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Project COEVOLVERS (Horizon Europe 101084220)

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- Webinar “Navigating Horizon Europe: Social Sciences and Humanities Perspectives from the Baltics and Beyond”



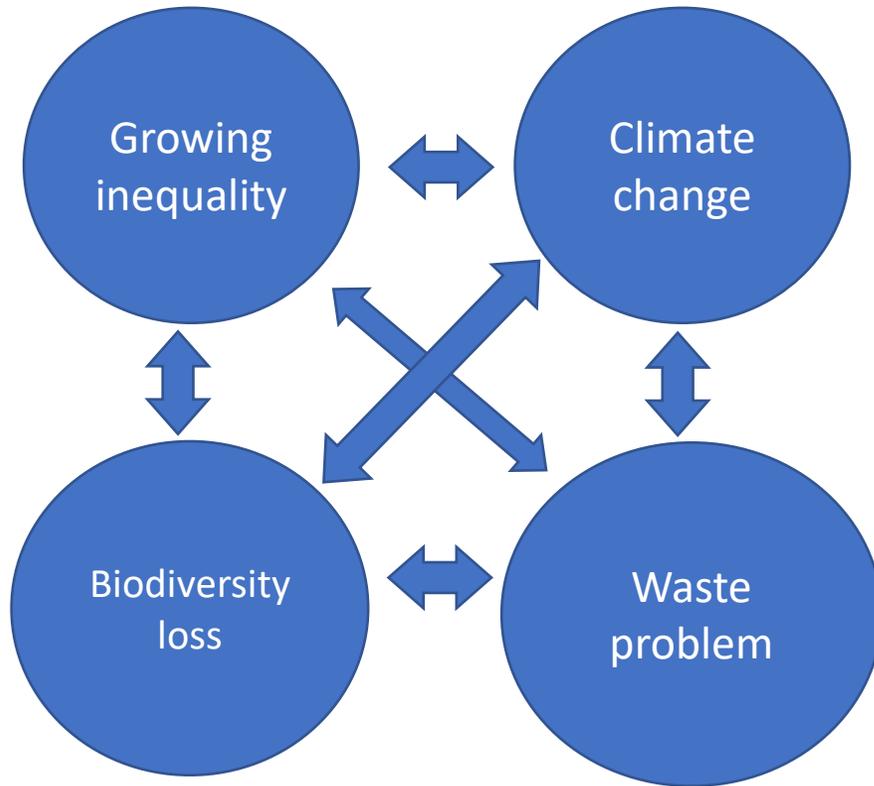
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Key interconnected global challenges facing all European countries in different ways

Social problems, political conflicts...

Global food security, pandemia

..



Heath, floods, draught, forest fires etc.

Human and animal health



Nature-based solutions as response to these challenges

- NBS are solutions to complex social and ecological challenges.
- They should benefit both humans and nature.
- They need to be connected with the everyday practices of local people and local environment.

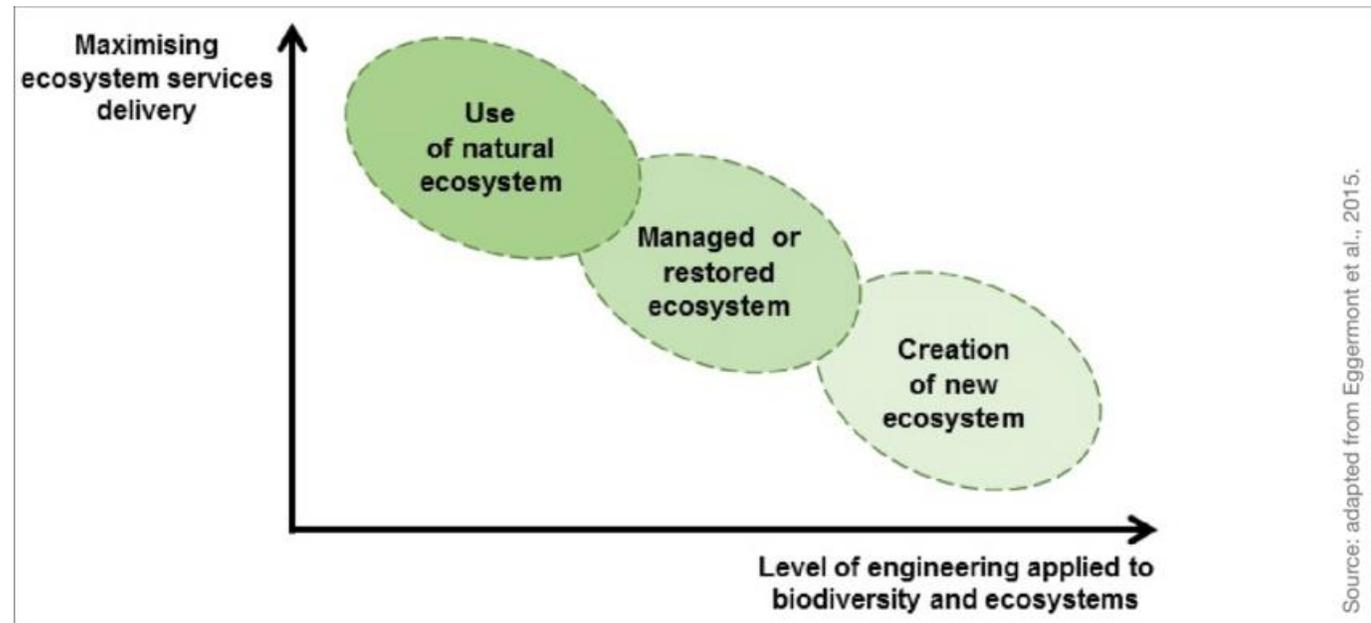


Various types of NBS

Solutions that involve **making better use of existing natural or protected ecosystems** (e.g. measures to increase fishstocks in an intact wetland to enhance food security);

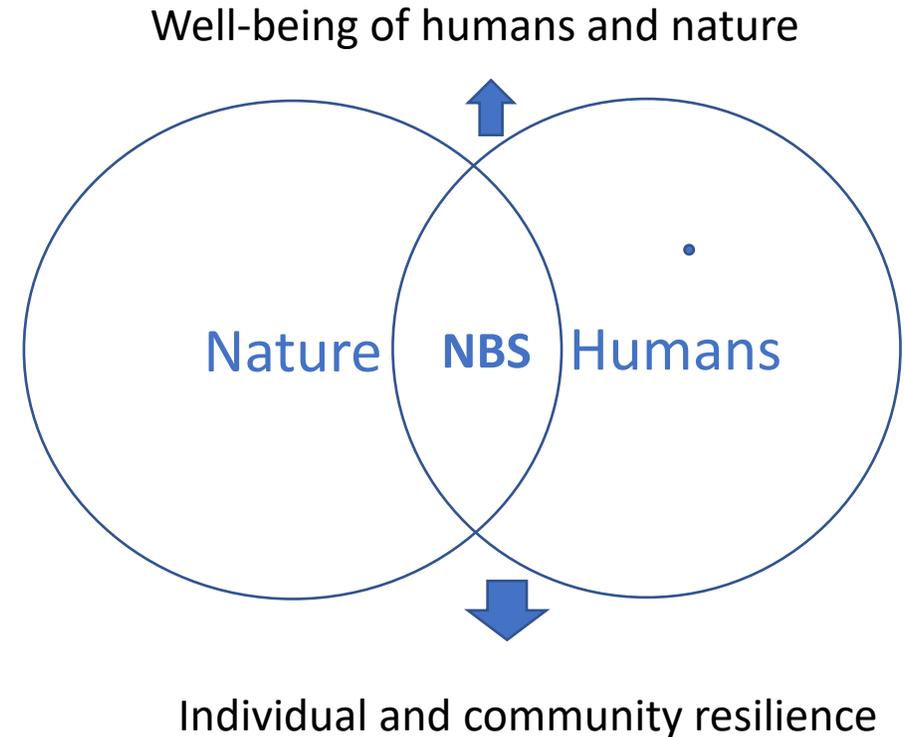
Solutions based on **developing sustainable management protocols and procedures for managed or restored ecosystems** (e.g. re-establishing traditional agro-forestry systems based on commercial tree species to support poverty alleviation); and

Solutions that involve **creating new ecosystems** (e.g. establishing green buildings (green walls, green roofs)).



COEVOLVERS project approach to NBS

- How to create or **strengthen reciprocal relationship and co-evolution between humans and nature** and enhance the local resilience in the long term?
- How to **target the most vulnerable people**, like people suffering from social exclusion or mental health problems, and supporting rural communities with their livelihoods against environmental risks such as forest fires and drought?



**There are 11
project
partners and
7 Living Labs
around
Europe**



Applying and managing

- › We are ecosemiotic research group in Department of Semiotics, University of Tartu. In the project we handle *Tartu LL (Multispecies city)*, *Umwelt analysis*, *incorporating non-human perspectives*.
- › We were contacted and included by the lead partner. We are outsiders to ecological economics, no previous contact with the main group.
- › The consortium is multidisciplinary and includes also NGO-s and non-academic partners. The communication, cooperation and work management has gone surprisingly well (strong lead partner).
- › Very intense contacts and cooperation (general meetings every second week, plus meetings in smaller groups), two physical meetings per year.



Strengths and Challenges

› Strengths of Coevolvers

- › Competent lead partner, strong logistical, administrative and legal support (wish that local support structures could be similar).
- › Methodologically interesting: attention in co-evolving and developing in practice (theory - applications, scientists – local people)
- › Good group with supportive atmosphere, genuine interest, many original minds with the aim to develop new knowledge and create new practices.

Strengths and Challenges

› Challenges with Coevolvers

- › Interdisciplinarity – different background knowledge, understandings about methods, research styles. Lot of explaining and „translating.“ *Be open but do not lose your focus!*
- › Large projects tend to be overwhelming. *Try to be realistic about the work amount, build a team.*
- › Administration, management and reporting can be a headache. *If possible, include competent person to the project.*



A word of encouragement

› Why to go into this...

- › Most probably it will be interesting - stepping out from your comfort zone, new methodologies and terminologies, creating fascinating interdisciplinary configurations.
- › Horizon projects are practically oriented – they give means and format to apply and implement your research and competence.
- › It may be good for professional development: learning about research leadership and management, getting new contacts and venues.

Tartu Living Lab: Multispecies city

Aim

- Develop NBS that empowers local communities through co-creative action and raised awareness about the role of nonhuman species in cities.

Actions

- Introduce various methods: **umwelt analysis**
sensory walks, etc.
- Co-create NBS through various events:
Participatory fieldwork
Community-based events
Workshops
Storytelling methods, etc.



Getting to know area and community, mapping problems



Kick-off workshop at Tartu in April 2023. Mapping workshop to discover different usages of space and possible resource-, meaning-. etc. conflicts and cooperations.

Garden visits: building community and sharing knowledge

Garden visits from June 2023 (“Poetic gardens”)

Garden visit from November 2023 (“Tree fungi and cultural heritage at the graveyard”)



Testing and developing new methods

Sensory walk at Kvissentali, September 2023



Bringing together experts and creating interdisciplinary knowledge

First meeting with our National Consultation Group, Tartu, November 2023



Some challenges from setting up our Living Lab in Tartu

- **How realistic is our plan?** E.g. what kind of influence we can create in a short timeline and small team?
- **Who are the dialogue partners?** E.g. no preliminary or ready community or communication channels in our area.
- **What language do we use? How do we translate** – aims, terminology, methods, workflows? Bureaucratic terms and frames vs working with people on the ground.
- **Does the timeline on paper align with reality?** E.g. testing methods and seasonal changes.
- **How to work across Living Labs?** E.g. dialogue between different kinds of expertise and practices

Thank you!