
Implementing Nature-Based Solutions in Cities - Expert Talk

Event

Workshop

Date

7 March 2019

Location

Berlin, Germany

On 7 March 2019, Polish and German NBS experts for nature-based solutions (NBS) met at the Ecologic Institute in Berlin for an informal exchange of experience and ideas. The group included engineers, planners, landscape designers, academics, policy specialists, artists, and municipal officers. The participants had a varied experience with implementing NBS – from planning citywide green infrastructure concepts or eco-districts to realising specific solutions together with citizens, such as storm water gardens or the revitalisation of riverbanks. Outcomes from this meeting will be integrated into upcoming "Climate NBS Polska" project activities, including the development of a catalogue of nature-based solutions and an overview of policy instruments, that cities can implement to support NBS implementation.

Nature-based solutions (NBS) can cost-effectively contribute to climate change mitigation through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, while also generating social, economic, and environmental benefits. Despite this potential, however, NBS have not yet been widely implemented in urban areas due to a number of barriers. The "Climate NBS Polska" project, financed through the European Climate Initiative (EUKI), aims to help Polish cities and urban planners to overcome these challenges and increase the understanding, acceptance, and uptake of NBS for urban climate mitigation.

Discussions focused on challenges that the participants have encountered while working with NBS, as well as identifying opportunities and creative solutions to overcome these. Common obstacles which were raised include:

- i) governance challenges (unclear jurisdictions, unsupportive regulations, tendering issues),
- ii) resource challenges (lack of funding, lack of qualified professionals and know-how, lack of data),
- iii) challenges to innovation (limited acceptance, lack of transdisciplinary thinking, lack of openness to innovation and institutional inertia).

Some solutions, which have been effective in addressing these, include strategies to engage citizens, developing comprehensive, cross-sectoral, and long-term visions for blue and green infrastructure in cities, using physical spaces creatively and implementing supportive policy instruments.

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