

# What is green Infrastructure (GI)?



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6<sup>th</sup> May 2013: “The European Commission adopted new strategy for encouraging the use of green infrastructure, and for ensuring that the enhancement of natural processes becomes a systematic part of spatial planning”. (Press release EU Commission)

“Strategically planned **network of natural and semi-natural areas** with other environmental features designed and managed **to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services**. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in **rural and urban** settings.”

Source: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS  
“Green Infrastructure (GI) — Enhancing Europe’s Natural Capital”  
{SWD(2013) 155 final}, 06.05.2013

**Box 7: EU-level GI projects.** The European Green Belt initiative is an ecological network running from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. Its aim is to better harmonise human activities with the natural environment and increase opportunities for the socio-economic development of local communities. It connects national parks, nature parks, biosphere reserves, trans-boundary protected areas and non-protected areas along or across borders. It supports regional development initiatives based on nature conservation. It takes one of the most divisive barriers in human history (the iron curtain) and transforms it into a symbol for reconciliation and cross-border cooperation by conserving and protecting some of Europe’s most impressive and fragile landscapes.

See page 10, Communication on GI







### **Promoting green infrastructure in the main policy areas**

By the end of 2013, the Commission will develop guidance to show how green infrastructure can be integrated into the implementation of these policies from 2014 to 2020.

**Improving research and data**, strengthening the knowledge base and promoting innovative technologies that support green infrastructure.

### **Improving access to finance for green infrastructure projects**

the Commission will set up an EU financing facility by 2014 together with the European Investment Bank to support green infrastructure projects

### **Supporting EU-level GI projects**

by the end of 2015, the Commission will carry out a study to assess the opportunities for developing an EU-wide network of green infrastructure.



Fragmentation of landscape + unsustainable land use

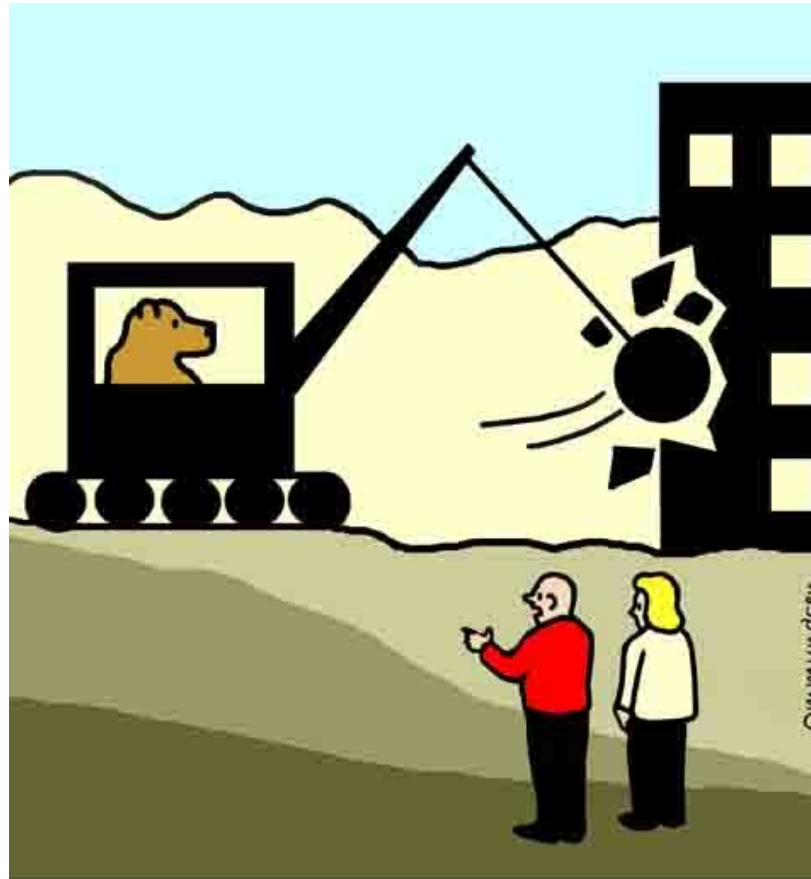
loss of nature related landscape structures and biodiversity

**loss of resilience and ecosystem services** (fertile soil, fresh water, clean air, water retention/flood protection, disaster risk minimization, adaptation function (climate change), human recreation/education)

## **economical loss**

*“Degraded ecosystems tend to have lower species richness and are unable to offer the same range of services than healthy ecosystems. These services however have direct value for our economy and **investing in green infrastructure therefore makes economic sense.**”*

## Background – ecosystem resilience

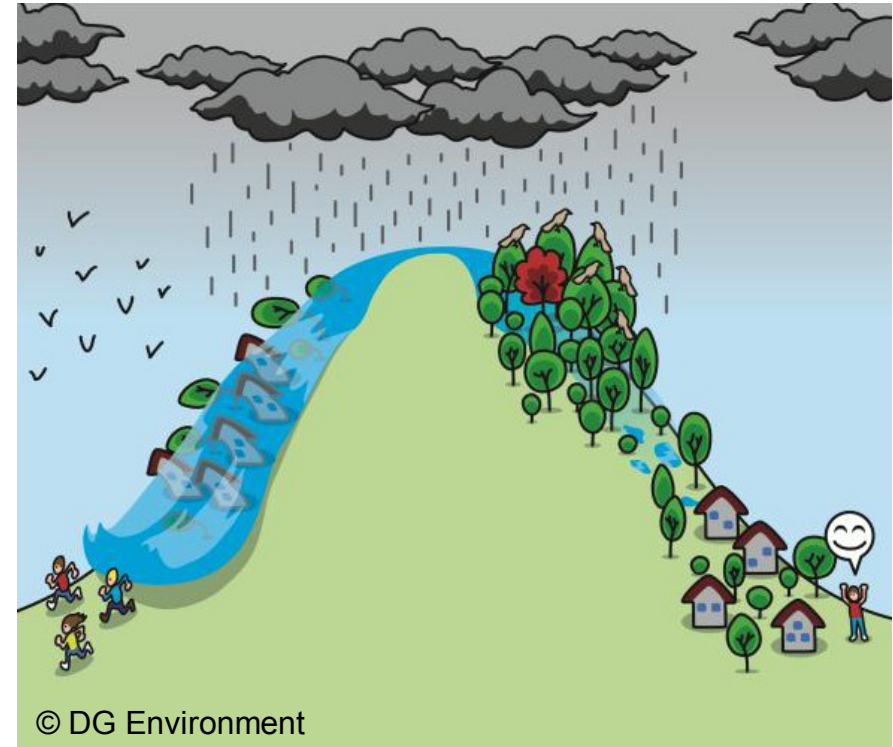


“Now THAT’S ecosystem resilience.”

## Background – ecosystem resilience for disaster prevention

### Example

June 2013: flood catastrophe in Germany caused a **damage of 12 Billion** (thousand million) € / thereof insured losses of 3 Billion €  
(source: insurance company Munich Re)

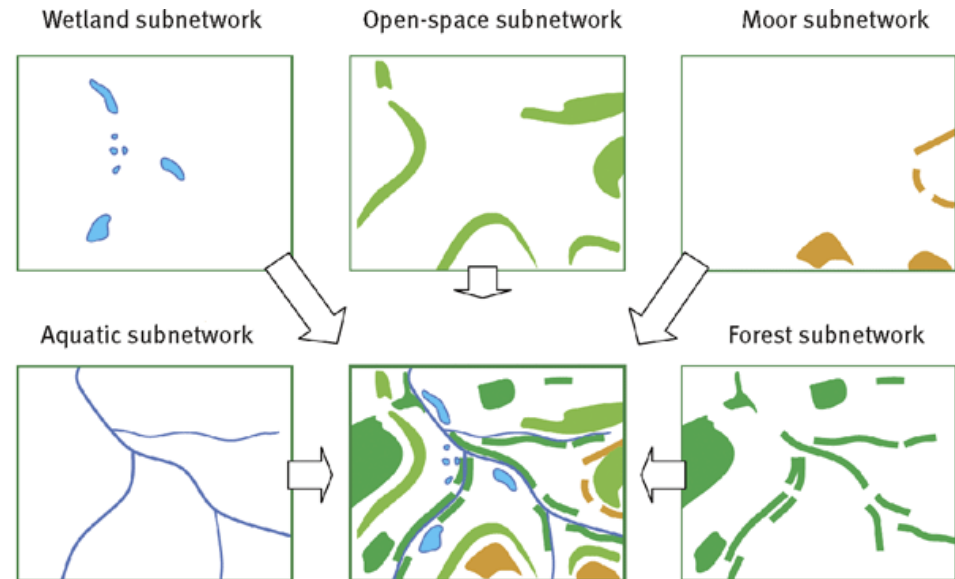
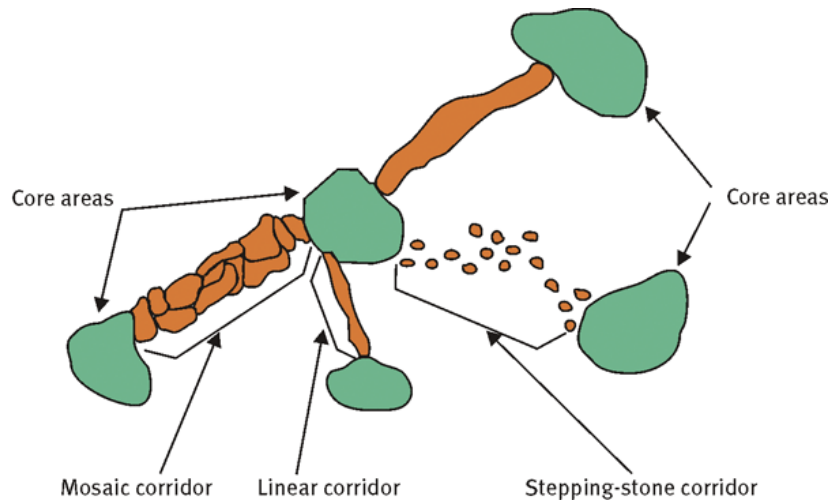


Advantages and disadvantages of monetarisation...





Ecological/habitat network preserving the totality of wild fauna and flora for each natural landscape area.





## Potential components of GI

“...areas where farming, forestry, recreation and ecosystems conservation all operate together in the same space...”

**Protected areas**

Support

**Restored habitat patches** with specific nature conservation focus

**Multifunctional zones** where compatible land use supports healthy ecosystems

**Healthy ecosystems and areas of high value outside of PA**

**adaption or mitigation**

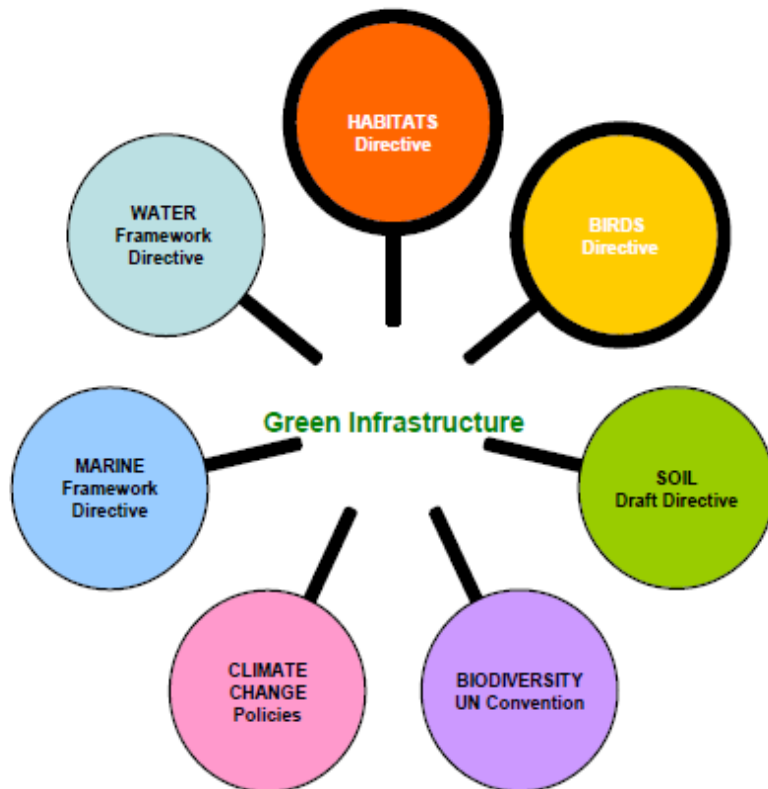
**Urban elements: green parks, green walls, green roofs**  
improving the ecological quality

**Natural landscape features** which can act as eco-corridors or stepping stones

**Eco-ducts and eco-bridges**  
(artificial features)

**Areas** where measures are implemented to improve the general ecological quality

## GI-Integration into existing EU-policies and financing mechanisms



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“...For the full potential of Green Infrastructure to be realised within the timeframe of the next budgetary envelope (2014 to 2020), the modalities for using it must be established as soon as possible **to facilitate its integration into projects funded through the appropriate funding mechanisms** such as the **Common Agricultural Policy, the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE)...**”

**No new funding instrument!**

“...The Commission and the EIB are looking at a number of options to establish a financing facility to support biodiversity-related investments, including GI projects...”





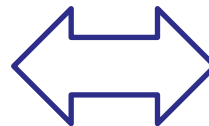
**Implementation of GI and its integration into spatial planning is not clear at the moment**

**GI will not solve the general unequal EU distribution of **money and power** between **grey** and **green infrastructure****



**Industrial agriculture  
Building industry**

...



Nature conservation and  
environmental protection  
Ecological farming,  
sustainable regional  
development

...



Advantages for promotion, acceptance building and for funding:

- **Economical view / emphasis on ecosystem services** can help to promote „green issues“
- Label “infrastructure” is for most people positive: **including investment, development, jobs**
- **European Green Belt as stated GI-project: Better access to (existing) funding opportunities on EU-level**

More information on Green Infrastructure on DG Environment-website:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm)



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