



SPEAKER GUIDELINES (Updated as of 16 October)

From Commitment to Capital: Scaling Nature-Positive Investment through the ADB–EU Partnership in the Nature Solutions Finance Hub

A side event co-organized by the European Union and the Asian Development Bank through the Nature Solutions Finance Hub

CBD COP17 • ASEAN Pavilion, Yerevan, Armenia • 26 October 2026 (16:00–17:30)

1. Background and Context

The interconnected crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental degradation continue to threaten economic prosperity, resilience, and sustainable development worldwide. Countries have adopted ambitious commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Paris Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—yet translating these commitments into bankable, on-the-ground investment remains the defining challenge of this decade. CBD COP17 sharpens that challenge: it is the first Global Review of the GBF implementation, and delegates will be looking less for new pledges than for evidence that partnerships and financing models are actually working.

Nature is increasingly recognized as central to the solution. Investment in ecosystem conservation, restoration, and nature-based solutions (NbS) can deliver biodiversity, climate, food security, disaster-risk, and livelihood benefits simultaneously. Scaling that investment, however, requires stronger partnerships, better project preparation, and de-risking instruments that make nature bankable—coordinated action among governments, multilateral and bilateral development partners, and the private sector.

The European Union's (EU) Global Gateway Strategy and the European Green Deal have opened new space for exactly this kind of collaboration with multilateral development banks. At the same time, ASEAN and the wider Asia and Pacific region face rising demand for nature-positive investment that can advance biodiversity, climate, and development objectives together, through instruments that link public and private capital to measurable nature outcomes.

Launched at COP28, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Nature Solutions Finance Hub (NSFH) was created to close this gap: its mandate is to catalyze \$5 billion in nature-positive investment by 2030 across Asia and the Pacific, using blended finance, project preparation support, and market-building tools to turn NbS into investable assets.

In December 2025, the European Commission and ADB signed a formal agreement for a €15 million blended finance package to NSFH—€5 million in technical assistance and €10 million in investment grants—which is among the Hub's first major catalytic contributions, and is ring-fenced for ASEAN countries facing acute biodiversity and climate pressure.



Ten months on, that partnership has become the anchor for a broader coalition. The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) are engaging as partners; the OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC Fund) is a key cofinancing partner; and ASEAN institutions are increasingly active in shaping how the Hub's pipeline is structured and owned regionally. This side event is the first opportunity to bring that coalition together publicly, and to show CBD COP17 delegates what a functioning nature finance partnership looks like in practice.

2. Why This Event, Why Now

The CBD COP17's Global Review will ask a hard question of every institution in the room: what has actually been delivered since Kunming-Montreal? Most side events will answer with commitments. This one is designed to answer with a partnership that is operating—structured, cofinanced, and already moving into pipeline.

The storyline the panel should build together is this: no single institution can close the nature finance gap alone, but a coalition that combines the right instruments can move faster and further than any of its parts. Each partner brings something distinct, and the strength of this partnership lies in how those pieces fit:

- **ADB/NSFH** supplies the financial architecture, safeguards, and regional delivery capacity to convert that capital into sovereign and sub-sovereign pipeline.
- **The EU** provides catalytic grants and the policy weight of Global Gateway and the Green Deal to legitimize nature as an infrastructure asset class.
- **AFD and GIZ or the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** bring deep bilateral experience in structuring and financing NbS, and the technical assistance that turns a project idea into a bankable proposal.
- **OPEC Fund** provides cofinancing, supports pipeline development, and promotes South-South knowledge exchange to help scale nature-positive investments.
- **ASEAN** (representative from the ASEAN Secretariat, since EU financing support for NSFH is focused on ASEAN, and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity [ACB]) brings regional ownership, policy alignment, and the credibility that comes from ASEAN member states themselves prioritizing and sequencing these investments.
- **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as NSFH technical partner**, anchors the model in science-based standards, so growth in volume does not come at the cost of credible, measurable biodiversity outcomes.
- **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** brings technical expertise, project preparation experience, and a strong track record in nature-positive development to help advance investment opportunities across Asia and the Pacific.

Presented together, this is the panel's core argument: the ADB–EU partnership through NSFH is not a bilateral transaction but a replicable model—one that other Team Europe partners, development finance institutions (DFIs), and regions can plug into. That is what “taking nature investment to another level” means in practice, and it is a message tailored to exactly the audience CBD COP17's Global Review will bring together.



3. Objectives

- Showcase the ADB–EU partnership through NSFH as a working model for translating the GBF, Paris Agreement, and SDG commitments into bankable nature investment, with ASEAN as the proof of concept.
- Demonstrate the complementarity of a multi-partner coalition (EU, ADB, AFD, GIZ, the OPEC Fund, ASEAN, and technical partners) in scaling nature-positive finance.
- Surface early pipeline results and lessons (what has worked, what has not) rather than restating commitments already made at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and CBD COP16.
- Identify concrete opportunities for cofinancing, pipeline development, and expanded partnership, including with other Team Europe partners and DFIs.
- Contribute a credible, evidence-based voice to CBD COP17’s first Global Review of GBF implementation, particularly on resource mobilization and the financial mechanism.

4. Key Messages

1. Partnership is the multiplier. The ADB–EU partnership through NSFH shows that blended finance, technical cooperation, and regional ownership—combined—can convert biodiversity ambition into an investable pipeline faster and at greater scale than any single institution could achieve alone.

2. From pilot to platform. The EU’s €15 million contribution is not a one-off transaction; it is a model other partners are now joining, and one that ADB intends to replicate and scale toward NSFH’s \$5 billion target across Asia and the Pacific.

3. ASEAN is leading, not just receiving. ASEAN member states are not simply recipients of this finance; they are shaping how it is deployed, offering a live example of regional ownership that speaks directly to CBD COP17’s Global Review of implementation.

5. Target Audience

Government delegations engaged in the GBF Global Review and resource mobilization discussions; MDB and DFI representatives; Team Europe partners and other bilateral agencies; ASEAN and Asia-Pacific country representatives; conservation and technical organizations; and private and institutional investors active or interested in nature-positive finance.



6. Format and Structure

Time	Segment	Content/Speakers
16:00–16:05 (5 mins)	Welcome Remarks and Setting the Scene	Event emcee sets out the storyline: from global commitment to investable capital.
16:05–16:15 (10 mins)	Opening Remarks (5 mins each)	• EU Delegation / DG INTPA representative. Why this partnership matters to Global Gateway and the Green Deal. • ADB / NSFH representative (VPST). Why partnerships are essential to closing the biodiversity finance gap.
16:15–17:05 (50 mins)	Moderated Panel Discussion (2 rounds, 25 mins each)	Conversational format (not sequential statements) with two rounds of questions focused on: (i) how partnerships translate into practice (going in-depth from the ‘why’ of the opening remarks), featuring panelists from the ASEAN Secretariat, ADB/NSFH, JICA, and (ii) pipeline development, particularly what are NSFH partners bringing to the table, which can contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable progress in ASEAN and the wider region, featuring panelists from AFD, GIZ, OPEC Fund, IUCN.
17:05–17:20 (15 mins)	Partner Reactions (from the floor) and Open Discussion	Other NSFH partners will be invited to attend the session and provide their reactions and perspectives. The floor will also be open to the audience for a free-flowing, inclusive discussion.
17:20–17:25 (5 mins)	Closing Reflections	Jerome Montemayor, Executive Director, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
17:25–17:30 (5 mins)	Event Wrap-up	Emcee summarizes key messages and invites participants to join the next NSFH-led side events (on 27 and 28 October at the MDB Pavilion).



7. Agenda

16:00–16:05 | Welcome Remarks and Setting the Scene

Emcee: Yoko Watanabe, Director, Nature and Environment, ADB

This welcome remarks will set out the storyline, framing the importance of partners coming together and moving from global commitment to investable capital to achieve the region's biodiversity ambition.

16:05–16:10 | Opening Remarks

Monika Hencsey, Director for Green Diplomacy and Multilateralism, Directorate-General of Environment, European Commission

The EU will underscore why the the EU partnership with ADB matters in relation to CBD COP17's shared objectives for sustainable and resilient economies, linked with Global Gateway and the Green Deal.

16:10–16:15 | Opening Remarks

Wempi Saputra, Vice-President (Sectors and Themes), ADB

The opening remarks from ADB will center on the role and importance of the partnerships, through the ADB-led Nature Solutions Finance Hub, and how this contributes to addressing the nature financing gap.

16:15–17:05 | Panel Discussion on Partnerships, Pipeline Development, and Progress

Panel Moderators: Aaron Vermeulen, Global Lead Finance Practice, WWF and Jennifer Romero-Torres, Principal Sustainable Finance Specialist, Unit Head, Sustainable Finance, ADB

The panel discussion offers a rich discussion among a variety of institutions and partners, essentially diving deep from the “why” highlighted in the opening remarks to the “how”—how do parties transition commitments to action on the ground, sharing what partnerships deliver and what can be replicated to create scale. The panel will have two rounds with two questions each:

Round 1 – Partnerships and Replication: How partnerships translate into practice and open a broader coalition for nature (4 minutes each question)

Moderator: Aaron Vermeulen, Global Lead Finance Practice, WWF

Panelists	Question 1	Question 2
Vong Sok , Head of Environment Division, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department, ASEAN Secretariat	What does it mean for the ASEAN to be collaborating with the EU and ADB for the betterment of the region's biodiversity? What are the most pressing biodiversity issues that ASEAN is facing that require (the most) support?	In terms of capital, how is the region or the different member states raising the importance of integrating nature considerations into national budgets, as well as policies to ramp up action for the ASEAN Biodiversity Plan, vis-a-vis the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?



Yevgeniy Zhukov , Director General, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, ADB	How does the NSFH bring the work of different partners all together and ensure we're headed in the right direction, particularly this ADB-EU partnership? What makes the NSFH different?	Considering that the role of partnerships in the ASEAN Biodiversity Plan hinges on Target 19 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, what are the opportunities to scale finance and joint action for biodiversity action through the NSFH model?
Kyosuke Inada , Director General for Sustainability Management, JICA	How have you worked with the ASEAN or specific countries in the region to also increase nature-based solutions and nature-positive investments?	As an institution that is also from the region who understands its needs and context, and has technical and financing prowess, what are other interventions and programs that may not have been scaled yet and deserve attention? And from your experience, what are the best practices that can be replicated and adopted by partnerships to mainstream biodiversity conservation?

Round 2 – Pipeline Development and Progress: How NSFH partners support investable nature-positive investments that contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable progress in ASEAN and the wider region (3 minutes each question)

Moderator: Jennifer Romero-Torres, Principal Sustainable Finance Specialist, Unit Head, Sustainable Finance, ADB

Guide questions framing the overall discussion:

- (i) Where do you see the greatest opportunities for partnerships to accelerate ASEAN's biodiversity ambitions? How can the NSFH help mobilize the finance, technical expertise, and collaboration needed to realize those opportunities?
- (ii) While the opportunities are clear, progress is often slower and smaller in scale than needed. What are the key obstacles to expanding partnerships, and how can we overcome them to mobilize greater finance and collective action for biodiversity conservation?

Panelists	Question 1	Question 2
Audrey Rojkoff , Head of Climate and Nature Division, AFD	From AFD's perspective, how can the Nature Solutions Finance Hub help translate promising nature-positive opportunities into a stronger pipeline of investable projects?	While the opportunities are clear, progress is often slower and at a smaller scale than needed. What are the main obstacles to moving nature-positive projects from concept to financing, and what could partners do differently to move beyond individual projects toward a more scalable or programmatic pipeline?



Elke Siehl , Director General Sectoral Department, GIZ	From GIZ's perspective, what technical and institutional support is most important for countries to develop a sustained pipeline of nature-positive investments?	What successful approaches or lessons have you seen that could be scaled across ASEAN to strengthen the pipeline of nature-positive investments?
Valerie Herzog , Senior Climate Change Specialist, OPEC Fund	From a financing and cofinancing perspective, what would help more nature-positive projects become finance-ready, and how can the Nature Solutions Finance Hub help mobilize financing around these opportunities?	What are the main obstacles preventing more capital from flowing into nature-positive investments? What would give financing partners greater confidence to commit more capital, and where can MDBs and platforms such as the NSFH help address those barriers?
Juha Siikamäki , Chief Economist and Director of Economy and Finance Team, IUCN	As we build a larger investment pipeline, how can we ensure that projects are not only investable but also deliver credible and measurable outcomes for biodiversity?	What are the main challenges in integrating robust biodiversity considerations and measurement into investment decisions? How do we make sure biodiversity considerations and measurable nature outcomes are built into investment decisions from the beginning, without making the process overly complex for projects and financing partners?

17:05–17:20 | **Partner Reactions and Open Discussion**

Moderator: Jennifer Romero-Torres, Principal Sustainable Finance Specialist, Unit Head, Sustainable Finance, ADB

Other NSFH partners will be invited to attend the session and provide their reactions and perspectives. The floor will also be open to the audience to raise questions and spark further opportunities for collaboration.

17:20–17:25 | **Closing Reflections**

Jerome Montemayor, Executive Director, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity

The closing remarks will highlight the impact of ADB and the EU's biodiversity efforts among ASEAN member states and opportunities to advance investments to protect one of the planet's most biodiverse regions.



17:25–17:30 | **Event Wrap-up**

Yoko Watanabe, Director, Nature and Environment, ADB

Short final remarks for key messages and appreciation for supporting the session. The audience will also be invited to attend the next NSFH-led side events on 27 and 28 October at the MDB Pavilion.

8. Expected Outcomes and Follow-up

- Elevated visibility for the EU–ADB–NSFH partnership as a reference model at a moment when CBD COP17 is assessing GBF implementation.
- A public platform for AFD, GIZ, the OPEC Fund, and ASEAN institutions to formalize and be recognized as part of the coalition.
- Concrete leads for further cofinancing and pipeline collaboration, to be followed up bilaterally after CBD COP17.
- Talking points and evidence that the EU Delegation and ADB can carry into subsequent GBF resource-mobilization and financial mechanism discussions.

9. Logistics and Other Reminders

Date and time	Monday, 26 October 2026, 16:00–17:30
Venue	ASEAN Pavilion, CBD COP17, Yerevan, Armenia
Duration	90 minutes
Language	English
Co-hosts	European Union and Asian Development Bank / NSFH
Contact	Klaus Prochaska - kprochaska@adb.org Ana Tolentino - atolentino@adb.org

- Submit a 100-word speaker bio and headshot by 19 October 2026. Please note that the team or moderator may shorten the bio submitted.
- **Waiver:** For external speakers (non-ADB staff), a release/consent form for your photographs and any video clips or presentation will be sent with this file. Please review and sign if you agree to the terms.
- **Allocated time:** Timekeeping will be crucial at the session. Please practice and ensure your talking points fit the suggested time.

