



D6.16 Plan for project clustering and joint production with other Green Deal projects

20/04/2023

WP6

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Joint Deliverable



D6.16 Plan for project clustering and joint production with other Green Deal projects

Prepared under contract from the European Commission

Grant agreement No. 101037097

EU Horizon 2020 Coordination and Support Action

Project acronym:	REST-COAST
Project full title:	Large Scale RESToration of COASTal Ecosystems through Rivers to Sea Connectivity
Start of the project:	01.10.2021
Duration:	54 months
Project coordinator:	Prof. Agustín Sánchez-Arcilla, Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya (UPC)
Type:	Restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services
Call:	H2020-LC-GD-2020-3
Deliverable title	Plan for project clustering and joint production with other Green Deal projects
Deliverable n°	D6.16
Nature of the deliverable:	Report
Dissemination level:	Public
WP responsible:	WP6
Lead beneficiary:	PENSOFT
Citation:	Popova, G., B. Barov (2023). <i>Plan for project clustering and joint production with other Green Deal projects</i> . Deliverable D6.16. EU Horizon 2020 REST-COAST Project, Grant agreement No 101037097
Due date of deliverable:	Month n°18
Actual submission date:	Month n°19

Deliverable status:

Version	Status	Date	Author(s)
1.0	Draft	27 March 2023	Gabriela Popova, Boris Barov, PENSOFT
	Review	31.03 – 19.04.2023	Sebastian Birk, UDE; Jeremy Briggs, Freshwater Habitats Trust; Shane McGuinness, UCD; Magda Bou Dagher, SUPERB.
2.0	Final		Gabriela Popova, Boris Barov, PENSOFT

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List of abbreviations

EU	European Union
D	Deliverable
NbS	Nature-Based Solutions
T	Task
GD	Green Deal
HRB	Horizon Results Booster

Preface

In accordance with Task 6.3, Scaling up: Transfer and exploitation in cooperation with other EU/national projects, REST-COAST shall maximise the project's exploitation efforts on local, national and EU level by generating common results and activities with other Green Deal projects funded in 2020 under the Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call (LC-GD-7-1-2020) on restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These projects are expected to contribute to the ambitions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy through hands-on restoration activities and the development of resources and tools, including for transformative change, that can support mainstreaming of large-scale restoration activities in Europe.

This task is also closely connected to Task 7.2 REST-COAST Cooperation Board for a shared approach to restoration upscaling, which aims at creating and running such a board with representatives from parallel Pilot projects, as well as Green Deal projects.

Against this background, D6.16 Plan for project clustering and joint production with other Green Deal projects, REST-COAST analyses and outlines potential cooperation opportunities, such as development of joint papers, workshops, dissemination and exploitation materials, shared inter-project messages. Joining forces with other GD initiatives will support and promote large-scale restoration.

Summary

The current Plan for project clustering and joint production among four Green Deals projects outlines the tools and actions that each project of the GD cluster can employ for common goals, developing joint results and engaging shared target groups, stakeholders and society at large with the restoration revolution.

The common objectives, actions as well as the communication and dissemination tools are listed in Table 2 and the link between tools and the different target groups are explained in the text. The current plan describes the active measures that the Green Deal cluster is going to take for maximising its visibility and knowledge exchange.

1 Introduction

In 2020 the European Commission launched a Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call LC-GD-7-1-2020 Restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services. These projects are expected to contribute to the ambitions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 through hands-on restoration activities and the development of resources and tools, including for transformative change, that can support mainstreaming of large-scale restoration activities in Europe.

Four projects REST-COAST, MERLIN, WaterLANDS, SUPERB were selected for funding under this call and have initiated to collaborate around topics of common interest and points of synergies.

- [REST-COAST](#) works on large scale restoration of coastal ecosystems through rivers to sea connectivity.
- [MERLIN](#) focuses on mainstreaming ecological restoration by means of nature-based solutions of freshwater ecosystems (rivers and wetlands).
- [SUPERB](#)'s main objective is to enable large-scale forest landscape restoration.
- [WaterLANDS](#) aims at upscaling the restoration of wetlands (freshwater and coastal).

A fifth project, PONDERFUL funded by the EU Horizon 2020 programme as part of Call and LC-CLA-06-2019 - Inter-relations between climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services expressed the wish to join the cluster in collaborating along similar objectives.

The duration of the five projects coincides between 2020 and 2026 and the lead organisations are the Catalonia University of Technology UPC-BarcelonaTech (REST-COAST), the University College Dublin (WaterLANDS), the European Forest Institute (SUPERB), the University of Duisburg-Essen (MERLIN) and the University of Vic (PONDERFUL).

In order to enhance the synergies between the GD projects, representatives of the five projects met in Brussels on 25 November 2022, back to back with a science-policy session on the Nature Restoration Law (NRL). A first practical joint result of the cluster was a joint policy position paper on the NRL which they developed, approved and submitted to the European Parliament. A preliminary action plan was also developed at this meeting and followed up by email correspondence.

In order to stimulate further practical cooperation, the REST-COAST project drafted the current document to analyse and outline specific collaboration actions, which will further allow the project to establish and maintain a coherent and ongoing transfer of results between the GD projects and beyond. In the same time, the remaining four projects were invited to review and endorse this deliverable as a next version of the joint action plan.

In support of the Green Deal social transformation, the current document provides the four sister projects with an action plan for the engagement of stakeholders to transfer results, restoration tools, data and ensure their uptake and exploitation.

By joining forces and linking existing connections, the Green Deal projects will be able to reach to a wider community of relevant parties and as such, to raise awareness towards the importance of restoration upscaling and to enhance support from key stakeholders in establishing effective management of marine and coastal biodiversity. Furthermore, such collaboration will allow the facilitation of relevant decision-making processes at local, national and EU levels.

1.1 The Green Deal cluster

The Green Deal cluster is formed by the four Horizon2020 – funded projects REST-COAST, MERLIN, SUPERB and WaterLANDS, joined by one more project PONDERFUL. Below is a description of the objectives, goals and commonalities of each of the five projects.

REST-COAST is focused on large-scale restoration of coastal ecosystems through rivers to sea connectivity. The project is focused on improving coastal restoration practices and techniques, enhancing already existing and generating new tools and data to assess risk reduction at various climate change levels, while at the same time to co-design innovative governance arrangements and policies to overcome present barriers.

MERLIN strives to mainstream ecological restoration by means of nature-based solutions of freshwater ecosystems, such as rivers and wetlands.

SUPERB's main objective is to enable large-scale forest landscape restoration.

WaterLANDS aims at upscaling the restoration of wetlands (freshwater and coastal).

PONDERFUL aims to investigate the inter-relations between climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Considered sister projects and sharing intertwined goals and objectives, the five projects aim to establish strong collaboration with one another, as such, facilitating wider engagement and awareness raising towards the objectives of the Green Deal call.

The 7.1 Cluster Action Plan aims to be the compass of the collaboration activities prioritised by the 4 (+1) projects, defining concrete milestones/outputs along the next years of project implementation. Based on each project's priorities for collaboration, the projects have identified several specific areas for collaboration with the overall aim to create synergies, avoid overlaps and maximise impact, within the following categories:

1. **Communication & Dissemination**
2. **Scientific/Technical related work**
3. **Governance and finance related work**
4. **Policy relevance & impact / policy stakeholder engagement**
5. **Capacity Building and training activities**
6. **Other possible workstreams between the projects**

Hence, the purpose of the current document is to establish an action plan for such collaboration.

1.2 Target groups

The communication and dissemination activities of the five projects are described individually in their Plans for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation. Herewith, we cross-reference those target groups of encompassing Quadruple Helix Model¹ and include EU, national and local projects, initiatives, organisations and key stakeholders in four areas:

¹ The Quadruple Helix Model of innovation recognizes four major actors in the innovation system: science, policy, industry, and society. In keeping with this model, more and more governments are prioritizing greater public involvement in innovation processes.

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- Policy
- Industry
- Academia
- General public

Additionally, based on the specifications of each of the four projects, additional target groups are added to the list, including local municipalities, private and public sector representatives, land owners, etc.

The five projects collectively cover the following spectrum:

Table 1 List of main target groups of the five Green Deal projects.

Target groups	REST-COAST	WaterLANDS	MERLIN	SUPERB	PONDERFUL
Local authorities	X	X	X	X	X
International coastal/marine networks	X	X			
National decision makers	X	X	X	X	X
European, international decision makers		X	X	X	X
Local national, international NGOs	X	X	X	X	X
Aquaculture facilities	X				
Civil engineering authorities and companies (e.g. maritime)	X		X		
Experts and practitioners in land and ecosystem services restoration	X	X	X	X	X
Scientific community	X	X	X	X	X
Farmers and land managers					X
Water managers (national, European)		X			X
Extractive industry (peat mining)		X			
Local community groups		X		X	

2 Action plan

The action plan presented in Table 2 includes categories of collaboration activities are articulated around the following areas:

- **Communication and Dissemination** (eg. common brochure, a common on-line space, joint social media campaigns, joint podcasts, joint press releases);
- **Scientific/Technical related work** (joint scientific publications/special issue in Journal, joint scientific conferences/ webinars/ thematic workshop, methodologies / data sharing / indicators / comparison of results...);
- **Governance and finance related work** (e.g., joint studies and business planning activities);
- **Policy relevance and impact/ policy stakeholder engagement** (joint policy sessions/ joint engagement with policy makers/relevant stakeholders, coordinated work in support of nature legislation/NRL implementation);
- **Trainings and Capacity Building activities** (e.g., training courses and materials);
- **Other possible work streams** between the projects.

2.1 Communication and Dissemination

The Communication and Dissemination activities of the cluster are a vital part of the joint collaboration, since through well-established communication and dissemination plan, the cluster will facilitate recognition and will further raise awareness towards all future joint results. As a first step, even prior the joint meeting, a common logo (Fig. 1) for the Cluster was designed, which is being distributed to the consortium members of each of the four projects. It will serve as a point of reference for the visual recognition of the cluster and will be used when communicating joint results and activities.



Figure 1. Green Deal cluster logo.

Moreover, supporting the online visibility of the cluster, each of the four projects is actively transferring knowledge through project, personal and institutional websites, and social media accounts. Furthermore, newsworthy announcements are being shared through the project's newsletters.

Regular meetings for further update of the communication and dissemination activities shall be established in order to facilitate a coherent spread of mutual outcomes.

2.2 Scientific and technical work

In an effort to maximize the cluster's scientific findings and joint research actions, the consortium members of the four projects have agreed to produce a number of publications, showcasing the connectivity between the projects and their common results. The developed research papers will be freely shared in leading open access journals.

REST-COAST will open a project collection in the [Research Ideas and Outcomes \(RIO\)](#) journal where all project-derived results will be shared. Hence, joint cluster publication shall be also included within this collection. Since the journal allows for the linkage of the metadata of other results stemming from both from the project and the cluster, which have been published elsewhere, this is considered an advantage.

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Furthermore, a [Restoration of Wetlands](#) collection has been created in the [Nature Conservation](#) journal, where members of the REST-COAST consortium are acting as editors in chief. Thus, the cluster has the opportunity to further disseminate all joint research findings by publishing results related to restoration of wetlands and coastal marine systems in the special issue of topic.

2.3 Governance and finance-related work

Coastal management is often based on single-sided use of resources proven unsustainable in the long term as the associated environmental pressures remain unresolved. Operating within a limited social and technical consensus and a fragmented policy framework, measures often favour short term interventions leading to poor investment decisions. Hence, REST-COAST will design coherent financial arrangements and business plans that support long-term restoration plans based on strategic investment pathways. In Deliverable 3.1 (Favero et al. 2022) REST-COAST has developed a conceptual framework for a NbS Business Model Framework which is transferrable to multiple sites. The purpose of the BMF is to provide tools to consistently describe NBS projects for coastal adaptation and to identify financing and funding arrangements suitable for their implementation and upscaling. Based on this framework, REST-COAST and other GD projects can develop joint approaches to financing restoration and NbS.

For example, GD projects cluster has identified common interest in the following activities:

- Workshop on private financing will be held in 2023, hosted by the University College Dublin.
- A project cluster about the restoration business market will be organized in 2025 (led by projects MERLIN & SUPERB, all projects are welcome to contribute).

2.4 Policy impact and policy stakeholder engagement

The Green Deal cluster projects are all focusing their efforts on developing policy-relevant outputs, in order to deliver higher policy impact, address vital issues related to coastal and wetland restoration, as well as to engage important stakeholder from the decision-making sector. Henceforth, REST-COAST, MERLIN, WaterLANDS and SUPERB have agreed on producing joint policy briefs, with the goal to maximise their policy impact.

Policy briefs focusing on environmental matters derive from contemporary research and are often produced within the framework of large-scale projects. The recommendations are based on a scientific paper published in an academic journal and on project results more generally. Policy briefs suggest a course of action for resolving existing environmental problems or for improving relevant international or national policies and legislation. They are aimed at policy and decision-makers at global, European, regional, national or local levels.

For example, the Green Deal cluster has already developed one policy brief, providing joint contribution to the Nature Restoration Law. The recommendations listed in the brief result from a science-policy workshop held in November 2022 and organised by the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission and DG R&I, and attended by the project coordinators and by representatives of EEA, JRC, DG-ENV, DG-AGRI, DG-MARE, DG-REGIO and DG-CLIMA. The policy brief was submitted to the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs of the EU Parliament's Environmental committee who prepare for the forthcoming debates on this very important draft legislation. The brief is available on the REST-COAST website, as well as on the web pages of the other contributing projects.

2.5 Training and capacity building activities

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Engaging the wider as possible audience in the Restoration Revolution, the cluster will be organising a number of joint capacity building and training events, where the target groups both on national and international level will be reached. In such as way the projects will provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and develop an action plan to overcome present barriers to large scale restoration and promote transformative changes at all levels. Deliverable 7.1 GD project cluster provides a draft plan of all the joint activities that the projects will be facilitating.

For example, REST-COAST will advance the Citizens Science engagement in restoration and invites all projects to look for synergies and added value. It will produce a) video game (aka serious games), b) Carbon footprint app for beaches, c) Quick Scan Tool, d) Dashboard for tracking progress of restoration projects.

2.6 List of cross-project of collaboration activities

Table 2 List of actions for cross-project collaboration

	2023	2024	2025
All projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) Scientific input to NRL debate • (CD) Use common hashtags on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) (CD) Restoration is good for people paper • (T) Training for communities in finance, ecology, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) NRL Briefing paper
Rest-Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CD) Joint submission and contact MEPs on NRL • (CD) Joint map of pilot sites for all projects using comparable data (all) • (CD) Template for comparable site pilot site fact sheets (REST-COAST) • (Sci) Database of NbS best examples in restoration • (T) Summer school in Uruguay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) Publication of joint papers • (€) Workshop on C sequestration measurements for finance • (CD) Citizen Science meeting during Annual meeting in NL (with Waterlands) • (T) Combined project meeting with WaterLANDS at Waddensea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CD) Aggregate Citizens Science approach in all projects, looking for synergies and added value with REST-COAST a) video game - serious games - , b) C footprint app, c) Quick Scan Tool, d) Dashboard • (€) Business plans for restoration • (€) CORE-Plat contracts • (P) Big policy event on coastal restoration • (Sci) Report comparing effectiveness of novel C+D initiatives
SUPERB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) Policy brief NRL • (CD) Social media analysis for impact (06.23) • (CD) Joint Twitter campaign on International Day of BD (22.03) and Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) Paper How to evaluate the success of restoration? • (Sci) Cost-efficient monitoring techniques • (Sci) Projection tools for carbon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) Policy brief on Socio-economic monitoring of restoration • (Sci) Report comparing effectiveness of novel C+D initiatives

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	of ES Restoration (05.06)	and biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) Cross ecosystem, landscape scale model, with MERLIN • (T) Data Base of best practices for restoration 	
MERLIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) NRL publication • (P) Policy round table on peatlands • (P) Proposals for modifying policies relevant to econ. sectors • (€) Workshop on private financing, open to all projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (€) Restoration business market place (all projects welcome to contribute) • (P) Road map of policy recommendations to economic sectors • (T) MERLIN academy, compilation of training materials from all projects • (Sci) Report comparing effectiveness of novel C+D initiatives
WaterLANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) NRL relevant indicators, baselines including socio-economic • (CD) Residence/guest artistic and creative engagement projects on sites • (€) ID of existing financial and governance models at wetland sites • (T) ID specific skills relevant to case studies • (P) Analysis on NbS integration in policies relevant to wetlands • (€) Report on supportive governance for wetland restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (€) Testing and developing landscape financial instruments • (Sci) Paper on Safe operating spaces for wetlands and beyond • (P) Develop alternative economic incentives for restoration that support a just transition. • (T) Training for communities in finance, ecology, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) Report comparing effectiveness of novel C+D initiatives • (T) Training on finances and reverse engineering

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NbS knowledge across sites compilation • Contribute to policy briefs • ID of innovative policies for wetland restoration 		
Ponderful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) Promoting policy guidance on the use of ponds as NbS and applications in different landscape types • (P, €) - Promoting adoption of Ramsar Convention resolution on small wetlands with stakeholders in partner states • (P) Contribute to policy briefs for use with stakeholders, promoting importance of small waters at national and state level • (CD) Promoting NbS knowledge about role of small waters in mitigation and adaption to climate change • (€) - ID of innovative policies for pond creation and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sci) Paper on special role of small waters in increasing resilience of freshwater biodiversity to climate change • (P) Promoting adoption of Ramsar Convention resolution on small wetlands with stakeholders in partner states • (T) Wide promotion with partners and stakeholders of the project's Technical Manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P) Long-term, post project application of project results through the European Pond Conservation Network • (Sci) Report comparing effectiveness of novel C+D initiatives

Categories of activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD - Communication and Dissemination • Sci - Scientific/technical work • € - Governance and finance • P - Policy impact and policy stakeholders engagement • T - Training and capacity building 	Categories used by GDSO for alignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing • Mapping of commonalities • Case studies • Policy windows of opportunity • Training and capacity building
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2.7 Possible work streams with other projects

Towards the end of 2022 REST-COAST joined the **Horizon Results Booster (HRB)** platform together with the projects SCORE, PROTECT and CoCliCo, as such forming a cluster. Despite being outside of the Green Deal, this cluster will allow for additional transfer of research and innovation actions within the sector of large-scale coastal restoration. The above-mentioned projects have the following objectives:

- **SCORE** - To increase climate resilience in European coastal cities by using an integrated solution of smart technologies and nature-based solutions;
- **PROTECT** - To assess and project changes in the land-based cryosphere in order to produce robust global, regional and local projections of SLR on a range of timescales;
- **CoCliCo** - To inform users through a platform on present-day & future coastal risks with the goal of improving decision-making on coastal risk management and adaptation.

By identifying commonalities in objectives, key exploitable results, target groups and stakeholders, the HRB will support the effective transfer of results by providing a detailed dissemination plan, focusing specifically on upscaling the outreach of the projects. The full dissemination portfolio is under development and shall be available towards April, 2023.

A preliminary analysis of differentiators, the market positioning diagram, and the SWOT analysis of the projects participating in HRB (Finzi et al. 2023) resulted in a list of starting positions and collaborative objectives for these projects:

1. *The projects aim at improving climate resilience. They intend to have an impact especially on policymakers, Research & Academia, Civil Society, NGOs, Citizens.*
2. *Points of strength resulting from this collaboration should be fostered, while limiting the possible threats represented in terms of the complexity of the system and low understanding of how beneficial the results can be for its target audiences.*
3. *The barriers are similar, mostly related to the difficulty of engaging the right audience showing the advantages of the Project Group's results.*
4. *The projects within the Project Group are the main protagonists of the research panorama on this topic. There are a few other Horizon projects outside the Group work on similar topics.*
5. *The potential of the ongoing research is very valuable and up to date, thanks to the professional and interdisciplinary skills of partners involved and the peculiarity of the topics of the research. The objectives of the projects are relevant to the society and aim at finding tangible solutions to present and future issues sea-level rise in coastal cities.*
6. *The audiences are broad and, therefore, not easy to reach and engage, but potentially highly interested in such research results.*
7. *The specific audience deserves to be targeted with tailored dissemination activities and a professional tone of voice. This is again an added value, but also a possible source of weakness.*
8. *Therefore, special attention on how to convey the message and the results to specific audience must be paid and this can lead to high interest from all the targets identified.*

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, under Grant Agreement 101037097

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The 4 Green Deal 7.1 projects are also part of a **Working Group on Biodiversity and Climate** established by the **Green Deal Support Office** (GDSO) bringing together 17 projects in the areas of nature restoration, forest fires and climate adaptation. This WG is part of the initiative run by the GDSO which aims to support dissemination and exploitation of all the GD projects (73 from all the calls) funded by the EC. The GDSO is developing a Joint Action Plan for this WG on Biodiversity and Climate group of 17 projects. Complementarities between that and 7.1 cluster efforts are being pursued. A first attempt is to align to the extent possible to the categories/focal areas identified in the draft Action plan of the WG on Biodiversity and Climate (see Table 2).

3 Conclusion

The current plan has been developed to foster effective clustering activities between the Green Deal project cluster and will serve as point for reference for the coordination of joint activities. The document describes the active measures that the Green Deal cluster is going to take for maximising its visibility and knowledge exchange. The Plan can be shared and promoted through the relevant collaborative platforms to which the participating projects partake, and this widen the reach and impact.

4 References

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