



Network Nature

A NbS tour around Europe: Local experiences and lessons learnt from working together with and for nature

Report

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A NbS tour around Europe: Local experiences and lessons learnt from working together with and for nature

Wednesday, June 5 • 11:00 - 12:30
The Nature of Cities Festival 2024, Berlin, Germany

In order to explore local experiences and share lessons learnt on Nature-based Solutions (NbS), NetworkNature facilitated a “Live tour of Nature-based Solutions around Europe”, showcasing how the community of [NbS Hubs](#) has been working together with and for nature. By enabling a tour across 10 countries, NetworkNature aimed to gather insights, learnings, provoke questions and share experiences. This Live Tour culminated in a capacity building session organised on June 5th, 2024, held in Berlin, Germany.

Nine NbS Hubs representatives were present from the NetworkNature Nordic Hub, the NbS Italy Hub, the Spanish Hub, the Caucasus Hub, the Ukrainian Hub, the Scottish Hub, the Polish NbS Hub in Wroclaw, TeAM Hub Hungary, and the Southeastern Europe Hub.



NbS Hubs representatives and NetworkNature

The highlight of the capacity building event was the presentation by the 9 NbS Hubs, each sharing insights from their NbS site visits, also captured in dedicated posters. The presented NbS included community gardens, green roofs, rain gardens, urban parks, seminatural retention basins, urban forests, close-to-nature forestry management, among others. A week-long [poster exhibition](#) was organised for the TNO festival participants to interact and learn about the Hubs' work and the implemented NbS. To facilitate interactive exchanges and peer-to-

peer learning among the NbS Hubs members and external participants, two panel discussions were facilitated by NetworkNature. These panels focused on discussing the successes and challenges encountered during NbS implementation in their local contexts, especially the technical, administrative, and political aspects. emphasised the importance of sharing lessons learned from previous projects and incorporating citizen insights, instead of strictly following standard protocols. These measures were identified as crucial for successful implementation and upscaling of NbS. Most NbS Hub representatives agreed that maintenance remains a significant challenge while scaling up NbS from pilot projects to larger initiatives. This challenge is particularly due to a lack of cooperation from politicians in managing the NbS post-implementation and the citizens' expectations of the upkeep by the city.



Dagmara Rydzewska from the Polish NBS Hub presenting the [NbS trail implemented in Wrocław \(Poland\)](#).



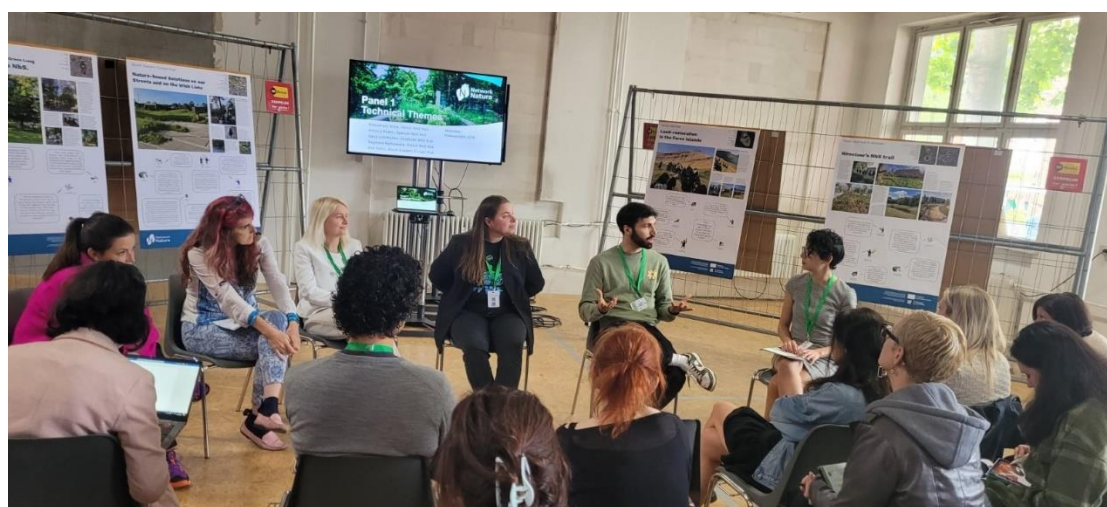
TNOC Festival participants visiting the NbS Hubs poster exhibition and learning about the NbS Hubs' work and the Nature based Solutions they implemented.

Exploring the technical aspects of NbS implementation and their role for local communities

During the first panel discussions, representatives from the NbS Hubs, including Alessandra Aires from the Italian NbS Hub, Antonio Prieto from the Spanish NbS Hub, Gana Lobchenko from the Ukrainian NbS Hub, Dagmara Rydzewska from the Polish NbS Hub, and Ana Simic from the Southeastern Europe Hub, discussed the technical aspects of the NbS implementation.

While discussing the challenges addressed by the NbS and the decisions leading to their adoption and implementation, several key points emerged. One significant outcome was the increased citizen's awareness and paradigm shift towards the effective role that NbS play in the mitigation and adaption to climate change, particularly during the hot season. For example, the role that Santa Margarita Park in A Coruña, Spain plays in mitigating the urban heat island effect.

“In addition to representing an effective nature-based solution, community gardens include an important social and educational component which largely contributes to increasing the general public's awareness about nature and NbS” - Alessandra Aires from the Italian NbS Hub



Panel 1 discussion on the technical aspects of the NbS implementation

Regarding the factors contributing to the success of the chosen NbS, the panellists emphasized the importance of these solutions in enhancing understanding and raising awareness about their implementation, monitoring, and maintenance. This increased awareness has the potential to attract more companies and stakeholders to implement NbS in the future.

“Thorough knowledge of nature, water and the local circumstances, combined with professional knowledge can result in impactful interventions. It is important to maintain communication with the local residents, continuously informing them about topics and foreseen actions, discussing them, and involving them in the long-term implementation process.” Architect, urbanist from Budapest, Hungary

Implementing NbS has also played a crucial role in shifting perspectives in Ukraine, leading to better collaboration and acceptance of project proposals. This shift highlights a generational shift in environmental management approaches. The ability to measure air and surface temperatures within the Santa Margarita Park in A Coruña, Spain, provided clear evidence of its benefits, allowing for comparison to baseline data. This was highlighted as crucial to raise public awareness.

Finally, the evolution of the community garden in Torino, Italy from a space for retirees to a multi-generational hub, underlined the community's growing enthusiasm for environmental initiatives.

“It is impressive that it is possible to make very small, and affordable, concessions to our own comfort and divide our living space leaving places for kestrel nests, bat habitats, bee hotels and allow nature to provide a whole range of ecosystem services for the entire urban ecosystem.” - Citizen from Belgrade (New Belgrade), Serbia

The majority of the panellists agreed that maintenance remains a significant challenge while scaling up NbS from pilot projects to larger initiatives. This challenge is particularly due to a lack of cooperation from politicians in managing the NbS post-implementation and the citizens' expectations of the upkeep by the

city. The panel highlighted the need for increased maintenance efforts and the promotion of community-led initiatives to ensure the longevity of NbS projects. Additionally, the panellists emphasised the importance of sharing lessons learned from previous projects and incorporating citizen insights, instead of strictly following standard protocols. These measures were identified as crucial for successful implementation and upscaling of NbS.

The panel concluded with a renewed commitment from the panellists to foster greater cooperation among all stakeholders, to sustain the efforts already made in increasing the citizen's awareness about the benefits of NbS through the implementation of more solutions, and to invest further efforts into the maintenance of NbS projects to ensure that they don't only scale but also endure and flourish.

Highlighting political and administrative challenges in NbS Implementation and ways to overcome them

During the second panel discussion, Leonard Sadin representing the Nordic NbS Hub, Gillian Dick from the Scottish NbS Hub, Gvantsa Kheladze from the Caucasus NbS Hub, and Monika Nemeth from the Hungarian NbS Hub, joined and discussed the political and administrative aspects of NbS implementation.



Panel 2 discussion on the political and administrative aspects of the NbS implementation

The panellists identified several key barriers to and needs for NbS implementation across all regions. In the Nordic regions, challenges such as the competition for space, siloed approaches, and maintenance issues were highlighted. Scotland faced a lack of funding and disconnect between beneficiaries and payers. Additionally, scepticism towards NbS, lack of understanding of the term and translation issues were widespread among Nordic stakeholders. The Caucasus region needed to consider cost-effective solutions, while Hungary faced significant challenges in securing financing for preliminary studies and data gathering underscoring the need for systemic efforts and integrated planning. The panellists highlighted the importance of early communication with citizens to prevent resistance towards NbS interventions. They stressed the need for educating residents in advance, a strategy already adopted by several municipalities in Hungary through different educational activities.

“What I paid attention to, was the fact that the success of green investments depends on good cooperation within the city administrators, departments, and in fact on people and their openness, understanding of a common vision for the development of the city space and the ability to work out a compromise.” - Employee at a Limited Liability Company from Wroclaw, Poland.

In Scotland, a place-based approach was recommended to ensure that future NbS projects are tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of each community. Additionally, the panel recognized that misunderstandings about community engagement could be mitigated by co-designing and co-producing solutions with young people, fostering more inclusive and effective engagement. Overall, availability of funding was highlighted as a crucial driver for NbS implementation. In particular, the panellists welcomed the EU's efforts in providing financial resources and incentives to support NbS projects and research on NbS.

Find out more about the [NbS Hubs](#) and the [NbS site visits posters](#).



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