

Who is behind Nature-based solutions (NBS)?

A network analysis of NBS communities of practice

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Project description

Nature-based solutions (NBS) are emerging as a viable way to realize more sustainable cities (van der Jagt et al, 2020). At the same time, their implementation requires substantial learning, in project and across projects (Frantzeskaki et al., 2025). Europe has supported research and innovation on nature-based solutions (NBS) with several rounds of research funding of the Horizon program. Yet, we lack a clear vision of how the funded collaborations are revealing identifiable communities of practice over time, which actors are included and how these communities map into geographies. Such a network analysis will reveal who benefits from the innovations, and who are the driving communities of practice in innovating / researching with/of NBS. In this project we use EU funded projects as observable and salient collaborative agreements that reveal NBS communities of practice.

The **tasks** of the student assistant include:

- Collecting data on all Horizon-funded project on NBS and organizing them into a database including name, location and type of funded organization and location and type of NBS project
- Visualizing networks of collaborations using social network analysis;
- Analyzing patterns over time and across geographies to identify key communities of practice and their evolution in time;

Note: a preliminary analysis for the years 2005-2022 was done in a pilot project, therefore the student assistant can start from that and then extend and expand it.

References

Frantzeskaki, N., Wijsman, K., Kabisch, N., & McPhearson, T. (2025). Inter-and transdisciplinary knowledge is critical for nature-based solutions to contribute to just urban transformations. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 122(29), e231591121.

van der Jagt, A. P., Raven, R., Dorst, H., & Runhaar, H. (2020). Nature-based innovation systems. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 35, 202-216.

Particular job requirements

Familiarity with network analysis software is required
Knowledge of NBS or sustainability transitions is helpful but not necessary