

sustainable waters
Supported by Nature

Deliverable 1.1 Plan to establish NBS Learning Sites



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Introduction

Deliverable 1.1 - Plan to establish NBS learning sites - outlines the local efforts undertaken to plan and prepare for learning sites across the Baltic Sea region. These sites aim to enhance understanding of nature-based solutions (NBS) and their contribution to improving environmental conditions. The deliverable details how target groups and stakeholders have been engaged locally to secure their support and involvement, ensure long-term sustainability while also integrating local knowledge and expertise. This approach, combined with the joint planning of pilot actions for the creation of learning sites, ensures that the sites become valuable tools in achieving the project's long-term goal: building a stronger knowledge foundation among target groups that will lead to more frequent and adequate use of NBSs in planning processes, as well as land and seascape management.

The transnational context and exchange between partners have also been important, providing valuable opportunities for sharing expertise and previous experiences.

The deliverable also provides an overview of the different types of multi-stakeholder approaches (MSAs) that are currently in use and will continue to be applied when establishing learning sites during pilot 1. It outlines methods for engaging target groups in the development of learning sites, focusing on different NBSs such as multifunctional wetlands, watercourse restoration, and coastal water habitats. Furthermore, the methods and activities used during the pilot phase will be evaluated to identify and showcase best practices for collaborative MSA when establishing learning sites as tools for capacity building – learning by doing.

The plans developed for establishing each NBS Learning Site will also become an integrated part of the output, Supported by Nature – a practical guide for building knowledge about NBS.

Planned collaborative multi-stakeholder approaches

A wide range of approaches have been used to engage both local stakeholders and target groups in preparation for establishing the learning sites. These approaches can be categorized into four different types of multi-stakeholder approaches, each reflecting the core strategies employed by project partners to involve stakeholders.

1. Hands-On and Practical Engagement

These approaches involve engaging stakeholders directly in the field activities or through hands-on participation. The focus is on allowing stakeholders to witness *and* participate in the physical work related to the Learning Site, enabling them to experience and contribute to its development.

Field Trips and Field Workshops

Stakeholders are taken to the site to observe or participate in the physical environment, seeing firsthand how the learning site is established, creating a direct link to the physical location, fostering a deeper understanding and connection to the work being done, and gaining greater knowledge about the particular NBS at the site. Active Participation in Site Development

Stakeholders are invited to join in restoration processes (e.g., watercourse restoration or wetland construction), contributing to hands-on work such as designing, digging, or planning measures. In this method, stakeholders don't just observe but actively participate in shaping the learning site and learning skills in real-time.

2. Dialogue and Collaborative Planning

This approach emphasizes continuous, open dialogue and joint planning between stakeholders, ensuring their input is integrated into the project, fostering collaborative decision-making and a sense of shared responsibility.

Dialogue and Communication

Dialogue between project managers and stakeholders occurs regularly, ensuring that everyone involved has a chance to share their ideas, concerns, and preferences. This approach builds trust, helps reconcile differing interests, and ensures that the Learning Site is co-developed based on diverse input.

Agile Planning

The planning process remains flexible, allowing for adjustments based on stakeholder input at various stages. This method values adaptability and inclusivity, ensuring that all voices are heard, and the process remains responsive to new insights or changing conditions.

Co-creation and co-design

Involves deep stakeholder engagement from the start of a project, enabling participants to jointly shape goals, processes, and outcomes. Unlike traditional consultation, co-creation makes stakeholders active partners in decision-making, fostering shared ownership and ensuring that the project aligns with local needs and values. This approach leverages diverse expertise and insights, creating solutions that are relevant, sustainable, and contextually grounded.

3. Structured Feedback and Deliberative Methods

This approach uses formal mechanisms such feedback queries, deliberative forums, and structured consultations to gather input and ensure that diverse perspectives of all stakeholders involved.

Feedback Queries and Surveys

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on proposals or ongoing projects through structured formats such as surveys or formal feedback sessions. This allows for systematic collection of input. These methods help identify common concerns or suggestions, enabling planners to adjust based on a broad range of stakeholder opinions.

Deliberative Forums

Stakeholders engage in structured discussions or forums designed to facilitate deliberation on the issues at hand. This ensures that all voices are considered, and decisions are made through informed debate. Such forums are often used in larger-scale events to include the public or more specialized groups.

4. Educational Engagement and Volunteer Involvement

This approach emphasizes using the Learning Site as an educational tool, inviting a wide range of community members, from schools to municipal officials, to engage with the project. It also encourages volunteer participation, where stakeholders contribute actively to site development while learning practical skills.

Workshops and Educational Activities

Stakeholders, including schools, local residents, and politicians, are invited to workshops where they can learn more about the Learning Site and contribute to its development. Educational programs are also created to explain processes and outcomes, providing knowledge transfer to a broader audience.

Volunteer Participation

Local individuals and groups (e.g., NGOs, sport fishermen) participate in the actual physical work of restoration or development, learning as they go. This creates a sense of ownership and ensures practical learning.

Involvement of target groups and stakeholders

While the types of NBSs addressed, as well as their local context and specific conditions, vary between learning sites, several preparatory steps have been consistent for all projects partners when planning to establish sites (during GoA 1.1). These steps include identifying and introducing relevant target groups and local stakeholders, engaging them in the establishment process for learning sites, and selecting the best location for each site, if not already decided.

The project's primary target groups are Local Public Authorities, Higher Education and Research Institutions, and Interest Groups. As future end-users of the project's output and solution, these groups are actively involved throughout the project, beginning with the initial preparation phase of learning sites. In addition, partners engage other local stakeholders who may not belong to these primary target groups. While these stakeholders may not be the main end-users of the project's output, and the solution not specifically tailored to their needs, their involvement at the local level is equally valuable. This inclusive approach ensures that the local implementation of the project's 17 learning sites benefits from a broad spectrum of participants, representing both target groups and other relevant stakeholders.

All partners involve representatives from each target group in their local implementations of learning sites. For the Local Public Authorities target group, this includes at least one municipality, often several, as well as county administration offices and nature conservation or environmental departments. Universities in each participating country are also involved, along with a folk high school and other institutes possessing relevant expertise. Additionally, a wide range of interest groups, such as NGOs and associations focused on e.g. fisheries, fishing management, nature protection, and other related local issues, are engaged, along with local water councils. Other stakeholders involved, include a wide range of actors such local companies and entrepreneurs, schools and gymnasiums, landowners and local residents, as well as national authorities.

Similarities

- Direct and Ongoing Communication: Almost all partners emphasize the importance of regular meetings and discussions with stakeholders. This approach facilitates the sharing of insights, allows for continuous feedback, and strengthen stakeholder relationships.
- **Collaborative Site Selection and Planning**: Stakeholders are actively involved in **site identification and feasibility assessment**, which allows for contextually relevant and ecologically appropriate decisions. This is particularly evident in the contributions of landowners, local authorities, and nature associations.
- Educational and Awareness-Building Focus: Most partners, integrate educational activities like field lectures and workshops, fostering greater public understanding of NBS.
- Local Knowledge Integration: Across all PPs, stakeholders contribute contextual knowledge, from ecological details (e.g., fish migration) to historical information (e.g., stone reef locations).
- Active Role in Site Selection and Design: In many cases, stakeholders influence site choice and project design, suggesting locations, reviewing plans, and proposing adjustments to better fit local conditions.
- **Building Legitimacy and Trust**: Engaging stakeholders from the start helps build **trust** and **legitimacy**, ensuring that the project is supported by those directly affected and adapted to emerging insights or environmental needs.

Overview learning sites

1. Learning Site: Taalintehdas Pike Wetlands (Finland) – Multifunctional Wetlands

1a: Högholmen Pike Wetlands

Key Focus: Restoration of spawning areas for pike.

Description: The learning site consists of two small pike wetlands situated close to each other south of the Taalintehdas municipality centre. The bays of interest are situated between Högholmen and Långön as well as between Långön and Apelholmen. The Högholmen island is a recreational area of the municipality.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Field trips for residents to observe the pike wetland establishment allow stakeholders to gain firsthand experience and insight into the project's practical aspects. Field trip for the local association of the Cottage Club is held on the sites for participatory planning and engaging the local stakeholders.

Workshop for expert stakeholders is held to increase participatory on the site planning on the expert level.

Stakeholders: Local residents

Dialogue and collaborative planning - dialogue & communication

Online meetings and direct communication with local authorities, interest groups, and residents create an ongoing dialogue, allowing stakeholders to voice their opinions and be informed at every stage of the project.

Collaborative site selection is ensured via direct inquiries to local and expert level stakeholders, utilizing existing networks and application notices for possible wetland sites in local medias.

Deliberative Forum method is utilized in the local public stakeholder's meeting in which the stakeholders are invited via local communication channels e.g. newspaper. In the meeting project experts introduces the site and the preliminary plans, and the stakeholders are working with experts utilizing e.g., the maps to develop the plans further.

Stakeholders: Municipality of Kemiönsaari, Southwest Finland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Kimitoöns Natur rf, Natur och miljö rf, Falkö rf, WWF, Fishery district Kemiönsaari, Lounais-Suomen Vesiensuojeluyhdistys ry, Långö-Apelholm ry, Åbolands Fiskarförbund rf., Wärtsilä Ltd. Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing, Landowners, local residents.

<u>Structured feedback and deliberative methods – feedback queries & surveys; deliberative forums</u> Feedback queries and deliberative forums are used at events for specialists, residents, and a broader audience. These methods facilitate structured feedback and deeper discussion on the planning and design of the Learning Site, ensuring that diverse perspectives are systematically considered.

Stakeholders: wider audience in the municipalities, specialists, local residents.

Location: Långön-Apelholmen, south of Taalihtehdas municipality centre

Coordinates: 60.00626, 22.51169

Partner: Turku University of Applied Sciences - Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere Reserve



Image: Långön-Apleholmen. Photo: Heli Kanerva-Lehto

1b: Sjölax Gård Pike Wetland

Key Focus: Enhancing spawning grounds in reed bed shore areas.

- **Description:** The learning site consists of a large reed bed shore area and the site is situated Southeast of the Kemiö municipality centre. In the shore area, there are small ponds, and narrow however too shallow ditches for the pikes and other fishes to spawn.
- MSA:
 Hands-on practical engagement field trips & workshops

 Field trips for residents to observe the pike wetland establishment allow stakeholders to gain firsthand experience and insight into the project's practical aspects. Workshop for expert stakeholders is held to increase participatory on the site planning on the expert level.

Stakeholders: Local residents

<u>Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication</u> Online meetings and direct communication with local authorities, interest groups, and residents create an ongoing dialogue, allowing stakeholders to voice their opinions and be informed at every stage of the project.

Collaborative site selection is ensured via direct inquiries to local and expert level stakeholders, utilizing existing networks and application notices for possible wetland sites in local medias.

Participatory discussions are utilized in the local public stakeholder's meeting. In the meeting all the close by residents and fisherman of the area are invited. In the meeting project experts introduces the site and the preliminary plans, and the stakeholders are working with experts utilizing e.g. the maps to develop the plans further.

Stakeholders: Municipality of Kemiönsaari, Southwest Finland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Kimitoöns Natur rf, Natur och miljö rf, Falkö rf, WWF, Fishery district Kemiönsaari, Lounais-Suomen Vesiensuojeluyhdistys ry, Långö-Apelholm ry, Åbolands Fiskarförbund rf., Wärtsilä Ltd. Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing, Landowners, local residents.

<u>Structured feedback and deliberative methods – feedback queries & surveys; deliberative forums</u> Feedback queries and deliberative forums are used at events for specialists, residents, and a broader audience. These methods facilitate structured feedback and deeper discussion on the planning and design of the Learning Site, ensuring that diverse perspectives are systematically considered.

Stakeholders: wider audience in the municipalities, specialists, local residents.

Location: <u>Southeast of Kemiö Centre</u>

Coordinates: 60,12831, 22,87058

Partner: Turku University of Applied Sciences - Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere Reserve



Image: Sjölax Gårds, Nässudden. Photo: Nanni Piiparinen

2. Learning Site: Brattnäs Reed Wetland (Finland) – Multifunctional Wetlands

Key Focus: Restoration of reed wetlands for nutrient retention and habitat creation.

Description: Brattnäsviken is a shallow sheltered bay situated southeast of Parainen municipality center. The bay consists of a large reed bed shore area. The area has been studied already in other projects conducted by Turku UAS, e.g., species have been mapped (birds, dragonflies, frogs and bats) and reed cutting was performed in 2022.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Field trips to introduce area residents and stakeholders to the proposed sites and provide a firsthand look at the potential for multifunctional wetlands. These trips facilitate direct observation and understanding of the project's goals and the site's potential.

Stakeholders: City of Parainen, Southwest Finland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve, University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), he Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations, Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing, Paraisten Iuonnonsuojeluyhdistys ry, WWF, Parainen fishery district, Lounais-Suomen Vesiensuojeluyhdistys ry, Turun Suomalaisen Yhteiskoulun Iukio, Paraisten Iukio, Pargas Gymnasium, Kimitoöns Gymnasium, Landowners.

Structured feedback and deliberative methods - feedback queries & surveys; deliberative forums

Feedback queries and surveys to capture insights and opinions from residents and experts and gather feedback on specific plans and potential actions.

Through deliberative forums to encouraged broader public participation, enabling community members to discuss the project collectively, provide feedback, and contribute to decision-making. This method ensured that the planning process included diverse perspectives and fostered an inclusive dialogue about the project's impact.

Stakeholders: City of Parainen, Southwest Finland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve, University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), he Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations, Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing, Paraisten Iuonnonsuojeluyhdistys ry, WWF, Parainen fishery district, Lounais-Suomen Vesiensuojeluyhdistys ry, Turun Suomalaisen Yhteiskoulun Iukio, Paraisten Iukio, Pargas Gymnasium, Kimitoöns Gymnasium.

Location: Brattnäs, Parainen, southeast of Parainen municipality centre

Coordinates: 60.27549, 22.36026

Partner: Turku University of Applied Sciences - Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere Reserve



Image: Brattnäs reed wetland. Photo: Jerome Tornikoski

3. Learning Site: Hiiumaa Wetlands (Estonia) - Multifunctional Wetlands

Key Focus: Coastal lagoons and wetlands restoration.

Description: The learning site is situated in the village of Kõrgessaare on the island of Hiiumaa, surrounded by coastal lagoons and wetlands nourished by streams and creeks. The area is rich in natural values, including bird habitats, fish migration routes, and habitats of the European mink. Historically, some of these wetlands have been transformed into water reservoirs.

MSA: <u>Dialogue and collaborative planning - dialogue & communication</u>

Direct discussions with local authorities and businesses ensure that project goals align with local needs and interests. Local nature guides and school leaders are also involved, fostering continuous dialogue and strengthening collaboration in the development of the learning site.

Stakeholders: Local municipality decision makers and development institutions, Tourism sector, creative economies sector, University students and researchers, landowners, local school leaders.

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement - workshops & educational activities

Educational activities and research participation is incorporated by organizing field trips, study tours, and on-site research with university students and researchers. Collaboration with local schools and planning events for wider audiences (residents, tourists) builds a foundation for community learning and volunteer involvement, enhancing the educational impact of the learning site.

Stakeholders: University students and researchers, local schools, residents, tourists.

- **Location:** Village Kõrgessaare, Hiiumaa, Estonia.
- **Coordinates:** 59.00000, 22.50000
- Partner: Estonian University of Life Sciences West Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve

4. Learning Site: Nuutri River Restoration (Estonia) - Watercourse Restoration

Key Focus: Restoring upstream stretches for biodiversity.

Description: The learning site is located on Hiiumaa Island in the town of Kärdla. focusing on the upstream waters of the Nuutri River and the impact of natural and agricultural areas. The site aims to enhance local awareness of water-related issues and adress the limited local understanding of how water functions within the landscape.

MSA: <u>Dialogue and collaborative planning - dialogue & communication</u>

Meetings with the local municipality of Kärdla align the project's objectives with local priorities, especially focusing on flood mitigation through nature-based solutions. Landowners are engaged to identify issues related to watercourses, with flooding and erosion emerging as key concerns. This ensures that the learning site development reflects the needs and concerns of stakeholders.

Stakeholders: Local municipality decision makers and development institutions, landowners.

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement - workshops & educational activities

Field trips, research activities, and study tours involving university researchers, PhD students, and school groups. Collaboration with local schools and planning broader events for residents and tourists, fosters educational engagement and creates opportunities for hands-on learning. This approach supports the Learning Site's role as an outdoor classroom and community resource for environmental education.

Stakeholders: University students and researchers, residents, local schools.

Location: Town of Kärdla and Nuutri River, Hiiumaa, Estonia.

Coordinates: 58.99847, 22.74319

Partner: Estonian University of Life Sciences - West Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve

5. Learning Site: Słowiński National Park Wetlands (Poland) - Multifunctional Wetlands

5a: Łupawa River, Smołdzino Municipality (existing NBS)

5b: Gardno Lake floodplain, Smołdzino Municipality (existing NBS)

5c: Gardno Lake floodplain, Retowo, Smołdzino Municipality (new NBS)

- **Key Focus:** Water retention, flood protection, and biodiversity improvement.
- **Description:** The learning site is located within Słowiński National Park, in an area characterized by multifunctional wetlands. This is a key ecosystem with potential to improve water retention, enhance flood protection, and supporting biodiversity. The specific site encompasses areas along the Łupawa River and the Gardno Lake floodplain in the Smołdzino Municipality, where existing nature-based solutions are already in place, providing a strong foundation for further development and exploration.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Workshops to exchange knowledge and experience with other stakeholders from various projects, during which examples of actions from other project partners is presented. These sessions allow participants to directly witness the ecological benefits of these solutions providing practical insights.

Stakeholders: Municipalities of Główczyce, Wicko, Smołdzino, Ustka, and Łeba, as well as Redzikowo and Kobylnica.

Dialogue and collaborative planning – *dialogue & communication*

Consultations and regular meetings with local authorities, communities, NGOs, and research institutions help align the learning sites objectives with local climate concerns, such as water retention and flood management. This dialogue aid in prioritizing key actions at the Learning Site, such as river re-naturalization and water system restoration, to address climate-related challenges like droughts and floods.

Stakeholders: Municipalities of Główczyce, Wicko, Smołdzino, Ustka, Łeba, Redzikowo and Kobylnica. Infrastructure management authorities: Wody Polskie (Polish Waters), Słowiński National Park and the Pomeranian Landscape Parks Complex, Pomeranian University in Słupsk, University of Gdańsk.

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement - workshops & educational activities

Workshops and educational events raise awareness about NBS among students, academics, and local stakeholders. Field lectures where students and academics observe nature-based solutions, e.g., re-naturalization of the Łupawa River valley and fish passes. These activities strengthen cooperation with scientific institutions and inspire further conservation initiatives, establishing the Learning Sites as educational and research hubs on nature-based solutions for future specialists and local communities.

Stakeholders: Pomeranian University in Słupsk, University of Gdańsk.

- **Location:** Słowiński National Park
- Partner: Slowinski National Park Słowiński Biosphere Reserve



Image: Lecture in the Łupawa River valley where renaturalization activities were carried out as an example of nature-based solutions. Photo: G.Kupczak



Image: Group of students and academic lecturers at the outlet of the fish pass on the Łupawa River. Photo: G.Kupczak

6. Learning Site: Nadelitz Wetland Restoration (Germany) - Multifunctional Wetlands

- **Key Focus:** Accessible educational site with wetland restoration.
- **Description:** The project area for the wetland restoration is in the village of Nadelitz on the outskirts. On one side, the project area borders on an agricultural hall. To the south and east, it is surrounded by arable land. To the west, there is a paved path that connects the village of Nadelitz with Muglitz. The arable land slopes slightly down to the project area, which forms a damp depression that is currently covered with willow trees and reeds and nettles.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Interdisciplinary workshops (including field trips and study trips) to allow participants to directly engage with nature-based solutions, enhancing their understanding and connection to the project.

Stakeholders: Farmers, landowners, residents, landscape planners

Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication; co-creation & co-design

Open discussions, advisory board meetings, and co-creation activities, actively involves stakeholders like tourism operators, local authorities, and farmers in planning the Learning Site. Tools such as stakeholder mapping and participatory decision-making processes (e.g., Delphi method) are employed to gather diverse perspectives and ensure that stakeholders contribute meaningfully to the site's development. Information channels like newsletters and social media further extend engagement, keeping stakeholders updated and involved in the project's progress.

Stakeholders: Partners/Ambassadors of the Biosphere Reserve, Local politicians and entrepreneurs, Landscape planners, NGOs, residents, local autorities, tourism operators

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – workshops & educational activities

Educational events, where participants are informed about the project and NBS benefits. Involving university builds awareness, facilitates shared learning, and encourages volunteer support.

Stakeholders: Educational institutions, research institutes

- **Location:** Nadelitz Village, near agricultural land.
- Coordinates: 54.35484, 13.54607
- Partner: Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve



Image: Workshop with Dr. Till Backhaus Minister for Climate Protection, Agriculture, Rural Areas and the Environment of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (July 2024). Photo: Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve



Image: Project area, Summer 2024. Photo: Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserv

7. Learning Site: Neuendorf Coastal Habitat (Germany) – Coastal Water Habitats

Key Focus: Coastal water habitat restoration with educational opportunities for visitors.

Description: The project area is located on the edge of the village of Neuendorf, which is in the area of the town of Putbus. The project area is easily accessible as a learning location thanks to a nearby paved path and an easily accessible section of beach. Stone fishing used to take place in the area mentioned. The relatively shallow water means that the learning location can later also be visited by swimming or snorkeling.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Active involvement of stakeholders in field trips and technical excursions to experience and discuss the potential impacts of nature-based solutions (NBS). Events include site visits with experts, allowing for direct observation and hands-on learning about the Learning Site's potential.

Stakeholders: Farmers, landowners, residents, landscape planners, fishing operators, local politicians

Dialogue and collaborative planning - dialogue & communication; co-creation & co-design

Ongoing dialogue and communication through various events and meetings, including advisory board sessions, individual discussions, and open days. A co-creation approach also encourages stakeholders to contribute their knowledge and insights, particularly at interdisciplinary events like advisory board meeting with tourism stakeholders and project workshops with government officials. Collaborative workshops and participatory decision-making methods ensure stakeholders participation in shaping the Learning Site's development.

Stakeholders: Partners/ambassadors of the Biosphere Reserve, local politicians and entrepreneurs, Landscape planners, NGOs, residents, coastal fishing operations, educational institutions, research institutes

Structured feedback and deliberative methods – feedback queries & surveys

Feedback channels allowing stakeholders to provide input and ideas on NBS and Learning Site development.

Stakeholders: Partners/Ambassadors of the Biosphere Reserve, local politicians and entrepreneurs, landscape planners, NGOs, residents, coastal fishing operations.

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – workshops & educational activities

Educational workshops and excursions to foster awareness and learning about NBS among academic groups, including students. Opportunities to learn about sustainable practices, contribute ideas, and support the project's goals. This educational focus help enhance understanding and generate enthusiasm for long-term engagement.

Stakeholders: Educational institutions, research institutes

Location: Neuendorf, near the town of Putbus.

Coordinates: 54.33254, 13.48072

Partner: Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve



Image: Project area, Summer 2024. Photo: Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve



Image: Excursion participants from Oman visited the Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve to learn about natural coastal protection, nature-based solutions and the Supported by Nature project. Photo: Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve

8. Learning Site: Stone Reef Restoration on Møn (Denmark) – Coastal Water Habitats

Key Focus: Rebuilding stone reefs for marine biodiversity.

Description: The pilot stone reef and learning site will be located along the coastline of the southwestern part of the island Møn. Historically, this area featured natural stone reefs which were removed due to intensive stone-fishing activities. The lack of stone reefs has a huge negative impact on the marine biodiversity and we want to show how the rebuilding of stone reefs can restore some of the lost biodiversity

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Engaging stakeholders through study trips, site visits, and workshops related to the stone reef establishment. By involving associations like diving and fishing groups in the data collection and mapping process, stakeholders gain practical experience and a deeper connection to the project's goals.

Stakeholders: Møns Sportsfiskerforening, Møns Sportsdykkerklub, Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (local branch), Vandklubben Klintholm Havn, Møn-Sydsjælland Turistforening.

Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication; co-creation & co-design

Through dialogue and communication at various events, including Baltic Sea Day and regular board meetings with the "Møn Stenrev" association, maintain open channels for stakeholders to participate in planning and decision-making. The co-creation approach is further emphasized with the formation of the "Møn Stenrev" association, which enables local groups to play an active role in developing and overseeing the Learning Site's establishment. Collaboration with Aarhus University also allowed stakeholders to contribute to a scientifically grounded mapping of potential stone reef sites.

Stakeholders: Møns Sportsfiskerforening, Møns Sportsdykkerklub, Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (local branch), Vandklubben Klintholm Havn, Møn-Sydsjælland Turistforening and Aarhus University, Institute for Eco Science.

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement - volunteer participation

Encouraging volunteer participation by mobilizing local associations to assist in data collection and restoration tasks. This volunteer-driven involvement gives local stakeholders a sense of ownership and allow them to contribute to the broader goal of restoring marine biodiversity. Volunteers' enthusiasm for taking part in the stone reef restoration reflects a strong commitment to educational outreach and community-driven conservation.

Stakeholders: Møns Sportsfiskerforening, Møns Sportsdykkerklub, Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (local branch), Vandklubben Klintholm Havn,

Location: Coastline in the South/Western part of Møn

Coordinates: 54.88287, 12.22392

Partner: Vordingborg Municipality - Møn Biosphere Reserve

9. Learning Site: Harbor Structures on Møn (Denmark) – Coastal Water Habitats

Key Focus: Utilizing structures for habitat improvement in coastal areas.

Description: The learning site is located on the island of Møn in Klintholm Harbour, owned by the Municipality of Vordingborg. There is strong interest in using parts of the harbour for habitat improvement while simulataneously establishing it as a learning site. Klintholm Harbour is the most visited harbour in the municipality, offering significant potential to attract visitors to the learning site.

MSA: <u>Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication; co-creation & co-design</u>

Local stakeholders have been leading the work to find solutions for habitat improvement in the harbour area. Through a collaborative process, several options for further investigation were identified and discussed with the project team and the Municipal Harbour team. Together, the group selected BioHuts as the most suitable solution, taking into account harbour activities and the need to maintain safe and uninterrupted sailing.

Stakeholders: Vandklubben Klintholm Havn (The Water Club), Klintholm Havn Borger- og Grundejerforening (Local citizen and Landowners' Association), Havneteamet (Municipal Harbour Team)

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – workshops & educational activities; volunteer participation

As part of establishing the learning site, volunteers from the local sports diving association, the Municipal Harbour Team and other local stakeholder, will collaborate to develop activities focused on blue biodiversity. These activities will be designed for use at both this learning site and the stoner reef restoration site, providing a deeper understanding of biological processes in coastal water habitats. Further, the local Water Club together with the teacher's education at University College Absalon , will develop educational material for the learning site.

Stakeholders: Vandklubben Klintholm Havn (The Water Club), University College Absalon - Campus Vordingborg (teacher education), Møns Sportsdykkerklub, Havneteamet (Municipal Harbour Team)

- **Location:** Klintholm Harbour, Vordingborg Municipality
- Coordinates: 54.95533, 12.46267
- Partner: Vordingborg Municipality Møn Biosphere Reserve

10. Learning Site: Marine Education Center (Sweden) – Coastal Water Habitats

10a: Södra Varvsbassängen

- Key Focus: Restoration of shallow seabeds in an urban industrial area to enhance marine life.
- **Description:** This former industrial harbor is being transformed into a modern district, featuring an underwater park of 52,000 m². Shallow sandy bottoms and rocky reefs were restored in 2023, and marine species such as eelgrass, flatfish, bluefish, and mussels have quickly returned. This area now serves as a safe and biologically rich learning site.

Location: Varvsstaden, Malmö

Coordinates: 55.61035, 12.99219

10b: Nyhamnen

Key Focus: Urban restoration to reconnect the city with its maritime heritage.

Description: Nyhamnen links the working port with the city center, serving as a bridge between old and new. Restoration efforts are underway to transform the basin into an inviting urban space, while also supporting marine biodiversity. Plans include a city park and swimming areas.

Location: Nyhamnen, Malmö

Coordinates: 55.61354, 13.00054

10c: Marine Education Center / naturum Öresund

- **Key Focus:** Coastal protection and habitat restoration using nature-based solutions.
- **Description:** Ribersborg, a 3 km sandy beach, is home to the Marine Education Center and Naturum Öresund, a national visitor center. Recent efforts include the construction of a new jetty and a breakwater reef to protect the shoreline from storm damage, while also creating habitats for marine species. The site receives 35,000 visitors annually.

Location: Ribersborg Beach, Malmö

Coordinates: 55.59829, 12.94749

MSA: <u>Dialogue and collaborative planning – co-creation & co-design</u>

Regular gatherings, discussions, and collaborative planning with expert groups and stakeholders ensure that the learning sites reflect the community's needs and insights. This inclusive approach encourages shared ownership and adaptability in the site's development, particularly for projects like the South Wharf basin.

Stakeholders: City of Malmö; Environmental department and the Property and Street Office. Teachers; Malmö university (faculty of Urban Studies) and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (faculty of Landscape Architecture)

Educational Engagement and Volunteer Involvement – workshops and educational activities

Lectures, discussions, and workshops with students, faculty, and the public to raise awareness of nature-based solutions. These educational events engage participants in topics related to sustainable urban environments and marine ecosystem preservation, fostering both learning and active interest in the ongoing development and objectives of the learning sites.

Stakeholders: University students; Malmö university and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, residents.

Partner: Marine Education Center



Image: Workshop at Marine Education Center. Photo: Michael Palmgren



Image: Fieldtrip to Södra Varvsbassängen at the harbour in Malmö (learning site 10a). Photo: Michael Palmgren



Image: Fieldtrip to Nyhamnen in Malmö (learning site 10b). Photo: Michael Palmgren



Image: Costal protection at Marine Education Center / naturum Öresund (learning site 10c). Photo: Michael Palmgren

11. Learning Site: Mjöån River Restoration (Sweden) – Watercourse Restoration

Key Focus: Enhancing spawning sites for sea trout using natural materials.

Description: The learning site is located along a 100-meter stretch of the Mjöån River near Östra Sönnarslöv, on municipally owned land, 5 km downstream from Huaröd. Focus is on improving existing sea trout spawning beds using the Hartijoki method, which loosens substrate to create optimal conditions. The flow habitat is enhanced through placement of boulders and construction of flow concentrators made from riverbank wood or boulders from the edges. The learning site will demonstrate nature-based solutions such as spawning ground restoration and shade planting.

MSA: Hands-on practical engagement – *field trips & workshops; active participation in site development*

Field trips and workshops onsite have enabled stakeholders to share local knowledge and engage in the planning and restoration process. A workshop showcasing restoration techniques using the Harkijoki method is scheduled for summer 2025, and a landowner has expressed interest to apply this method to restore spawning grounds on their property. Additionally, field walks with residents have identified previously used spawning grounds that are no longer suitable due to low water levels.

Stakeholders: Landowners, residents, Skåne County Administrative Board, Kristianstad municipality

Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication; co-creation & co-design

The learning site is developed in collaboration with local stakeholders through meetings along Mjöån. Insights from these meetings play an important role in shaping the learning site. During meetings, residents have shared their observations about trout migration and stream conditions and several residents are now monitoring trout migration through Huaröd, promoting knowledge exchange and increased understanding of Mjöån's ecosystem.

Additionally, regular meetings with the County Administrative Board and informing and reporting to the Fisheries Conservation Area and its board support project progress and ensures a co-creative process.

Stakeholders: residents, landowners, Skåne County Administrative Board, Kristianstads municipality Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – workshops & educational activities

As part of establishing the learning site, students from the local upper secondary school, Önnestadsgymnasiet, will take part in restoration activities aimed at improving spawning during low-flow periods. Their tasks will include building a smolt trap and placing gravel and boulders to enhance spawning grounds.

Stakeholders: Önnestad Upper Secondary School

Location: Mjöån River, near Östra Sönnarslöv.

Partner: Kristianstad Municipality - Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve



Image: Location at the Mjöån river. Photo: Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve



Image: Mjöån river. Photo: Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve

12. Learning Site: Äspet Stone Reef (Sweden) – Coastal Water Habitats

- **Key Focus:** Stone reef restoration for marine habitat improvement.
- **Description:** The Äspet Stone Reef and learning site will be established off the coast of Åhus. Its final location will be determined in collaboration with local fishing rights holders and informed by their historical knowledge and observations.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Meetings, field trips, and discussions with individual fishing rights holders and their community representatives have facilitated knowledge exchange and mutual understanding. During site visits, stakeholders reviewed potential reef locations and by providing maps and photographs to be used in stakeholder meetings, the information and knowledge was spread even further. This hands-on approach enables stakeholders to visualize the site and compare with already existing similar structures and reefs to better understand the benefits of NBS.

Stakeholders: Fishing right holders

Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication; co-creation & co-design

Dialogue, collaborative planning and exchange of knowledge and experience have been a cornerstone of the work since the start.

Fishing rights holders have contributed valuable historical knowledge, such as areas where stones were previously removed for eel fishing, which lead to informed decisions about the reef's location.

The stakeholders have also been involved in discussions concerning the design of the learning site, with an emphasis on using materials natural to the local marine environment. These dialogues have enhanced stakeholders' understanding of nature-based solutions and fostered a co-creative process that incorporates their expertise and priorities.

A continuous dialogue with the County Administrative Board ensures the legal review needed for reef construction.

Stakeholders: Fishing right holders, Skåne County Administrative Board

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – workshops & educational activities; volunteer participation

The local diving associations have been involved in exploring the seabed near the planned site, providing important insights into its conditions. This engagement has not only enriched the project with unique knowledge but also fostered mutual learning, where NGOs and stakeholders feel valued for their contributions.

Moving forward, schools, NGOs, and the public will actively participate in activities to establish the learning site, such as bringing their own stones to the beach to contribute to the reef, fostering a sense of ownership and connection to the project.

Stakeholders: NGO:s, fishing right holders, students, public

Location: Off the coast of Åhus

Partner: Kristianstad Municipality - Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve



Image: Coastline of Äspet in Åhus. Photo: Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve

13. Learning Site: Åhus Harbor Structures (Sweden) – Coastal Water Habitats

Key Focus: Harbor structure improvements for biodiversity.

Description: The learning site will be located along the promenade at Gamla Skeppsbron in Åhus, adjacent to the quay where one set of structural plates will be installed. Another set of plates will be placed in the Port of Åhus. These plates are designed to enhance biodiversity in harbor environments by creating habitats for aquatic organisms, which will be showcased at the learning site.

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops</u>

Stakeholder dialogue has been ongoing since the project's inception, with efforts focused on identifying the most suitable location for the learning site. Access challenges at the industrial harbour led to the use of "digital study visits," which included evaluating potential sites through drawings, drone images, and photographs.

To address the difficulty to visit the industrial port, structural plates will also be installed in the guest harbour in Åhus, providing an additional, accessible site for showcasing the NBS and the project. Collaborations with the Port of Åhus and Kristianstad Municipality helped finalize a location along the promenade where the learning site will reach a wide audience. On-site discussions and visits ensured the location would be easily accessible.

Stakeholders: Municipality of Kristianstad, Port of Åhus

Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication

Collaborative planning involves regular meetings with key stakeholders and outreach to a wider target group. A meeting with all companies operating in the Port of Åhus introduced the project and gathered feedback. Businesses showed interest in the initiative, sparking discussions about their potential contributions to producing and installing additional tiles. These interactions foster a new understanding among participants about how varied harbour structures can improve biodiversity, highlighting the project's impact on stakeholder knowledge and engagement.

Stakeholders: Port of Åhus

- **Location:** Gamla Skeppsbron, Åhus.
- Partner: Kristianstad Municipality Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve

14. Learning Site: Karlshamn and Brunnsparken Wetlands (Sweden) – Multifunctional Wetlands

14a: Karlshamn Wetland Revitalization

Key Focus: Restoration of wetland through small measures with a path for educational purposes.

- **Description:** The learning site is situated in a drained wetland near the Karlshamn railway station, which is undergoing restoration through small-scale measures to revitalize the area. A pathway will be built around the wetland to enhance accessibility for visitors.
- Location: Långakärr/Svarte mosse, near Karlshamn railway station.

Coordinates: 56.17697, 14.88209

14b: Brunnsparken Wetland Ronneby

Key Focus: A well-visited recreational area with educational potential for wetland restoration.

- **Description:** The learning site is located near Fågelsjön (the Bird Lake) in Ronneby Brunnspark, close to both Naturum Blekinge and Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve. It is easily accessible for local schools and will include a pathway with educational signs to enhance learning opportunities.
- Location: Fågelsjön, Ronneby Brunnspark

Coordinates: 56.19723, 15.27019

MSA: Hands-on practical engagement – *field trips & field workshops*

Stakeholders are engaged through a combination of individual and group meetings, with a strong focus on field trips and face-to-face interactions. This approach has been highly effective in gathering local knowledge, generating interest, and identifying opportunities for the learning sites. The process is collaborative and organic, fostering trust, and a sense of shared purpose among participants, key elements for achieving the project's goals. The diverse group of stakeholders brings a wide range of knowledge and expertise, offering valuable contributions integral to establishing the learning site.

Stakeholders: Västra Blekinge ornitologiska förening (BirdLife Sweden), The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation Karlshamn, Karlshamn Municipality, Naturum Blekinge, Ronneby Municipality, Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, Blekinge County Administrative Board

Dialogue and collaborative planning - dialogue & communication; co-creation and co-design

In addition to field trips, a continuous open dialog is maintained with stakeholders to determine final locations for learning sites, co-create their scope and content in more detail and explore how to ensure a successful long-term collaboration beyond the project's conclusion.

Stakeholders: Västra Blekinge ornitologiska förening (BirdLife Sweden), The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation Karlshamn, Karlshamn Municipality, Naturum Blekinge, Ronneby Municipality, Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, Blekinge County Administrative Board

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – workshops & educational activities

The learning sites are intended as educational resources for a wide range of users, including local schools, offering opportunities to explore landscape functions and ecosystem services connected to multifunctional wetlands. As part of establishing the learning site in Ronneby Brunnspark (14b), teachers will be engaged in shaping educational programs to be offered through naturum Blekinge and the Biosphere Reserve.

Stakeholders: Naturum Blekinge, Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, Knut Hanh Upper Secondary School

Partner: Ronneby Municipality - Biosphere Reserve Blekinge Archipelago

15. Learning Site: Mieån and Mörrumsån River Restoration and Landscape forming processes (Sweden) - Watercourse Restoration

15a: Mieån River Restoration

Key Focus: Fluvial processes and landscape forming processes.

- **Description:** The learning site is located along a slow-flowing stretch of the Mieån River in Karlshamn Municipality, Blekinge. The site will highlight fluvial processes and the role of natural hydrology in a watercourse, as well as the importance of effective river management for enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Location: Mieån River

Coordinates: 56.19082, 14.84446

15b: Mörrumsån River Habitat Restoration

- Key Focus: Fluvial processes and habitat restoration near visitor centers.
- **Description:** This learning site, located on the Mörrum River near the Mörrum Kronolaxfiske visitor center, will showcase fluvial processes and the importance of natural hydrology in watercourses and restoration efforts. It will feature small restoration areas near the visitor center, providing opportunities for hands-on practical learning.
- Location: Mörrum River, near Mörrum Kronolaxfiske Visitor Center

Coordinates: 56.19190, 14.74903

MSA: <u>Hands-on practical engagement – field trips & workshops; active participation in site development.</u>

Field trips with stakeholders have helped identify key challenges to address at the learning sites and determining suitable locations to ensure the sites are inclusive and engaging for a wide audience. The primary target groups in this area are sport angles and local resident, with an emphasis on fostering acceptance and of nature-based solutions for river management.

Additionally, the learning sites will serve as platforms to educate decision-makers about the benefits of NBS and the use of natural processes to address future challenges. A field workshop with politicians and decision-makers is planned as part of the process to establish the sites, to raise awareness of NBS strategies.

Stakeholders: South Mieåns Fisheries Management Area, Miådalens FK, Swedish Anglers Association, Blekinge County Administrative Board, Karlshamn Municipality, Mörrum Kronolaxfiske (Svea Skog), Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve

Dialogue and collaborative planning - dialogue & communication

A continuous dialogue with stakeholders has been maintained throughout the planning of learning sites, and will continue when establishing sites, to build competence and confidence within the group. The goal is to enhance stakeholders' capacity to implement nature-based solutions for water management and restoration actions.

Alongside this project, a restoration plan for part of Mieån will be prepared and implemented by some of the stakeholders, offering an additional valuable opportunity to gain practical knowledge and disseminate information about NBS restoration practices.

Stakeholders: South Mieåns Fisheries Management Area, Miådalens FK, Swedish Anglers Association, Blekinge County Administrative Board, Karlshamn Municipality, Mörrum Kronolaxfiske (Svea Skog), Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement – *workshops & educational activities; volunteer participation*

Establishing the learning site provides an excellent opportunity for educational engagement. Events showcasing small-scale restoration techniques and principles of running water restoration is planned in collaboration with course leaders at Blekinge Folk High School.

The visitor center at Mörrum Kronolaxfiske serves as an ideal hub to engage and inform volunteers, includein sports fishers, local residents and tourists.

Additionally, the learning site will offer a valuable resource for local schools, enhancing their biology and natural science classes with hands-on learning experiences.

Stakeholders: South Mieåns Fisheries Management Area, Miådalens FK, Swedish Anglers Association, Mörrum Kronolaxfiske (Svea Skog), Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve.

16. Learning Site: Urban Wetland (Sweden) – Multifunctional Wetlands

- Key Focus: Stormwater regulation and purification, biodiversity enhancement in urban areas.
- **Description:** This urban learning site is located in a green area in central Hedemora, situated below a sports field. The site has the potential to serve multiple purposes: cleaning stormwater, reduce flood risks, enhance biological diversity and provide a recreational space for the community.

MSA: <u>Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication; agile planning</u>

By using already established networks of authorities, schools, universities, and interest groups a wide range of potential stakeholders are reached. These stakeholders are engaged through individual and group meetings, using both physical and digital formats, to gather local knowledge and identify locations for the learning sites and identifying additional stakeholders to involve. A local reference group, with representatives from various organizations and with various competences, contribute directly to planning and decisions, ensuring flexibility with agile planning approaches.

Stakeholders: Hedemora Municipality, Upplandsstiftelsen, Mälaren Water Conservation Association, Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. County Administrative Board, Sagåns Water Council, Federation of Swedish Farmers.

Structured feedback and deliberative methods – feedback queries & surveys

Structured feedback through feedback sessions in planned workshops. This setup will allow diverse groups, including schools and local residents, to provide their insights and raise questions, creating a systematic way to incorporate community input.

Stakeholders: Residents, Hedemora municipality, local kindergartens, elementary and upper secondary schools.

- Location: Hedemora
- **Coordinates:** 60.27246, 15.99473
- Partner: Biosphere Reserve Nedre Dalälven

17. Learning Site: Olsbäcken Creek and Jönshytteån Stream Restoration (Sweden) – Watercourse Restoration

Learning Site 17a: Olsbäcken Creek Restoration

- Key Focus: Restoration of sea trout spawning grounds.
- **Description:** Olsbäcken is a creek that flows through a nature reserve/Natura 2000-area and into the Baltic Sea. Sea trout swims into the creek and try to reproduce, but because Olsbäcken, just like most other water courses in southern Sweden, has been cleared of stones and straightened, there is a lack of suitable spawning and breeding grounds. Another problem is that the creek often runs dry in summer. The main reason for this is that the lake upstreams was drained in the 1930s.
- Location: Olsbäcken, Skutskär

Coordinates: 60.65062, 17.53508

Learning Site 17b: Jönshytteån Stream Restoration

Key Focus: Restoration of trout habitats, integrating cultural and historical aspects.

Description: Jönshytteån, Säter, is a stream that flows between two inland lakes. The area is covered in forest but is easily accessible. There are trout in the stream, but spawning and rearing areas should be improved by loosening the gravel in the bottoms. In the area there are several sites of archaeological and historical interest and a hydroelectric dam, which has caused a delay in the permitting process with County Administrative Board.

Location: Jönshytteån, Säter

Coordinates: 60.33481, 15.68326

MSA: <u>Dialogue and collaborative planning – dialogue & communication</u>

Open communication with local stakeholders, including residents, authorities, and conservation groups, through physical and digital meetings. A local reference group comprising representatives from various organisations provides ongoing guidance, ensuring that the project aligns with local priorities and ecological considerations. Regular dialogue with nearby residents and other local stakeholders allows to build trust, incorporate community knowledge, and address any emerging concerns throughout the planning process.

Stakeholders: Municipalities, Swedish Anglers Association, County Administrative Board, Swedish Association for Nature Conservation, Local Fishing Conservation Area Associations, volunteers with experience of local water course restauration, landowners, Community Road association, hydropower company.

Educational engagement and volunteer involvement - volunteer participation

Active volunteer involvement in the restoration process, inviting stakeholders such as sport fishermen, landowners, and nature conservation groups to participate directly in hands-on restoration activities. Volunteers are engaged in each phase—from assessing initial watercourse conditions to taking part in restoration actions and later also the evaluation of those —allowing them to gain practical skills and an in-depth understanding of watercourse restoration. This approach not only enhances capacity building in forms of educational outcomes and network building but also fosters a deep sense of ownership and commitment to the Learning Site and creates a living example where future visitors can learn about restoration efforts and communityled conservation in action.

Stakeholders: Residents, recreational anglers, The Swedish Anglers Association, Swedish Association for Nature Conservation, Local Fishing Conservation Area Associations, landowners

Partner: Biosphere Reserve Nedre Dalälven