

5 Key Takeaways

1 Huge market potential but uneven growth: The market for green buildings is growing rapidly in some parts of Europe but lagging behind in others. In Austria, we heard about a recent study showing high growth rates for internal and external green walls and green roofs. Over 550 businesses are active in Austria in this sector generating approx. €100 million in turnover. They are supported by strong and supportive government policy including market incentives.

A climate certification scheme is in place which developers can use to demonstrate market leadership. In Austria this kind of certification is seen as a competitive advantage – these companies are the front-runners. Research shows they can charge 8% more for buildings with green infrastructure so there's a strong business case for investment.

A simple message for the construction industry:
Why NBS? It works (really), It's cheaper (a lot) & it looks good!
- Rodolphe Deborre, from French construction giant Rabot Dutilleul

2 Fundamental challenges: The construction sector in many countries lacks knowledge and therefore trust in nature-based solutions. In an industry traditionally driven by price how much will nature cost in the short and long term? Will the client pay extra for nature? How can the construction industry help to 'seduce' clients with nature in their marketing approaches?

More concretely - how effective are NBS? Are NBS even allowed under current regulations? In an industry driven for centuries by hard engineering and physics, there is little knowledge of ecology or nature and therefore little trust in it...ecologists are too often only brought in at the end to 'greenwash' a project!

The **Connecting Nature Enterprise Platform** is a pioneering platform that supports the growth of the nature-based economy in Europe and beyond, by connecting demand with supply.

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3 Solutions are needed fast and education takes too long - Stand up industry pioneers! Systemic change is needed throughout the education system to generate a new breed of architect, developer and investor but systemic change takes time. The current pace of climate change and biodiversity loss means we don't have time. Industry pioneers are needed right now to show leadership and demonstrate that NBS can work. Where industry leaders go, others will follow. It's time for industry leaders to step up and step forward.

But the industry cannot act alone - academia can provide vital support – proving the effectiveness of nature-based solutions and helping to reduce costs with new technologies. Strong policy support is a pre-requisite. It is no surprise that the fastest-growing markets are those where there are strong regulations in place requiring the use of green infrastructure and market incentives in place to stimulate demand.

4 Less focus on individual buildings, more planning for districts and co-creating with communities. Urban planning needs to consider green infrastructure at district or community level rather than at the level of individual buildings. IKEA provide a good example of how community needs at a district level can be considered as part of new building design.

The IKEA Story "If there is a will, there IS a way"

Johanna Cederlöf, market manager of the IKEA store at Vienna Westbahnhof explained how IKEA developed the plans for their new building in close cooperation with the local community. The community wanted more nature so the IKEA building was designed as a park which people can access even without coming into the store. IKEA have taken a similar community co-creation approach in other cities opening up green roofs to citizens in London, putting football pitches for the community on the roof in Eindhoven and public playgrounds on the roof in Utrecht. The possibilities are endless...will other retailers follow IKEA's example and re-examine the possibility of green buildings for communities?



5 The future of construction is Pre-Fabricated ... with nature. Pre-fabrication is a growing trend in the construction industry. How can nature be integrated into innovations such as the BoKlok housing concept? Costs and resources could be saved by implementing pre-fabrication. On the building, this is combined with good planning for maintenance for the plants. Digitalization such as the introduction of BIM or the use of automatic irrigation systems and sensors make this possible today.

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