



# Digest

DECEMBER 2021

Nature-based Solutions: **working together**

An update from NetworkNature and the EU  
Nature-based Solutions Task Forces



Network  
Nature



# NetworkNature Task Forces

Providing a space for dialogue and exchange  
for the nature-based solutions community




The NetworkNature Team

**Over the years, nature-based solutions have gained increasing attention and are now widely adopted as concrete approaches to address several societal challenges, from climate change, to disaster risk reduction, local economic development and biodiversity. The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized the importance of nature for collective well-being, creating momentum to build back better and strengthening the role of nature-based solutions in addressing multiple challenges.** Nevertheless, a NetworkNature event during the European Green week highlighted that only a small portion of funding is dedicated to nature as part of economic recovery plans, and more needs to be done to ensure both health and nature are incorporated in all recovery policies.

So, what are we doing to prepare for the future? To date, knowledge on the environmental and social benefits of nature-based solutions is continuously increasing. However, challenges to their market development still persist and less attention has been dedicated to their economic potential. For the market for nature-based solutions to thrive, more research is needed as well as policies put in place to support its development.





## Ultimately, it is our nature to network!

In the current policy landscape, the growth and interest in nature-based solutions is striking. Nature-based solutions are instrumental to the aspirations of the European Green Deal, as well as to other policy objectives, such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Recovery Plan. At the global level, nature-based solutions are recognised as an important part of the pathway to achieve the goals of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

In this context, NetworkNature plays a crucial role in providing space for dialogue and exchange for the nature-based solutions community, and therefore facilitating the creation of opportunities for local, regional and international cooperation.

Cooperation should be the real focus! With a growing portfolio of EU-funded projects under the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme that focus on nature-based solutions — be it in relation to sustainable urban development, social cohesion, public health, water and climate resilience, or disaster risk reduction — now more than ever there is a clear need to join forces and harness the variety of approaches and outputs that these projects produce.

Ultimately, it is our nature to network!

For this very reason, NetworkNature has taken charge of the European Union Task Forces for Nature-based solutions clustering. We're collaborating with projects around several transversal topics, organised into five task forces, each with specific objectives and outcomes. Across the task forces, projects will collaborate to share, search and reuse data and knowledge related to nature-based solutions (Task Force 1), assess their impacts and benefits (Task Force 2), identify and consolidate underlying business and investment models and build a nature-based economy (Task Force 3), maximise their visibility (Task Force 4) and promote co-creation for inclusive nature-based regeneration (Task Force 6). All activities which will contribute to maximising the impact and spread of nature-based solutions.

If you are interested to know what goes on in each of these task forces and be updated on the key outcomes and activities, read on!



# Task Force 1 update

## Data and Knowledge Sharing



**Jonathan Porter**

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The primary focus of Task Force 1 in recent meetings has been the discussion and development of a Shared Data Management Plan. Task force members agreed that this plan should support collaboration rather than be prescriptive, because each project develops their own individual data management plans.

A shared metadata template has been proposed by Piersaverio Spinnato of the UnaLAB project and this is being tested by projects to ensure that it can accommodate the range of datasets that are being generated by different aspects of research and innovation for nature-based solutions.

A draft shared data management plan has been developed by the Task Force and is open for comment and further development at future meetings. The plan includes principles for sharing metadata; defining levels of access to databases; promoting open data; documenting the provenance of data; using free and open-source software; and ensuring long term availability of data.





# Horizon 2020 Nature-based Solutions Cluster Task Forces Meeting

On 31 May 2021 Task Force members, NetworkNature, and the European Commission (REA and DG R&I) met for an interactive dialogue.

The dialogue involved taking stock of achievements to date and strengthening synergies and exchange to further increase the impact of Horizon 2020 nature-based solutions. Task Forces and projects presented their work and explored opportunities for synergies.

**In breakout sessions, participants explored potential opportunities for synergies and collaboration on the following topics:**

- Economic valuation of nature-based solutions benefits
- Strengthening engagement with target audiences through co-creation, impact monitoring and communication
- Monitoring, collection and storage of NBS data



**The nature-based solutions community is continually growing with new projects and new ideas. The next Task Force meeting will take place on Monday 17th January.**

# The Nature-based economy

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## How can nature-based solutions contribute to the sustainable economy of the future?

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Nature-based solutions provide an overarching framework embracing concepts and methodologies such as biodiversity net-gain, ecosystem-based adaptation, mitigation, environmental disaster risk reduction, green infrastructure and natural climate solutions to name a few. While much focus to date has been on the environmental or social benefits of nature-based solutions, less attention has been paid to their economic potential and their role in contributing towards more sustainable and just societies. Indeed, modern economies are not generally built around nature and nature-based solutions — other than extracting from nature. The dire predictions of our climate changed future, now in many ways already our present, tell us that this must change. Business as usual is not a prescription for human survival.



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**Daniela Rizzi, Phd**

*Senior officer for nature-based solutions,  
green infrastructure and biodiversity*

ICLEI Europe



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**Siobhan McQuaid**

*Associate Director Innovation*

Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin and Coordinator of the H2020 project Connecting Nature

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Some of the questions respondents were asked to consider as part of a [\*\*TNOC virtual roundtable on the nature-based economy\*\*](#):

- How do you see nature-based solutions contributing to the sustainable economy of the future?
- How do we go from nature-based solutions to a nature-based economy — where we work in harmony with nature — planning, growing, harnessing, harvesting and/or restoring natural resources in a sustainable way?
- What type of new jobs, new innovations, new enterprises might emerge from a nature-based economy and what are the challenges to uptake of such a concept globally?

***...less attention has been paid to their economic potential and their role in contributing towards more sustainable and just societies...***

You can engage with more than 20 respondents in the comment section of the roundtable and discuss with them on perspectives, opportunities and challenges.

It is not about simply assigning monetary value to nature — although, in a monetised world, this is part of the discussion. It is about recognising the values of nature (in many dimensions) and firmly integrating these values in our economies. It is also about creating broad and inclusive discussions about nature and its benefits across sectors such as business, planning, engineering, science, conservation, and community.

The roundtable forms part of a [\*\*wider consultation on a new White Paper on the Nature-Based Economy\*\*](#). Thank you to everyone who contributed to this consultation process. We are now analysing the 100+ responses which will provide input for the forthcoming European Commission Expert Publication on the Nature-based economy.

TASK FORCE MEMBER PROFILE

# Tom Mackenzie

Member of: **Task Force 4: Nature-based solution communicators**



## Hi Tom, what interests you about the work of your Task Force?

The best thing about Task Force 4 (TF4) is surely the way it allows the Communication & Dissemination partners of EU/H2020-funded, nature-based solutions -focused projects to get together, at regular intervals throughout the year, to discuss best practices, compare approaches, challenge, test and learn from each other. This is invaluable.

As the Communication & Dissemination partners for our respective projects we have a common set of objectives: to relay important information, to tell the unfolding stories of our project implementations, and to ensure that the results of our projects — the datasets, the research findings, the nature-based solutions prototypes, the testimonials, the peer-reviewed papers, the co-creation workshops etc. — are presented in a language, style and format that resonate with our multiple target audiences. In practice, however, our approaches, and our favoured Communication & Dissemination tools and platforms tend to differ. This, of course, is what is so valuable about TF4. It is the diversity of TF4 members' experience and perspectives that makes interactions with this group so interesting.

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**Tom Mackenzie**  
*Lead Consultant*

ITEMS International, Paris  
[www.items.fr](http://www.items.fr)

Informative, topical, convivial, each meeting is an opportunity to hear from other nature-based solutions Communicators about new or tried-and-tested tools, platforms, methods and strategies for effective communication and dissemination. What works? What doesn't work? What can we do individually and collectively to improve general awareness about the potential of nature-based solutions, and the many opportunities for ordinary citizens, researchers, entrepreneurs, activists to get involved in our projects?

Each TF4 meeting is also a great way to share or pick up tips on website design, better leveraging of social media, event management, academic publishing, or how to improve the dissemination level and impact of project newsletters. As well as excellent opportunities to build collaborations and synergies between projects.



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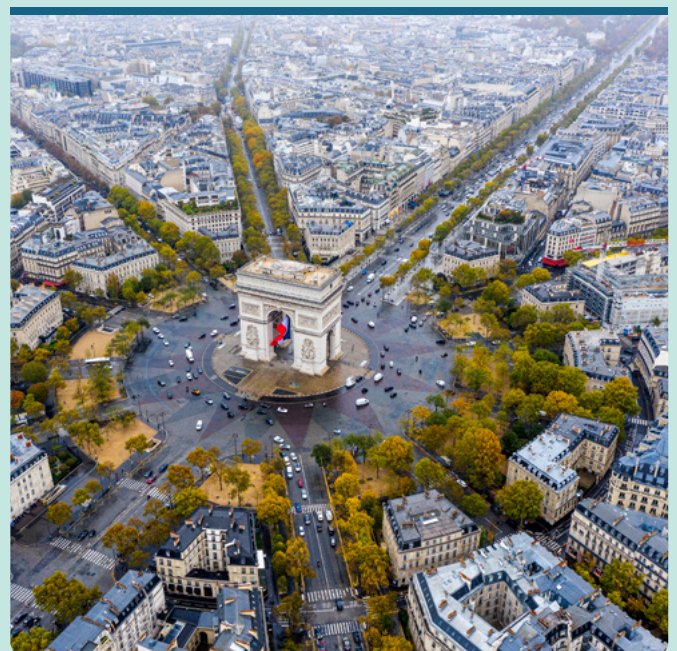
## **How your organisation is working with nature-based solutions?**

ITEMS International is a Paris-based consultancy firm specialised in the deployment of ICTs including smart grid technologies, the Internet of Things, to make cities safer, smarter and more resilient. In recent years our focus has shifted from “smart” to “cognitive” cities which have the capacity to learn through constant interaction with their citizens, through advanced ICTs, allowing them to ever more efficient, sustainable and resilient.

ITEMS International is also the organiser of the annual Global Forum: Shaping the Future event which brings together thought leaders from around the world to discuss key societal and technological challenges. The next event, to be held in Muscat (Oman), on 7 & 8 March 2022 will be largely dedicated to the potential of nature-based solutions to make cities more sustainable and climate proof.

## **Are there any upcoming events that you're excited for?**

As part of the URBiNAT project, ITEMS International is one of the co-organisers of an international event on the theme of nature-based solutions and the co-creation of Healthy Corridors to make cities more sustainable and resilient. The event will be held on 16 and 17 June 2022 at the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation in Milan. More details to be announced soon via the URBiNAT website ([www.urbinat.eu](http://www.urbinat.eu)), and social media.





TASK FORCE MEMBER PROFILE

# Laura Wendling

Member of: **Task Force 2: Integrated Assessment Framework**



## Hi Laura, what interests you about the work of your Task Force?

The opportunity to contribute to a coherent European evidence base on NBS performance and impact. The ability to assess the impacts of NBS across multiple challenge areas and compare NBS of different types, spatial scale, and implemented in different locations is essential to our understanding of how to maximise the positive impacts of NBS, and the “success” of future NBS projects.

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**Laura Wendling**  
*Research Team Leader  
in Nature-Based Solutions*

VTT Technical Research Centre  
of Finland, Ltd  
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## How your organisation is working with nature-based solutions?

One of VTT's largest NBS projects to date is the Urban Nature Labs (UNaLab) H2020 project, wherein we are working together with partners across Europe to co-create, demonstrate, and evaluate a range of different NBS targeting climate resilience and the sustainable management of water resources. Collaborative knowledge production among a wide network of partner cities — including Tampere, Genova, Eindhoven, Stavanger, Prague, Castellón, Cannes, Başakşehir, Hong Kong and Buenos Aires — enables UNaLab project results to reflect diverse urban socio-economic and ecological contexts, and climate conditions. Evidence of NBS effectiveness to combat the negative impacts of climate change and urbanisation are being captured via comprehensive monitoring and impact assessment. The outcomes of this work will be a robust evidence base and go-to-market environment for innovative, replicable, and locally-attuned NBS.





The opportunity to contribute to a coherent European evidence base on NBS performance and impact.

...we are working together with partners across Europe to co-create, demonstrate, and evaluate a range of different NBS targeting climate resilience and the sustainable management of water resources.



# Task Force 4 update

## Nature-based solution communicators



**Nea Pakarinen**

ICLEI

Task Force 4 Nature-based solutions Communicators has re-started during NetworkNature and is meeting regularly to establish synergies on joint-activities to enhance visibility and streamline efforts.

The Task Force has also engaged in capacity-building activities among members, sharing skills and resources, for example a lesson on graphic design was held in spring. More recently the Task Force has been focusing on establishing joint messaging for different target audiences and establishing contact and synergies with European Commission communicators.



# NetworkNature's first Annual Event:



## Achieving the European Green Deal through Nature-based Solutions

**On 21st October, NetworkNature held its first Annual Event which focused on the NetworkNature semester theme “Ecosystem restoration through nature-based solutions”, in line with current EU ambitions for achieving the European Green Deal and the start of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.**



The all-day online event, moderated by **Anna Jones**, an Agricultural Journalist & Broadcaster, created a space for dialogue for the Nature-based Solutions community and gathered new and impactful actors, policy makers, scientific experts, civil society representatives as well as landowners, natural resource managers and businesses.

The event explored opportunities for strengthening engagement and partnerships for NBS. The objective was to promote the uptake of project results and to support Horizon 2020 NBS projects, as well as the Biodiversity Partnership and Horizon Europe Missions to integrate NBS for ecosystem restoration effectively in future plans and actions.





# Achieving the EU Green Deal through Nature-based solutions

## *NetworkNature Annual Event*

The opening plenary started with an introduction to NetworkNature by **Bettina Wilk**, Senior Officer Sustainable Resources Climate and Resilience at ICLEI and coordinator of NetworkNature. As a key resource for the NBS community, NetworkNature facilitates the creation of opportunities for local, regional and international cooperation. **Chantal van Ham**, Acting Director of IUCN European Regional Office, further emphasised the role of NetworkNature in engaging new audiences, such as forest and landowners, water managers, as well as the finance and infrastructure sectors, who play a key role in upscaling NBS. The immense potential of NBS to address societal challenges was presented by **Daisy Hessenberger**, IUCN Global Ecosystem Management Programme, as well as the risks associated with their misidentification and misuse, which may weaken the evidence base on NBS and lead to harm to people and nature. For this reason, the Global NBS Standard was presented as providing a global path towards mainstreaming NBS.

**Frederic Lemaitre**, Officer in charge of science-society and policy interfacing for BiodivERsA, provided an overview of the ongoing work to develop an EU Research & Innovation Roadmap for NBS. The results of their research show that a high proportion of NBS projects focus on urban environments and agricultural

land. The main societal challenges addressed are linked to social justice and social cohesion, new economic opportunities and green jobs, followed by climate resilience, and food security.

A lively panel debate on the needs and opportunities for upscaling NBS concluded the plenary session of the event, with speakers from the NetworkNature NBS Community representing cities, landscape architects, the business sector, and projects implementing NBS on the ground, namely **Holger Robrecht** (ICLEI), **Tony Williams** (IFLA), **Giulia Carbone** (WBCSD), **Pierre Failler** (MaCoBioS), and **Tom Wild** (Conexus).

The discussion, facilitated also by the numerous questions from the audience, concluded that nature — compared to grey solutions — provides multiple benefits, from coastal defence and risk reduction, to the creation of more liveable places, supporting tourism, and enhancing biodiversity. The delivery of multiple co-benefits was one of the key factors mentioned by the panellists crucial for ensuring NBS upscaling, in addition to proper education, research adapted to the local context, skills development and re-skilling programmes, and the use of the IUCN Global NBS Standard.



## PRESENTATIONS & RECORDINGS

### Five parallel sessions took place, addressing different areas of relevance to NBS:

- [Carbon farming as a NBS and a first attempt to pay for ecosystem services](#), organised by the European Landowners Organisation
- [The role of NBS to deliver the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework](#), organised by IUCN
- [Closing the research gaps on NBS](#), organised by BiodivERsA
- [Kick-off meeting of the network of National representatives for SMEs interested in NBS](#), organised by Steinbeis 2i
- [Rethinking cities: from smart into human](#), organised by the EIB Institute

During the closing plenary, **Philippe Tulkens**, from DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission, emphasised the importance of investments in NBS for achieving the Green Deal ambitions for the EU, in particular the value of nature for citizens' mental and physical health, as well as for climate change mitigation. He concluded that a science-based approach is important to successfully address the climate crisis and to incentive investments from the public and private sector.

A panel discussion on achieving Ecosystem Restoration targets through joint actions for NBS brought together a range of stakeholders: **Raysa França** (Youth4Nature), **Richard Scott** (SER Europe), **Jurgen Tack** (ELO), **Raul Sanchez** (UrbanGreenUp project) and **Silvana Di Sabatino** (Operandum project). They agree that in order to achieve ecosystem restoration no one should be left behind. Ensuring the representation and involvement of youth, communication among people and stakeholders, and effective cooperation across sectors are among the main challenges to overcome for the implementation of NBS projects for ecosystem restoration.

The NetworkNature Annual Event concluded with a message of hope: despite the different crises the world is facing, this is an exciting time to act. Progress on NBS is developing and will continue to grow but more efforts are needed to seek “diversity”, both in the ecosystems to protect and in bringing together the groups to make this happen.

The recordings of this event (opening and closing plenaries, and parallel sessions) and the presentations can be accessed [here](#).

A full report of the event is available [here](#).



# Nature-based solutions in Sustainability

## Implementing nature-based solutions in the built environment



Israa H. Mahmoud, Ph.D. MSc.

*Post-Doc and CLEVER Cities research leader*

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You are invited to submit manuscripts to a special issue of **Sustainability** on nature-based solutions, citizen participation and shared governance. This special issue belongs to the section **“Sustainable Urban and Rural Development”**.

The topic of pinpointing nature-based solutions in the urban context has lately been attracting interest from different scholars, urban planning practitioners, and policymakers.

This Special Issue aims at bridging the gap between science and practice of getting nature-based solutions implemented in the built environment. In particular, we invite scholars to investigate how nature-based solutions and urban greening strategies are re-shaping the built environment and the whole imagery of cities, both from a spatial and a governance perspective.

This Special Issue welcomes scientific articles that cover novel insights into urban debates on design and planning theory, policy, and practice around nature-based solutions. Currently, cities are making use of nature as a solution to many challenges, without radically and critically addressing the full potential of interpreting green as a powerful urban design and governance feature.

We invite authors to address the procedural gaps in strategies for greening cities that are currently at the forefront of the re-shaping of many urban fabrics.



**Share your manuscripts at:**

**[www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special\\_issues/greening\\_cities](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special_issues/greening_cities)**

**Deadline for submissions: 31 January 2022**





# PHUSICOS at IUCN World Conservation Congress 2021

## Strategies for enhancing nature and natural solutions – Task Force 6 at the IUCN World Congress

**At the IUCN World Congress, the Task Force on co-creation and co-governance of nature-based solutions for spatial planning was invited to showcase how nature-based solutions create good environmental governance by engaging all parts of society and to enhance multiple benefits for both humans and nature.**



**Dr. Gerd Lupp**  
*Research Associate*

TUM

Co-creation with broad involvement of stakeholders and civil society therefore is a key factor for successful broad implementation of nature-based solutions. The European Union positions itself as a forerunner in nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity. NetworkNature supports and facilitates this process to bring together experts across many fields to provide collaboration in task force teams.

The multidisciplinary team on Co-creation and co-governance of nature-based solutions for spatial planning represented by Gonçalo Canto Momiz, Américo Mateus ([URBINAT](#)), Israa Mahmoud ([CLEVER Cities](#)) and Gerd Lupp ([PHUSICOS](#)) provided an interactive presentation and discussion. They gave the interested audience insights on why it is important on systematic involvement strategies for enhancing nature and natural solutions in both urban and rural contexts.

# Nature-based solutions in light of the pandemic

## Creating sustainable and livable habitats for humans

**A new NetworkNature brief on nature-based solutions in light of the Covid-19 pandemic summarises how nature-based solutions in cities can support residents' mental and physical health.**



The NetworkNature Team

The findings, based on NetworkNature's first semester 'Nature-based solutions in light of the pandemic', indicate clear linkages between the use of nature-based solutions, such as parks, forests and gardens in the urban gardens and well-being. Even just the vicinity or a view of greenery can result in better health. Further nature-based solutions can help mitigate the spread of food- and waterborne diseases and zoonoses, by bolstering biodiversity — thus contributing to lessening the risk of future pandemics. During the COVID-19 pandemic many studies and surveys found that citizens were increasingly seeking and appreciating urban green spaces.

The benefits of nature-based solutions are clear, and when designing them in consultation with stakeholders, they can help create sustainable and livable habitats for humans. [Read the semester Outcomes Brief](#) to learn more about the findings and explore our [next semester theme on ecosystem restoration](#).







# Network Nature



[networknature.eu](https://networknature.eu)



[NetworkNatureEU](https://twitter.com/NetworkNatureEU)



[NetworkNature](https://www.youtube.com/NetworkNature)



[NetworkNature](https://www.linkedin.com/company/NetworkNature)

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