

# Nature-based solutions business development and business models

## Policy Recommendations

- To foster private investment in NbS, entrepreneurs need transparency, accountability, and clarity for what is defined as a sustainable investment.
- „Encourage rather than punish“: Regulations, policies, and financing instruments should build up frameworks that give advantages to sustainable businesses.
- An experienced coordinator, early planning, and organisation, especially of long-term maintenance, are particularly important for public-private models.
- A commercially driven consultancy model needs to specialise in a niche with a clear value proposition.
- For a citizen driven model, it is crucial to integrate local, cultural specifics, or identity into the project so that people want to be a part of it and feel it is a project that belongs to them.

*This brief provides information about the outcome of REGREEN research on NbS business development and business models.*

To limit global warming, halt biodiversity loss, stop land degradation, and achieve sustainable development goals, investments from the public and private sectors in NbS have to increase massively. The awareness of the need to act—for governments, private companies, and financial institutes—is rising, also that NbS are essential and suitable to meet these challenges. But the speed of action is too slow, and especially investments in the private sector have to increase massively.

## Why business models and NbS?

The business model concept is a potential planning tool to clarify:

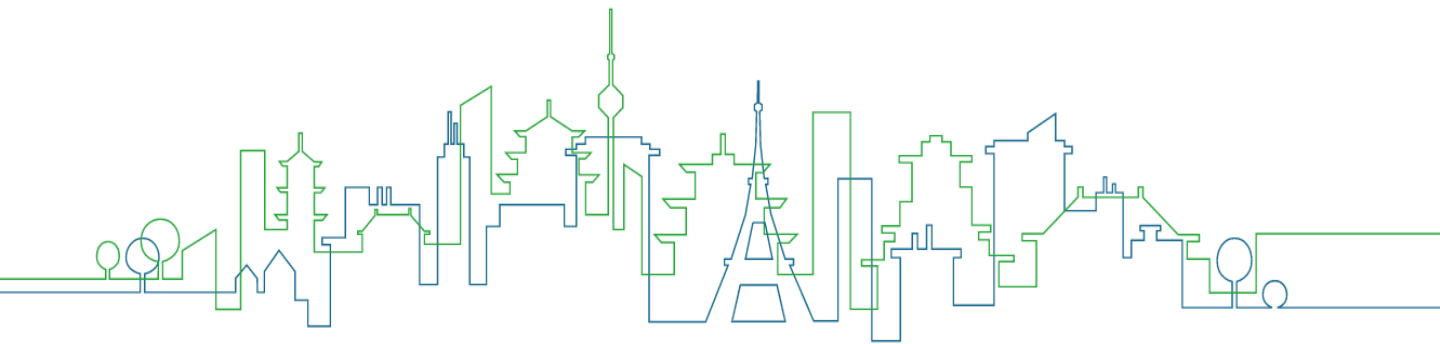
- What is the value proposition of the planned enterprise or project?
- What is important for finding investment?
- What are suitable ways to engage the right stakeholders?
- How to get a project started?

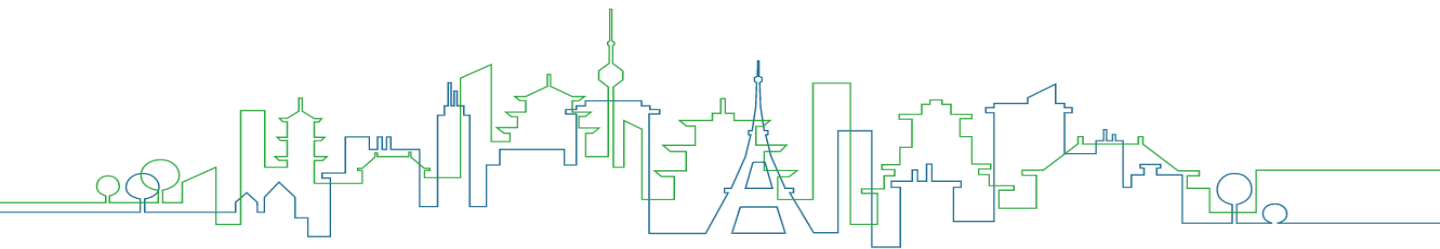
Business models are for the public and private sector. There is no strict separation, and hybrid models with flexible, adjusted elements are also possible.

Sustainable business models and NbS share the fact that both take a holistic approach to addressing future challenges. Non-monetary value, social embedding, and long-term character are categories to be considered.



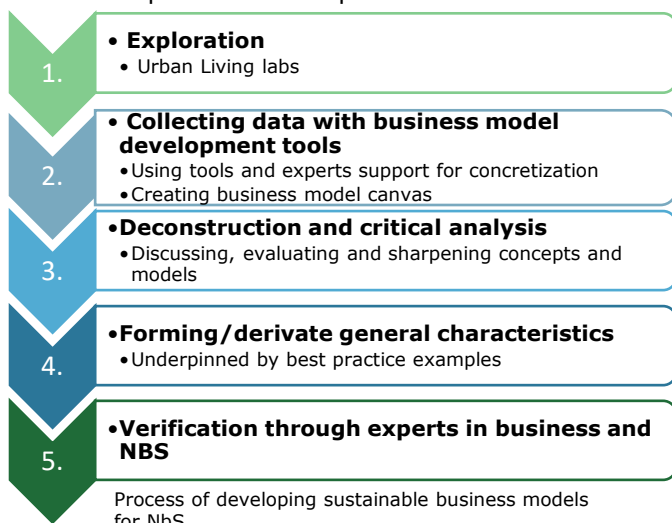
Urban Farming Graz, Austria, © JOANNEUM RESEARCH Life





## Approach

The research process of developing sustainable business models and their overall economic embedding in the REGREEN project can be described as an iterative process with a focus on keeping the balance between theoretical inputs and practical experiences. It is possible to read the procedure described below as a description of our research approach in the Prospectus for NbS business investment as well as potential steps for imitation in the development of a NbS business model, especially in the first phase of development.



## Three models

The three REGREEN business model approaches are based on actual business model cases with which our partners in the ULLs have gained experience. The models were further developed with the help of a business model canvas and in discussions.

### Public private driven model

Brings together private and public interests. There is a share of responsibility and risks for NbS in financing, implementation, and maintenance.

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## Do you know that...

... in REGREEN, two more distinct initiatives address business-related aspects?

The Decision Support Tool (DST) introduces users to NbS, offering foundational knowledge from the REGREEN project. It simplifies complex information and empowers users to replicate successful NbS actions.

<https://nature-solutions.eu/decision-support-tool/>

The Start-up accelerator programmes facilitate and provide professional advisory to SME by promoting innovation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders.

Tedeschini, F. (2023). Report on start-up accelerator programme

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10607886>

### Commercially driven consultancy model

The knowledge-based consultancy is flexible with regard to individual possibilities and needs. It needs a financial value creation in a sustainable and responsible way, and NbS could be a niche or extension of the portfolio of an existing enterprise.

### Citizen driven model

This model is characterised by bottom-up initiatives and local stakeholders, which needs a group of like-minded people to bring in time, manpower, and knowledge. Its advantage is the greater commitment due to personal involvement and co-creation with citizens.

For more on the NbS market, corporate investment, and the three NbS business models:

Ellmer, H.-P, et al. (2023). Prospectus for Nature-based solutions business investment.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10607872>

## You want to know more?

REGREEN webpage

[www.regreen-project.eu](http://www.regreen-project.eu)

REGREEN repository zenodo

<https://zenodo.org/communities/regreen>



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