

How using a roadmap can encourage cities to replicate more nature-based solutions in the planning process

Key Points

- A roadmap can outline and capture a city's path towards co-creating their own local nature-based solutions (NbS) plan. It can help cities to create and follow up on their plan of how to overcome identified barriers and challenges and mainstream NbS replication activities into existing local (and/or national) policy, legislative, governance and citizen engagement structures as well as repeat replication activities in other districts.
- In the CLEVER cities project, each of the fellow cities (Belgrade, Larissa, Madrid, Malmö, Quito, and Sfantu Gheorghe) constructed a template for a generic roadmap that could be filled in and adjusted for each city.
- The idea behind the roadmap was that it would then help the city to develop its own NbS plan that could then be applied. A NbS plan can be understood as a generic term and the form it can take in each city is different as each city's conditions are unique. It can address different urban scales and be framed differently, depending on the existing political frameworks and institutional structures in place. It can be a draft of a chapter embedded in an overall existing citywide strategic plan or masterplan or the document might be an NbS plan focused on a certain neighbourhood.
- Depending on the type of plan/document being produced the roadmap will support the cities in coordinating the activities in the process of developing an urban NbS plan. The roadmap was designed to be a living document that can be adapted, added to and adjustable to fit the needs of the individual city.

Structure of the roadmap

The structure of the road map is inspired by the international standard “Sustainable development in communities – Management System for Sustainable Development” (ISO 37101). The different steps in the road map are not to be understood as linear and successive but are to be treated as overlapping with one another in

both time and practice. The process will unfold and become more tangible and will therefore require feedback loops that allow for adjustments and improvement. Considering the dynamics of city politics, back-and-forth loops between steps are not only to be expected, but even desired.



Different steps of the roadmap:

1) Current state - By using existing knowledge and engaging local stakeholders, collating data and information about the city creates a baseline or starting point for each city.

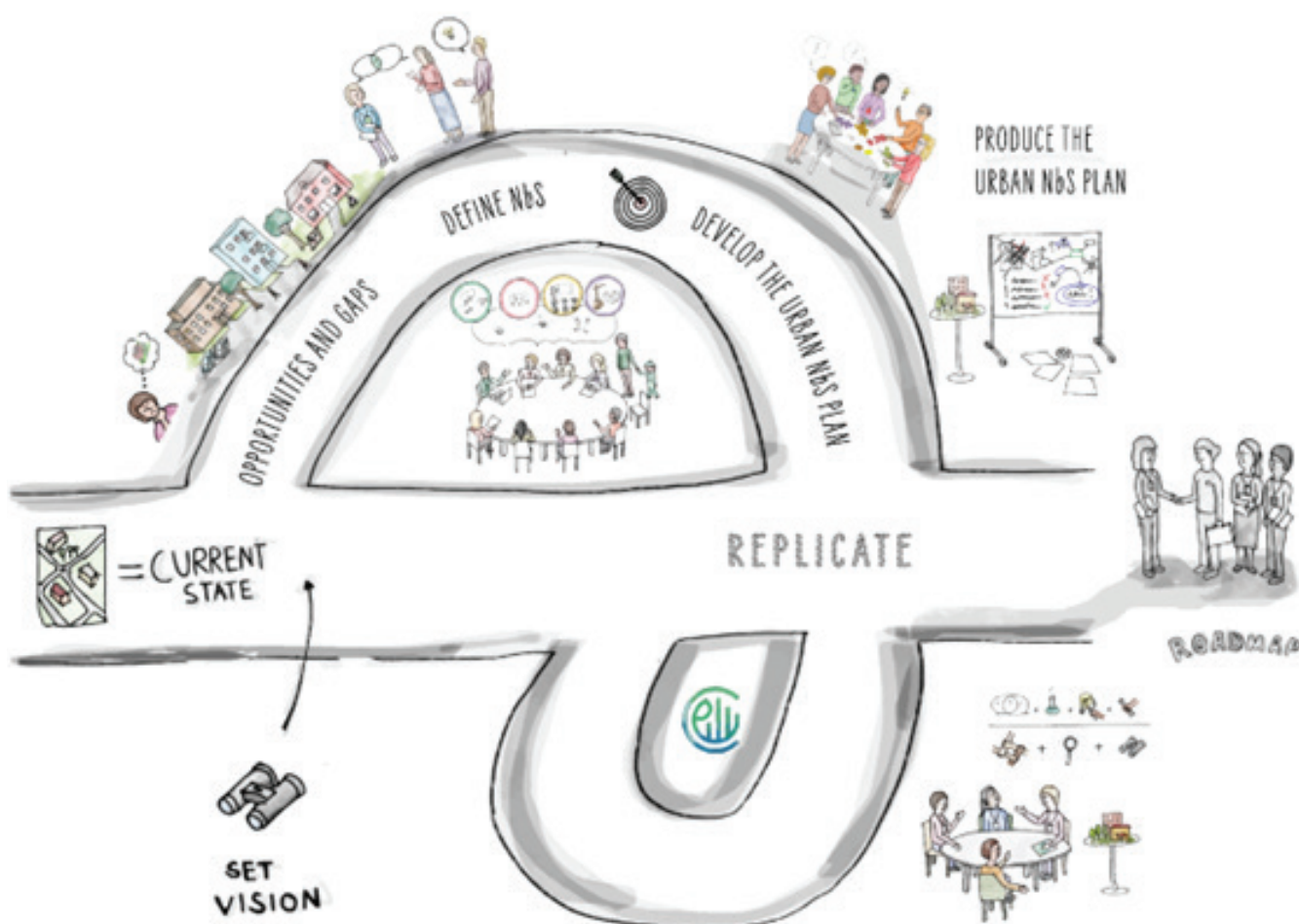
2) Set vision - When the city has its starting point it then needs to identify where it wants to go and establish targets to get there. It can be valuable to include multiple stakeholders in the development of the vision and work with residents that will be affected by the outcome of the plan.

3) Opportunity and gaps - The vision can then be compared with the current state and what is lacking to reach the vision can be identified. This is a move from the initial analysis of the current state on city- and district-level towards a collaborative and co-creative process which aims at getting involved locally.

4) Define NbS for chosen district - By brainstorming possible solutions and measures, as well as testing and analysing their desirability and feasibility, the nature-based solutions that are most suitable for the plan can be selected. It can be that there are multiple solutions to be applied in a large-scale plan or area.

5) Develop the urban NbS Plan - The purpose of the NbS plan is to mainstream nature-based solutions into existing local policy and planning. Using the information brought together in the sections described above, a city can develop its own urban NbS plan.

6) Produce the urban NbS Plan - It is important to define the scale and frame of the plan to prepare and implement a relevant submission strategy and a communication package for the plan.



Malmö's roadmap

Malmö found writing the roadmap to be a really useful process to understand what is needed in the area of Lindängen in terms of nature-based solutions. We started with mapping out the current situation, looking at the history of the local area as well as the needs of the local community.

We used these needs, as well as an understanding of the local context to set the vision.

'Lindängen is a green, health promoting place with a focus on sustainable urban development'.

Exploring the opportunity and gaps gave us the chance to identify some challenges and recognise some barriers that exist, such as the re-organisation of Malmö into specialised department and commit-



tees instead of being organised into geographical districts. This has made cooperation and development from a local (area based) development perspective difficult. We also found that many people, on all levels, did not know what nature-based solutions were, and many local residents did not know how they could make a difference in their local area and push for more greener solutions.

This helped us to develop the realisation that our plan would be a guide informing local residents, municipal staff and property owners on benefits of nature-based solutions and why they should be incorporated into plans, as well as inspiring local residents how they can make change happen in their area.

The roadmap really helped us to develop these ideas and gather all the information we needed to move forward.



Images by Malmöstad/Apelöga

Experiences with replicating/upscaling the NbS roadmaps

The three cities, London, Milan and Hamburg, have developed a series of activities to develop their own NbS roadmaps. In the first phase, each city has worked to identify those successful experiences that could have the potential for replication. Among all the experiences identified, each city has selected the one with the greatest interest for its replication and/or upscaling. Thus, each city has been able to adapt the replication to its reality; in the case of London, by giving continuity to its Community Design Collective (CDC) in the different urban regeneration projects, in the case of Milan, by identifying the

renaturation of the school at the Giambellino park, as an action with a great capacity for expansion to other schools, and finally Hamburg, more focused on upscaling different experiences for their integration on the city's adaptation strategy.

Once the strategies with potential for replication were identified, the methodology tested in the Fellow Cities was taken as a starting point but adapted to the context and reality of each Front Runner city. In this way, cities will be able to have a document adapted to their needs and the current reality



of their planning and co-creation contexts. In this sense, each city will have a document with a real capacity to advance in the replication of the project results. In this way, it has been sought that the NbS roadmaps can continue generating a real impact in the different areas of action, trying to avoid a road-map that is not adequate to the current reality of the Front Runner cities.

Informing the European Commission's Guidance for the Urban Greening Plans

The **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** lays out ambitious and long-term goals to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 and contains specific actions and commitments, also in relation to urban ecosystems, which are recognised as a key part of achieving the aims of the strategy. In order to bring nature back into our cities, the European Commission calls on all cities above 20,000 inhabitants to develop Urban Greening Plans (UGPs) as strategic, multi-scale frameworks that enable the mainstreaming of urban biodiversity as a priority across municipal departments and across sectors.

The **European Commission's current draft UGP guidance** was developed through an extensive consultation process with dozens of European cities. The concept of the NbS Roadmaps developed in CLEVER Cities as well as the experiences and lessons learned coming out of the roadmap development in the CLEVER Fellow Cities played a leading role in the

conceptualization of the UGP guidance. Following CLEVER's NbS roadmaps as a blueprint, the UGP process includes a number of steps based on the cyclical Integrated Management Approach as defined in **ISO 37101** which is driven by a local co-creation process.

Policy relevance and implications

The roadmap was a productive tool to initiate the narrative alignment of the fellow cities' different ways of working towards planning of nature-based solutions by highlighting certain steps of development. Although the road map was used in different ways by the different cities, it provided a robust framework for the co-creation process that structured the descriptive planning steps of the key stakeholders in each fellow city.

All fellow cities deviated from both the sequence and priority of the six steps. This highlights the flexibility and adaptability of the roadmap tool which ensures that the urban NbS plans are locally anchored and applicable.

References and further readings

NbS roadmap template to guide cities, (link pending)

NbS roadmaps from the fellow cities, (link pending)

UrbanByNature webinars, (link pending)

UGP policy brief, (link pending)

UGP guidance at EC website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/urban-greening-platform_en

ISO 37101 'Sustainable development in communities — Management system for sustainable development'