

The EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy



1st European Urban Green Infrastructure Conference

Strahil Christov, DG Environment

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The EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy

- May 2011: EU adopts a **Biodiversity Strategy** to halt biodiversity loss in Europe by **2020**
- **Target 2:** 'by 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing **Green Infrastructure** and restoring at least **15%** of degraded ecosystems'
- May 2013: Commission's **Green Infrastructure Strategy**. It places GI in context of "Europe 2020 Growth Strategy" which calls for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth across the EU



The EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2)



- The new GI strategy is made up of four main elements:
 - Promoting Green Infrastructure in main EU policy areas
 - Supporting EU-level GI projects
 - Improving access to finance for GI projects
 - Improving information and promoting innovation



Promoting Green Infrastructure through EU's main policy areas

- **GI**: can be significant contribution to many of the EU's main policy objectives, especially as regards
 - **Sustainable growth and jobs / Europe 2020**
 - **Cohesion, regional and rural development**
 - **Urban policy**
 - **Climate change** mitigation and adaptation
 - **Disaster risk reduction and management**
 - **Agriculture/forestry and the environment**

Natural Water Retention Measures

Intercropping (Agriculture)



Benefits: slow runoff, increase infiltration, reduce erosion, filtrate pollution, reduce flood risks, protect ecosystems...

Green roof (Urban)



Benefits: slow and store runoff, Increase evapotranspiration, climate change adaptation and mitigation, flood risk reduction, aesthetic and cultural value...

Land use conversion (Forestry)



Benefits: slow and store runoff, Increase evapotranspiration, increase infiltration, reduce pollutant sources, intercept pollution, reduce erosion...

Re-meandering (Hydro-Morphology)



Benefits: slow river water, intercept pollution, reduce erosion, create aquatic and riparian habitat, natural biomass production, biodiversity preservation...



Green Infrastructure and Climate change

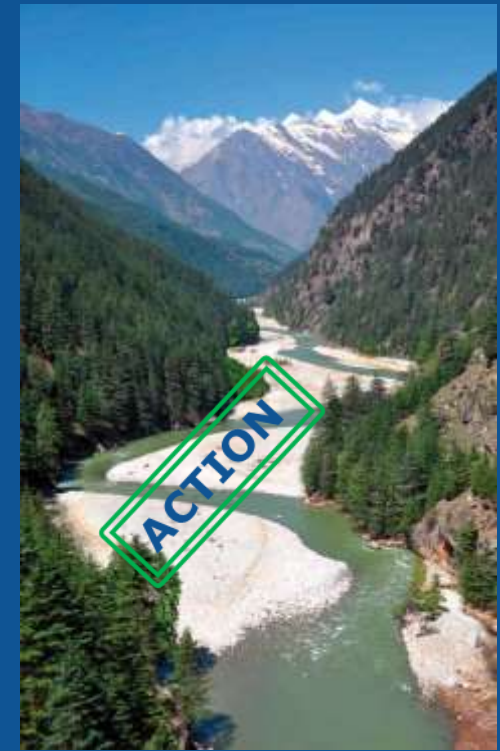
- Climate change and infrastructure development make disaster-prone areas more vulnerable to extreme weather events and natural disasters (landslides, avalanches, floods, soil erosion, etc.)
- Impacts of such events on human society and environment can often be reduced using green infrastructure solutions
- EEA's new report "Exploring nature-based solutions": overview of where specific weather- and climate-related natural hazards are likely to occur; where well-functioning ecosystem services can support disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation; and where the provision of ecosystem services may be improved.

TEN-G



Assess opportunities for developing an EU TEN-G initiatives

- Already available:
 - **Analysing projects which could serve as examples of trans-European GI**
- Upcoming:
 - **Study to assess the opportunities for TEN-G, including assessment of costs and economic, social and environmental benefits by end 2015**



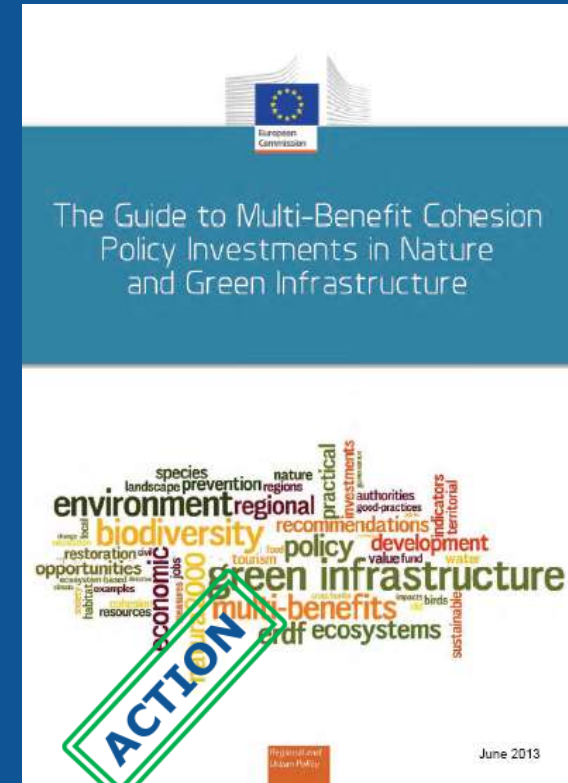
Major rivers and mountain ranges are obvious candidates for EU-level GI projects.



GI guidance

The Commission will develop technical guidance setting out how Green Infrastructure will be integrated into the implementation of the main policies and their associated funding mechanisms from 2014 to 2020

- Already available:
 - **Better environmental options for flood risk management**
 - **Guidance on connectivity**
 - **Natural water retention measures (link to adaptation)**
 - **Integration of biodiversity and climate change into SEA and EIA**
 - **Connecting Smart and Sustainable Growth through Smart Specialisation**
 - **Smart guide to multi-benefit investments**
- Next upcoming guidance:
 - **Agriculture/Climate adaptation**





Technical standards



Assess the contribution technical standards could make to "growing the market" of GI products

- Already available:
 - **Inclusion of assessing benefits and risks of standard setting for GI into Union work programme on European standardisation**
- Upcoming:
 - **Working meetings with relevant DGs, e.g. ENTR, MARKT, JRC and with business organisations**
 - **Further screening of available standards within ISO, EMAS, COST, with ICLEI**
 - ...



What Financial support ? (1)

- EU's main policies and their accompanying financial instruments vital to mobilise the potential of stakeholders to invest in GI
- **Structural Funds** (European Regional Development Fund & European Social Fund), **Cohesion Fund**, **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**, **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development**, **LIFE+**; & research funding programmes (**Horizon 2020**)
- **Funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation** could also provide significant co-benefits for GI



What Financial support ? (2)

- **Natural Capital Financing Facility** (NCFF) set up by Commission and European Investment Bank: will finance investments in natural capital projects, including GI, which generate revenues or save costs and contribute to nature, biodiversity and climate change adaptation objectives
- NCFF open to **public** and **private entities**, where appropriate cooperating in partnerships. Investments could e.g. on ecosystem restoration projects as insurance against floods or draughts or to improve water quality



European Commission

More info on DG ENV, BISE, and NWRM webpages

The screenshot shows the 'ENVIRONMENT' section of the European Commission website. The 'Green Infrastructure' page is highlighted in the left sidebar. The main content area features a title 'Green Infrastructure' with social media icons, a sub-header 'What is Green Infrastructure?', and a detailed text block explaining its role in addressing the spatial structure of natural and semi-natural areas. Below the text is a map of Europe with various icons representing different types of green infrastructure. A red arrow points to the 'Green Infrastructure' link in the sidebar.

The screenshot shows the 'Natural Water Retention Measures' webpage. It features a header with the NWRM logo and title. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for 'Home', 'The practical guide', 'Recent NWRM projects', 'Evaluation of measures', 'Case studies', and 'Summary'. A main text block explains that NWRMs are measures that aim to protect water resources using natural means and processes. Below this, there are buttons for 'MORE ABOUT NWRM' and 'POLICY QUESTIONS'. A 'Browse NWRM concepts' section includes a 'BROWSE' button and a 'POLICY QUESTIONS' button. There are four category icons: 'AGRICULTURE', 'URBAN', 'FOREST', and 'RIVER MORPHOLOGY'. At the bottom, there is a map of Europe with various icons representing NWRM projects across different regions. A red arrow points to the 'AGRICULTURE' icon.

The screenshot shows the 'BISE CATALOGUE' webpage. It features a header with the BISE logo and title. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for 'Home', 'Policy', 'Data', 'Research', 'Outreach', and 'Technical'. A main text block titled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020' discusses the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the Union's natural capital. Below this, there are sections for 'BISE Highlights', 'News - Europe', and 'News - World'. A '2184' badge indicates the number of records in the catalogue. A search bar is visible at the top right. A red arrow points to the 'ACCESS TO FULL CATALOGUE' link at the bottom right.

- http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm
- <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/adaptation/ecosystemstorage.htm>
- <http://biodiversity.europa.eu/bise-catalogue> > Green Infrastructure
- <http://www.nwrn.eu>