



European
Commission



The EU Green Infrastructure Strategy

Update on EU actions



*(Julie Raynal
European Commission, DG Environment,
Biodiversity Unit
Belgium)*



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Structure of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy

2050 VISION

2020 headline target

halt biodiversity loss – restore ecosystem services – global contribution

SIX TARGETS

1

Enhance
implementation
of nature
legislation

2

Restore
ecosystems
establish Green
Infrastructure

3

Sustainable
agriculture
and
forestry

4

Sustainable
fisheries

5

Combat
Alien
Invasive
Species

6

Contribute to
averting global
biodiversity
loss

addressing main drivers of biodiversity loss and aiming to reduce key pressures

ACTIONS

specific, partly time-bound measures



Target 2 Ecosystem Restoration & Green Infrastructure

***Objective:** By 2020, maintain and enhance ecosystems and their services, within and beyond protected areas, by:*

- **Restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems** (Action 6a)
- Establishing '**Green Infrastructure**' throughout the EU (Action 6b)





Action 6b: The EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy

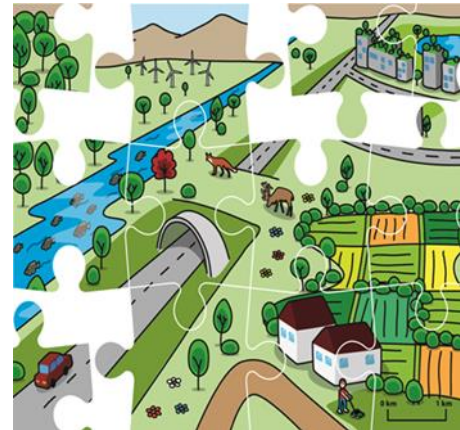
- Policy context: **EU Biodiversity strategy to 2020; 7th EAP** (1st priority "to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital")
- **The EU GI Strategy** (2013) is made up of four main elements:
 - I. **Promoting Green Infrastructure in main EU policy areas**
 - II. **Supporting EU-level GI projects**
 - III. **Improving access to finance for GI projects**
 - IV. **Improving information and promoting innovation**

What is Green Infrastructure

➤ A strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver wide range of ecosystem services (in terrestrial, aquatic, coastal & marine environments)

➤ The structure enabling healthy ecosystems to deliver their multiple, valuable, economically important goods and services to people, such as: clean water and air, carbon storage, pollination etc., mitigation and adaptation to climate change

Spatial and functional structure delivering nature benefits to people





I) Promoting Green Infrastructure through EU's main policy areas and legislation

GI: can make significant contribution to many of the EU's main policy objectives, especially as regards

- **Nature protection : strengthening N2000**
- **Sustainable growth and jobs / Europe 2020**
- **Cohesion, regional and rural development**
- **Urban policy**
- **Climate change** mitigation and adaptation
- **Disaster risk reduction and management**
- **Agriculture/forestry, water and the environment**



Synergies with EU Research policy: Horizon 2020 and NBS



I) Promoting Green Infrastructure through EU's main policy areas: Urban GI (1)

- *Urban GI provides multiple solutions in cost-effective way*
- *EU develops knowledge on urban GI: already proposes **flexible indicator framework** to support assessment of urban ecosystems condition and their services in cities across the EU:*
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/pdf/102.pdf
- *Next phase: testing further the methodology with more cities across the EU (2017-18): 'EnRoute' project*





Enhancing Resilience Of Urban Ecosystems through Green Infrastructure ('EnRoute')

(2017-2018)

- 1. Implementing and testing the urban MAES framework [19 'city labs' + EU level]**
 - 2. Science-policy interface (mainstreaming GI in urban policy: governance, community engagement)**
 - 3. Networking (communities of practise)**
- *Kick off workshop 7/8 March [Rome]***
 - *Conference on 'Evidence-based planning for greener cities', in cooperation with EU Maltese Presidency – 13 June in Malta***

I) Promoting Green Infrastructure through EU's main policy areas: EU Macro-Regional Strategies (2)

- **EU GI Strategy:** Many geographical features such as mountain ranges and major rivers go beyond national boundaries and call for coordinated, joined-up actions
- **Green infrastructure can provide a strategic framework for more integrated and sustainable strategies** to address in a cost-efficient way the many challenges raised by e.g. climate change, disaster risk management, biodiversity erosion and landscape fragmentation; ex for the **EU strategy for the Alps (EUSALP)**, or the **EU strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region (EUSAIR)**, in particular in the Dinaric Alps and Greek mountains.

I) Promoting Green Infrastructure through EU's main policy areas: GI and invasive alien species (3)

GI is improving the resilience of ecosystems to IAS
*Condition: GI preferably based on **native species***



Regulation 1143/2014 and Commission Implementing Regulation 2016/1141

-> certain IAS listed as IAS of Union concern
-> planting no longer allowed, eradication or control obligation

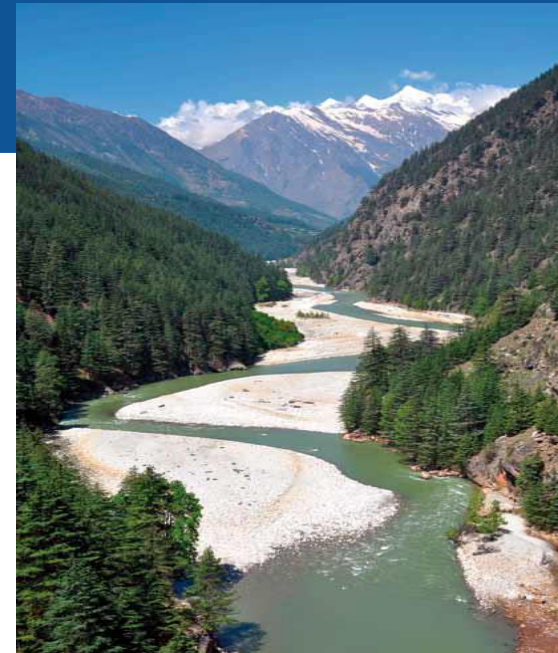
Example - *Baccharis halimifolia* (Eastern baccharis) from North America, popular for landscaping, invaded ecosystems, dense, impenetrable, choking all other vegetation

2) Supporting EU-level GI projects

Assessing opportunities of developing an EU-level GI initiative (1)

- would have significant benefits for securing the resilience and vitality of some of Europe ecosystems and the services they provide to society
- Findings from a recent contract on assessing costs and benefits of a more ambitious EU-level GI network: such initiative would have the potential to provide greater benefits per € invested than the current GI policy implementation and funding allocation.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/docs/green_infrastructures/GI%20Final%20Report.pdf



Major rivers and transboundary mountain ranges are obvious candidates for EU-level GI projects.

N2000: Backbone of a possible future EU-level GI network.

The Green Belt Initiative : very good regional illustration of what a GI network should achieve at wider EU scale

Assessing opportunities of developing an EU-level GI initiative (2)

- **Fitness check of Nature Directives:** found that whilst essential for EU biodiversity objectives, the Directives alone cannot deliver EU 2020 goal of halting loss of biodiversity. A lot remains to be done to halt loss of biodiversity outside the Natura 2000 network => ***An EU-level GI initiative could help addressing those gaps***
- If no action taken at EU level, there will be only a few independent initiatives that do not deliver their full potential to restore natural capital.
- By contrast, an EU-level coherent approach would ensure that cross-border ecosystems, such as some river basins, major mountain chains and forests are managed in a way which takes into account transboundary effects to deliver an optimum level of ecosystem services.

Assessing opportunities of developing an EU-level GI initiative (3)

Possible working option being explored :

- *Such an EU-level initiative on GI to be part of the follow-up actions to the Fitness check of the Nature Directives*
- *Synergies sought with research on and implementation of Nature-based solutions (H2020), and with various EU funding instruments*
- *Objective: promoting strategic investment in Nature through EU-level GI projects, to improve connectivity of N2000 sites within and across national borders, linking up through biodiversity-rich areas*

3) Improving access to finance for GI projects

- **Structural Funds** (European Regional Development Fund & European Social Fund), **Cohesion Fund, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, LIFE+, & research funding programmes (Horizon 2020)**
- **Funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation** could also provide significant co-benefits for GI
- **Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF)**

The Guide to Multi-Benefit Cohesion Policy Investments in Nature & Green Infrastructure

- Rationale for investing in nature and biodiversity: **working with nature, natural resources as the base of the regional economy**
- Operationalization (11 thematic objectives broken down into priority investments)
- Examples



4) Improving information and promoting innovation

- **To Improve the knowledge of ecosystems and their services in EU:** *Action 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy*
- Member States, with assistance of the Commission, are required to **map** and assess state of **ecosystems** and their **services** in their national territory by 2014, assess economic value of such services, and promote integration of these values into accounting and reporting systems at EU and national level by 2020.
- Action 5 is one of the keystones of the strategy providing a knowledge base for **Europe's green infrastructure**, the **restoration of 15% of degraded ecosystems** and the **No Net Loss** of biodiversity and ecosystem services initiative.
- <http://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes>

Next steps

- ***End April (tbc):*** adoption of Action Plan to follow up the FC of the Nature Directives
- ***29 June:*** EU WG on Green Infrastructure and Restoration, Brussels
- ***By end 2017:*** report on the review of implementation of the EU GI Strategy



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More info on DG ENV & BISE webpages

The screenshot shows the 'ENVIRONMENT' section of the European Commission website. The main heading is 'Green Infrastructure'. Below the heading, there is a sub-heading 'What is Green Infrastructure?' followed by a paragraph explaining that Green Infrastructure addresses the spatial structure of natural and semi-natural areas. A sidebar on the left lists various topics under 'NATURE & BIODIVERSITY'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'An EU-wide strategy on Green Infrastructure: Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital' with a list of communication documents and links.

The screenshot shows the 'BISE CATALOGUE' website. The main heading is 'EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020' with the sub-heading 'Our life insurance, our natural capital'. Below this, there is a 'BISE Highlights' section with a progress bar showing 1 to 6 steps. A '2184 days to meet the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets' banner is visible. The 'BISE CATALOGUE' search bar is prominent, with a red arrow pointing to it and the text 'ACCESS TO FULL CATALOGUE'. The page also features 'News - Europe' and 'News - World' sections with various news items and dates.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm
<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/bise-catalogue> > Green Infrastructure
<http://www.nwrn.eu>

