

# How to start and deepen your business around nature-based solutions

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# What are nature-based solutions?

*“[...] 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.**”*

European Commission

*“[...] **actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems** which **address social, economic and environmental challenges** effectively and adaptively, while **simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits**”*

Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)

# What are nature-based solutions?

All definitions mention challenges that NBS can solve and benefits they can bring. NBS have the potential to help with

- ***Environmental*** problems
  - E.g. related to climate and water
  - Biodiversity improvement is intrinsic to the concept
- ***Social and cultural*** challenges
  - E.g. in in the fields of public health, food security and social cohesion
- ***Economic*** challenges
  - E.g. lack of employment opportunities, renaturation of attractive landscapes

# SMEs are facing a challenge.

## Many SMEs are interested in NBS, but information is not readily available

- NBS projects publish resources which are highly relevant for SMEs but they are spread all over the web.
- Especially small businesses don't have the capacity to search for them and read long reports.

There was a need for a Business Information Package which should:

- **Be relevant for SMEs of all levels of prior knowledge**
- **Include practical content which SMEs can use right away**
- **Be engaging and thus motivate hands on action**
- **Give SMEs tips to start their NBS journey**

# How can the business information package be relevant for higher education institutes?

To pave the way for NBS, it is important to include the concept itself in the education of future business professionals.

If these professionals are educated about NBS early on in their career, they can help pave the way for the further support of NBS. The deliverable should therefore:

- **Be relevant and easy to use for higher education teachers/lecturers:** the materials should include basic definitions of concepts as well as material which can be used for exercises.
- **Make the topic accessible for students:** to this end, specific examples of good practices will be included in the form of case studies of successful nature-based enterprises.





Network  
Nature



Network  
Nature

# Nature-based solutions Business information package



# Contents of the Business Package

## 1. What are nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises?

Clarifies the NBS and NBE concepts

## 2. Examples of successful nature-based enterprises

Inspiring stories of NBE which made their way through

## 3. Nature-based solutions as a business opportunity

Depicts an overview of key figures and trends

## 4. Business models for nature-based solutions

Three business models canvases especially adapted for NBS

## 5. What next? Where to start?

Policy and legislation, networking platforms, funding and investment opportunities





# What are nature-based enterprises?

- Are independent entities
- Have as their core mission to address climate change and biodiversity challenges
- Contribute to the regeneration or restoration of nature (i.e. are nature-positive)
- Conduct activities which contribute towards a just, fair and equitable society
- Are committed to measure the impact of your enterprise activities and operations in terms of environmental, economic/financial, social impact

(from the Connecting Nature Enterprise Platform)



Ecosystem Restoration & Biodiversity



Green Buildings



Urban Landscapes



Regenerative Agriculture



Smart Tech



Regenerative Forestry



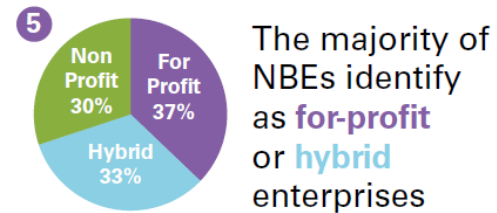
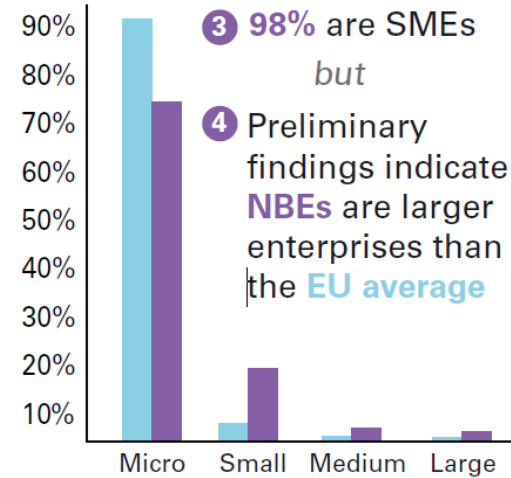
Water Management



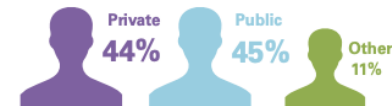
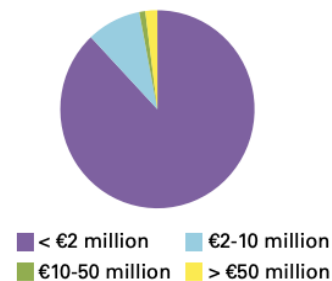
Regenerative Tourism



# Research findings about nature-based enterprises from Connecting Nature

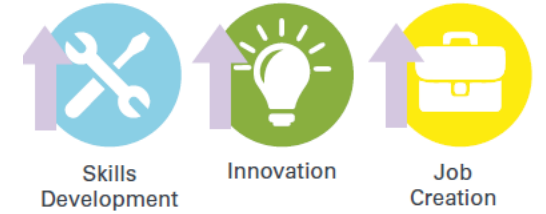


## NBE turnover



The **private sector** is almost as important as the **public sector** as a source of turnover

## Economic value created:



## Environmental value created:



## Social value created:



# Helix Pflanzen GmbH

**Helix Pflanzensysteme plans innovative plant ecosystems and technologies, delivers them and also cares for the stewardship of these systems.**

- Ready-to-use solutions for urban areas, focusing on greening buildings and landscapes
- Innovation as an important success factor, achieved also through European research and innovation projects



Picture source: Helix  
Pflanzensysteme



Picture source: Helix  
Pflanzensysteme

# Helix Pflanzen GmbH

## Environmental problems

- In cities there is less and less space available for greenery, leading to increased heat and decreased air quality and biodiversity, and to counteract this Helix focuses on using vertical space for greening and thus contributes to greener cities
- improve living conditions in cities by improving air quality, providing cooling effects and reducing CO<sub>2</sub>
- designed to increase biodiversity by choosing plants so insects live and/or find food there

## Social and cultural challenges

- Helix strives to bring nature into cities for everyone to enjoy, for this they provide green rooms, either portable or permanent
- Products are produced fairly and sustainably

## Economic challenges

- The company has existed for decades and has grown to create even more jobs in the region

# Nature-based solutions as a business opportunity

**Increasing demand for nature-based solutions by the public sector, private sector and civil society.**

- **Policy environment is pushing to make more funding available for NBS**
  - EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
    - Cities with over 20.000 inhabitants need to develop Urban Greening Plans
  - New Nature Economy Report II - The Future of Nature and Business (World Economic Forum)
  - UN State of Finance for Nature
    - Calling for tripling investment in NBS by 2030

# Nature-based solutions as a business opportunity

- **Independent Expert Report “The vital role of nature-based solutions in a nature positive economy (2022)”**
  - EU considers NBS as an opportunity to foster innovation and competitiveness
  - Companies delivering NBS can
    - Open up new markets
    - Contributing to new types of job creation (both high-tech and low-skilled jobs)
    - Create diversification of portfolios and income streams
- **Delivering NBS to end-users generates a second layer of benefits**
  - As they help to solve environmental problems, social and cultural challenges and economic challenges
  - Society and ecosystems profit from contributions to climate change mitigation/ adaptation, biodiversity, public health, the economy and social cohesion



# Business Models for NBS

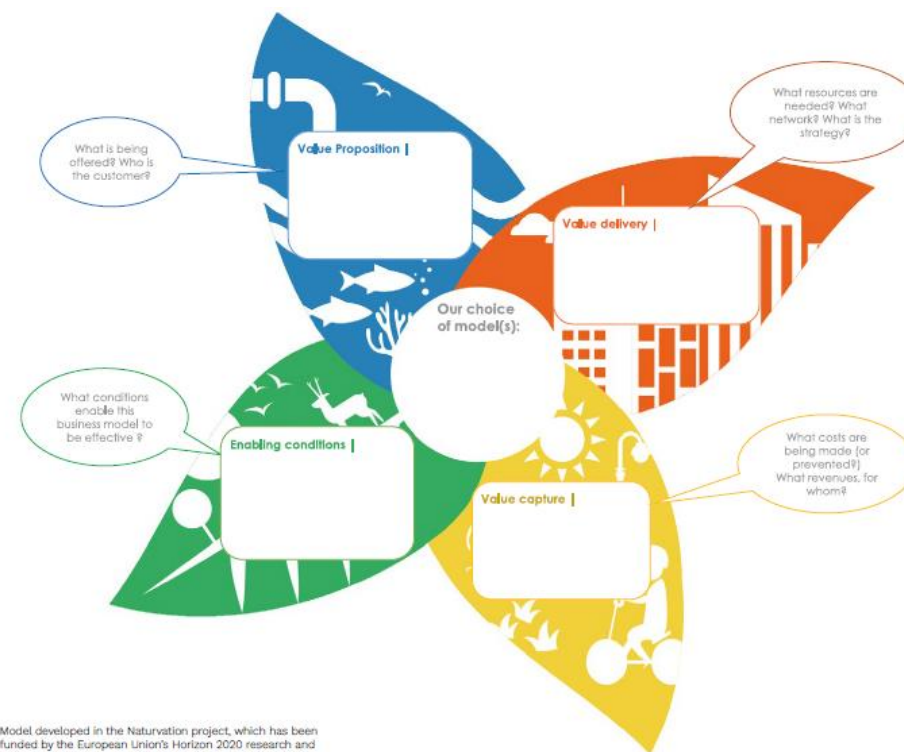
## The basics.

- BMs lay the basis for NBE, designed to be sustainable from a business point of view.
- Benefit 1: you gain a sound understanding of “what are you offering”, “to whom are you offering it”, among other key aspects (revenues, costs, key partners, etc).
- Benefit 2: it equips you with a powerful communication tool to develop a storyline that shall help NBE to get the support they need to starting-up:
  - getting financial support
  - attracting talent
  - engaging in alliances/cooperation partnerships
  - etc.

# Business Models for NBS

Improved knowledge on BMs for NBE arising from Horizon 2020 projects

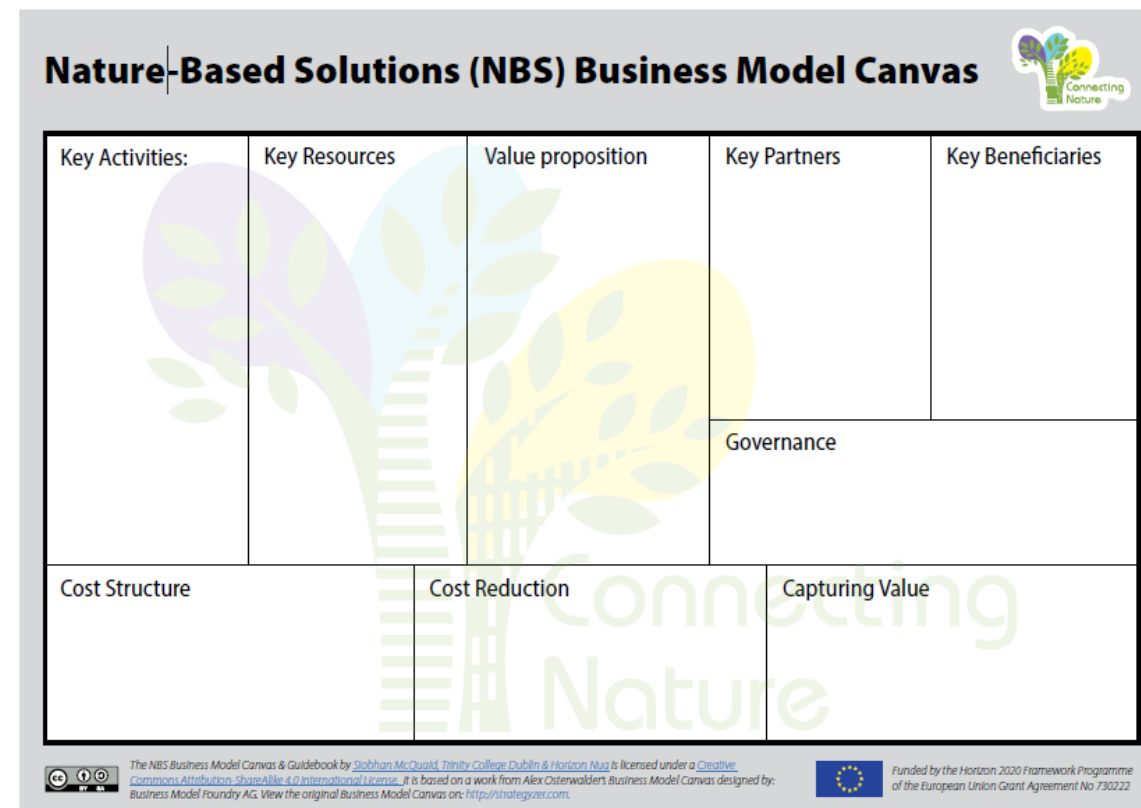
- **Business Model Puzzle** - solve the puzzle in just three steps!
  - Project Naturvation
  - Perfect for early stage NBE
  - Focus: assuring alignment & coordination between different actors



# Business Models for NBS

Improved knowledge on BMs for NBE arising from Horizon 2020 projects









- **NBS Business Model Canvas**
  - Project Connecting Nature
  - Perfect for NBE who already have value proposition and want to design how the business should operate
  - Focus: long term business sustainability addressing governance issues and an expanded understanding of “value”



# Business Models for NBS

Improved knowledge on BMs for NBE arising from Horizon 2020 projects

- **BMC Matrix for NBS**
  - Project Clever Cities
  - Perfect for NBE driven by groups of organisations in urban settings looking to ease the cocreation of BMs
  - Focus: predefined sets of questions guide and ease the co-creation process

Business Model Canvas Matrix for NBS. Focus on Creation, Delivery and Capturing Value				
<b>6)Key Partners</b>  Who are the Key Partners? Who are the Key suppliers? Which Key Resources are acquired from partners? Which Key Activities do partners perform	<b>5)Key Activities</b>  What Key Activities do the Value Propositions require? What are the Distribution Channels? Beneficiary Relationships?  <b>4)Key Resources</b>  What Key Resources do our Value Propositions require(Physical, financial, intellectual human resources)? Revenue Streams?	<b>2)Value Propositions</b>  What value is delivered to the beneficiaries? Which one of the beneficiary's problems are helped to be solved? What bundles of products and services are offered to each beneficiary? Which beneficiary needs are we satisfying?	<b>7)Governance</b>  Who is involved in our governance process and public participation related to NBS? How do we engage stakeholders in the co-design, co-implementation and co-monitoring processes of NBS?	<b>1)Beneficiaries</b>  For whom is the value created? Who are the most important beneficiaries?
Value Delivery			Value Creation	
<b>8)Cost Structure</b>  What are the most important costs inherent in the business model?		<b>3)Revenue Streams/ Financial Model</b>  For what value and benefits are our beneficiaries really willing to pay and which are the revenue streams ? Which is the Financial Model ?		
Value Capture				



Model developed in the CLEVER Cities project, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 innovation action programme under grant agreement no. 776604.

Model Adapted from Connecting Nature project (<https://connectingnature.eu/financing-and-business-models>) and with guidance from Osterwalder, Alexander; Pigneur, Yves; Clark, Tim (2010). Business Model Generation: A Handbook For Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers

# What next? Where to start?

## Summary of resources directed to NBE and companies interested in NBS

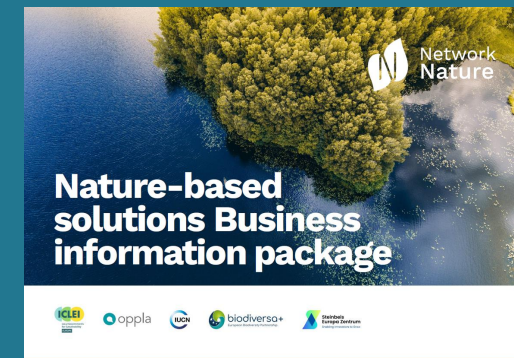
- **NBS databases**
  - Help NBE unsure about which NBS fits the challenge they want to address
    - NBS Toolkit (Project Operandum)
    - Urban Nature Atlas (Project Naturvation)
- **Policy and Legislation databases**
  - Help NBE better understand what permits (permitting path) they need to implement their projects
    - Geospatial Information Knowledge Platform - GeoIKP (Project Operandum)



# What next? Where to start?

## Summary of resources directed to NBE and companies interested in NBS

- **Networking platforms**
  - Help NBE to connect with partners across their value chains, stay up to date and to make their voice heard
    - Connecting Nature Enterprise Platform (Project Connecting Nature)
    - EdiCitNet Marketplace (Project Edible Cities Network)
    - European Rewilding Network (Rewilding Europe)
- **Funding opportunities**
  - Different financial instruments facilitate the start-up and scale-up of NBE
    - *Grants* from EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, LIFE programme, COST Actions or the European Regional Development Fund
    - *Loans, guarantees and equity* from EU institutions such as the European Investment Bank
    - *Crowdfunding* through the Nature Solutions Platform (Project REGREEN)



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