Digest

JULY 2025

Nature-based Solutions: **working together**

An update from NetworkNature
and the NbS Cluster Task Forces

Network
Nature

NetworkNature Task Forces

Working together on nature-based solutions

Membership to the Task Forces is open to partners of EU Horizon NbS projects (Cluster 6) and selected projects directly funded by the EU Missions.

The NetworkNature Team

The NbS Cluster Task Forces (TF) are working with a growing portfolio of EU Horizon projects that focus on nature-based solutions.

We collaborate on six impactful areas of nature-based solutions, seeking to share best practice, learn from each other and co-create new tools and resources to help our community achieve impact.

Working together through the Task Forces we can:

→ Create common messages for NbS and facilitate knowledge sharing, development and synthesis to amplify project findings, dissemination and exploitation.

→ Enable meaningful synergies to combine efforts and save resources around common areas of interests and work to address gaps for NbS design, creation and implementation.

→ Build long-lasting collaborations and strengthen networks between diverse EU NbS projects, partners and other stakeholders across a wide range of disciplines and professions

→ Maximize impact for mainstreaming NbS.

There are six NbS Task Forces: five coordinated by NetworkNature and one by ENABLS:

→ **Task Force 1:** **Data and Knowledge Sharing.** Helping projects with data-related challenges and working to improve how data on NbS and biodiversity is collected, standardised and shared.

→ **Task Force 2:** **Integrated Assessment Framework.** Facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise on NbS assessment and evaluation, to promote standardised approaches measuring the multiple benefits of NbS.

→ **Task Force 3:** **Governance, Business Models and Financial Mechanisms.** Focusing on mobilising finance and investments, creating business models and supporting enterprises and entrepreneurs.

→ **Task Force 4:** **NbS Communicators.** Using strategic communication, resource sharing and advocacy efforts to elevate awareness and exchange valuable insights around NbS.

→ **Task Force 5:** **Education.** Transforming education into a powerful force for positive environmental action, ensuring a more sustainable and harmonious future.

→ **Task Force 6:** **Co-creation and Governance.** Co-creation and co-governance for nature-based solutions.

Nature-based solutions Task Forces Cluster Meeting

17th September 2025

Shaping Together the Future of Nature-based Solutions

The NetworkNature Nature-based Solutions Task Forces (TFs) Cluster Meeting will bring together NN Task Forces members, NN NbS Hubs representatives, NN partners, and the European Commission (European Research Executive Agency and DG Research & Innovation) to take stock of the TFs achievements, exchange and strengthen synergies, further develop joint ideas and build capacities. It will take place on September 17th in the Brussels Environment building in Brussels.

This year's meeting will build on a collaborative spirit, encouraging exchanges and cooperation across the NetworkNature community and beyond. After a short plenary presentation on cross-TF collaboration and connection beyond the NN community, the morning will focus on the advancement of the NetworkNature Labs ideas, with brief presentations followed by a workshop-style session designed to accelerate co-creation among participants.

Closing the morning block, recent updates on NetworkNature ongoing work on standardization will be presented.

In the afternoon, each Task Force will have the opportunity to share forward-looking updates. During an interactive session, Task Forces will then provide feedback regarding their alignment with the R&I Roadmap, before clustering in dedicated tables.

In parallel, a tailored Hubs Capacity Building session will support the NbS Hubs in strengthening their long-term sustainability with actionable strategies to secure long-term financing and stakeholder engagement.

Please make sure to register here.

Please note: This event is only open for Task Forces members, NbS Hubs, NN partners and the European Commission.

Building communities at the intersection of climate adaptation and nature-based solutions

Susanna Gionfra

European Comission

In recent years, the evidence has become increasingly clear on the interlinkages between two major crises of our time: biodiversity loss and climate change.

Often referred to as two sides of the same coin, the EU has been advocating for these two crises to be tackled together rather than separately.

In this context, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are the perfect fit to the challenge. As multilaterally **defined by UNEA 5**, these solutions are being applied to address common societal challenges while simultaneously benefitting people and nature. Climate adaptation, intended to increase the adaptative capacity of both ecosystems and communities, is often selected as a priority objective when designing and implementing NbS.

From cities harnessing the power of nature to adapt to increasing temperatures and floods, to rivers regaining their natural flow to increase their resilience to a changing climate, these solutions are populating the evidence of the benefits of biodiversity while bridging the nature-people divide that has long characterised our economies.

In fact, while many different examples of climate-proof, nature-based interventions exist, it is worth stressing the role played by the growing community of citizens, experts, practitioners, policymakers, businesses, and many more, committed to building, promoting and upscaling these solutions. Where climate and biodiversity meet, so can the communities behind them, ultimately joining efforts to solve the biodiversity and climate crises.

More precisely, the collaboration between the two initiatives was initiated through their clustering activities. On the one hand, the NbS Task Forces, coordinated by NetworkNature, are providing a common space for collaboration, exchange and joint outputs for over 90 EU-funded NbS projects. On the other hand, a similar bottom-up approach was established by the Mission to enable the creation of thematic working groups which reflected the needs of the projects involved. Naturally, and in line with one of the priorities of the Mission, NbS was one of them.

The two initiatives therefore saw a clear opportunity to merge such common goals and take advantage of the many existing projects that are generating knowledge and practice on NbS and climate adaptation. In practical terms, this collaboration materialised by identifying the Mission Adaptation projects with a core NbS component to take part in the NbS Task Forces, therefore meeting the objective of an NbS working group. In turn, the outputs of the relevant NbS Task Forces are shared with Mission Adaptation and contribute to the Mission's wider adaptation knowledge.

As a result, 20 Mission projects have been invited to work together with over 90 NbS projects, and 15 of them have already started to do so, building common messages and bringing their expertise and experiences to the benefit of the people and nature.

This initiative is yet another demonstration of the power of working together, of connecting existing networks, and of building, strengthening and expanding the NbS community, which is ultimately the goal of NetworkNature.

New Horizon and Digital Europe Projects Boost Access to Biodiversity and NbS Data
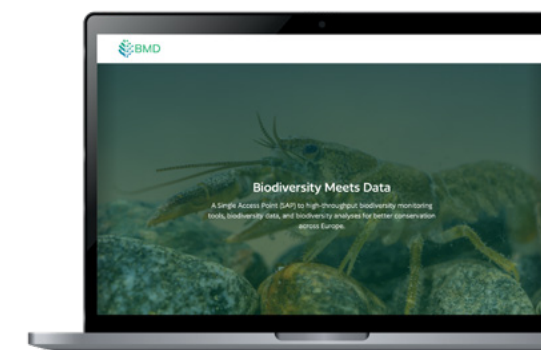
Piret Noukas

European Comission

We are pleased to highlight two newly launched EU-funded projects — BMD: Biodiversity Meets Data and SAGE: Data Space for a Sustainable Green Europe.

Both BMD and SAGE contribute directly to the EU's strategic priorities to unlock the benefits of data for biodiversity, climate action, and nature-based solutions. They are developing data infrastructures and tools highly relevant to the NbS community. The projects started in March 2025 and are funded respectively under Horizon Europe and Digital Europe.

Biodiversity Meets Data - BMD
[Horizon Europe | Coordinator: Naturalis Biodiversity Centre]

BMD empowers natural resource managers and policymakers with next-generation biodiversity monitoring and decision-support tools, including:

➔ High-throughput biodiversity monitoring and AI-based taxon identification
➔ Mobilisation of historical and legacy data into FAIR-compliant repositories
➔ A harmonised data catalogue across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine realms
➔ Co-designed Virtual Research Environments (VREs) for:
➔ Biodiversity monitoring
➔ Analysis of drivers of change
➔ Projections of land cover and climate impacts on the distribution of species and habitats
➔ A web-GIS viewer to explore data and VRE results

All tools aim to support evidence-based biodiversity planning, including the management and expansion of protected areas, species and habitat conservation, and EU Nature Directive reporting.
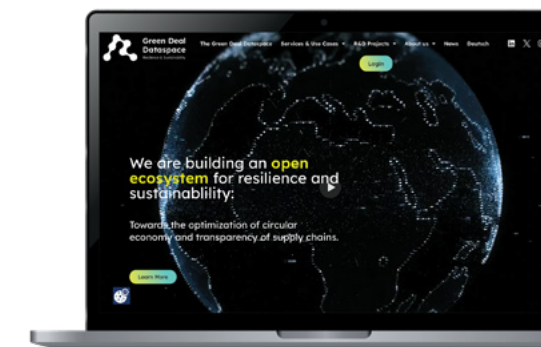
The Data Space for a Sustainable Green Europe - SAGE
[Digital Europe | Coordinator: IDC Italia]

SAGE is building the Green Deal Data Space (GDDS) — a federated, interoperable platform to connect and enrich Europe's green and environmental data landscape. Designed to serve diverse users — from researchers and public authorities to businesses and citizens — SAGE supports key European Green Deal pillars – Zero Pollution, Climate Adaptation, Biodiversity, and the Circular Economy Action Plan. SAGE biodiversity use cases, include:

➔ Adaptive forest management: Machine learning models trained on national forest inventories and EO data, scaled to EU level
➔ Pollinator monitoring: A data-driven platform to identify pollinator-friendly crops and promote sustainable agriculture
➔ Nature and ecosystem services trade-offs assessment tool: Integration of EO and in-situ data for next-gen ecosystem services analysis

The GDDS will continue beyond the project's lifetime through a dedicated legal entity ensuring long-term sustainability.

Task Force 1

Data and Knowledge Sharing

Workstream 01: metadata templates for NbS indicators

Workstream co-leads:
Agnieszka Olszewska-Guizzo (NeuroLandscape), Iván Cester (Eurecat), Mamuka Gvilava (GIS and RS Consulting Center GeoGraphic).

The TF1 team has now finished an initial review of shortlisting of more than 80 priority indicators for measuring the impact of NbS, using the Handbook for Practitioners developed by Task Force 2. This has been an in-depth process involving collaboration with TF2 and TF3, during which each indicator has been considered in terms of its impact potential; implementation requirements; applicability and scalability; and ease of standardisation. A condensed shortlist of around 20 indicators is now being taken forward for a second stage review, after which work will commence on developing metadata templates for a pilot sample of around 10 indicators.

The overall aim of this work is to develop and test methods for streamlining the collection of data on NbS impacts, supporting an evidence base for policy and decision-making. TF1 aims to have a first batch of templates ready by end of 2025 for testing with EU-funded projects.

Workstream 02: Hackathon

This year's TF1 Hackathon is being hosted in-person as part of the Task Forces Cluster Meeting on 17 September in Brussels. During a two-hour workshop between 2:30-04:30pm, participants will attempt to answer a key question or solve a common challenge in relation to data and knowledge sharing. There is still opportunity to put forward suggestions for the topic of the Hackathon; so if there is a question or challenge you would like us to address, please contact **TF1@networknature.eu**

Workstream 03: Learning events

Workstream lead:
Francisca Tapia (ABUD).

Task Force 1 is supporting its own knowledge sharing with a series of webinars, commencing during the autumn 2025. These informal learning events will explore different topics relating to data and knowledge sharing, and use of information technology more generally. Current proposals include Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data knowledge sharing and sizing. If you'd like to suggest a topic for our learning events, contact us at **TF1@networknature.eu**

Updates from other TF1 Workstreams:

→ **Workstream 04** on awareness of relevant projects, resources, technologies and innovations is co-lead by Carolina Cantergiani de Carvalho (Tecnalia) and Neil Sang (SLU) and expects to commence work in the autumn.

→ **Workstream 05** on project resources and case studies is led by Paul Mahony (Oppla) and has been recently invigorated by launch of the new Oppla web-platform, which features improved systems for sharing and storing the outputs of NbS projects. A new Oppla/ NetworkNature API is in development and the Oppla team is in the process of onboarding NbS projects to the new platform, aiming to have all 80+ projects visible by July 2026.

→ **Workstream 06** is the latest addition to TF1 and led by Neil Sang at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). Nicknamed PERENNIAL, it seeks to establish a PERsistent, Evolving, REpository for Network Nature's Impact-modelling, Analytics and machine-Learning. Anyone interested in this topic can sign-up for PERENNIAL at **tinyurl.com/TF1-PERENNIAL**

Task Force 2

Integrated Assessment Framework

Task Force 3

Governance, Business Models and Financial Mechanisms

Taskforce 2 has recently gone through a change in leadership. Louis Durrant from IEEP has taken over the responsibility for co-ordinating Task Force 2 from March 2025.

In a welcome development, the AIM NbS NetworkNature lab project has been granted funding to investigate the uptake and implementation of the NetworkNature handbook.

At the most recent meeting, the Task Force participants have taken the opportunity to define workstreams to align with their needs and priorities. The workstreams are:

1. Pooling evidence across different projects regarding policy development, monitoring and good practices. This workstream will be informed by the outputs of the AIM NbS project.

2. Collaborating with TF1 on improving the usability of the NetworkNature NbS handbook's indicators.

3. Developing indicators and assessment methods relevant to co-creation/governance approaches in spatial planning (in collaboration with TF6).

4. Reviving the development of the mini handbook on biodiversity indicators.

The first three workstreams will start work from now; the fourth workstream is to be developed later this year.

Upcoming Publication: Transformative Change Towards a Nature-Positive Economy

In a welcome development, the AIM NbS NetworkNature lab project has been granted funding to investigate the uptake and implementation of the NetworkNature handbook.

The TF3 team is finalising the upcoming European Commission (EC) expert publication titled Transformative Change Towards a Nature-Positive Economy, set to be launched at the European Business and Nature Summit (EBNS) in Helsinki, Finland in October 2025.

This publication represents the collective efforts of TF3 theme facilitators and members, who have worked tirelessly to integrate insights, project inputs, and validated recommendations.

The publication will include the following chapters:

➔ Introduction to the Publication

➔ Nature-Based Solutions and the Nature-Positive Economy

➔ Rationale for Accelerating Investments in Nature as a Pathway to a Nature-Positive Economy

➔ Business Rationale for Transitioning to a Nature-Positive Economy (NPE)

➔ Policy Pathways for Transformative Change Towards a Nature-Positive Economy

➔ Recommendations

The draft will be submitted to the European Commission soon for feedback, marking the final step before the official release.

Stay tuned for the launch during EBNS 2025!

Task Force 4

Communicators

NN Labs: Integrating Insurance and Nature-Based Solutions for Resilience

As part of TF3, CMCC will be focusing on the integration of insurance mechanisms with Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) to enhance resilience.

This NN Lab will focus on:

➜ Compiling business cases from the NN+ innovation ecosystem, showcasing how insurance can support ecosystem restoration.

➜ Developing engaging animations and standardised illustrations to explain the role of key actors in nature-based insurance.

➜ Organising a high-level, hybrid side event at upcoming CoPs to present business cases.

Objectives include:

➜ Showcasing real-world applications where insurance mechanisms incentivise investments in ecosystem restoration.

➜ Using compelling visuals to clarify the roles of insurers, policymakers, and practitioners in nature-based insurance.

➜ Facilitating dialogue among stakeholders to promote uptake and replication of successful business cases.

This initiative will involve some engagements in the form of webinars, which will be announced soon.

Task Force 4 (TF4), made up of your intrepid Horizon project (and select Missions!) communicators, remains hard at work identifying cross-project synergies and Peer2Peer learning opportunities.

Since our last digest, we have:

➜ Published over 25 newsbits featuring over 29 TF4 member projects

➜ Distributed 5 monthly digests, featuring 18 project mentions

➜ Members contributed to a design guide for journalists interested in NbS

➜ Members supported each other's social media campaigns, such as #FostertheFuture

This quarter, our trouble shooting session focused on work package management and partner engagement.

Not a part of TF4? This is your not so subtle reminder that your communications colleagues need content and support from you, if they are to successfully share project outcomes with your audiences!

Over the next six months, our TF will pilot a recurring walk-in meeting, in addition to our general meetings.

The goal is to create a space for more spontaneous trouble shooting and group work. A focus will be shaping the NetworkNature Communications Toolkit for Local and Regional Governments, an output that will highlight case studies and resources from Horizon projects. We look forward to updating you on our progress in the next TF digest!forward to updating you on our progress in the next TF digest!

A TF4 highlight continues to be the NetworkNature Reads Campaign, to which TF4 members are encouraged to contribute.

Featuring books from **The Lord of the Rings** to **Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet**, #NetworkNatureReads is inspired by #ReadingRainbow and the #NewYorkTimes #ByTheBook series, both of which spread a love of reading by highlighting standout books and the people who love them. Our goal is to do the same, but with a #naturebasedsolutions flavor. What is more, this opportunity is open to members of all NetworkNature TFs (and projects), not just those involved in TF4.

Need a reminder of how TF4 is directly supporting project communications?

Look no further, we've got you covered:

➜ Editorial calendar with regular newsbit contributions from TF4 members

➜ Branded Canva Card promotional pack shared with TF4 members

➜ Peer2Peer learning opportunities

➜ TF4 Monthly Digest

➜ NetworkNature Reads Features

Task Force 5

Education

Task Force 6

Co-creation and Co-Governance

Task Force 5 on education launched in January 2024, and focuses on integrating nature-based solutions at all levels of education.

The TF5 was up to now led by Trinity College Dublin on behalf of the EU-funded project NBS EduWORLD (nbseduworld.eu). To date, TF5 is an established collaborative European network dedicated to advancing NbS education for lifelong learning. Since the start, TF5 commissioned a NBS Story Telling Toolkit together with the Task Force members. ENABLS (**Home • ENABLS**) is taking over the lead of TF5 from NBS EduWORLD as this project comes to an end in August 2025.

The main goals of TF5 include: (1) fostering a community of educators, researchers, and policymakers who are committed to incorporating NbS in curricula across Europe, and (2) enhancing environmental awareness and problem-solving among students and teachers alike.

The TF builds competency-focused initiatives, hoping to establish long-term changes in environmental education practices throughout Europe.

The Task Force's objectives are twofold:

Community Engagement and Outreach:

This includes creating partnerships with educational institutions and environmental organizations to raise awareness through hands-on events and workshops.

Curriculum integration:

The task force aims to embed NbS across different educational disciplines, helping students understand ecosystem interdependencies and environmental challenges.

If you would like to join the conversation, become a member, or just to find out more, please get in touch with our Taskforce Leaders Dr. Ann-Catrin Fender (anncatrin.fender@uni-hohenheim.de), Sabiha Gökçen Zwack and Dr. Rasa Pakeltienė.

Task Force 6 (TF6) focuses on tools and guidance for co-creation and governance in the context of nature-based solutions.

Workstream 01: Involving commonly excluded stakeholders in co-creation

A survey has been used to collect information and perspectives on achieving inclusive engagement in NbS co-creation. A dedicated workshop has also been held to focus on identifying strategies, key principles and lessons learned for meaningfully engaging commonly excluded stakeholders. The workshop explore the following key topics:

→ **Rethinking inclusion:** Exclusion is context-specific and true inclusion means recognizing intersecting identities. Stakeholders go beyond people – nature itself has a voice.

→ **Understand the barriers:** Time, access, trust, language – all shape who participates. Past experiences of being ignored leave lasting impact. Processes can unintentionally reinforce power imbalances.

→ **Shift the approach:** Build authentic relationships, not one-off consultations. Create safe spaces for dissent, emotions and complexity. Use creative tools (games, art, tech) to open up engagement. Value and elevate local knowledge and lived experience.

The next step for this workstream will be a collaborative publication collating lessons learned and key messages for policy uptake.

Workstream 02: Online co-creation tool

Funding from NetworkNature Labs has been used to further develop the decision-support tool for co-creation, led by Groundwork London. Meetings have been held with TF6 members to test and provide feedback on the tool, which has been further improved towards a final version. Groundwork London and the TF6 are seeking to continue development of the tool beyond NN Labs and funding is being sought to support this.

Workstream 03: Spatial planning

A first meeting has been held to develop a plan for this workstream. There is potential for collaboration with the **BioAgora** project to develop guidance for the use of methods and tools in spatial planning.

Unlocking the Potential of the NbS Co-creation & Co-governance Decision Support System
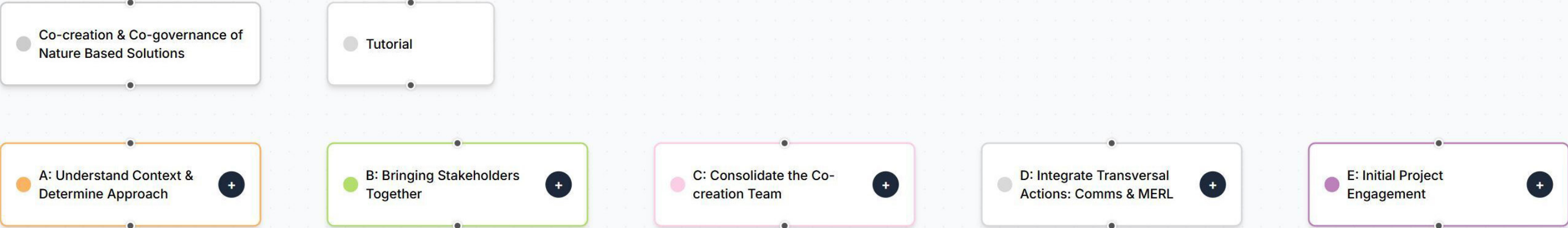
Sean Bradley

Groundwork London

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are emerging as powerful responses to climate adaptation, biodiversity regeneration, and the structuring of effective social systems. However, it remains a formidable challenge to establish a consistent process in which collaborative decision-making guides the implementation of NbS, particularly as this involves integrating multiple stakeholders and perspectives. In this context, a new **Nature-Based Solutions Co-creation & Co-governance Decision Support System (NbS DSS)** is being developed to offer a much-needed structure to help facilitators, municipal specialists, and communities find their own unique pathway through the co-creation process to develop context-sensitive NbS projects and actions.

Designed for urban professionals, community facilitators, researchers, civil society actors, and engaged citizens, the NbS DSS offers a structured yet flexible set of considerations, case studies, references, and tools to navigate the full lifecycle of an NbS initiative, ranging from early engagement to long-term systems consolidation. As a decision support system, it does not provide a pre-packaged methodology or sequence to follow. Rather, it invites users to consider the possible factors and steps involved in the co-creation of NbS and provides many helpful resources to support this process. The strength of the tool lies not just in its content, but in the flexibility it provides for users to adapt the information to their particular context and needs.

At the heart of the DSS is the recognition that co-creation and co-governance should be a transformational process for all those involved in regenerative development.

It encourages reflection on local power dynamics, stakeholder capacities, cultural norms, and the history of development processes within the community. The DSS also helps embed Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) across all stages so that evaluation is treated as a continuous, participatory process, ensuring that project development stays grounded in lived realities and that learning is captured and shared. Modules include Understanding the Context, Consolidating the Co-Creation Team, Orchestrating Co-governance, Co-Implementation, and others, helping users assess readiness and shape realistic, inclusive strategies tailored to their situation.

The platform helps practitioners address the complex, multi-scalar nature of community-led decision-making, acknowledging diverse stakeholder motivations and offering tools to map, align, and reconfigure collaborative networks over time. This is not just a technical tool, but a catalyst for cultural change and long-term capacity-building. As cities and communities seek to evolve systems that consolidate social and ecological connections, the DSS offers an effective framework for decision-making and a holistic, integrated way of thinking about the role of NbS as a critical catalyst for social change. By helping users integrate co-creation with communication strategies, community organisation, visioning, co-implementation and many other factors, all into one coherent process, it ensures that NbS are not only technically sound but also community-owned and socially embedded.

> The DSS is being developed by Sean Bradley & Groundwork London with support of the many members of the EC Taskforce 06 on Co-creation and Network Nature Plus. The Beta Version is undergoing tests with an expected launch date of the 1st quarter of 2026.

Co-creation & Co-governance of Nature Based Solutions

Tutorial

A: Understand Context & Determine Approach

B: Bringing Stakeholders Together

C: Consolidate the Co-creation Team

D: Integrate Transversal Actions: Comms & MERL

E: Initial Project Engagement

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ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability — EUROPE

Oppla

IUCN

biodiversa+ — European Biodiversity Partnership

Steinbeis Europa Zentrum — Enabling Innovators to Grow

ALTAMIRA — SYSTEMS THINKING FOR REGENERATIVE FINANCE

the nature of cities Europe

Trinity College Dublin — Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath — The University of Dublin

Horizon Nua

UN environment programme — WCMC

Institute for European Environmental Policy