

The We Value Nature pilot project in Cabo de Gata-Níjar (Spain)



Integrating natural capital in public and private sector decision making

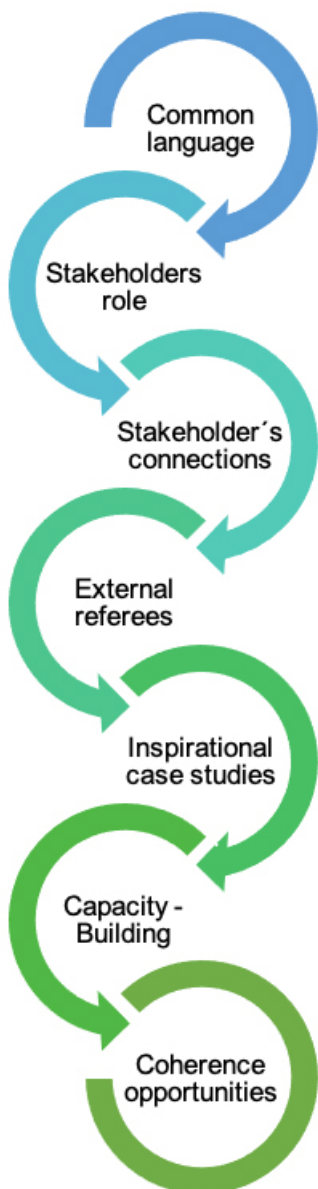
The We Value Nature pilot project in Cabo de Gata – Níjar aimed to demonstrate how stronger collaboration between the private and public sector can enable new market-based and non-market-based opportunities for valuing nature.

There are often joint benefits in collaborating but these can be obscured by different incentives, vocabularies and ways of working. The We Value Nature pilot project aimed to overcome these barriers by strengthening dialogue between key stakeholders in Cabo de Gata-Níjar, creating opportunities to build partnerships and develop projects which benefit nature.

Cabo de Gata – Níjar

The We Value Nature pilot focused on the restoration of degraded land and ecosystems in the Mediterranean area of Cabo de Gata – Níjar (Andalusia, Spain).

Ecosystems in Cabo de Gata – Níjar such as wetlands, high mountain ranges and coasts are currently being degraded by climate change and high demand for natural resources. Most climate models predict an increase in temperature and a substantial decrease in rainfall in the area. These issues facing Cabo de Gata – Níjar apply to many similar Mediterranean areas.



The seven steps to building dialogue between public and private sectors

The We Value Nature pilot project implemented a seven-steps method designed to encourage the dialogue between the public and private sectors in the Cabo de Gata-Níjar protected area.

The objective was to develop a shared sense of responsibility for natural capital and biodiversity and build capacity to resolve issues.

1. Common language

The first step was ensuring a common understanding of the **terminology** associated with the natural capital approach. In order to create a comprehensive and helpful context, participants received training on natural capital approaches including natural capital accounting.

2. Stakeholders' role

Understanding **stakeholder's roles** and the psychology of stakeholders enabled the project team to determine the best ways to manage expectations, needs, demands and personalities.

3. Stakeholders' connection

A theory of change (ToC) approach was applied and focus groups were implemented to assess **stakeholder's connections**, define strategies and identify their demands and needs. Stakeholders were asked to examine a natural capital framework and identify risks, opportunities and potential synergies.

4. External referees

Academia, NGOs, conservation, and social civil organizations played a crucial role in the method. **External experts** acted as advisors on controversial issues and validated the decisions made by the working groups.

5. Inspirational case studies

On some occasions, strengthening the cooperation between public and private sectors required trigger thinking in terms of solutions among stakeholders. One approach here was to use **inspirational case studies** that represent success stories of natural capital approaches in similar circumstances.

6. Capacity building

Capacity building actions such as internal training gave organisations the skills to design, implement, and supervise natural capital approaches.

7. Coherent opportunities

Common frameworks helped to align public and private goals and ensure specific projects incorporated all stakeholder's needs. Global goal frameworks were made relevant to local stakeholders and local opportunities.

Lessons learned

1. Understanding stakeholder needs and expectations

It was essential to consider stakeholder needs and expectations at the start of the process. Without this first step we would not have been able to foster productive dialogue between the government, private and public sectors, and scientists.

2. The importance of a multidisciplinary team

Although most stakeholders understood and appreciated the importance in valuing nature, they had very different ways of thinking about the problems. A multidisciplinary team was required to speak to different stakeholders' viewpoints and expertise.

3. Developing skills

Businesses and other stakeholder often lacked the technical knowledge or quantitative tools required for natural capital accounting. We needed to develop these skills through training sessions.

Ecoacsa were the lead consultants for the pilot project



Case studies

As part of the pilot project, We Value Nature researched positive case studies which could inspire and inform stakeholders in the pilot area. These case studies can all be found on the [We Value Nature website](https://wevaluenature.eu).

Ecological restoration in a quarry in Mesa de Ocaña (<https://wevaluenature.eu/media-item/322>)

This case study demonstrates one private company's approach to natural capital. LafargeHolcim Group developed a biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation and accounting tool and applied the tool during quarry restoration works in the Yepes-Ciruelos quarry, Toledo, Spain.

Heineken's Cañaveral project (<https://wevaluenature.eu/media-item/321>)

The Cañaveral project took place in the Rambla del Poyo or Barranco del Poyo (Rambla or Gully of Poyo), which supplies water to one of the most important wetlands in Spain, Valencian Albufera. Water is an essential natural resource for Heineken and this project improved ecosystems whilst compensating for 428 million litres of water.

Evaluation of agricultural sustainability on a mixed vineyard and olive-grove farm in Córdoba, Spain (<https://wevaluenature.eu/media-item/320>)

Using the INSPIA tool (European Index for Sustainable Productive Agriculture) to measure the economic, environmental and social sustainability of a farm located in Córdoba, Spain. Wider use of a tool such as INSPIA could facilitate the transition from a traditional agriculture to a more sustainable model.

The campaign is being led by the [Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales](https://www.icaew.com) alongside the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development](https://www.wbcscd.com), [IUCN](https://www.iucn.org) and [Oppla](https://www.oppla.com).



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