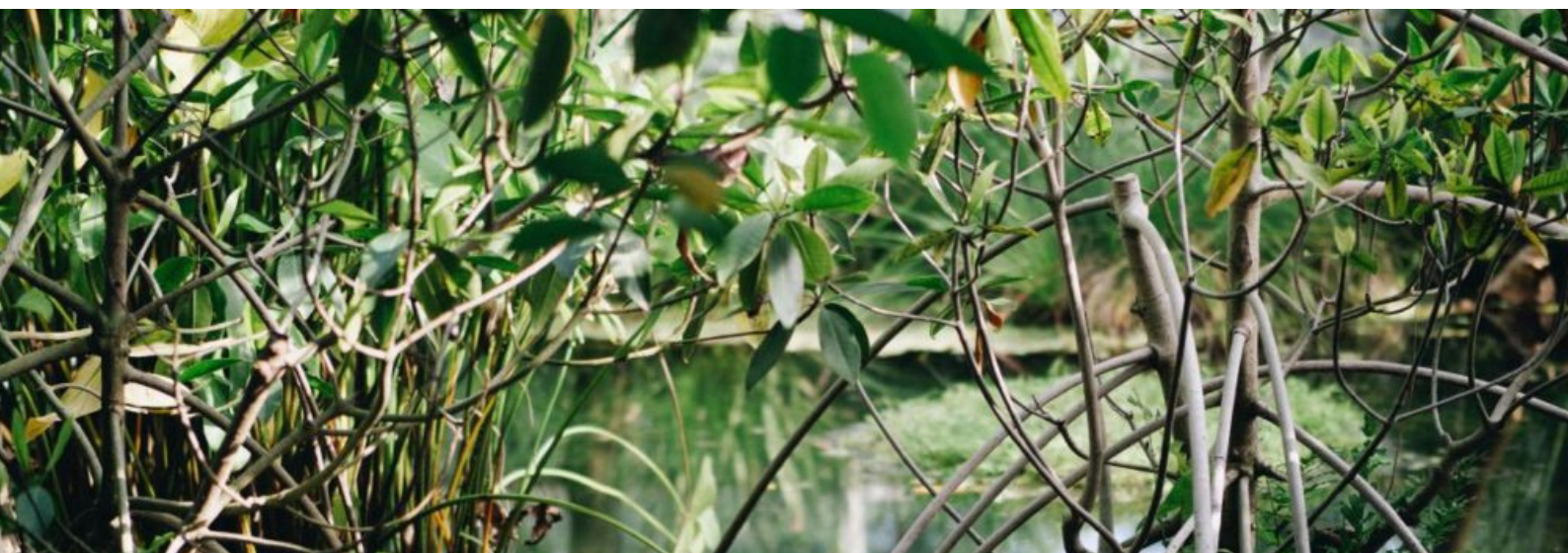


Geneva Nature-based Solutions Dialogues

Outcomes of the multi-stakeholder dialogues co-convened by IUCN & GEN from April to December 2021



Nature-based Solutions in Focus

Whether it's climate change, food and water security, human health, disaster risk, socio-economic development, biodiversity loss or environmental degradation, nature can help us. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) refer to a wide range of "actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits" (IUCN, 2016).

Through the multifaceted benefits that they provide, NbS offer a variety of positive environmental, social, economical and governance outcomes. As such, they effectively support the achievement of multiple global targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, misuse and ineffective design of NbS can result in unintended negative consequences. Thus, having a shared language and framework on NbS is critical for decision-makers and investors to design, assess and implement NbS interventions.

In order to fill this gap, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed the IUCN Global Standard for NbS™. The standard creates a benchmark which facilitates the design, verification and scaling up of NbS in a way that maximizes their potential to help address climate change, biodiversity loss and other societal challenges at the appropriate scale.



Figure 1. NbS deliver both human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits.

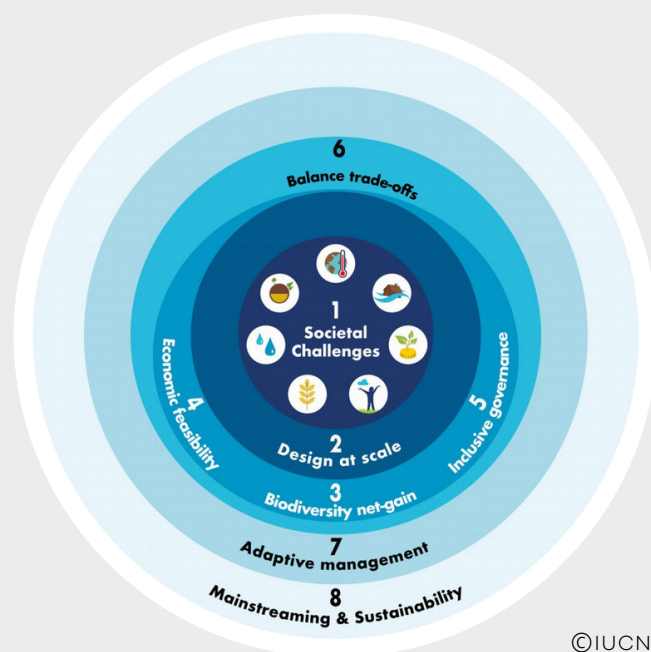


Figure 2. The eight criteria of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS serve as a benchmark for designing and assessing NbS.

The Geneva Nature-based Solutions Dialogues

Throughout 2021, IUCN and the Geneva Environment Network (GEN) hosted the Geneva Nature-based Solutions Dialogues, a series of webinars to facilitate further engagement and discussion on the topic of NbS. This journey brought together multiple actors from the Geneva international community and beyond to establish a common understanding, set an open dialogue and share perspectives.

With key environmental negotiations scheduled to take place, 2021 was a critical year for nature and society. In this context, the dialogues were hosted in the run-up to major events in the international agenda, thus highlighting the linkages between NbS and global processes of environmental governance. By drawing links with ongoing and upcoming conferences, meetings, campaigns, international days and more, the dialogues provided highly relevant reflections on the role of NbS to address the key challenges of our times.

In Numbers

The series featured 11 thematic sessions throughout the year. They brought together more than 80 speakers, representing all regions in the world. The dialogues reached almost 1'000 people from various sectors and across the globe.

Key Messages from the Dialogues

The Untapped Potential of NbS

The dialogues demonstrated that NbS can contribute to address the challenge of meeting our needs without further jeopardizing the health of our planet. Well-designed NbS can help address pressing societal challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, food and water security, disaster risk reduction, socio-economic development, and human health.

As many countries focus on economic relief and recovery efforts in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that the recovery is sustainable, green, and replicable as much as possible has been recognized globally. The potential of NbS in this context is tremendous. NbS provide cost-effective solutions that reap wide benefits across a range of issues. Investing in NbS will also be less costly than paying the price of non-action.

Building Knowledge and Partnerships for NbS

Addressing societal challenges in a holistic and collaborative way requires to break silos. Bringing together actors from the conservation sector and beyond can help us see where we can take action to move to a just and more equitable future for all, particularly for future generations. Thus, it is important to encourage partnerships and solidarity at all levels towards the achievement of our goals.

The dialogues further highlighted the need to advocate for transdisciplinary research and to integrate knowledge from different

scientific and non-scientific stakeholders and communities. Developing an inclusive understanding of NbS is crucial to halt biodiversity loss, while simultaneously enhancing human well-being and safeguarding human rights.

In particular, the rights of indigenous people, who have been custodians of nature for centuries, as well as their knowledge, systems and practices must be central to NbS. NbS must include all relevant stakeholders, including local communities, women, youth and the private sector.

Restoring our Relationship with Nature

Humanity's destruction of nature is driving numerous risks to human and planetary health. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the consequences of our broken relationship with nature. The growing momentum for NbS is a critical opportunity to reframe our understanding of the relationship between people and nature by emphasizing that people are part of nature.

By improving our relationship with nature, we can jointly walk towards a common goal, a just and more equal future that responds to the challenge of climate emergency and biodiversity loss. NbS offer an inclusive and holistic framework — based on solid environmental and social safeguards — to uphold human rights and enable a transition to this common goal.

Thematic Insights

GLOBAL POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Due to their potential to halt biodiversity loss and fight climate change, NbS and ecosystem-based approaches must prominently feature in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

ECOSYSTEMS RESTORATION

Restoration and NbS can benefit from each other to ensure that we develop win-win solutions for people and nature.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Moving from theory to practice, NbS can help us improve preparedness, prevention, response and recovery to disasters.

DECENT WORK & INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Moving towards NbS can help us ensure a green recovery from the pandemic which brings more sustainable, human-centered, and inclusive decent jobs.

CITIES

Incorporating NbS into practice and decision-making at the local level can make our cities more livable, resilient, sustainable, safe and inclusive.

HEALTH

Deploying NbS and breaking sectoral silos can help us protect the health of ecosystems, which are the foundation for human health.

FOOD

As agriculture fundamentally depends on nature, mainstreaming NbS in food systems is essential for food security, livelihoods and biodiversity

WATER

We are all water: we must ensure its value is recognized for all the benefits it provides us.

THE OCEAN

Global partnerships, robust science and innovative blue finance are essential to harness NbS for the achievement of SDG 14.

PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding needs to become an integral part of NbS by developing inclusive processes and new forms of capacity building.

PEOPLE

Human rights, inclusive participation, and free, prior and informed consent are an integral and essential part of equitable and effective NbS.

Authors & Resources

The International Union for Conservation of Nature is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organizations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organizations and the input of more than 17,000 experts. This diversity and vast expertise makes IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

The Geneva Environment Network is a cooperative partnership of more than 100 environmental and sustainable development organizations based in Geneva. Established in 1999, the GEN organizes events and promotes awareness on environmental issues. The Secretariat is supported by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme.

Learn more about the Geneva Nature-based Solutions Dialogues : www.tiny.cc/GENevaNbS