Welcome package for Horizon 2020 Nature-based Solutions Task Forces

About NetworkNature

NetworkNature is a resource for the nature-based solutions community, creating opportunities for local, regional and international cooperation to maximise the impact and spread of nature-based solutions. The project is funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 programme.

NetworkNature's activities

- **Synthesize & strengthen the NBS evidence base** by gathering experiences, knowledge, tools and services from **over 30 Horizon 2020** projects.
- **Engage existing stakeholders & expand the NBS community** to new sectors and target audiences, by creating new partnerships and identifying sectoral champions, sharing knowledge in dedicated events, educating young generations and communicating the latest findings in the field.
- **Ensure NBS science informs the policy agenda and vice versa.** As an interface between NBS innovators and knowledge generators as well as business and policy makers, NetworkNature is a bridge between the European policy landscape and the NBS community.
- **Accelerate the uptake of NBS** across science, business, policy and practice by providing guidance and capacity building, creating and operating new European NBS regional hubs, coordination of the EU H2020 Nature-based Solutions Task Forces and networking with practitioners, business, investors and policymakers.

NetworkNature Pathways for Impact

The objectives, activities and desired outcomes of the Task Forces align with NetworkNature's impact pathways:

1. *Increase the understanding of benefits and risks of NBS for all target audiences, through generating and consolidating a strong evidence base for NBS on EU level in collaboration with the H2020 Task Forces.*

2. *Enhance attractiveness of NBS for business, by creating an understanding of the NBS market context and business opportunities, based on the work undertaken in TF3, to devise a strategy for improving NBS attractiveness for the business and investment sector.*

3. *Improve the capacities of NBS innovators and practitioners, by supporting the established community of NBS innovators - H2020 TFs - in capacity-building and expanding it to new audiences.*

4. ***Support mainstreaming of NBS across policy sectors***, *by creating an interface between EU policy makers and the NBS community to develop mutual understanding and co-develop policy responses.*

5. ***Raise societal awareness of the benefits of NBS,*** *by finding a joint language and communication mechanism to communicate with the wider public and engage citizens, with the by-product of creating greater visibility for project results and taskforce products.*

The H2020 NBS Task Forces

There is a growing portfolio of EU Horizon 2020 projects that focus on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) related to: sustainable urban development, social cohesion, public health, water and climate resilience, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). These projects work on several transversal topic areas, often with different approaches and with varying outputs produced. In order to gather and synthesize the variety of approaches and outputs, ensure the EU added value and policy relevance of this coherent portfolio, as well as to maximize social, ecological and innovation impact, the projects are 'clustered' around several key transversal topic areas.

For the projects, clustering provides benefits, such as enabling synergies, strengthening networks, sharing and synthesizing knowledge, communicating and disseminating results with a wider impact, and saving resources around common areas of work, NetworkNature helps the H2020 NBS projects to harness those opportunities through curated NBS Task Forces (TFs) in relevant transversal themes, such as NBS knowledge, NBS impact assessment, finance and business models for NBS, NBS communication, and co-creation of NBS.

NetworkNature supports the coordination of the H2020 NBS TFs together with the European Commission (EASME and DG RTD). Membership of TFs is restricted to partners of H2020 NBS projects to keep clear focus and obligations, while ensuring a manageable governance structure – opportunities for exchange with other projects will be facilitated during TF meetings, there is also the possibility for other projects to contribute to the work streams of the TF. Guests and observers are also sometimes invited to come along on this exiting journey.

Key objectives of H2020 NBS Task Forces

The H2020 NBS project clustering aims to create common messages for NBS, foster knowledge sharing and synthesis of varying approaches and results, strengthen networking and collaboration to maximise synergies among projects for NBS. In doing so, it aims to increase the projects' impact on mainstreaming NBS, while saving resources around common areas of work by creating synergies.

The current Task Forces are as follows and the name of the NetworkNature focal point for this TF is indicated:

TF1: Data Management and EU NBS Knowledge Repository - Jonathan Porter, OPPLA

Description: Taskforce 1 aims to define and implement an effective approach to share, search and reuse data and knowledge related to nature-based solutions.

Objectives: The main objective is an EU knowledge repository of nature-based solutions with contributions from each project stored within the Oppla web platform. The other objective is a shared data management plan to ensure project contributions and individual data platforms and inter-operable, open access and contain comparable data.

Key activities for 2021:

Extending the knowledge repository. The Oppla knowledge repository will be updated to allow data for the core KPIS within the NBS Impact Evaluation Handbook (TF2) during spring 2021 after the handbook is published.

Further uptake and testing of the Oppla API. The existing Oppla API will be further tested by NBS projects, using a draft testing protocol developed by the UnaLAB project.

Extension of the Oppla API. The Oppla API will be further developed to allow the storage of KPIs for nature-based solutions as part of the NetworkNature project. This work will be carried out in 2021 and members of Taskforce 1 will be invited to help shape the functionality of the API and further test it.

Shared approach to data management. A shared data management plan will be further developed during 2021 through discussion between members of the Taskforce.

TF2: NBS Impact Evaluation - Verónica Ruiz, IUCN Global

Description: enables all nature-based solutions projects funded under Horizon 2020 to collaborate on demonstrating the multiple benefits of their projects according to different areas/topics as well as testing and implementing the Handbook and its recommended indicators.

Objectives: the primary activity until now of this TF has been the development of the Handbook for Practitioners on "Evaluating the Impact of Nature-based Solutions". This document will be published in the 2021 spring and therefore, TF2 has adopted a new dynamic to cover a diverse range of topics.

Key activities: to date five work streams have been defined and each of them, under the coordination of a lead or co-leaders, will define the workstream activities and outputs for 2021:

1. <u>Handbook monitoring, testing and implementation</u>: dedicated to the testing and implementation of the Handbook and its recommended indicators. It should cover different areas of work:
- Conceptual testing of the indicators
- Conceptual testing of the framework provided by the Handbook to support monitoring
- NBS evidence from monitoring data (collaboration with TF1 envisaged).

The overarching goal is to create the evidence to further improve the Handbook. Other minor and more specific outputs (eg. joint publication of a research paper) could be also envisaged.

2. <u>Economic valuation of NBS benefits</u> : workstream dedicated to enhance knowledge related to the economic valuation of NBS benefits (eg. through the application of the SEEA methodology or other similar approaches). The overarching goal is to further improve the Handbook. Other minor and more specific outputs (eg. joint publication of a research paper) could be also envisaged as well as collaboration with TF3.

3.   Health and NBS: workstream dedicated to enhance knowledge related to assessing the impacts of NBS on health. The overarching goal is to further improve the Handbook. Other minor and more specific outputs (eg. joint publication of a research paper) could be also envisaged.

4.   NBS Biodiversity: workstream dedicated to enhance knowledge related to the monitoring of biodiversity within NBS projects. The overarching goal is to further improve the Handbook. Other minor and more specific outputs (eg. joint publication of a research paper) could be also envisaged.

5.   Marine environment: workstream dedicated to enhance knowledge related to assessing the impacts of NBS in marine/coastal environments. The overarching goal is to further improve the Handbook. Other minor and more specific outputs (eg. joint publication of a research paper) could be also envisaged.

TF3: Governance, Business Models and Financial Mechanisms – *Matthieu Grosjean, Steinbeis, supported by Bettina Wilk, ICLEI*

Description: TF3 focuses on NBS finance, investment mechanisms and business models from the perspective of co-creation and co-finance.

Objectives: TF3 aims to support and accelerate private sector uptake of NBS, and stimulate private sector investment in NBS, to move in the direction of an inclusive nature-based economy that creates new business opportunities and green employment (especially in light of post-COVID-19).

Key activities for 2021: The Task Force entails six working clusters that are led by, contributed to, and reviewed by representatives of different projects. Each cluster will agree on its specific focus together with its contributors, define their agenda and timing and identify output formats for their work:

- **Developing investable NBS propositions at scale** (large-scale NBS or cluster of NBS) for different types of investors with differing governance/implementation modes (focus still to be discussed); one activity in 2021 will include consultation/feedback on the EIB study: assessment of access-to-finance conditions for innovative Nature-based Solutions;
- **Towards a nature-based economy** which unites demand and supply side of NBS (NBS enterprises); envisaged output: report compiling project work so far including case studies and policy recommendations to be presented during the Connecting Nature Nature-based Enterprise Summit in June 2021;
- **Essential elements of the NBS business case**; output: compiling business models developed in the different H2020 NBS projects in a special edition of the journal "Business Strategy and Environment", work in progress;
- **Valuation of NBS co-benefits** to address the missing market value of NBS, and the valuation /quantification of non-monetary benefits, such as social impacts of NBS and thus, stimulate private sector investment and business uptake of NBS;
- **NBS and insurance**; envisaged output: compiling existing resources (i.e. policy documents, etc.) from H2020 NBS projects (NAIAD, etc.) in a report or paper (still to be defined);
- **Spatial and urban planning frameworks as enablers for NBS**, including collaboration and alignment with TF6 (co-creation) which is working on a similar topic to avoid overlap and duplication;

TF4: NBS Communicators *-Nea Pakarinen, ICLEI*

Description: This TF has been inactive for a while and re-started during the virtual TF meeting that took place on 27 October 2020. It synergises and enhances communication approaches and messages across projects.

Objectives: Increase visibility and dissemination channels of NBS project work and NBS in general.

Key Activities for 2021: The TF shares knowledge, engages in training and capacity building, develops common strategies and collates resources. The TF will explore the themes of common strategies, international cooperation, policy relevance, synergies with the EU, guidance for non-communicators, and explore workshops/trainings/capacity building sessions.

TF6:Co-creation and Governance - *Chantal van Ham, IUCN European Regional Office*

Description: Taskforce 6 focuses on co-creation for nature-based solutions, which involves engaging citizens and stakeholders in assessing problems and issues, designing nature-based solutions, implementing them and monitoring their impact. The Taskforce incorporates all interested NBS projects, and is not limited to the sister projects on NBS for urban regeneration.

Objectives: TF6 aims to improve and promote co-creation, including in spatial planning, for inclusive nature-based regeneration. It aims to co-develop joint guidelines on co-creation of nature-based solutions, and promote the concept to the wider audience of stakeholders engaging in NBS. It includes a focus on spatial planning.

Key activities for 2021: The Taskforce incorporates several working clusters that are led by, contributed to, and reviewed by representatives of different projects. These clusters are:

- *NBS – introduction – to frame the topic of co-creation for NBS*
- *Co-creation for/with who,*
- *Co-governance and policies*
- *How to do co-creation and resources*
- *Monitoring and evaluation*

Each cluster will agree the definition of their topic; define their agenda and timing; identify output formats for their work, such as videos, webinars, posters, etc.; and consider links with ongoing work in the projects. The outputs from the cluster will be made available in a wiki format as well as communicated in other forms as determined by the clusters. Due to the focus on spatial planning, the Taskforce coordinates with Taskforce 3 to avoid overlap and duplication.

Roles and responsibilities of Task Force partners

The key actors involved in the management and operation of the Horizon 2020 NBS Task Forces are: NetworkNature consortium partners, EASME, EU DG RTD and the representatives of the European Horizon 2020 NBS projects, both their Coordinators (some of them in the project board) and Task Force members.

Every Task Force – based on agreement among its members - develops its own way of working, of attributing roles, of frequency and means of meeting, within the framework of contributing to the objectives of the R&I agenda on Nature-based solutions. "Subgroups" or workstreams can be created for more technical discussions when needed, or dissolved when no longer needed or deemed counter productive. In this case, one of the project partners will be in charge of steering sub-working groups as necessary, organizing and facilitating the necessary exchanges in a time- and resource-efficient manner as well as the development of common activities and outputs.

NetworkNature will keep an overview of all plans and results of the TFs to identify synergies on an ongoing basis and to present relevant outcomes on the NN website (in coordination with the TF leads) – this will also serve to inform H2020 project coordinators about the developments in the TFs (through the NetworkNature Project Board).

One NetworkNature focal point is allocated to each of the task forces. These focal points will be present at task force meetings, organise note-taking as well as dissemination of minutes, maintain and update the mailing list of each of the TFs on a regular basis, and oversee the TF groups on the NetworkNature platform. NetworkNature focal points will keep track of the results and knowledge needs of the different Task Forces and this information will be shared on a quarterly basis.

NetworkNature will organise two TF cluster meetings per year, one of them linked to the annual NetworkNature event and connected to the semester themes to be selected by NetworkNature – during these meetings space will be created for exchange between TFs. NetworkNature will create opportunities for exchange with key user groups of the results of the TFs to ensure uptake and to benefit from feedback from users through inviting external speakers for TF meetings and during the bi-annual cluster TF meetings.

NetworkNature will provide a continuously updated list of relevant NBS events on its website and will promote events of the NBS projects and support in creating synergies through joint events and synergies and providing inputs to policy processes.

NetworkNature will ensure that Task Forces will be supported in creating visibility for their projects. Joint promotion of results will be explored through the actions of TF 4 NBS Communicators, including access to a range of key awareness raising materials provided by the EU DG RTD.

In addition to the coordinating role of NetworkNature focal points, "TF leaders" can be elected to lead the TF discussions. Content-based activities and decisions are not part of NetworkNature's responsibilities and have to be assumed by project partners. NetworkNature ensures planning of virtual and in-person meetings as well as the electronic exchanges between and across the TFs and the project coordinators.

Project representatives in all the Task Forces are expected to actively participate in all TF-related meetings, i.e. continuously sharing knowledge and ideas, provide advice on the agenda and contribute to the content of the bi-annual all-TFTask Force-meetings. They are invited to provide insight in key knowledge resources and results of projects, present findings and tools, to ensure that TFs do not duplicate efforts. State-of-the art resources are the basis of cooperation in the TFs and NetworkNature can effectively promote and disseminate (new) findings and help create common objectives and messages. Project representatives are expected to upload relevant information sources in the online TF space via the NetworkNature platform. The NBS project coordinators shall encourage project partners to participate in the Task Forces and ensure representation of their project across the different Task Forces as relevant and adequate.

Representatives of H2020 projects, which end, are welcome to remain involved in the Task Forces as there will be a continued interest in sharing and learning from the results of their projects as well as opportunities for communicating and sharing these to promote wider uptake. New Horizon 2020 project representatives will join as projects start.

Frequently asked questions

What is the role of the NetworkNature platform for the Task Forces?
NetworkNature created an on-line platform to provide resources and foster a dialogue on nature-based solutions. All projects should actively contribute to the dialogue with their updates, thereby facilitating identification and exploitation of synergies among projects. A non-public section of the NetworkNature platform for TF Groups is used for storing TF discussion material, including minutes of TF meetings, agenda, and relevant resources and other information materials.

The TF groups on the NetworkNature Platform are used to discuss ideas and access and store TF content including minutes of TF meetings, agendas and other relevant materials. The groups are private and access is by invitation only.

Every member a TF group can use the NetworkNature Platform to create and comment on TF group 'posts'. These posts are only visible to other members of the same TF group and can be used to share news, discuss ideas or share files.

Administrators of TF groups can upload files to a file repository. These repositories contain relevant documents, organised into categories, which can be easily accessed and downloaded by any member of the TF group.

The TF groups on the NetworkNature Platform will be reviewed and updated throughout the project with new features added when convenient and relevant. New features can be bespoke to individual TF group needs and do not need to be applied universally by all Task Forces.

What about common deliverables of Task Forces?

The TF common outputs can, when relevant, replace project specific deliverables. The contribution of each partner/project should be identified (e.g. as percentage of total work) in the common deliverable/report. The quality of common deliverables will be evaluated as other project deliverables. Indicating the contribution of each partner to the common deliverable will allow the quantitative evaluation. Common outputs beyond (common) deliverables are also very welcome. For example, a joint publication decided by all/several TF representatives can be produced and mentioned in the periodic report and reflected under the impact assessment of each project.

How to handle intellectual property?

The intellectual property of the information and knowledge shared within TFs remains solely with the individual projects in line with their contribution to the TFs. The contributions of each member to the TF outputs should be documented to accurately reflect project contribution to the common outcomes in order for it to be accordingly recognised. All the knowledge and documents shared by the projects and created by them must remain within the TFs unless agreed otherwise by its members. Data within the TF should be managed according to the GDPR EU policy. NetworkNature, EASME and the DG RTD do not have any rights to the information shared by the projects and hence will not present any TF discussions and outputs as their own. TF's results will be externally communicated with agreement of all TF's members, and full credit to the individual project will be given by- inter alia - branding it with the project's logo.

How resource intensive are clustering activities?

Experience has shown that clustering is very resource intensive, and projects are therefore recommended by DG RTD/EASME to ensure smart allocation of resources to the TF work, to ensure reaching the TF objectives and to maximise the synergies that can be achieved through cooperation with other H2020 projects.