



Have you heard about nature-based solutions and want to know more? Then read on as NetworkNature helps you understand what nature-based solutions (NBS) are. You will also be able to identify those solutions that claim to be NBS but are not. We will introduce you to quality criteria of NBS, common misuses of the concept and links to video tutorials, useful resources and a wide range of NBS examples. By the time you are done, you will have a clear picture of what counts as NBS and what does not; they are more than just urban greenery!

What are nature-based solutions?

According to the [European Commission](#) 2016, nature-based solutions are “solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Nature-based solutions must therefore benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services.”



There is another more recent definition formally agreed by governments that might catch your interest from the [United Environment Assembly 2022](#): “Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, which address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem resilience and biodiversity benefits.”

In other words, nature-based solutions directly use the power of functioning and healthy ecosystems to tackle societal challenges, while enhancing, or at least maintaining the biodiversity level and ecosystem integrity of their implementation site.

Terms that sound the same but are not

What are nature-based solutions aiming to do? NBS are actions that benefit society and nature at the same time.



NBS differs from the other solutions out there ([IUCN](#)):

Nature derived solutions:

Wind, wave, and solar energy are derived from nature. They are solutions to replace our carbon energy needs and benefit society. In isolation, they are not based on functioning natural ecosystems, and while necessary, they are not providing direct benefits to the ecosystems around them.

Nature inspired solutions:

Innovative design and production of materials, structures and systems that are modelled on biological processes (like the sticky gloves that mimic geckos). The impact of these types of solutions are not based on direct use of ecosystem services and do not provide benefits for nature.



Nature-based Solutions Made Easy



What do well designed nature-based solutions look like?

Every definition can have multiple interpretations. NBS is an umbrella concept which does not make it easier for us to agree on a common understanding. Nevertheless, a lot of progress has been made thanks to the work of many EU-funded projects and initiatives working to get us one step closer to a shared concept of NBS.

Poorly designed NBS can have unintended negative impacts and fail to tackle societal challenges and biodiversity loss. Many institutions, organisations and research groups have been joining efforts to provide a common understanding of NBS. For example, IUCN has developed the [IUCN Global Standard on Nature-based Solutions™](#), which details the criteria for effective and sustainable design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of NBS projects.

In addition, the [Nature-based Solutions Initiative](#) has developed four

evidence-based principles for delivering successful, sustainable NBS with long term benefits for people and nature:

1. NBS are not a substitute for the rapid phase-out of fossil fuels and must not delay urgent action to decarbonize our economies.
2. NBS involve the protection, restoration and/or management of a wide range of natural and semi-natural ecosystems on land and in the sea; the sustainable management of aquatic systems and working lands; or the creation of novel ecosystems in and around cities or across the wider landscape.
3. NBS are designed, implemented, managed and monitored by or in partnership with Indigenous peoples and local communities through a process that fully respects and champions local rights and knowledge, and generates local benefits.
4. NBS support or enhance biodiversity, that is, the diversity of life from the level of the gene to the level of the ecosystem.



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Want to know more?



What Are Nature-based Solutions?
<https://youtu.be/TGuyMakgeVw>



How Are Nature-based Solutions Co-Created?
<https://youtu.be/wWA2cx5y45c>



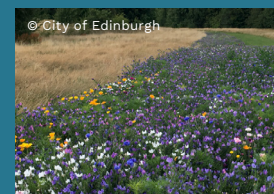
Still not sure what NBS are? Take a look at these examples!



Health forest in the Nature reserve of Kintterö, Finland



Flood-based agriculture in the Upper Mekong Delta, Vietnam



Bio-rich meadows and shrub beds nature network in Edinburgh, Scotland



What are some common misuses of nature-based solutions?

Now that we know how to deliver successful nature-based solutions it is time to explore common risks that can jeopardise and reduce the overall quality of an NBS project. Take note of these common risks identified during the NetworkNature [Semester Theme on NBS Quality and Standards:](#)

If a project ...

- overlooks indigenous peoples' and local and vulnerable communities' rights;
- contributes to gentrification;
- unfairly distributes benefits;
- promotes industrial agriculture and monoculture planting;
- causes land grabbing and displacement of communities; and
- fails to contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

... it may be inspired by nature, but it is not NBS.



NBS are making policy waves!

Nature-based solutions are very present in the European policy landscape to ensure a greener future for all of us! They are referenced in the:

- [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#)
- [EU Nature Restoration Law](#)
- [EU Soil Strategy for 2030](#)
- [EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#)
- [EU Climate Law](#)

... and more!

