

was that economic and social benefits of conserving biodiversity should also be highlighted (e.g. through nature-based solutions).

The workshop participants noted the lack of foresight, and the absence of a sense of urgency, among development actors as explanatory factors for the mixed success of biodiversity mainstreaming. Biodiversity is only considered a policy priority when its degradation is visible and directly hampers development, by which time action to repair damage can be ineffective and/or costly. The cost-effectiveness of early biodiversity mainstreaming was stressed, as well as the need to focus on prioritizing certain sectors (e.g. agriculture) and areas (e.g. the urban periphery, networks of wetlands). Alignment with the Southern partners' priorities was identified as a key condition for success, as was the strengthening of existing mainstreaming initiatives. Focusing on training future biodiversity champions was regarded as key to ensure that a locally developed long-term vision addresses future governance challenges that could otherwise jeopardize the benefits of biodiversity mainstreaming. Ensuring that biodiversity is seen as an asset and not just as an externality, was regarded as essential. Monitoring and evaluating biodiversity mainstreaming requires alignment and harmonization among donors and their partners, to avoid unjustified pro-biodiversity labeling of aid flows. Finally, there was a call for a critical stance regarding the expected linkages between biodiversity and climate action in development co-operation: although synergies are possible, narrowly designed climate projects can actually degrade biodiversity.

JEAN HUGÉ* (orcid.org/0000-0002-3695-547X) and
MAARTEN VANHOVE University of Hasselt, Hasselt, Belgium
E-mail jean.huge@ulb.ac.be

BRUNO VERBIST and ELS DEKEYZER Katholieke Universiteit
Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

PIET STOFFELEN Meise Botanic Garden, Meise, Belgium

INGRID LEEMANS and JENNIFER SJÖLUND (orcid.org/0000-0001-9599-3516) IFS, Stockholm, Sweden

ISABELLE VERTRIEST WWF Belgium, Brussels, Belgium

ERIK VERHEYEN, HILDE KEUNEN, ANNE-JULIE ROCHETTE and
LUC JANSSENS DE BISTHOVEN (orcid.org/0000-0002-9547-1563) Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, Brussels,
Belgium

*Also at: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

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As we are all aware, wild nature is declining rapidly and the Earth's life support systems are under increasing stress. As nature erodes and the response of human systems is inadequate or destructive, it can seem that the only rational response is despair. However, if you zoom in from the big picture, a mosaic appears. Amongst the stories of loss, you find inspiring stories of regeneration and positive change. Stories in which nature is actually making a difference in people's lives and where people value and nurture their natural environment.

At Conservation Optimism we believe that these stories are the key to securing our planet's future. We need to learn from them, replicate them, and thereby build a world in which nature and people can coexist. Our mission is to help tell and amplify these stories of conservation optimism. Conservation Optimism is a spirit and an ethos that many organizations are embracing as we all move forward to build a more effective, more inclusive and more active future for conservation. To this end, we are working to build robust reciprocal relationships with organizations—collectively called the Conservation Network of Optimists Worldwide, or ConservationNOW.

Our members are working to inspire, motivate, equip, support and empower conservationists around the world, and they have joined this network so that collectively we can all be more effective at sharing our successes, broadening our reach and maximizing our impact. We currently have 60 member organizations. To amplify their voices, we publish their stories on our website and share their blogs with our enthusiastic Twitter community. By joining the network, organizations pledge to be optimistic but realistic. Acknowledging failures and exposing challenges is crucial to moving forward and learning from our mistakes. Our community is global, inclusive and uplifting. It aims to provide support for conservationists who are struggling with burnout and the general negativity that comes with working in the challenging world of conservation, and tools and resources to empower people from every walk of life to take action for conservation.

If you are interested in joining this community you can submit your application at conservationoptimism.org/join-conservationnow.

JULIA MIGNÉ (orcid.org/0000-0001-8625-7250)
Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science, University
of Oxford, Oxford, UK. E-mail julia.migne@zoo.ox.ac.uk