

Wetlands International views on the Baku to Belém roadmap to 1.3T

Contacts: Paula Martinelli (paula.martinelli@wetlands.org) and Cinthia Soto (cinthia.soto@wetlands.org)

(a) What are your overall expectations for the “Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T”?

Our overall expectations for the Baku to Belém Roadmap (aka Roadmap) is to see a major focus on wetlands¹ and water, specifically on mobilising finance for wetlands as nature-based solutions critical to achieving climate goals, and ensuring finance plays its part in ensuring the minimisation of harm to wetland ecosystems from climate actions in other sectors, such as energy and agriculture. The Roadmap should, therefore, give attention to three key priorities on finance and wetlands.

Firstly, mobilising finance for wetland conservation, restoration and wise use for climate and adaptation and resilience. Wetlands buffer the effects of climate change and are key ecosystems supporting climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and resilience. Wetlands regulate water flows, minimizing flood and drought risks, absorbing excess water and precipitation, helping with flood alleviation. They also provide water storage and purification, which can enhance drought resilience, while coastal wetlands provide a natural shield that can decrease the harm done by storms and reduce erosion.

Secondly, increasing finance for wetlands for mitigation. Wetlands are among the planet’s largest natural terrestrial carbon stores. Peatlands alone store twice as much carbon as all the world’s forests biomass. Coastal and estuarine wetlands such as mangroves are particularly important for carbon sequestration. However, wetlands can emit significant quantities of greenhouse gases (GHGs) when drained, dredged and degraded. Wetland conservation, restoration and wise use can prevent emissions and, in many instances, sequester significant amounts of carbon. The achievement of the Paris Agreement goals will be considerably impacted if wetland degradation is not stopped, and substantial restoration does not start immediately. This is because CO₂ emissions from degraded peatlands, for instance, continue to emit and accumulate in the atmosphere. Hence, stopping further drainage is not sufficient. You need to urgently – and in parallel- invest in the restoration and rewetting of peatlands to reduce the warming effect of cumulative CO₂ emissions. This will allow the ecosystem to heal and continue to store and sequester carbon, together with other key ecosystem services.

Therefore, increasing finance for wetland protection and restoration and implementing context-specific wetland management, including in national climate plans Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) can deliver greater benefits and cost-effective, coherent action to meet multiple climate and nature goals and minimise trade-offs. Context-specific wetland management is important because each wetland type varies in terms of hydrology, ecology, and role in the carbon cycle.

¹ UNFCCC documents refer to wetlands as water-related ecosystems, inland waters, and coastal ecosystems. As defined by the [Convention on Wetlands in article 1\(1\)](#), and adopted also by the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#), wetlands include a wide variety of inland habitats such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes, and coastal areas such as saltmarshes, mangroves, intertidal mudflats and seagrass beds, and also coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than six metres at low tide.

Thirdly, climate action and finance should be in harmony with biodiversity goals, in particular Target 8 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) on climate, which includes: ‘minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity’. The Roadmap should focus on ensuring the activities supported by increased climate finance are carried out in harmony with nature, including recognition of the critical role of wetland restoration and conservation in halting and reversing nature loss, supporting livelihoods, underpinning water security and meeting climate goals. For example, in the energy sector, hydropower can devastate freshwater biodiversity and strongly alter the ecosystem services natural rivers provide, besides displacing and disrupting people's lives. The expansion of mining for lithium and other critical minerals required for batteries and other elements of the energy transition is threatening vulnerable wetland ecosystems in the High Andes, affecting people who rely on them. Bioenergy from biomass crops grown on drained peatlands can cause major GHG emissions. Climate finance should consider such impacts and account for these GHG emissions accurately, besides including robust social and environmental standards. Overall, climate finance can play a critical role in ensuring a nature-positive energy transition by recognising these risks and setting out principles and safeguards to accelerate climate action whilst protecting critical wetland ecosystems important for people and nature and climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation. In agriculture and land management, climate finance should also seek to stimulate the uptake of land management practices, innovations, and technologies that, while sustaining productivity, use water more efficiently, lead to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and enhance other co-benefits (e.g. water provision, flood prevention, among others). Such practices include paludiculture, the productive land use of wet and rewetted peatlands that preserves the peat soil, thus reducing CO₂ emissions and subsidence, enhancing resilience, and supporting biodiversity.

Lastly, the expectations and recommendations above are in line with key UNFCCC commitments, including:

- The outcomes of the First Global Stocktake contained in Decision: 1/CMA.5 (FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/16/Add.1), which recognizes the critical role of protecting, conserving and restoring water systems and water-related ecosystems for climate adaptation while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, and in Par63(d) urges Parties and invites non-Party stakeholders to increase ambition and enhance adaptation action and support to reduce climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity and accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including through their management, enhancement, restoration and conservation and the protection of terrestrial, inland water, mountain, marine and coastal ecosystems; and paragraph 33, which “emphasizes the importance of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including through enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by conserving biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”
- Recommendations in the Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement Synthesis report by the UNFCCC secretariat (FCCC/PA/CMA/2024/10) Par

(27): Parties continue to focus on food production and nutrition security, water resources, terrestrial and wetland ecosystems, key economic sectors and services, and human health; followed by disaster risk management, coastal and low-lying areas, urban areas and human habitats, livelihoods and poverty, and ocean ecosystems

(b) Which topics and thematic issues should be explored to inform the Roadmap, within the scope of the mandate?

Key topics to be explored in the **Baku to Belém Roadmap** include:

1. Addressing climate finance gaps for wetland protection, restoration and wise use for climate adaptation and resilience, as well increasing finance for wetlands for mitigation with a focus on:
 - a. Ensuring wetlands, as highly effective nature-based solutions, receive adequate investment within adaptation and mitigation funding streams, as part of strategies to bridge the \$1.3 trillion finance gap
 - b. Ensuring that the upcoming framework, strategy, and operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund includes pathways to restore wetlands such as mangroves and peatlands, to halt habitat loss, protect biodiversity and important ecosystem services, by effectively channelling financing to wetlands, ideally through a dedicated funding window. Wetland solutions can play a critical role in averting and minimizing loss and damage and support addressing slow-onset climate events such as sea level rise, and extreme weather events, such as storm surges and droughts. Restoring and managing wetlands as natural buffers against extreme climate events would strengthen food and water security, prevent displacement, and mitigate social instability linked to environmental degradation.
 - c. Allocating finance for wetland restoration, protection and wise use under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) is essential for achieving the Paris Agreement and the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). According to the IPCC AR6, the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Uses (AFOLU) sector can contribute 20–30% of the global mitigation needed to remain within 1.5°C or 2°C pathways by 2050. AR6 also highlights that managed and natural terrestrial ecosystems act as carbon sinks, absorbing nearly one-third of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. Peatlands for instance has the highest per hectare mitigation potential among land-based mitigation measures. Given that emission reductions alone are insufficient to limit global warming, 20–30% of climate finance should be directed toward the AFOLU sector, giving wetlands a significant focus due to its connection to water security, livelihoods, drought and flood prevention, enhanced resilience, and key for mitigation.
 - d. Ensuring fair and accessible climate finance requires bridging the finance gap for implementation, particularly in the Global South and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
 - e. Additionally, an inclusive approach must be adopted, centering Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), smallholder farmers, as key

beneficiaries and decision-makers in climate finance, recognizing their vital role as stewards of wetlands and key biodiversity areas.

2. Incorporating safeguards into climate finance directed towards other sectors such as energy and agriculture to ensure that wetland ecosystems essential for biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation are not adversely impacted.
 - a. The imperative for such safeguards is provided by AR6, where it states that wetlands are cost-effective nature-based solutions for carbon storage, sequestration, water resilience, and biodiversity protection. Conservation of high-carbon ecosystems such as peatlands, other wetlands, rangelands, mangroves and forests, have immediate benefits on climate. And immediate rewetting and restoration are crucial to minimizing the warming caused by cumulative CO₂ emissions. Climate change is experienced through water-related impacts, such as floods, droughts, and shifting hydrological cycles, and that without water-resilient ecosystems, the Paris Agreement targets will be unachievable. As showed in IPCC AR6 “Ecosystem-based adaptation 17 approaches such as urban greening, restoration of wetlands and upstream forest ecosystems have been effective in reducing flood risks and urban heat (high confidence). Combinations of non-structural measures like early warning systems and structural measures like levees have reduced loss of lives in case of inland flooding (medium confidence). Adaptation options such as disaster risk management, early warning systems, climate services and social safety nets have broad applicability across multiple sectors (high confidence).”
 - b. Investing wetland restoration, conservation and wise use is key to fighting climate change and adapting to its effects, strengthening local economies, creating green jobs, and enhancing social protection by ensuring access to essential resources, especially for marginalized groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, and youth. Integrating wetlands into the Global financial agendas would enable countries to drive sustainable and inclusive growth by supporting climate-resilient agriculture, fisheries, ecotourism, and adaptation efforts that improve livelihoods and reduce inequalities.
3. Strengthening alignment with international commitments and initiatives to leverage climate finance and accelerate implementation
 - a. Align with and enhance national implementation of other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), in particular the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the Convention on Wetlands
 - b. Build on initiatives that accelerate the implementation of global frameworks (e.g., GBF, Global Goal on Adaptation, SDGs, among others) and voluntary multistakeholder transformative initiatives seeking to accelerate action and investments in wetland ecosystems such as the Freshwater Challenge and the Mangrove Breakthrough
 - c. Mobilize public and private investments can unlock financing for inclusive green growth and long-term resilience. Forging partnerships focused on wetlands could attract capital that prioritizes environmental and social returns, not just

financial profits. This approach would support wetland restoration, create green jobs, stimulate local economies, and contribute to sustainable development. By prioritizing investments that deliver ecological benefits and social impact, countries could ensure long-term prosperity while avoiding debt accumulation.

4. Strengthening governance, transparency, and action: align climate finance tracking with other frameworks such as the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and NCQG reporting structures.

(c) What country experiences, best practices and lessons learned can be shared related to barriers and enabling environments; innovative sources of finance; grants, concessional and non-debt creating instruments, and measures to create fiscal space?

1. The Netherlands – the Room for the River program showcases how wetland restoration can reduce flood risks while enhancing biodiversity. It can provide a model for integrating wetlands into climate adaptation financing
2. Saudi Arabia & The Riyadh Action Agenda - the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership secured \$150 million to support water and drought resilience
3. Capacity building on best practices for the restoration of wetlands:
 - Best practices for mangrove restoration: Beeston, M., Cameron, C., Hagger, V., Howard, J., Lovelock, C., Sippo, J., Tonneijk, F., van Bijsterveldt, C. and van Eijk, P. (Editors) 2023. [Best practice guidelines for mangrove restoration](#).
 - Restoration, creation and management of salt marshes and tidal flats: A collation of evidence-based guidance: Cutts V., Erftemeijer P.L.A., Gaffi L., Hagemeyer W., Smith R.K, Taylor N.G. & Sutherland W.J. (eds.) (2024). Report of Conservation Evidence, Wetlands International and the World Coastal Forum. <https://doi.org/10.52201/CGSCOL1/LCNC6109>

(d) Which multilateral initiatives do you see as most relevant to take into account in the Roadmap and why?

Freshwater Challenge (FWC): The FWC is a country-led initiative with 49 country members, including Brazil, plus the EU. It aims to accelerate the restoration of 300,000 km of degraded rivers and 350 million hectares of degraded wetlands by 2030, as well as conserving intact freshwater ecosystems. The initiative just received 5mi USD from GEF for implementation and is planning to leverage resources via the private sector. It has also been recognized at past Rio COPs:

- Nearly 50 countries signed the Baku Declaration on Water for Climate Action, emphasizing the role of wetlands and water management and mentioning the FWC
- UNCCD Riyadh Action Agenda features the FWC as a flagship initiative, with financing commitments from OPEC, IsDB, and Saudi Arabia

Mangrove Breakthrough: The Mangrove Breakthrough is a call for accelerate action and investment from governments, the private sector, and non-state actors for one of the most

under-protected and threatened ecosystems on the planet. The Mangrove Breakthrough provides a framework for State and non-State Actors to work together towards a global science based target of securing the future of over 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030, underpinned by \$4bn of sustainable finance. It supports the implementation of the Paris agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ecosystem conservation and restoration goals, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, 30×30 targets, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade of Ocean Science.