From Grants to Systems

How NbS Creates Value, Attracts Finance & Sustains Impact

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EDGE CATALYST FINANCE

Let's Start Here

Before we dive in, we'd like to understand where you're starting from.

Quick Pre-Assessment (3 minutes)

Mentimeter QR Code

https://www.menti.com/alxkkbhzbxi4

Your responses will help us tailor the conversation to what matters most to you.

From Grants to Systems

How Nature-Based Solutions Create Value, Attract Finance & Sustain Impact

J-USE Call for Proposals Sensitization Session

Session 5: Sustainability, Maintenance & Finance

Urban & Peri-Urban Nature-Based Solutions in Jamaica

March 18, 2026

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Why This Conversation Matters

Many projects succeed in implementation—but fail in sustainability.

> Not because the idea was wrong.
> Not because the funding was insufficient.
> Not because the community didn't care.

> 💡 **But because sustainability was never designed.**

A Picture You Might Recognize

URBAN EXAMPLE

A community garden is planted in Kingston with great fanfare. School children are involved. A ribbon is cut. Photos are taken. The project is declared a success.

But six months later, when the grant ends:

- **Who waters the plants during the dry season?**
- **Who replaces the tools when they break?**
- **Who buys the seeds for the next planting cycle?**

Beyond the City: Peri-Urban Complexity

PERI-URBAN EXAMPLE

A watershed restoration project in the hills above Montego Bay. Trees planted. Community engaged. Monitoring reports submitted.

Three years later:

- Who maintains the access paths?
- Who protects seedlings from fires during dry season?
- Who coordinates with farmers whose land borders the restoration area?

PERI-URBAN DEFINITION

Transition zones where urban development meets rural landscapes—with complex land tenure, multiple stakeholders, and competing land uses.

Projects End When Funding Ends

THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MINDSET

- Focus on activities and outputs (trees planted, workshops held, people trained)
- Timeline tied to grant disbursement schedules (often 12-24 months)
- Success defined by completion, not continuation
- Limited thinking on maintenance beyond the project period
- Ownership unclear or transferred without resources

THE SHIFT WE NEED

From development projects

↓

To sustainable systems

The Evidence is Clear

The J-USE Diagnostic

EFJ's J-USE diagnostic revealed that **only 11% of past grantees** had a clear, sustainable business model beyond the grant period.

The Vulnerability

Without sustainable models, environmental gains are quickly lost, and communities become disillusioned with "hit-and-run" interventions.

The Disconnect

There is a fundamental disconnect between how we **fund** nature (short-term grants) and how nature **works** (long-term cycles).
In urban areas, this is compounded by high land value, dense populations, and complex municipal jurisdictions.

We cannot solve long-term urban resilience problems with short-term project thinking.

Not All Value Is Monetisable—And That's OK

Nature-Based Solutions create value—but not all value is monetisable.

This is not a problem. This is actually the key to designing sustainable NbS in urban and peri-urban contexts.

Understanding Value Creation in NbS

1. Revenue-Generating Value

- Urban agriculture products (vegetables, herbs, ornamental plants)
- Eco-tourism experiences in peri-urban nature areas
- Environmental education programmes for schools

EXAMPLE

Ornamental fish value chain in Kingston generates export income while supporting biodiversity.

2. Cost-Saving Value

- Urban flood mitigation reducing drainage infrastructure costs
- Peri-urban watershed protection reducing water treatment costs
- Urban cooling reducing air conditioning costs for buildings

EXAMPLE

Peri-urban watersheds above Montego Bay provide water quality benefits to NWC.

3. Public Good Value

- Urban green spaces for recreation and mental health
- Biodiversity corridors in peri-urban transition zones
- Climate resilience for vulnerable urban communities

EXAMPLE

Urban green spaces in Kingston provide cooling, recreation, and mental health benefits.

Step 1: Define the Value

We start by asking: **What value does this urban or peri-urban NbS create, and for whom?**

1. Environmental Value

Flood mitigation, cooling, biodiversity, water quality

2. Social Value

Livelihoods, health, education, community cohesion, inclusion

3. Economic Value

Revenue, cost savings, property values, jobs

4. Beneficiaries

Urban residents, peri-urban farmers, government, private sector

KEY PRINCIPLE

If you don't define value, you cannot define sustainability.

Designing for Everyone

When we talk about social value in urban and peri-urban areas, we must explicitly consider inclusion.

For organizations working with persons with disabilities:
An accessible urban nature trail creates social value not just for able-bodied visitors, but for a much wider community.

CREATING VALUE FOR:

- Wheelchair users
- Visually impaired visitors
- Elderly persons
- Parents with strollers

Inclusion is not an add-on—it's a design principle.

Step 2: Align the Financing

Once value is clear, we ask: **Who pays for that value?**

	PRIMARY FINANCING	URBAN/PERI-URBAN EXAMPLE
Public Good	**Public / Donor Funding**	Urban parks, peri-urban biodiversity corridors
Revenue-Generating	**Private / Market Capital**	Urban agriculture, eco-tourism experiences
Cost-Saving	**Blended Finance**	Peri-urban watershed protection

KEY PRINCIPLE **Different value attracts different types of capital.**

What EFJ Investment Means

CATALYTIC CAPITAL

EFJ is providing **100% grant funding** with no expectation of financial return to EFJ.

Note: This does not mean your project cannot or should not generate revenue.

WHAT IT MEANS

EFJ is investing in pipeline development—helping you build the track record that can attract additional funding in the future.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Use EFJ catalytic capital to prove your model, then attract:

- **Government Allocations**
- **Private Sector Investment**
- **Additional Donor Funding**
- **Operational Revenue**

Step 3: Design the Stewardship

Finally, we ask: **Who maintains this over time?**

This is critical for urban and peri-urban areas where land use is dynamic and stakeholders are diverse.

1. Community Stewardship

Citizens associations, benevolent societies, community development committees

2. Government Integration

Municipal corporations, Parish councils, UDC, NWA

3. Private Operator

Social enterprises, cooperatives, private businesses

4. Hybrid Partnership

Multiple stakeholders sharing responsibility through formal agreements

KEY PRINCIPLE

If sustainability is not defined at design stage, it fails at implementation.

Getting the Commitment in Writing

Urban agriculture like aquaponics and vertical farming requires clear governance for long-term success.

For urban and peri-urban NbS, you must answer critical governance questions **at the design stage**, not at the end of the project.

THE DESIGN STAGE CHECKLIST

- ☑ Who holds the legal title or lease to the land?
- ☑ Is there a formal MOU for maintenance responsibilities?
- ☑ Are maintenance costs integrated into an existing municipal or organizational budget?
- ☑ What is the contingency plan if the primary community group dissolves?

Key Success Factors for NbS

EARLY AGREEMENTS

Formal MOUs between community groups and municipal corporations must be signed **before** ground is broken.

EMBEDDED MAINTENANCE

Maintenance costs must be integrated into an **existing organizational or municipal budget**, not treated as an afterthought.

DEFINED VALUE

Clear articulation of who benefits economically, socially, and environmentally is required to **attract the right capital**.

Pathway 1: Urban Green Infrastructure

THE PROJECT

Restoring an urban gully in Kingston with terraced planting, permeable surfaces, and a linear community park.

VALUE CREATED

Public Good (flood reduction, community recreation space, cooling)

PRIMARY FINANCING

Public funds, multi-lateral grants, municipal budgets

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

1. **Initial Capital:** Initial capital for the heavy capital works and initial planting.
2. **Government Integration:** Government integration formally adopts structural maintenance into annual budget.
3. **Community Stewardship:** Community stewardship manages daily use, light cleaning, and programming.

Pathway 2: Peri-Urban Protection

THE PROJECT

Protecting a peri-urban watershed above Montego Bay to reduce sedimentation in the municipal water supply.

VALUE CREATED

Cost-Saving (reduced water treatment costs for utility, avoided infrastructure damage)

PRIMARY FINANCING

Blended finance (grants + private utility investment)

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

1. **Initial Capital:** Grant funds the establishment of the protection zone and initial community engagement.
2. **Revenue Stream:** A water utility pays a "watershed protection fee" based on verified cost savings.
3. **Community Stewardship:** Local farmers are paid from this fee to maintain sustainable practices instead of clearing land.

Pathway 3: Productive Urban Landscapes

THE PROJECT

Converting vacant urban lots into high-yield aquaponics or vertical farming systems.

VALUE CREATED

Revenue-Generating (food sales, job creation, community food security)

PRIMARY FINANCING

Private capital, impact investment, blended finance

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

1. **Initial Capital:** Private capital or impact investment funds the setup of the agricultural infrastructure.
2. **Revenue Stream:** Selling produce to local markets, restaurants, or directly to consumers generates ongoing income.
3. **Community Stewardship:** A community-based enterprise manages operations, paying salaries and covering maintenance from revenues.

The Role of Civil Society

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are the **connective tissue** in urban NbS.

THE CONVENER

Bringing together municipal authorities, private sector entities, and local citizens who might not otherwise sit at the same table to design a shared vision.

THE TRANSLATOR

Translating complex, technical NbS concepts into tangible **community value**, and translating community needs into **investable project metrics**.

THE STEWARD

Serving as the long-term anchor for maintenance, monitoring, and continuous community engagement long after the initial capital deployment is complete.

The Role of Academia

> **Capital flows to certainty.**
> **In Nature-based Solutions, certainty requires rigorous, verifiable data.**

BASELINE DATA COLLECTION

Establishing the scientific "before" picture so that value creation can be accurately measured over time.

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION

Providing credible, third-party verification of environmental and social outcomes to satisfy investors and donors.

METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Developing new ways to quantify complex urban NbS benefits, such as urban cooling or localized biodiversity gains.

The Role of the Private Sector

Moving Beyond Traditional CSR

The private sector is shifting from philanthropic donations towards integrated, value-driven investment in Nature-based Solutions.

THE CO-INVESTOR

Providing capital for projects that offer operational resilience, such as protecting critical supply chains or physical assets from flood risks.

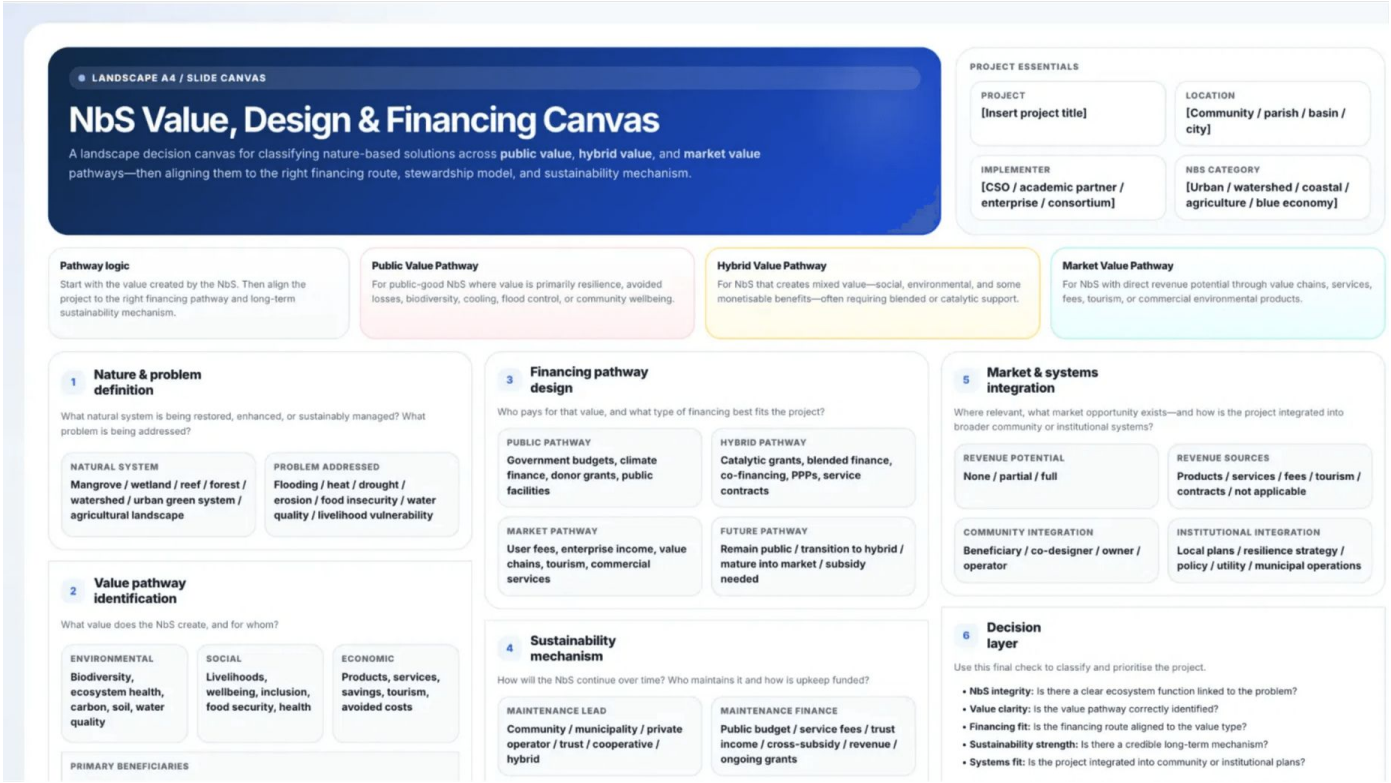
THE OFF-TAKER

Purchasing the tangible outputs of NbS, whether that is fresh produce from urban agriculture or verified carbon/biodiversity credits.

THE INNOVATION PARTNER

Bringing efficiency, technological advancement, and the ability to scale to NbS implementation and management.

NbS Value, Design & Financing Canvas



The NbS Business Model Canvas

VALUE PROPOSITION

What specific urban problem are we solving, and what is the measurable outcome?

- Flood risk reduction
- Urban heat island mitigation
- Local food security

BENEFICIARIES / CUSTOMERS

Who benefits directly, and more importantly, who is willing or able to pay for that benefit?

- Municipalities (avoided damage)
- Utilities (reduced treatment costs)
- Local communities (jobs, health)

COST STRUCTURE

Separating the initial build from the long-term reality.

- **CAPEX:** Heavy initial costs
- **OPEX:** Ongoing maintenance, monitoring

REVENUE STREAMS

How do we fund the OPEX over 10-20 years?

- Integrated municipal budgets
- Utility fees / cost-savings sharing
- Direct sales (agriculture, tourism)

The Future of NbS in Jamaica

PILOT TO PORTFOLIO

Moving past one-off grants to structured portfolios of investable, scalable green infrastructure projects.

SILOS TO SYSTEMS

Breaking down barriers between water, works, and environment ministries for integrated urban planning.

COST TO ASSET

Recognizing green infrastructure on municipal balance sheets as highly valuable, risk-reducing assets.

CLOSING REFLECTION

If you had $500K USD to invest in one NbS pathway in your community tomorrow, which would you choose and why?

THANK YOU

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