

Leveraging communication for systemic change: advancing Nature-Based Solutions through stakeholder engagement

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Abstract

The adoption of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) is increasingly recognized as a key strategy in dealing with the emerging effects of climate change and enhancing resilience in ecosystems and communities. The NBRACER project is advancing this approach in Europe by fostering regional demonstrators, drawing lessons learned and replicating good practices. Unlike conventional engineering methods, NbS harness natural processes to offer sustainable solutions that mitigate climate risks while improving biodiversity, water management, and community well-being. To strengthen the climate resilience of a whole region, NbS should be developed at a regional level, acknowledging its interconnectedness with the ecological, social and economic systems. Effective communication is central to this systemic change: it plays a crucial role in raising awareness, engaging diverse stakeholders, creating a shared understanding and fostering trust and commitment necessary for effective NbS implementation. This paper describes how NBRACER's communication strategy aims to support regional partners (both within and beyond NBRACER) to amplify stakeholder engagement and collaboration in NBS implementation and facilitating the widespread adoption of NbS. By uniting NbS developers, the scientific community, policymakers, entrepreneurs and local communities, NBRACER aims to support the creation of sustainable and resilient communities.

Keywords

Communication, Systemic change, Mission Climate Adaptation, NbS implementation, NBRACER

1 Introduction

The need for NbS and systems change

The adoption of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) has become a recognized strategy in building resilience in both ecosystems and communities while dealing with the emerging effects of climate change. Unlike conventional engineering approaches, which often rely on man-made infrastructure, NbS harness natural processes - by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring nature – to provide sustainable solutions to climate challenges. NbS is centered on systemic change, which acknowledges the deep interconnections between ecological, social, and economic systems. Systemic change, in this context, refers to transformations that impact all system components—such as economies, communities and ecosystems—by acknowledging their interdependency. By integrating natural processes with urban planning, agriculture, and disaster risk management, NbS create synergies that enhance resilience across multiple sectors. For instance, reforestation not only reduces the risk of flooding and storm surges but also boosts biodiversity and delivers essential ecosystem services, offering broad benefits to both people and nature.

A transformative journey for NbS implementation

The effective implementation of NbS relies upon a transformational journey—a process of reimagining and reshaping how we address complex challenges like climate change. This journey goes beyond adopting existing solutions; it calls for a systemic shift in thinking, planning and acting. By embracing the interconnectedness of ecological, societal, and economic systems, the transformational journey takes a holistic perspective on adaptation. As such, it challenges conventional approaches by fostering innovation, inclusivity and collaboration to create a sustainable and resilient future.

At the heart of this journey lies a mission-driven approach, emphasizing not just ideas but purposeful, targeted actions. In this approach climate change adaptation is viewed as an opportunity to rethink and improve systems by examining the interactions and interdependencies between NbS and societal dynamics (Pelling, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2012). Despite differences in needs, interests, and values, the shared mission to strengthen climate resilience through NbS unifies stakeholders, fostering systemic change and ensuring full societal engagement (Mazzucato, 2021). This calls for active engagement from diverse stakeholders—policymakers, businesses, communities, and researchers—to co-create impactful and equitable solutions.

A cornerstone of this process is social learning, where stakeholders share experiences and co-develop new methods to address shared challenges. By fostering mutual understanding, continuous improvement, and adaptive problem-solving, social learning drives collective resilience.



To support this transformation, innovative governance models are also essential. These models prioritize inclusive decision-making and empower local actors by involving diverse groups in planning and implementation. Such frameworks enhance legitimacy, accountability, and transparency, building trust and adaptability. Inclusive governance structures enable cross-sector collaboration, pooling resources and expertise to amplify the impact of NbS.

The role of effective communication

Effective communication is crucial in this transformative adaptation journey to enable systemic change and to mainstream climate adaptation. It plays a central role in raising awareness, transferring knowledge, building common understanding and sharing success stories. More importantly, it supports more inclusive decision-making by involving and engaging diverse stakeholders such as local communities, governments, and NGOs in envisioning, planning and the implementation processes. In fact, engaging all local stakeholders is essential to foster trust and commitment necessary for effective NbS implementation. Central in the transformative journey are the regional processes and the dynamic interactions among the different stakeholder groups. Additionally, each region comes with its own challenges and unique characteristics, which calls for place-based strategies and solutions. Hence NBRCAER communication efforts are aimed at different levels within the project regions.

About NBRACER

NBRACER is a project funded by HORIZON Europe Research and Innovation actions in support of the implementation of the Adaptation to Climate Change Mission (HORIZON-MISS-2022-CLIMA-01). NBRACER works with eight demonstrating and replicating regions in the Atlantic biogeographical area, across sectors and disciplines. NBRACER facilitates a transformative journey by collaborating with regional partners across the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society. By uniting NbS developers, the scientific community, policymakers, and local communities, NBRACER fosters trust, cultivates shared knowledge, and builds collective commitment. This inclusive approach empowers stakeholders to develop sustainable and resilient communities, driving meaningful and lasting change.

About this paper

This paper explores how NBRACER's regions can design their communication strategies with the aim to amplify stakeholder engagement and collaboration, facilitating the widespread adoption of NbS.

2 Advancing NbS through effective communication

Clear and purposeful communication is essential to convey the broader benefits of NbS, ensuring they are widely understood and inspiring alignment among diverse actors around a shared mission to address climate challenges while promoting sustainable development. This understanding is crucial for fostering full stakeholder engagement in the effective implementation of NbS.

As such, effective communication involves more than just sharing information: it's about creating a shared understanding of the potential of NbS and building a sense of collective ownership among stakeholders. By articulating the long-term benefits of nature-based approaches—such as enhancing biodiversity, building climate resilience and supporting local economy and well-being—stakeholders will better grasp how these solutions could fit within broader societal, environmental and economic goals. This helps to build a narrative that not only informs but also inspires action, bridging short term and long term. Knowledge transfer is also crucial in the process, as it involves building capacity by equipping local communities and stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills for implementing and maintaining NbS.

Additionally, communication is key in building momentum around NbS initiatives and trigger mission-driven adaptation. By regularly sharing successes, lessons learned, and real-world examples of NbS in action, stakeholders can see tangible evidence of progress and impact. This continuous flow of information reinforces commitment, maintains enthusiasm, and encourages broader participation. For example, successful urban green infrastructure projects that reduce heat islands, improve air quality, and create recreational spaces can inspire other cities to adopt similar strategies for sustainable development.


Effective communication is also a key to reach out to stakeholders and bring them together, fostering collaboration across sectors, disciplines and communities. NbS initiatives require the participation of various actors, from local governments and environmental organizations to private businesses, researchers, and local communities. Engagement processes such as consultations, workshops and co-creative sessions facilitate not only the exchange of ideas and knowledge but they also ensure that the perspectives and needs of all involved are considered. These processes also helps to build relationships of trust and commitment between these groups of people. And these collaborative processes are key for systemic change, by co-developing strategies and solutions that are context-specific and capable of delivering multiple benefits.





2.1 For whom are NbS beneficial?

NbS offer significant benefits to a diverse range of stakeholders, each with unique interests and roles in driving the systemic change required for successful implementation. Understanding these stakeholders is essential for crafting effective communication strategies that address their specific needs, align with their interests, and highlight the opportunities for them to engage to the transformative change necessary for NbS implementation. More importantly, attracting stakeholders' participation through targeted communication fosters collaboration and ensures their active engagement in driving sustainable, climate-resilient solutions. With the help of analysis of good NbS practices elsewhere and based on the NBRACER communication strategy, a list of stakeholders has been identified and categorized, detailing both their interests and the opportunities the NbS can provide (table 1).



Table 1: Interest in NBS from different stakeholders

TARGET AUDIENCE	DESCRIPTION AND INTEREST	OPPORTUNITIES
 <p>NBS developers</p>	<p>Description Professionals involved in the planning, design, implementation and management of NbS projects, including engineers, landscape architects and environmental planners.</p> <p>Interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing sustainable business models around NbS Collaborating with other stakeholders to ensure the success of NbS projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable development: Participate in projects that provide multiple benefits, such as climate adaptation, biodiversity enhancement, and improved quality of life for communities. Capacity building: Participate in training programs and workshops to enhance knowledge on NbS and technical expertise, allowing them to stay at the forefront of innovative, scalable NbS projects. Cross-sector collaboration: Opportunity to work with policymakers, researchers, and private businesses to create cost-effective solutions for disaster risk reduction, ecosystem restoration and community well-being.
<p>Scientific community</p>	<p>Description Researchers and scientists in fields related to biology, ecology, economy, landscape management, sociology, economy and climate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships and collaboration: Collaborating with policymakers, developers, and local communities to apply research findings in practical contexts. This also supports interdisciplinary research.



	<p>Interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applying scientific research to address real-world (climate) challenges• Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of NbS in different settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research funding and grants: Opportunities for accessing funding to conduct applied research and contribute valuable insights into NbS efficacy, climate adaptation, ecosystem restoration and community well-being.• Public impact: Showcase scientific findings through participation in real-world NbS projects, contributing to public awareness and environmental education.
 <p>Local communities</p>	<p>Description</p> <p>Local communities facing climate challenges such as droughts, flooding, peat oxidation, salinization, forest fires, and sea-level rise.</p> <p>Interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy environment• Climate risk reduction• Improved well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restoration and regeneration: NbS can support habitat restoration, local economies and health, directly benefiting local communities.• Sustainable farming practices: Adoption of NbS technologies and sustainable agricultural methods can address water management issues, improve food security, and increase resilience to climate change.• Community resilience: NbS initiatives can empower regions by enhancing local capacity to manage natural resources and adapt to climate risks, contributing to long-term sustainability.
 <p>Local organisations</p>	<p>Description</p> <p>Organizations interested in environmental conservation, better livelihoods and community well-being, including grassroots organizations, environmental NGOs, and local activists.</p> <p>Interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protecting nature and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable development: Involvement in NbS initiatives that protect and restore ecosystems, contributing to biodiversity conservation, enhance local economy and community well-being.• Citizen engagement: Opportunities for participation in awareness campaigns, NbS-related workshops, and local



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting sustainable development • Empowering local communities to lead NBS projects • Enhancing the resilience of vulnerable areas 	<p>advocacy efforts that help communities reduce risk and enhance preparedness against climate impacts.</p>
 <p>Business, private sector</p>	<p>Description Companies and organizations looking to adopt sustainable practices, improve their environmental impact, and enhance their corporate social responsibility (CSR) profiles.</p> <p>Interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in green technologies and sustainable development initiatives • Incorporating sustainable practices to improve brand reputation and attract eco-conscious consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green infrastructure: Private sector actors can invest in nature-based infrastructure projects that improve sustainability, enhance community well-being and provide financial returns through ecosystem services. • Ecotourism development: Businesses have the opportunity to develop eco-friendly tourism packages, supporting local economies while preserving natural resources and contributing to sustainable regional development. • Corporate partnerships: Collaborating with local governments, communities, and NbS developers to create impactful CSR initiatives that align with climate goals and offer shared value.
 <p>EU & national policy makers</p>	<p>Description Policymakers developing and implementing policies in different domains (environmental, economic, health, social, educational)</p> <p>Interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with policy makers in other fields to design more holistic policies • Economic and social benefits of NbS • Creating policy frameworks that integrate NbS into broader infrastructure and climate strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross sector coordination: Opportunity to align with policy makers of other sectors and reach a systemic understanding of the region. • Policy development and integration: Policymakers can create regulatory frameworks that facilitate NbS adoption, aligned with the EU's climate adaptation strategy, to boost adaptive capacity and reduce vulnerability to climate change. • Funding mechanisms: Opportunity to create or improve funding streams for NBS projects, encouraging regional



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhancing community engagement and promoting social equality through NbS	and local governments to implement solutions that enhance resilience while fostering economic growth.
 <p>Media</p>	<p>Description Journalists, influencers, and opinion leaders interested in climate change, environmental issues, and sustainable development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public relations and media campaigns: The media can play a key role in raising awareness of NbS benefits, amplifying the efforts of the EC and local governments in sustainable development• Storytelling and education: Through compelling stories, videos, and case studies, media outlets can engage a wider audience in NbS success stories and the positive impacts on communities and ecosystems.



3 Leveraging communication for a transformative journey

To leverage communication and foster engagement in NBS implementation in the transformative journey, it is essential to consider a set of key aspects, which are outlined in this section. These elements are foundational to promote effective knowledge sharing, aligning priorities and building collaborative networks across sectors and communities. By integrating these elements into its communication strategy, NBRACER can transform communication into a powerful catalyst, accelerating the adoption and impact of NbS through systemic change.

Highlighting co-benefits and synergies

To foster greater engagement with NBS projects, it is essential to emphasize the multiple co-benefits they offer across environmental, social, and economic areas. On the environmental front, NbS can restore ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Socially, these solutions can improve community well-being by creating green spaces, reducing health risks, and strengthening local resilience. Economically, NbS provide cost-effective solutions for urban planning, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development. By communicating these synergies, we can bridge gaps in awareness, encourage active participation, and streamline policymaking.

Building knowledge, raising awareness and common understanding

Raising awareness about NbS is crucial for fostering public understanding and engagement. Many people are not familiar with NbS or have misconceptions about their effectiveness. Awareness-raising informs stakeholders about what NbS are, why they are important, and how they benefit both communities and ecosystems. This requires messages that are simple, memorable, and tailored to different audiences, breaking down complex concepts into accessible, relatable ideas. To make knowledge transfer effective, communication should be engaging and tailored to various audiences. Approaches include infographics, videos, and real-life case studies that illustrate the tangible outcomes of NbS projects. These tools help demonstrate NbS benefits in a way that resonates with different stakeholder groups.

Sensitizing for action

Building knowledge alone is not enough; inspiring actionable steps is equally critical. Sensitizing people for action ensures that knowledge transfer not only informs but also mobilizes stakeholders to participate actively. Communication in this phase is engaging and audience-specific, with tools such as case studies, infographics, and video content designed to showcase the practical outcomes of NbS in real-world settings. These formats resonate with diverse stakeholder groups by emphasizing the practical benefits and highlighting successful examples, motivating people to adopt and implement similar solutions within their own regions. In this context, communication serves as a catalyst for action, transforming information-sharing into an invitation for involvement. By

presenting actionable points and concrete examples, NBRACER encourages stakeholders to view NbS as viable, impactful solutions that they can champion locally, amplifying their potential for widespread, positive change.

Active participation, ownership and trust

Active participation, a sense of ownership and trust are key to the success and sustainability of NbS projects. These aspects are key in mission-driven adaptation: when stakeholders are involved in decision-making and implementation, they are more likely to support and maintain these initiatives. Strategies such as participatory planning, public consultations, and workshops can help engage communities in shaping NbS projects to reflect local needs and aspirations. Additionally, volunteer programs and citizen science initiatives offer avenues for community involvement, while empowering local champions to advocate for NbS and lead efforts. Cultivating a strong sense of ownership is crucial for long-term commitment, which can be fostered by recognizing contributions, providing opportunities for feedback, and ensuring transparency. Trust, built through consistent communication and active listening, is essential for maintaining engagement and forming lasting partnerships, helping NbS projects thrive over time.

Real-life collaboration for regional impact

Implementing solutions in real-life scenarios with partners at the regional level is essential for showcasing the effectiveness of NbS. By collaborating closely with stakeholders, it becomes possible to scope and frame NbS from their perspective and within their context—using their frames, narratives, and priorities. This approach ensures that NbS projects are tailored to address local needs and realities, resulting in tangible improvements in climate resilience, economic sustainability, and livelihoods. By grounding NbS in the lived experiences of stakeholders, this collaborative effort transforms NbS from a theoretical concept into a practical, actionable tool for regional development and environmental stewardship.

Streamlining policymaking

Supporting NbS implementation involves creating more integrated policy frameworks. Cross-sector policy coordination can streamline existing legal processes, making it easier for NbS to be integrated into infrastructure projects. Effective communication in this process fosters a reflection and learning mindset among policy makers, making them more aware of being part of system and therefore supporting systemic change. Dialogue and information exchange can tackle current barriers in policymaking and legal frameworks, supporting constructive conversations around necessary reforms. By engaging stakeholders in these discussions, communication helps identify practical solutions and align diverse perspectives to support policy reforms that prioritize and facilitate the implementation of NbS across various governance levels.

Connecting policy fields and creating collaborative visions

As part of a more integrated approach, connecting policy fields and building collaborative future visions with diverse partners can align strategies and operational frameworks. Cross-sector collaboration among policymakers is crucial for the successful implementation of NbS because it helps break down silos between different policy areas—such as urban planning, environmental conservation, and disaster risk management. Effective communication plays a major role in highlighting that systemic change is based on bring people together, rather than polarizing frames that blame or disempower certain groups. Using narratives around commonly shared values are essential to ensure people engage in community dialogue. By fostering a shared vision, it becomes easier to align initiatives and efforts across sectors, ensuring that NbS are embedded within broader regional and national agendas. This collaboration not only harmonizes policy objectives but also leverages the strengths and expertise of various sectors, driving NbS implementation forward on a regional scale. This approach ensures that policy domains, the private sector, and knowledge institutions are working towards common goals, amplifying the impact of NBS on climate resilience and sustainable development.

Partnering with local influencers and organizations

Collaborating with local influencers, community leaders, and trusted organizations is key to effectively amplify NbS messages and build trust. These individuals and groups, who already have strong connections within their communities, can communicate in ways that resonate with local values and experiences, making the message more relevant and impactful. To maximize both reach and credibility, it's important to ensure that these messengers represent the diversity of the community, helping to make NbS messages inclusive and widely accepted.

Engaging with difficult-to-reach groups

Engaging difficult-to-reach groups, such as marginalized communities, elderly residents, or non-native language speakers is essential for NbS implementation. This requires tailored strategies that address specific barriers these groups may face in accessing information. To achieve this, it is essential to collaborate with trusted intermediaries and adopt participatory approaches, such as small-group discussions and listening sessions. These platforms enable diverse groups to voice their concerns and contribute ideas, fostering more inclusive and meaningful communication. Actively involving these stakeholders ensures that communication efforts are relevant and responsive to their needs, ensuring no group is overlooked or left behind in the process. Moreover, in areas with limited digital access, employing traditional communication methods, like local radio broadcasts, door-to-door campaigns, or public information sessions, can be effective.

Simplifying information and encouraging peer learning

Providing accessible information about NbS is crucial to support engagement, especially among stakeholders who may have limited time to seek out complex guidelines. Offering

clear communication, peer learning opportunities, and guidance on accessing financial incentives can significantly increase participation. Demonstrating successful pilot projects and highlighting how to navigate available resources can further encourage the adoption and scaling up of NbS practices.

Incorporate local languages and dialects

Communication efforts should incorporate local languages and dialects to make messaging more accessible and inclusive. In multilingual or multicultural communities, providing materials in multiple languages ensures that key messages reach a broader audience and resonate more deeply. It also shows respect for local cultures, traditions, and identities, fostering a sense of belonging and trust. Tailoring communication in this way helps break down language barriers, promotes cultural understanding, and increases the likelihood of community engagement and support for NbS initiatives.

4 Developing key targeted messages

Key messages are the foundation of an effective communication strategy, designed to distill complex ideas into clear, concise, and compelling statements that resonate with diverse audiences. They communicate the core purpose, benefits, and urgency of an initiative, making it easier for stakeholders to grasp its value and relevance. In this way, key messages play a crucial role in attracting attention and fostering engagement.

These messages are tailored to address the interests, values, and concerns of different groups (table 1) ensuring that each audience sees how their involvement contributes to shared goals. By emphasizing the tangible benefits of participation, such as advancing climate resilience, promoting economic opportunities, or enhancing community well-being, key messages inspire stakeholders to take action and align around a common mission.

To maximize their impact, key messages must be delivered through effective communication channels, such as social media, workshops, events, flyers, and newsletters. Utilizing a mix of these platforms ensures broad outreach, allowing stakeholders to engage in the format that best suits their needs and preferences, further strengthening the connection to the initiative.

Table 2 summarises an initial set of tailored messages, which can be refined for each stakeholder type in each region. These messages are centred on the identified stakeholder interests and the identified opportunities NBRACER can bring to them (table 1).

Table 2: Key targeted messages per stakeholder type

Target Audience	Key message
NBS developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving a climate-resilient future by 2030 demands the rapid replication and scale-up of innovative NbS. Through the NBRACER project, novel practices and technologies will be developed and implemented to drive this transformation. • Mission-driven innovation is at the heart of NBRACER’s approach, providing a pathway to collaborate and create solutions that are both visionary and practical. This approach opens up new regional perspectives and opportunities for systemic change.
Scientific community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NBRACER’s work on regional demonstrators offers a unique opportunity to test, refine, and scale up NbS, creating a blueprint for climate resilience that can be replicated. These demonstrators will challenge the scientific community to work hand-in-hand with local stakeholders and embrace new methods of implementation that are grounded in regional realities. • Networking and collaboration with sister projects and regional partners are vital for knowledge sharing, co-creating solutions, and fostering new research opportunities. These collaborations will bridge the gap between scientific research and real-world implementation, ensuring that NbS deliver measurable benefits for both communities and ecosystems.
Regions and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NBRACER aims to support you in building resilient communities through the adoption of NbS. By working together, we can reduce climate risks while enhancing the quality of life for all. • Prioritizing NbS creates opportunities for risk reduction and long-term resilience. By restoring and regenerating ecosystems, we strengthen the natural buffers that protect communities from climate impacts, sustain local economies and community well-being. • Collaboration is key: NBRACER promotes a multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together governments, NGOs, local communities, and private sector entities to ensure the success and sustainability of NbS initiatives.
Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU initiatives like NBRACER are designed to support communities in understanding and preparing for climate risks and build an economically and socially strong society through active community engagement.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NbS offer a promising pathway to sustainability, creating opportunities for communities to build self-reliance while contributing to the health of local ecosystems.• Participation is key: NbS initiatives thrive when communities are actively involved. Your voice and engagement will help ensure that these solutions are maintained, effective, and scalable. Together, we can create resilient regions that turn climate challenges into opportunities.
EU & national policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NBRACER is dedicated to advancing the EU's climate goals, helping regions across Europe develop the capacity to adapt to climate risks, while unlocking new economic opportunities and ensuring long-term community health.• NbS represent a win-win opportunity, combining economic growth with environmental conservation and social well-being. This approach aligns with the EU's Green Deal and contributes directly to the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.• By embedding NbS into policies, we enhance resilience to climate change impacts, sustain the economy and society well-being.• Collaboration between policymakers in different sectors is key to realize the transformative potential of NbS. NBRACER supports this collaboration by providing the tools and evidence needed to integrate NbS into policy frameworks.
Businesses, private sector, service providers and investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investing in NbS is not only a strategic move for reducing environmental risks but also a smart business decision. NbS generate economic returns by enhancing ecosystem services, reducing operational costs, and unlocking new market opportunities.• Green infrastructure investments offer promising areas for private sector involvement, aligning profitability with sustainability and regional resilience.• Supporting NbS means contributing to risk reduction for businesses, while enhancing biodiversity and securing the natural capital on which industries depend.• New market opportunities: As the demand for sustainable products and services grows, NbS can create jobs and open up new economic sectors, positioning businesses at the forefront of the green economy.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urgent action is needed to increase public awareness of the benefits of NbS in reducing climate risks. NBRACER is leading this charge, and the media has a crucial role in amplifying these efforts.





- As climate change continues to impact communities, NBRACER provides hope by offering sustainable, lasting solutions that address both environmental and social challenges.
- By highlighting successful examples of NbS, the media can showcase their positive impact on communities, bringing visibility to the transformative role that NbS play in climate adaptation.



5 NBRACER communication in three project phases

To guide the eight regions involved in this initiative through a transformative adaptation process, NBRACER follows a three-phase journey: establishing the baseline, co-developing adaptive pathways, and implementing these pathways. Communication will have different aims depending on the progress of project phases. They are described in the following paragraphs.

Phase 1: Baseline and visioning

In the first phase (approximately months 1–20), communication activities will focus on raising awareness of climate change challenges and on supporting the stakeholders to look at their region from the lens of systems. The baseline includes information about how the natural and the social systems are interconnected to each other and how climate change is expected to further affect the key community systems in their regions. NBRACER baselines and the related visioning process help to assess each region's vulnerabilities by analyzing the current state of climate adaptation, including risk profiles, as well as the governance and financial barriers and enablers, with a focus on opportunities for NbS to strengthen the regional resilience. This information provides a foundation for defining adaptation pathways using NbS, requiring a collaborative approach and a shift in mindset across sectors. The primary audience for this phase includes policymakers, local decision-makers, and local organizations, as their support and alignment are critical for laying the groundwork for adaptation.

Phase 2: Demonstration and implementation of NbS

In the second phase (approximately months 20–42), communication shifts to emphasize the further elaboration of the selected NbS adaptation pathways and their anticipated benefits. During this period, co-development efforts focus on defining concrete NbS actions within local and regional contexts and advancing discussions on enabling implementation by bringing together the required people, funding and resources. In this phase, the audience broadens to include local practitioners, land-use planners, and representatives of civil society. With more concretely defined pathways, discussions turn toward practical steps for implementation at the local level. Engaging these groups is essential, as they will play key roles in translating these pathways into real-world action.

Phase 3: Summarizing findings and lessons learned to support NbS scaling

In the third phase (approximately months 36–48), attention shifts from implementing the selected NbS to sharing early outcomes from the NbS initiatives to support NbS scaling at the regional level. Communication in this phase focuses on showcasing preliminary results, for instance from the NbS monitoring, and distilling key lessons learned, aiming to broaden awareness of the benefits and impacts of the implemented NbS as well as to further enhance the governance to enable region-wide implementation. The audience expands further to include the general public and wider civil society, raising awareness about the project and illustrating the tangible impacts of NbS on regional adaptation and



resilience. By highlighting successes and areas for improvement, NBRACER intends to inspire further engagement, foster a culture of resilience, and offer actionable insights that may inform future NbS initiatives in other regions.

6 Conclusion

NbS are promising to build climate resilience, while supporting local economies and communities. The success of a broader uptake of NbS and the implementation in a strategic, concise way hinges on systemic change and mission-driven shared visions—addressing the root causes of climate vulnerability by integrating NbS into local economies, urban planning, agriculture, and disaster risk management. To unlock this, it is crucial to ensure that the benefits of NbS are widely understood and all stakeholders groups are actively involved in elaboration NbS that would fit into their regional context.

Communication and stakeholders' engagement are key enablers of this transformation, as they cultivate shared understanding, stimulate a sense of ownership and foster the collaboration necessary for mission-driven change. Partnerships between scientists, policymakers, developers, and communities will be key to this success, requiring ongoing dialogue, capacity-building, and shared ownership of solutions. This article has provided a set of elements that are key for such a successful communication strategy.