



Network
Nature

Voices from the NetworkNature Nature-based Solutions Hubs

A booklet of success stories



This booklet aims to provide information on the NetworkNature Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Hubs, on their mission, objectives, and success stories. By doing so, the booklet targets all those local stakeholders working on NbS who are interested in engaging in knowledge exchange and collaborations, as well as the international NbS community.

What and where are the NetworkNature NbS Hubs?

NetworkNature is working to expand the nature-based solutions (NbS) community and provide support for implementing and amplifying NbS. One way we do this is by investing in relationships and working with local partners to grow locally-based networks.

New hubs are established either as a NetworkNature **member state hub**, which consists of stakeholders from multiple regions within a Member State; or as a NetworkNature **European regional Hub** that includes stakeholders in a geographic region from multiple Member States with similar planning or landscape contexts.

Local hubs bring researchers, policy-makers, cities, businesses, and the general public together to address specific local barriers and opportunities for NbS and create a nuanced understanding of NbS across ecological, geographic, economic and political contexts. The goal is for hubs and NetworkNature to work together

to create long-lasting structures for NbS uptake, foster capacity building and knowledge exchange, build relationships and new partnerships, and implement more NbS policy and practices.

To date, NetworkNature supported the launch of 6 hubs in collaboration with local partners in the Nordic region, Hungary, Portugal, Ukraine, Poland, and Italy.

Beyond NetworkNature...

NetworkNature grows new networks and supports existing ones that prioritise NbS. We partner with hubs established within the [UrbanByNature Programme](#) and the [Resilient Cities Network](#). We are also looking for additional opportunities to partner with other existing networks, for instance focusing on the circular economy and coal regions.



Mapping the NetworkNature Hubs

The Nordic Hub

The NetworkNature Nordic Hub is a gathering place for all those who work with NbS in the Nordic region, including Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. It is a platform where members can exchange contacts and share knowledge about implementing nature-based solutions in this part of the world.

The Hub was launched in October 2022 and is administered by Jóna Ólavsdóttir, coordinator of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Nature-based Solutions programme in the Nordic region.

Who is involved?

Currently, the Nordic Hub primarily consists of research institutes and organisations. However, there is an open invitation to municipalities, businesses and policymakers to join.

What does the Nordic Hub focus on?

The Nordic Hub aims to provide a space for people to connect on NbS, to enable networking as well as knowledge and practice exchange. The creation of thematic groups may be explored in the future. Currently, the Hub focuses on:

- **Supporting local politicians and administrations in the implementation of NbS**, building on the experiences of NbS project managers and on the geographic, climatic and legal context of the Nordic countries.
- **Increasing the understanding of NbS in all Nordic ecosystems - coastal, forests, water, urban, and Arctic.** Extra priority is given to coastal areas, cities, and the Arctic, because cases from these areas are limited.

While the Nordic Hub has not followed a specific engagement methodology, there is a forward-looking objective to focus more on **co-creation and participatory processes**, increasing citizens' involvement in NbS and encouraging support from policymakers.

Spotlight on activities

The Nordic Hub has been actively producing new content, including new publications and case studies. The Hub also facilitated collaborations with partners and stakeholders that have led to new project ideas and opportunities to participate in events.

Every year, the Nordic Council of Ministers launches an environmental prize. The theme of the last prize was NbS, which led to the identification of many NbS projects in the Nordic countries. Among the 8 projects nominated, an [NbS project on wetlands in Åland, Mariehamn municipality](#) won the prize. Overall, the Hub identified 54 successful NbS case studies through the [S-ITUATION project](#), 16 of which are made available on Oppla and NetworkNature. The projects were included if they simultaneously aimed for a biodiversity net-gain and addressed one or more



societal challenges, which are the minimum inclusion requirements reflected by criteria 1 and 3 of the [IUCN Global NbS standard](#).

Further, the Nordic Council of Ministers recently published its report [“Working with nature-based solutions: Synthesis and mapping status in the Nordics”](#), providing a status overview of NbS in the Nordic region obtained from the S-ITUATION project, focusing on research on NbS, policy frameworks, challenges and key examples. The report is available in the Hub's platform. A dedicated webinar was organised to share the synthesis results.

Two projects have started, receiving funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers, namely A-DVICE focusing on policy and GuideNbS on guidance for NbS, both led by Norsk Institutt for vannforskning (NIVA).

As regards to events participation, the Hub has been actively promoting itself at several occasions. For instance, the Nordic Council of Ministers participated in the [Nordic Adaptation Conference \(NOCCA\) 2023](#) in Iceland. The Hub also participated in the

launch event of the Portuguese Hub and of the Ukrainian Hub.

The Nordic Hub aims to strengthen the focus of policymakers on NbS. Therefore, it provides future opportunities to generate more engagement in NbS from policymakers.

Meet the Nordic Hub Coordinator



Jóna Ólavsdóttir, is the coordinator of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Nature-based Solutions programme in the Nordic region (2021-2024). She is based in the Faroe Islands, at the Faroese Environment Agency, the administrative body of the programme.

Jóna has always been interested in the interaction of people with nature. Even though the natural environment was not part of her public administration studies, her personal background growing up in a small Faroese town has contributed to her strong connection with nature. In particular, the interest in NbS comes from their benefits to human well-being and the recognition of the value of nature to people.

By coordinating the Nordic Hub, Jóna has found the way to promote the work of the Nordic countries on NbS while contributing to increasing local knowledge and facilitating exchanges and collaborations which can only be beneficial to the future of NbS in the Nordics.

What's next?

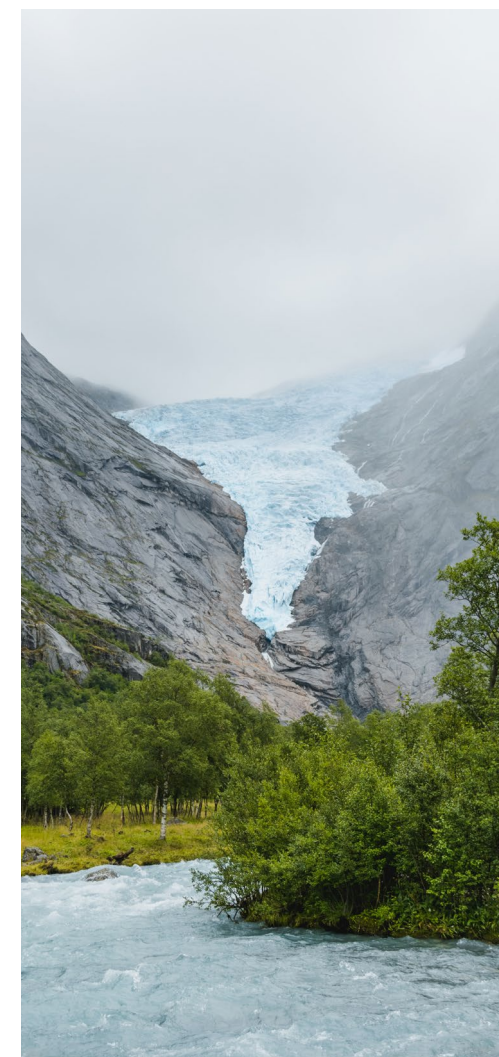
The Nordic Hub will continue to reach new members and audiences by organising dedicated webinars, promoting the Hub at events, uploading case studies and contacting the stakeholders working on NbS in the region.

The vision for the Nordic Hub is to be the go-to platform for people working on NbS in the Nordic Region where people can exchange, network, find and share opportunities for project collaboration, while continuously contributing to the evidence base on NbS in Nordic countries.

Future commitments for the Nordic Hub include the participation in the NetworkNature Annual Event and the dedicated Hubs Meeting, and the organisation of a Hub event in the fall.

How to connect?

Find out more about the Hub and how to join [here](#), or contact the Nordic Hub Coordinator for more information: Jóna Ólavsdóttir, jonao@us.fo.



The Hungarian Hub

The NetworkNature Hungarian Hub (TeAM HUB, where TeAM stands for “**T**ermészet-**A**lapú **M**egoldások”, the Hungarian term for NbS) is a professional community of organisations and individuals committed to the widespread dissemination of nature-based solutions in Hungary. Professional, technical, financial and operational knowledge on the application of nature-based solutions is still scarce in Hungary. TeAM HUB aims to provide a forum for sharing national and international knowledge, experience and good practices on NbS, and to stimulate dialogue and cooperation between governmental, municipal, professional and civil actors for the widespread practical application of NbS.

The TeAM HUB was launched in October 2022 and is coordinated by Mónika Németh, Senior Expert at Bright Urban Solutions Team (BURST) Nonprofit Ltd.

Who is involved?

The TeAM HUB is composed of a “group of advisors”, a core group of stakeholders (approximately 30 members) gathering experts from government organisations, such as ministries of various relevant sectors (e.g. agriculture, territorial development, construction and transport), as well as key knowledge organisations, universities, engineers and landscape architects.

Besides, a broader pool of stakeholders with whom the Hub engages includes “knowledge providers”, i.e. planners, engineers, ecologists, landscape architects, civil society organisations and municipalities (which are also the main target audience). The Hub aims to also involve more business partners.

What does the TeAM HUB focus on?

The TeAM HUB focuses primarily on:

- urban greening and water retention measures, including blue and green infrastructure
- the **mobilisation of resources and financing** for such interventions **in municipalities**.

The scope of the Hub can be broadened in the future, for instance to include promotion of NbS in agriculture.

In line with the thematic priorities, the TeAM Hub focuses on the **urban ecosystem**. This comes also from the fact that one of the founding members of the Hub is the Association of Climate-friendly Municipalities. The recent droughts in the country have demonstrated a need to further strengthen these efforts in urban environments. Further, this gets a special relevance also thanks to the EU Nature Restoration Law, acknowledging these ecosystems as part of nature to be preserved/restored. This ecosystem focus is not exclusive, as also wetlands or freshwater ecosystems are being addressed.



**TeAM
HUB**

As regards to the social context of the Hub, two ways of cooperation are used. One is project-based, where the Hub works with cities to help them specify their challenges, gather relevant stakeholders and shape project ideas. The other approach is the group of advisors, through which experiences are channelled by working with cities on the ground to provide inputs and recommendations for shaping policies, as well as enabling an inter-sectoral dialogue to source more knowledge and insights.

Spotlight on activities

The TeAM HUB was launched via a highly successful hybrid event in October 2022, with close to 400 attendees. The programme featured high-level speeches from ICLEI, OECD and key representatives of the Hungarian Government, a case study simulation showcasing a variety

of exemplary NbS implemented in Hungary, an interactive introductory session on TeAM HUB and parallel project generation workshops. A [report on the main outcomes of the event](#) was made available on NetworkNature.

One of the core missions of TeAM HUB is to disseminate NbS related knowledge in Hungarian language. New case studies and resources are regularly [shared on NetworkNature](#). Further, a series of interviews with inspiring project leaders was launched as a way to engage partners and share information. These included:

- [Horizontal principles for nature-based water retention management in Hungary](#)
- [Available, applicable and easily spreadable good practices for bee-friendly cities](#) with [Hungarian version available in NetworkNature](#)

Regarding project ideas and collaborations, many projects have arisen and new ones are in the pipeline. Examples include:

- An Interreg Europe project (NBS4LOCAL) aimed at improved policy uptake of NbS to improve the climate resilience of local governments (approved)
- An Interreg Central Europe project (LOCALIENCE) on collaborative disaster response and

management solutions, including NBS (approved)

- A LIFE project under the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation sub-programme addressing urban heat island effects with NBS (approved)
- An Interreg Danube Region project on natural water retention measures in peri-urban riparian areas (passed the 1st round)
- A Driving Urban Transition (DUT) project to advance the ability of cities' actual uptake of NBS using enabling governance and enhanced decision support tools (passed the 1st round)
- An EUKI project to demonstrate and exploit the carbon-saving and removal potentials of nature-based solutions (submitted to 1st round)
- A Horizon Europe project aiming at urban greening and renaturing under the EU's Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities (submitted)

Stakeholder meetings with the 'group of advisors' are organised on a monthly basis, where participants can share information and experience related to ongoing policy or project level activities. The TeAM HUB is also promoted at partners' events, e.g. at a recent conference on the EU's Green Deal and its implications on biodiversity co-organised by the Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations.

What's next?

The TeAMHUB will continue to promote its work and attract new members using different channels, including social media, newsletters, and events. For the latter, a new event is planned in the fall.

The vision for the Hub is to initially operationalise collaborations and secure funding to provide a solid way of working with stakeholders in NbS,

with the ambition of then expanding the Hub to new stakeholders (e.g. the private sector) and new areas of relevance (e.g. agriculture).

How to connect?

Find out more about the Hub and how to join [here](#) or contact the TeAM HUB's coordinator with any questions: Mónika Németh, the Hungarian Hub's coordinator (teamhub@burstgroup.eu).

Meet the TeAM HUB's Coordinator



Mónika Németh is a Senior Expert at Bright Urban Solutions Team (BURST), coordinating the Hungarian Hub.

She comes from the field of EU funding and regional and urban development. While she is not an NbS expert by profession, sustainable development projects have always been close to her. She has experience in coordinating and facilitating cooperation, work across scales, making EU or national priorities understandable at local level, and helping to turn challenges and needs into specific actions, by involving the right partners and stakeholders. This is a generalist approach, which is also

highly relevant for the planning and implementation of nature-based solutions.

Her motivation for starting the Hub came from a specific technical assistance project initiated by a managing authority in Hungary dealing with energy and environment which requested the support of DG REFORM of the European Commission to give advice to improve structural and policy frameworks to promote NbS in Hungary. Mónica got involved in this assignment as an expert, which helped her to understand how NbS were paving the way in Hungary. The Hub therefore represents a continuation of this project and a great opportunity to continue collaborations on NbS.

The Portuguese Hub

The NetworkNature Portuguese Hub is a gathering space for meeting and collaborating with specialists in Nature-Based Solutions, citizens, municipalities, associations, researchers, companies and professionals and aims to be a platform for sharing good practices and applied knowledge.

The Portuguese Hub was launched in January 2023. It is coordinated by GUDA/ ISMAT researchers Americo Mateus and Susana Leonor and Gonçalo Canto Moniz from Centre for Social Studies (CES), University of Coimbra.

Who is involved?

The Portuguese Hub was initiated by the H2020 [URBiNAT project](#) and its Portuguese partners. It is composed of researchers, companies, some municipalities and governance institutions. While many citizens are involved in the Hub as individuals, the network is interested in engaging more with citizens' organisations. Further, the Hub aims to reach more industry associations, companies, government institutions as well as municipalities and schools.

What does the Portuguese Hub focus on?

The Hub focuses on:

- **urban regeneration and sustainable urban development** with nature integration
- **participation and co-creation as key enablers for NbS**

Its purpose is the establishment of a community of practice as well as of interest that involves and promotes dialogue and cooperation between different actors, knowledge and experiences.

As regards to ecosystems, most NbS projects in the country are focused on **urban and rural regeneration**. The Hub therefore follows such focus on the **urban and peri-urban ecosystems as well as on coastal areas**.

Spotlight on activities

The Portuguese Hub has committed to increase its cooperation and collaborations. For instance, a new NbS project within schools (Schools Roadshow) is in the making, with a group of schools in Algarve, Alentejo and central Portugal already confirmed. This initiative aims to use the material produced within the URBiNAT project, such as NbS cards and the [toolkit of NbS](#).

As regards to regional collaborations, efforts are ongoing within Algarve and Alentejo and more broadly with the national government. The launch event was pivotal for these kinds of cooperation as it attracted a lot of interest. Further, involvement of cities is ongoing, with two cities (Loulé and Cantanhede) being invited to run two workshops along the same format as the launch event in Portimão.



The Hub has identified several publications as well as NbS case studies arising from URBiNAT and other NbS projects in the country. There is a commitment to add these cases to the NetworkNature and Oppla repositories in the future to contribute to the evidence base on the benefits of NbS.

Within the national policy landscape, policies are found to be lacking support for NbS, failing to activate local stakeholders. For this reason, the Hub offers potential opportunities to incentive collaborations, knowledge sharing, and NbS project development, towards a green transition.

Meet the Portuguese Hub Coordinators



Americo Mateus and Susana Leonor are GUDA partners, Associate Professors of ISMAT - Instituto Superior Manuel Teixeira Gomes - and Researchers at the TRIE - Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Entrepreneurship & Innovation Ecosystems.

Gonçalo Canto Moniz is an architect by profession and Principal Coordinator of the EU H2020-funded URBiNAT project. He is a Professor at

the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra.

Americo and Susana are designers by training focusing their interests in management, innovation and research on design processes and strategies. In recent years, they have started the development of design processes for social innovations.

The entry to the NbS world was the URBiNAT project. NbS were considered by them as a great fit also for the co-design world. The involvement in URBiNAT allowed them to gain a lot of valuable insights and information which led them, together with the Portuguese partners, to launch the NbS Hub, taking the opportunity from NetworkNature.

The Hub provides a way to disseminate practices of NbS in Portugal while showing how NbS can make the difference, and how design fits in this context.



What's next?

The Hub will continue to explore funding opportunities for continuing and strengthening the NbS work within the country. The vision for the Hub is to position itself as a network of organisations while also being part of something bigger, where collaborations with other hubs are also possible.

Two cities' workshops are planned in 2023 in Loulé and Coimbra. The Hub will also continue the preparation for the schools Roadshow.

How to connect?

Find out more about the Hub and how to join [here](#) or contact Americo Mateus, Susana Leonor, and Gonçalo Canto Moniz, the NBS Hub Portugal's coordinators (nbs.hub.pt@gmail.com).

The Ukrainian Hub

The Ukrainian Hub is an online source of helpful information, methodologies, and best practices for those responsible for strategic planning and practical implementation of nature-based solutions. The platform is also designed to bring together a diverse set of stakeholders and policymakers and facilitate dialogue and learning across levels of governance on the potential of NbS.

The Hub was launched in March 2023 and is coordinated by Nataliia Pustilnik, Administrative Assistant Manager at WWF Ukraine.

Who is involved?

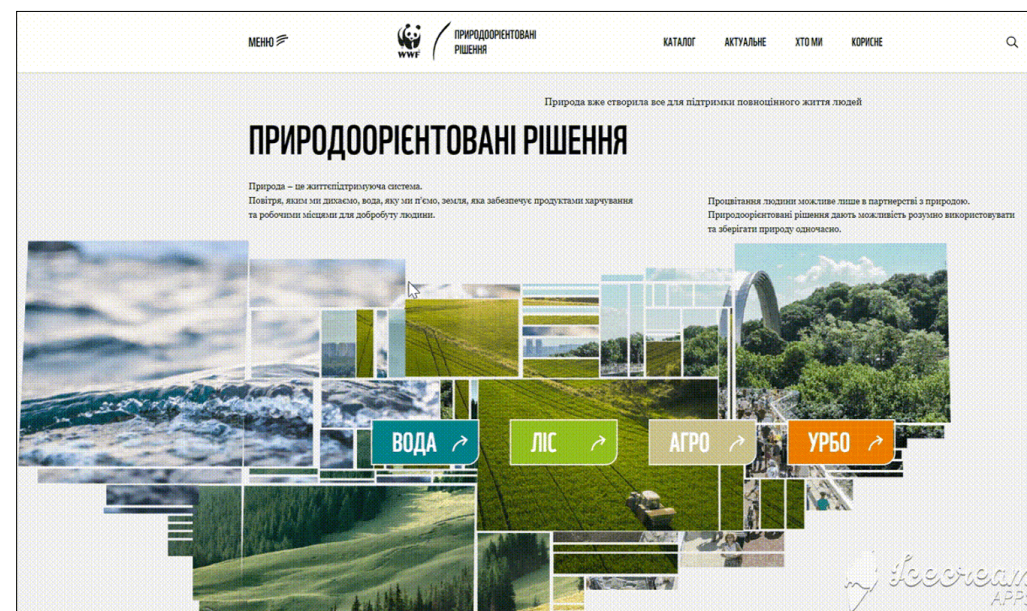
The Hub has attracted primarily universities and scientific institutions. The Hub is also working with small local NGOs that work with local authorities. A growing interest from local authorities comes from the requirement to develop comprehensive recovery, where NbS can play a crucial role.

The Hub hopes to increase engagement of agricultural businesses with whom conversations have started.

What does the Hub focus on?

The Hub focuses on NbS on:

- **River and forests** as the main ecosystems as well as more recently **urban environments**, as NbS for cities is becoming an increasingly promising topic
- **Water, forestry and agriculture for the country's recovery and climate change adaptation.** More specifically **water and food security and disaster risk mitigation through restoration and protection of riparian zones, floodplain restoration and**



management, river revitalisation and peatland rewetting and paludiculture, as well as forest landscape restoration and sustainable agriculture.

All these sectors were chosen as considered most dependent on climate conditions and nature, in addition to their interdependence.

The Hub was established through participatory processes and continues to stress the relevance of social engagements. In particular, for youth engagement, the Hub has launched special courses for young people about their role in environmental protection, with one module dedicated to NbS.

Spotlight on activities

The Hub has been gathering a lot of material related to NbS and ecosystem services which is available on the [knowledge platform](#). For instance, a translation of the IUCN Global NbS Standard was carried out, with the intention of making it interactive. NbS case studies are already available in the platform and will be added to NetworkNature and Oppla.

As regards to collaborations and projects, discussions are ongoing with a scientific institute on forestry and agroforestry, member of the Hub, to explore how an existing shelter belt

between crops (of 350-400k ha) can be increased. Some research partners have expressed interest in this effort (e.g. Kiev and Elvira Universities). Another promising idea that the Hub aims to explore to promote NbS is close-to-nature forestry especially for protected areas, as many forests have been damaged by the war.

A project developing a forest restoration platform was recently started to provide a software with information on forests to be restored and how. Further, a river revitalisation project is being discussed with interest of a state water agency as it is increasingly recognised that rivers in the country have transformed because of economic activity. Therefore, work is expected in this sphere.

As regards to events, the Hub participated in the [Future of Agriculture Forum](#) in 2023. Payment for ecosystem services (PES) through carbon markets was among the topics discussed, exploring opportunities for application in Ukraine.

An analysis of national legislations carried out within the [sourcebook of the INSURE project](#) identified several opportunities for improving NbS support, including through

financial incentives and capacity building, gathered in a [summary for policymakers](#). A knowledge sharing event “[Harnessing the power of Nature-based Solutions as a contribution to sustainable post-war recovery and the environmental legislation of Ukraine](#)” was organised in 2022 to present the findings. The

Hub represents a great opportunity to bring this discussion forward by contributing to awareness raising and knowledge sharing. Further, sectoral working groups are established by the government, providing an additional potential role for the Hub to share knowledge and advocate for NbS in restoration and strategic plans.

What's next?

The Hub will continue to explore opportunities with the government and other entities to contribute to a green recovery while looking for funding schemes.

The vision for the Hub is to become a source of ideas and an attractive space for collaboration between state, regional, local authorities, businesses, NGOs and civil society.

How to connect?

Find out more about the [NbS platform](#). The Hub page will also be made available on NetworkNature. Further information may be requested to Nataliia Pustilnik, the Ukrainian Hub's coordinator (npustilnik@wwf.ua).

Meet the Ukrainian Hub coordinator



Nataliia Pustilnik is Administrative Assistant Manager at WWF Ukraine, a Food and Agriculture Advisor at WWF Netherlands and temporary coordinator of the Ukrainian Hub.

Nataliia was first introduced to the natural environment and more specifically to the value of nature conservation when studying for a Bachelor's program on ecology. She completed a MSc degree on land use change modeling in grasslands ecosystems with consequences for food production and biodiversity conservation. After that, she started working at WWF Ukraine on a project focused on integrating nature-based climate solutions into Ukraine's reform agenda with an increasing focus on recovery after the war. During the project she therefore gained increasing knowledge and recognition on the contribution of biodiversity to well-being.

While strengthening her understanding of the value of nature and nature-based solutions, she realised that not so much science and evidence is available in the country for solutions other than shelter belts. The Hub was therefore considered as a great and needed opportunity to share and expand knowledge on NbS.

The Italian Hub

The NetworkNature Italian Hub is providing the space to help spread knowledge about NbS throughout Italy and work to mainstream the concept in the country. The Hub is intended as a node able to collect all the past and future EU-driven NbS-related initiatives and facilitate the access to them and to the related knowledge for national and local stakeholders. By capitalising on the work already happening in the local context, the Hub will work at the national level to develop a country-wide concept and practice for NbS.

The Hub was launched in May 2023 and is coordinated by Carlo Calfapietra, Institute of Research on Terrestrial Ecosystems of the CNR (Italian National Council of Research).

Who is involved?

The Hub is composed primarily of municipalities and research institutes, engaged through a screening of the main Italian partners involved in the EU-funded NbS projects (until 2020). The next step will be to engage the private sector, NGOs, etc. so as to make research and knowledge available to all actors working on NbS.

What does the Hub focus on?

The Hub focuses on:

- the identification of the **link between NbS, biodiversity valorisation and the fight against climate change**, including **carbon sequestration, heat island effect and air pollution mitigation**, due to the severe climate impacts on Mediterranean countries.
- on **terrestrial and urban areas, including coastal**.

The marine ecosystem will be focused on at a later stage, since the number of marine NbS are still few in the country, but the hub wants to overcome this limitation. Further, Italy

is a biodiversity hotspot, and therefore biodiversity is at the core of the hub

The intention is also to use the Hub to launch co-creation and participatory processes and to strengthen trainings.

Spotlight on activities

Many collaborations have arisen between partners involved in the Hub through previous engagements in projects, e.g. between municipalities and research institutes. The Hub will serve to institutionalise such collaborations, as its main objective is to create synergies and facilitate new project development. An important opportunity for the Hub is found in the launch of the [National Biodiversity Future Centre](#) (NBFC), which is investing 300 million euros on biodiversity and already places NbS as a priority.

Publications are a priority for the CNR and many are available especially on NbS in cities which are of relevance to the Hub's partners. Further, several case studies are available on the NetworkNature, Oppla and GeoIKP portals from existing projects, as well as from the ongoing catalogue of the National Biodiversity Future Centre.



These activities are coordinated by the CNR and therefore a clear link to the Hub will be made.

As regards to events, several commitments to represent the Hub internationally have been made. For instance, the Annual Conference of the International Ecology and Engineering society (including CNR researchers in the Scientific Committee) will be fully dedicated to NbS, and NbS dedicated sessions are planned to be organised in other International Conferences under preparation.

Last but not least, the Hub aims to valorise a normative initiative for NbS, with the objective of integrating these solutions at normative level.

Meet the Italian Hub coordinator

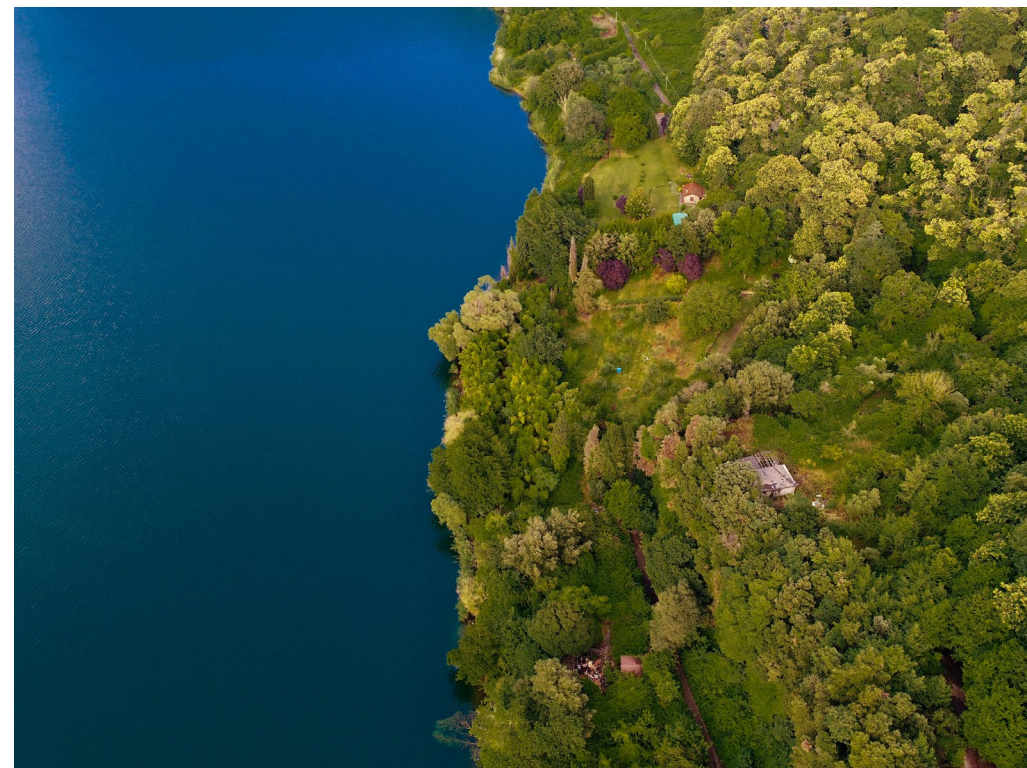


Carlo Calfapietra is the Director of the Institute of Research on Terrestrial Ecosystems at the Italian National Research Council and coordinates the Italian Hub.

Carlo has a forestry background and is an expert of the European Commission on NbS. He has been co-chair of the EKLIPSE NbS Assessment Working Group, and has been representing the European Commission in a number of events. He has coordinated the Cost Action GreenInUrbs and is involved in a number of EU projects on NBS.

For Carlo, the role played by practitioners and scientists is crucial in NbS, emphasising the need of scientific validation, to which he contributes through the work of the CNR. He has published several papers on the role of NbS and particularly trees on environmental benefits, particularly on carbon mitigation and air quality.

Carlo is one of the Coordinators of the National Biodiversity Future Centre, the largest project ever funded in Italy on Biodiversity. He coordinates the topic of NbS within this large initiative which involves about 2000 researchers.



What's next?

The vision for the Hub is to become a point of reference for the NbS community in Italy. The Hub will build clear and scientifically robust messages about NbS as an investment rather than a cost. The Italian Hub will spread this message and related information to attract public and private financing for NbS in Italy.

The Hub will capitalise on the power of the National Biodiversity Future Centre which already gathers 1300 researchers and the vital role of NbS in the perspective of building the new Symbiocene era has been clearly stated at the NBFC launching event, held in Rome in May 2023.

How to connect?

The Hub page will be made available on NetworkNature. Further information may be found in the [social media page](#) or requested at nbs.italy@iret.cnr.it

The Polish Hub

The NetworkNature Polish Hub – Polish NbS Hub in Wrocław – gathers and transfers knowledge on NbS in Poland, supporting and encouraging cities as well as regional and national authorities to develop and implement NbS strategies and actions. It will raise awareness among stakeholders from different disciplines and backgrounds, support the exchange of knowledge and experience and create new partnerships to working together on challenges that block the implementation of NbS on a wider scale.

The Hub was launched in May 2023 and is coordinated by Malgorzata Bartyna-Zielińska, Wrocław City Council.

Who is involved?

The Hub’s first partners are municipal and academia partners. In addition to the Wrocław City Council, three universities are official members of the Hub. Discussions are ongoing also with the Society of Landscape Architecture and cities.

What does the Hub focus on?

The Hub focuses on:

- demonstrating and promoting the **potential of NbS to reduce heat stress and flooding**, providing other co-benefits
- developing an effective strategy for those solutions to contribute to **climate change adaptation** across other regions.

Beyond NbS, the Hub aims to focus on promoting local solutions in general.

The work of the Hub targets **urban ecosystems**, with the intention of exploring other needs in the future.

Further, the Hub builds on the work of the [GrowGreen](#) H2020 project on NbS co-design, and aims to explore co-creation approaches building on the experience of other projects.

Spotlight on activities

The city of Wrocław has been engaging in initiatives and efforts to place itself as the NbS Hub. For instance, the city is recognised as a resilience hub, as part of the [Making Cities Resilient 2030](#) initiative. In addition, Wrocław was one of the GrowGreen partner cities. The engagement in this project has supported the city in creating their NbS Action Plan. Within this project, a workshop was held to train professionals and municipal workers on NbS, an initiative which will be repeated regularly in the future. Wrocław has also started building a network of cities connected by NbS throughout the GrowGreen project.

As regards to case studies, NbS projects are contributing to the local evidence base. The collaboration of the Hub with the universities is also expected to bring more knowledge and cases, with the objective of explaining different solutions, their gaps and the opportunities to fill them, and to



innovate the way of teaching. New projects are expected to arise from the Horizon and Interreg programmes focusing on NbS.

In Wrocław, several policies are already supporting NbS. For instance, NbS are officially part of the city’s municipal investment, requiring NbS to be integrated in the city’s projects. A local plan for climate change adaptation is in place as well as the Mayor ordinance (act for municipalities). Further, the “Grey into Green” programme for schools is setting rules on the percentage of greenery in schools to integrate rainwater management solutions. The Hub hopes to be the space and knowledge provider to make sure that all these initiatives and policies lead to proper investments in NbS.

Meet the Polish Hub coordinator



Malgorzata Bartyna-Zielińska is an urban planner at Wroclaw City Council and coordinator of the Polish Hub.

She was initially interested in the idea of smart cities to then focus more on resilient cities and sustainable development. But it was by working on the GrowGreen H2020 project, representing the municipality as a partner city, that Malgorzata got closer to the concept of nature-based solutions.

When she became the city's gardener, she found more interest in projects related to NbS and climate change adaptation and decided to start a PhD on NbS in urban planning.

Currently, Malgorzata is in charge of climate change adaptation and mitigation policies for the municipality. Her role and background have made starting the Hub the natural outcome, as an umbrella space for all the processes which are already ongoing.



What's next?

The Hub will continue to look for opportunities to promote its work and objectives and exchange with relevant stakeholders. Events and conferences will provide the perfect space for this mission. For instance, a conference is planned for November for the LIFE project LifeCoolCity, which will gather cities and academics.

Further, cities often reach out to the Hub coordinator to organise study visits, which are used as opportunities to promote NbS and the Hub with other municipalities. All these processes have already been ongoing. The vision for the Hub is to bring all these processes together and facilitate their functioning with the objecting of upscaling NbS in Poland.

How to connect?

The Hub page will be made available on NetworkNature. Further information may be requested to Malgorzata Bartyna-Zielińska, the Polish Hub's coordinator (malgorzata.bartyna-zielinska@um.wroc.pl).



Network Nature

NetworkNature supports the creation of national and regional NbS hubs with the objective of facilitating local cooperation, to mainstream and upscale NbS across Europe.

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