

Building institutional frameworks for successful Nature Based Solutions

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Green Infrastructures and Urban Forests in the Urban Planning:
New Approaches and Challenges.

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Agents and Institutions

It is common to say that “changes in the institutional framework” are needed in order to enhance the introduction of Nature Based Solutions*

Defining institutions as “settled habits of thought common to the generality of men” (Veblen 1919) we might argue that institutional change consists of (and leads to) a change of the human attitude and behaviour in relation to the environment

In turn, the change of the human attitude and behaviour leads to a change in social norms and behavioural codes

*17,300 Google entries for the entire sentence.



Two key questions

Environmental issues give rise to an increasing demand for institutional change

1. What kind of changes in behaviour and in social norms are required?

Academic and policy documents refer more to actions for change than to actors of change

2. Who acts in order to generate changes?



***Institutional* change for what, where, and with whom?**

1. Which problems require institutional change?
2. What are the features of the community which is engaged in the definition of new rules?
3. How is power distributed within the community?



Behavioural change for what, where, and with whom?

1. Why we need change in behaviour?
2. Which is the community that needs to change its habits of thought in relation to the environment?
3. Do all the members of the community need to agree on behavioural change?



Actors involved in Nature Based Solutions

1. Consumers

Changes in consumption preferences

2. Entrepreneurs

New products and new techniques

3. Communities

Transforming private needs in collective actions

4. Public administrators

Nature based actions supported by public expenditure



Adaptation requires institutional change

1. Norms and prescriptions

Formal and informal rules that enable and constrain human behaviour

2. Common patterns of behaviour

Social convention for non-deliberative and self-actuating propensity to engage in a previously adopted pattern of behaviour

3. Actions of organizations

Firms, banks, state agencies, associations, parties, trade unions etc.



Vested Interests and Conflicts

	Planting trees on private or common land	Selected waste management
Consumers/ citizens	++/-- +++	+/-
Entrepreneurs/ landowners	---	+/-
Communities/ associations	++++ ++	+++
Government/ Local-National	++	++++



Lose-lose and win-win vs win-lose

The necessity of change follows from the assumption that in environmental games everyone suffers (a lose-lose situation)

Two alternative solutions are possible

1. win-win solutions, so that every actor gains from change
2. win-lose solutions, so that some win while others lose

The argument that win-win solutions are always feasible is a way to hide the problem instead of solving it



Major conclusions

The introduction of Nature Based Solutions requires institutional change:

1. A process in which both individual behaviour and social norms change
2. A process in which agents with conflicting interests are involved
3. A process in which the conflicts of vested interests is acknowledged enhancing further institutional change in a long-term perspective



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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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