



MERLIN  
INNOVATION  
AWARDS  
2023

Join us at the  
**MERLIN Innovation  
Awards Ceremony!**

**MIA 2023 Award Ceremony**  
**15 February 2023, 10:30h CET**

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# MERLIN INNOVATION AWARDS 2023

The MERLIN Innovation Awards (MIA) were launched by the European Union's flagship project MERLIN. The MIA recognise new and widely applicable solutions for restoring the functions of freshwater ecosystems or enabling their financial benefit.

The best innovative solutions will be selected in two categories:

- Product of the year 2023
- Service of the year 2023

## Agenda

- 10.30-10.35 **Welcome to MIA** by Matt C. Smith
- 10.35-10.45 **Introductory speech** by Piret Noukas (European Research Executive Agency)
- 10.45-11.45 **Company presentations part 1** (3 min pitch + 2 min Q&A)  
**Introducing the MERLIN Marketplace** by Paul Mahony (Oppla)  
**Company presentations part 2** (3 min pitch + 2 min Q&A)
- 11.45-12.00 **Importance of innovation for nature restoration projects** by Sebastian Birk (MERLIN, University Duisburg-Essen)
- 12.00-12.15 **MIA winners announcement**
- 12.15 **Wrap up and closing**

## Speakers



**Sebastian Birk**, the MERLIN project co-coordinator, is a Senior Scientist and Lecturer at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. Contributing to the water-related science-policy interface at the European level, his academic interests cover: multiple stressors, environmental condition/human impact assessment, ecosystem services, restoration ecology, environmental policy assessment and implementation.



**Piret Noukas** is a Project Adviser in the European Research Executive Agency (REA) monitoring a portfolio of EU-funded research and innovation projects in the field of nature-based solutions, biodiversity and climate adaptation, supporting the dissemination of their results, including feeding the R&I results in EU policy-making and organisation of evaluations of project proposals in these fields.



**Paul Mahony** is a communications specialist with over 20 years' experience in the environmental and tourism sectors. He is general manager of Oppla, the EU Repository of Nature-based Solutions (Netherlands) and creative director of Countryside (UK & Estonia), a media agency supporting science, business and civil society.



**Master of Ceremony: Matt C. Smith** is a former venture capitalist and 2x unicorn investor, turned exited-founder and author of the Startup Buzzword Dictionary. Today, he is known for his energetic, entertaining and educational stage performances as an acclaimed public speaker, startup lecturer and master of ceremonies at many of the largest conferences around the world.

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