

# Co-Implementation of Nature-based Solutions

## Implementing NBS with stakeholders: what, why and how

**What:** The co-implementation of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) involves collaborating with people and partners to effectively put these solutions into action, ensuring their marketability and long-term sustainability. This requires actively engaging various stakeholders, particularly local ones, in the provision and construction of previously designed or co-designed solutions.

**Why:** Participating in the implementation phase is crucial as it fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to the process, encouraging ongoing care and maintenance of the implemented solutions. The tangible interventions also serve as a testing ground to refine NBS, making them more appealing and sustainable.

**How:** The co-implementation of NBS is flexible, tailored to the availability and resources of stakeholders. For instance, individual citizens and local associations can volunteer their efforts, while sponsors and suppliers might also express interest in contributing, depending on the opportunities that NBS interventions present.

## Overview / Approach

Addressing NBS from the perspective of the European Commission requires a broad overview and a complex interplay between definitions, challenges, and feasible solutions. In addition, implementation and funding of NBS are at the forefront of issues being tackled by many cities; including how to achieve and facilitate the implementation of NBS into public policies and tackling other barriers to implementation at the urban micro-scale. NBS co-creation processes are

hence intertwined with stakeholder engagement throughout the implementation of different phases. Accordingly, co-creation processes will also result in co-benefits in adjacent communities. Local residents will be able to verify the impacts during co-implementation, help maximize co-management and co-monitoring, and maintain the solutions in place on the long run.

### Make sure your co-creation process is:

- ✓ An **innovative and active** collaboration between partners.
- ✓ Aims **to achieve co-benefits** on both local and city-wide scales.
- ✓ Is processed through a **collective and shared governance approach**.

Table 1: Different Levels of and approaches to stakeholder engagement in co-implementation

Level of Engagement	Nature of Approach	Description
<b>Inform</b>	Non-participatory	A one way flow of information from program to stakeholder. Stakeholders are simply informed about the co-implementation of NBS.
<b>Consult</b>		A process by which stakeholders are asked for information or their opinions to improve the construction phase, and the social acceptance of NBS in place.
<b>Involve</b>	Participatory	Stakeholders are involved in discussions about the program and can influence decisions but are not directly involved in decision-making.
<b>Collaborate</b>		Stakeholders are fully involved, often included in decision-making. Depending on the resources and assets that they bring into the process, they can have an impact on the final construction of NBS.
<b>Empower: full involvement, often lead on decision-making</b>		Stakeholders are fully involved, and often facilitated to lead decision-making. Usually, owners of land or technical solutions and play a major role.

#### Real world Example from London, Thamesmead.

London's NBS are all located in South Thamesmead, an area of Thamesmead undergoing rapid change due to significant regeneration activities, such as new transport infrastructure and hundreds of new homes being created. Peabody, the social landlord is investing over £10million in improving the public realm and landscape. This presented an excellent opportunity for CLEVER to be part of this scheme, adding value to the co-design processes and sharpen the focus on climate resilience. To guide this project and share decision making a group of residents were recruited and formed the Community Design Collective (CDC). This group have been working in collaboration with the CLEVER partners piloting a new innovative form of project governance. The CDC were appointed early in the design phase and have continued through into the implementation phase which is currently ongoing.

As set out in the CLEVER Guidance, Co-implementation is working with PEOPLE and partners to put the solution into action; the tangible interventions serve as a 'test' environment to make NBS marketable and sustainable. Co-implementing the solutions means involving people and stakeholders, especially local ones, in the provision and construction of the co-designed solution. Sponsors, suppliers, single citizens might wish to contribute to this phase, depending on the possibilities that the construction offers. Feeling to be part of the implementation phase is fundamental to initiate the following taking care of the solution in place. Co-implementation in the context of Thamesmead builds upon this definition, but also expands it to ensure that the implementation of the CLEVER Solutions have a long-lasting legacy by strengthening the community capacity and social infrastructure that was established in the co-design phase.

Given the complexity of the interventions and the scale of the project, the core elements of CLEVER Cities are being implemented by a third-party contractor, Maylim that the CLEVER Cities team, together with the CDC have appointed after a competitive tender exercise.

## Policy relevance and implications

The co-implementation of NBS poses several challenges in terms of governance and administrative procedures. Bureaucratic and safety restrictions in the co-construction processes of green areas with citizens and private sponsors make the approval process complex, often leading to the proponents and local authorities abandoning them.

## What can cities do to foster the co-implementation of NBS?

- ✓ Establish "collaboration pacts" that are open to both public and private entities or adopt a framework for entrusting the management of green areas through fixed-term contracts with well-defined tasks. For instance, Public-Private Partnerships can pool resources, expertise, and funding for the successful execution of NBS projects. This approach also facilitates co-construction and co-management of NBS, ensuring better social protection of spaces and substantial cost savings for the local government.
- ✓ Streamline the process of receiving donations and sponsorships for NBS interventions by utilizing methods such as public bids, crowdfunding, or engaging third-party agencies capable of efficiently managing the financial aspects.
- ✓ Create public registers of technical experts who contribute to the tangible implementation of NBS. This allows easy access to valuable expertise during the intervention phase, ensuring smoother implementation of the projects.
- ✓ Local policies should streamline permitting processes.
- ✓ Offer incentives or recognition to individuals, businesses, or organizations that actively participate in or support NBS co-implementation efforts. This can include awards, certificates, or other forms of acknowledgment for NBS projects. In addition, offering tax incentives is an option.
- ✓ Accelerating Green Procurement: prioritize green and sustainable procurement practices when acquiring goods and services related to NBS. This encourages businesses to adopt environmentally friendly approaches and products.
- ✓ Capacity Building: Invest in training programs and capacity-building initiatives for local communities, organizations, and professionals to enhance their skills and knowledge related to NBS implementation and management.

**AUTHORS: Eugenio Morello, Israa Mahmoud, and Nicola Evans.**

### CONTACT:

Email: [info@clevercities.eu](mailto:info@clevercities.eu)

Website: [www.clevercities.eu](http://www.clevercities.eu)

The sole responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the authors. It does not necessarily



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 innovation action programme under grant agreement no. 776604.

represent the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EASME nor the European Commission are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.