



NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

TOWARD THE
IMPLEMENTATION IN
MEDITERRANEAN CITIES



Brainstorming summary

Experts group | 21 February 2018

DRAFT, 12 March 2018

Introduction

As part of the work of research done in the identification of Nature-based-Solutions in cities of the Mediterranean region, IUCN-Med organised a discussion with a group of international experts, in order to discuss the opportunity of joining efforts in promoting this concept; and to identify the most suitable scope of a common project in that field.

A group of seven experts, together with members of the IUCN-Med team, met in Malaga last 21st. February 2018 for that purpose. The participating experts came from different trans-disciplinary fields of expertise, covering urban ecology, research, public administration, international organisations, entrepreneurial network, and public agencies related to Mediterranean cities. All of them participated in a facilitated interaction and dialogue about NbS.

List of participants

- Chantal Van Ham, IUCN Europe. Brussels
- Gregorio Sgrigna, CNR, Greeninurbs, EKLIPSE. Rome

- Miguel Mendez, Junta de Andalucía, Head of department of Climate Change. Seville.
- Francesc Baro, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Naturvation Project. Barcelona
- Jesus Iglesias Saugar, Ecopreneurs4Climate, Málaga.
- Bernard Valero, Avitem, Marseille
- Salvador Rueda, Agency of Urban Ecology, Barcelone
- . Andrés Alcántara, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
- Lourdes Lázaro Marín, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
- Cecilia Gañán de Molina (Moderator), International Consultant.

In this document, we would like to highlight the main ideas resulting from the inputs provided by the experts group.

Strategic elements to achieve re-natured cities and sustainability-related challenges in the Mediterranean cities/urban areas

1. Nature in cities must be seen as a source for innovative solutions.
2. NbS must be always context-adapted, and therefore, it is paramount to consider the complex geo-politic reality of the Mediterranean.
3. NbS should always consider issues as migration, water scarcity, sea protection or vulnerability to climate-change as peace and justice challenges for the region.
4. The Mediterranean city model, characterized by the population density, the compactness of the building, the complexity of urban uses and functions, and the proximity of services on a pedestrian scale, must be claimed and protected.
5. To address contemporary urban challenges, it is key to manage cities as ecosystems (urban ecology approach).
6. Multi-level, multi-sector and multi-actor policy support for NbS must be urgently promoted.
7. Climate change resilience, heat-island effect, air pollution and noise related-illnesses, urban mobility, access to Nature, sustainable integrated urban agendas are the main strategic elements for the Mediterranean cities.
8. A change in the urban mobility pattern is of central importance to address the main challenges (avoiding the urban sprawling trend; re-naturing cities and making cities healthier -by liberating public space from motorized mobility-...).
9. Complementarily, a new model of public space is necessary to guarantee residents the opportunity to become “citizens” (with different rights in the public space, not only the mobility), and not only “pedestrians”.

Suitable NbS to get the best results, in terms of societal and biodiversity benefits

1. Multiple challenges faced by Med-cities concerning social inequities and disconnection with Nature could be adequately addressed by NbS. However, NbS concept and impacts should be better defined.
2. There is no “one-size-fits-it-all” NbS policy: the best NbS must always be adapted to the local circumstances and needs.
3. NbS applied to the Mediterranean urban areas should consider three main connections:
 - Urban-peri-urban territory
 - Land-sea connection
 - Urban green corridors
4. Greening and re-naturing cities is a strategic NbS addressing multiple benefits: contribution to climate change adaptation, reduction of the heat-island effect, reduction of noise, improvement of health and well-being of residents, avifauna attraction, new visual and acoustic urban landscapes.
5. “Superblocks” are seen as an adequate urban model to promote sustainable and healthy cities in the Mediterranean, by changing the mobility model and releasing new public spaces for uses such as green corridors, community gardens, social and cultural activities, leisure, environmental education, etc.
6. Trees are strategic elements for re-naturing cities and providing, simultaneously, environmental and multiple societal benefits. Paying attention to species selection is important though; and also the promotion of a stronger collaboration between municipalities in this regard.
7. Urban agriculture is part of the solution: a great interest for community initiatives promoting proximity for local production and consumption is shown all over the region.
8. A right to energy, efficient and inclusive, with gender perspective, should be developed in the Mediterranean cities.
9. NBS related to marine and coastal environment should be the next step in the process of implementing bio-inspired solutions in the urban areas of the region.

Tools to facilitate NbS implementation in Mediterranean cities

Seven areas of actions were identified:

Awareness, education and communication tools

- Actions to promote empowerment of local population as drivers of change, taking advance of the sense of “community” that is intrinsic in the Mediterranean region.
- Education in values linked to long-term sustainability vs short-term profit making values.
- Communication and awareness innovative actions allowing ownership of NbS concept.

Regulatory tools

- Consider the accessibility to Nature as a social justice challenge/right.
- Long-term NbS policy with compulsory rules.
- Promotion of more links health-green cities.
- A shift in public procurement regulations (avoiding the “auction” effect).
- Alignment of economic indicators to environmental and societal concerns.

Governance tools

- Integrated policy frameworks are key for supporting sustainable urban integrated agendas and the implementation of Nbs
- Stronger political commitment for breaking down silos and work across sectors.
- Promotion of initiatives of collaborative and decentralized economy.

Capacity-building tools

- Transdisciplinary knowledge about urban biodiversity.
- More policy-citizens-science integration
- Training politicians and officials on NbS.
- Development of an “NbS expert” figure/profile to manage NbS.

Economic and Financial tools

- Development of financial tools and tax incentives for the implementation of NbS.
- Encouragement of public-private investments in ecosystems.
- Development of more funding for eco-entrepreneurs and green SMEs.

Information and knowledge-exchange tools

- Development of prospective and information tools for identifying scenarios in support of NbS decision-making processes.
- More evidence-based and tailor-made information.
- Creation of a platform for capacity-building in the Mediterranean, exchange of knowledge, and documentation of good practices.

Technical tools

- A new model of ecosystemic urbanism is needed. It should take into consideration not only the urbanistic planning at the surface level, but also at the underground and at the roof levelⁱⁱ for assuring a new model of re-natured and sustainable city and maximising, at the same time, the ecological efficiency of the urban space (enhancing urban biodiversity, the water cycle, and clean forms of energy).
- Indicators to assess impacts for a new ecosystem urbanism.
- Indicators measuring intangible value in the urban space (qualitative assessment vs. quantitative economic indicators).

Potential join-actions to undertake in the coming months

In order to design a potential roadmap for joining efforts in the promotion of NbS in the Mediterranean urban areas, some proposals were shared by the participants:

- Preparation of a small document, explaining the main challenges that Mediterranean cities face, what are NbS, how is the concept applied in the region, and which obstacles should be removed in order to promote its implementation.
- Preparation of a brochure explaining briefly the above-mentioned content, and offering a visual synthesis of the situation of NbS in the Med-cities.
- Organization of a workshop in the framework of next Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate (MEDCOP).
- Organization of a side event in the framework of the workshop "[The challenges of the metropolis beyond Habitat III: a contribution to the New Urban Agenda](#)", to be held in Barcelona on May 2018, organised by the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona.
- Organization of an international meeting with experts from the Southern Mediterranean countries, to discuss with them the more convenient NbS for the challenges faced in these urban areas. M. Valero, from Avitem, proposed to

contact the “Maison du Climat” de Tanger, for exploring the possibility of organising there this event in the coming months.

- Creation of an online platform, similar to those implemented by the European projects Naturvation, Oppla or Eklipse in the EU region, offering the possibility of mapping case studies of NbS in the Med-cities, exchanging good practices and methodologies, and allowing the creation of a network of cities, practitioners and social stakeholders for the promotion of this bio-inspired approach in the region.

ⁱ Superblocks are areas (from 16 to 20 Ha.) of the city where the traffic is restricted to the roads in the superblock perimeters. Cars are only allowed in the streets in between if they are residents, emergencies or providing local businesses, and at a reduced speed of 10km/h.

ⁱⁱ 1/3 of the green spaces in Med-cities should be created on height –roofs-, to give a new use and ecological function to these areas.