



MERLIN INNOVATION AWARDS 2025

MIA 2025 Award Ceremony, 13 February 2025

Meet the Jury Members

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C O N N
E C T O
L O G Y



The MERLIN project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036337.



Miriam Colls
Freshwater Ecologist

Daniel Thorel
Deputy Chief District Forester,
Swedish Forest Agency

Karolina Lubowiecka
Nature protection specialist

Albert Scricciu
Scientific Researcher, Head
of Interdisciplinary Research
of the Fluvial Environment
Department at GeoEcoMar

Tamás Gruber
Freshwater Programme
Manager at WWF Hungary



RESTORATION PROJECT:
Deba river restoration (Spain)
Innovations to be applied:
A basin-wide restoration action
acts simultaneously on ten
obstacles in the main river
channel (in the MERLIN project)

RESTORATION PROJECT:
**Beaver re-introduction
(Sweden)**
Innovations to be applied:
Nature-based Solution to
restore degraded wetlands and
small streams and ditches —
from local to regional scale

RESTORATION PROJECT:
Kampinos wetlands (Poland)
Innovations to be applied:
→ an innovative approach to
planning, designing, and
implementing measures aimed
at naturalising artificial ditches
and surrounding wetlands
→ monitoring the effects of
those activities, conducted in
a nature-protected National
Park and Natura 2000 site area

RESTORATION PROJECT:
**Danube floodplain
(Gârla Mare, Romania)**
Innovations to be applied:
Gârla Mare was selected to
demonstrate the benefits of
reconnecting former/
transformed wetlands back
to the natural flood pulse of
the Danube, to enhance the
benefits provided to nature
and local communities

RESTORATION PROJECT:
Tisza (Hungary)
Innovations to be applied:
→ designing and implementing
a modern way of the
traditional floodplain farming
→ harmonising irrigation
infrastructure with
nature-based water
retention measures



Andrea Schneider

Research Associate at University Duisburg-Essen

José Maria Santos

Assistant Professor at the School of Agriculture of the University of Lisbon

Anna-Kaisa Ronkanen

Environmental Engineer, Senior Scientist, Development Manager

Pieter Boets

Researcher aquatic ecology for the Province of East Flanders

Justyna Olszewska

Freshwater Ecologist at UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology



RESTORATION PROJECT: **Germany's Blue Belt (Germany)**
Innovations to be applied:

- a combination of complete removal of bank protection and nature-based modification of river banks in a highly frequented waterway

RESTORATION PROJECT: **Sorraia floodplain (Portugal)**
Innovations to be applied:

- riparian rehabilitation (clearing of sedges and woody debris, bank stabilisation, and removal of exotic woody vegetation)
- removal of exotic invasive plants (water hyacinth, Brazilian milfoil) in rivers and canals
- creation and maintenance of ecological set-aside areas
- fish passes in weirs and river crossings

RESTORATION PROJECT: **Kompassuo Peat Extraction Area (Finland)**
Innovations to be applied:

- Evidence-based results to guide decisions over future land-use/restoration measures in abandoned peat extraction sites and to scale up goal-oriented planning approach in/to the case study area

RESTORATION PROJECT: **Upper Scheldt catchment (Belgium)**

- Restoration of the Zwalm river basin:
- installation of wastewater treatment plant and sewer systems
- removal of fish migration barriers
- species reintroduction programs
- habitat restoration — restoration of spawning beds, water buffer basins, buffer strips

RESTORATION PROJECT: **Forth catchment (Scotland)**
Innovations to be applied:

- floodplain reconnection
- riparian restoration, including additions of large woody debris and embankment removal
- channel geomorphology restoration
- rewetting of peatlands
- beaver management
- wetland creation



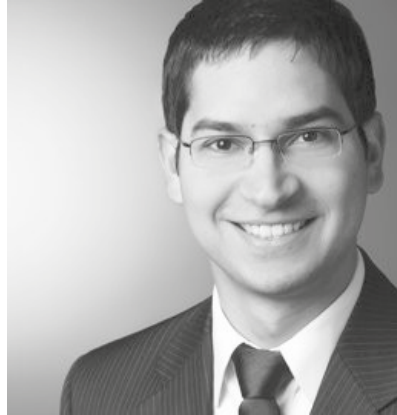
Cross-Case study Jury Members 2025

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Viviane Cavalcanti

*Climate Adaptation Finance
Advisor for Deltares*



Gerardo Anzaldúa

*Senior Fellow at
Ecologic Institute*



Laura Pott

*Environmental Scientist
for UDE, Research
Associate for Universität
Duisburg-Essen (UDE)*



Laurence Carvalho

*Research Leader
(Freshwater Ecology) for
the Norwegian Institute for
Water Research (NIVA)*



Eva Hernández

*Initiative Lead, Living
European Rivers for WWF*



Marie-Isabell Lenz

*Research Associate for Nature
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Thank you for participating!

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