



## **Policy Workshop 2 Report**

### **Deliverable D5.7**

30 April 2025

Boris Barov, Eva Slavova

*Pensoft Publishers*

#### **TRANSPATH**

**Transformative pathways for synergising just biodiversity and climate actions**



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## 1. Preface

This report covers the second of three policy workshops planned under Work Package 5 (WP5) of the TRANSPATH project which aims to reinforce the science-policy interface through co-designed, policy-relevant knowledge. These workshops are structured to ensure iterative engagement between project researchers and policymakers, allowing for continuous review, feedback, and direction-setting.

The policy workshops are conceived as a series of three half-day events held in Brussels (at project months M12, M30, and M42). Their format is intended to foster co-production of knowledge with the Policy Board—a group composed of senior policy officials from relevant institutions and sectors. Each workshop provides an opportunity for participants to review ongoing project results, reflect on their implications, and offer guidance on next steps. The workshops aim to ensure the relevance of the project's outcomes, strengthen their impact on policy, and promote ownership among key policy actors.

This report, Deliverable D5.7, documents the second policy workshop held in Brussels on 14 April 2025. The focus of this workshop was on the IPBES Transformative Change Assessment. Transformative change is a core theme of the TRANSPATH project, with its relevance across systems of economy, governance, and societal values. The content builds on the first policy workshop, which focused on finance and systemic transformation (see [Deliverable D5.6: Policy Workshop 1 Report](#)), and anticipates the third and final policy workshop scheduled for M42. The third workshop will consolidate the project's findings and focus on actionable pathways to support long-term, transformative biodiversity and climate policies at the EU level.

This report summarizes the discussions from the second workshop, provides an overview of the presentations, and reflects on the key insights that emerged. It also includes the agenda, background materials, participant list, and visual documentation from the event.

## 2. Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of the TRANSPATH workshop was to explore three key strategies for enabling transformative change: transforming economic systems, governance systems, and societal values, as defined in the [IPBES Transformative Change Assessment](#). These were examined through the lens of ongoing project work and in dialogue with the participants, with the aim of co-designing next steps and identifying policy opportunities. The strategies correspond to specific work packages (WPs) that provide insights into how biodiversity and climate policies can act as levers for systemic change.

Transforming economic systems for the benefit of nature and equity is central to WP3 and WP4. WP3 models the socio-economic and environmental impacts of transformative pathways, while WP4 designs interventions targeting trade regulation, the financial sector, and sustainable value chains. Together, they identify leverage points for shifting economic paradigms toward biodiversity-positive outcomes.

Transforming governance systems is addressed through WP2 and WP4. WP2 focuses on the development of Science-Policy-Practitioner Labs to co-design transformative pathways across diverse contexts. WP4 examines multi-actor engagement, rights-based approaches, and governance structures that support systemic change. Together, these work packages explore how policies and institutions can become more integrated, inclusive, accountable, and adaptive to better support biodiversity and climate objectives.

Shifting societal values is embedded in WP1 and WP2. WP1 provides the theoretical foundation for leverage points at individual, organisational, and system levels, while WP2

ensures interventions are sensitive to cultural contexts and knowledge systems. By recognizing human-nature interconnections, these strategies support long-term sustainability transitions.

The workshop provided a space to examine how these three strategies can inform and shape future biodiversity and climate policies, focusing on the critical economic and governance reforms, as well as the cultural and normative shifts required to enable transformative change.

### **3. Target groups and participants**

The primary target group for the workshop consisted of policy officers from relevant Directorates-General of the European Commission, as well as stakeholders from different institutions and sectors related to biodiversity, climate, and sustainability policy. A full list of participants is provided in [Annex VI](#) and the invitation in [Annex II](#). Unfortunately, the response rate of the invited participants was very low, possibly due to the forthcoming holiday season.

### **4. Agenda**

The workshop agenda is available in [Annex IV](#). It featured opening remarks from project coordinator Dr. Jeanne Nel, an introductory keynote on transformative change by project coordinator Prof. Francisco Alpizar, and a series of presentations and facilitated discussions on economic, financial, and governance systems. Karin Zaunberger, Policy Officer at the European Commission's DG Environment, delivered the closing remarks, reflecting on the relevance of the discussions to ongoing EU policy developments.

### **5. Background Materials and Pre-Workshop Communication**

In advance of the workshop, participants received preparatory materials including background readings and the agenda. These were shared via direct email and through the TRANSPATH project's communication channels. Screenshots of the pre-event communication are included in [Annex V](#), along with photographs from the event.

All presentations were recorded and shared, with integrated slides, on the TRANSPATH website and YouTube channel to support broader outreach and ongoing policy dialogue.

### **6. Presentations Overview**

#### **6.1 Transformative change for a just and sustainable world, by Jeanne Nel (WUR)**

Dr. Jeanne Nel began her presentation with a reminder of the key messages from the 2019 First Global IPBES Assessment: the current rate of nature's decline is dangerous and unprecedented, with species extinction accelerating. The global response so far has been insufficient, and there is an urgent need for transformative change to restore and protect nature. She emphasised that opposition from vested interests can be overcome in pursuit of the public good. These messages are summarised in Figure 1.

# Frist Global IPBES Assessment 2019

## Key findings



**Figure 1: Key messages from the First Global IPBES Assessment 2019**

Dr. Nel then highlighted how previous IPBES reports have shown that increased conservation efforts alone are not enough to 'bend the curve' of biodiversity loss. This understanding led to the development of two recent reports: the Transformative Change and Nexus reports.

The presentation then shifted to the purpose of the workshop: to explore transformative pathways using three sources — the Transformative Change assessment report, ongoing work within the TRANSPATH project, and the workshop discussions themselves. Dr. Nel framed the discussion around identifying leverage points and interventions at three levels: consumers, producers, and organisations, while remaining sensitive to socio-cultural contexts and rights.

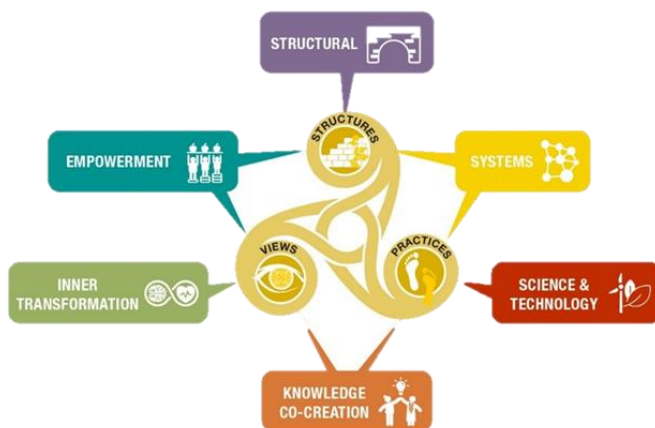
## 6.2 Transformative change: A quick primer, by Francisco Alpizar (WUR)

Professor Francisco Alpizar, one of the lead authors of the IPBES Transformative Change report, opened his presentation with a brief overview of the Nexus Assessment, highlighting the interconnectedness of the biodiversity, climate, water, food, and health crises. He emphasised that a business-as-usual (BAU) approach is insufficient to address these intertwined challenges. BAU is characterized by fragmented policies that fail to tackle the underlying causes of nature's decline, leading to isolated decisions, conflicting objectives, duplication, inefficiencies, and unintended consequences across policy targets. As a result, addressing multiple global challenges is often perceived as costly, politically toxic, and elitist.

Given the ineffectiveness of the BAU scenario, Professor Alpizar emphasized the need for transformative change, as defined by IPBES (2025) as *"fundamental, system-wide shifts in views, structures, and practices"* that address the root causes of biodiversity loss and the decline of nature.



**Figure 2. Representation of the IPBES description of transformative change**



He further noted that six commonly used approaches to addressing these issues are insufficient on their own, as they tend to be polarized and restricted within disciplinary boundaries.

**Figure 3. Six approaches to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss**

Transformative change can only occur when these approaches are used in a complementary way. They have been consolidated into five concrete strategies, as shown in the figure 4.



**Figure 4. Five strategies for transformative change, as identified by the IPBES Transformative Change Assessment Report**

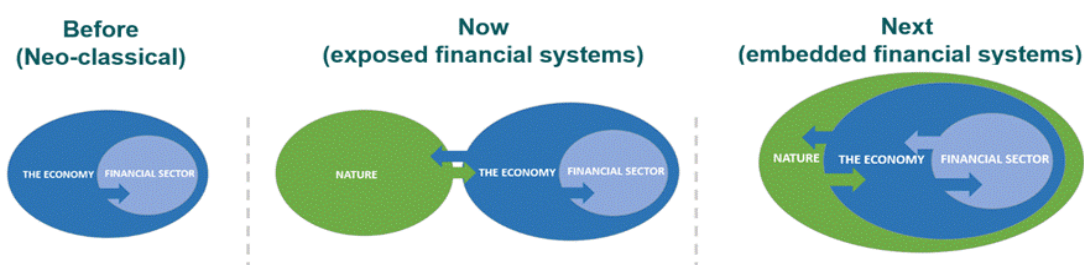
This workshop focuses on exploring strategies three, four, and five in more depth.

### 6.3 Transforming economic systems for nature and equity: Case study - The EU financial sector (Strategy 3), by Paul Dingkuhn (WUR)

Paul Dingkuhn focused on the role of the financial sector in shaping economic systems and their interactions with nature. He noted that sustainability is gaining ground within the EU financial sector, as evidenced by numerous voluntary initiatives, the emergence of green finance products, and supportive EU policies.

The presentation highlighted three major paradigm shifts necessary to transform the financial sector:

- **Paradigm Shift 1:** From external to nature-embedded financial systems — recognising that nature must be integrated within financial decision-making rather than treated as an external factor.

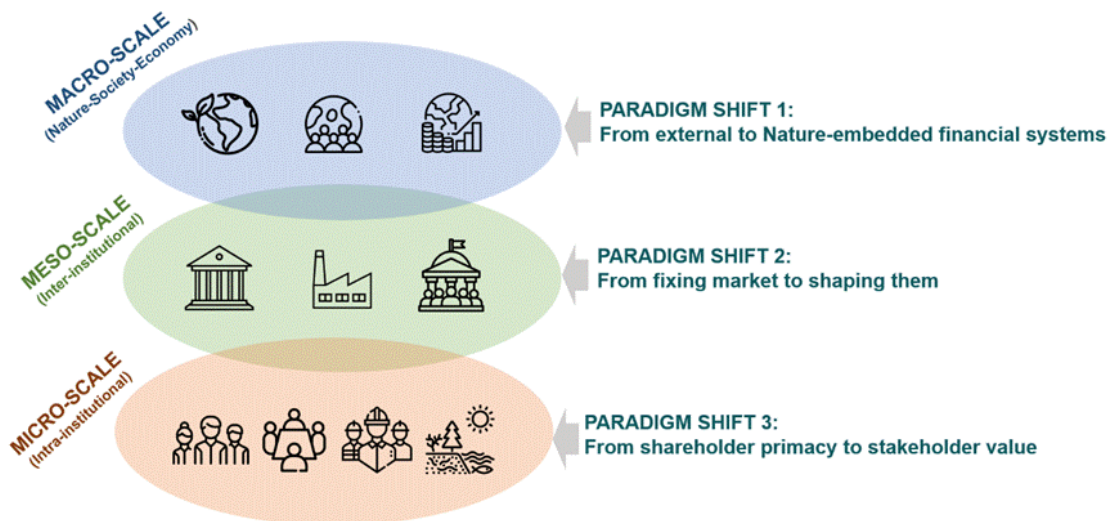


**Figure 5: Shows the next stage of nature's integration process into the financial decision-making scheme**



- **Paradigm Shift 2:** From fixing the market to shaping the market — moving beyond the Efficient Market Hypothesis (where rational investors operate with complete information) to the Adaptive Market Hypothesis (where markets are dynamic, evolving, and influenced by changing environmental conditions).
- **Paradigm Shift 3:** From shareholder primacy to stakeholder value — reorienting firms' purpose from maximising shareholder profits to enhancing the welfare of a broader community of stakeholders, with fiduciary duty aligned toward balancing diverse community interests.

These paradigm shifts require interventions at multiple scales (Figure 6). The approach involves connecting "shallow interventions" (such as low-hanging fruit) to deeper systemic transformations by addressing the root paradigms through transformative policy pathways that operate across different levels of the financial system.



**Figure 6: The three scales where paradigm shifts require interventions**

#### **6.4 Transforming governance systems to be integrated, inclusive, accountable and adaptive (Strategy 4), by Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (WUR)**

Focusing on Strategy 4, Dr. Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen emphasised the need to transform governance systems through four key principles:

- Inclusive governance should help people reconnect with nature and strengthen relational values such as a sense of place, community, care, responsibility, and stewardship.
- Integrative governance aims to decentralise power and redistribute wealth from the few to the many, particularly in food and energy systems. It also emphasises the importance of integrating non-material motivations, such as relational values, into governance structures to support conservation efforts.

- Accountable governance involves clearly assigning responsibilities and timeframes, providing complementary institutional mandates and establishing systems for iterative and transparent evaluation and revision of policies, regulations, and trade agreements (as highlighted in TC Action 4.4).
- Adaptive governance supports creative learning processes that help reframe problems, overcome path dependencies and foster continuous cycles of planning, monitoring, and reflection. This approach encourages actors to assess their actions, responsibilities, and underlying values critically.

Dr. Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen concluded that these four qualifiers — integrated, inclusive, accountable, and adaptive — provide tangible, promising directions for transformative governance. However, much remains to be learned about how to govern deep systemic change. She stressed that humility and sensitivity to contextual diversity are essential for scholars and practitioners aiming to support transformative pathways effectively.

### **6.5 Shifting societal views and values to recognize and prioritize fundamental interconnections between humans and nature (Strategy 5), by Zuzana Harmáčková (Czech Globe)**

Focusing on Strategy 5, Dr. Zuzana Harmáčková explored how shifting social norms and cultural narratives are embedded in transformative change processes. She emphasized that these shifts occur within complex, context-specific dynamics and are powerful drivers of behavioural change—raising critical questions about how they can be purposefully integrated into broader transformative efforts.

To illustrate this, she presented a case study using Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCM) to better understand the underlying mechanisms of transformative processes. The study revealed two key influencing factors: purchasing power and public conformity.

The findings showed that:

- When the influence of *public conformity* is removed, the society's relationship with nature improves.
- Conversely, when the influence of *purchasing power* is removed, the relationship with nature deteriorates.

These contrasting results highlight the complex and sometimes counterintuitive dynamics at play. Dr. Harmáčková's key message was clear: Social norms and cultural narratives are crucial deep leverage points for enabling transformative change.

## 7. Discussion: Understanding socio-cultural dynamics in Transformative Change: Insights from a roundtable discussion

### 7.1 Cultural and Psychological Barriers to Transformation

Transformation is as much about belief systems, norms, and emotions as it is about technology or policy. The discussion highlighted several key psychological and societal dynamics that may hinder or enable change:

- **Values are resistant when directly challenged**

Framing transformative change as a change in “values” may trigger resistance, as it can be perceived as a threat to identity. More effective is language that emphasises alignment with existing aspirations or roles.

- **Norms evolve invisibly**

Today, algorithms, digital platforms, and marketing subtly and constantly shape social norms, often more effectively than formal institutions. This influence is not always visible or acknowledged in policy frameworks. Transformation is continuous; the question is how we change algorithms.

- **Risk aversion dominates decision-making**

For many stakeholders—especially in vulnerable sectors like agriculture—perceived costs and risks outweigh potential benefits. What is considered a “positive outcome” varies significantly, and uncertainty hinders action.

- **Negative experiences can mobilize more than positive ones**

Although positive visions of change frequently appear in narratives, negative experiences—such as climate disasters and economic shocks—often drive immediate engagement. However, these instances rarely translate into lasting policy momentum.

- **Hope is a missing ingredient**

There is a strong need to frame transformation in terms of hope, opportunity, and empowerment—especially for younger generations. Relying solely on crisis messaging is inadequate and may even alienate people.

### 7.2 Social Leverage Points for Transformative Change

Despite challenges, the discussion identified key societal entry points that can be leveraged to foster transformation:

- **The gendered power of consumer influence**

Women influence around 80% of consumption decisions in Europe. Although they may not always manage finances, their role in shaping demand-side dynamics provides a crucial — yet underutilised — avenue for systemic change.

- **Embedded long-term thinking**

Even if not formally captured in models, stakeholders across sectors demonstrate long-term concerns in their reasoning. These underlying motivations can be tapped into through storytelling, participatory design, and policy framing.

- **Cultural layers vary by context**

Religious and institutional norms shape values differently across regions. Some communities are more influenced by faith-based beliefs, while others are guided by secular social norms. Transformative narratives need to be culturally adaptive.

- **Experiential learning as a tool for change**

Both positive and negative lived experiences shape how people engage with transformation. Policy design should actively incorporate emotional and experiential learning, not just rational information.

### 7.3 Governance and Policy Pathways Forward

To create an enabling environment for transformation, a shift in governance and policy communication is necessary:

- **Multi-level governance and collaboration**

Transformative change is too complex for top-down mandates alone. It must be incremental, distributed, and collaborative—engaging actors across sectors, scales, and cultures.

- **Policy that communicates hope and opportunity**

Narratives matter. Instead of emphasizing costs or sacrifices, policy messaging should focus on empowerment, shared futures, and new possibilities for work, community, and wellbeing.

- **Effective communication for impact**

- EC-funded projects should produce clear, accessible policy briefs to ensure that research informs action.
- Connect actively with other projects in the Transformative Change Cluster to foster mutual learning and enhance visibility.

- **Reframing the economics of action**

When speaking with policymakers, concentrate on the cost of inaction versus the cost of action—a framing that is both pragmatic and persuasive, especially in times of uncertainty.

## 7.4 Conclusion and closing remarks

Transformative change requires more than just facts or technologies; it demands a keen attention to emotion, identity, and cultural nuance. By holistically engaging with gender dynamics, emotional experiences, and subtle value shifts, while communicating through hope and fostering a long-term perspective, we can craft more grounded, inclusive, and resonant strategies for societal change.

In closing, Karin Zaunberger summarised the discussion with a powerful reminder:

*“Transformative change is not only urgent and necessary; it is, most importantly, possible.”*

Rather than focusing on costs, we need to shift our dialogue towards investments. Both the Transformative Change and Nexus reports have made it unequivocally clear: transformative change is the solution we need. The business case for adopting nature-based solutions (NbS) is already established — when 50% of the global GDP relies on nature, the challenge transcends saving the environment; it is about securing our economies.

The saying, “We are all in this together,” a motto originating from the Rio process, remains just as pertinent today. When we succeed in this endeavour, we all triumph together.

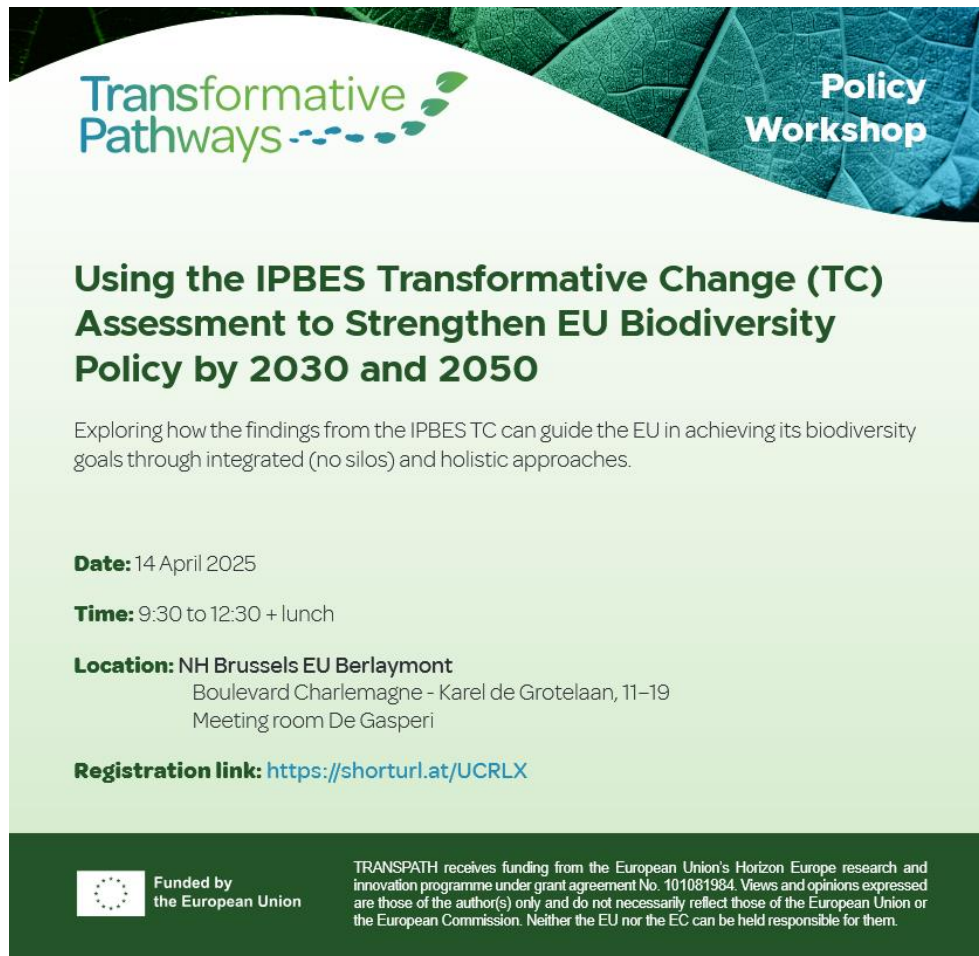
Thus, we grasp the “what.” The pressing question now is: do we still have the time? Let’s ensure that the answer is a resounding yes.

## **Annex I: Presentations**

The presentations are available on the project website:

<https://transpath.eu/storage/app/uploads/public/681/218/ebc/681218ebc95e4774157061.pdf>

## Annex II: Invitation



**Transformative Pathways**

**Policy Workshop**

### Using the IPBES Transformative Change (TC) Assessment to Strengthen EU Biodiversity Policy by 2030 and 2050


Exploring how the findings from the IPBES TC can guide the EU in achieving its biodiversity goals through integrated (no silos) and holistic approaches.

**Date:** 14 April 2025

**Time:** 9:30 to 12:30 + lunch

**Location:** NH Brussels EU Berlaymont  
Boulevard Charlemagne - Karel de Grotelaan, 11–19  
Meeting room De Gasperi

**Registration link:** <https://shorturl.at/UCRLX>

 **Funded by the European Union**

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## Annex III: Background Paper



# TRANSPATH Workshop on Transformative Change

## Background and Context

The **TRANSPATH project** explores pathways for **transformative change** in biodiversity and climate governance, focusing on long-term strategies to integrate sustainability into policies and practices. As part of this mission, TRANSPATH is organising a **workshop**, this April 2025 in Brussels, that will discuss key findings from the [IPBES Transformative Change Assessment Report](#), a comprehensive report that examines the drivers of biodiversity loss and the systemic changes needed to address them.

This assessment, developed by 101 experts from 42 nations, draws from over 7,000 references, including indigenous and local knowledge, to provide evidence-based options for transitioning towards a sustainable world.

## Key Findings of the Assessment

### The Need for Systemic Change

A fundamental reorganisation of the relationships between technology, economy, and society is crucial to tackling biodiversity loss. Current economic models prioritise short-term individual gains, leading to a continued disconnect between humans and nature.


### Underlying Causes of Biodiversity Loss

#### The report identifies five key challenges that drive biodiversity loss

The issue of biodiversity loss is driven by five key challenges that intertwine economic, political, and social factors. Firstly, **prevailing relations over nature and people** are often dominated by economic and political structures that exploit natural resources for short-term gains. This is compounded by significant **economic and political inequalities**, where a disproportionate







number of individuals and communities have access to benefits and decision-making power, leaving many without a voice in critical environmental matters.

Furthermore, the **inadequacy of policies and the presence of unfit institutions** lead to weak governance frameworks that cannot adequately address or rectify systemic issues related to biodiversity. Moreover, **unsustainable consumption and production patterns** exacerbate the situation, as we see the overexploitation of natural resources surpassing ecological limits. Finally, there is a notable barrier in the **limited access to clean technologies**, which hinders the widespread adoption of sustainable innovations that could mitigate these challenges. Collectively, these factors create a complex landscape that continues to threaten biodiversity across the globe.


## Strategies for Transformative Change


The assessment outlines **five interlinked strategies**, each requiring coordinated action. Firstly, **sustainable stewardship** involves engaging indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation efforts. Secondly, **transformative sectoral changes** focus on high-impact sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and mining. Thirdly, **economic restructuring** emphasises a shift towards sustainable economic paradigms. **Inclusive governance** ensures participatory decision-making that reflects diverse voices. Lastly, a **shift in societal values** encourages the recognition of human-nature interdependencies.

## Mapping TRANSPATH to Transformative Change Strategies

The TRANSPATH workshop will explore three key strategies for transformative change: **transforming economic systems, governance systems, and societal values**. These strategies provide a framework for understanding how biodiversity and climate policies can drive systemic change.

Transforming economic systems for nature and equity involves identifying leverage points that shift economic paradigms toward biodiversity-positive outcomes. The project examines the socio-economic and environmental





impacts of different transformative pathways and explores interventions in trade regulation, the financial sector, and sustainable value chains to support this transition.

Transforming governance systems focuses on multi-actor engagement, rights-based approaches, and governance structures that enable systemic change. By fostering more integrated, inclusive, accountable, and adaptive institutions, TRANSPATH seeks to support long-term biodiversity and climate goals through effective policy and decision-making.

Shifting societal values is essential for embedding sustainability into policy and practice. The project explores how cultural contexts, knowledge systems, and perceptions of human-nature interconnections influence transformative change. Recognizing these values helps design interventions that are both socially and ecologically responsive.

The workshop will examine how these strategies can shape future biodiversity and climate policies, with a focus on economic and governance reforms alongside value shifts needed for lasting transformation. A full report on the workshop discussions will be available on the TRANSPATH website in early May 2025—stay tuned for insights and key takeaways.



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## Annex IV: Agenda


### Workshop Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:30	Welcome, introduction to the topics and goals of the workshop	TRANSPATH Coordinator, Jeanne Nel
9:40	<b>Opening speech:</b> Underlying causes of biodiversity loss and nature's decline identified by IPBES: conflicting values, indirect and direct drivers and their context in the current EU policy landscape	TRANSPATH Francisco Alpizar
10:00	Introduction, ice-breaker and first reactions	Tour de table
10:15	Transforming economic systems for nature and equity	TRANSPATH Paul Dingkuhn
10:35	Transforming governance systems to be integrated, inclusive, accountable, and adaptive	TRANSPATH Sylvia Karlsson- Vinkhuyzen
11:00	<b>Discussion round 1</b> Discuss the two topics presented so far	Facilitator Axel Paulsch
11:30	Shifting societal views and values to recognize and prioritize fundamental interconnections between humans and nature	TRANSPATH Zuzana Harmackova
11:50	<b>Discussion round 2</b> Discuss the third topic; Summary of both discussions (all topics)	Facilitator Axel Paulsch
12:15	<b>Closing remarks:</b> Optimistic, pessimistic or realistic view on how EU policies can advance on the action points from the IPBES TC Assessment Report	Karin Zaunberger (tbc)
12:30	Light lunch	

## Annex V: Social media posts and photos from the workshop

### 1. Workshop social media and website announcements

NEWS



**TRANSPATH Policy Workshop**  
Using the IPBES TC Assessment to strengthen EU Biodiversity Policy by 2030 and 2050

Transformative Pathways  
Funded by the European Union

**TRANSPATH Workshop on Transformative Change**


26 Mar 2025

**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The **TRANSPATH project** explores pathways for **transformative change** in biodiversity and climate governance, focusing on long-term strategies to integrate sustainability into policies and practices. As part of this mission, TRANSPATH is organising a **workshop**, this April 2025 in Brussels, that will discuss key findings from the **IPBES Transformative Change Assessment Report**, a comprehensive report that examines the drivers of biodiversity loss and the systemic changes needed to address them.

**TRANSPATH Project**  
235 followers  
2w • Edited •

Exciting news from TRANSPATH! 🌱 We are very happy to announce a policy workshop taking place this month in Brussels, in relation to the recent IPBES [#TransformativeChange](#) (TC) Assessment Report. 📄 🗨️ ...more



**TRANSPATH Policy Workshop**  
Using the IPBES TC Assessment to strengthen EU Biodiversity Policy by 2030 and 2050

Transformative Pathways  
with CATIE Oficial and 3 others  
Funded by the European Union

Joshua Raymond Muhumuza and 29 others

3 comments · 7 reposts

Like Comment Repost



## 2. Photos

















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## **Annex VI: List of participants**

Luisa Prista - Water Europe

Martin Lok, Executive Director of the Capitals Coalition.

Karin Zaunberger, Policy Officer, DG Environment, European Commission

Maria do Rosário Partidário, Director of CiTUA (Centre for Innovation in Territory, Urbanism, and Architecture)

Leonor César das Neves, Policy and Project Officer for Biodiversity at the European Landowners' Organization (ELO)

Fleur van Ooststroom-Brummel, Policy Officer, DG RTD, European Commission

Facilitator:

Axel Paulsch, Institute for Biodiversity - Network. e.V.

From Transpath project:

Dr. Jeanne Nel, Wageningen University Research, project coordinator

Prof. Francisco Alpízar, Wageningen University Research, project coordinator

Maria Naranjo-Barrantes, Wageningen University Research, project manager

Paul Dingkuhn, Wageningen University Research, researcher

Dr. Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, Wageningen University Research, researcher

Zuzana Harmáčková, Czech Globe

Eva Slavova, Pensoft Publishers

Boris Barov, Pensoft Publishers