



Nature's integration in cities'
hydrologies, ecologies and societies

D5.3 NICHES Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy (Update)

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Summary

Communication, dissemination, and exploitation are key elements of NICHES to maximise the project's impact and ensure effective long-term knowledge exchange and the uptake of project results during and after the project duration. The Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (DEP) aims to maximise the use of partners' considerable outreach and influence, amplified locally via the co-design arenas to guide communication and provide baselines for evaluating and measuring outreach. The purpose of the DEP is to ensure a clear definition of objectives and interactions between target groups, messages, and means of implementation. The DEP is based on an extensive survey conducted within the NICHES consortium (results are available in Appendix 1).

With the aim of guaranteeing the sustainability of the project's outcomes, the NICHES DEP identifies exploitable results and deliverables and situates them in the relevant context of use. The DEP defines strategic objectives and target groups together with the key messages and ideas that NICHES aims to communicate as well as specific objectives and concrete implementation actions to realize these.

The NICHES DEP presents guidance on communication, dissemination, and exploitation efforts within the framework of the project and outlines how to convey clear, understandable, coordinated, and effective messages and ways for disseminating project results to all interested parties within the various stakeholder groups. This document also describes NICHES' Key exploitable results (KERs) as well as the main communication and dissemination tools for ensuring maximum engagement of key stakeholders and the larger community. These include the project website, press releases, newsletters, posters, brochures, social media, meetings and workshops, scientific publications, etc. and the link between the different tools and target groups is explained alongside suggested indicators for active monitoring of effectiveness.

This is a living document and will continue to be modified throughout the project duration and adapted to any new developments or project needs as they arise.

Reflecting on the above statement that the deliverable is a living document, the current version is being updated at M34, as the NICHES consortium has identified the need for adjustments in the Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy.

List of abbreviations

EU	European Union
DEP	Dissemination and Exploitation Plan
KER	Key exploitable result
NBS	Nature-based solutions
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
SME	Small or medium enterprise
SETS	Social-ecological-technical systems
CSO	Combined sewer overflow
ES	Ecosystem Services

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1 Introduction

The Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (DEP) aims to communicate and disseminate project results, to ensure their exploitation and uptake by relevant organisations and experts. To do so, the DEP will help raise project visibility and prompt a socioeconomic transformation towards the utilisation of nature-based solutions (NBS) in urban water management. By using diverse channels, the DEP defines the main actors in the processes of communication and dissemination as well as the key messages NICHES aims to broadcast to its selected audiences.

1.1. What is ‘communication’?

Communication entails informing, promoting and communicating the NICHES’ activities and results. Communication efforts are targeted to reach multiple audiences and aim to raise awareness about the project’s goals and mission without referring to specific project results, but rather communicate more general aspects such as the societal challenges that prompted the proposal of the project as well as the added value of the project’s outcomes to the European scientific landscape. Considering the communication activities target a non-specialised audience, it is important to use a less technical language and avoid scientific jargon. Examples of communication tools include NICHES’ visual identity (logo, templates, etc.), NICHES website, press releases, etc. Communication activities will take place throughout the entire project duration.

1.2. What is ‘dissemination’?

Dissemination refers to the active promotion of NICHES results to the scientific community, as well as to any interested parties that can benefit from them. The target audience of dissemination activities is any potential user of the project’s results, e.g. public authorities, industry, policymakers, and civil society and it aims at maximising the uptake of research outputs. This contributes to the progress of science in Europe in general. The time frame of commencement of the dissemination activities begins as soon as the project produces actionable results.

1.3. What is ‘exploitation’?

Exploitation refers to the use of NICHES results for commercial purposes or for policymaking. Apart from being directly targeted to the research community, potential exploitation of results is also aimed at the industry, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and other sectors of interest. Successful exploitation of results can lead to new legislation, benefit innovation efforts, the economy, and society and help respond to an existing demand for data. Activities supporting exploitation will primarily be conducted towards the end of the NICHES project, but also throughout the project on the basis of exploitable results.

2 Who: Target groups & stakeholders

NICHES targets actors and groups involved in diverse facets of NBS, climate, water management, biodiversity research, water management infrastructure, urban planning and policy-making, and in the social-ecological-technical systems (SETS) domain. The target audiences have been selected for the purposes of the NICHES project based on their work and potential interest in the project themes and the usefulness of project outcomes for them. The categories and sub-categories are not strictly limited to experts and academics but focus also on media representatives, public administrations, and civil society.

NICHES stakeholders are based on the target groups and follow the categories and subcategories outlined in Figure 1 below. The NICHES stakeholders and the methods of engagement with them have been detailed in D5.1 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

NICHES target groups & stakeholders

Academia (research and education)	Government & Public Authorities	Sectoral Professionals (practitioners)	Business & Economy	Media & general public	Civil Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social scientists • Ecologists • Hydrologists • Economists • Urbanists • Chemists • Biologists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City or intra-city mayors • City council • Environmental agencies • Water management authorities • Environmental ministries • Public work ministries • Ministries/agencies dealing with disaster risk reduction • DG Regio, DG Environment, DG Clima 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NBS practitioners • Landscape & urban planners • Architects • Hydro-engineers • Nature conservation experts • Health technicians • Water management technicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water utility companies • Private landowners • Construction companies • Port authorities (where relevant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science journalists • Clients of water utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental NGOs • Civil activists • Community groups/neighbourhood organisations • Land/water stewardship associations

Fig.1. Target and stakeholder groups in NICHES

3 What: Main project outcomes

3.1. Project outcomes

NICHES will produce a range of outputs and deliverables within the project's life cycle that will be communicated and disseminated actively during the project duration. With the aim of boosting the impact NICHES results on society at large and particularly for its target audiences, the exploitation of results needs to be ensured after the project's completion.

The main outcomes of NICHES include the co-design of an impact assessment and ecosystem services (ES) module, creating baseline and themed NBS scenarios and site potential maps, creating illustrated frameworks for urban water value analyses, a cross-city co-design workshop and so on.

Other outcomes are the co-production of specific transition pathways with the case study cities, the creation of an impact assessment framework, recommendations to cities on NBS integration in policy, the creation of an innovative holistic conceptual framework on NBS, as well as the publication of scientific papers, policy briefs, model code, and a data repository. This is based on a questionnaire conducted among NICHES partners (see Appendix 2)

In addition, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented dissemination measures, which will be done through regular network analyses to evaluate changes in network size, complexity, and linkage strength. Monitoring of the project's public interest over time (e.g. web page visitation) and/or in response to specific project-related events will be done to identify the impact of NICHES.

3.2. NICHES Key Exploitable Results

Results of a project support the achievement of the aforementioned project outcomes through comprehensive dissemination and exploitation measures. The most valuable results are the so-called key exploitable results (KERs). The NICHES Project Proposal defines a list of key exploitable results, which have been further enriched through the input from NICHES partners in the communication, dissemination, and exploitation survey:

Table 1. NICHES Key exploitable results (KERs)

No.	KER	Tasks involved	Scope	Potential Users	Added Value
1.	Co-creation of knowledge and understanding of restorative NBS to avoid storm-water run-off	All tasks	international	decision-makers, technicians, professionals, researchers, NGOs/civil society organisations,	promotion of NBS in an area which are not mainstream, advanced insights.

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				stakeholders, scientific community	
2.	Spatially explicit modelling framework	T2.1, T2.2, T4.1, T2.1, T2.2.	regional, local, international	decision-makers, policymakers, technicians, planners, stakeholders	show the added value of promoting NBS to deal with CSO, holistic assessment of NBS, advanced insights
3.	NbS scenario maps and estimates of hydrological and nutrient loading impacts	T2.3, T2.4, T2.1, T2.2	city, regional, international	water quality managers, decision-makers, policymakers, technicians, planners, the scientific community	provides planning scenarios for agencies to understand the efficacy and ideal placement of NBS, shows the added value of promoting NBS to deal with CSO, helps decision-making processes dealing with CSO and water management, and advanced insights.
4.	Scientific publications on hydrological and ecological impacts of restorative NbS	T2.1, T2.2, T2.3, T2.4	international	researchers, practitioners, scientific community	contribute to highlight the benefits of restorative NBS to mitigate the hydrological and ecological impacts of CSO, advanced insights
5.	Scientific publications on social and economic impacts of restorative NbS.	T3.2	international	researchers, practitioners, scientific community	contribute to highlight the social and economic value of enhanced ecosystem services due to restorative NBS, advanced insights
6.	Integrated	T4.1	international,	decision-makers,	develop an

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	water assessment framework for urban restorative NbS.		regional, local	policymakers, technicians, NGOs, researchers, planners, stakeholders, scientific community	integrated perspective for urban restorative NBS to deal with CSO, holistic assessment of NBS, advanced insights
7.	Policy gaps and opportunities for the management of urban water SETS.	T4.2	regional, local, international	decision-makers, policymakers, technicians, researchers, stakeholders, the scientific community, local policymakers	mainstreaming restorative NBS in policy-making for mitigating CSO, advanced insights
8.	Transition pathways toward Nature's Integration in Cities' Hydrologies, Ecologies and Societies	T4.3	international, regional, local	policymakers, technicians, NGOs, researchers, planners, practitioners, stakeholders, scientific community	mainstreaming restorative NBS for mitigating CSO, breaking the silos of sectoral planning of hydrological issues, advanced insights
9.	International final conference	T5.1	International	scientific community, policymakers	mainstreaming restorative NBS for mitigating CSO, advanced insights

As NICHES has already entered the final phase of its duration, all outreach efforts are focused on paving the pathways for future exploitation of the project's results. Hence, the below table highlights the current status of each KER, the relevant involvement of stakeholders and plans for exploitation.

Table 1.a. NICHEs Key Exploitable Results and Further Implementation.

No.	Current status	Stakeholder/s involvement	Exploitation pathways (if applicable)
1.	Co-creation of knowledge and understanding of restorative NBS to avoid storm-water run-off	Multiple Workshops have been held in Rotterdam, Barcelona and Berlin to co-create transition pathways for urban water management and evaluate the effectiveness of restorative NBS	The outputs will be used in an upcoming scientific publication and have been used for (D1.2; D4.3, D5.1). A policy brief will be published on the website
2.	A spatially explicit tool for estimating runoff mitigation, retention volume, and flood volume has been developed using the InVEST and BETT modeling tools. These tools have been applied in case studies in Barcelona, Boston, and Rotterdam.	Several meetings were held in Barcelona and Boston to discuss the tools, as well as the conceptual and methodological framework.	The outputs will be used in an upcoming scientific publications
3.	NbS scenario maps were developed based on a SETS feasibility assessment for three case studies. A methodological framework for estimating hydrological and nutrient loading impacts, as well as co-benefits, has been fully developed and tested for Barcelona and partially for Boston, with completion for all three case studies expected within a month	Several meetings were held in Barcelona and Boston to discuss the tools, as well as the conceptual and methodological framework.	The outputs will be used in an upcoming scientific publication

4.	A novel methodology for the integration of Discrete Choice Experiment and PPGIS is being developed	Citizen engagement through survey	The outputs will be used in an upcoming scientific publication; the methodology allows for replicability
5.	Data from the survey on citizens' preferences on ES in specific areas and on the reasons they frequent these places	Citizen engagement through survey	The outputs will be used in an upcoming scientific publication; potentially can be used for new studies
6.	The integrated assessment framework has been developed to combine the spatial analysis tasks of vulnerability, feasibility, and modeling of mitigation potential. Additionally, the study has been enriched with co-benefits modeling of the most relevant urban issues for each case study	Several meetings were held in Barcelona and Boston to discuss the tools, as well as the conceptual and methodological framework	The outputs will be used in an upcoming scientific publication
7.	Data has been gathered for all cities, analysis is pending	Multiple Stakeholder interviews have been conducted. Offered insights on public water management in cities, focusing on key areas such as current policy measures, the power dynamics influencing decision-making, and the barriers and opportunities for improving water management systems	A Policy Brief will be published on the project website, accessible for stakeholders and policymakers from local authorities
8.	Data has been gathered for all cities, analysis is	Stakeholders participated in workshops to address three	Results will benefit both policymakers and

	pending	key aspects: (1) the current state of water management in each city, (2) the desired future state of water management, and (3) the innovations, opportunities, and barriers that could influence the transition between these two states	researchers by providing a clear understanding of the key issues and strengths of urban water systems. These insights highlight what needs to be preserved, improved, or addressed to achieve a more effective and desirable state. Additionally, the findings offer a contextualized set of resources—at local, national, and regional levels—that can support the transition
9.	Organisation in process	Agenda has been sent out to panelist invitations, invitations of participants pending	

4 How: Tools and channels

Informing and engaging with the NICHES audience beyond the scope of the project is of vital importance for NICHES. The communication of results in an engaging manner for the community is a high priority for NICHES as it allows for fruitful discussions to take place as well as facilitates the efficiency of the NICHES co-design arenas. This Plan focuses exclusively on external communication and its tools and methods. **Whether a tool helps in the communication, dissemination, or exploitation of NICHES results is indicated within each section.**

4.1. NICHES website

The NICHES website is the main entry point to the project and a repository for useful materials and information about the project's aims, work plan, news, outcomes, project partners, and the NICHES case-study cities: Berlin, Rotterdam, Sheffield, Barcelona, and Boston. Moreover, all visual elements and promotional materials can be easily accessed and downloaded through the website. Thus, the website is a tool for **communication, dissemination, and exploitation.**

The website has been designed and developed by project partner Pensoft Publishers and adheres to all elements and visual guidelines outlined in D5.2 Visual identity and branding.

The website has been designed to match the NICHES logo, which renders the overall visual identity streamlined and recognisable from external audiences.

The importance of the website as a communication tool lies in that it presents NICHES to a wide audience using non-technical language to communicate the main ideas and guiding principles behind the project. In other words, it is NICHES' "business card", which can be shared with new and potential stakeholder groups and other interested parties.

Over the past 12 months, the NICHES website has welcomed 2,643 new users, bringing the total to 8,010 visitors. Engagement with the site continues to grow, with 57 downloads of NICHES promotional materials, demonstrating strong interest in the project's resources. The most visited sections of the website include the News section, About, and Outputs, highlighting the audience's curiosity about project updates, its mission, and key deliverables.

The majority of website visitors come from Europe, reflecting NICHES' strong presence in the region. However, given the project partners with institutions in the USA and UK, there is also visible activity from these countries, further extending NICHES' global reach.

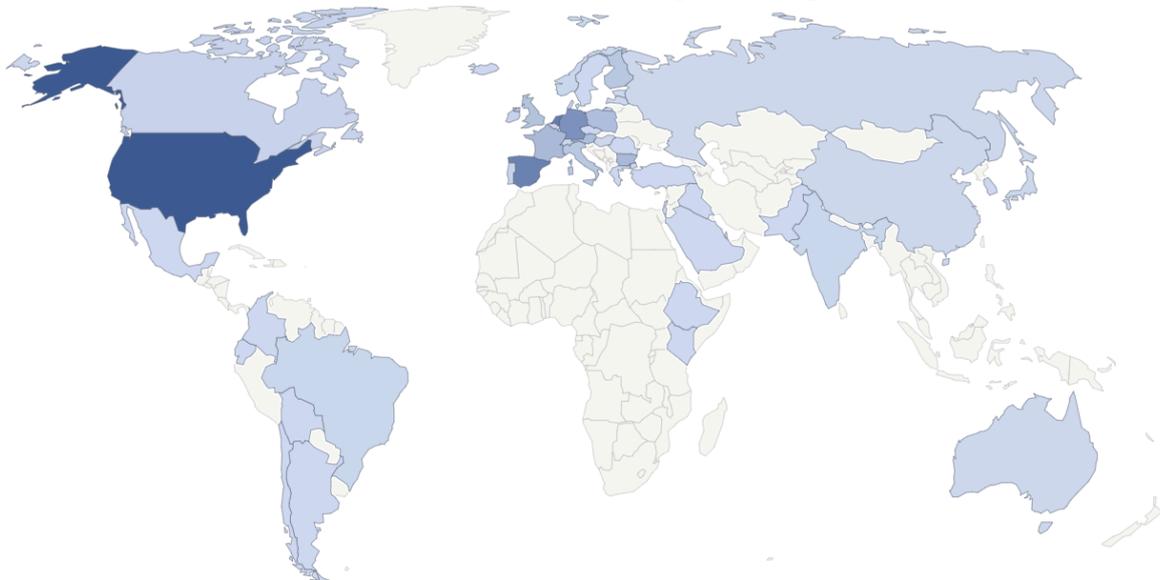


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of the NICHES website users.

4.2. Social media

4.2.1. Why social media

Social media is a valuable **communication** tool as it presents the opportunity to users to share content with ease, open discussions, and raise awareness about niche topics in scientific research. Thanks to the large variety of platforms, a wide range of interested audiences can be reached and engaged with NICHES in particular and its results.

Using social media for science communication creates trust among NICHES audiences and enhances the overall transparency of the project. Furthermore, communicating the project's

ideas and results increases its impact by leveraging an easily accessible and widely used tool such as social media. In the words of Shahbaznezhad et al., “The emergence of social media platforms has dramatically altered the role of customers from passive observers of content to active participants, who are now the co-producers and co-creators of content through their online interactions and behaviours” (2021). Indeed, the recipients of NICHES results also become producers of knowledge through the medium of social media by sharing, discussing, and engaging with NICHES content.

4.2.2. Measuring social media impact

Table 2 presents the benefits and drawbacks of the social media platforms that are of interest to the project.

Table 2. Comparison of the benefits and drawbacks of NICHES social media and the impact within the project.

Social media	Specification	Impact within NICHES
Twitter	<p>Benefits: Good for engagement with media outlets, policy makers, professionals and public interest groups. Has a large number of users. Users can be tagged in tweets to encourage dialogue and expand networks. Hashtags can be used to follow specific campaigns.</p> <p>Drawbacks: Has limited character space. Uncertainty about Twitter’s future as a platform and possible shift to Mastodon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generate interest and share ongoing news and activities through posts/tweets ● Twitter lists: build a community around the project and get relevant news ● Personal messages ● Twitter Analytics
Facebook	<p>Benefits: Has a diverse audience and various age groups. No post character limits. Good for sharing images, videos, papers and other results. Good for engaging the target groups in conversations and can draw attention to events by sharing invitations.</p> <p>Drawbacks: Less professional and used mostly for personal purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generate interest and share ongoing news and activities ● Share media in posts or in separate albums ● Personal messages ● A large number of users ● Event creation of promotion ● Facebook Insights
LinkedIn	<p>Benefits: LinkedIn is considered to be the largest social platform in the world, hence, allows for a wide growth of network. It does not have a limit in post characters,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generate interest and share ongoing news and activities ● Reach more professional

	<p>which gives the opportunity for publishing longer, more detailed content.</p> <p>Drawbacks: While being the largest social platform is considered a benefit, it is also a downside, since an extensive amount of users are on LinkedIn. Hence, reaching the right target audience can be more challenging and time-consuming.`</p>	<p>audiences, as industry representatives, business owners and policy actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A large number of users ● Event creation and promotion ● Sharing of video and pdf content
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It is important to note that only Pensoft Publishers manages the NICHES social media accounts and has posting rights so as to ensure a streamlined communication style. NICHES partners can share and retweet NICHES posts through their personal or institutional accounts and additionally can email the Pensoft team with updates, which the latter will publish in due time.

Moving forward from the original plan, NICHES has been actively and regularly using LinkedIn as one of the main project channels for communication and dissemination. While Facebook is also on the list, in recent years, the platform has shifted the focus of its content to more personal postings. Consequently, the project has decided to shift to LinkedIn, as not much impact has been achieved through Facebook.

The NICHES project continues to expand its reach and engagement across social media. On X (formerly Twitter), the account has grown to 361 followers, with 298 posts sharing key insights, updates, and discussions. Meanwhile, on LinkedIn, while the follower count stands at 81, the engagement with NICHES content has been remarkable. Over the past 12 months (since February 2024), the project’s posts have generated more than 2,000 impressions, demonstrating strong interest and impact within the professional community.

4.3. Promotional materials

NICHES promotional materials refer to all digital and printed materials that serve to promote increased visibility, understanding, and consequent engagement with the project. In the scope of NICHES, in the project proposal the following initial set of promotional materials has been defined:

- Project brochure
- Roll-up banner
- Stickers

During the NICHES kick-off meeting in April 2022, the following additional materials were specified (See Appendix 2 for the survey results):

- Infographic
- Factsheet
- Poster
- Practice abstracts

These materials will be available in digital form as well as in print format suitable for distribution at face-to-face meetings or conferences and will serve as tools for **communication and dissemination**.

The aforementioned promotional materials will be developed and/or printed depending on available resources and the preferences and needs of the NICHES consortium.

Throughout the duration of the project, printed copies of the NICHES brochure and stickers have been delivered to consortium members to distribute at in-person conferences, workshops and other meetings. Additionally, the communication and dissemination leader, has joined a number of international conferences, where the project has been promoted through an exhibition stand.

Currently NICHES has produced a project poster and a factsheet for its' Barcelona case study. Factsheets for the remaining NICHES cities are under development and will be available on the project's website.

4.4. NICHES Newsletter

The NICHES newsletter is a bi-annual news bulletin sent out in the form of an email to a list of subscribers who have agreed to receive it. It is GDPR compliant and is created in SendInBlue software by the NICHES communication team - Pensoft Publishers. All project-related news for the last four months will be summarised together with information about project progress, key events and activities, project outcomes. The newsletter will feature a mix of images from project-related events, links to news items or relevant initiatives as well as a section announcing future planned events relevant to the project.

The subscription for the newsletter is available on the website and is also periodically announced on social media with the aim of attracting the largest possible number of interested audiences. Past newsletters will be uploaded to the NICHES website in .pdf format and available via the project website. The newsletter serves as both a **communication and dissemination** tool.

A significant part of the NICHES project took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed restrictions on fieldwork, data collection, event participation, and other essential activities. As a result, limited results were available in the first phase, leading to the postponement of newsletters until meaningful findings could be shared. Despite these challenges, the team quickly adapted, and work continued as planned in the second phase. So far, two newsletters have been distributed, with one more on the way.

4.5. Press releases

Press releases are official statements directed at members of the news media and serve as a **communication** tool. They aim to provide the press with information or announcing a specific event or matter that may be of interest to their readers. Press releases are a proven way of reaching out to the journalism sector, which enhances the visibility of NICHES as a project.

NICHES, at the time of writing this DEP, has one successfully published press release focusing on introducing the project and detailing its kick-off meeting held in Berlin, Germany in April 2022. During the project’s duration, press releases will be published for any NICHES event of significance such as the last international conference held in month 35 (February 2025).

All NICHES press releases will be uploaded to the ‘News’ section on the project website. NICHES partners have defined possible interested recipients of the NICHES newsletter, who will be added to the newsletter subscribers list in a GDPR-compliant manner.

Since the majority of the work within the NICHES project took place in the second half of its duration, press releases were not a primary focus. However, as the project nears completion, press releases will be published to highlight key outcomes, reflect on the NICHES final international conference, and outline future pathways for nature-based solutions implementation.

4.6. Local engagement

Local media is a powerful **communication and dissemination** tool for increasing awareness about NICHES on the ground. The project partners have identified local news channels, which may be interested in the project and its results. The partners themselves are responsible for conducting the engagement with local news media platforms outlined in Table 3:

Table 3. List of local media channels with potential interest in NICHES.

City	Media name	Media type	Activity
Boston	WBUR Boston	Radio station	
Sheffield	Guardian	Newspaper	n/a
	Observer	Newspaper	n/a
	ENDS Report	Magazine	n/a
	Environment journal of CIWEM	Journal	n/a
Barcelona	El País	Newspaper	none
	La Vanguardia	Newspaper	none
	Betevé	TV channel	none
Rotterdam	Volkskrant	Newspaper	n/a

	Parool	Newspaper	n/a
	NRC	Newspaper	n/a
	Binnenstebuiten	News programme on NPO	Broadcast on the Dutch water quality
			Broadcast on the water quality and its' effect on aquatic animals
	BNNVARA	TV network	Broadcast on the quality of water around sewer overflow
Berlin	Berliner Zeitung	Newspaper	
	Berliner Morgenpost	Newspaper	
	rbb24	TV channel	

4.7. Policy briefs

Policymakers need clear and evidence-based recommendations in order to make adequate changes to legislation, taking into account the science and foundational data. In this way, by relying on comprehensive research findings, policymakers can make informed decisions for the betterment of society. Policy briefs are thus an effective **dissemination and exploitation** tool to inform this target group. In the context of NICHES, the following possible policy brief topics have been defined and further enriched through the communication, dissemination, and exploitation survey:

Table 4. List of expected topics, scale, target groups, and timeline of NICHES policy briefs

No.	Policy brief topic	Scale	Target groups	Approximate timeline
1.	Intersectoral cooperation on NBS	city	n/a	n/a
2.	Financing NBS	international	n/a	n/a
3.	Social and economic values of enhanced ecosystem services through NBS to mitigate	international - comparison between cities	policy makers, technicians, professionals, general public, civil	M34-M36M34-M36

	CSO		society organisations	
4.	Transition pathways to mainstream NBS to mitigate CSO	regional, national - comparison between cities	decision-maker, technicians, financial sector, civil society organisations	M34-M36
5.	Co-defining transition pathways	EU, international	local policy makers	M30-M36
6.	Integrated assessment framework	EU, international	local policy makers	M24-M30
7.	Community vulnerability assessment	EU, international	local policy makers	M18-M24
8.	Multifunctional use of urban blue spaces	EU	policy makers	M34-M36
9.	Transition pathways towards improved NBS policy, governance, design and implementation in cities	local	city government representatives	M34-M36

The NICHES project has centralised its efforts on developing hands-on solutions for the implementation of nature-based solutions in major cities. Rather than focusing on pushing for specific policy changes, the project has prioritised the analysis of various aspects and scenarios to provide concrete, practical outcomes. While influencing policymakers remains an important factor in driving meaningful change, the consortium aimed to deliver tangible results and real-world examples that can support urban adaptation efforts.

As a result, the project shifted from its original plan and decided to develop three policy briefs, each highlighting different project outputs and their practical implementation. These briefs serve as actionable resources, demonstrating how nature-based solutions can be effectively integrated into urban environments, ensuring their impact extends beyond theoretical discussions and into real-world practice.

4.8. Factsheets

A factsheet is a one-page document detailing a specific idea or a finding in an easily digestible way for **dissemination and exploitation** purposes. Factsheets often place a heavy reliance on visual elements such as graphs, tables, or images which contribute to the overall

understanding of the topic in a more user-friendly way. NICHES plans to produce several factsheets on the following topics:

Table 5. List of expected topics, scale, target groups, and timeline of NICHES factsheets

No.	Factsheet topic	Scale	Target groups	Approximate timeline
1.	Social and economic values of enhanced ES of NBS to mitigate CSO	city, regional	general public	M34-M36
2.	Integrated assessment framework to promote NBS to mitigate CSO	international	decision-makers, technicians	M34-M36
3.	Climate robust urban waterscapes	EU	water management authorities	M34-M36
4.	Good practices for urban water quality management	EU	water management authorities	M34-M36

As the NICHES project progressed, the partners decided that the most valuable insights would come from the real-world applications observed in each of the NICHES cities rather than from general discussions on ecosystem services and climate resilience. While the original plan aimed to provide broad thematic factsheets, the team found that these topics are best understood within specific local contexts. Each city presents unique challenges, solutions, and socio-economic dynamics that shaped the effectiveness of nature-based solutions.

Additionally, shifting the focus to city-specific factsheets enhanced stakeholder engagement, making the information more relevant and actionable for local policymakers, urban planners, and communities.

By M35, NICHES has developed factsheets for the Barcelona and Berlin case studies, while the remaining three will be made available towards the end of the project duration.

4.9. Scientific publications

Scientific publications are an important output for dissemination in research projects. In NICHES, the publications will focus on themes such as the hydrological and ecological impacts of restorative NBS, which will assess their deployment for combined sewer overflow management, more specifically. Such scientific publications are targeted to the academic community and contribute to knowledge exchange and potential contribution.

According to a questionnaire filled by the partners (Appendix 2), the journals within which NICHES partners plan to publish their research include:

- The ESP Journal
- ASLO Publications
- Inland Waters - SIL-International Society of Limnology
- IALE Journal “Landscape Ecology”
- The Global Lake Ecological Observatory Network (GLEON)
- JASM Journal
- Science of The Total Environment Journal (STOTEN)

4.10. Exchange and coordination with relevant initiatives and projects

Input in NICHES does not solely stem from partners’ direct involvement in diverse research projects or their own research, but also from extensive practical experience in implementation, governance, and transdisciplinary engagement. One type of input is the engagement with different relevant projects and initiatives, which ensures direct access to outcomes. In this way, NICHES enhances its **communication, dissemination and exploitation** impact by identifying opportunities for joint utilisation of outcomes and/or lessons learned in the process of collaborating on novel products.

Relevant projects are listed in Table 6, which consists of ongoing and already concluded initiatives. Communication with the former will help NICHES exchange ideas and potentially collaborate on current tasks, while interactions with the latter will contribute to NICHES’ work with lessons learnt from the concluded projects.

Furthermore, NICHES will track the progress of new projects such as the 36 funded projects under Biodiversa+’s BiodivProtect call on “Supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems across land and sea”. A full list of the 36 projects can be found [here](#).

Table 6. Relevant projects for NICHES

Name of project	Description/are of interest	Account (social media)	Initiated synergies
INTERLACE	The INTERLACE project supports actions to restore, rehabilitate and (re)connect ecosystems. It aims to empower and equip European and CELAC cities to effectively restore and rehabilitate (peri)urban ecosystems towards more liveable, resilient and inclusive cities.	@INTERLACE_NBS	Participation in Transition pathways workshop carried out in november 2024 in Barcelona. Interlace presented

			results from its guide for the implementation of NBS in urban environments.
CONEXUS	The Conexus project is bringing together Latin American and European partners to strengthen international cooperation on nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration.	@ConexusNBS	Multiple Presentation of NICHES results (e.g. D4.2) at Conexus Final conference in May 2024, Barcelona
CLEVER Cities	Through exchange between cities, inclusive collaboration and multi-disciplinary learning, the CLEVER Cities project aims to drive a new kind of nature-based urban transformation for sustainable and socially inclusive cities across Europe, Latin America and China.	@CLEVER_Cities	
NATURVATION	NATURVATION seeks to develop our understanding of what nature-based solutions can achieve in cities, examine how innovation can be fostered in this domain, and contribute to realising the potential of nature-based solutions for responding to urban sustainability challenges by working with communities and stakeholders.	@naturvation	
Re-Nature	ReNature aims to establish and implement a nature-based solutions research strategy for Malta with a vision to promote research and innovation and develop solutions in a pursuit of economic growth, whilst at the same time improving human well-being and tackling environmental challenges.	@ReNature_H2020	
MANTEL	MANTEL (Management of Climatic Extreme Events in Lakes & Reservoirs for the Protection of Ecosystem	@MANTEL_ITN	

	Services, 2017- 2021) trained a cohort of Early Stage Researchers to investigate the effects on water quality of the most extreme events, and of more subtle events of lower magnitude, while at the same time providing training in state-of-the art technology, data analysis and modelling, and linking to the water management sector.		
Inventwater	Inventive forecasting tools for adapting water quality management to a new climate.	@invent_water	
NetworkNature	NetworkNature is a resource for the naturebased solutions community, creating opportunities for local, regional and international cooperation to maximise the impact and spread of nature-based solutions.	@NetworkNatureEU	
UPSURGE	UPSURGE bridges the gap between the existing knowledge base on Nature Based Solutions and their step-by-step practical implementation for regenerative development of cities focusing on air pollution alleviation and climate neutrality.	@UPSURGE_H2020	
REGREEN	Regreen promotes urban liveability, through fostering nature-based solutions in Europe and China using evidence-based tools and improved urban governance accelerating the transition towards equitable, green and healthy cities.	@REGREEN_nbs	
OPEANDUM project	Open-air laboratories for nature-based solutions to manage hydro-meteo risks.	@OPERANDUM_EU	
BiNatUr	BiNatUr will quantify the role of biodiversity and its linkages with ecosystem services in urban aquaNBS, with an overall aim of improve the planning, building, restoration, and management of aquaNBS.	n/a	Invitation of BiNatUr representatives as panel speaker at NICHES final conference

<p>Commit2Green</p>	<p>C2G supports 8 cities to move away from a project-by-project NBS intervention approach towards the development of greening and renaturing strategies that (a) are cross-scalar and participatory (b) inform existing development agendas and policies, and (c) are implemented through demonstrators that create tangible impact on the ground for the local communities and broader ecosystem. This paradigm shift is founded on the operationalisation of Ecosystem Services (ES) in city decision-making at the district and city scale.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Uptake/refinement of conceptual framework and (downscaling of) methodological approaches developed in NICHES</p>
<p>FairNature</p>	<p>FairNature develops new knowledge and practical guidance for NbS scaling approaches that incorporate social and environmental justice principles. Inclusion of these principles is expected to foster just transformative change for the sustainable use of biodiversity and other societal challenges.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Advancement of NICHES conceptual framework for justice related NBS assessments</p>



<http://niches-project.eu/>

Project partners



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