

UNALAB PROJECT SUMMARIES OF KEY RESOURCES FOR THE ADOPTION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

PLANNING A NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS PROJECT



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WHAT ARE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS?

Nature-based solutions (NBS) are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified ecosystems¹. NBS are co-created systems that utilise natural features and ecosystem-based processes to effectively and adaptively address social, economic and environmental challenges. In other words, NBS are able to protect, manage or restore ecosystems and their services, thereby addressing a multitude of urban challenges posed by the world's changing climate and rapid urbanisation. These innovative solutions bring more diverse nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, thereby creating more sustainable and resilient societies.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTION PROJECTS

Adaptive management is an iterative process for managing the whole lifecycle of a nature-based solutions project. The process of co-creating, implementing, monitoring and co-managing NBS is cyclical, thus requiring continuous evaluation and feedback at every stage in the process and identifying needed adjustments for reaching the targets and objectives. The adaptive management cycle, or the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycle, aims to learn from the past actions to improve or adjust next steps and future planning of similar projects.



1. https://www.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/news/united-nations-environment-assembly-nature-based-solutions-definition/

In its five summary documents of key resources for the adoption of NBS, the UNaLab project is presenting its main tools, handbooks, reports, lessons learnt and experiences that can be used by various stakeholders in the different phases of the adaptive management cycle. The aim of these summary documents is to introduce urban stakeholders to resources that can provide them with inspiration, ideas, knowledge and practical tools in the different phases of the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycle, ultimately advancing the adoption of NBS in their cities.

RESOURCES PRESENTED IN THIS SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The resources presented in this summary document are relevant to the PLAN phase. This phase is about making problems visible. During the PLAN phase, local urban living labs consisting of key stakeholder groups are established and challenges are co-identified in a series of urban living lab workshops along with overall goals and specific objectives. Further, suitable nature-based solutions are co-identified in a series of co-creation workshops.



UNALAB PROJECT SUMMARIES OF KEY RESOURCES FOR THE ADOPTION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

THE UNALAB PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL

The EU-funded UNaLab project is contributing to the development of smarter, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable urban communities through the implementation of nature-based solutions, which are co-created with and for local stakeholders and citizens.

Our three front-runner cities -Eindhoven, Tampere and Genova - are through the establishment of Urban Living Labs demonstration areas experimenting, demonstrating and evaluating a range of different naturebased solutions addressing climate- and water-related urban challenges. The front-runner cities actively collaborate and share their experiences with our seven follower cities - Stavanger, Prague, Castellón, Cannes, Başakşehir, Hong Kong and Buenos Aires – as well as our two observers - Guangzhou and the Brazilian Network of Smart Cities.

The project results will contribute to the growing evidence base on benefits, cost-effectiveness, economic viability and replicability of nature-based solutions, which will guide cities across Europe and beyond in developing and implementing their own co-creative nature-based solutions.

CO-CREATION & URBAN LIVING LABS

Co-creation Toolkit

TYPE OF RESOURCE:

Online toolkit and inspiration cards

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS:

Municipalities, Living Lab professionals, organisations and individuals working with co-creation and stakeholder engagement

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: https://unalab.enoll.org/

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The UNaLab Co-creation Toolkit collects a wide range of co-creation tools and methods in a user-friendly online format. The tools can be used by city administrations or any other organisations for the co-creation and experimentation of innovative solutions in a real-life urban environment together with citizens and all relevant stakeholder groups in a city. The tools come in different formats, ranging from games and ICT tools to work-shops and templates.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The co-creation toolkit includes a suite of co-creation tools and methods for the different development phases of a product or service. The toolkit includes tools which can be used for:

- Need finding to discover user needs, goals and values and get to the right solution
- Ideation to discover valuable insights and generate innovative solutions
- Strategy to design action plans to achieve long-term goals
- Experimentation to test and validate the developed solution
- Feedback to evaluate the user's reaction to the solution

The toolkit can be used in the planning phase of a nature-based solutions project as a source of inspiration and to prepare co-creation sessions with various stakeholders. Users can filter through the different categories of the toolkit in order to find the best fitting tool for their activity. These categories relate to the aim of the session, format, time frame available for the activity and group size.

The co-creation tools included in the toolkit are also available as *inspiration cards*. These cards can support the planning process of a co-creative session as they give a quick overview of all the tools as well as their benefits and requirements in terms of material.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The toolkit will help users to identify the best tool for their co-creative activity based on their needs and circumstances. This will enable them to achieve greater inclusion of local stakeholders and increase the social impact of their projects and activities. One of the aims of the co-creative tools is to receive input on a specific challenge from a wide range of stakeholders, regardless of their ethnicity, age, gender, religion and other factors. With the tools, participation of these stakeholders is expected in an equal manner, with the facilitator encouraging contribution from all participants. The tools are also designed to understand what challenges and expectations people experience in their daily environment and how these can be overcome. In the context of a city, increased social inclusion and well-being is expected from running co-creative activities with a wide group of citizens.

UNALAB PROJECT SUMMARIES OF KEY RESOURCES FOR THE ADOPTION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDY: LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE FRONT-RUNNER CITIES' CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS

Through a series of co-creation workshops, the UNaLab front-runner cities (Tampere, Eindhoven and Genova) and the local stakeholders worked together to explore the concept of nature-based solutions and to implement NBS demonstration areas in response to local challenges. The cities adopted different methods for their co-creation workshops - Genova used the European Awareness Scenario Workshop method, whereas Tampere and Eindhoven used the Design Thinking method. The difference in approaches was mostly due to the difference in scale and nature of the UNaLab demonstration areas. Cultural and organisational differences also impacted the choices.

A wide range of local actors participated in the workshops, ranging from professionals working in the different city departments (communication, water policy, green areas, maintenance) and private professionals (energy companies, landscape architects, building companies, urban planners) to NGOs and citizens (school children, teachers, students, residents).

LESSONS LEARNT

- Start by defining the goal of the workshop as this will have an impact on the selection of the methodology and participants. Define the expected impact of the participants' input and how to ensure their long-term involvement. Remember that nature-based solutions are technical solutions, making it important to reflect on how different stakeholders are engaged in and can contribute to the topic.
- It can be useful to integrate the workshop into other events or planning processes of the city to save resources and to ensure the impact of short-term projects in long-term urban planning processes.
- Make sure to have a team with exper-

tise in nature-based solutions and the chosen co-creation method involved in both the planning and execution of the workshop.

- Bring together a wide range of actors in the workshop, including technical experts, policymakers from the public administration and local residents, and provide time for mutual learning.
- If possible, organise the workshop in the area where the nature-based solutions will be implemented and involve the participants in on-site activities, in order to receive more concrete ideas. Make sure to prepare high-quality educational material for the workshop, such as maps, pictures and plans of the relevant area, to support the discussion.
- Ensure that you work on two parallel tracks in the workshop: explore ideas and content, and explore ways to collaborate during the implementation phase to ensure the long-term participation of the participants.
- To redefine the challenges and to collect several ideas for solutions, make sure that there is no hesitation among the participants to voice an opinion. The workshop facilitator should be impartial to the discussions.

DEFINING PRE-NBS BASELINES IN THE PLANNING PHASE

Methodology for establishing monitoring baselines

TYPE OF RESOURCE: Handbook

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS:

Practitioners, scientific/research/academic community

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE:

https://unalab.eu/system/files/2020-02/d31-nbs-performance-and-impact-monitoring-report2020-02-17.pdf

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The Performance and Impact Monitoring of Nature-based Solutions is a living handbook that provides guidance to cities for the monitoring of nature-based solutions. It introduces good monitoring practices, guides the process of indicator selection, and outlines the steps needed to acquire and process the data. The handbook presents key performance and key impact indicators and metrics grouped by societal challenges for transparent monitoring and impact assessment of nature-based solutions. The contents of this handbook contributed to the development of Evaluating the Impact of Nature-based Solutions: A Handbook for Practitioners publication, and its final version is to be found in the UNaLab NBS Implementation Handbook (to be published in November 2022).

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The handbook aims to provide clear information on NBS monitoring with respect to what is measured, how is it measured, and what is the 'big picture' significance of the measurement. It discusses the NBS baseline establishment and design of NBS monitoring plans, and provides a suite of relevant key performance and key impact indicators and metrics. Careful design and implementation of NBS monitoring facilitates comparison across different locations and generates evidence on NBS performance and impact. The handbook primarily targets NBS practitioners, and scientific, research and academic communities involved in developing and implementing the monitoring strategies and impact assessment (such as qualitative, quantitative, or statistical analyses). Certain parts of the handbook, such as baseline identification, contribute to the PLAN phase of an NBS project.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Nature-based solutions have emerged as innovative and transforming solutions that can contribute to regenerating urban areas. To facilitate their financing and uptake, replication in other locations and environments, and upscaling, it is necessary to establish evidence on their long-term performance and impact. Monitoring helps understanding whether the implemented NBS achieve the intended outcomes, and what needs to be adjusted to maximise its impact. Adopting common indicators and methods for their assessment leads to a more comprehensive comparison across locations at various scales, and in different socio-economic contexts. Documented NBS performance is a straightforward way to influence policies, decision-making and an array of other activities directly influencing local adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

UNALAB PROJECT SUMMARIES OF KEY RESOURCES FOR THE ADOPTION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Methodology for establishing modelling baselines

TYPE OF RESOURCE: User guide

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS: Technical users, practitioners

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: https://unalab.eu/en/documents/d32-systemic-decision-support-tool-user-guide-for-municipalities

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The Systemic Decision Support Tool (SDST) allows to assess, ex-ante, the direct and indirect impacts of NBS measures (individual NBS) and strategies (suites of NBS) on urban heat and air quality, flooding and water quality, and sprawl, gentrification and real-estate valuation. The Systemic Decision Support Tool User Guide for Municipalities contains a technical user guide that provides a technical description of the SDST approach, including its structure, disciplinary component models and data organisation, as well as a practitioners' user guide that describes those stages of the NBS co-creation process that are essential for the preparation and use of the SDST.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

From a technical user's perspective, the SDST integrates and builds upon data and information from disciplinary component models into a spatially-explicit framework at the landscape scale. Input and output data is organised and stored in a geodatabase, containing results for the reference baseline scenario (2015) as well as for the NBS scenarios under baseline (2030) and future (2050) conditions across spatial scales (local, neighbourhood and city). This systematic data organisation and storage allows the NBS Simulation Visualisation Tool (NBS-SVT), i.e. the user-interface of the SDST, to efficiently locate and retrieve data from the geodatabase server, according to the selected year, scenario and scale.

From a practitioner's perspective, the preparation and use of the SDST forms an integral part of a nature-based solutions project. In

the PLAN phase, the preparatory steps needed to create and implement solutions are undertaken. This phase is characterised by co-exploring, meaning that the main city problems are spotted and explored, and the project planning is initiated.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Sustainable urban landscape development requires decision-making that acknowledges the complex environmental, social and economic interactions that occur in landscapes. Thereby, scientific knowledge should inform stakeholders in the decision-making process regarding what to protect, sustain and/or develop. Active participation of stakeholders from the beginning of the planning process is crucial, especially in the situation where facts are uncertain, values are in dispute, stakes are high and decisions are urgent. The SDST allows to experiment with different NBS measures/strategies, assess their effectiveness and evaluate their multiple impacts as to, in turn, decide on the most desirable NBS to be implemented. Thus, the underlying principle of the SDST is that NBS are co-created in a transparent, transdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder and participatory context as well as systematically incorporated into urban landscape planning. It aims to facilitate the participatory planning process and public discussion by improving stakeholder awareness about the multiple impacts of NBS. Hence, the SDST enriches public discussion, adds transparency and increases public benefits.

ICT-TOOLS TO SUPPORT CO-CREATION

Open Nature Innovation Arena

TYPE OF RESOURCE: Digital tool

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS: Municipalities, citizens, businesses

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: https://onia.unalab.eng.it/

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The Open Nature Innovation Arena (ONIA) is an online collaboration environment ensuring active stakeholder participation in bottom-up innovation processes and decision-making. It allows stakeholders to collectively discuss and identify issues or concerns affecting the quality of life in the city and collaborate to propose possible ideas of solution.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

ONIA is the co-creation tool included in the UNaLab ICT framework that facilitates the decision-making process by exploiting the collective intelligence and spontaneous collaboration of the local communities. Citizens, businesses and public administrations can share their opinions on the conditions of urban areas and collaborate on co-defining possible solutions to be implemented in the form of nature-based solutions. In the PLAN phase, the stakeholders can use the tool to collectively identify the issues or concerns affecting public services and the quality of life in the city.

EXPECTED IMPACT

ONIA supports the merging of bottom-up and top-down processes in an online co-creation environment, by reducing the need for face-to-face interactions through scheduled meetings or workshops to identify local issues and brainstorm solutions. The tool contributes to building a more inclusive community by also involving individuals and communities with logistic or linguistic difficulties in the decision-making processes. Moreover, ONIA increases the sense of belonging within the local communities. Finally, ONIA allows public administrations to demonstrate their accountability in addressing civic issues and providing evidence of the work that has been done. The evaluations of the proposed ideas are transparently published on the challenge results page as well as through the chosen communication channels.



TYPE OF RESOURCE: Digital tool

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS: Municipalities, citizens, businesses

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: http://unalab.eng.it/nbssvt_v4/

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The Systemic Decision Support Tool (SDST), and associated NBS Simulation Visualisation Tool (NBS-SVT), allows stakeholders to compare and visualise the potential direct and indirect environmental, social and economic impacts of nature-based solutions scenarios without (2030) and with (2050) climate change and/or population growth relative to the reference baseline situation (2015). Hence, the SDST integrates and builds upon data and information from disciplinary component models into a spatially-explicit framework at the landscape scale to assess the direct and indirect impacts, benefits and co-benefits of NBS measures (individual NBS) and strategies (suites of NBS) on urban heat and air quality, flooding and water quality, as well as sprawl, gentrification and real-estate valuation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The *SDST practitioners' user guide* describes the stages of the NBS co-creation process that are essential for the preparation and use of the SDST. In the PLAN phase, the co-creation process starts with co-exploring the main city challenges and preliminary planning of the project.

The *SDST technical user guide* provides a technical description of the SDST approach, including its structure, disciplinary component models and data organisation. It thereby builds upon data and information from disciplinary component models into a spatially-explicit framework at the land-scape scale, to assess the direct and indirect impacts of NBS measures and strategies on urban heat and air quality, flooding and water quality, and sprawl, gentrification and

real-estate valuation.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The SDST aims to facilitate the participatory planning process and public discussion by improving stakeholder awareness about the multiple direct and indirect impacts, benefits and co-benefits of NBS. The SDST maps the spatial distribution as well as quantifies the size and value of the multiple direct and indirect impacts of NBS at the local, neighbourhood and city scale. Hence, beyond obtaining insight in the multiple impacts, benefits and co-benefits of NBS, it allows to evaluate how these impacts and benefits are distributed across the landscape and corresponding stakeholders. Making this information available to stakeholders allows NBS to be co-created in a transparent, transdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder and participatory context as well as to be systematically incorporated into urban landscape planning. Thus, the SDST/NBS-SVT enriches the public discussion, adds transparency and increases public benefits.

Nature-based Solutions Simulation Visualisation Tool



TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS: Municipalities, citizens, businesses

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: http://unalab.eng.it/nbssvt_v4/

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The NBS Simulation Visualisation Tool (NBS-SVT), which constitutes the user-interface of the Systemic Decision Support Tool (SDST), is developed as an internet-based browser application for interactive touch tables/screens to provide powerful geo-visualisation tools for participatory planning. It allows urban planners and stakeholders to visualise, compare and discuss the potential direct and indirect environmental, social and economic impacts of nature-based solutions measures and strategies in the face of global change.



DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

During the PLAN phase, the NBS-SVT can provide stakeholders with map-based simulations of selected parameters, such as flooding, air pollution or real-estate valuation, to ease the understanding of the magnitude and extent of a particular issue in the future.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The NBS-SVT provides easy-to-understand representation of simulated impact indicators, allowing the involvement of experts, non-experts and the wider public in the decision-making processes. Hence, the NBS-SVT will facilitate their active role in co-creating and co-monitoring nature-based solutions to address urban problems.

PLANNING A NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS PROJECT

City Performance Monitor

) **TYPE OF RESOURCE:** Digital tool

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS: Municipalities, citizens, businesses

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: https://unalab.eng.it/cpm_v2/

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The City Performance Monitor (CPM) is the performance analytics and monitoring tool used by the UNaLab project cities. It increases stakeholder and citizen awareness of urban conditions through an easy-to-understand representation of the effectiveness of the nature-based solutions implemented in the city using social, environmental and economic performance indicators.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The CPM exploits the city's data sources - including IOT sensor devices, open data platforms and legacy services - to obtain environmental measures and to calculate indicators for the social, environmental and economic conditions of the city, and the effectiveness of the implemented NBS in addressing these issues. During the PLAN phase, decision-makers can use the tool to monitor and evaluate the indicators to identify possible disruptions in the services or new urban issues.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The CPM will provide an easy-to-understand representation of indicators allowing the involvement of non-expert users and volunteers in the monitoring and evaluation activities. The CPM will therefore give them an active role in co-creating and co-monitoring urban solutions including nature-based solutions.

The rapid exponential development and the concurrent reduction in costs for pervasive technologies will enable a rapid increase in the deployment of monitoring devices in cities. The CPM will facilitate the elaboration of key performance indicators based on the huge amount of data produced by the increasing number of sensors and will allow city managers to have a more reliable holistic vision of the urban environment.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Nature-based Solutions Technical Handbook

TYPE OF RESOURCE: Handbook and inspiration cards

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS: Municipalities, urban planners, practitioners, project managers

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: https://unalab.eu/en/types-nature-based-solutions

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

P

The Nature-based Solutions Technical Handbook provides information on potentially applicable nature-based solutions to support urban climate- and water resilience. It presents detailed and accurate information on multiple nature-based solutions, ranging from greening interventions and public green spaces to water sensitive urban design measures. The handbook functions as a source of inspiration and information for practitioners and urban planners, and can facilitate informed decision-making in cities.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The NBS technical handbook can provide a source of inspiration and knowledge in the planning phase of an NBS project, as it presents the following information on the nature-based solutions included in the handbook:

- Urban climate- and water challenges addressed by the NBS
- General description of the NBS
- The role of nature
- Technical and design parameters
- Conditions for implementation
- Benefits and limitations
- Anticipated or demonstrated performance

• References to key case studies

The information in the handbook provides a good knowledge base for discussions in cities when planning public spaces. The corresponding *inspiration cards* can enrich and spark new ideas in such discussions both within public administrations as well as between different local stakeholder groups.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The NBS technical handbook and the inspiration cards can help informing local discussions on public urban spaces. The handbook presents a comprehensive overview of the different NBS and their characteristics, while still ensuring that all relevant stakeholders such as decision makers, practitioners, businesses and members of civil society, with diverse knowledge of NBS and urban planning, can understand and contribute to such discussions. Both resources therefore support informed decision-making where all relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to participate.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS VALUE MODEL

TYPE OF RESOURCE:

R

NBS Value Model framework and inspiration cards

TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS:

Municipalities, administrative staff, urban planners, project managers

LINK TO THIS RESOURCE: https://unalab.eu/en/unalab-value-model

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

The UNaLab NBS Value Model aims to shed light on the often abstract value chain and associated beneficiary constellation of nature-based solutions. It evaluates the different benefits that NBS provide due to their multifunctional nature and explores the value capture potential. Building on this knowledge, the model aims to identify potential alternative governance constellations and financing mechanisms for NBS. It is a conceptualized as a theoretical framework to guide urban planners and stakeholders interested in learning how to involve different beneficiaries in the implementation and financing of a specific NBS project.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

The Value Model is meant to facilitate thought processes and help the user to select suitable NBS and explore related beneficiary constellations and financing options. Administrators, urban planners and municipalities can use the method as a step-by-step guide to identify potential partners to engage in the planning and implementation of an NBS project.

It follows the logic below:

- Identification of the main urban challenges in a given city location
- Selection of fitting nature-based solutions to tackle these challenges
- Adding local specifications to reflect individual circumstances

- Exploring "usual-suspect-beneficiaries" based on the performance of the given NBS
- Select relevant beneficiaries and assess their potential willingness to invest
- Learn about suitable financing options for the NBS project idea

The value creation *inspiration cards* aim to capture potential beneficiaries and benefits of selected NBS. The cards can be used to support planning processes in cities by sparking new ideas and enriching discussions around nature-based solutions. In the future, the framework could be further developed into a tool, to increase user-friendliness and uptake.

EXPECTED IMPACT

The NBS Value Model is a way for urban planners and project managers to learn about the functions and benefits of different NBS, as well as to identify potential beneficiaries, partners, and financing options for a given NBS project. It can help to create synergies between NBS projects, and motivate and engage key stakeholders in the NBS planning and implementation process.







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