

An exciting opportunity to test your Green Infrastructure proposal



A great new opportunity is opening up to try out a new tool that can provide extra justification for a Green Infrastructure (GI) proposal, or help to justify GI spending. This document tells you more, and how to apply to take part in the test. It's being organised by Nature Smart Cities (NSCiti2S), an INTERREG project bringing together the municipalities of Brugge, Lille, Antwerp Province, the Antwerpse Zuidrand, Den Haag, Kapelle, Cambridge and Southend-on-Sea, and the Universities of Antwerp, Ghent, and Imperial College London.

■ What's it for?

Staff who develop GI proposals know how difficult it can be to produce reliable evidence of the benefits GI can bring, especially the secondary benefits. We also struggle to compare the costs of GI with those of a grey alternative, or to make comparisons with the infrastructure already in place. This tool is being developed to help overcome these challenges.

■ What is this tool?

It's a Business Model being developed by our university partners, in collaboration with local authority officers, and is based on research into understanding your needs. There are lots of GI tools out there, but only this one has specifically been designed for use in smaller municipalities.

It uses a complex algorithm, drawing on data from a variety of reliable sources, to generate results that paint a fuller picture of your GI project and the benefits that will result from it. These are summarised in a professional-looking format suitable for a decision-maker you need to convince, or who needs to convince their colleagues.

■ So what's this opportunity?

We are now looking for a small number of municipalities who are willing to take part in a supervised test of the software against a real-life project. If you're selected, our consultant will meet with you in your office (COVID permitting of course) and you'll be invited to enter the details of your project into the software.

At the end of the process, the Business Model generates a Factsheet which you'll be asked to review and comment on. You'll also be asked how you found the process and what improvements you want to suggest. This will then be fed back to the developers and used to improve the Business Model before it launches formally in 2022.

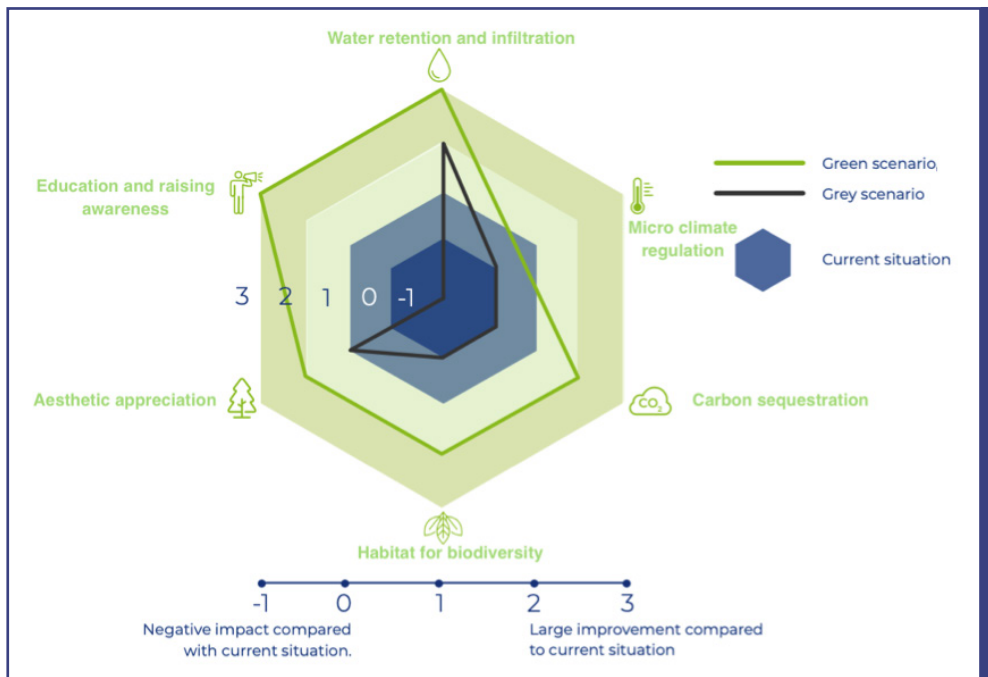
■ How will my municipality benefit?

You'll get first-hand experience of using the new tool – which we think you'll find useful in the future as well. Your experience will contribute to the final product. And you'll

get an opportunity to take part in some capacity building workshop events next year, to help build others' confidence in the tool.

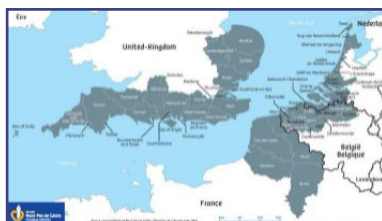
You'll generate a factsheet about your project that will give you new information about your project, new arguments to use in support of it, and a comparison with the grey alternative or with the existing infrastructure.

Here's an example of one of the diagrams that will appear. It looks at a project aiming to replace traditional road surfaces with permeable surfaces. It's essentially a flood reduction project, but as the diagram shows, it produces other benefits as well.



What will be expected from me and my council?

- You'll need to be in the [INTERREG 2seas area](#)
- You'll need to have a GI project at a preparatory stage. Ideally, you'll have an idea in mind but you still need to develop your project plan or get the necessary approval.
- You'll have to do some preparation and be ready with some fairly straightforward data.
- You'll have to set aside some time – at least half a day, maybe more if you want to have extra run-throughs.
- We'll need to sit beside you while you use the Business Model, so that we can see what you're doing and observe how you get on.
- The test is conducted in English, and so is the discussion afterwards, so you'll need to be confident in using English, or have someone available to act as an interpreter.



How do I apply?

You can access our short application form [here](#). It's very straightforward and shouldn't take long to fill in. We need to have this returned to us **by Friday 16 July** please.

We'll be carrying out the tests in September and early October, so projects planned for delivery next year could be exactly what we need. If COVID prevents a face-to-face visit, we'll set up an online alternative.

There is a limit on the number of trials we can carry out, so we may have to select from the applications we receive. We'll make our decision in July and let you know.

If you have further questions, please contact our consultant Dr Phil Back at phil@philback.co.uk.

Anything else?

The NSCit2S project will be running free Capacity Building events in 2022, specifically to support smaller municipalities in developing more GI. There will be two workshops in each of the project countries – Belgium, France, Netherlands, and the UK. To find out more about this programme and future opportunities/events please sign up to the Nature Smart Cities newsletter [here](#) or follow the project on [LinkedIn](#).

And what does Nature Smart Cities get out of it?

We need to be sure our Business Model is comprehensive, covering the full range of possible benefits from GI. We need to know that users find the results credible and valuable. And we need to be sure that the product can be used by those who need it – those who have to make the case for GI. The best way for us to do this is to try it out in real-life situations.

