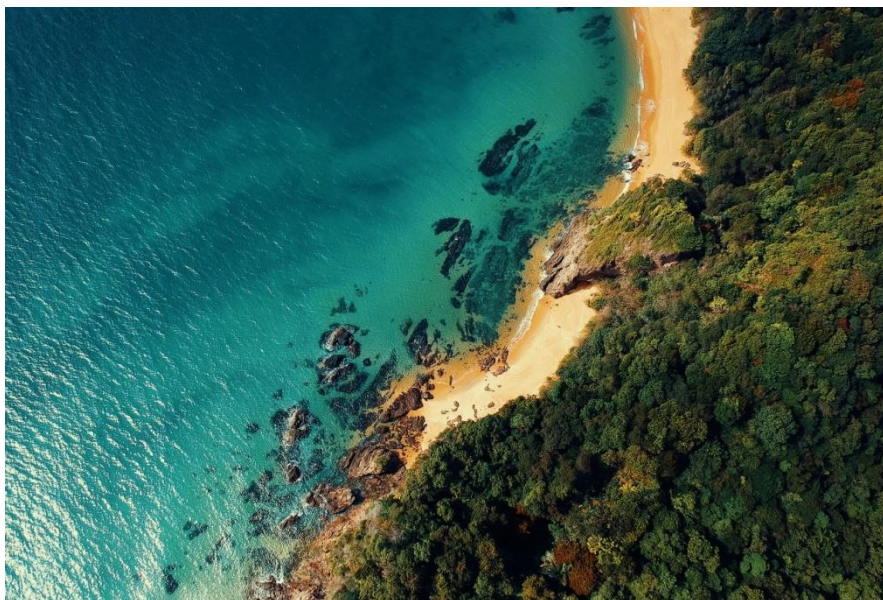


## “90 minutes for discovering the EU Overseas: BEST innovative & key partners of the EU Biodiversity strategy”



**29 September 2020, 10:30 - 12:00 CEST**  
**Online event**

**Hosted by MEPs Stéphane Bijoux & Sara Cerdas**  
Co-Chairs of the ‘Islands and Overseas Entities’ Working Group  
of the EP Intergroup on ‘Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’

From the poles to the tropics, the European overseas include 22 entities: 9 Outermost Regions (ORs) and 13 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). They are linked to 5 European Member States: Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Found in every ocean and diverse biogeographical regions they are home to a unique diversity of species and ecosystems of global significance, which are highly vulnerable to human impacts and increasingly the impacts of climate change.

The objective of this event is to therefore acknowledge the role of the European overseas as key players in the post-2020 European Biodiversity Framework in order to ensure adequate funding for biodiversity actions in these territories in the years to come and to maintain the great experience of BEST as small grant mechanism. The event would hence focus on sustainable financing aspects. The successful EU BEST Initiative will be presented to stress the importance of small actions to enable and strengthen partners on the ground; and to foster greater mobilisation and ownership. Building on BEST experience, the future of such programme under NDICI and LIFE will be discussed in order to secure support from the different institutions, seek synergies and complementarities. Besides BEST, this will also be the occasion to

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understand how the EU intends to protect biodiversity and people outside continental Europe and to further discuss the role of ORS and OCTS in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Six years after the last EU Overseas Biodiversity and Climate Change Conference, the event will be very timely with ongoing discussions at the EP and Council on the EU Biodiversity Strategy and future MFF and recovery plan under the framework of the European Green Deal. Concretely, it would take place ahead of the Outermost Regions Forum (12-13/10) and European Council (15-16/10).

## Background on BEST

The need of a EU dedicated mechanism for the Overseas was underlined in the Message from the 1st EU Overseas Biodiversity and Climate Change Conference held in La Reunion in July 2008 (Message from Reunion Island). The European Commission and the European Parliament then supported the development of a preparatory Action called the “BEST Initiative” on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas. Several calls for projects were organised and a BEST III consortium led by IUCN developed useful regional ecosystem profiles mobilising several networks of expertise and stakeholders in all EU Overseas.

The need for a dedicated European financial mechanism for supporting projects in EU Overseas was reiterated at the 2nd EU Overseas Biodiversity and Climate Change Conference (La Guadeloupe Island, 2014) as its Message called for a dedicated mechanism to better support actions and ease access to the available European funds for the Overseas Territories.

From 2011 to 2020, BEST has financed 90 projects worth a total of EUR 18 million. It has been acknowledged by a CBD decision (CBD COP XI/157) that mentions BEST among the “the progress on sustainable financing mechanisms developed in island regions for climate change and Biodiversity” and constitutes as well A Global Island Partnership challenge.

In 2020, LIFE4BEST and BEST 2.0+ programmes took over following the end of BEST RUP and BEST 2.0+, respectively covering the ORs and the OCTs. Both programmes support field actions, which aim to enable, empower and strengthen local authorities and civil society organisations committed to local development, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services, through the implementation of grant schemes accompanied by capacity building activities.

More information on LIFE4BEST and BEST 2.0+ respectively available at:

<https://www.life4best.org/>

<https://www.best2plus.org/>

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## Final Agenda

- **10:30 – 10:45**  
Opening and welcome remarks (*including an interactive quiz*)  
MEP Stéphane Bijoux and MEP Sara Cerdas
- **10:45 – 10:50**  
Short video warm up (*testimony from one BEST grantee in Pacific*)
- **10:50 – 11:00**  
BEST results and lessons learnt in the ORs and OCTs  
Carole Martinez, Senior BEST Programme Coordinator, Global Protected Areas Programme, IUCN
- **11:00 – 11:10**  
Video-message intervention from Stephane Ciccione, Director, Kelonia
- **11:10 – 11:20**  
Intervention from Ruben Eiras, Co-ordinator for Blue Economy, Forum Oceano
- **11:20 – 11:30**  
Intervention from Helene Loiseau, Policy officer for European Affairs, French Biodiversity Office
- **11:30 – 11:45**  
The EU Overseas in the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and the LIFE Programme
  - Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director-General for Natural Capital, DG ENV, European Commission
  - Carla Montesi, Director-General for Planet and Prosperity, DG DEVCO, European Commission
- **11:45 – 11:55**  
Q&A session
- **11:55 – 12:00**  
Closing remarks by hosting MEPs

