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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Water Resilience Strategy (WRS)[1] promotes nature-based solutions (NbS) by leveraging nature[2,3,4], water[5] and climate policy[6], which advocate using ecosystems like soils, wetlands, and forests for natural water management. To further these efforts, the Commission supports research and innovation to promote NbS[7] and plans to create a Sponge Facility. This will establish a coordinated framework to boost water retention on land, leveraging the natural abilities of ecosystems and innovative 'sponge cities'[8]. Additionally, the Commission seeks to foster public-private initiatives to advance cost-effective, innovative solutions for water management that reduce reliance on traditional grey infrastructure.

To align with long-term climate scenarios and avoid stranded investments, the WRS emphasises integrated, sustainable planning. The Commission will enforce the Water Framework and Floods Directives by reviewing Member States' plans and offering climate-aligned recommendations during the upcoming structured dialogues. These dialogues will also incorporate the guidance on adapting river basin management plans to climate change[9]. Furthermore, the Commission intends to adopt an Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience and Risk Management in 2026, which will help ensure that the right climate scenarios are considered for any water management planning decisions.

The Commission will support tackling water scarcity and drought by developing indicators and releasing Technical Guidance on Drought Management Plans. In preparing their national restoration plans[10], Member States must identify synergies with climate change adaptation and disaster prevention, and prioritise restoration measures accordingly.

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[1] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/european-water-resilience-strategy_en.
[2] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en.
[3] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-regulation_en.
[4] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/forest-strategy_en.
[5] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/floods_en#law.
[6] https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy_en.
[7] https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-cluster-6-food-bioeconomy-natural-resources-agriculture-and-environment/nature-based-solutions_en.
[8] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101112738 and https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101156116.
[9] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/river-basin-management-changing-climate_en.
[10] due by 1 September 2026, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/912 of 19 May 2025 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards a uniform format for the national restoration plan. http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2025/912/oj.