



NBRACER
Nature Based Solutions
for Atlantic Regional Climate Resilience

The Horizon Europe NBRACER project, Nature Based Solutions for Atlantic Regional Climate Resilience - 3rd General Assembly



by IID-SII

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NBRACER 3rd General Assembly Concludes in Santander, Spain

Bringing Together European Partners to Advance Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience

The third **NBRACER General Assembly**, held from October 22-24, 2024, in Santander, Cantabria, Spain, successfully brought together experts, stakeholders, and regional partners to reflect on the achievements of the project's first year and to chart a path forward for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across Europe. This event served as a platform for sharing knowledge, building collaborations, and driving innovation in climate adaptation strategies.

Celebrating a Year of Progress

Since its launch, the NBRACER project has been making significant strides in implementing **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** across Europe, addressing climate challenges through innovative, sustainable interventions.



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Over the past year, NBRACER has made significant progress in implementing NbS across the NBRACER Atlantic regions. Each region has been working closely with local stakeholders to design and deploy solutions tailored to its environmental and societal context.

Across the Atlantic biographical area, these efforts have ranged from improving flood resilience through landscape restoration, to enhancing water retention in rural areas, restoring river corridors and natural floodplains, and expanding urban green infrastructure to help manage heat and stormwater. The first-year results were presented during the General Assembly, offering valuable insights into both achievements and challenges faced during implementation.

These collective experiences are helping to shape the next phase of the project, providing essential lessons for scaling NbS and adapting proven solutions to other European regions. Discussions also focused on how these solutions can be further integrated into national and EU-level policies, ensuring long-term sustainability and broader impact.

Field Visits Highlight Real-World NbS Impact

One of the highlights of the General Assembly was the field visits to key NbS demonstration sites in the Santander region. Participants had the opportunity to witness first-hand the transformative power of NbS in action. The visits included :

- **Urban parks** designed to prevent flooding and manage stormwater in populated areas of Santander.
- **The Oyambre estuary**, where the removal of a dyke has restored natural floodplain processes, providing both ecological and community benefits.
- **Riparian forest** restoration along the Saja River, where native vegetation is being used to enhance flood resilience and improve biodiversity.
- **Green filters** in the Treceño area, which are helping to control erosion in eucalyptus forestry zones, improving both land stability and water quality.

“These site visits were invaluable,” said one participant. “They allowed us to see how NbS are being practically applied to solve pressing environmental challenges. It’s inspiring to witness the real-world impact of these projects.”



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Sister Projects and Future Collaboration

NBRACER's mission to promote Nature-based Solutions is strengthened through collaboration with its sister projects, **RESIST**, **Project MERLIN**, and **DesirMED**. Each of these projects shares NBRACER's commitment to NbS but focuses on unique aspects of climate resilience and environmental restoration:

- **RESIST** is dedicated to enhancing resilience in vulnerable regions, focusing on using NbS to protect communities from climate-related risks, particularly in areas prone to natural disasters.
- **Project MERLIN** is committed to the restoration of freshwater ecosystems, with a focus on integrating NbS to improve biodiversity, water quality, and habitat stability along river systems.
- **DesirMED** aims to develop and implement NbS tailored to the unique Mediterranean environment. The project focuses on preserving and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems, which are under threat from climate change and human activities.

During the General Assembly, representatives from RESIST, Project MERLIN, and DesirMED participated in a roundtable discussion to explore shared goals and new opportunities for collaboration. These discussions emphasized the need for joint efforts in knowledge-sharing and resource pooling, which can enhance the impact of NbS across Europe's diverse landscapes. By working together, these projects can address a broader range of climate adaptation challenges, from Mediterranean coastal resilience to freshwater ecosystem restoration and disaster risk reduction in vulnerable regions.

Collaborative Workshops and Future Planning

Throughout the assembly, a series of **interactive workshops and discussions** provided a platform for in-depth exploration of critical themes in advancing Nature-based Solutions (NbS). The workshops covered a range of topics vital to the project's success and highlighted opportunities for further collaboration and innovation.

One of the key workshops focused on **scaling the impact of NbS** across regions, with discussions centered on how to adapt successful solutions to different landscapes and communities. Participants shared strategies for integrating NbS into urban planning and sustainable water management, emphasizing how these solutions can address climate risks such as flooding, drought, and urban heat islands. These discussions underscored the potential of NbS to create resilient cities and ecosystems, while participants exchanged best practices for ensuring the adaptability and longevity of these projects.

Another significant workshop examined the **role of gender and intersectionality in NbS projects**, an essential but often overlooked component in environmental planning. This session highlighted the importance of inclusive approaches that consider the diverse needs and contributions of all community members. Participants discussed frameworks for ensuring that NbS initiatives are accessible and beneficial to marginalized groups, as well as the importance of empowering local communities to be active contributors to climate adaptation efforts.





Additionally, a workshop dedicated to **enhancing cross-regional collaboration** allowed participants to explore methods for strengthening partnerships within the NBRACER consortium and with external stakeholders. By focusing on shared challenges and solutions, this session encouraged regions to pool their resources, data, and knowledge, fostering a collaborative network that could accelerate the development and implementation of NbS across Europe.

A dedicated **stakeholder engagement session** with local representatives provided a unique opportunity for the NBRACER team to present recent NbS actions in Cantabria, demonstrating how these initiatives align with regional priorities. This dialogue underscored the value of community involvement in the planning and execution of NbS, ensuring that projects are not only sustainable but also relevant and responsive to local needs.



These workshops and discussions laid a foundation for the next phase of the project, equipping NBRACER partners with actionable insights and strategies to further develop and implement NbS that meet the diverse needs of Europe's Atlantic Arc regions.

Looking Ahead

As the NBRACER project moves into its second year, the focus will be on scaling up successful initiatives, expanding partnerships, and further integrating NbS into regional and national policies. The insights gained from the General Assembly will play a critical role in shaping the project's future and helping regions across Europe adapt to the growing challenges of climate change.



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