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Policy Recommendations for Climate Resilience in the Mediterranean

What are Traps?

From our analysis across all the case studies, we identified four patterns of interconnected barriers to nature-based solutions mainstreaming that are recognized in all case studies.

How can we Overcome or Steer clear from traps?

Identified good practices in the making that explicate how to overcome the different traps.

TRAP 01

Weak(ening) Evidence

Represents how risk aversion of regional and local governments' practice is reinforced by limited epistemological inclusivity, and a weak evidence basis for drawing climate policy and planning measures that results in slow or stalled policy implementation.

- Include the private sector (such as businesses related to vineyards, hotels and farms) in efforts to measure land-use changes and water use across the region in the inter-municipal and regional plans.
- Collaborate with public health personnel, including professionals from the nearby hospital, to strengthen data-monitoring plans for NbS and other sustainability practices.

TRAP 02

Community as a challenge

Refers to the situation where there is an avoidance of public officers engaging with communities and citizens that reinforces a lack of participatory planning and preference for consultations, which fuels distrust of public institutions from local communities and a transactional attitude toward engagement and participation from the communities.

- Create opportunities to engage with incoming young professionals through the green corridor. Other socio-economic groups can be involved by engaging with the southern regional section of the architects association, the University of Évora students and teachers, the Regional Health Administration and the Environmental Agency. These collaborations can serve as dissemination and awareness-raising forums to reach the Alentejo Central population and broaden engagement in NbS planning.
- Involve private landowners and farmers in the restoration and future maintenance of the green corridor, including elders in the community who remember fishing in the streams. Workshops around future imagining, involving elders and youth can create connections between these groups.

TRAP 03

Excluding Narratives of Climate Change and Nature-based Solutions

Refers to the ways Nature-based Solutions have been advocated and/or communicated alongside climate change action create excluding narratives, with technocratic language/terms that disengages community and blocks buy-in.

- Adapt the NbS and practices so that narratives around sustainability, biodiversity, and water-use are aligned with local practices and language.
- Include QR codes and other communication tools in the green corridor and ecotrail to share knowledge about health, culture, birding, and other Citizen Science projects that allow citizens of all ages to get involved and invested in NbS.

TRAP 04

Ambivalence in place - Nature-based Solutions as simultaneously soft and hard solutions

This trap captures the portraying of nature-based solutions as "soft" (desirable and easy to advocate for) and "hard" (technocratic and difficult to communicate about) simultaneously that creates a stalemate in how they are translated across urban agendas especially those on urban regeneration/planning.

- Extend existing interventions into urban areas through place-making and belonging activities. These partnerships have mostly introduced NbS in rural landscapes to date. In addition to the direct intervention in the rural and agricultural areas, provide the region's municipalities with plans to restore urban river and stream galleries creating urban green networks and reaching more people.
- Promote knowledge about natural cycles and the changes in the landscape while nature-based solutions are being implemented. River restoration is not a linear process; thus, preparing and informing communities about side effects (including smells, flooding, arrival of new bird species) allows NbS practitioners to bring nature into urban areas.

How can Alentejo be a catalyst for climate change adaptation and resilience?

The region of Alentejo is scaling up numerous and interconnected NbS by connecting rural and urban spaces together. The resilience of vineyards, agricultural sites, and recreational areas' can be increased through the stream restoration and the removal of invasive species. There is potential for these NbS to support the neighbouring regions of Spain and create impactful trans-boundary collaborations.

The Dehesa/Montado system serves as an example of a socio-ecological system with deep connections to the rural region as it is a cultural landscape shaped by human activity. The enormous biodiversity of the Montado system ensures that this area works as a buffer zone to desertification and local people recognise this importance. Demo 7 has the potential to restore and reconnect the Alentejo region's landscape and communities through a network of green corridors and streams. By connecting communities to each other, through their past experiences and visions of a brighter future, Demo 7 provides important lessons on how other projects can scale up NbS in rural regions of the Mediterranean.

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