

# Financial instruments for Land Stewardship

LIFE Stewardship Project

Event Investing in Nature Restoration.  
Building a Sustainable Future.  
June 4, 2026.





Nature governance – an innovative mission for enhancing biodiversity conservation through land stewardship

## THE PROJECT

### Coordinator



Fundación Biodiversidad

### Partners



**DURATION:**  
48 months  
Oct. 24–Sept. 28

**LOCATION:**  
Spain +  
international  
projection

**BUDGET:**  
1.74 M€  
60% (1.05 M€)  
EC Co-funding



VICEPRESIDENCIA  
TERCERA DEL GOBIERNO  
MINISTERIO  
PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA  
Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO

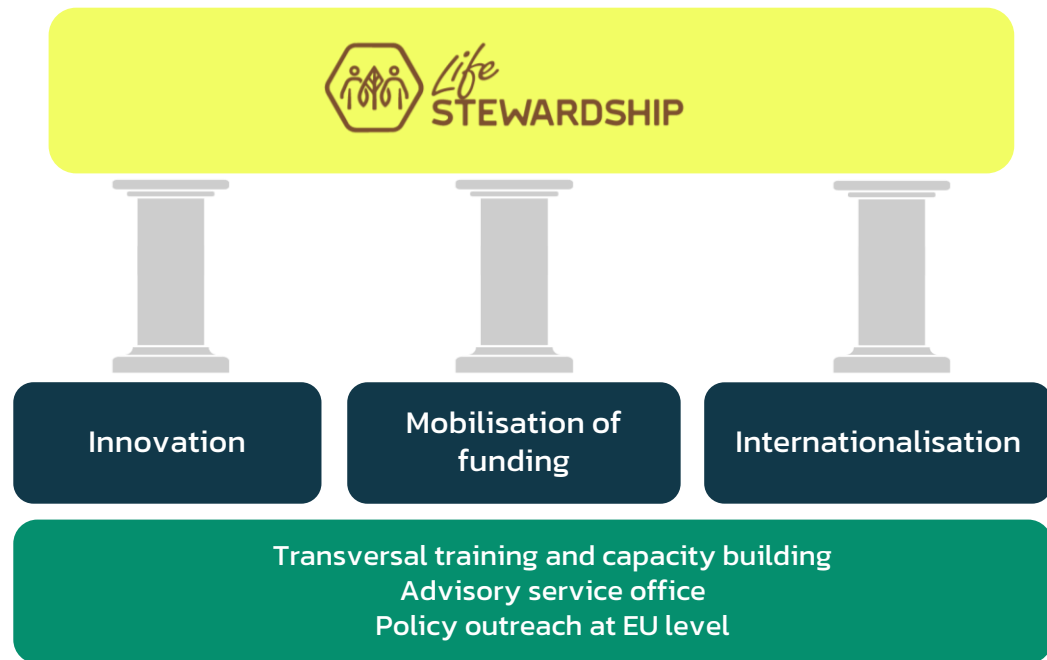


Fundación Biodiversidad



Nature governance – an innovative mission for enhancing biodiversity conservation through land stewardship

## THE PROJECT



# Why we need financial innovation for Nature

- In the European context, conservation still relies heavily on **public funding**.
- Long-term stewardship commitments require **stable finance**.
- Traditional funding is **insufficient** for scale and continuity.
- Need to **mobilize** private and philanthropic **capital**.



# Global shift in nature finance



- From grants to investment
- From activities to outcomes
- From public funding to blended finance

# FGN. Work Package 2

**Identification of financial instruments** susceptible to be used in nature conservation, restoration & potential use in land stewardship processes.

Identification of patterns, opportunities and constraints, and **key factors that may influence the implementation.**

**No definitive conclusions;** no determination of the absolute suitability of each instrument.



# Instrument fact sheet



## Recognisable name of the instrument

Concise description of its operating logic, including the source of funding, the canalizing mechanism and, where applicable, the type of associated return.

Type	Indicative functional category of the different instruments analysed. It helps identify their main operating logic in relation to the origin of resources, the allocation mechanism and, where applicable, the type of return.
Suitability	Qualitative assessment of its adequacy for land stewardship processes, based on the structural features and variables described in the previous chapter.
Strengths	Main advantages of the instrument in relation to financial stability, coherence with voluntary agreements and its potential for practical application.
Weaknesses	Technical, regulatory, operational or contextual limitations that may hinder its use in land stewardship processes.

For comparative purposes, each instrument is also analysed according to the following factors:

Actors	Alignment with the typical actors involved in land stewardship, including landowners, land stewardship organisations, public administrations and the private sector, as well as real possibilities for shared responsibility.
Innovation	Level of novelty or transformation introduced in the specific context of land stewardship, particularly when it enables new financial flows or relationships with financiers.
Complexity	Degree of administrative, technical and verification requirements, as well as the need for specialised intermediation.
Scale	Potential for territorial application, possibilities for aggregation and suitability for projects of different sizes.
Timeframe	Temporal compatibility with the formalisation and implementation of land stewardship agreements, including processing and consolidation periods.
Continuity	Capacity to sustain commitments beyond one-off funding, in line with the medium- and long-term orientation of land stewardship.
Replicability	Possibility of reproducing the instrument in other contexts and/or with other actors, without depending on exceptional conditions.
Complementarity	Ease of integration with other instruments in hybrid schemes combining different funding sources and mechanisms.
References	Established sources supporting the description and assessment of the instrument.

# Most suitable instruments



- Payments for Ecosystem Services
- Restoration Results–Based Payments
- Membership Programmes
- Environmental Compensation Schemes

# Emerging instruments with high potential



- Biodiversity Credits
- Carbon Credits
- Water Positive Credits
- Environmental Investment Funds
- Impact Funds

# Traditional instruments with high suitability



- Sale of certified products or services
- Transfer of rights (transfer of ownership, usage or management rights).
- Environmental philanthropy

# Conditional instruments



- Voluntary eco-levies in economic sectors
- Climate resilience credits
- Green loans
- Tax incentives:
  - (+) % of taxes that returns to conservation.
  - (-) % of property tax reductions.

## Key factors

## Key factors for operational use

- Source of funding (who provides the resources)
- Expected return (type & conditions of expected return)
- Time horizon (time needed to be active & duration)
- Scale (scale needed to be in place)
- Risk allocation (where the risk is allocated)
- MRV requirements (Monitoring, Reporting and Verification)
- Costs & operational complexity

## Tips

The future of land  
stewardship finance  
lies in blended,  
outcome-based  
approaches

### 1. No single financial instrument can support the entire stewardship process

Different phases require different financing mechanisms.

### 2. Long-term conservation requires diversified funding sources

Combining public funding, private investment, philanthropy, and environmental markets reduces vulnerability and increases resilience.

### 3. Results-based finance is becoming a new standard

Investors and funders increasingly demand measurable environmental outcomes.

### 4. Land stewardship provides an effective framework for nature finance

It facilitates collaboration among landowners, NGOs, public administrations, and private actors.

## Key Functions

**The strategic role of  
land stewardship  
organizations**  
connecting conservation  
objectives with financial  
instruments, enabling projects  
to become investable,  
measurable and scalable.

### 1. Facilitators

Build relationships among stakeholders.  
Align environmental, social and financial objectives.

### 2. Governance Coordinators

Structure and manage stewardship agreements, projects.  
(Co) Define responsibilities, commitments and decision-making processes.

### 3. Translators Between Worlds

Convert outcomes into metrics understandable to funders.  
Adapt financial requirements to on-the-ground realities.

### 4. Trust Builders

Trust-based relationships with landowners, funding providers, etc.  
Increase transparency, accountability and credibility.

## Operational Functions

## Operational Functions of Stewardship Organizations

### 1. Project Development and Management

Design, coordinate and manage implementation and long-term commitments.  
Aggregate landowners and territories into larger initiatives.

### 2. Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

Collect environmental data and monitor outcomes.  
Produce reports and coordinate independent verification and auditing.

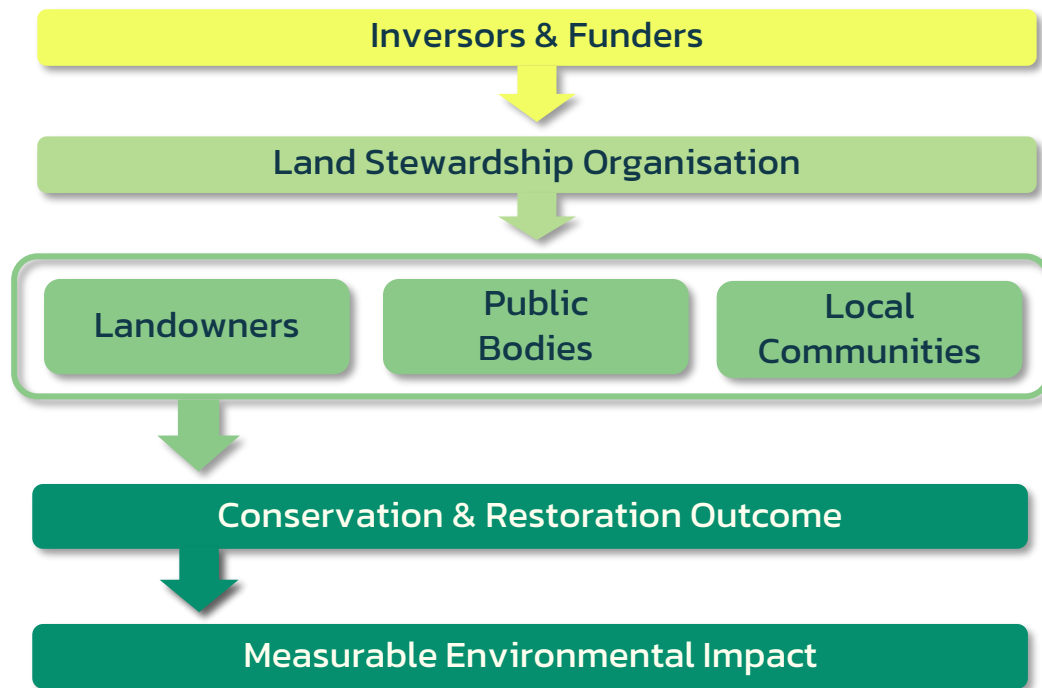
### 3. Financial Intermediation

Intermediate financial negotiation and channel public or private funding.

### 4. Risk and Compliance Management

Support contractual compliance.  
Strengthen confidence among investors and landowners and relevant stakeholders.

Stewardship organizations act as facilitators, aggregators, project managers, verifiers and trusted intermediaries, making nature finance operational at the territorial level.



# Conclusions

- Financial suitability in land stewardship is directly linked to the **alignment** between the **timeframe of the instrument** and the **timeframe of the initiative**.
- Finance requires a **stable legal environment and initiatives with verifiable commitments over time**. **Technical capacity** conditions access to different instruments.
- The financial resilience of land stewardship is built through **complementarity of instruments, avoiding dependence on a single dominant source**, public or private.
- **Territorial aggregation is also a key enabling factor** to expand access to more complex financial instruments in land stewardship.
- Financing for land stewardship is not only a matter of instruments, but of the **capacity to activate processes of dialogue** and joint design of solutions.



# Financial inspiration tool

La Plaza de la Custodia

Comunidad

Asesoramiento

Recursos

Agenda

Guía de uso

Contacto

## Asesor de Instrumentos de Financiación para la Custodia del Territorio

This tool is designed to **inspire users by highlighting potential funding instruments to explore**, based on the characteristics of a given land stewardship initiative or project.

# Financial inspiration tool

PROGRESO 1 DE 10 PREGUNTAS RESPONDIDAS

**F1 - TIPO DE ECOSISTEMA O HÁBITAT**  
¿En qué tipo de ecosistema se desarrolla el proyecto?

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Humedales	<input type="radio"/> Bosques y sistemas forestales	<input type="radio"/> Agrosistemas
<input type="radio"/> Pastizales y mosaicos agroganaderos	<input type="radio"/> Riberas y corredores fluviales	<input type="radio"/> Zonas litorales o marinas
<input type="radio"/> Zonas esteparias o áridas	<input type="radio"/> Ecosistemas urbanos o periurbanos	<input type="radio"/> Hábitats singulares o relictos

PROGRESO 3 DE 10 PREGUNTAS RESPONDIDAS

**F3 - RÉGIMEN DE PROPIEDAD O TITULARIDAD**  
¿Cuál es el régimen de propiedad del espacio?

<input type="radio"/> Propiedad privada individual	<input type="radio"/> Propiedad privada colectiva	<input type="radio"/> Propiedad comunal o vecinal
<input type="radio"/> Propiedad pública municipal	<input type="radio"/> Propiedad pública autonómica	<input type="radio"/> Propiedad pública estatal
<input type="radio"/> Entidad sin ánimo de lucro	<input type="radio"/> Entidad mercantil	<input type="radio"/> Otros

PROGRESO 3 DE 10 PREGUNTAS RESPONDIDAS

**F2 - NIVEL DE PROTECCIÓN**  
¿Qué nivel de protección presenta el territorio?

<input type="radio"/> Parque Nacional	<input type="radio"/> Protección internacional (Biosfera, Ramsar...)	<input type="radio"/> Red Natura 2000
<input type="radio"/> Otras figuras de protección nacional	<input type="radio"/> Espacio protegido regional	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Sin protección específica
<input type="radio"/> Otros		

PROGRESO 2 DE 10 PREGUNTAS RESPONDIDAS

**F10 - ESTADO DEL PROCESO DE CUSTODIA**  
¿Cuál es el estado del proceso de custodia?

<input type="radio"/> Idea o iniciativa en fase inicial	<input type="radio"/> Proceso de custodia en preparación	<input type="radio"/> Acuerdo voluntario de custodia
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Acuerdo formal de custodia	<input type="radio"/> Cesión de uso del terreno para custodia	<input type="radio"/> Convenio de custodia con administración
<input type="radio"/> Proyecto integrado en iniciativa territorial de custodia	<input type="radio"/> Otros	

PROGRESO 5 DE 10 PREGUNTAS RESPONDIDAS

**F4 - USO DOMINANTE DEL TERRITORIO**  
¿Cuál es el uso dominante del territorio?

<input type="radio"/> Agrícola o ganadero	<input type="radio"/> Forestal	<input type="radio"/> Agroforestal o mosaico rural
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Espacio natural sin uso productivo	<input type="radio"/> Uso recreativo o turístico	<input type="radio"/> Uso urbano o periurbano
<input type="radio"/> Áreas en abandono o transición	<input type="radio"/> Uso mixto o diverso	<input type="radio"/> Otros

PROGRESO 8 DE 10 PREGUNTAS RESPONDIDAS

**F8 - PRINCIPALES AMENAZAS AMBIENTALES**  
¿Qué problema ambiental aborda el proyecto?

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Pérdida o degradación de hábitats	<input type="radio"/> Contaminación del suelo o del agua	<input type="radio"/> Alteración del ciclo hídrico
<input type="radio"/> Especies exóticas invasoras	<input type="radio"/> Sobreexplotación del suelo o recursos	<input type="radio"/> Presión recreativa o turística
<input type="radio"/> Impactos del cambio climático	<input type="radio"/> Conflictos de gobernanza o gestión	<input type="radio"/> Otros

## Financial inspiration tool

### F1 - TIPO DE ECOSISTEMA O HÁBITAT

✓ ¿En qué tipo de ecosistema se desarrolla el proyecto?  
Humedales

### F10 - ESTADO DEL PROCESO DE CUSTODIA

✓ ¿Cuál es el estado del proceso de custodia?  
Acuerdo formal de custodia

### F2 - NIVEL DE PROTECCIÓN

✓ ¿Qué nivel de protección presenta el territorio?  
Sin protección específica

### F3 - RÉGIMEN DE PROPIEDAD O TITULARIDAD

✓ ¿Cuál es el régimen de propiedad del espacio?  
Propiedad privada individual

### F4 - USO DOMINANTE DEL TERRITORIO

✓ ¿Cuál es el uso dominante del territorio?  
Espacio natural sin uso productivo

### F5 - PRINCIPALES AMENAZAS AMBIENTALES

✓ ¿Qué problema ambiental aborda el proyecto?  
Pérdida o degradación de hábitats

### F6 - ESCALA ECONÓMICA

✓ ¿Cuál es la escala económica del proyecto?  
50.000 a 100.000 €

### F7 - ESCALA TERRITORIAL O SUPERFICIE

✓ ¿Cuál es la superficie aproximada del proyecto?  
100 – 500 ha

### F8 - ACTORES IMPLICADOS EN EL PROYECTO

✓ ¿Qué actores participan en el proyecto?  
Propietarios y/o usuarios del terreno

### F9 - FINALIDAD PRINCIPAL DEL PROYECTO

✓ ¿Cuál es la finalidad principal del proyecto?  
Restauración ecológica

# Financial inspiration tool

Range of options that may help guide the search for funding opportunities.

Based on a review of financing cases related to land stewardship & voluntary conservation across different countries.

<https://plaza.custodia-territorio.es/asesor-finaciero/>

## Resultado de idoneidad

Los instrumentos están ordenados de mayor a menor adecuación para tu proyecto. Pulsa en cada uno para ver su descripción.



## Next steps



Celebration of workshops with private sector (companies) and land stewardship organizations.

Development of technical documents oriented to some of the instruments.

Identification of demonstrative lighthouses.

# Thank you!

For more information: <https://life-custodia.es/en>  
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