



NATMed

Policy recommendations

FOR POLICY MAKERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

STRATEGIC DESIGN AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Require **early-stage technical, economic, and regulatory feasibility assessments** for NbS projects to reduce implementation risks and delays.

Embed **Full-Water Cycle Nature-based Solutions (FWC-NbS) frameworks into national water management, climate adaptation, and infrastructure planning guidance** to support coherent implementation at regional and local level.

Integrate the **requirement for an NbS strategy** into national guidance and funding frameworks for NbS projects.

Promote the use of **recognised NbS standards** in national guidance and programmes supporting NbS implementation.

Require **participatory and evidence-based identification of societal challenges** as a prerequisite for NbS-related funding and planning processes.

Require **NbS strategies, planning and approval processes to systematically integrate biodiversity enhancement and ecosystem integrity objectives** as cross-cutting priorities, even when biodiversity loss is not identified as a primary societal challenge.

Require **alignment of NbS biodiversity goals with existing conservation policies, legal frameworks and monitoring obligations.**

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Integrate **participation, governance, and grievance-resolution requirements** into national NbS-related planning, approval, and funding frameworks.

Require **stakeholder involvement in NbS monitoring, risk management and review of mitigation measures.**

Support **awareness-raising and training actions** as integral components of NbS governance frameworks.

Promote **capacity-building for public authorities and legislators on NbS planning, governance and monitoring.**

SYNERGIES AND CROSS-SECTOR INTEGRATION

Strengthen cross-sector coordination at national level by **aligning NbS objectives with water, climate, biodiversity, agricultural and spatial planning policies** to ensure coherent implementation and maximise co-benefits.

Integrate **cross-sectoral synergy and risk assessment requirements** into national NbS planning, approval and funding frameworks.

Promote **hybrid solutions combining NbS with grey infrastructure and digital technologies** where this improves efficiency and resilience.

ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Integrate **economic feasibility and sustainability assessments** as a mandatory component of NbS-related planning and funding frameworks.

Support **diversified and long-term funding models for NbS**, combining public funding with private, regional or sector-based resources.

Encourage the use of **multi-criteria assessment frameworks in NbS-related planning and funding decisions**.

RISK ANALYSIS AND BALANCING TRADE-OFFS

Integrate **risk and trade-off assessment requirements** into national NbS approval, funding and regulatory frameworks, including post-implementation monitoring obligations.

Require explicit **consideration of biodiversity-related risks, including invasive species, water pollution and salinisation**, particularly for NbS implemented near protected areas.

Support **coordination mechanisms across administrative boundaries** where NbS risks and impacts extend beyond the local intervention area.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Integrate **Monitoring and Evaluation requirements, including baselines, indicators and adaptive management**, into national NbS-related planning, approval and funding frameworks.

Promote standardised, multi-dimensional **indicators capturing ecological, socio-economic and human well-being outcomes of NbS**.

Support **long-term monitoring arrangements beyond project lifetimes** through institutionalised roles for public authorities.

Support **access to relevant environmental and socio-economic information** to enable informed local decision-making.

TENDERING AND PROCUREMENT

Update **national public procurement frameworks to better recognise NbS characteristics**, including qualitative environmental outcomes, lifecycle costs and co-benefits.

Promote **capacity building for public authorities and procurement officers on NbS-specific tendering, evaluation and contract management**.

Encourage **hybrid procurement approaches** that allow a combination of NbS with grey infrastructure and digital technologies where this improves efficiency and resilience.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION (M&O)

Integrate **M&O requirements into national NbS approval, funding and regulatory frameworks**.

Require NbS business and investment plans to explicitly **account for long-term M&O costs and resource needs**.

Promote the use of **low-maintenance, locally adapted designs and scalable modular solutions** in NbS implementation.

MAINSTREAMING AND POLICY UPTAKE

Integrate **NbS-related evidence and lessons from pilot projects** into national policy reviews, guidelines and regulatory updates.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Integrate **communication and dissemination requirements** into national NbS-related planning, approval and funding frameworks.

Promote the **adaptation of scientific and technical NbS outputs into simplified, multilingual and policy-relevant formats** for wider dissemination.

Encourage **coordination and knowledge exchange between NbS projects** at national level to support learning, replication and mainstreaming.



Background and further information

The recommendations presented in this policy brief are based on the evidence and experience generated by the NATMed project, which designed, implemented and monitored Full Water-Cycle Nature-based Solutions across five Mediterranean case studies in Spain, Greece, Italy, Türkiye and Algeria.

Building on real-world interventions, harmonised monitoring frameworks and validation against the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, NATMed translated scientific findings, technical implementation lessons and stakeholder engagement processes into concrete, actionable guidance for decision-makers.

The full set of structured recommendations, covering strategic design, governance, financing, monitoring, risk management, procurement, maintenance and mainstreaming at local, national and EU levels, is available in Deliverable “D5.6 Policy Guidelines” on the project website <https://natmed-project.eu>



NATMed

Nature-based Solutions on existing infrastructures for resilient Water Management in the Mediterranean



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