

# “Social acceptance: a turning point for Nature-based Solutions?”

Lessons from the World Water Week 2018 in Stockholm

FWP | IUCN | RARE

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The results presented in this document stem from an event organized by Rare, IUCN Global Water Program & the French Water Partnership at the 2018 edition of World Water Week in Stockholm.

This event aimed at highlighting bright spots in the adoption and social acceptance of NBS projects, and considering a theoretical framework to show that grey and green solutions are complementary when NBS are socially accepted and normalized. The event aimed at developing a strategy to better take into account local stakeholders both in conceptualizing and implementing NBS projects, including how to shift local stakeholders' (donors, government authorities, local populations...) attitudes and behaviors associated with NBS towards acceptance.

Nature-based solutions (NbS) are defined by the IUCN as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”. NBS are cross-sectoral projects which, according to the IUCN, are implemented at a landscape scale, “maintain cultural diversity” and are “determined by site-specific natural and cultural contexts that include traditional, local and scientific knowledge”. Yet one of the biggest obstacles facing the implementation of NBS projects is the social acceptance of these projects. This obstacle is also one that is typically unaddressed in discussions and policy design on the topic of NBS.

## LESSONS LEARNT

### Obstacles facing Nature-based Solutions implementation

Benefits of Nature-based Solutions are not easily monetized which undermines potential for revenue capture and flows

### Recommendations

- Time is essential to allow the multiple benefits of Nature-based Solutions to emerge
- The cost both of inaction and of liabilities that result from short-term vision must be taken into consideration
- Favorable cost-benefit assessment, including natural capital accounting and valuing water ecosystems and the services they provide is key in showing the importance of investing in Nature-based Solutions for water
- A long-term vision of water challenges and opportunities is required for urban and rural development, taking into account climate change



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## Obstacles facing Nature-based Solutions implementation

- Limited knowledge of NBS and its benefits.
- Inadequate mechanisms for local populations' and farmers' participation in decision-making.
- Limited access to resources needed by farmers to implement NbS – especially small landholders – stemming from complex bureaucratic processes with limited assistance
- NBS are not implemented in a socially equitable manner.
- NBS are not co-designed or adapted to the needs and desires of local populations

## Recommendations

- Good governance of Nature-based Solutions and conservation projects on the long run requires creating local partnerships and identifying within those partnerships that will be in charge of authorization issuance, project implementation, financial management, keeping the project alive, communication and the creation of local participatory processes...
- Engaging local stakeholders and fostering intersectoral and local collaboration is essential
- Translating policy and solutions into local language (rather than the other way round) to enable better understanding of the drivers and impacts of environmental degradation, thus laying the foundation for effective adoption of Nature-based Solutions.
- Local traditional knowledge on water and nature must be at the core of Nature-based Solutions implementation
- Issues linked to equity and gender should not be viewed as obstacles but rather as part of the solution

### KEY CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATION:

**RAISING AWARENESS AT ALL LEVELS ON THE MULTIPLE BENEFITS OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IS FUNDAMENTAL**