



SIDE EVENT

Nature Solutions Finance Hub: Scaling Investments for Nature-Positive Landscapes and Introducing the FIELD Initiative

A side event organized by the Asian Development Bank through the Nature Solutions Finance Hub

UNCCD COP17 • Venue: MET-05, Ulaanbataar, Mongolia • 26 August 2026 • 15:00–16:30 (90 minutes)

1. Background and Context

Asia and the Pacific are facing accelerating challenges from land degradation and desertification, biodiversity loss, drought, and watershed deterioration, with growing implications for food security, climate resilience, livelihoods, and economic development. These pressures are central to the goals of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and to countries' land degradation neutrality commitments, which encourage increased investment for restoration and sustainable land management. Nature-based solutions (NbS) offer a practical and cost-effective approach to restoring ecosystems while delivering multiple environmental, social, and economic benefits. However, transforming NbS concepts into investment-ready projects capable of attracting public and private financing remains a challenge.

To address this gap, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) established the Nature Solutions Finance Hub (NSFH) as a platform to support the development, financing, and scaling of NbS investments across Asia and the Pacific. The NSFH works with governments, development partners, technical organizations, and financing institutions to strengthen project preparation, mobilize innovative financing, build investment pipelines, and facilitate knowledge exchange.

The NSFH is an ADB-led initiative driven in collaboration with a coalition of financing and technical partners. These partners include the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the European Union (EU), the Green Climate Fund through the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF) Green Recovery Program, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC Fund), and the UK-ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility. Technical partners include BirdLife International, Conservation International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), NatureFinance, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Through its three pillars covering project origination and preparation, innovative financing, and policy and capacity development, the NSFH aims to help countries move NbS projects from concept to implementation while generating multiple benefits for biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and economic development.

Note: This session flyer is updated as of 26 August 2026.

NSFH is also developing special initiatives focused on specific themes that might require different approaches and innovations in pipeline development and catalytic finance. One such initiative is combating land degradation and desertification which will be launched at UNCCD's 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17).

This event, to be held on the sidelines of UNCCD COP17, will showcase practical experiences and partnerships that are helping countries adopt bankable NbS investments, from technical design to implementation and financing. Through case studies, knowledge products, and dialogue among partners, the session will explore how collaboration and innovative finance can accelerate investment in resilient grasslands, healthy river basins, and nature-positive landscapes across the region.

2. Objectives

The event aims to:

- (i) introduce the NSFH and its role in supporting governments to develop investment-ready NbS projects and investment pipelines across Asia and the Pacific;
- (ii) showcase practical experiences and partnerships that have helped advance NbS initiatives from project identification and technical design to implementation and financing;
- (iii) present innovative financing approaches and investment models for ecosystem restoration, landscape management, and nature-positive development, drawing on experiences from development partners and conservation organizations; and
- (iv) officially launch the NSFH Special Initiative, Financing Investments and Eradicating Land Degradation and Desertification (FIELD), as a regional platform to build a pipeline of bankable investments, mobilize public and private finance, and scale up action on land restoration, sustainable land management, and desertification across Asia and the Pacific.

3. Target Audience

- Government representatives and policymakers from UNCCD COP17 participating countries
- Development finance institutions, multilateral development banks, and development partners
- Climate, nature, and conservation finance institutions and funds
- International organizations, technical agencies, nongovernment organizations, and conservation organizations
- Private sector entities, investors, and philanthropic organizations
- Research institutions, knowledge partners, and NbS practitioners
- Existing and potential NSFH partners



4. Agenda

Moderator: Chris Dickinson, Senior Environment Specialist, ADB

15:01–15:05 | **Opening Remarks and Setting the Scene**

Constanze Neher, Director (Deputy Director General), BMZ

This welcome remarks will highlight the growing urgency of addressing land degradation, biodiversity loss, drought, and watershed degradation across Asia and the Pacific, and emphasize why investment in NbS is becoming central to sustainable development, food security, climate resilience, and economic growth.

15:05–15:10 | **Keynote Remarks**

Scott Morris, Vice President (East and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific), ADB

The keynote remarks will underscore ADB's role in scaling finance and partnerships to accelerate investment in nature and land restoration through the NSFH.

15:10–15:20 | **Introducing the Nature Solutions Finance Hub**

Yoko Watanabe, Director, Nature and Environment, ADB

This opening keynote will introduce the NSFH as ADB's flagship regional platform for developing investment-ready NbS. The presentation will also detail how the NSFH supports countries from project identification through technical design, financing, implementation, and knowledge sharing. Plans for an upcoming publication will also be shared, focusing on best practices and financing opportunities for sustainable grassland and rangeland management.

Key messages:

- Why the NSFH was established
- Vision and objectives
- NSFH supports governments in developing bankable NbS
- Building pipelines of sovereign and private sector investments
- Mobilizing partnerships and innovative financing to scale ecosystem restoration across Asia and the Pacific
- Introduce panel on partnership in action, launch of the Financing Investments and Eradicating Land Degradation and Desertification (FIELD) Initiative

15:20–15:40 | **Partnership Showcase: Building Nature-Based Solution Pipelines – Technical and Financial Solutions**

5 minutes per presentation

The showcase demonstrates how partnerships supported through the NSFH are helping governments and institutions move from technical concepts toward implementation.



Nature Finance in Practice: Country Experience

Galbadrakh Davaa, Country Director for Mongolia, TNC

This is a presentation of Mongolia's landscape financing initiatives, including the Project Finance for Permanence approach and lessons from TNC's Financing for Land Restoration and Drought Resilience Playbook.

A Shared Action Agenda for Grasslands, Savannas, and Rangelands

Leonie Meier, Senior Policy Advisor for Terrestrial Ecosystems, WWF

This presentation will showcase WWF's Global Grasslands Programme and practical experiences in mobilizing finance for nature-positive landscapes, and highlight the work that is being conducted to support the global initiative in rangeland best practice.

Nature-Based Solutions for Hybrid Green-Grey Infrastructure

Satrio Adi Wicaksono, Regional Coordinator, Forest and Drylands, IUCN Asia

This is a presentation on integrating NbS into hybrid green-grey infrastructure planning and development, highlighting lessons and opportunities relevant to UNCCD COP17 discussions.

15:40–16:20 | Roundtable – NSFH Special Initiative: Financing Investments and Eradicating Land Degradation and Desertification (FIELD) Initiative

Moderated by Anouj Mehta, Advisor, Strategy, Policy, and Partnerships Department, ADB

Following the formal launch of the FIELD Initiative during the Finance Day of UNCCD COP17, this roundtable dives into what the FIELD Initiative is all about. A special initiative under the NSFH, FIELD aims to catalyze capital from both public sources and especially private and capital market sources. The panel discussion will therefore focus on the following questions:

- (i) What are the key policy and finance issues constraining the flow of public and private capital into projects targeting land degradation and desertification? How can the NSFH and FIELD help address these?
- (ii) What is your organization aiming to focus on to bring solutions to this theme from the aspects of visibility raising, capacity building, project pipeline development, access to finance for the FIELD Initiative?

Panel participants:

- Yoko Watanabe, Director, Nature and Environment, ADB
- Marina Kosmus, Head of the Competence Centre for Biodiversity, Forests, and Agriculture, GIZ
- Gerardo Parco, Director of Sustainability and Climate Change, OPEC Fund
- Gonzalo Munoz, Cofounder of Ambition Loop and Representative of the Riyadh Action Agenda



16:20–16:25 | **Closing Remarks and Call to Action**

Adrien Mourgues, Team Leader (Cooperation Section), EU Delegation to Mongolia

The closing remarks will invite stakeholders to engage with the next generation of NSFH-supported initiatives by highlighting:

- opportunities for governments to develop investment-ready NbS projects through the NSFH;
- opportunities for technical organizations to contribute knowledge, innovation, and project preparation expertise;
- opportunities for development finance institutions, private investors, and philanthropic partners to cofinance scalable NbS investments; and
- opportunities to contribute to a growing regional pipeline of NbS investments across Asia and the Pacific.

16:25–16:30 | **Event Wrap-up**

The moderator will conclude with a summary of the key technical messages and invite participants to join the expanding regional partnership for resilient grasslands, healthy river basins, and nature-positive landscapes across Asia and the Pacific.

5. Speakers (in order of appearance)

Constanze Neher

Director (Deputy Director General), BMZ

Constanze Neher has headed Directorate 10 – Global Issues and Trends, Poverty and Inequality, Governance at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development since May 2026. At present, the political priorities are water security, food security, questions of democracy, and human rights in development policy.

Previously, she was the Deputy Director General for Cooperation with Civil Society, Local Authorities and Global Learning. Prior to this appointment, she served for many years as BMZ's budget commissioner. Among other responsibilities, she is also currently a member of the board of trustees of the German Institute for Human Rights.



Scott Morris

Vice President (East and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific), ADB

Scott Morris joined ADB on November 2023 and has significant prior leadership experience in both government and the nonprofit sector. He is currently responsible for overseeing ADB's operations in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

Mr. Morris is an expert on development finance and debt policy with more than 30 years of experience in international economic policymaking and research. Prior to joining ADB, he was a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development (CGD) in Washington, DC. At CGD, he led work on multilateral and bilateral development finance, including the role of concessional finance in supporting low-income and climate-vulnerable countries.



Yoko Watanabe

Director of Nature and Environment, ADB

Yoko Watanabe heads the environment and nature initiatives of ADB, including biodiversity, nature-based solutions and nature finance, air quality, and circular economy. She has over 30 years of professional experience working on nature and environment management. She has strategically managed large teams and worked on environment projects and programs in over 130 countries.

Prior to joining ADB, she directed the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme, the largest GEF program, as its Global Manager at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York. In her role, she worked closely on global environmental issues with civil society and local communities. She also worked at the GEF Secretariat in Washington, D.C. for over a decade and held key positions, as well as served at the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.



Galbadrakh Davaa

Country Director for Mongolia, TNC

Galbadrakh Davaa joined TNC in Colorado as a conservation fellow in 2007. Before joining TNC, Gala worked in various areas of conservation in Mongolia including establishment of Mongolia's new protected areas network, developing and implementing community-based approaches to protected areas management, strengthening environment impact assessment (EIA) policies and practices, environmental education, ecotourism development, and contributed to development of more than 20 environmental laws and legislation.



Prior to TNC, Mr. Davaa had leading positions at the UNDP/GEF Mongolia Biodiversity Project, UNDP/GEF Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project, and the German Technical Cooperation Agency's Nature Conservation and Buffer Zone Development projects. He is also a founding Board Member of the Mongolian Society for Environmental Education.

Leonie Meier

Senior Policy Advisor for Terrestrial Ecosystems, WWF

As Senior Policy Advisor for Terrestrial Ecosystems, Leonie Meier leads the Global Grasslands and Savannahs Initiative at WWF. Her work focuses on scaling ecosystem restoration, preventing land degradation, and strengthening the sustainable management of grasslands and other terrestrial ecosystems to deliver benefits for biodiversity, climate, and people.



With over 10 years of experience in international environmental policy, Ms. Meier has worked at Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), driving programs on forest and landscape restoration, sustainable land management, and biodiversity conservation. She has also led global sustainability initiatives, including the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, and contributed to policy development on climate resilience, circular economy, and ecosystem services. Her expertise spans ecosystem restoration, stakeholder engagement, and multilateral policy advocacy, with a particular focus on advancing integrated solutions to land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Satrio Adi Wicaksono

Regional Coordinator, Forest and Drylands, IUCN Asia

Satrio Adi Wicaksono leads and supports a portfolio of forest and drylands-related country, sub-regional, and regional projects across Asia, and contributes to forest and drylands-related results of the IUCN global program.

Previously, he served as Forest and Land Use Governance Expert at the European Forest Institute's EU REDD Facility, where he provided analytical and technical support to Southeast Asian countries in their efforts to slow, halt, and reverse deforestation. He also served as a manager-cum-researcher at WRI Indonesia, a nonprofit research organization affiliated with the World Resources Institute. He led WRI forest and landscape restoration efforts in Indonesia, in addition to developing and managing WRI Indonesia's Sustainable Ocean Initiative portfolio, in charge of fundraising, strategic planning, and research capacity development. He is also a 2024 Yale Climate Fellow.



Marina Kosmus

Head of the Competence Centre for Biodiversity, Forests, and Agriculture, GIZ

Marina Kosmus brings over 20 years of professional experience in biodiversity and ecosystem services, rural development, value chains, valuation, design and implementation of economic instruments for nature conservation, sustainable development, and climate change. Throughout her career at GIZ, she has developed a range of guidelines and training programs on economic and governance tools for the sustainable management of ecosystems, such as the Integrating Ecosystem Services in Development Planning or IES. She has led both bilateral and global projects in these areas, including ValuES, Private Business Action for Biodiversity and Water and Energy for Food.



Ms. Kosmus served as a lead author for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment on the diverse values and valuation of nature and contributed on the past to the IPBES task force on policy instruments and tools. She is also a member of the advisory board of the Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA).

Gerardo Parco

Director of Sustainability and Climate Change, OPEC Fund

As the Director of the Sustainability and Climate Change Unit, Gerardo Parco leads a team managing the environmental and social safeguards and climate requirements of investment projects for both the sovereign and nonsovereign portfolio of the OPEC Fund. His portfolio of projects span Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, and Africa. These projects are mainly high-risk infrastructure projects such as dams, renewable energy (wind and solar), expressways, urban projects, among others. His work with the private sector includes work with financial intermediaries, trade finance operations, private equity firms, and corporate loans.



Gonzalo Muñoz

Cofounder, Ambition Loop, and Representative of the Riyadh Action Agenda

Gonzalo Muñoz is the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion from the 25th Conference of Parties (COP25) Presidency appointed by the Chilean Presidency in 2019. From that position, he co-led the Race To Zero, Race To Resilience, and Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ) campaigns. At present, he has cofounded the global nongovernment organization Ambition Loop. He also cofounded



Sistema B (the B Corp movement in Latin America and the Caribbean), Manuia and Polkura Winery, and founded and led TriCiclos, one of the most recognized Latin American companies in circular economy and recycling.

Currently, he leads the food and agriculture strategy for non-state actors at the UN Climate Change Conference Conference of the Parties (COP), as well as at the Land and Soil COP. Mr. Muñoz is a member of The Club of Rome and has been recipient of the Chilean national awards on environment, innovation, and social entrepreneurship, and was awarded the honor of the Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George under Queen Elizabeth's final honors list in 2022.

Adrien Mourgues

Team Leader (Cooperation Section), EU Delegation to Mongolia

Adrien Mourgues has over 20 years of experience in EU cooperation. Before his current role, he was posted to the EU Delegation to Papua New Guinea from 2014 to 2022, where he worked as the Deputy Head of Cooperation, and to the EU Delegation to Vanuatu from 2005 to 2014.

Previous to this, he worked with the French Foreign Affairs. He also did research in plant breeding and physiology with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Northern Queensland, Australia. Mr. Mourgues also carried out some work in Tonga for the development of coffee production and also coconut breeding in the Pacific. He has a long experience in the Pacific where he lived for 32 years (Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Australia) and in Africa where he grew up (Central African Republic and Senegal).

