

Learning from LIFE - panel discussion on nature conservation, democracy and everyday life



Panelist

**Viliina Evokari
(Finland)**



Vilina Evokari is leading Priodiversity LIFE, Finland's largest strategic nature project in Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland. She is a project veteran who has worked on EU-funded projects for more than 20 years. Over the years, project sizes and ambition levels have grown to new extremes.

In her day-to-day work, she regularly wipes the sweat from her brow and marvels at how brilliantly the project's outstanding partners deliver on its ambitious goals.

Panelist

Rita Grinienė
(Lithuania)



Rita Grinienė is an environmental communication expert and Deputy Director of Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania. For more than a decade, she has worked with nature conservation and LIFE projects, helping to connect conservationists with farmers, communities, policymakers and the wider public. Her experience combines strategic communication, environmental education, advocacy and practical stakeholder engagement.

She is also a council member of Eurosite, the European network for nature conservation practitioners.

Panelist

**Jørgen Bidstrup
(Denmark)**



Jørgen Bidstrup has been working for 25 years in the Environmental Protection Agency working on nutrient discharges into the aquatic environment and the associated ecological effects; and 20 years of being engaged on stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes.

Since 2013 he has served as a project manager at the Danish Nature Agency, focusing on wetland restoration. Currently leading LIFE IP „Natureman - The Farmer as Nature Manager“ project.

Panelist

**Nanna Vilborg
Harðardóttir
(Iceland)**



Nanna Vilborg Harðardóttir holds a Master's degree in landscape architecture from Germany and has a background in tourism and spatial planning. She currently serves as the Project Manager of planning and environmental affairs for the municipality of Grundarfjörður as well as the Project Manager of LIFE-Icewater.

Nanna combines international expertise with deep local roots while focusing on implementing nature-based solutions for water management through community-driven planning, spatial design, and collaboration with local residents to ensure sustainable environmental outcomes.

Panelist

**Aveliina Helm
(Estonia)**



Aveliina Helm is professor of Restoration Ecology at the University of Tartu. Her research focuses on understanding how landscape change affects biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, and the benefits that nature provides to society.

In addition to her academic work, she has contributed to environmental policymaking in Estonia and internationally, including through expert roles in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).