

# BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONSORTIUM?



VALUING NATURE



The University Of Sheffield.



## TOM WILD

Research Fellow, Dept of Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield  
Principal Investigator, Horizon 2020 CONEXUS project (RIA)

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[tinyurl.com/conexus-project](https://tinyurl.com/conexus-project)



CONEXUS



## Tom Wild

Department of  
Landscape Architecture  
University of Sheffield

[@tomcwild1](#)



- Tom is an ecologist, specialising in aquatic and riparian ecosystems, and catchment management practices
- Background in environmental planning, with a particular focus on urban water and nature-based solutions, such as sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) and river restoration
- Research interests centre around the conditions, policies and practices that enable or hinder the rehabilitation and regeneration of impacted (and semi-natural) ecosystems
- Much of my work has been concerned with values and economic valuation of blue-green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
- Interested in the roles of the public and private sectors and how they do - or do not – invest in ‘green’ c.f. ‘grey’ solutions

# Previous projects & roles

- **Projects & grants:** Urban-Net, VALUE, Making Places Profitable (MP4), SEEDS, Value Added, Conexus, > £25m since 2005
- **Roles:**
  - Director of South Yorkshire Forest Partnership (2010-15)
  - Chair, South Yorks Local Nature Partnership (2012-15)
  - Chair, Sheffield Waterways Strategy Group (2011-16)
  - Founder Director, River Stewardship Company (2009-15)
  - Founder Director, Don Catchment Rivers Trust (2009-13)
  - Sustainable drainage & urban environment research, Scotland
  - Environmental protection officer (EA / SEPA)
  - Research Assistant, IFE/CEH – River Lab, Dorset

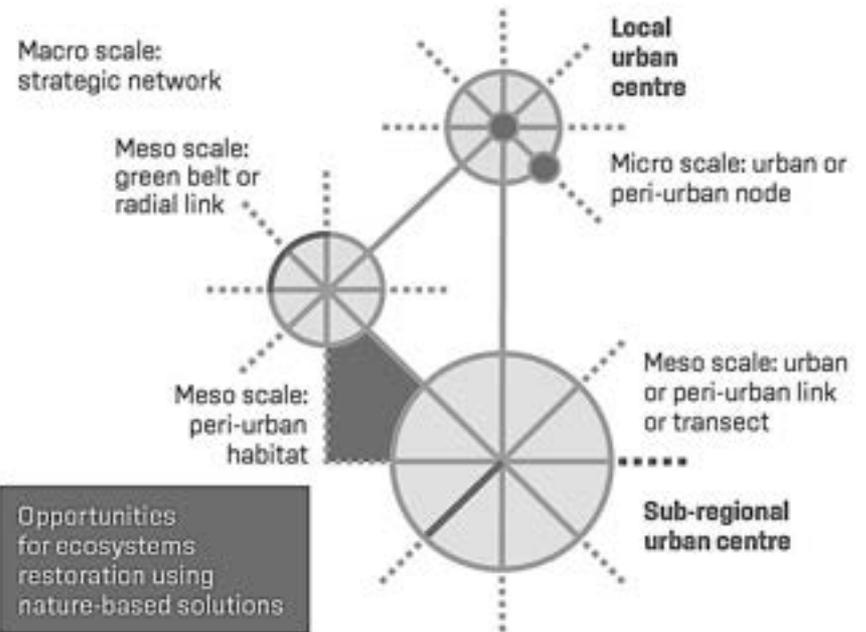
# Context appropriate, place-based NBS... ...urban nature connects us

São Paulo – Bogotá – Santiago – Buenos Aires – Lisbon – Barcelona – Turin

**Bringing together European and Latin American partners sharing the purpose to strengthen international cooperation on nature-based solutions (NBS) and ecosystem restoration.**

CONEXUS will co-produce, structure and promote access to the shared, contextualised knowledge needed to support cities and communities to co-create nature-based solutions and together restore urban ecosystems to help drive the required step-change in urban policy and practice in Europe and Latin American countries.

Our focal cities share common challenges of sustainable urbanisation and are united by their extensive experience, transdisciplinary approach and vision to implement place-based NBS and nature-based thinking.



CONEXUS transdisciplinary partnership: brings together NBS policy, practice and research, engaging citizens in innovative 'Life-Labs': urban and peri-urban ecosystem restoration pilots in EU & CELAC cities.



# Co-producing NBS & restored ecosystems: transdisciplinary nexus for urban sustainability

## Research & academia

## Government & public sector

## NGOs, SMEs & international



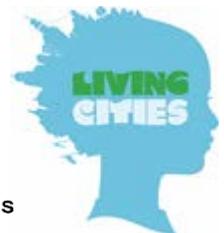
European Urban Knowledge Network



BARCELONA REGIONAL AGÈNCIA DESENVOLUPAMENT URBÀ



PERIFERIA



Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



# Transnationality & innovation

- Building blocks of many programmes & projects
- Innovation: *'both radical and incremental changes in products, processes or services'*
- Transnational approach, international impacts?
  - Global environment: infra., climate, biodiversity, pollution
  - Political goals: global cooperation, locally grounded?
  - A test = folk, work, place
  - Do I really believe it will make a difference?

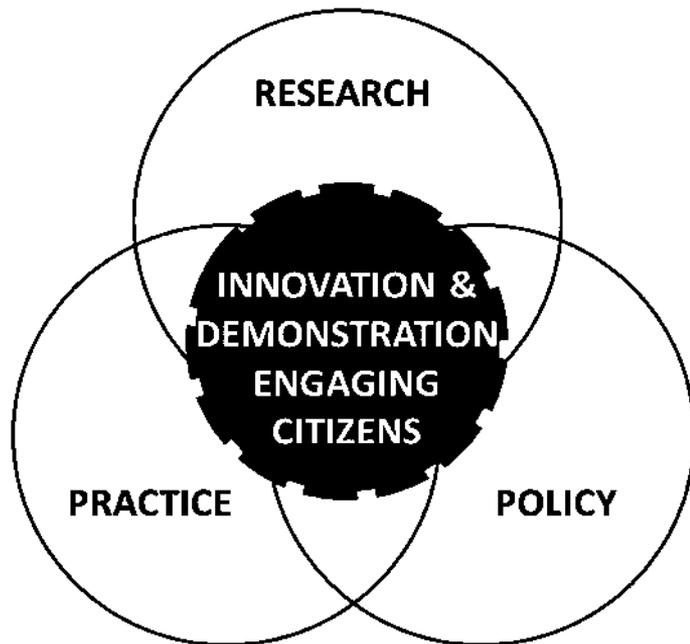


# CONEXUS: *urban nature connects us*



**CONEXUS**  
Urban nature connects us  
Conectados por la naturaleza urbana  
Conectados pela natureza urbana

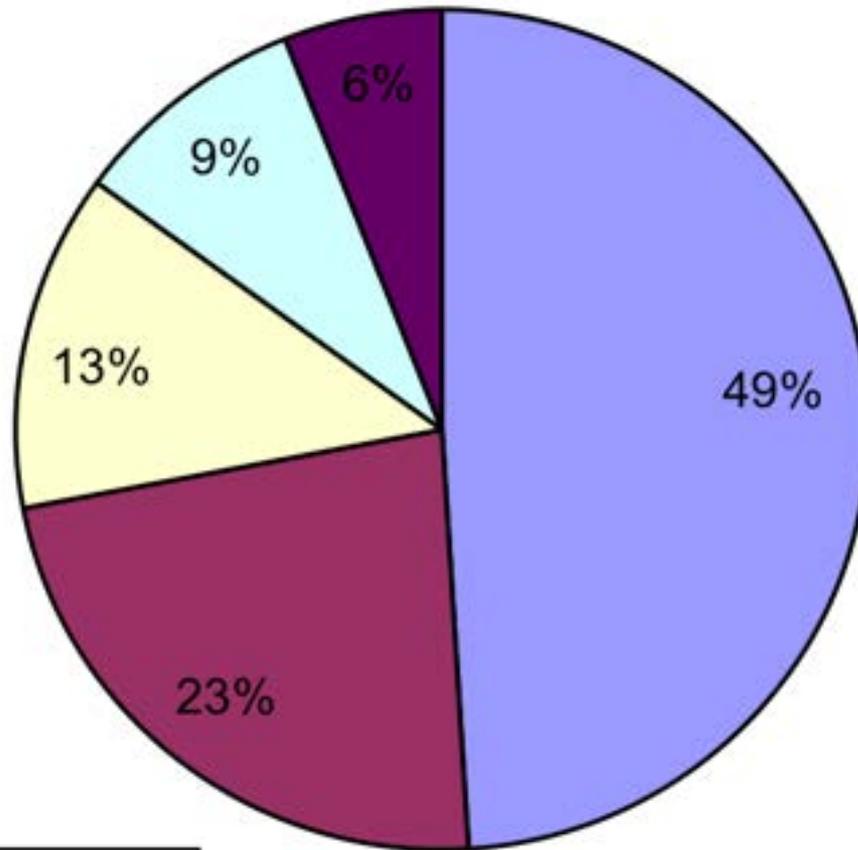
CONEXUS city issues, scales, cases & Life-Labs	Urban food & amenity	Urban water & river corridors	Urban heat & air quality	Biodiversity	Environmental justice
<b>Micro-scale</b>	BARCELONA TURIN	SAO PAULO BUENOS AIRES	BUENOS AIRES LISBON	All cities	All cities
<b>Meso-scale</b>	BOGOTA LISBON	SAO PAULO SANTIAGO	SANTIAGO BOGOTA	All cities	All cities
<b>Macro-scale</b>	BARCELONA LISBON	BOGOTA LISBON	TURIN SAO PAULO	All cities	All cities



# Project need vs want: is it necessary?

- Problem that UK / others can't fix alone?
- Are you already in contact with your equivalents in other countries?
- Are good practices applied elsewhere that can't yet be achieved here? If not, why?
- Does my idea address funding programme scope, objectives and priorities? If not, forget it?
- Other drivers, e.g. regulatory, 'level playing field' etc

# Partnering: sources of partners



- Previous collaborations
- Other consortium members
- At meetings
- Third parties (e.g. consultants)
- Other

# Partners: where you find them

- Past collaborations and friends of friends
- Online project ideas and calls for partners
- EU and international networks
- National Contact Points
- Quality issues – delivery by trusted contacts



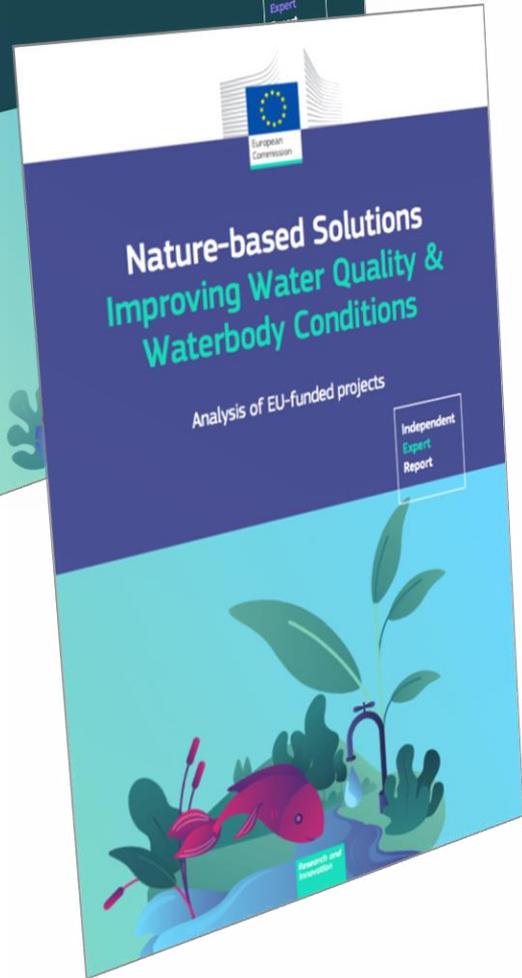
# Building momentum

- ‘Pincer movement’
  - local legitimacy and transnational credibility
- Do you have management support?
- Have you consulted key interest groups?
- Is there national coordination / UK driver?
- Secretariats and steering committees
- Deeper, meaningful commitment to global goals

# Lead or follow?



- Lead partners (beneficiaries) need capacity to deliver
- Expertise, judgement and systems
- Can you write the proposal / pay for consultant?
- Benefits: ability to steer, gain profile, budget
- Downsides: distraction, administration & hassle
- Internal profile, and politics
- Responsibility worth it if you can follow through



European Commission | English | Search

Home > News > New publication: What Nature-Based Solutions can do for us

NEWS | 16 July 2020 | Brussels, Belgium | Research and Innovation

## New publication: What Nature-Based Solutions can do for us

Between November 2019 and May 2020, six independent experts undertook the analysis of EU-funded projects in the area of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in order to assess their impact and valorise their results. They produced six reports.

Working closely with Eurostat, the experts analysed 2020-funded NBS projects across the EU.

EU research and innovation in the area of biodiversity, climate change, air quality, and microclimate, and presenting the state of the art of the lessons learnt. The results show the relative cost-effectiveness of different NBS.

The reports also identify key strategies and actions for those that can contribute to solving the challenges.

**Sectorial reports:**  
[Biodiversity](#) – Out now  
[Air quality](#) – Out now  
[Climate mitigation](#) – Out now  
[Water quality](#) – Out now  
[Sustainable communities](#) – Out now

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Détail de la publication > Nature-based solutions improving water q...

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★★★★★ Évaluation des utilisateurs

### Nature-based solutions improving water quality & waterbody conditions

Analysis of EU-funded projects

Publications de l'UE

This document is part of the report 'Nature-based solutions improving water quality & waterbody conditions' (Eds.) 2020) published by the Publications Office of the European Union.

Afficher plus

Détails de la publication

Publié: 2020-07-31

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Auteurs personnel(s): Wild, Tom

UK Parliament | Committees

UK Parliament > Business > Committees > Environmental Audit Committee >

## Water Quality in Rivers

### Inquiry

The Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) is launching an inquiry into water quality in rivers. The EAC has previously inquired into nitrate pollution so this inquiry intends to focus on the water industry and urban diffuse pollution.

For more information about this inquiry read the call for evidence.

## 7 key points in partnership working: *international partnerships?*

1. Taking time to find out what parties really want
2. Avoiding professional presumption (deficit model)
3. Expecting confusion - internal & external conflicts
4. Being careful to give people credit for their input
5. Providing time to think - avoid rushing to decisions
6. Adopting a structured approach: explore, recast, review
7. Building confidence - formal decisions & evaluation



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VALUING NATURE  
INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT, 23/03/21



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