



Network  
Nature

# Network Nature Report

**H2020 Nature-based solutions  
Task Forces Cluster Meeting**

4<sup>th</sup> February 2022



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# Executive summary

The Horizon 2020 Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Taskforce Meeting brought together 120 participants, including representatives of Horizon projects (78%), NetworkNature partners (16%) and the European Commission (European Research Executive Agency and DG Research & Innovation) (6%).

The meeting provided the opportunity for projects and other partners to interact, creating a space for networking and collaborations, which are essential objectives of NetworkNature.

The results of interactive poll questions with the audience showed the relevance that is given to networking, collaboration, communication and knowledge sharing, as they were mentioned among the main successes in the participants' project related work, despite the challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The European policy landscape shows a clear potential for NBS to be better integrated into the different policies and initiatives as means to address multiple societal challenges. At the global level, the work carried out by the NBS projects and the Task Forces contributes with useful inputs to international negotiations. With an ever-increasing number of NBS projects, NetworkNature plays a crucial role in bringing them together to work towards addressing knowledge gaps and prioritising opportunities.

Inspiring stories from two of the H2020 NBS projects, namely [GrowGreen](#) and [PHUSICOS](#), provided a testimony of the added value of such projects in delivering results that contribute to ecosystem restoration, and to upscaling NBS, providing evidence and lessons for other projects.

Four new Horizon Europe Green Deal projects were presented, as a demonstration of the growing repository of projects where an important role is given to NBS. The introduction to [MERLIN](#), [WaterLANDS](#), [REST-COAST](#) and [SUPERB](#) generated extensive interest across other projects and partners for future collaborations.

The work of the different Task Forces was outlined by the Task Forces leads, highlighting their main products, resources and publications, as well as upcoming plans, and opportunities for synergies and collaborations.

It was agreed that cross Task Forces interactions are needed to seize the opportunities to impact on the wider policy landscape. In addition, a clear need to improve coherence in the use of key NBS terminology and concepts was identified.

Cross Task Forces interactions were enabled through the organisation of four parallel training sessions, focused on selected topics which reflected the interests of the projects. All training sessions were structured in such a way to enable discussions and interactions with the participants, in addition to providing knowledge and guidance on the different topics:

- Standardisation for NBS – This session explored the European context of standardisation. It aimed at providing members of all Task Forces with an overview of



ongoing standardisation work in relation to NBS, identifying opportunities and paving the way for joint standardisation activities.

- **Creating policy impact** - This session introduced the eight steps which can support people in developing policy impact planning and enabled a discussion on how that can work in the Task Forces.
- **Communicating effectively** – This session focused on developing ideas for effective communication, and making a distinction between the idea of disseminating and that of engaging and communicating, exploring what has worked and what has not.
- **Working with unconventional partners** – This session aimed to help participants step into the shoes of some unconventional actors and partners that can be involved in financing NBS, in the setting of urban areas. For this purpose, the session was structured around a professional interactive game (serious game).

The meeting concluded with a session dedicated to taking stock of the challenges and difficulties encountered by the projects (including those related to COVID-19), and the lessons learnt. The main difficulties were related to the challenge of ensuring real engagement and interaction with practitioners and professionals, implementing and upscaling NBS, as well as working remotely.

The session also offered key insights into the future of NBS. A number of potential opportunities for the projects were identified, including sharing knowledge and case studies, and working towards a common language.

Overall, the meeting, and the exchanges it triggered, stressed the importance to upscale NetworkNature's agenda through knowledge sharing and communication, not only between partners but also across the projects and Task Forces.

This report provides a detailed summary of the meeting, including links to the recordings and presentations of the different sessions and trainings:

- [Presentations and recording of plenary sessions](#)
- [Presentation and recording of “Standardisation for NbS”](#)
- [Presentation and recording of “Creating policy impact”](#)
- [Presentation and recording of “Communicating effectively”](#)
- [Presentation of “Working with unconventional actors and partners” and \*serious game\* description](#)



# Introduction

## Structure and objectives

The third Horizon 2020 NBS Taskforce Cluster meeting, held virtually on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022, aimed to bring together Taskforce members, NetworkNature, and the European Commission (European Research Executive Agency and DG Research & Innovation) for an interactive dialogue to take stock of achievements of the Horizon 2020 NBS projects to date, strengthening synergies and exchange to further increase impact.

Key achievements from NetworkNature (including recent publications, case studies and events) and updates from the European Commission were presented. New Horizon Europe projects were introduced as well as success stories from the H2020 projects, centering around the current NetworkNature semester theme, ecosystem restoration.

A significant part of the meeting was dedicated to updates from each Task Force with attention on increasing the understanding the key developments, achievements and plans of each Task Force.

The meeting fostered dialogue and collaboration also across the different Task Forces, creating synergies and exploring new ideas for future cooperation and applicability of results to practitioners and users.

Interactive sessions on selected topics gave participants the opportunity to build priority skills needed for the mainstreaming of NBS.

An interactive session concluded the meeting to discuss common challenges to NBS project design and implementation, and provide a vision for the future on opportunities for upscaling NBS in Europe and beyond.

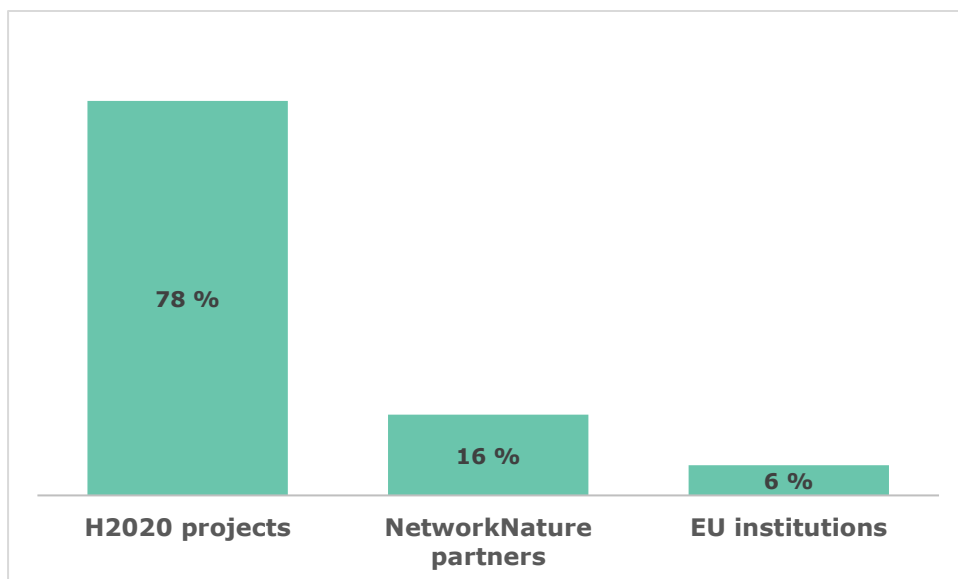
You may access here the [slides](#) and [recording](#) of the plenary sessions.

## Participation

The Horizon 2020 Nature-Based Solutions Taskforce Meeting brought together 120 participants, including Taskforce members, NetworkNature, and the European Commission (European Research Executive Agency and DG Research & Innovation).



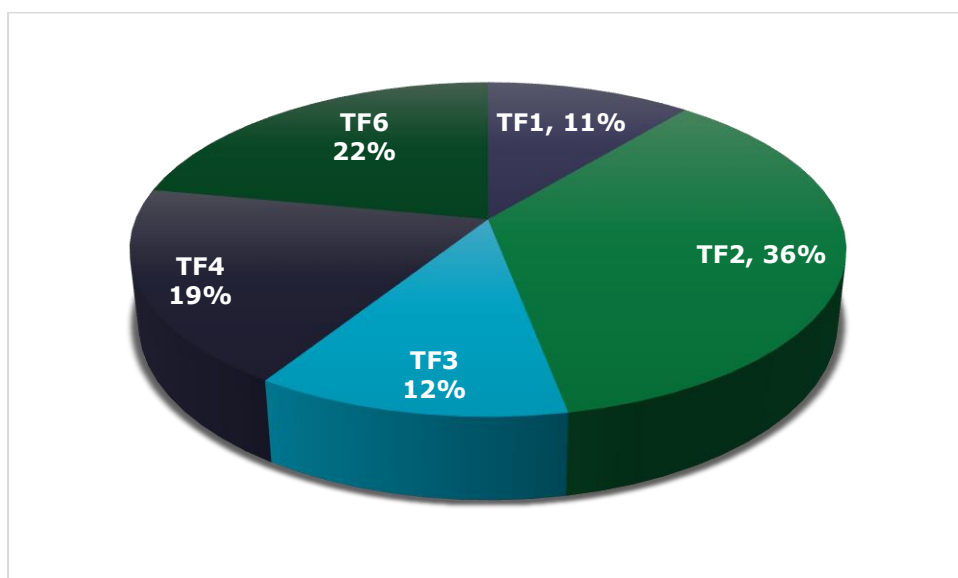
*Figure 1 - Participants by stakeholder category*



64 members of the five task forces participated in the meeting:

- TF1: Data and knowledge sharing
- TF2: Integrated assessment framework
- TF3: Governance, business models and financial mechanisms
- TF4: NBS communicators
- TF6: Co-creation and governance

*Figure 2 - Task Forces representation*





# Updates from NetworkNature, the European Commission and projects

## Highlights from Network Nature

Alice Reil, from ICLEI European Secretariat, and Daisy Hessenberger, from IUCN provided some updates from the NetworkNature project.

Alice Reil presented the NetworkNature semester "Nature-based solutions for ecosystem restoration" (September 2021 – March 2022) which aims to understand what ecosystem restoration is and what it needs, how it contributes to biodiversity and tries to answer the question of when an ecosystem can be considered "restored". It is related to the political landscape, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Subsequently, Alice showed the numerous outputs offered by the NetworkNature website, such as news, opinion articles, blogs, books, research articles and case studies. She introduced the NBS Research and Innovation Roadmap and the next steps for its development. The first draft Roadmap will be ready in February 2022 and, following further consultation, the Roadmap will be finalised in May 2023. Meanwhile, NBS Hubs are being launched in the EU Member States to create structures for the adoption of NBS, to promote capacity building and knowledge exchange, build relationships and create understanding of risks and benefits.

Daisy Hessenberger highlighted the results of the first NetworkNature Annual event "Achieving the EU Green Deal through nature-based solutions", held in October 2021. The event aimed to identify opportunities and barriers for commitments and partnerships for NBS, help promote the adoption of project results and support NBS H2020 projects as well as the biodiversity partnership and missions of Horizon Europe to effectively integrate NBS for ecosystem restoration in future plans and actions. She then showed the importance of the kick-off of the NetworkNature NBS National SMEs Representatives, the main result of which was the agreement on priorities and contribution of tasks for NetworkNature.

Further information on this session can be found in the [slides](#) (3-22).

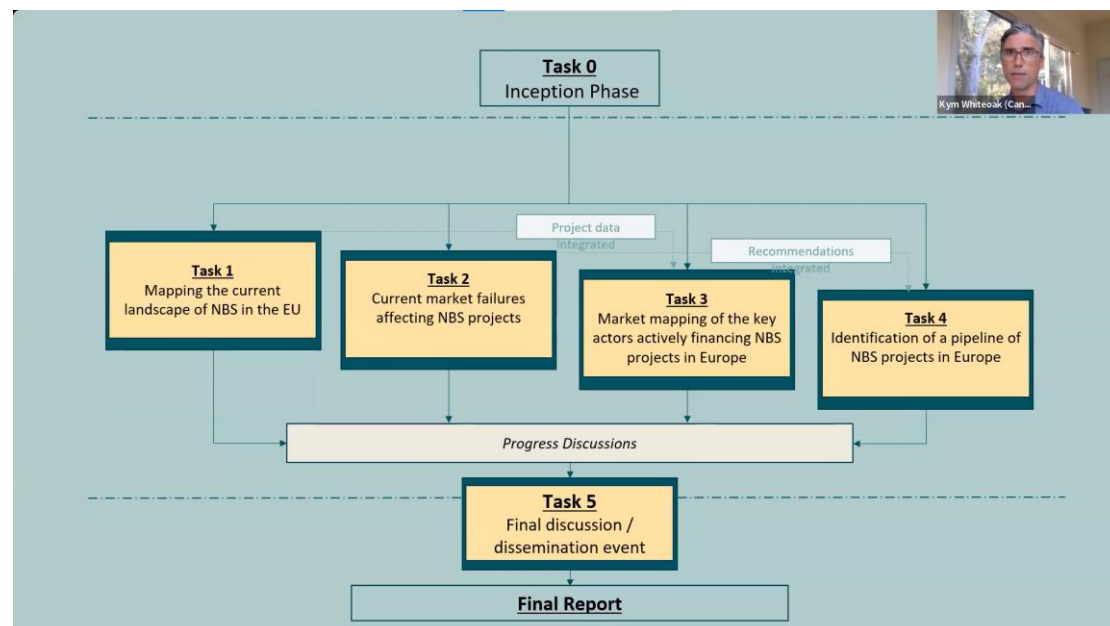
## Access to finance for NBS

Kym Whiteoak, from Trinomics, presented the "Assessment of access-to-finance condition for innovative Nature-based Solution in the European Union" project, commissioned by the European Investment Bank to Trinomics, Bankers without Boundaries and IUCN.

Kym provided an overview of the work of the project's five Tasks.



*Figure 3 - Structure of the „Assessment of access-to-finance condition for innovative Nature-based Solution in the European Union” project*



The project could benefit from inputs from the Task Forces to collect relevant information for two of the projects' tasks:

- Task 1, which aims to provide an overview of physical, on-the-ground NBS projects, identifying the scope and types of NBS within the EU
- Task 2, which aims to identify the main market failures and barriers that inhibit the enhancement of NBS implementation, particularly in relation to access to finance for NBS projects

More information on the EIB project can be found in the [slides](#) (23-30).

## Interactive session on successes, challenges and opportunities

An interactive session to engage the audience was run through the use of mentimeter.

The results of the mentimeter poll questions showed that the successes most important for participants in the past year concerned collaboration, communication and networking. Further, the main challenges encountered were primarily linked to the impediments due to Covid-19 (e.g. online working and online meetings). When asked about what opportunities they see for NetworkNature, participants provided a number of key words, revolving around networking and collaboration (Figure 4).



*Figure 4 - Opportunities for NetworkNature*



Participants were then asked to write a short hypothetical review for “the book titled NetworkNature”. The responses from the attendees shed light on the complexities of the project and its role while also showing its unique opportunity to share knowledge and promote NBS, bringing together all relevant actors.

NetworkNature will continue its efforts to clarify and bring forward its mission to increase the NBS evidence base by enabling information sharing, and to enhance opportunities for cooperation across projects and actors, by providing guidance and capacity building. Ensuring the use of a common language for NBS terminology and concepts through trainings and organisational events is key to provide an interface between science and policy and create impact.

## Updates from the European Commission, impacts, policy developments and Horizon Europe

Marco Fritz, Deputy Head of Unit at DG Research and Innovation, provided an overview of what is happening in the European Commission in relation to NBS. He explained that providing such an overview could help to situate the work carried out by NetworkNature and through the Task Forces.

In particular, he stressed the importance of the NBS projects, and the added value that can be achieved through their clustering, which is orchestrated by NetworkNature.

He explained that NBS are closely related to many of the European policies and initiatives.

H2020 projects clustering Taskforces support the “**better implementation**” of EU Policies and EU Policy Initiative, such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, when supporting the formulation of **science-based targets and solutions from science, for example** for the future EU Nature Restoration Law (setting nature restoration targets). Both Policies are also of crucial



importance to incentivise the implementation of NBS. Further, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, adopted last year, gives an explicit role to NBS.

As regards to European initiatives, the European Bauhaus offers an opportunity to better integrate the role of NBS, as they can provide opportunities in the interface between landscape architecture and ecology.

The main factor is to base policies on scientific data, and here the work of the Task Forces comes into play. With the portfolio of projects increasing and introducing new R&I topics in the NBS domain (e.g. economics, social policies, education for NBS, etc.), NetworkNature plays a key role in bringing all projects together to both identify and work towards addressing current knowledge gaps. These knowledge gaps have fed in Horizon Europe WP 2021-2022, and the topics on NBS which are mostly found in Cluster 6, destinations 1 and 6, and it's continuing to feed in the co-creation of the HE WP 2023-2024.

Marco Fritz stressed the importance of NetworkNature and the work of the Task Forces (e.g. through their publications) in providing useful inputs to international negotiations, especially in the run up to the COP CBD 15.

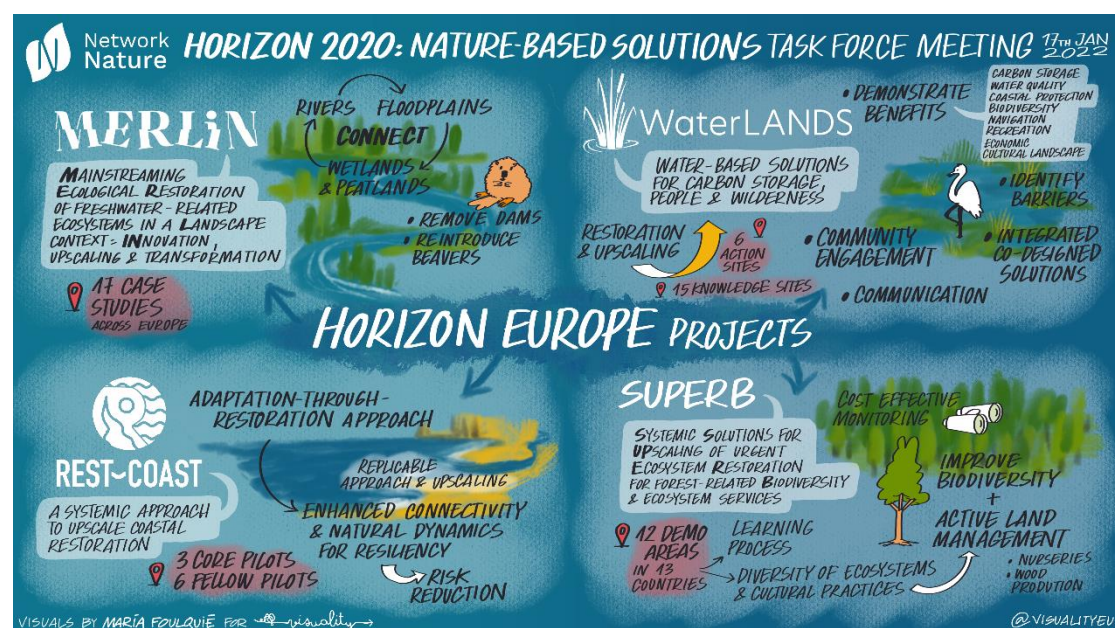
Lastly, he mentioned the new missions of Horizon Europe, and the need to make NBS part of the portfolio of solutions. In particular, he mentioned the mission on adaptation as the most relevant.

## Introduction to new Horizon Europe projects

The four new Horizon Europe Green Deal projects were introduced by their coordinators, namely MERLIN, WaterLAND, Rest-Coast and SUPERB.

A live sketch of the main features and objectives of the four projects was developed (accessible [here](#)).

Figure 5 - Representation of the new Horizon Europe projects





### **MERLIN project**

Daniel Hering, from the University of Duisburg-Essen, provided an overview on the [MERLIN](#) project (Mainstreaming Ecological Restoration of freshwater-related ecosystems in a Landscape context: innovation, upscaling and transformation). MERLIN has 17 case studies, targeting small streams (7), large rivers (5), peatland and wetlands (5) and located in different European countries. During the presentation, Daniel also explained the MERLIN workflow and the partners included in the project.

### **WaterLANDS project**

Craig Bullock, from the University College Dublin, introduced the [WaterLANDS](#) project. The project, which started in early December 2021, has 32 partners and restoration sites across Europe. The sites are divided in Action sites and Knowledge Sites. Its goals are related to restoring and upscaling water-based solutions for carbon storage, people and wildlife, while also identifying barriers and opportunities for it.

### **REST-COAST project**

Augustin Sanchez-Arcilla, from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, presented the [REST-COAST](#) project (Large scale RESToration of COASTal ecosystems through rivers to sea connectivity). It intends to develop a scalable adaptation-through restoration plan based on NBS building blocks, and to evolve the Green Deal coastal dimension. Moreover, it aims to create a replicable approach to upscale NBS in Europe and beyond.

### **SUPERB project**

Gert-Jan Nabuurs, from the Wageningen University, provided an introduction to the [SUPERB](#) project (Systematic solutions for Upscaling of urgent ecosystem restoration for forest related biodiversity and ecosystem services). SUPERB aims to create a supportive environment for, and demonstration of, large-scale restoration of forests and forest landscapes across Europe.

More information on the four projects can be found in the [slides](#) (32-75).

## **Inspiring stories on ecosystem restoration from H2020 projects: GrowGreen and PHUSICOS**

The coordinators of two successful H2020 projects, namely [GrowGreen](#) and [PHUSICOS](#), presented inspiring stories from their projects outputs and results, focusing on ecosystem restoration.

Sophie Sheil, Manchester City Council and coordinator of the GrowGreen project, offered an overview on the Manchester's River Valley Strategy, a complementary action plan to the existing Infrastructure Strategy. Thanks to stakeholder consultations, the Strategy identifies several objectives to create sustainable and resilient cities, considering the opportunities that rivers offer. The Strategy has city-wide actions, such as an integrated water management policy and a walking and cycling route maps, and river-specific actions.



Sophie presented also the practical example of the pilot project in Brest, France, where the Green Spaces Department wanted to ‘daylight’ the River Spernot, which ran underground through the park, for landscape and biodiversity reasons. The video on “Daylighting the River Spernot” is available [here](#).

Gerd Lupp, Technical University of Munich, offered an overview on the PHUSICOS project through a presentation on the Mountain Forest Initiative. PHUSICOS aims to demonstrate how NBS can provide robust, sustainable, and cost-effective measures for reducing the risk of extreme weather events in rural mountain landscapes. The Mountain Forest Initiative is an particularly inspiring example of best practice. Thanks to this initiative, 1.119 hectares of forests have been recovered, 229.750 trees were planted, and 314 events were organised. Gert also showed the success factors, incentives, and funding of the project.

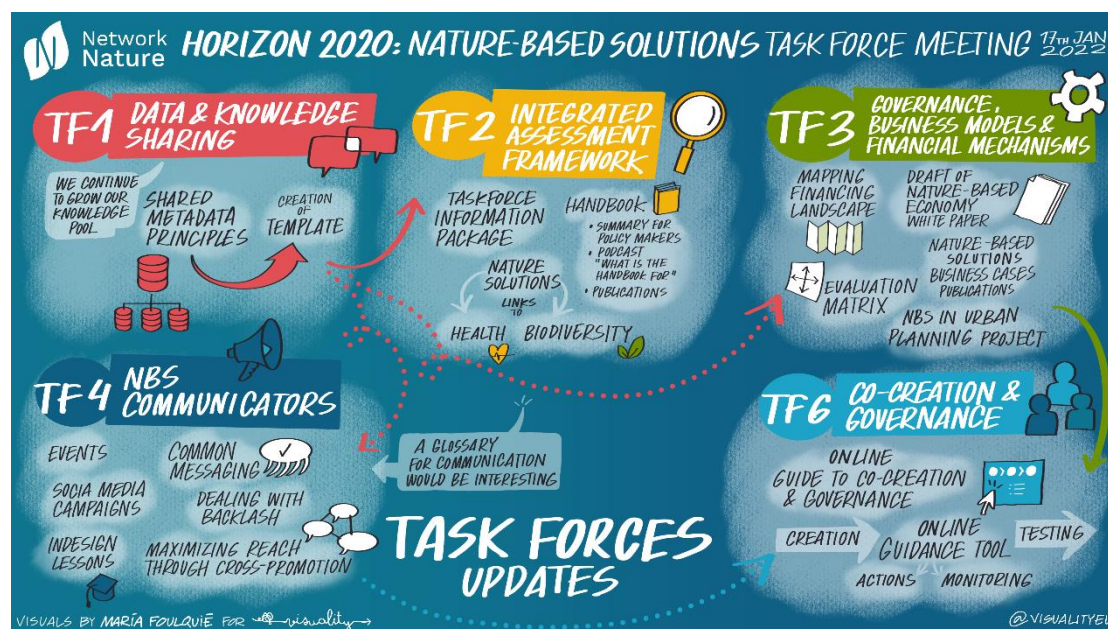
More information on the two projects and inspiring stories can be found in the [slides](#) (76-98).

## Updates from the Task Forces

The Task Forces leaders provided an update on the main work carried out by their Task Force, including publications, handbook and events, announcing any upcoming activities and detailing the collaborations that have taken place across Task Forces.

A live sketch of the main work of the five Task Forces was developed (accessible [here](#)).

Figure 6 - Representation of the work of the Task Forces and collaborations



Jon Porter (Oppla) presented the updates for TF1. He pointed out that the case study database is continuing to grow, which is critical to building knowledge on NBS. Jon suggested establishing the principles of sharing metadata, open data, documents, free and open source through the creation of a template. The TF1 has had a lot of interaction with the TF2 and is ready to collaborate more with the TF4 and TF3 as well.



Veronica Ruiz (IUCN) presented the updates for TF2. TF2 has developed an information package to better know where they are working. Subsequently, she updated the participants on the work done by TF2 on the Handbook “Evaluating the Impact of Nature-Based Solutions”. The Handbook includes a summary for policy makers, including the presentation of four European nature-based solution case studies, and an appendix of methods. A podcast will soon be released explaining what the manual is for. The Handbook has been promoted for its importance for climate change adaptation in European cities. The links between NBS and health, and between NBS and biodiversity were highlighted. A mini-handbook on NBS and biodiversity evaluation is currently being developed.

Matthieu Grosjean (Steinbeis) presented the updates for TF3. He updated the participants on the workflow related to mapping the funding mechanisms landscape for NBS in order to prepare a tool for funding solutions. The draft Nature-based Economy Whitepaper is under review. The NBS business case publication element was prepared and published in the summer. The NBS Benefit Assessment has been developed and several NBS projects provided inputs, using the Assessment Matrix. He announced that, in the near future, TF3 will work on a joint action on how to estimate NBS benefits from EU NBS projects. This work will be linked with the TF6 for NBS in urban planning projects.

Nea Pakarinen (ICLEI) presented the updates for TF4, which aims to maximize the work of NBS projects. TF4 collaborated in various campaigns and events on social media, in order to provide a common message. She underlined the importance to plan a social media campaign on NBS, the key outcomes and benefits. She announced that there will be future discussions with TF6 to define messages for target audience.

Knud Erik Hilding-Hamman (Teknologisk Institut) presented the updates for TF6. He set the initial framework for an online guide to co-creation and co-governance on NBS. Several meetings took place with Oppla to plan and structure the online guide tool on actions and monitoring. They will then begin testing with the cities and stakeholders to understand how this guide can really help. As regards to collaborations, TF6 has already started collaborating with TF3 on spatial planning. More collaborations will take place with TF3 and TF4.

After the presentation of each Task Force representative, a Q&A session with the participants took place. The presentations of the Task Forces’ work triggered interest in several projects to interact with other Task Forces.

It was agreed that cross Task Forces interactions are needed to seize the opportunities to impact on the wider policy landscape. In addition, a clear need to improve coherence in the use of key NBS terminology and concepts was identified.



# Interactive Task Force skill and synergy building

Four parallel training sessions were organised with the objective of enabling skill and synergy building on selected topics.

*Figure 7 - Overview of parallel training sessions*



## Standardisation for NBS

This session was led by Daisy Hessenberger, IUCN, in partnership with ICLEI.

It was organised following numerous discussions between project partners within and across projects on how to best standardise NBS and how projects can contribute to this. Many projects funded by H2020 have an activity on standardisation based on call requirements or projects' visions for NBS, yet lack an approach or connections to European and international standardisation work. This session brought together speakers who work on a number of standardisation "fronts" to provide members of all Task Forces (TF) with an overview of ongoing standardisation work, identify opportunities and pave the way for joint standardisation activities.

34 people participated in this session.

More information can be accessed through the [slides](#) and [recording](#) of the session.

### Main objectives:

The sessions' objectives were to:



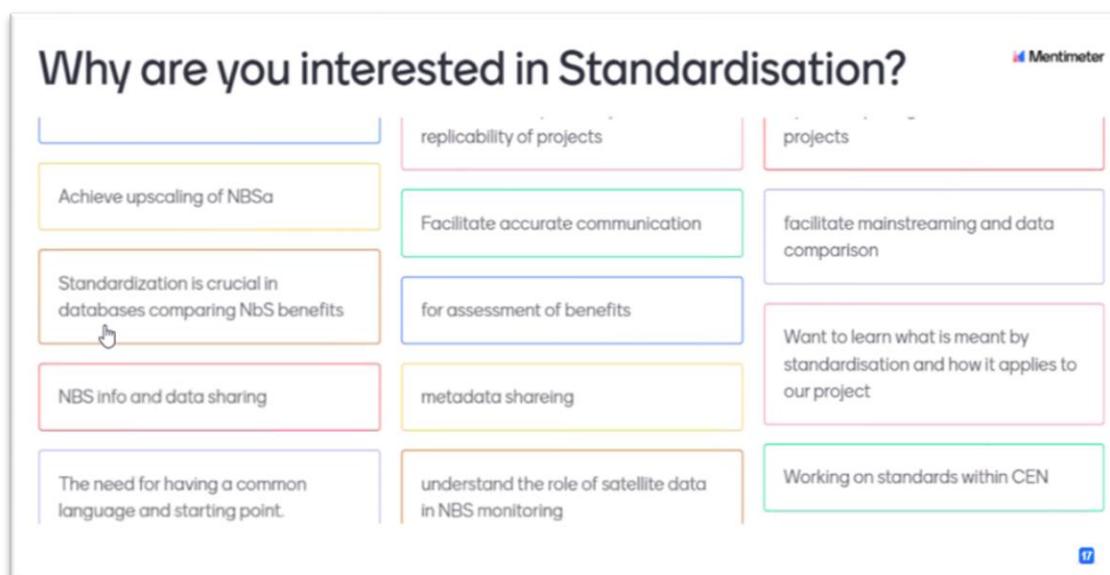
- Support the positioning of the EU as a global leader in NBS
- Raise awareness for the option to use standards for exploitation of project results
- Encourage NBS projects to engage in standardisation as part of their project activities
- Provide practical information of available, immediate options to engage
- Encourage understanding of complementarity of IUCN Global NBS Standard and CEN/CENELEC NBS standardisation activities

### Structure of session:

The session included introductory presentations to outline what is meant by standardization, and its importance for EU projects. A presentation on the standardisation landscape followed to provide an overview of the European context, followed by a mapping exercise. Lastly, the opportunities and role of the Horizon 2020/ Europe projects was presented.

### Summary of session:

Participants joined from across many Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe funded NBS-projects. The motivation behind joining was often linked to the overarching challenge of upscaling NBS, yet other aspects were also mentioned (e.g. assessment of benefits, data usage and sharing, common language for better communication around NBS, not reinventing NBS “wheel”). Many participants already had experience in developing standards as well as NBS application, which was a great starting point for the discussion.



### Julie Delcroix, EC DG RTD: Why is this important for EU projects?

Standardisation work related to NBS is included in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe calls. With 32 projects currently working on NBS across levels and landscapes, the NBS community paves the way in terms of evidence around NBS. The need to standardise NBS is clear, particularly if investors are to be convinced of the (market) potential of NBS. Community of stakeholders needs to be involved in developing standards around NBS to avoid the misuse of



the NBS concept. DG RTD fully supports the standardisation work of projects and collaborates with DG CLIMA on standards in the climate arena as well as DG ENV for environmental perspective, amplifying the impact NBS standards can make on other policy areas.

### Daisy Hessenberger, IUCN Global: What do we mean by Standard?

## Why do we need additional assurance and oversight?



Weak assurance and oversight might lead to system break-down, i.e. unwarranted certificates, loss of trust



Assurance and oversight intend to

- Ensure compliance
- Provide confidence
- Rules for all to follow
- Who does what? When? How?



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## What does the Standard look like?

The Standard – each criteria with brief guidance, indicators, case study, informative graphic and photo example.

The Guidance – puts NbS into context with detailed descriptions of the rationale and requirements behind each criterion and indicator.






Standards are complex, yet helpful in tackling many crises whilst ensuring economic viability of a solution. A standard is an **agreed** way of doing something, the distilled wisdom of people with expertise on topic (e.g. UN SDGs: 17 goals can function as standards). Standards help to a) engage stakeholders, b) build common understanding, c) create consensus, d) create demand, and e) incentivize positive change. Adequate assurance and oversight through standards create clarity.

The **IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions** is an umbrella standard with eight criteria, providing guidance on how to design, assess and scale up NBS. Following the ISO standardisation process for developing standards (incl. a revision every 4 years), the IUCN Global Standard was conceptualised on the basis of a global definition of NBS (by IUCN, adopted by members in 2016), on the ground experience within IUCN and by its members as well as a subsequent mapping of priority principles of NBS against other standards. The IUCN Global Standard is made up of the standard as such and is complemented by a guidance as



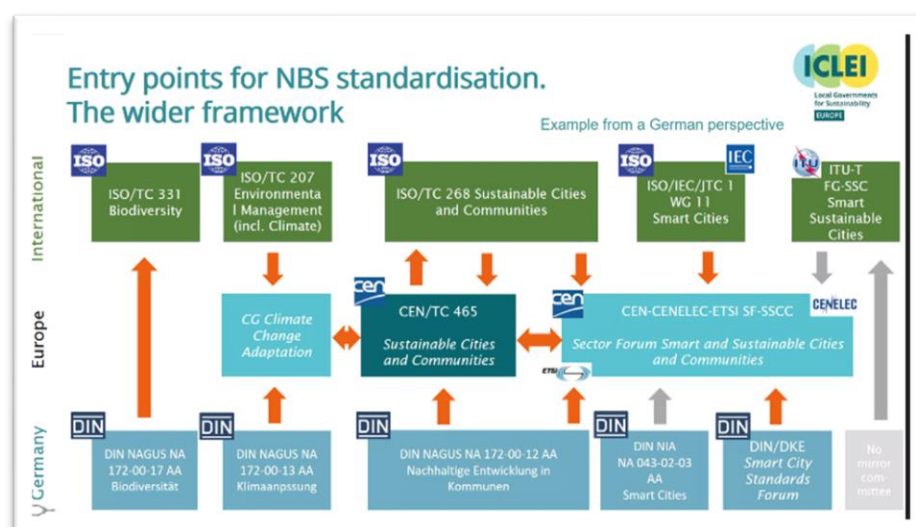
well as a self-assessment tool. The latter rates the performance or action against the IUCN Global Standard with the goal of having a standardised process of using the standard. The goal of the IUCN Global Standard is to improve good practice, rather than initiatives having to be strong in all categories.

### Holger Robrecht, ICLEI Europe + CEN/CENELEC TC 465 "Sustainable cities and communities" chair: Standardisation landscape in Europe



The IUCN Global Standard could be taken up or complemented by international standardisation committees such as ISO (global) and CEN/CENELEC (Europe). There is a need to establish better linkages between research work and standardisation bodies, e.g. by projects issuing proposals for standards or by participating as research institutes in stakeholder consultations in course of standard development. Modules of projects (e.g. Turas Green Living Room) can offer inspiration for bigger actions (e.g. informing how to better green houses).

The structures of standardisation bodies complement each other. ISO standards are not necessarily a national standard (unless CEN/CENELEC adopts the ISO standard into





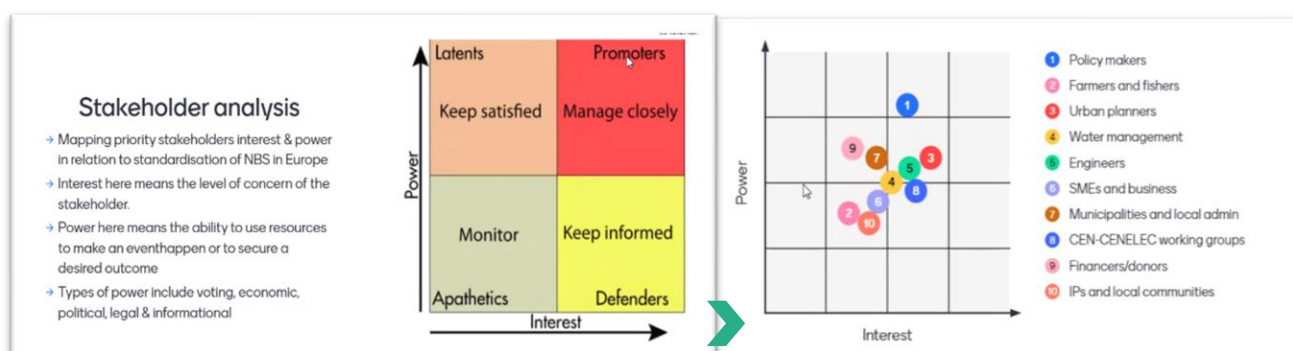
European standard, which is subsequently translated to MS level). Standards are always voluntary, not mandatory.

Currently, there is no allocation of NBS to a specific standardisation body/ committee. ISO/TC 331 “Biodiversity” as well as CEN/TC 465 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” are interested. CEN/TC 465 aims to contribute to implementing the SDGs by – inter alia – developing guidance on integrated planning where NBS could play a role. In 2021, there have been numerous presentations and interventions of EU-funded NBS projects (e.g. CLEVER Cities) and DG RTD at CEN/TC 465 meetings, resulting in a working agreement<sup>1</sup> on Green Roofs with NEN and NBS being included in the committee’s business plan and work programme from 2022 onwards.

**CEN/TC 465 NBS-PLANS 2022**

- Continued exchange with EC (DG RTD/CINEA)
- CEN Workshop on NBS ‘Standards for Climate Change – Nature-based solutions to tackle environmental challenges’, 24 May 2022.
- NBS standardisation
  - Workshop (tbc – option for collaboration with EC/Network Nature)
  - Technical Report: NBS Standardisation roadmap (option for collaboration with HE projects, e.g. Clever Cities)
  - NWIPs (option for collaboration with HE projects)
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - to be determined by CEN/TC

In 2022, opportunities offered by CEN/TC 465 for EU-funded NBS projects are plentiful (s. slide on left). CEN/TC 465 is committed to collaborating with R&I projects (e.g. consider standardisation options offered by projects, technical platforms) and DG RTD. Other opportunities include projects contributing to up- and outscaling (e.g. provision of quality criteria, benchmarks, reference building for procurement processes) or exploitation of project



<sup>1</sup> Working Agreements are a summary/draft of what a standard on the respective topic could look like in 10-15 pages. Projects can convene workshops and draft a standardisation text as outcome, which is turned into a Workshop Agreement (expire after 2 years; are included in CEN catalogue; mandatory to refer to if full standard is developed in that context).



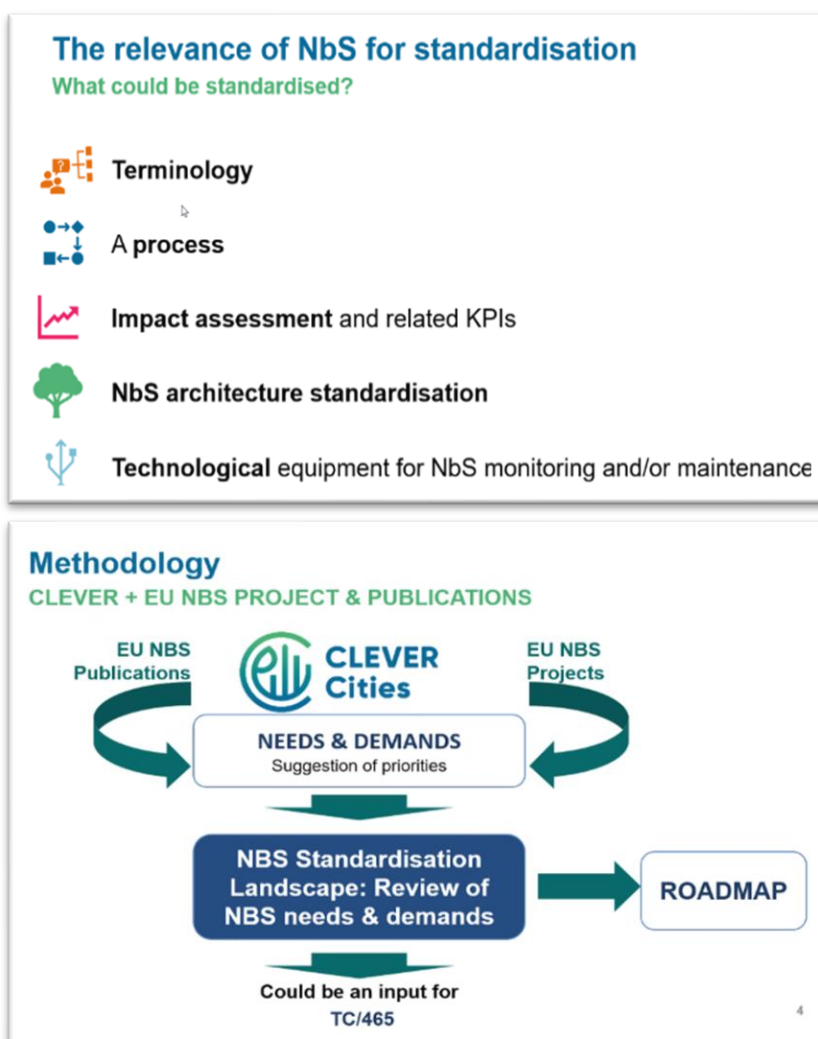
deliverables (e.g. instruments and tools, business/ service models). Project partners can engage in standardisation committees as delegated expert (via National Mirror Committees), by becoming a CEN partner, observer, stakeholder, liaison or by means of initiative a CEN Workshop Agreement (e.g. as a result of a project workshop).

### Daisy Hessenberger, IUCN Global: Interactive stakeholder mapping exercise

Participants mapped the stakeholders of NBS standardisation work according to their power as well as interest. Policy-makers were regarded as highly important with both high power to influence and a high interest in doing so. One to monitor is the finance/donor community, which was predicted to have a high power yet not as high interest.

### Efrén Feliú, TecNALIA (CLEVER Cities): What is the role of projects?

TecNALIA developed a standardisation component as part of CLEVER Cities. If NBS is included in standards it helps address bigger sustainable cities/ communities challenges (e.g. biodiversity loss, climate change impacts, resilience, social challenges), particularly if it includes “interoperability” with grey/ technological solutions and addresses urban management processes and community engagement mechanisms.






The project has mapped the needs and demands for standardising NBS within project as well as across other EU-funded NBS projects and recent publications, which resulted in priorities and proposals for standardisation along 5 spheres:

1. NBS Technical Design and Implementation
2. Policy and Governance
3. NBS Planning
4. NBS Financing and Economic Activities
5. Communication and Awareness Raising

### NBS needs and demands

 **NBS Technical Design & Implementation**

0. EXTEND AND CONSOLIDATE THE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE NBS

1. IMPROVE TECHNICAL DESIGN

1.1 Process on how to improve NBS technical design

2. IMPROVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF NBS


2.1 Requirements to consider/include in a monitoring plan

2.2 Reduction in price of monitoring equipment with technological advances to make monitoring more accessible

2.3 Consideration to include in a NBS impact assessment and the monitoring plan

2.4 Methods for choosing the adequate indicators selection and data

**Policy & Governance**

 1. CHANGE POLICY MAKING & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

1.1 Promote changes policy making

1.2 Promote changes to regulatory framework (Institutional and legal):

2. IMPROVE GOVERNANCE

2.1 Reinforce political leadership

2.2 Process how to strengthen collaborative governance

2.3 Find the best composition of stakeholder groups

2.4 Improve horizontal coordination

2.5 Improve vertical coordination

3. IMPROVE CO-DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES


3.1 Improve co-design processes

3.2 Improve engagement processes

4. DEVELOP POLICIES THAT FAVOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

4.1. Develop policies that favor social inclusion

### NBS needs and demands

 **NBS Planning**


1. ENCOURAGE UPSCALING

1.1 Possible method on how to manage the uncertainties linked with the application, upscaling and replication of NBS

2. IMPROVE PLANNING

2.1. Develop a more coordinated and integrated approach in planning and maintenance of NBS

2.2 Adapt NBS management and activities

 **NBS Financing & Economic Activities**

0. EFFECTIVENESS COST/ BENEFITS

Method for assess cost/benefits that analyse the effectiveness of NBS


1. ENSURE AND IMPROVE FUNDING

1.1. Ensure public financing, access to funds

1.2. Promote private financing (markets)

2. ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS AND FINANCE MODELS

2.1. Develop (alternative) business and finance opportunities and models for NBS

 **Communication & Awareness Raising**

1. BUILDING CAPACITY

1.1. Develop and actively disseminate guidance materials, streamlined tools and approaches for Member States, regions, cities to guide NBS mainstreaming, monitoring, design, funding and assessment, using existing platforms.

2. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

2.1 Improve communication & information

3. RAISE AWARENESS (Citizens' education & sensitization)

3.1 Promote green and social values through citizens' awareness and education

3.2. Promote green and social values through technicians

NBS-Projects interested in working on these activities and developing the roadmap can contact Efren Feliu ([efren.feliu@tecnalia.com](mailto:efren.feliu@tecnalia.com)). A proposal was made to have NetworkNature organise a workshop for all projects on standardisation of NBS. A question was raised on how the roadmap for standardising NBS could be taken forward, which TF could drive it, how it could be financed. It was emphasised that the work should be done within the context of CEN/TC 465.

### Main messages and conclusions



An interactive Mentimeter led to the following next steps that are needed to advance on the work of standards on NBS. The session provided a **solid overview of opportunities for progressing in NBS standardisation work**. The need for a **joint work plan across all (interested) NBS projects** and **clear coordination** are most imminent. NetworkNature together with all TF leads may need to decide where and how to best tackle this complex, yet needed work. The **next NetworkNature semester theme on “Quality assurance for NBS” could be the first opportunity**, whilst the **operational fund of NetworkNature** might be able to provide further (financial) support for action across TFs.

## Main messages to communicate from today



## Creating policy impact

This session was led by Ben Delbaere, Oppla

More information can be accessed through the [slides](#) and [recording](#) of the session.

### Main objectives:

This session aimed to cover the definition of policy impact and introduce the eight 8 iterative steps to plan your research's policy impact actions and then an interactive session to consider how to increase NBS research and innovation policy impact. The session enabled a discussion on how that can work in the Task Forces.

### Structure of the session:

The session included an interactive presentation, including several Mentimeter exercises facilitated by James Atkinson from Oppla, and open discussion with insights from participants. 18 people participated in the session.

### Summary of session:

Many definitions of policy impact exist. It is important to think about how you define it before trying to achieve it. A useful definition is:

“Research impact is a direct or indirect contribution of research processes or outputs that have informed (or resulted in) the development of new policy/practices, or



revisions of existing policy/practices, at various levels of governance (international, national, state, local, organisational, unit).”  
(adapted from Alla et al., 2017<sup>2</sup>)

The following steps were presented.

## 1. Who will you represent

Before starting policy impact planning, reflect on who you represent. People often wear different hats depending on time, location, situation etc. For example, you might represent one of the following groups: individual expert, research department, university, European project, learned society, focus group (e.g. NBS Task Force), business, lobbyist, NGO, citizen. Deciding from the outset who you, as an individual or jointly, represent will define the next steps, such as the communication style, mandate and authority level.

## 2. Why policy impact?

Consider why would you want to achieve policy impact. Not all research should have a policy impact. Reasons can be grouped into 4 main types of policy impact to achieve (Lemaitre et al., 2018)<sup>3</sup>:

- **Attitudinal or behavioural change:** i.e. framing debates and getting issues on the political agenda. Drawing attention to new issues that were not part of the policy debate.
- **Procedural change:** i.e. change in the procedures through which policy decisions are made, beyond straightforward policy outcomes. E.g. improved dialogue.
- **Change in policy content:** i.e. affecting policy making. Securing changes in policy – for example through new legislation. Change in policy content includes changes in policy makers’ position towards international declarations or conventions, or of national policy positions.
- **Change in policy implementation:** i.e. affecting the way policy is implemented. (e.g. demonstrate policy in/effectiveness)

It is important to be honest and open. Do not over or underestimate the importance of your work. Clarity on your goal for achieving policy impact will help answer the next questions.

Participants were asked to indicate why they would want to achieve policy impact, from the perspective of the projects or organisations they represented, the result of which is presented below.

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<sup>2</sup> Alla, K., W.D. Hall, H.A. Whiteford et al. (2017) How do we define the policy impact of public health research? A systematic review. *Health Res Policy Sys* 15, 84. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-017-0247-z>

<sup>3</sup> Lemaitre F., P. Bridgewater, H. Eggermont, S. Gardner, K. Hueso, J. Niemelä, R. Paloniemi, I. Pereira Martins, A. Thornton & X. Le Roux (2018) *BiodivERsA guide on policy relevance of research and on effective science/policy interfacing in research proposals*. BiodivERsA report





### 3. Whose policy to affect?

Most project proposals refer to informing or involving ‘all relevant policymakers’ without specifying who they are. However, there is no such thing as ‘the policymaker’. To illustrate this point, participants were asked to list types of policymakers that they could think of, from the perspective of NBS, see below.



Typically, for EU research projects, policymakers could include EU Directors General or the DG staff (relevant for most Horizon projects), national ministers, Members of the European Parliament, representatives of regional/local council, a CEO of a multinational company, or a farmer's association. The important thing in this step is to reflect in an early stage (proposal) who it is that you want to address.

As part of this process it is essential to build relationships and trust with policymakers from the moment of project initiation. A practical step is to create a detailed list, including contact details of individuals, of policymakers you wish to reach out to. Think about this relationship as engaging people, not only informing them.



Your EU project officer, as well as your national contact points, may be a good first step to advise you on who to target.

When identifying which policymakers to target, carry out an audience analysis. Try to answer questions like: What is their expectation, their attitudes towards the topic, or their level of understanding of the topic.

Useful questions to ask in this step also include:

- How can I help solve their problem?
- What are they like?
- How might they resist?
- What is their mandate/influence?

#### 4. Which policy to impact?

Ask yourself which policy you want to have an impact on. Consider the difference between policy (e.g. EU Communications, agreements, which are non-binding agreements) and legislation (e.g. EU directives and regulations, which are legally binding). You can gain understanding of policy specifics by screening policy documents for relevant keywords or objectives and by monitoring policy processes. It is important to gain understanding of the policy drivers (e.g. state of nature, climate change, geopolitical pressure, a pandemic).

You may seek to influence EU legislation, a sectoral strategy, research funding policy, biodiversity financing or procurement policy. Following this analysis, you should create a detailed list of targeted policies, where possible down to the level of specific objectives, proposed actions and indicators.

#### 5. What's your point?

What of your research outcome is so important that it may have a policy impact? What is your key message? Focus on actionable knowledge and remember to consider, "how can I help solve their problem?" Does your research provide: entirely new insight; evidence to support untested policy ideas; assessment of policy outcomes or policy scenarios; or findings that overthrow preconceived ideas?

It is helpful to keep in mind CRELE: is your knowledge or message **credible** (supported by facts and evidence, makes sense), **relevant** and **legitimate** (justified, balanced)? Take a step back and ask yourself 'so what?'

Use these questions to produce your key message(s), linking your research results with policy objectives or processes. Phrase your key messages like a news headline to grab attention.

#### 6. Communicate!

How to convey your message to policymakers? Use a mix of communication tools: stories, policy briefs, social media, blogs, vlogs, reports/executive summary, infographics, indicators, presentations. Customise approaches to various audiences. Contribute to hearings,



consultations, policy events, speaker's notes. Organise events for policy makers and scientists to meet: field days, side events and exchange visits.

Don't try to cover communication by yourself if you do not have the skills or capacity, rely on professionals such as knowledge brokers, science-policy interfaces, communication experts, or graphic designers.

Mind your language: no jargon or acronyms, avoid double meanings, keep it short, relate to audience context, relate to what is 'hot' in policy (e.g. NBS are popular now but may be passé in 10 years' time). Offer help: provide case studies (e.g. via Oppla or the NetworkNature platform), systematic reviews and knowledge brokerage.

Scientists typically put a lot of effort in describing the background and context, the methodology used and results obtained. Relatively little attention is put to distilling the key message. When addressing policymakers, it is most important to put effort in phrasing a good message that will catch the eye of an information-overloaded policymaker. This approach is presented in the inverted pyramid here below:

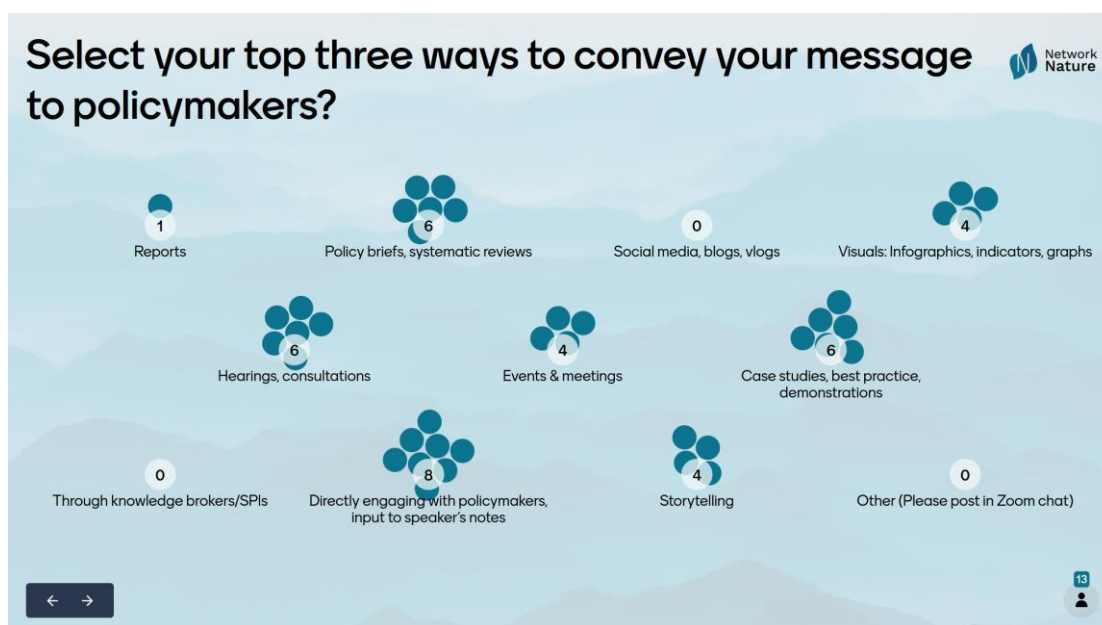


Source: EU Academy<sup>4</sup>

Participants were asked which options they thought would be most useful to convey their message to policymakers, as shown below:

<sup>4</sup> <https://academy.europa.eu/course/view.php?id=133>





Thus, in this step you create a selection of complementary and mutually supportive communication tools and processes, customised to different target groups.

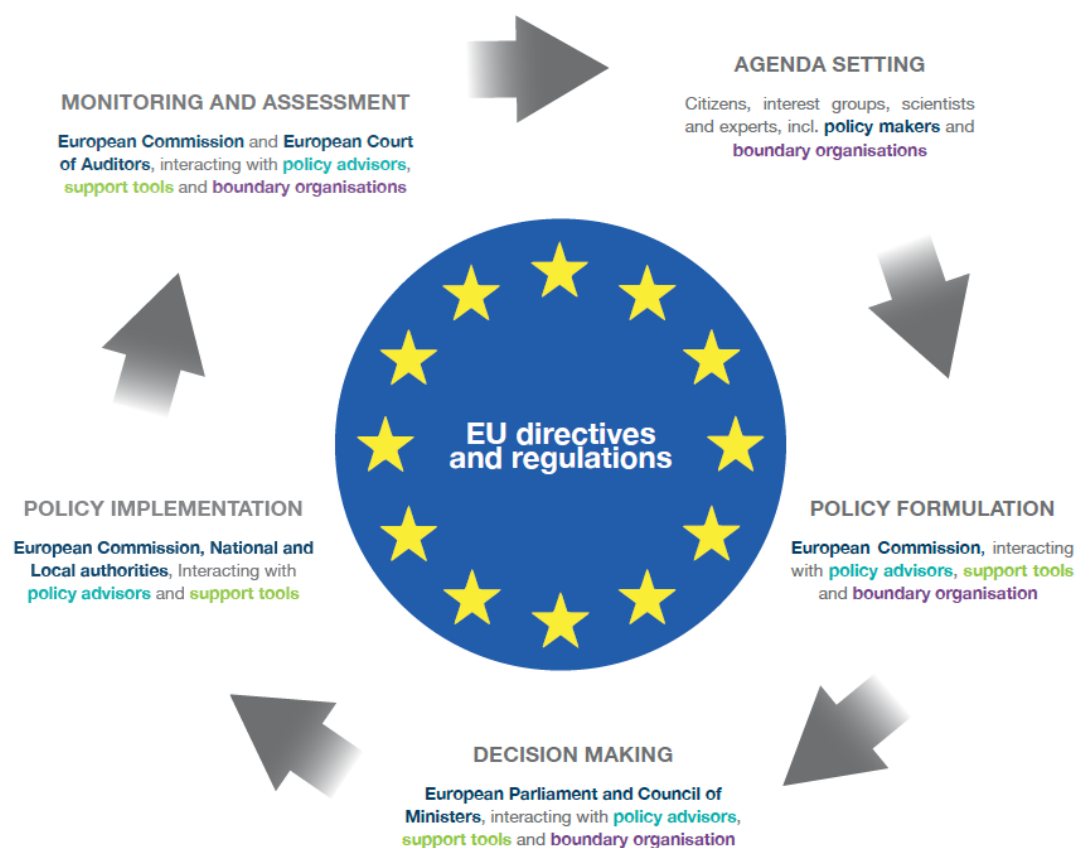
## 7. When to communicate?

Think before you act! Do not expect that sending a project flyer at any random point in time will have an impact. Reflect on the policy cycle to find the correct windows of opportunity. This is a key challenge because of the different time frames between science and policy, the latter for example strongly influenced by the electoral cycle.

Again, it is important to plan ahead and include policy impact from the start of a project, and even at the proposal stage. Ensure that you have direct engagement and continuous dialogue with policymakers.



Figure 8 - Moments in the policy cycle when research input may best be provided, by type of science-policy interface (Lemaitre et al., 2018).



However, not everything can be planned. There can be key moments when your messages may have greater impact, such as: public consultations, policy meetings (e.g. DG ENV Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature, Conference of the Parties of international conventions), key moments in policymakers' agendas or crisis events. Communicating at times of crisis is important as there is a sudden momentum that opens attention for a given topic. For example, the heavy floods in parts of Europe in July 2021 created a lot of attention to the role that ecosystems could play in reducing flood risks.

Together with the previous steps, the result of this step is to develop a dynamic communications agenda, planning outreach activities at least a year ahead, with indication of communication tools, key messages, and identifying the sender and receiver.

## 8. Monitor and evaluate

How could you assess whether you've impacted policy? It can be difficult to demonstrate direct influence. Accept the reality of politics and competing topics and information sources and remember the importance of persistence and repetition.

Possible ways to identify whether your research has achieved any type of policy impact include:

- Has your message been integrated in a policy document?



- Have your data/research results been quoted?
- Have you been acknowledged?
- Do policymakers talk about it?

Considering these questions will give an indication of throughput of your messages to policy, reasons why/why not you have been heard, lessons for future attempts. When reflecting on lack of impact, refer back to your audience analysis: could it be that policymakers have insufficient knowledge of the topic, are they resistant or disinterested?

### How can we increase the policy impact of NBS research and innovation?

The session was closed with a brief discussion with the participants, which was led by the question 'What is the most important message about NBS to convey to policymakers?'. The result of this exercise is shown below.



**What is the most important message about NBS to convey to policy makers?**

- Cheap and multifunctional
- NBS effectiveness
- NBS can tackle multiple societal challenges
- Better health in postpandemic cities
- Multiple benefits
- Worth financing
- Better relation of cost-benefit (to promote funding)
- Support SMEs in implementing them or getting interested in it.
- NBS help to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises
- Key step in climate resilience
- Locally adaptable
- NBS are good for people
- Inclusive and tangible

During this exchange Marco Fritz of DG Research and Innovation highlighted the critical importance of EU funded research funding influencing EU policy, as well as local, national and international policy processes. To avoid overburdening policymakers he highlighted the importance of making effective use of Task Forces and established communication channels such as the Oppla Outline newsletter to reach EU policy makers.

### Useful resources

The following limited selection of resources provides more in-depth training materials for those who want to know more about how to achieve policy impact:

- EU Academy course: Science for Policy - Maximise your Policy Impact:  
<https://academy.europa.eu/course/view.php?id=133>
- EU Science for Policy Handbook:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/sites/default/files/science\\_for\\_policy\\_handbook\\_fin.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/sites/default/files/science_for_policy_handbook_fin.pdf)



- BiodivERsA guide on policy relevance of research: <https://www.biodiversa.org/1543>
- The Spiral Project Handbook: Effective interfaces between science, policy and society <https://oppla.eu/product/24371> & resource book <https://oppla.eu/product/24372>

#### **Summary of main outcomes:**

- The participants of the session agreed on importance of policy impact but showed a mixed understanding on how to achieve it
- There are 8 questions to follow when planning for policy impact
- The main reasons for wanting to achieve policy impact mentioned by the participants included: tackling the nature crisis, bridging gaps, and providing a clear purpose to research
- The main audiences to be addressed included: Government agencies, spatial planners, EU policy, City administrations, Politicians, and associations
- The most important message to convey about NBS referred to their cost-effectiveness, the possibility to multiple benefits and to be applied at various scales
- Direct engagement with policy makers was chosen as the best way to convey key messages, followed by hearings and consultations, and organisation of events and meetings.

## **Communicating effectively**

This session was led by David Maddox, The Nature of Cities.

More information can be accessed through the [slides](#) and [recording](#) of the session.

#### **Main objectives:**

This session aimed to develop ideas for effective communication, and make a distinction between the idea of disseminating and that of engaging and communicating, exploring what has worked and what has not.

#### **Structure of the session:**

The session included an initial presentation of topic and introductions, followed by two presentations from projects with inspiring communications, a general discussion and an assignment. 18 participants took part in this session.

#### **Summary of session:**

David Maddox began the training session reminding participants the pitfalls of treating communications as an afterthought, with people assuming it happens without any work. He echoed how it is crucial to address different target audiences and think about what knowledge is useful to each audience and how do they want to receive it. The communicators need to think about how to transform project content into useful information for each audience.

**“Communications is not about distributing information – It is about creating understanding” – David Maddox**



Data is not the goal – how we communicate that data is the key. The notion of dissemination is a bit old fashioned, as it is rather passive, many think of it as “*just dumbing the information out there*” David stated. Instead we should be seeking to engage people with ideas that are supported and improved by the content in the projects.

David highlighted elements of a communications process:

- Goal (what do you want to change, what understanding do you want to create, match communication to goal)
- Audience (what audience is engaged, is the audience accessible to you, are they changeable, be specific)
- Message (what can you say that would make a difference)
- Message medium (channels)
- How will you tell the story (how would you say it to make a difference, what works for your target audience, what do they want/need to know? What engages them?)
- DOING IT (be effective)
- Monitoring & impact (what change did you effect – were they changed?)

**Your work rarely speaks for itself**, David reminded everyone. Communications need to be integrated with project content from start to finish. He also encouraged people to avoid common pitfalls:

- Outdated website design, poor accessibility
- Uninspiring content and content that stales after project end
- Facts that overwhelm storytelling
- Disconnection between style and audience
- Overreliance on single mode of communication
- Spamming; built excitement one story at a time, build audience over time

David encouraged everyone to consider other forms that reporting, museum exhibits, visual storytelling, art, interviews, activities, comic books etc.

The session continued with **Audrey Timm, The International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH)** presenting their innovative communications on the World Green City Awards. They focus on storytelling and engaging people in dialogue, to showcase what can be achieved. The goals is to create awareness of the programme, attracting entries for the awards, with a focus on communicating what can cities gain by entering, and sharing news of the cities entering the awards. Audrey reminded participants that the messenger and their reputation and legitimacy is crucial in getting the message across. Further timing is key, e.g. aligning



communications with international advocacy days can be used for more impact. Audrey also reminded that the social aspects are key, building meaningful and long-lasting connections through engagement. A great help in communications work is to anticipate and eliminate barriers. The World Green City Awards take into account the variety needed in languages, whether related to technical or regional levels of understanding. She has also found stakeholder analysis useful, it can be less formal, e.g. contacting partners in cities in the case of World Green City Awards to assess needs and impact. Audrey brought the exiting recipe narrative to the table; start with the description of a finished product (e.g. in the case of recipes this would be a picture and description of the food), then describe how it is made and the process. The presentation was followed by discussion on how monitoring is not as easy, and the fact that typical KPIs on social media do not really reflect the change enacted. This is hard to reflect, but by being in touch with partners and asking for qualitative feedback/opinions can help to this end.

**Claudia Misteli, TNOC and LALI (Latin American Landscape Initiative)**, followed with an engaging presentation on LALI's (a network of networks) visual and inclusive approach to communications. LALI found it crucial to create a visual identity that communicates the diversity of Latin-America, and all of the many project clusters to create an inclusive and inviting first impression. LALI utilises infographics and visuals as a core part of the project to communicate effectively. Claudia stressed the need for gradual approach and patience in communications (building up audience).

*Figure 9 - LALI's logo and cluster colour tags*



The discussion that ensued, got the communicators wondering how to innovate with limited time. Claudia, highlighted how collaboration, slow process, supporting each other, programming social media posts, Canva and enlisting others with specific skills for contributions with the incentive of naturally giving them credit a great support in managing time when it comes to communications.

Finally, in the interactive and exiting conversation that ensued, participants stressed how communications should be the work of everyone in projects and new and innovative paths.

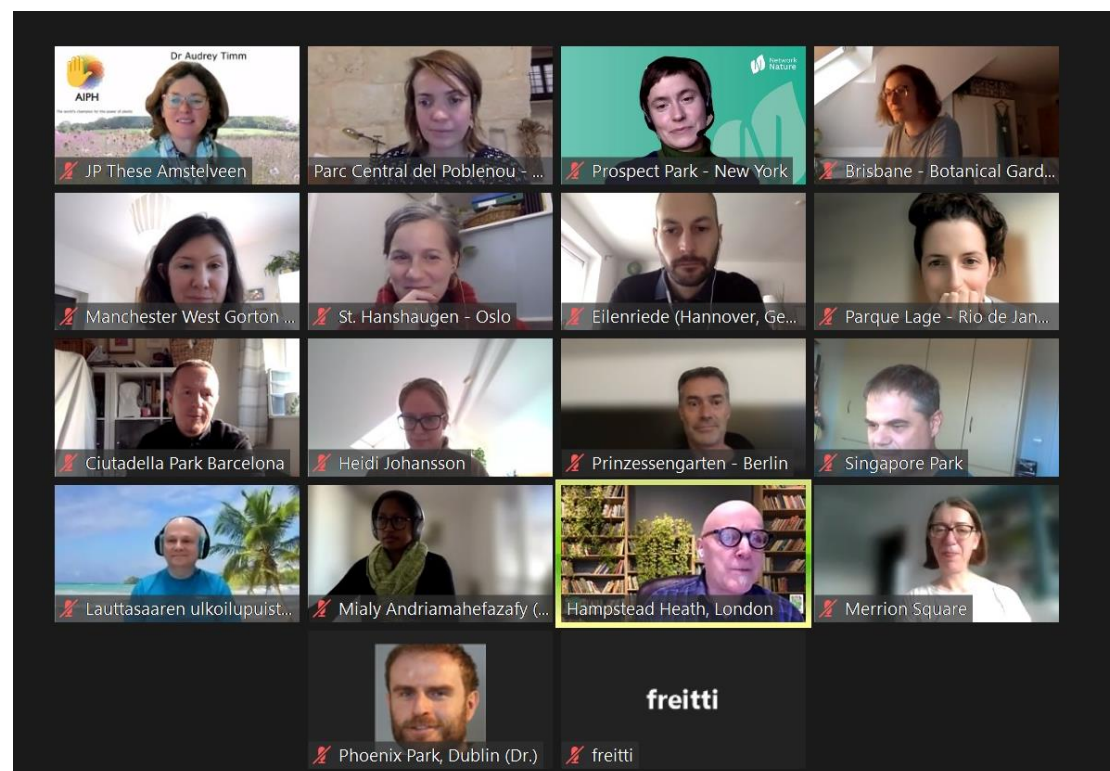


There is a need for more emphasis on communications and a need to tap into influencers that can spread the word whom already have an audience and good standing in the communities.

The INTERLACE project is engaging youth in Latin America through gaming, namely through Minecraft (one of the most popular games out there), where actual sites are modelled into the game, and users can design and introduce nature-based solutions there themselves. Some projects gathered citizens into groups giving feedback on the solutions they desired which was then modelled to showcase how these varied desired would transform the district and their associated costs to increase understanding. Some projects were exploring the use of VR for engagement. As a more old-school method of communication, on-site exchange through local partners, associations and even by creating new associations is useful. Locals in some projects such as proGReg are engaged through events (even parties), on-site info points, surveys and trainings on site. The importance of art should not be forgotten, art can be used to communicate results, with art/science exchanges found very useful in the case of The Nature of Cities. A sound reminder was also mentioned when creating tools in projects, to not engage people only during the launch of said tool rather throughout the project, building a sense of ownership and getting the feedback needed from the get-go.

The discussion also reiterated that those keen to communicate project content, need to remember **who is the audience** and that **the facts do not speak for themselves** – they need to be tailored to each audience and contain something of value to them, streamlining content is key.

*Figure 10 - The session group discusses their favourite parks, and their paths on reaching people*





#### Summary of main outcomes:

- **“Communications is not about distributing information – It is about creating understanding”** - not just about dumping facts on audiences (usual connotation for dissemination)
- Communications should not be an afterthought in projects “The facts do not speak for themselves”. Data is not the end goal – how we communicate the data is. All should be involved in communications and keep in mind the target audiences and how they want to get their information and what will engage them
- Building audiences and communications slowly, engaging people with ideas
- Be specific about the audience!
- Follow a clear strategy: Goal, Audience, Message, Message medium, How will you tell the story, DOING IT, Monitoring & impact
- AIPH World Green City Awards (Audrey Timm): is about storytelling and engaging people in dialogue, to showcase what can be achieved and what are the benefits to the cities participating. The recipe format: describe the end result and then go into process and how this was made.
- LALI communications (Claudia Misteli): Visual identity is crucial (first impressions) be inclusive, infographics, visuals. Communicating consistently and slowly to build up interest
- Conversation: explore different ways of communication – art/science residencies, local engagement on site, gaming, VR, influencers to organically spread the message (events, info points), involving people in the design process and showcasing what their wishes would entail in reality, when creating tools engage audiences in the whole design process not just the final product, internal communication also crucial

## Working with unconventional partners and actors

This session was led by Daan Groot, Nature Squared.

The slides of the session can be accessed [here](#).

#### Main objectives:

The objective of the session was to help participants step into the shoes of some unconventional actors and partners that can be involved in financing NBS, in the setting of urban areas.

#### Structure of the session:

The session was structured around an interactive serious game where participants played different roles of stakeholders involved in the development of a park in an empty lot of a municipality. 13 people participated in this session.

The instructions of the serious game and features of the different roles can be accessed [here](#).

#### Summary of session:

The session started with an introduction on **financing urban NBS**.



The potential of NBS to many of the large urban challenges is clear: climate adaptation, air quality, health, heat island effects and social cohesion.

Values and impacts of NBS can be monetized, quantitative or qualitative (valuation pyramid). The use of the different levels of valuation depends on the audiences, the type of communication preferred (robustness and preciseness) and the purpose.

It can be interesting to monetize, but is not always helpful. It is better to be roughly right, then to be precisely wrong.

When developing a business case for new actors, it is advisable to check the level and purpose that is fit for your audience.

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity TEEB Cities workstream tool in The Netherlands shows how much value is added to cities by green and blue infrastructure. A few aspects are taken into account: real estate values, health effects, energy use effects and social benefits. The value of nature is very high, based on peer reviewed scientific literature.

Although accessing the money is not obvious, the value is however higher than the costs, which is of interest to the business case. Which parts of the value are easy to capture and which stakeholders are essential to be part of this. Feasibility of realizing the value is dependent on engaging the right actors to realise it.

### Key challenges

- Often the benefit holders are not the cost bearers – this requires an intricate financial arrangement
- Often a misfit between short and long-term investments and benefits – often the benefits materialize in the long-term, whereas current investment often look at the short term (1-4 years)
- An integrated approach to costs and benefits is lacking – there are many siloes in particular for public budgets
- Lack of knowledge and methodologies

### Examples of arrangements

- Classic – real estate developers invest in landscaping and renters/buyers pay through higher prices/rents
- Pooling – Municipality invests through various budgets, mixing budgets, e.g. the damage insurer participates
- Outcome payment – Municipality invests in greening, productivity increases as sick leave reduces for employees, the % of avoided costs are returned to the municipality



- Blended finance – bank provides a loan for green roofs, the investment is paid back through reduced energy costs, the municipality pays the guarantee

What remains challenging is finding ways to efficiently make arrangements where multiple non-conventional actors get involved to leverage public funding for urgent needs related to biodiversity and climate change and good quality of living. This investment requirement is high and public budgets will help to deliver on these outcomes.

Crowd funding can be an option, but is not always successful.

### **The serious game on the challenge – developing a park on a vacant urban lot**

The roles of the serious game included: chair person, city council, citizen, water authority, housing corporation, bank and health insurance company. Each receives an instruction for the interest and outcome of the particular actor with budget and negotiation goals.

Two rounds of the game were played in two different groups – with a different role each time, while the chair stayed the same. The result of stepping in the shoes of different stakeholders and defending their views and interests was an interesting approach to understanding a real life example of finding common ground for the development and implementation of NBS.

#### **Summary of learnings from this session:**

This was an interactive session with a serious game, stepping into the shoes of stakeholders involved in the development of a park in an empty lot of a municipality, to learn about engaging with unconventional partners.

- Work on a shared vision is a key lesson, as all actors have their own interests and wishes
- To widen the circle, some of the partners that are invited for the exchange do not respond but others can be engaged
- The game helped to understand each others' language and the way they operate. In reality the environment can be very complex, but it helps to get a better understanding of the stakeholders points of view
- The personality of the stakeholders and having a personal connection with the people you engage with is key, sometimes the personal connection does not exist, but it can be established, especially in larger organisations there are different departments which can be an entry point for engagement as an internal change agent, this can be even more important than the quality of the message
- Starting negotiations with a game structure can help to consider the different views in the community, playing the game as a starting point can help the understanding of other viewpoints and positions – these views are legitimate and do not block the progress of the project



- A serious game can help to convey messages and help to experience how it can work
- Reading material: Investing in a green urban future  
<https://networknature.eu/product/24352>



## Action for the future

## Upscaling NBS in Europe and beyond

Chantal van Ham, EU Programme Manager Nature Based Solutions and Acting Director of the IUCN European Regional Office, offered an insight into the future of NBS. NetworkNature and all the projects it collaborates with have a clear mission, but the path towards achieving it is not always well defined. The session zoomed into some of the challenges and difficulties encountered (including COVID-19), and the lessons learnt. This was done thanks to an interactive session through the use of mentimeter.

The results of the mentimeter poll questions showed that the main challenges encountered in achieving the project results were related to the challenge of ensuring real engagement and interaction with practitioners and professionals, implementing and upscaling NBS, as well as working remotely. Other aspects, that represent challenges in the attendees' projects concerned lack of time to deliver actions.

Figure 11 – Aspects that present challenges for projects



A number of potential opportunities for the projects were also identified, including sharing knowledge and case studies, and working towards a common language.

Attendees have also proposed some valuable solutions to solve the challenges, for instance by organising specific trainings and informational events. Finally, attendees have been requested to provide some suggestions on how the European Commission and the cooperation with other



Horizon projects can help them to deal with the challenges and opportunities discussed during the session, such as more resources for the Task Forces and flexible deliverables.

*Figure 12 - Suggestions on how the European Commission can help projects deal with challenges*



## Closing remarks

The H2020 Nature-based solutions Task Forces Cluster Meeting concluded with a closing speech from Sofie Vandewoestijne, from the European Research Executive Agency of the European Commission, thanking all participants, speakers and organisers. She underlined the importance of this meeting to create a network and upscale EU funded research and innovation on Nature Based Solutions through knowledge sharing and communication, not only between partners but also across the projects and Task Forces, and beyond.

Alice Reil, ICLEI, concluded by stating the critical role that a discussion among NetworkNature's extensive network plays in identifying new topics to work on, putting together events that are interesting to partners, providing the opportunity to look beyond projects and Task Forces and providing the space to learn new angles of NBS.



# Follow-up actions

## Collaboration and networking

The different sessions and presentations of the H2020 NBS Task Force Cluster Meeting provided relevant information as well as opportunities for networking and collaborations. Several participants have expressed interest in collaborating with specific projects, Task Forces and policy areas.

The following table provides a summary of follow-up actions which should help bringing forward new networking and collaboration opportunities. NetworkNature believes that the engagement of different partners and projects can benefit the NBS community in acquiring new knowledge and experience, with the objective of creating impact, and will continue to enable such interactions.

NetworkNature will take stock of the outcomes of this meeting, resulting from the interactions and discussions with the participants, to bring forward throughout the duration of the project and in the next Task force Cluster Meetings.

*Table 1 - Overview of follow-up actions for networking and collaborations*

Topic	Action
<b>National and Regional NBS Hubs</b>	The National Research Council of Italy (CNR) is interested in being the organizing partner for the Mediterranean Hub. Carlo Calfapietra will get in contact with Anna Bruen (ICLEI).
<b>EIB project on assessing access to finance for NBS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FutureMARES expressed interest in collaborating with regards to marine work. Vera Köpsel to get in touch with Kym Whiteoak (Trinomics)</li><li>• Anyone interested in providing inputs to the project can get in touch with Kym Whiteoak at: <a href="mailto:kym.whiteoak@trinomics.eu">kym.whiteoak@trinomics.eu</a></li></ul>
<b>Policy landscape</b>	<b>New European Bauhaus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regarding NBS in Horizon Europe and LIFE connecting to New European Bauhaus, see relevant session as from 3:30:00 in this video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lixOiffMfe4&amp;t=17913s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lixOiffMfe4&amp;t=17913s</a></li><li>• To make suggestions for the self-assessment tool for the New European Bauhaus initiative projects, feel free to get in touch with: <a href="mailto:vera.koepsel@uni-hamburg.de">vera.koepsel@uni-hamburg.de</a></li></ul>
<b>Collaboration across projects</b>	<b>Rest-COAST:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MaCoBioS expressed interest to collaborate to exchange on coastal NBS (<a href="mailto:geraldine.perez@institut-paul-ricard.org">geraldine.perez@institut-paul-ricard.org</a>)</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FutureMARES expressed interest to collaborate on marine NBS in Europe and CELAC (<a href="mailto:vera.koepsel@uni-hamburg.de">vera.koepsel@uni-hamburg.de</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b>GrowGreen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Just Nature project expressed interest in collaborating building on findings of their project focusing on Gzira city in Malta, on regulating dense urban microclimate through green constructions and design elements, ensuring a healthy safe, comfortable streetscape through citizen-based monitoring</li> </ul> <p><b>EUPOLIS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An integrated NBS-based urban planning methodology for enhancing health and well-being of the citizens. For more information one can contact the coordinator Nikos Doulamis (<a href="mailto:ndoulam@cs.ntua.gr">ndoulam@cs.ntua.gr</a>) and the project manager Manolis Sardis (<a href="mailto:sardism@mail.ntua.gr">sardism@mail.ntua.gr</a>) <a href="https://eupolis-project.eu">https://eupolis-project.eu</a></li> </ul>
<b>Task Forces</b>	<p><b>TF1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you would like to join Task Force 1: Data and Knowledge Sharing please contact <a href="mailto:jonathan@oppla.eu">jonathan@oppla.eu</a> or <a href="mailto:Alberto.POZZA@ec.europa.eu">Alberto.POZZA@ec.europa.eu</a></li> <li>The next TF1 meeting will be on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022</li> </ul> <p><b>TF2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If interested in joining TF2 please contact: Sofie VANDEWOESTIJNE &lt;<a href="mailto:Sofie.VANDEWOESTIJNE@ec.europa.eu">Sofie.VANDEWOESTIJNE@ec.europa.eu</a>&gt;, Laura PALOMO RIOS &lt;<a href="mailto:Laura.PALOMO-RIOS@ec.europa.eu">Laura.PALOMO-RIOS@ec.europa.eu</a>&gt; and Verónica RUIZ GARCIA &lt;<a href="mailto:Veronica.RUIZ@iucn.org">Veronica.RUIZ@iucn.org</a>&gt;</li> <li>If interested to contribute to the NBS &amp; Biodiversity work under TF2 please contact: Esther San José Carreras (<a href="mailto:estsan@cartif.es">estsan@cartif.es</a>), Stuart Connop (<a href="mailto:s.p.connop@uel.ac.uk">s.p.connop@uel.ac.uk</a>), Raúl Sánchez (<a href="mailto:rausan@cartif.es">rausan@cartif.es</a>) &amp; Caroline Nash (<a href="mailto:c.nash@uel.ac.uk">c.nash@uel.ac.uk</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b>TF3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To join TF3 contact: Matthieu Grosjean <a href="mailto:matthieu.grosjean@steinbeis-europa.de">matthieu.grosjean@steinbeis-europa.de</a></li> <li>if interested in collaborating on valuing the benefits of NBS (TF3 - workstream 4) contact: <a href="mailto:mz@envs.au.dk">mz@envs.au.dk</a> and <a href="mailto:wenting.chen@niva.no">wenting.chen@niva.no</a></li> <li>Next TF3 Meeting: 07.02.2022 at 15:30 CEWT (every 2 Months usually 1st Monday of the month)</li> <li>WS4 next Meeting: 22.02.2022</li> </ul> <p><b>TF4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new projects' communicators are encouraged to join TF4 - please email <a href="mailto:nea.pakarinen@iclei.org">nea.pakarinen@iclei.org</a></li> <li>Next TF4 meeting to be held on 3.02.2022 10-11.30am CET</li> </ul> <p><b>TF6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If interested in joining TF6, please contact 'GIONFRA Susanna' &lt;<a href="mailto:susanna.gionfra@iucn.org">susanna.gionfra@iucn.org</a>&gt;; Knud Erik Hilding-Hamann &lt;<a href="mailto:khi@teknologisk.dk">khi@teknologisk.dk</a>&gt;; or NOUKAS Piret (REA) &lt;<a href="mailto:Piret.NOUKAS@ec.europa.eu">Piret.NOUKAS@ec.europa.eu</a>&gt;</li> <li>Next meeting of TF6 to be held on 31.1 at 15:30 CET</li> </ul>



## Relevant publications and initiatives

During the event, a number of useful initiatives and publications have been promoted:

- TF3 Work Stream 2 (Nature-based Economy) published a draft NBE White paper on Nature-based Economy in Summer 2021, available at: <https://networknature.eu/Nature-Based-Economy-White-Paper-Consultation>
- TF3 Work Stream 3 (Elements of NBS business case) published “State of the Art and Latest Advances in Exploring Business Models for Nature-Based Solutions”, available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/13/7413/htm>
- TF3 Work Stream 4 (valuation of NBS benefits) had made available a matrix on valuation of NBS benefits: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1\\_bYB2\\_Yz1m306bwX5fqTLGLwxEXDEGjFIof1ma3Zhd0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_bYB2_Yz1m306bwX5fqTLGLwxEXDEGjFIof1ma3Zhd0/edit?usp=sharing)
- The first NetworkNature Task Forces Digest was published in December 2021, available at: [https://networknature.eu/sites/default/files/images/NetworkNature-Digest-Issue01\\_2021-Winter.pdf](https://networknature.eu/sites/default/files/images/NetworkNature-Digest-Issue01_2021-Winter.pdf)
- CLEARING HOUSE has developed a typology for urban forests as nature-based solutions, which could be extended for other ecosystems: <https://clearinghouseproject.eu/2021/09/15/a-novel-typology-for-urban-forests-as-nature-based-solutions-workshop/>
- The Spiral Project published a Handbook on Effective interfaces between science, policy and society, available at: <https://oppla.eu/product/24371>
- AIPH World Green City Awards 2022, designed to champion ambitious nature-orientated approaches to city design and operation: <https://aiph.org/green-city/green-city-awards/>
- Nature Squared published a report on Investing in a green urban future, available at: <http://www.nature-squared.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Investing-in-a-green-urban-future.pdf>
- LALI is a network of networks to share diverse and transformative ideas through its nodes, projects, publications, symposiums and forums: <http://www.lali-iniciativa.com>

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