

# Business with Purpose: Capturing the Voices of Nature-based Enterprises

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**Nature-based Enterprises (NbEs) are businesses that deliver products and services that contribute to the restoration and regeneration of nature. Such businesses can range from landscape architects/horticulturalists who construct green roofs and facades on urban buildings to land or ocean farmers that adopt regenerative practices, which in turn help to restore and sustain crucial ecosystems.**

As part of the Invest4Nature project, Horizon Nua is tasked to work with Living Labs to develop an entrepren ensures support and development for NbEs across t ext. Interviews were conducted

learning could be shared and mainstreamed, and NBS markets grown.

> ***"Our goal is to restore 100 million hectares by 2050. We will not do it on our own. So the idea…it's to be able to develop really robust technology, and then to sell it, or to rent it … to other operators, elsewhere in the world."***
>
> *– Marketing Director at a forest ecosystem restoration company*

With many NbEs being micro or small enterprises under the EU SME classification (see Deliverable 3.3), collaboration could bring multiple benefits with respect to how impact could be scaled – from addressing issues with economies of scale and fragmentation of data; to bringing together complementary expertise to deliver a whole beyond the sum of the parts.

> *"I **think NbEs, given their small nature, or small scope, have to work in a collaborative network, meaning they have to engage in a lot of partnerships and being part of other networks and especially in multi stakeholder environments. This is a way to have really meaningful impact working with the rest of the stakeholders in a collaborative way. So that we all do our bit, but together we complement our expertise."***
>
> *– Founder of an NbS co*

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> ***companies are great professionals. But that does not necessarily enable them to scale their professional skills and scale up the company. … if we want to maintain the quality within our industry, that can be one of the one of the roadblocks."***
>
> *– CEO of a Green roofing business*

Entrepreneurs with strong business skills who entered the sector driven by mission often seemed to be successful in partnering with those with technical expertise, as well as learning from them. It often seemed harder for entrepreneurs whose expertise was primarily technical to develop their business skills to the level necessary, or to find business experts to partner with who shared their commitment to mission.

> ***"It is something that is already operational, we're just trying to monetize it … I mean, the technical development is already done. The business part is the weakest now. It's the one we are struggling with."***
>
> *– Chief Technology Officer at a collaborative laboratory working in coastal, urban and water management sectors*

On the NBS technical side, some leaders had concerns about potential consequences of escalating de ed solutions in the context of current limited supply side ca quality NbS, and with many potential buyers not having enough information to distinguish between options

> ***if there was really an honestly, way to just do math on carbon sequestration, or some metrics that you can be more clear on, I think this would be actually helpful for these investors. But as of right now, there's, there's nothing and so it's more of just a storytelling, and it's a feel good thing."***
>
> *– Founder and CEO of forest products cultivation business*

Many leaders noted that the current educational pipelines were not meeting the demand for the skills needed to scale up nature based solutions. Gaps related to both numbers of professionals being trained in key areas such as ecology and landscape architecture, but also to updating curricula in relevant sectors (such as forestry, agriculture and aquaculture) to take account of the state of the art in regenerative approaches.

> ***"One of our key gaps is finding collaborators who are, also have that mindset, or approach or ethos of nature based solutions, and even contractors. ...and it's very hard to get ecologists now. And so it – getting people to work with is quite difficult, which I'm sure you're seeing – and real skill shortage in – we don't, literally don't have enough ecologists."***
>
> *– Landscape architect*

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