

## Results Theme 4 - Workshop Green Infrastructure (GI)

*Francis Turkelboom, Anik Schneiders, Helen Michels (INBO, Belgium), Monika Suškevičs (EULS, Estonia), Sylvie Vanpeene (Irstea, France), Marion Mehring, Thomas Fickel (ISOE, Germany)*

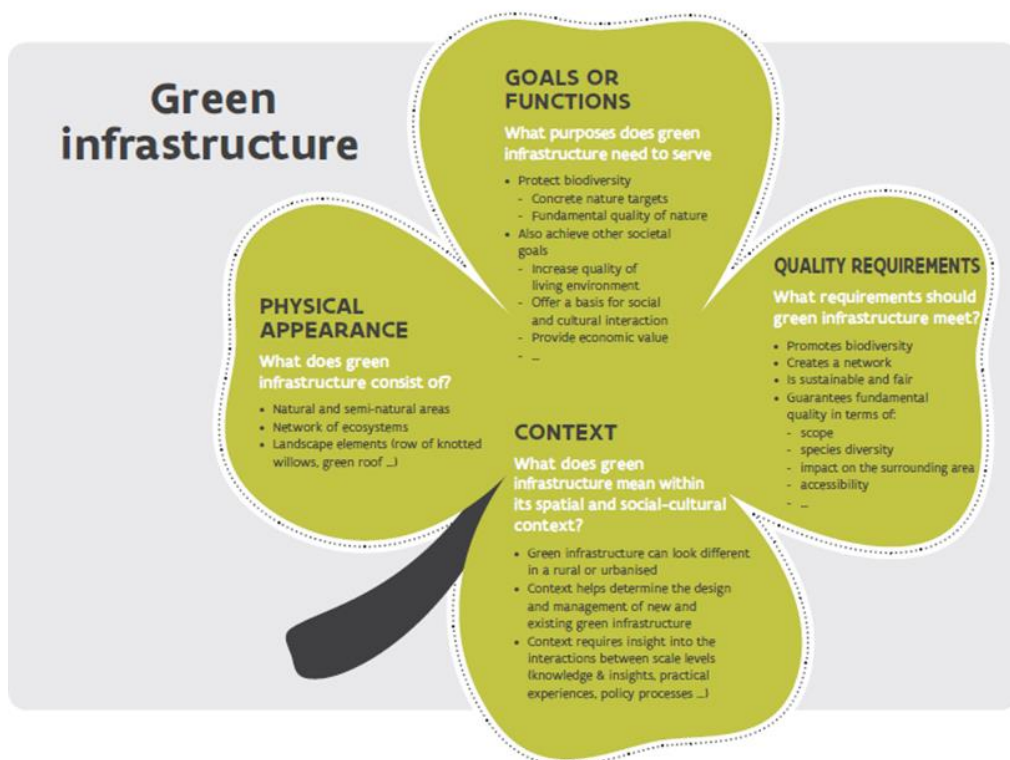
### Summary

- There is a high diversity of GI types. Depending on the goals (e.g. rail infrastructure versus hedgerows, recreation vs. species migration), the context (e.g. urban vs rural), GI can take many different shapes and forms. There are also a lot of other similar concepts used in Europe, but which are labelled differently. Some opportunities are already available (i.e. low-hanging fruit), such as for example transport infrastructures.
- We can learn from the past. Many GI were attempted, but few materialized or were a success. By using top-down methods (such as forcing sectorial objectives to other actors/sectors, desk-designed maps with 'optimal GI'), the chances of failure increase dramatically. This often leads to a polarised debate. In this sense, the term "strategically planned" in the EC GI definition can be counterproductive, as it can inhibit development of spontaneous potentials during consultations.
- So, how to succeed? Successful cases studies indicate that bottom-up approaches, identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders, starting from local needs & values and integrating them in a shared vision, and use of scenarios and visualisations (which can make solutions more concrete), demonstrating the added value of GI (e.g. comparing before and after GI project), can help in to achieve a co-created vision and implementation of that vision.

### Specific recommendations from the individual presentations

- Policy language often reflects the importance of GI, but **sectorial synergies** needed.
- **Strategic mapping:** Creating top-down strategic policy maps for green infrastructure can be counter-productive:
  - It is still interesting to work out ecological-underpinned exercises, mapping potentials for biodiversity and ecosystem services restoration. But do not launch these maps as "strategic policy maps".
  - The past decades many exercises for mapping potentials for ecological networks, blue-green networks... were worked out on different scales. At best, these exercises resulted in a better delineation of two land uses such as nature and agriculture. They did not contribute to a better integration of multifunctional land use.
- **Transport infrastructure** green verges can potentially provide suitable habitats and green corridors for biodiversity. However, scientifically validated feedback is required to identify favourable management methods and to design relevant protocols for transport infrastructures.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Analytical stakeholder approaches, such as stakeholder analysis, can aid local GI management decisions, by identifying roles, interests and preferences for ecosystem services. However, stakeholder heterogeneity can be complex and need rethinking (e.g. perception (current situation) vs. desirability (future perspectives), problem understanding versus practical barriers for implementation for e.g. farmers). A better recognition of stakeholder approaches is needed in national and EU biodiversity & spatial policies.
- **Finding a "shared notion" of green infrastructure:** As green infrastructure is a 'boundary object', it can be used in different ways by different "communities". Adaptive governance is needed to create tailor-made green solutions.

- Outside nature reserves, **biodiversity** could benefit from **smart linking to societal goals of GI**. This requires skills which are limited available in most concerned agencies, such as: socio-ecological analysis, transdisciplinarity, facilitation skills empathetic listening, mediation, networking and alliance building....
- **The four elements of the four-leaf-clover** (see figure below) can help to de-polarise the debate about green infrastructure. It is not just an accounting system of green elements in the landscape. People typify GI not only on their physical appearance (“what does it look like?”), but also on their functions (“what purpose does it serve?”) and it’s qualities (“which requirements should it meet”). The fourth dimension is the spatial and social context (Is it part of a bigger network on a larger scale? What is the historical context? Where is situated?). The quality criteria can be different for private gardens in a city compared to the countryside. Analysing the steps mentioned in the four-leaf-clover help to understand each other’s mind-set in order to reach an agreement on functions and targets
- **The four perspectives on nature:** Strengthening cultural identity, allowing nature to find its way, using the economic flow and working with nature, based on a system-approach, can help to open the mind-set and de-polarise the debate: (1) it makes different visions more explicit, (2) allows to think outside your own perspective, and (3) shows effect of choices. Working with perspectives is **no cherry picking**. You cannot chose the best of each perspective. The region will be too small to implement them all and the ecological footprint outside the region will increase immensely (<https://www.natuurrapport.be/actueel/lees-de-engelse-versie-van-de-natuurverkenning-2050/>).
- **Use different tools:** combine images, storytelling, mapping, indicators... It underpins a creative and innovative debate.



**2050**  
Strengthening cultural identity



**2050**  
Allowing nature to find its way



**2050**  
Using the economic flow



**2050**  
Working with nature