Governance Guidebook

Connecting Nature

Bringing Cities to Life,
Bringing Life into Cities

Acknowledgments

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1 | Introduction

What are Nature Based Solutions?

The European Commission defines Nature-Based Solutions to societal change as solutions that are

> *"inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions."*

Nature-Based Solutions benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services.

What is the Connecting Nature Framework?

Designing and implementing Nature-Based Solutions on a scale that delivers economic, environmental and social co-benefits, while also building resilience and benefiting biodiversity is complex with many different issues to consider.

Many questions arise and need answers.

- What is the best solution for the area?
- Who will manage it?
- How will it be financed?
- Who needs to be involved in the design, implementation and maintenance?
- How to measure the economic, environmental and social impact?
- Will it support innovation and generate jobs?
- How can we manage change?
- Even identifying where to start can often be a challenge!

In response to this uncertainty, Connecting Nature has developed a process tool to help cities and other organisations navigate the path towards implementation of Nature-Based Solutions on a large scale: the Connecting Nature Framework. The Framework identifies three distinct phases of development for a nature-based solution: planning, delivery and stewardship.

Throughout each phase there are seven separate elements that cities and other entities need to consider when shaping their individual nature-based solution: technical solutions, governance, impact assessment, finance, entrepreneurship, co-production and reflexive monitoring.

Cities may choose to start with any element of the Framework process and consider the others in the order that suits their context. What emerges from the Framework process is a comprehensive 360° overview of each stage of development of the nature-based solution.

Guidebooks

To assist you in developing your nature-based solution, Connecting Nature has produced a series of guidebooks. The overall Connecting Nature Framework Guidebook is a good starting point. There is also a guidebook for each element of the Framework process describing the implementation steps and providing case studies to show how it works in practice. A step-by-step how-to manual on the Connecting Nature Framework process is also available.

For cities and organisations wishing to use the Connecting Nature Framework process, a step-by-step how-to manual is available to download on **www.connectingnature.eu**.

Connecting Nature Framework

- TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS
- GOVERNANCE
- FINANCING AND BUSINESS MODELS
- NATURE-BASED ENTERPRISES
- CO-PRODUCTION
- REFLEXIVE MONITORING
- IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2 | What is Governance?

This guidebook outlines the role of governance in implementing nature-based solutions in your city or community.

Governance is broader than government. It covers legal frameworks, formal and informal networks and organisations, and the rules and policies related to whatever is governed Governments change but governance continues and evolves.

Governance is also about the coordination of people and organisations so that all their activities contribute to the desired benefits of nature-based solutions.

Nature-based solutions are better when people and organisations collaborate. This is because nature-based solutions are ultimately for everyone. Developing them together ensures different needs and interests are considered and that local opportunities are exploited

Collaboration also supports the long-term stewardship of a nature-based solution. For example, a local municipality that no longer has the resources to manage a nature-based solution may find a way to secure its future by involving local communities or entrepreneurs in the process.

Therefore, when it comes to governance for nature-based solutions, we advocate a collaborative approach. Collaborative governance means that the public and private sectors, formal and informal community institutions, private organisations and groups work together to achieve a common vision that could not be realised if each were working alone.

Why do we need to change existing urban governance for nature-based solutions?

Facilitating governance for nature-based solutions, which are cross-sectoral, multi-scale and inclusive by definition, can be a significant challenge to a city or local government's usual way of working. For example, city governments and other large organisations often work in silos (departmental or technical) within which they follow their own agendas. Furthermore, they may not communicate with or involve the public in their day-to-day work. Both approaches fly in the face of what nature-based solution development is all about.

Given the multiple benefits of nature-based solutions, their governance cannot be separated from the governance of other urban policy priorities and goals, such as those associated with mobility, health and climate resilience. Consequently, governance cannot be left solely to single departments or indeed local government.

Adopting a collaborative approach to governance is most likely to deliver the multiple benefits of a nature-based solution. Since nature-based solutions are mostly spatial, they are implemented in a locality and are therefore unlikely to succeed in the longer term if they do not have the backing of the local residents, workers and businesses. The ongoing stewardship of a nature-based solution, regardless of who creates it, will often depend on people, organisations and networks embedded in the locality.
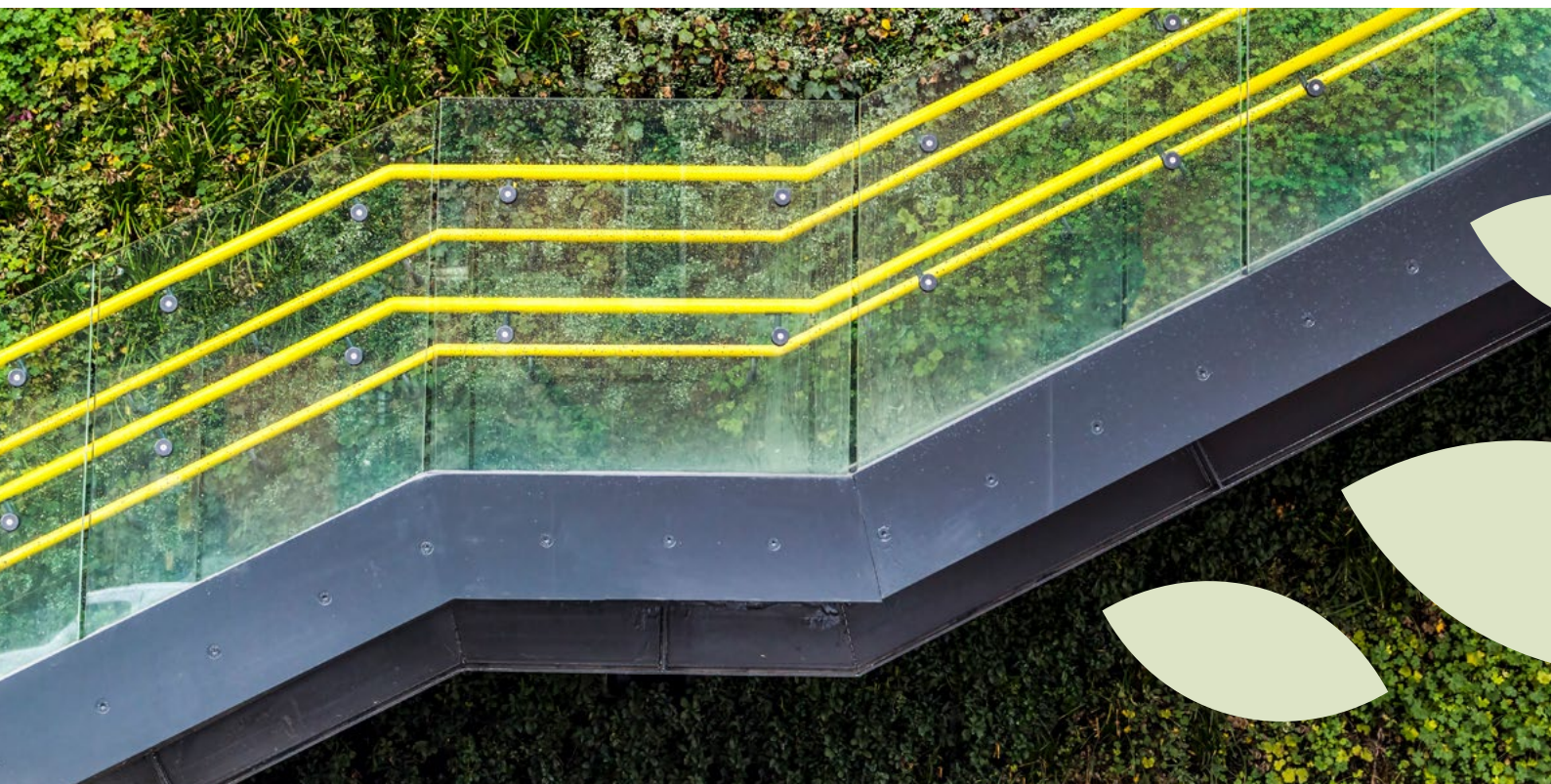
2 | How Do We Do It?

What makes governance collaborative?

Collaborative governance is based on fundamental principles of adaptability, polycentricity and inclusion. These are some of the features that make it suitable for nature-based solutions:

- It is adaptable – with a collaborative approach, the management and decision-making processes for the project are expected to adapt over time, and they can be formed for specific moments in a longer project to achieve certain goals.

- It is polycentric – a collaborative approach allows existing organisations, individuals with an interest in the outcome and professionals and experts with relevant skills to come together when it is useful, timely and relevant for the stage and scale of the nature-based solution. This approach to governance recognises

that different organisations have different governance structures, thus spreading roles and responsibilities for different aspects of a project. This in turn enables devolved levels of governance, with multiple centres responsible for different aspects of a project. It is recognised that community-led institutions are often the most effective at operational level because they are closest to the nature-based solution.

- It is inclusive – different people and organisations can lead the process in different phases, while every member of the group can learn from one another and reflect on what is working and what is not.

A collaborative governance approach can accommodate the various phases of a nature-based solution – planning, delivery and stewardship – required to ensure the solution makes a positive contribution in the long term.

How is Connecting Nature helping city governments and other actors work more collaboratively to develop nature-based solutions?

Connecting Nature has developed a five-step collaborative governance process (see below). based on research and practice. It should be noted that, as collaborative governance for nature-based solutions is new, the process will be under review and may be adapted based on our collective experiences within the Connecting Nature cities and beyond.

It is important to emphasise that this is not a linear process, and there are several different points of entry. Furthermore, it is an iterative process.

See below for more information about each step and how it could work in practice.

STEPS TO EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR NBS

Make the case for Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)
Align NBS goals with wider goals of the city so you can build the case for delivering multiple benefits

Current Status of Location
Identify the current use, ownership and management of where you want the NBS to be

Who are the Required Partners?
Identify all relevant partners and bring everyone together to co-create vision and goals for the NBS

How Will You Work Together?
Develop and agree a collaborative governance framework so that the different partners work together effectively

What Will You Need to Succeed?
Conditions, skills, capacities and reflexive learning practices to ensure ongoing success

Figure 2. The steps to develop a collaborative governance process

Make the case: aligning nature-based solutions with the wider goals of a city or community

Nature-based solutions can deliver multiple benefits, so to ensure the capture of these multiple benefits a wide range of actors need to be brought together. This requires that your nature-based project can be presented in alignment with the broader social, political and business priorities and goals of your city or community. It is useful to show not only how your nature-based solution meets these local priorities but also how it delivers on multiple global themes, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and emerging nature-based solutions categories. This will help you build the case for your solution and communicate how it can generate a wider benefit. This can be useful, for example if you are applying for funding. Communicating the wider benefits of a nature-based solution helps to build alliances with partners who have different interests. For example, your nature-based solution could support people to become healthier by providing space for exercise, or it could enhance biodiversity or improve stormwater management. Therefore, you should communicate the benefits to organisations working to improve residents' health and wellbeing, those working to improve the natural environment, those maintaining open spaces and to development planning organisations in order to secure their buy-in.

Our Connecting Nature city partners have done this with their nature-based solution exemplars, to align the goals of the project with broader city-level and global goals, but any organisation, from a community group to a local business, could do this with a bit of research. See the example of Glasgow in Figure 3 below.

Current status of the location: identify the current use, ownership and management of where you want to implement your nature-based solution

Whether you are a community group, a city government, a local government department, a business or a third-sector organisation, once you have identified where you want to implement your nature-based solution, there are some fundamental questions to answer:

- Who currently uses the space?
- Who owns the space?
- Who manages the space?

Finding the answers can be complicated, especially if the space is used, owned and managed by many different people. However, answering the questions is an essential first step. Many viable locations for nature-based solutions in cities, including parks, municipal open spaces, streets and bodies of water, are owned and managed by local governments. Therefore, while many ideas for nature-based solutions will come from communities, the involvement of local government is almost certainly needed at the early stages.

Figure 3. Example of the connection between city strategic goals, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and nature-based solutions frameworks

Case study: Identifying the diverse users, owners and managers of the Stiemer Valley, Genk

In our Connecting Nature partner city of Genk, the Connecting Nature project team identified an 8-km watercourse and surrounding land running through the city – the Stiemer Valley – as the heart of its nature-based solution exemplar. To develop the exemplar, the team identified the multiple users, managers and owners of the area, which includes private gardens, municipality land and property (with different managers) and the stream itself, part of the wider water management for the region.

Image: Stiemer Valley.
Copyright: City of Genk

Case study: Making community organisations the lead actors in the Warta River area, Pozna

In our Connecting Nature partner city of Pozna , the city team used the strategic policy for the Warta River to develop an evolving programme to revitalise parts of the waterway. Over time, it increased the leadership role of community organisations and small businesses while decreasing the traditional city government role in delivery. This has had multiple benefits, including social, cultural and economic benefits. Year on year, the city has spent less money on the project and has created more opportunities to develop locally run services and commercial activities. The lease of the land is offered for free to operators (companies, community organisations) who must ensure continuity of operation by agreeing to long-term contracts.

The aim in Pozna has been to reduce the number of traditional city-government-controlled interventions and turn the community organisations and private sector into the lead actors, with the public sector playing a responsive, supporting and low-level role.

Image: Stiemer Valley.
Copyright: City of Genk

Who are the required partners: identify all relevant partners and bring everyone together to co-create a vision and goals for the nature-based solution

By completing the steps outlined above, you will already have identified many of the individuals, groups and organisations who will have to work in partnership to achieve the nature-based solution. In this step, identify partners not directly related to the location of the nature-based solution but who are significant nonetheless.

Once all the partners have been identified, you will need to think about the best way to bring them together so each can communicate its interest in the place or the proposed outcome, or both. The **Co-production Guidebook** contains ideas on how to bring the partners together and on co-producing a (new) vision for the space. While the various parties and organisations will have their own aims, wishes and plans, agreeing a shared vision for the chosen space will be essential in aligning their interests and clarifying common goals, timeframes, management and stewardship.

How will you work together? Develop and agree a collaborative governance framework so that the different partners work together effectively, sharing roles and responsibilities

Once all the partners have agreed to the vision, the next step is to identify how you will work together. This is where the adaptive and polycentric nature of collaborative governance is useful. Each partner operates within a different governance framework – it will be formal for city governments and less so for local community groups – and these differences need to be clear from the start so that everyone contributes as best fits their areas of expertise or spheres of activity.

Case study: The Stiemer Valley project in Genk depends on a flexible and polycentric approach to governance

In Genk, the Stiemer Valley programme involves many different mini-projects that address economic, social and environmental issues. The evolving governance frameworks are designed to facilitate partners to contribute in different ways. The innovative Stiemer Deals are a case in point: this is a collaborative funding and governance framework to stimulate and support new projects harnessing the nature-

based potential of the Stiemer Valley. Entrepreneurs or social enterprises are supported to establish businesses such as ice-cream production or bee keeping with a level of governance suitable for their scale. At the other end of the spectrum, more formal governance arrangements are needed when it comes to the plan to develop a more ecologically sound sustainable urban drainage system in the Stiemer Valley, where stakeholders such as residents who have private gardens in the catchment area and regional water management partners need to be brought together, with different roles and responsibilities. This flexibility is at the heart of Genk's collaborative and polycentric governance approach.

Figure 4. City of Genk's collaborative governance framework
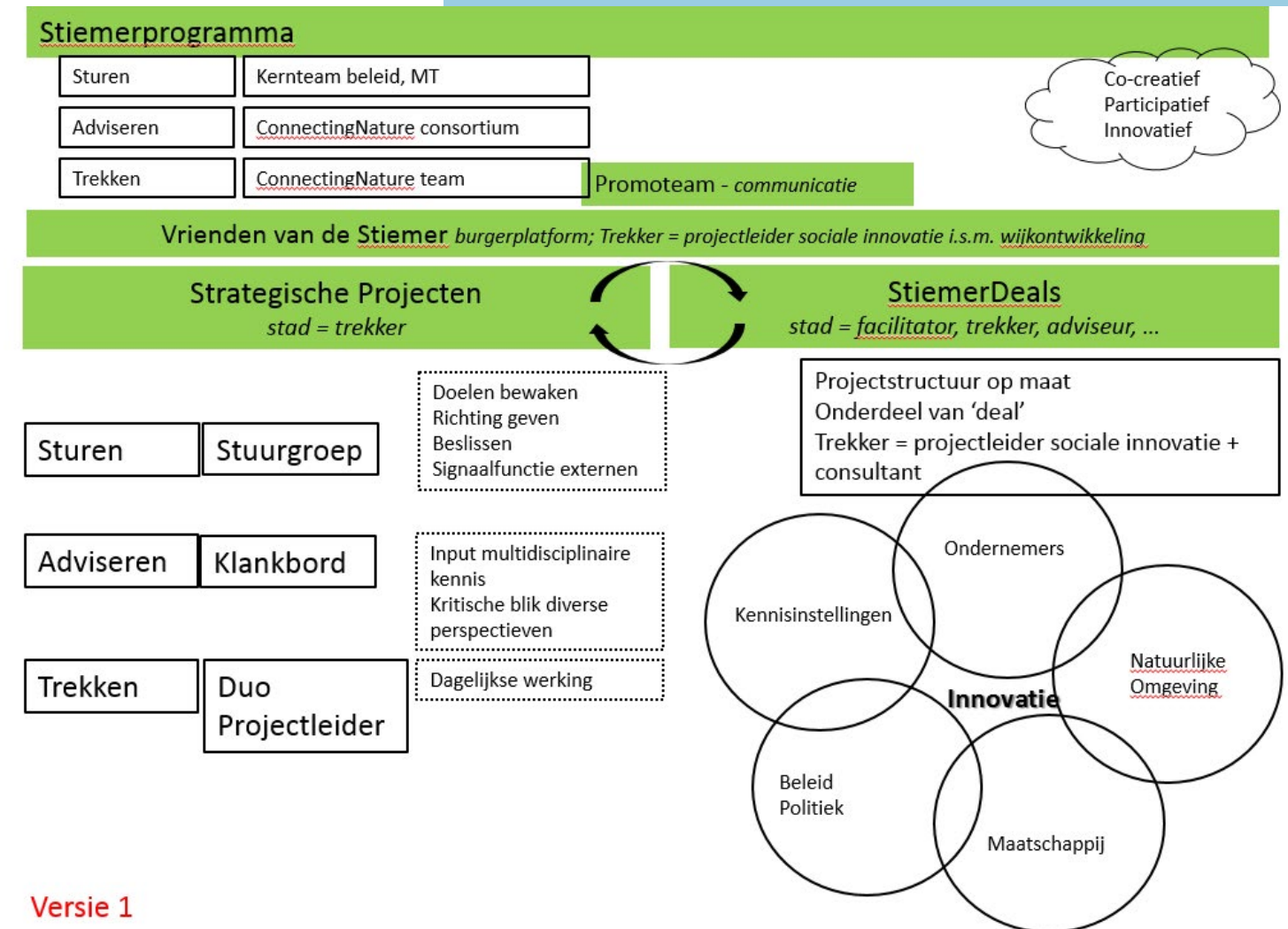
What will you need to succeed? Identify conditions, skills and reflexive learning capacities to ensure ongoing success

This new form of governance brings with it the challenge of developing the organisational conditions and skills that enable collaborative governance, such as those related to leadership and support, knowledge, trust and communication. Below we summarise key conditions and skills that will be needed. Mapping these across the partnership will help build mutual trust and confidence.

Conditions and skills needed across the partnership:

1) Partners need to build knowledge in

- Understanding the place and context – for example, who the existing users are and what the city goals are – and how the nature-based solution will contribute to this context

- Identifying and measuring synergies and trade-offs

- Showing how nature-based solutions add value to existing projects/processes

2) Partners need to agree and communicate clear and transparent roles and responsibilities

- Who will do what and when, expressed as a process and a partnership

- How people and organisations can be involved for short periods, for example, co-opting partners, often temporary and location-specific such as a landscape architect for specific technical input, has been found to be vital for progressing the practice of nature-based solutions

- How to build trust between partners

3) Partners need to be open to experimentation and learning

- Create spaces for collaborative learning, pooling knowledge, actions and resources

- Sharing knowledge with each other, respecting the different perspectives and knowledge types within the partnerships

Skills needed by partners:

1) The ability to identify opportunities to collaborate with a wide spectrum of urban actors

2) Mediation skills to bridge different priorities, interests and agendas – sometimes, an independent facilitator can help with this bridging role

3) Communication skills to win the 'hearts and minds' and the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues in different city departments or organisations so that effective scales and multiple benefits can be leveraged

4) Leadership skills to assess and adapt priorities and to influence and mobilise

5) The ability to forge partnerships across communities of interest, such as with community, local businesses and local universities and colleges

Drumchapel community engagement.
Copyright: Glasgow City Council

Case study: The Stiemer Valley project in Genk depends on a flexible and polycentric approach to governance

Our Connecting Nature city partner Glasgow has used an NGO – Greenspace Scotland – to facilitate a community planning and scoping meeting in the Drumchapel area of the city, where there are many social and economic challenges. There is an opportunity to provide support to vulnerable members of the community and produce local food. Greenspace Scotland's contribution as a neutral bridging organisation means it can enable a space for equal interactions among city officers, residents, the housing association, the police and other groups. This helps the exchange of knowledge and fosters a sense of community ownership of an emerging nature-based solution project.

4| Resources

Connecting Nature is developing the Connecting Nature Framework and a range of publications and support tools that provide a state-of-the-art understanding of governance as related to nature-based solutions, including this guidebook.

- Frantzeskaki N, Vandergert P, Connop S, Schipper K, Zwierzchowska I, Collier M, Lodder M (2020). **Examining the policy needs for implementing nature-based solutions in cities: Findings from city-wide transdisciplinary experiences in Glasgow (UK), Genk (Belgium) and Pozna (Poland)**. Land Use Policy, 96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2020.104688

- Frantzeskaki N, Vandergert P, Dick G (forthcoming). 'What cities need to transform with nature-based solutions?' chapter in Nature-based Solutions and Water Challenges: accelerating the transition to more sustainable Cities, eds Herzog, C. P., Freitas, T. and Wiedman, G.; Published by European Commission, Brussels

- Zwierzchowska I, Fagiewicz K, Poni y L, Lupa P, Mizgajski A (2019). **Introducing nature-based solutions into urban policy – facts and gaps. Case study of Pozna** . Land Use Policy, 85. DOI: 10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.03.025

- Connecting Nature Framework **https://connectingnature.eu/innovations/connecting-nature-framework**

- UrbanbyNature **https://connectingnature.eu/programme-steps**

In addition to Connecting Nature, other European Union funded projects are examining nature-based solutions. A selection of resources, listed below, provide information on collaborative governance:

- Nature4Cities **https://www.nature4cities.eu/**

- Clever Cities **https://clevercitiesguidance.wordpress.com/**

- Ambrose-Oji et al, (2017). **Innovative Governance for Urban Green Infrastructure: a guide for practitioners** – GreenSurge project deliverable 6.3, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen. http://www.e-pages.dk/ku/1337/html5/

- Vandergert P et al, (2015). **Blending adaptive governance and institutional theory to explore urban resilience and sustainability strategies in the Rome metropolitan area, Italy**. International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development   http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19463138.2015.1102726