

MID-TERM EVALUATION CONSENSUS REPORT

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE PERIURBAN: LINKING ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS (NATWIP)

Name of Coordinator: Dr. Nandita Singh
Project code: WaterWorks2017-NATWIP
Duration of project: 36 M
Start date: 1 April 2019

End date: 30 June 2022

FOLLOW-UP GROUP

Please include the data of the FG members reviewing the report

Name	Organisation
Jessica Budds	University of East Anglia
Mario Schirmer	Eawag, Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology

I. Scientific and technological progress (Maximum 250 words)

The project report presents progress in an clear, comprehensive, honest, and structured manner.

The project started in April 2019, and suffered delays due to funding decisions, which resulted in changes to some partnerships and administration: the loss of the Polish partner; delays for the Norwegian, Spanish and South African partners; and reduction of funds and role of the South African partner.

Despite this, good progress has been made. The kick-off meeting was able to happen on time, and the first two WPs (systematic literature review; design of methodological framework) are nearly complete. Tasks have been completed to a high standard and in a collaborative way, e.g. the literature review identified gaps for additional reviewing, and activities being led by partners in the Global South.

The groundwork for the next two WPs (application of methodology to case studies and identification of common narratives) has also started. Here, in-depth interviews with key experts in the different project countries had to be conducted with input from all the consortium partners. An 'interview guide' was prepared by the Spanish partner. Thereafter each partner identified interviewees and conducted the interviews. Due to COVID-19, completion of the in-depth interviews was somewhat delayed, but the team has proposed sensible mitigation measures, e.g. secondary literature and online interviews. Transcripts of all completed interviews are available. The development of narratives derived from the expert interviews is foreseen as a complementary research paper.

The project has three journal articles underway, which are described with detail, which represents solid progress at this stage.

In summary, NATWIP is progressing very well.

2. **Collaboration, coordination and mobility within the Consortium** (Maximum 250 words)

Due to the loss of the Polish partner, a Brazilian institution joined as associate partner. The collaboration between the project partners is very effective and cuts across each WP, which is led by the partner specialized in that area. This initial effort is then subject to multi-partner review and discussion, leading to a collaborative effort from the entire consortium.

The project continues to be transnational in nature. A segment of activities was country-based, the outcomes of which are being integrated into a research article which presents transnational perspectives. The case studies are transnational and this will emerge even more clearly during data analysis when case studies will be compiled and compared. This shows that the project work is integrated in a meaningful way across partners, whereby each partner (including those based in the Global South) leads an activity according to their specialization but with feedback from other partners, and across the case study locations, whereby the project work is developing in tandem, and not in a fragmented way.

The coordination activities described are very well-defined and strong, with a clear line of command across the project and for each work package. The arrangements in terms of information sharing and feedback on activities are very well organized, with a good number of meetings across the project having been held to date.

As expected, coordination and mobility have been affected by Covid-19. The situation threatens to affect work package 3 in particular, although valid mitigation measures are proposed. Mobility is proposed from July 2021, so this could also be affected and would have to be substituted accordingly.

3. **Coordination with other international project funded by WaterWorks2017, or other instruments** (Maximum 250 words)

The report does not mention links with other JPI projects or other projects funded from other sources, perhaps as this is a larger and more interdisciplinary project than some of the others funded under this call, and comes across as being very autonomous in its own right.

We understand that this sort of engagement is expected, but in this case are not concerned by its apparent absence. Indeed, this project represents an example of how a good project under this call could be organized and managed, and that could perhaps be mobilized to inform other projects funded under the call.

4. Coverage of the themes and sub-themes of the call (Maximum 250 words)

NATWIP contributes to a large range of themes and sub-themes of the call. This research covers Sub-theme 1.2. Integrative management by implementing Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) and Sub-theme 1.3 Mitigating water stress in urbanized areas. Furthermore, the project strengthens socio-economic approaches to water management (Theme 2) and especially to Sub-theme 2.1. Integrating economic and social analyses into decision-making processes, Sub-theme 2.3. Connecting science to society and Sub-theme 2.4. Promoting new governance and knowledge management approaches. In addition, NATWIP contributes to Theme 3. Supporting tools for sustainable integrative management of water resources and complements the actions developed under the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and other European initiatives.

The project is therefore highly interdisciplinary and integrated project, and so is extremely well aligned with the themes of the JPI programme as well as its ambition. It could be expected that the impacts of the pandemic will be uneven across the case studies as restrictions and possibilities differ across places, and this is something for the team to be mindful of as the project moves into work package 3.

5. Stakeholder/industry engagement (Maximum 250 words)

NATWIP has successfully engaged with several major stakeholders, including government institutions at different levels, academia, civil society, and the private sector. This engagement has been through interviews with them as key experts in NBS to gain knowledge about their experiences and understandings of NBS and its application to manage the distinct water challenges within their respective jurisdictions. These interviews were conducted by the partners in every country.

Further engagement with stakeholders is ensured with the stakeholders closely connected to the case studies. In Norway, the case study site is set in Skien municipality and throughout the reporting period they have been involved in the project. NGI has had meetings with them to keep them updated about the project as well as to see how the knowledge gained by the researchers can be best used by the practitioners. Similarly, the South African team interviewed key stakeholders, including landowners linked to one of their case studies. In Sweden, close communication with the public sector and other actors connected to the case studies is being maintained. In India, close ties with the governmental as well as civil society actors connected to the case studies have been established. In Brazil, the new Associate Partner IIS-Rio has held interviews and meetings with professionals involved in the NBS theme of the academy and the public and private sectors.

In the next stage of the project, stakeholder engagement could also be scaled up to wider and/or international actors at this stage. The communication plan may need to be revised in line with the lower possibility of conducting face-to-face activities.

6. **Recommendations for improvements/amendments of the report** (Please complete Table below)

Page	Modification	Rationale for change
26	Set out how face-to-face research methods, such as participant observation, will be adjusted if physical fieldwork is not possible in some case study locations.	Potential mitigation measures needed.
28	The nature of external stakeholders could be further elaborated.	Information provided rather general.
29	Would the visit to Sweden be replicated in another way or postponed if travel is still not possible by June 2021?	Potential mitigation measures needed.
29	Indicate if there is coordination of NATWIP with other international projects funded by WaterWorks2015, WaterWorks2018 or other instruments.	Evaluation point 3 (Coordination with other international projects funded) was difficult to judge by the reviewers.

7. **General Assessment Comments** (Maximum 250 words)

The project has made very good and solid progress, despite delays arising from funding issues and, after 12 months, the shift to online activities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The project is well organized and administered, and activities have been completed to a high standard, with key milestones achieved, and in a manner that integrates the project partners in an interdisciplinary and equitable way.

We have no concerns about the progress of this project, and are confident that the team is on track to achieve their aims.