

Selected research highlights

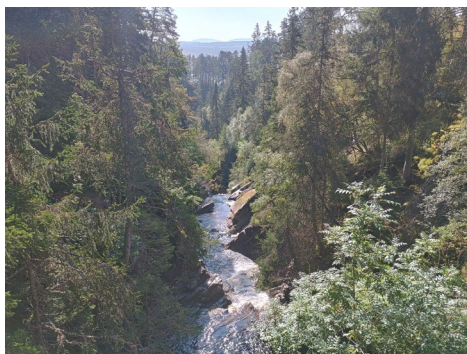
FairNature project develops conceptual framework to analyse the just scaling of NbS during kick-off meeting in Barcelona



The Biodiversa+-funded FairNature project, led by Marije Schaafsma, Ina Lehmann, Alexandra Krendelsberger from IVM's Environmental Economics and Environmental Policy Analysis sections, develops a practical guide and roadmap to scale Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in fair and equitable ways that support just transformative change. Through reflexive learning,

scientists and stakeholders co-create knowledge across six European action cases, ensuring NbS deliver benefits for both people and nature while addressing justice concerns. From 26-28 November, consortium members came together at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona to collaboratively develop the project's conceptual framework. The framework draws on the consortium's diverse disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives and is empirically grounded in ongoing work in pilot projects on NbS scaling. A guided bike tour through Barcelona's superblocks offered hands-on insights into both the opportunities and challenges of green infrastructure and building as urban NbS. After three inspiring days, participants returned home with valuable new theoretical and practical insights, as well as a strong sense of community and shared purpose for the years ahead.

Business as usual is no longer viable for European forests



European forests face unprecedented pressure from six megatrends: climate change, wildfires, pests, forest cover and felling intensity change, harvesting intensity and pollution. A new study led by Jakob Langenbacher provides the first Europe-wide comprehensive spatial analysis of these overlapping megatrends. For example, the study identifies Nordic and mountainous areas as critical hotspots of negative trends. Nordic forests are affected

by increases in warming and intensifying forestry, while mountainous areas suffer from increased bark beetle activity and storm impact. To adapt, the authors call for region-specific management strategies, including converting vulnerable spruce monocultures to mixed species stands and adjusting harvesting intervals. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that effective adaptation requires moving beyond maximizing timber production toward building resilient forests. The research was published in Sustainability Science.

> [Link to paper](#)

FEATURED RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Dissertations:

Judith Claassen (29 January 2026): [*Multi-Hazard Entanglement: Unraveling Historical and Stochastic Multi-Hazard Events*](#)

Julius Schlumberger (22 January 2026): [*Taming the Tangle: A Pathways Approach to Multi-Risk Management*](#)

Lars Tierolf (17 December 2025): [*Rising Waters: Tradeoffs in Climate Migration and Adaptation Under Future Flood Risk*](#)

Ileen Streefkerk (24 November 2025): [*Drought risk and adaptation in East and Southern Africa: Capturing human-water feedbacks*](#)

Rhoda Odongo (12 November 2025): [*Mapping drought risk and community resilience: An integrated study of drought propagation, risk and adaptation strategies in the Horn of Africa*](#)

Thijs Endendijk (29 October 2025): [*Homes under Water: From Physical to Financial Flood Risk for Real Estate*](#)

Jonas L. Appelt (20 October 2025): [*Changing realities for smallholders in Southeast Asia: Well-being outcomes and climate change consequences*](#)

Eric Mortensen (24 September 2025): [*Preparing for future flood risk now: An expanded understanding of forward-looking disaster risk reduction in the face of increasing coastal and riverine flood risk*](#)

Selected journal articles:

Fonseca-Cerda, M., de Moel, H., van Ederen, D., Schmid, T., Wouters, L., Aerts, J.C., Botzen, W.J.W., & Haer, T. (2025). Hailstorm prediction and loss assessment using high-resolution hazard and claims data. *Atmospheric Research*, 108501. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.atmosres.2025.108501>

Bilalova, S., Valin, N., Burchard-Levine, A.F., Gerlak, A.K., Huitema, D., Jager, N.W.,..., Koehler, J.K.L. ... & Ros, J.R. (2025). Now you see me, now you don't: the role and relevance of paradigms in water governance. *Ecology and Society*, 30(4). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-16279-300411>

Hamed, R., Steinmann, C. B., Ma, Q., Balanzategui, D., Broadman, E., Lesk, C., & Kornhuber, K. (2025). Amplified agricultural impacts from more frequent and intense

Workshop participants co-develop green adaptation pathways to climate extremes



On 21 October, the second co-creation workshop of the [GreenAdapt2Extremes](#) project took place in Maastricht. During the workshop, representatives from government, agriculture, nature organisations, and citizen initiatives co-developed criteria to select and rank nature-inspired measures. They prioritised flood protection and highlighted the importance of sustainable financial models (e.g., payment and revenue systems) to support measures in the long term. Forest-based and wetland measures, such as (food) forests, alluvial forests, and wetlands, were favoured, while small-scale measures ranked lowest. Building on visions from the [last workshop](#), participants co-developed green adaptation pathways for a wet, high-emission climate scenario. These pathways emphasize low-regret measures as starting points, but also include the establishment of enabling conditions for forest-based and wetland measures, so that these conditions are in place when such measures are implemented in the longer future. Next steps within the project include following up with stakeholders who were not present during the workshop, and producing and sharing a report on workshop results.

Weathering the storm: climateflation & fossilflation in Belgium



Mathieu Blondeel, Jan Busselaers, Veronica Lupi and Miguel Poblete Cazenave collaborated on the 'Weathering the Storm - climateflation & fossilflation in Belgium' report, commissioned by WWF Belgium. The report introduces the key concepts of fossilflation and climateflation. The research reveals for the first time that both fossil fuel dependency and climate extremes have substantially and persistently accelerated

inflation in Belgium over the past decade. Climate change is no longer solely an environmental concern — it is a systemic economic and financial risk. The study calls for urgent financial policy reforms: phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, scaling up investments in renewable energy, decarbonizing key sectors, as well as aligning fiscal and monetary frameworks to support climate adaptation, sustainable infrastructure, and resilient economic growth.

> [Link to paper](#)

The Hidden Spillover Effects of Environmental Policies



Environmental policies are meant to protect nature and slow climate change, but sometimes their effects spill over in unexpected ways. In the paper, published in *Global Environmental Change*, Diana Lucero Ramirez Mejia and Peter Verburg review scientific evidence on these "land-use spillovers"—when measures like creating protected areas, banning logging, or regulating supply chains shift environmental pressures elsewhere. The

research find that such spillovers are widespread and can be negative (like deforestation moving across borders) or, at times, positive (such as conservation spreading to nearby areas). They are strongly shaped by factors like market dynamics, enforcement capacity, and land accessibility. Yet, research remains patchy, often focused on a few regions and policy types, and scientists use inconsistent terms to describe similar processes. This study highlights the need to connect local, regional, and global perspectives, helping us see the bigger picture and design policies that truly reduce pressures instead of moving them elsewhere.

sequential heat events. *Environmental Research Letters*, 20(11), 114001.

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Rabitz, F., Beaudoin, S., Jedd, T., Lehmann, I., Prip, C., de Queiroz-Stein, G., & Tsioumani, E. (2025). A turning point in global biodiversity governance? *Environmental Politics*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2025.2565867>

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Tom X. Hackbarth, T.X., May, J., Verburg P.H. 2025. Food system interventions in urban environments: Integrating simulation models and

> [Link to paper](#)

Major contribution to UN report highlights interactions between hazards



and Timothy Tiggeloven highlight how disasters often result from complex interactions between different hazards, and that hazards are not isolated events. The report describes interactions between hazards in the updated [Hazard Information Profiles \(HIPs\)](#). The profiles provide consistent definitions and descriptions of the various kinds of hazards that society faces, from floods and earthquakes to health-related threats to cyber threats. "Examples [for how hazards interact] include triggering, where rainfall from a tropical storm triggers a landslide; amplifying, where drought increases the risk of forest fires; or compounding, where coastal and river flooding and rainfall occur in the same region at the same time", Ward explains. The report, which is part of the [MYRIAD-EU project](#), provides twenty examples of such multi-hazard events from around the world, demonstrating how different hazards and impacts are interlinked. By doing so, it supports the development of integrated disaster risk reduction strategies that enable better preparation for future events.

> [Link to paper](#)

Sharing research findings on carbon pricing with the next generation

In a recent [article](#) published in *Frontiers for Young Minds*, a journal focused on sharing cutting-edge research with readers aged 11–14, Daniel Muth explored public acceptance for carbon pricing. His findings show that when revenues from carbon pricing schemes are returned to citizens or invested in climate solutions, support for these policies increases, making it possible to strengthen climate action. To ensure that the text is accessible and engaging for its target audience, the publication process with *Frontiers for Young Minds* involves a unique peer review procedure in which kids, not adults, serve as reviewers, with the help of a science mentor. Publications are intended to be based on high quality research but also to be exciting to read. Daniel's piece builds on his academic work on carbon taxation that highlights how the smart use of revenues can unlock more ambitious climate policies, for which he was recently recognized as a [National Champion](#) with the *Frontiers Planet Prize*.

> [Link to paper](#)

Nature-Based Solutions Pay Off in Flood Prevention



In a recent presentation at the INSIDERS Series Climatewise workshop, organized by the Centre for Sustainable Finance (CISL) at the University of Cambridge, Guillermo García and Wouter Botzen shared key findings from three years of research under the [NATURANCE](#) project. The session focused on a societal cost-benefit analysis of nature-based solution (NbS) policies in the context of the devastating 2021 European floods, evaluating their financial viability and identifying potential investment opportunities. Beyond risk reduction, the assessment included the monetization of NbS co-benefits using a Discrete Choice Experiment, alongside a complementary insurance analysis to evaluate the impact of NbS on insurability, insurance premiums, and coverage. The findings show that NbS are economically viable when the co-benefits are taken into account, and highlight the need for targeted measures, as large land use changes not only can limit policy support, but considerably increase the costs, jeopardizing the financial viability of NbS.

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Sandström, E., Boere, E., Krisztin, T., & Verburg, P. H. (2025). Enabling and constraining factors for organic agriculture in Europe: a spatial analysis. *Environmental Research. Food Systems*, 2(3), 1-18. Article 035006. <https://doi.org/10.1088/2976-601X/adf22e>

Mortensen, E., Cassanti, A.C., Tiggeloven, T., Twaalfhoven, A., Ward, P.J., & Haer, T. (2025). On moving towards a more inclusive understanding of disaster risk reduction: A sexual and gender minorities perspective through the lens of global flood risk. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 100442. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2025.100442>

Koloffon Rosas, M. (2025). Partnerships for sustainable development: measuring transformative potential through leverage

Education news

Start of the academic year

This last academic year started with the IVM again leading and contributing to several programmes, including the BSc Earth Economics and Sustainability, BSc Minor in Sustainability, MSc Environment and Resource Management, MSc Global Environmental Change & Policy, MSc Hydrology, MSc Climate and Sustainable Finance, MSc Climate Econometrics, and MSc UNIGIS. In total IVM welcomed about 370 new students in these programmes.

IVM also hosted several summer schools, one on [Governing Climate Change](#) (led by Oscar Widerberg), one on the [Global Energy Transition](#) (led by Mathieu Blondeel and Daniel Muth), and one on [Water Politics and Governance](#) (led by Jampel Dell'Angelo), where students from various geographic and disciplinary backgrounds came together to explore these topics in theory and in practice, including during a joint field trip of the first two groups to the European Parliament in Brussels.



EAERE Interdisciplinary school in resource and environmental economics 2026

The [EAERE Interdisciplinary School](#) (Jan 26–30, 2026) will bring PhD researchers together in Amsterdam and Antwerp to explore cutting-edge methods for valuing ecosystem services and integrating these insights into sustainable policy and project evaluation.

Prizes, awards and grants

ERC Synergy Grant

A group of researchers, including Jeroen Aerts, has received a Synergy Grant from the European Research Council (ERC) to [investigate the limits of adaptability to flood risk of rivers](#).

VU-UT Alliance Fund Grant

Alex Levering and [Jasper van Vliet](#) won this grant to work on measuring perceived changes to liveability for slums in Nairobi, using satellite images. Click [here](#) to read more.

NWO Open Competition XS grant

[Oscar Widerberg](#) won this grant for a project that investigates how political pressure, especially under U.S president Trump's second term, may cause companies to back away from committing to "net zero" carbon emissions. The project uses advanced text analysis of corporate reports and interviews with company leaders in the U.S. and Europe.

UNSEAL: Transforming Impervious Cities into Biodiverse Urban Landscapes

Urban green is commonly accepted as nature-based solution to increase biodiversity and human well-being in urban areas. The international project [UNSEAL](#), led by [Jasper van Vliet](#), will launch in early 2026. Researchers will investigate how removing impervious surfaces, such as buildings, roads, and parking sites, can contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem services in cities. The project has partners and case study areas in Switzerland, Hungary, Romania, and Greece, and is part of the [Driving Urban Transitions Partnership](#).

SwaRM: Scaling Water bunds for climate Resilience Management in Kenyan rainfed agri-food systems

The NWO-CGIAR funded [SwaRM project](#), led by IWMI with partners including IVM's [Marije Schaafsma](#) and [Teun Schrieks](#), Justdiggit, and Tegemeo Institute, explores how nature-based solutions like water bunds can be scaled to boost drought resilience and

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Muth, D., Blondeel, M., & Pattberg, P. (2025). The Architecture of Global Carbon Pricing Governance: Institutions, Functions and Policy Pathways. *Global Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.70078>

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STAFF AND ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

- [Philipp Pattberg](#) has been appointed as [George Soros Visiting Chair](#) in global policy at the Central European University (CEU)
- [Anne van Loon](#) has been appointed [professor of Drought Risk and Water Security](#). As new chair she investigates processes at the interface of hydrological and social systems.
- [Peter Verburg](#) has been selected as one of the three co- chairs of the upcoming [IPBES Spatial Planning and Connectivity Assessment](#), while the IVM has become the assessment's Host Institution.
- [Jeroen Aerts](#) was elected as a new member of [The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences \(KNAW\)](#).

STAFF AND ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

Hello and goodbye

This year, IVM has welcomed several new staff members:

- In the section Water and Climate Risk (WCR) [Clara Lesser](#), [Elda Pipa](#), [Esther Bakels](#), [Lisanne van Amelsvoort](#) and [Susan Geurtsen](#) started as PhD candidates, [Meriem Krouma](#) as Postdoc, [Roy Pontman](#) as Junior Researcher and welcomed [Marjolijn Naudé](#) as new Lecturer.
- The section Environmental Policy Analysis (EPA) welcomed [Zilva van Rossum](#) as PhD candidate, she will also be part of Environmental Geography.
- The section Environmental Economics (EE) welcomed [Arda Aktas](#) as Postdoc.
- In the section Environmental Geography (EG) [Emmeline Long](#) as new Lecturer, [Gabriella Bishop](#) and [Hongmei Lu](#) as Postdocs.

Last year we said goodbye to Adna Steinmann, Charlotte Rappel, Jennifer Kraaijeveld, Marjolijn Staarink and Veronica Lupi.

livelihoods in Kenyan rainfed agriculture. Complementing this, IVM also contributes to a DG-Clima project developing decision-support tools for climate impact and resilience.

JustBioSolar: Green Energy Transitions in Europe: Impacts on Biodiversity, Landscapes and Justice

[JustBioSolar](#), a new Biodiversa+ funded project including IVM's [Peter Verburg](#), will investigate conflicts around agricultural solar fields and biodiversity, mapping conditions from case studies to the European scale to guide solar deployment toward locations less sensitive to ecological trade-offs and community tensions.

RESHAPE: Reshaping food systems: value change transformation through reconnection

[RESHAPE](#), a new FutureFoodS project with IVM's [Mario Torralba](#), investigates how food value chains across Europe can reconnect people with the socio-ecological dynamics of food to drive transformative change toward sustainable and resilient food systems

How do we achieve the Paris climate target

On October 30, 2025, [Michel den Elzen](#) delivered his [inaugural address](#) as Professor by Special Appointment of International Climate Policy and Mitigation of Climate Change at VU Amsterdam, focusing on scenario analyses for global climate policy and Paris Agreement implementation

IVM in the spotlight

[Federico Riva](#) participated in the panel-debate in Mexico for the ATBC meeting on the topic of "Is Habitat Fragmentation Bad or Good for Biodiversity? Implications for Tropical Sustainability". Click [here](#) to watch the debate. Federico also talked about the linkages between small patches of biodiversity and biodiversity with the [BBC](#).

[Floris van Montfoort's](#) PhD research, where he tested dynamic grid tariffs in a field experiment with over 600 EV households, showing how price incentives can reduce peak demand and ease grid congestion attracted quite some attention, including an article at [ESB](#) and an interview at [BNR](#).

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement, [Mathieu Blondeel](#) published an essay in the December edition of Belgian magazine [Samenleving & Politiek](#) talking about what role the Agreement can still play in the current political climate. In September, he was interviewed by Dutch public broadcaster [NOS](#) on the visit of US Secretary of Energy Chris Wright to the EU, speaking on the geopolitical and climate policy-related implications of, i.a., expanding European gas imports from the U.S.

The [UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2025](#), with [Michel den Elzen](#) leading two chapters, concludes that the projected global temperature rise this century has only marginally decreased, leaving the world on track for severe climate risks and damages. The report's findings received extensive media coverage, including [NOS](#), [RTL](#), [Algemeen Dagblad](#), [Volkskrant](#), [Trouw](#), [Telegraaf](#), and [Nu.nl](#)

Previous events



In September, [Peter Verburg](#), [Nynke Schulp](#), and [Gabriella Bishop](#) joined nearly 90 global experts at IIASA in Laxenburg, Austria to launch the [IPBES Spatial Planning and Connectivity Assessment](#).

On 16 December, Kate Negacz introduced key findings on how to address soil and water salinity through collaborative action during a [webinar](#) co-hosted by FAO's [International Network of Salt-Affected Soils \(INSAS\)](#), the [Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture \(WASAG\)](#) and various partners. These findings will also

be made available as a Policy Brief in early 2026.

On 4 December, Daniel Muth and Philipp Pattberg joined the [COP30 Expert Debrief](#) hosted by the Amsterdam Sustainability Institute to evaluate outcomes, and discuss which positions and controversies shaped the negotiations that took place in Belém, Brazil, between 10 and 21 November 2025.

On 17 October, the [MYRIAD-EU](#) project convened policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in Brussels for a [high-level policy roundtable](#) on advancing Europe's multi-hazard and multi-risk disaster resilience. Philip Ward, Sophie Buijs, and Judith Claassen highlighted tools and methods developed in the project, and discussed what would be required to sustain Europe's multi-hazard expertise from the perspective of early career scientists.

From 29 September to 1 October, the IVM hosted a workshop on Behavioral and Environmental Economics—organized by Madeline Werthschulte in collaboration with the RWI—featuring keynote talks by leading scholars and junior VU researchers, with funding from the VU Starting Grant 2025 and the RWI.

On 30 September, Mirja Schoderer joined [the Art Science Dialogue](#) linked to the Water Views exhibition at the VU ART SCIENCE gallery, to discuss with artist [Suzette Bousema](#) how human actions have impacted life in and with water, and how art can contribute to alternative forms of engaging with nature.

Other news and announcements

Upcoming new season of the Climate Breakdown Podcast

Starting in January 2026, the Amsterdam Sustainability Institute's [Climate Breakdown](#) podcast is entering its third season. In each episode, hosts Paulina Raniecka and Mathieu Blondeel highlight a different facet of the climate crisis and the ways in which it could be tackled, through conversations with experts from various backgrounds. The first episode on the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement is available as a pre-release [here](#), and a future episodes on extractivism is in the works.

To help us tailor future newsletters to your needs, we would love to hear from you. Would you like to see some additional or alternative sections? What did you find most insightful this time, and what is on your mind that we could explore in upcoming issues? Reach us at m.c.schoderer@vu.nl and m.torralbaviorreta@vu.nl

IVM (Institute for Environmental Studies), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam produces three newsletters per year to promote and communicate its research activities. They present a series of articles of our researchers on their newest findings in the fields of Environmental Geography, Economics, Policy and Governance, and Water and Climate Risk. You are receiving this newsletter because you have been in contact with us recently or in the past. Should you not wish to receive our information in the future please unsubscribe by [clicking here](#) (send the resulting e-mail as it is). If you receive our newsletter indirectly you can subscribe by [clicking here](#) (send the resulting e-mail as it is). For more information, please visit our website www.vu.nl/ivm or contact us through info.ivm@vu.nl
