



Co-learning Forum

Handbook for application of the
Co-learning Forum methodology



CONEXUS

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Authored By:	Vanessa Duarte and Emma Shepherdson, (Living Cities and Communities).
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Abbreviations

CELAC	– Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CLF	– Co-Learning Forum
EU	– European Union
GAB	– General Assembly
LL Exchange	– Life Lab Exchange
NBS	– Nature Based Solutions
WP	– Work Package

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1. Introduction

This handbook is a how-to guide for implementing **Co-learning Forums**, a platform for co-learning and co-production of knowledge, and includes key methodology and tools for organisation and facilitation, in both digital and face-to-face participatory activities. The methodology is grounded in the Conexus Guiding Principles for Co-learning. This methodology has been developed in the context of international urban Nature Based Solutions (NBS) but has high relevance in a broad range of sectors for the co-production of knowledge.

The handbook includes a catalogue of methods and tools, as well as a list of crucial roles in these activities. This catalogue includes a description and practical examples of how the methods or tools can be used.

Co-learning Forums (CLFs) are a sequence of participatory meetings (both face-to-face and online) to build knowledge and learn in a trajectory way from local arenas, engaging different tools and methods for co-production, including site visits, small group discussions, on-site workshops, plenary presentations, and panel discussions. CLFs facilitate transnational partner-partner communities of learning involving citizens together with researchers and public sector representatives.



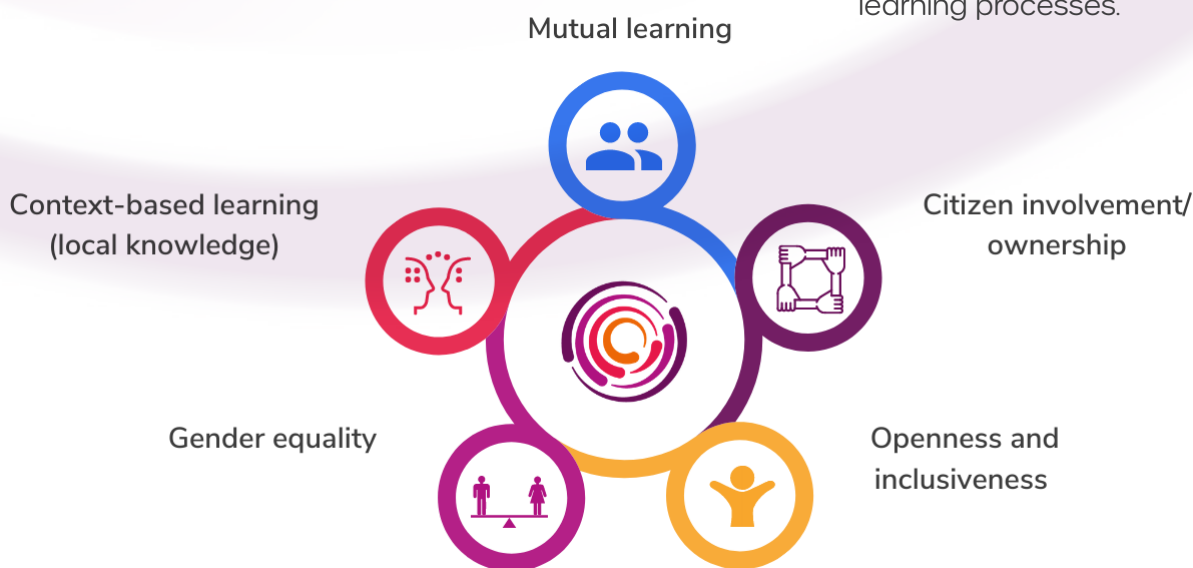
2. Guiding Principles for Co-learning

The Conexus Co-learning Forum methodology is developed from the identified need to create a common space for transdisciplinary knowledge exchange and co-learning. These exchanges comprised both face-to-face meetings and on-line participatory spaces for co-learning, taking notice of the need for balancing directions of learning and avoid typical north → south, academia → practice single-directional knowledge transfer approaches.

The Co-learning Forum methodology is grounded in the Conexus Guiding Principles for Co-learning. These Guiding Principles for Co-learning is a practical framework which concretises five principles for transdisciplinary learning within NBS:

- i. Mutual learning,
- ii. Context-based learning (local knowledge),
- iii. Citizen involvement/ownership,
- iv. Gender equality, and
- v. Openness and inclusiveness

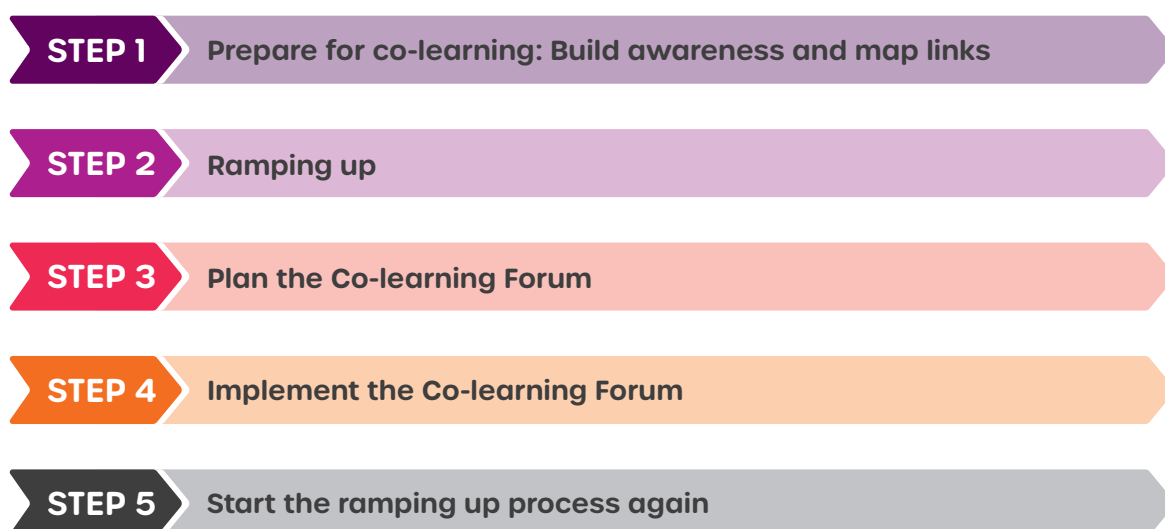
The five principles have been concretised and tested in co-learning forums, and as a direct output from Conexus, they have been developed into a practical framework for co-production of knowledge and learning within international transdisciplinary research for sustainable development in cities (see **T6.2 Product: Guiding Principles of Co-learning Framework**). Besides the five principles mentioned, the framework, developed based on co-production and decolonisation of knowledge, includes a set of guiding questions to identify gaps, shed light on possible silences (e.g. epistemologies; groups) and tackle power dynamics within collaborative learning processes.





3. Process: A how-to Guide

The following guide describes the process that was adopted in the Co-learning Forum development and the steps that can be taken to foster inclusive and robust co-production of knowledge. Co-learning forums are envisaged as cyclical, with a period of “ramping up” knowledge and co-production between each forum. The process has five main steps which are carried out chronologically, with some overlapping:



STEP 1

Prepare for co-learning: Build awareness and map links

The first step of the Co-learning Forum development is to prepare the consortium for co-learning. This is done by building awareness of co-production of knowledge, co-learning and common principles. This sets a basis for collaboration by working towards a commonly agreed set of principles.

Another important step in the preparatory phase is to undertake a mapping exercise to identify links and hierarchies in the project and consortium. This ensures a transparent and open process whereby all project members understand their responsibilities and project dependencies and identify the links between tasks or project members.

The mapping should be based on the project description. In order to build a common understanding of linkages and responsibilities, it is important that all project members/ tasks have the opportunity to contribute to this mapping.

Resources required:

When: In the project inception phase. This is a good project overview and group building activity.

Who: The awareness building activities are done by the CLF Coordinator. The mapping should be initiated by a project member with project wide responsibilities, for example in a project management or project coordination role. If there is a task assigned with the co-production of knowledge or co-learning, this would be the most appropriate to conduct. After sessions to co-create have been conducted with the project members, the mapping can be collated by the responsible task. It is important to feed back the resulting interconnections map to the project group.

How: Build awareness through common workshops, and one-on-one meetings. Online whiteboard tools (for example Miro, Mural etc) are great to use for creating a common understanding.



Legend

Transnational communities of learning
= WP6 file route

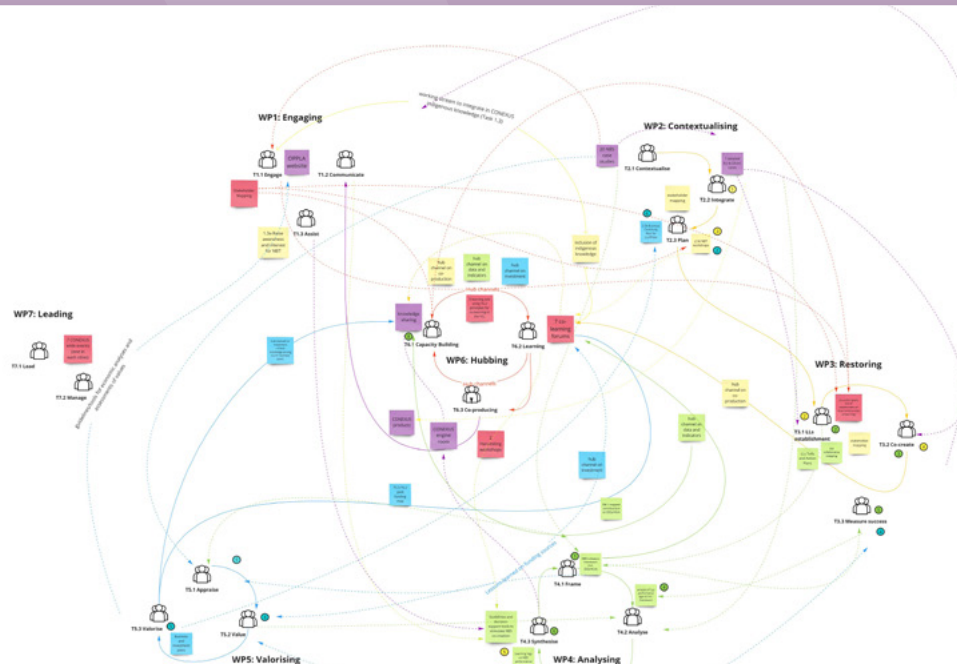
Challenge for impact 1: co-production of knowledge, research, practice

Challenge for impact 2: NBS data and indicators (urban scale)

Challenge for impact 3: investing and innovative NBS business models

Knowledge sharing & NBS celebration

Inputs needed
validation / learning process



Key interlinkages reading guide

- T2.2 builds upon T2.1 contextual analysis and state of the art of NBS to develop the 7 detailed case studies.
- Case studies/lessons/practices integrated in WP5. Used in shaping terms of reference for the 7 CONEXUS Life Labs (T3.1), and to inform preparatory plans for the small scale pilot projects.
- NBT workshops and co-creative dialogues developed by T2.3 to identify locally distinctive vision/knowledge and opportunities to integrate NBT into local governance structures. Additional input: T1.1 Training of stakeholders awareness of NBT and support for CONEXUS action.
- NBT lessons used to strengthen NBS medium and long term visioning, planning, design and implementation in each CONEXUS city (typical focus on accessible and visible big data). This process will be enhanced by international peer-review and benchmarking of NBS "communities of learning".
- NBT findings feed in to WP4's locally adapted suite of social, cultural, environmental, economic and governance indicators.
- Informed by the contextualised case studies (2, 1), 4.1 identifies theoretically based set of qualitative and quantitative indicators (indicators portfolio).
- Indicators included in Action Plans. Framework applied and tested in LLA and NBS interventions. Results iterated with 4.1 for its refinement (co-development of contextualised indicators and measurement procedures). Additional co-creative dialogues with citizens held in T2.3.
- Development of stakeholders meetings with all LLA focusing on social learning (designs of learning logs, participatory monitoring training).
- T4.2 analysis of results used as input for further enhancement of NBS across LLA (T3.2).
- Assessment of NBS interventions using the co-created indicators and measures of success tools (iteration with T4.2). Results used to further develop interventions in T3.2.
- T3.3 collected evidence of NBS co-benefits present in T4.3 guidelines. Additional input from T1.3 (stakeholder needs and knowledge/skills gap analysis), T2.2 (valuations) and NBS (lessons learned framework).
- Building upon the state of the art/analytical analysis developed by T1.1 (20 case studies), T1.1 identifies innovative business-financing models, evaluates barriers and develops complementary systems analysis. Additional input: T4.3 (lessons learned on funding sources). Report on comparative analysis of economic valuation models.
- Identify a suite of NBS interventions to be valued (from WP2).
- Through T2.3 NBT workshops, T2.2 will identify existing local valuation practices. It will engage participatory planning and decision-making scenarios to parameterise the SR valuations and understand local valuation practices for CBM.
- T2.2 will use CBM and SR approaches developed by T1.1 to value the impacts of NBS. It will develop a "Toolbox on valuation of NBS, financing models and database of elements for CBM & SR".
- The impact of NBS selected cases is measured using CBM and SR (Additional input indicators developed by T4.1 used as outcome measures in the SRMs). T2.2 valuation approach tested and validated by T1.3.
- T1.3 to use the valuations of specific NBS to valorise public and private investments in NBS and to leverage additional resources (development of alternative scenarios to strengthen climate resilience and business cases for NBS interventions).
- Application of the methodology in other project cities and at different scales and making the relevant Open Source programme available for use outside CONEXUS.
- WP6 economic valuations and investment propositions fed back in to T2.3 for the valorisation of the Business Continuity Plans.

Example: Conexus Work Package Interconnections

The learning process began by mapping the connections between work packages, tasks and subtasks within the project, including an identification of three levels of interconnections within the project, (direct linkages, interdependencies and synergies). The mapping of linkages was lead by Work Package 6 who was the work package responsible for co-production and "hubbing" within the project.

STEP 2

Ramping up

The “ramping up” period between Co-learning Forums is a time for active promotion of co-learning within the project. During the ramping up period a series of important meetings and exchanges take place to build to the Co-learning workshop or forum including bilateral and multilateral exchanges, across partners, cities and WPs. These include a number of online forums, if partners are not all located in the same location.

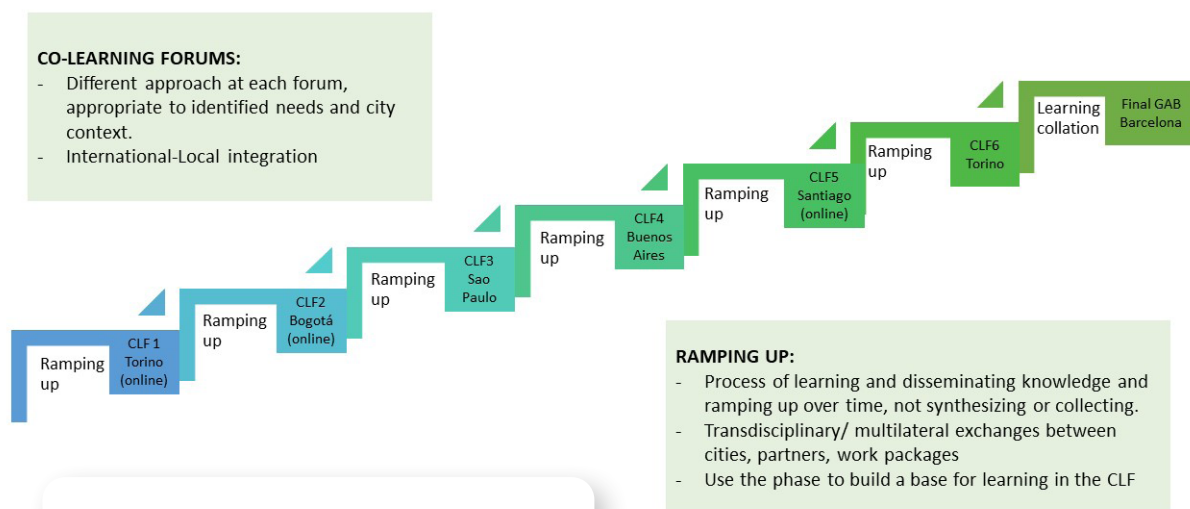
Resources required:

When: Before the Co-Learning forum, as a preparatory phase but with a focus on active promotion of co-learning.

Who: CLF Coordinator and relevant task leaders can facilitate the ramping up period.

Time required: In Conexus the ramping up was approx. 6 months.

How: Online forums, both bilateral and multilateral exchanges, across partners, cities and WPs. Be aware of time differences and language, in order to ensure equality in co-production of knowledge.



Example:

The ramping up process and connection to Co-learning Forums from Conexus project.



1 - ¿Qué se necesita para conocerse mejor? ¿Cómo podemos familiarizarnos con los proyectos piloto del otro?



An exert from an online workshop exercise in the first CLF that led to the establishment of the LL Exchanges.

Example:

Life Lab Exchanges

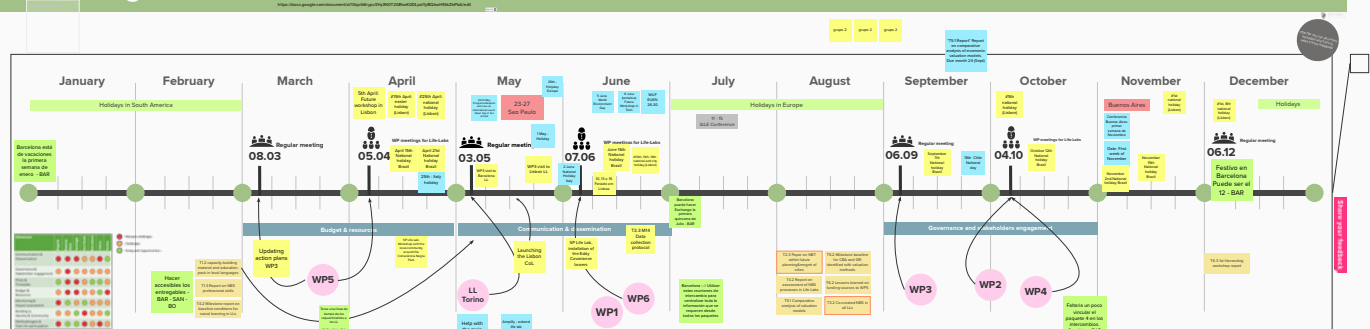
In Conexus, the main activity in the ramping-up period was the Life Lab exchanges. The goal of these exchanges was to promote collaboration between Life Labs on relevant topics, from the conceptualisation of key ideas to practicalities related to the planning and management of Life Labs and pilots. The LL exchanges drew on the knowledge of the consortium to build capacity and assist Life Labs.

The platform of LL exchanges grew out of the first Co-learning forum, where the forum identified a need to share knowledge on the results of the different Life Labs and

have (informal) smaller meetings to discuss concrete context-specific problems, similar to the CLF breakout sessions. The CLF report recommended an informal and regular forum for exchange between Life Labs.

The LL exchange made use of interactive online tools and the use of a “traffic light” chart to collaboratively map how Life Labs are tracking on different topics such as finance, communication, and community engagement. The themes and annual plan were collaboratively planned by the Life Labs, as well as themes based on the expertise within the consortium.

Annual Agenda LL Exchanges



An example of collaborative multilateral planning within the LL Exchanges.



STEP 3

Plan the Co-learning Forum

Parallel to the ramping up, planning for the Co-learning Forum begins. Below is a description of the stages of planning the CLF.

Start-up: An initial meeting between the CLF Coordinator/s or coordinating team and project leader to define a common understanding of the rationale, mandates/roles and current project needs/priorities. At this stage project tasks, deliverables, and milestones to be addressed in the CLF are defined.

Internal anchoring: An initial meeting between the CLF Coordinator/s and other partners with responsibilities for co-production or knowledge exchange. This step is an internal check to ensure that we are working according to project goals and continuously working in a collaborative way.

Collaborating with the local host: A series of collaborative meetings between the local host and CLF Coordinator/s to calibrate between CLF programme and project priorities, with the host's priorities and practicalities of the CLF. These meetings share information about full event plans, share CLF methodology, including Guiding Principles for Co-learning, define roles and responsibilities, identify contacts and set the terms of collaboration. Especially important to discuss the matching of site visit requirements with programmatic requirements, and that meeting room spaces match the programmes applied methods.

Session coordinators: The CLF Coordinator/s then meets bilaterally with project task leaders who will be preparing sessions at the CLF. The session coordinators are responsible for developing the session, but the CLF Coordinator/s can assist with suggestions of methods/tools and how to reach task outcomes in the most effective way. All session coordinators should produce a session summary using a provided template (see example below), this will assist in the production of the programme. These bilateral meetings create familiarity with task leaders and their work, identify needs/goals, and expectations and agree on focus and themes. In collaboration with session coordinators and based on Guiding Principles for co-learning, the sessions methods and tools are identified. Session coordinators select tools, e.g. from the CLF Handbook catalogue (see **section 5** of this handbook).



Programme development: During the meetings with session coordinators and local host, a collaborative development of the programme takes place. The process is facilitated by the CLF Coordinator/s with the steering focus of co-learning and is a continual process of checking back with the other partners. The CLF must balance gender/ language/ nationality/ discipline/ age across sessions and break-out groups to ensure a reflective co-production of knowledge. This conscious balancing is not the simplest alternative, for example in Conexus we have had breakout groups in four languages, even though a certain level of English is understood by all participants. The Guiding Principles of Co-learning can be used to ensure reflective co-production and justify the extra work.

Once the programme and sessions have been set, the more detailed programme development can happen, including identification of volunteers, and practical requirements of technical equipment and meeting rooms. Volunteers take the form of session facilitator, note-taker or language mediators (see **list of required roles**, section 6 below). At this point it should be identified if participation in small groups will be pre-assigned or if participants will self-determine during the CLF.

Once again, we are seeking to balance gender/ language/ nationality/ discipline/ age across sessions in our volunteers and in each of the breakout groups, to ensure a reflective co-learning environment.

Session summary template

In Conexus, the following template was used to ensure co-development of the CLF programme. This template was completed by each session coordinator and included the purpose, goals, expected outcomes, methods and time breakdown for the session.

An excerpt from the Conexus CLF Session summary template developed initially by ICLEI

CONEXUS Torino Co-learning Forum 25 – 27 October 2023
CONEXUS Co-Learning Forum

Date and time: *for programme*

Topic: *Title of the session*

Background: *Short narrative text as background to the session. This may be used in pre-conference materials.*

Dynamics/ methods that will be used in the session:

Goals of the session:

- XX
- XX

Expected outcomes from the workshop:
Including links to deliverables and CONEXUS themes

- XX
- XX

Session breakdown

DURATION	TITLE	SESSION TITLE	ACTIVITY / MODERATION

Note: Task leaders have the responsibility of developing the session's background information, provision of supporting documents, stationary items, and any other materials needed to support the implementation of the workshop.

Resources required:

When: Before the Co-Learning forum, parallel to the ramping up.

Who: CLF Coordinator/s can facilitate the ramping up period.

Time required: In Conexus the process took a minimum of 3 months, in a 25% employee capacity.

How: Online meetings, online shared documents (detailed schedule), walk through tours of venues via video call or photos.

STEP 4

Implement the Co-learning Forum

Co-learning forums can be arranged as online or face-to-face. Online CLFs have the possibility of being more accessible and can allow for more attendees. Face-to-face CLFs can positively strengthen social cohesion within the consortium and allow for site visits and context-based (place-based) learning.

Site visits and **on-site workshops** were two methods tested in Conexus that resulted in a high level of co-production. These are possible in face-to-face CLFs and are the responsibility of the local host organisation, with support from the coordinating team.

Depending on the size of the project, the Co-learning forum can be designed as a **2–3 day event**. In face-to-face CLFs, this timeframe should include 1–2 site visits and an on-site workshop.

Online meetings can be held over several days, but preferably in 3-hour slots that take into account time differences. Online meetings can supplement on-site visits with roundtable panel discussions for context-based learning.

A **detailed schedule** should be developed prior to the start of the CLF. A detailed schedule should be an online open document available to the coordinating team, local hosts, session coordinators and volunteers. The detailed schedule includes information on programme and timing, addresses, meeting rooms, language and names of volunteers. For an online CLF it will also include links to online whiteboards or polls as required.

During the implementation, the local host, CLF Coordinator/s and session coordinators work closely to **implement the programme** in a flexible and respectful manner. CLF coordinators are responsible for MC, timekeeping and programmatic information. Local hosts are responsible for venue, technical and transport logistics, and coordination with local political or organisational representatives.



The CLF must create a space for **equal contribution for reflective co-learning**. All participants have a responsibility to be respectful and aware of other partners' knowledge and contributions to the co-learning process. This is best assured by a code of conduct and will become more ingrained as the group forms and gets to know each other better. In particular the session coordinators, facilitators and MCs must actively seek equal participation in groups.

Language is an important element in creating an inclusive space for knowledge sharing and make sure everyone can contribute in an international environment. **A multilanguage approach** attempt to balance dynamism of the small group discussions and ensure learnings across the consortium.

Tools including a code of conduct, volunteer briefing notes, language tools, site visits and breakout groups are described in the catalogue at **section 5** of this handbook.

STEP 5

Start the ramping up process again

After the CLF there is an important period of debriefing and finalising, which overlaps with the start of the next ramping up period. The finalisation of the CLF includes reporting, analysis and follow up with all participants, as well as reflections on how to build on the co-learning in the next ramping up period and next CLF.

The co-learning process can be seen as a set of stairs, building on the previous learnings, adjusting, and testing again. After the CLF implementation, the next ramping up period starts. If a series of Co-learning forums are planned, a CLF report on the learnings and recommendations for work going forward can improve the quality of the co-learning in the remainder of the project.



4. Catalogue of Co-learning Forum Methods

Small group discussions

The method “small group discussions” can include online or face-to-face breakout sessions and can be mixed or grouped around a theme/skill/geographical location.

Small group discussions are moderated by a facilitator, with the support of a note-taker and where necessary a language facilitator, and follow a set of guiding questions or activity which has been collaboratively developed prior to the forum.

Small groups discussions are designed to reach a practical outcome and identify potential solutions for a challenge, through a collective effort in reviewing and exchanging perspectives. This outcome is clearly stated before the activity begins. The role of the facilitator is an important one and focused on guiding the discussion and process of collective problem-solving rather than that of “transferring knowledge” to the other participants.

The small group format allows for more intimate exchanges of knowledge. Moreover, it has an “equalising” effect in mixing academics, practitioners, local government representatives, researchers, and professionals at different stages of their careers.

See also: **Online tools: Collaborative mind-mapping, online whiteboard tools.**

In Conexus, small group discussions have been crucial for the co-production of knowledge and learning amongst the consortium and very positively received by the project members. Based on the task and context, Conexus has held small group discussions in four languages, city-based or mixed themes, both online and face-to-face. **See two examples opposite.**



Example: Small group discussions (face-to-face)

Co-learning Forum 4: Buenos Aires

Two of the sessions at CLF4 applied the small group discussion method, one with small groups based on four chosen pilots (in Spanish and English) and one with three language-based groups.

The small group discussions in both sessions first received an introduction to the work of the particular task and an introduction to the activity to be completed in the small group discussions. In these sessions, the small groups first reviewed and discussed prioritised

methods for the pilot projects then discussed how to practically apply them.

Due to the size of the group, mixed small group discussions were more valued at this Co-learning Forum. Building on learnings from CLF3, session coordinators were encouraged to mix groups as much as possible to ensure a range of experts could discuss city-specific questions. This allowed for a broader mix and more attendees to each group.

Example: Small group discussions (online)

Co-learning Forum 5 (online)

Two of the sessions at CLF5 applied the online small group discussion method, both with language-based groups of mixed expertise to promote cross-city exchange.

Both sessions began with an introduction to the work of the task. In the case of the online roadmaps tool being presented, this was presented as a live case study in a step-by-step format to show how the roadmap worked. The small groups discussions invited critical interaction and exchange, to improve usability and

exploitability of results. Each breakout room was facilitated by a moderator, supported by a note-taker who registered inputs and ideas in the pre-prepared Miro boards. The project consortium is now experienced in using online whiteboard tools (Miro), and this is a very effective and useful tool for this project.

This approach furthered the work of the tasks in a collaborative way, contributing to co-production of knowledge in the project.



Site visits

Site visits are an excellent method for co-producing knowledge in a face-to-face Co-learning Forum.

Site visits allow everyone present to become familiar with the social and ecological context of local site and see the diversity in the activities being implemented and tested. Participants are exposed to a broad range of different activities, and the city more broadly, in the process.

Site visits also provide good opportunities for informal mingle and co-learning in a setting which links practical applications with the theoretical. Our learning is that the site visits are a valued exercise in knowledge exchange which has good possibilities for co-production of NBS initiatives in the future.

Site visits should be clearly framed within the purpose, goals and progress of the project. For best results, the site visit must clearly state the goals and learning outcomes of the visit. This is best combined with an on-site workshop for co-production of knowledge.

We recommend a half-day site visit, depending on the practicalities of the group and site. Site visits are planned by the local hosts and those working on-site and should include a guided tour with local actors. Consider time restrictions, special requirements of the participants, language, and provide detailed information to prepare the participants. A risk analysis may be necessary to be prepared for site visits. Distribute emergency numbers and local contact information, especially if the group has travelled internationally.

Example: Site visits

Co-learning Forum 4: Buenos Aires

In the debriefing session with participants of the Co-Learning Forum, the site visits were cited as the methodology that best resulted in co-produced knowledge. The Buenos Aires team formed a programme with a strong focus on site visits, as well as “on-site” workshops in San Martin to meet the on-site practical demands of the co-learning process. Participants were able to visit all three pilots of the Life Lab. The site visits also provided good opportunities for informal mingle and co-learning. For example in the final site visit, some flexibility was built into the end of the walk through the pilot, which allowed for an informal “mingle” and informal exchanges WP6 aims to foster in CONEXUS.



Site visit activities in Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo. Images: Emma Shepherdson

On-site workshops

On-site workshops are an effective method for co-production of transdisciplinary, context-specific knowledge. The method should be combined with a site visit, where participants then have the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to the case study of the site they have just visited. Focusing consortium members on one specific pilot around a specific task encourages co-learning in a practical way, applying each other's differing skills and knowledge to a special context or problem. The method provides useful outputs

mainly for the specific case/site but also as a learning for the project on successful methodologies for co-production.

The workshop can be held in an existing or neighbouring venue if available, or in a temporary arrangement such as tents and portable tables depending on local conditions.

The on-site workshops have shown to generate a high quantity of context-specific usable knowledge and suggestions from transdisciplinary discussions on NBS.

Example: On-site workshop

Co-learning Forum 3: Sao Paulo

Following a guided site visit of Cachoeiras do Rio Itaquera Park, the group had the opportunity to workshop the learnings directly, on-site in the park to connect theoretical knowledge with context-based applications. Six breakout groups of approximately 8 participants each discussed what could be implemented at the site from the perspectives of ecosystem services, environmental sustainability, and urban governance, switching groups halfway through to cover different topics. At the end, the group facilitators for each topic joined to present their findings to the whole group. The on-site workshop was followed up on the final day of the Co-learning Forum by a session where small groups worked on writing guidelines for the Sao Paulo Life Lab pilot Cachoeiras do Rio Itaquera Park.

Co-production and learning from the different competencies within the consortium was practiced through the workshopping element, generating a high quantity of context-specific usable knowledge and suggestions from transdisciplinary discussion on NBS. The workshop provided the group with the opportunity to translate academic knowledge into the work of the municipality and merge theories from various disciplines and cultural contexts.

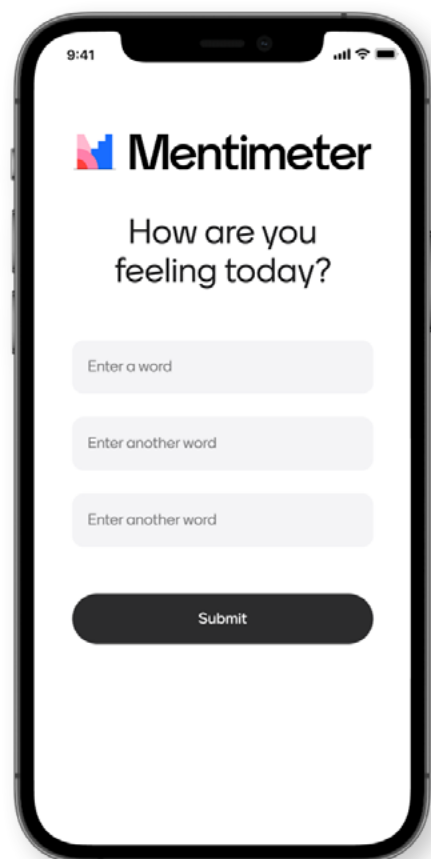


Onsite workshop in Sao Paulo. Image: Vanessa Duarte

Plenary presentations/ lecture format

Plenary presentations are in many cases necessary for conveying knowledge and important information for the whole consortium but in general are not as useful for co-production of knowledge, unless used in combination with other methods. This method is best applied in online environments. Presentations can be held successfully online and the focus of the CLFs should be the small group discussions and take advantage of the ability to work dynamically in-person. In a face-to-face Co-learning Forum, plenary presentations can be a good introduction to ensure all participants have the required information, which can then be workshopped in small groups.

Where appropriate, a panel or round table format can provide an interesting dynamic where different perspectives are discussed on the same topic. Plenary presentations can benefit from combining with interactive elements such as filmed content or online polls (eg mentimeter) to increase active engagement in the topic.





5. Catalogue of Co-learning Forum Tools

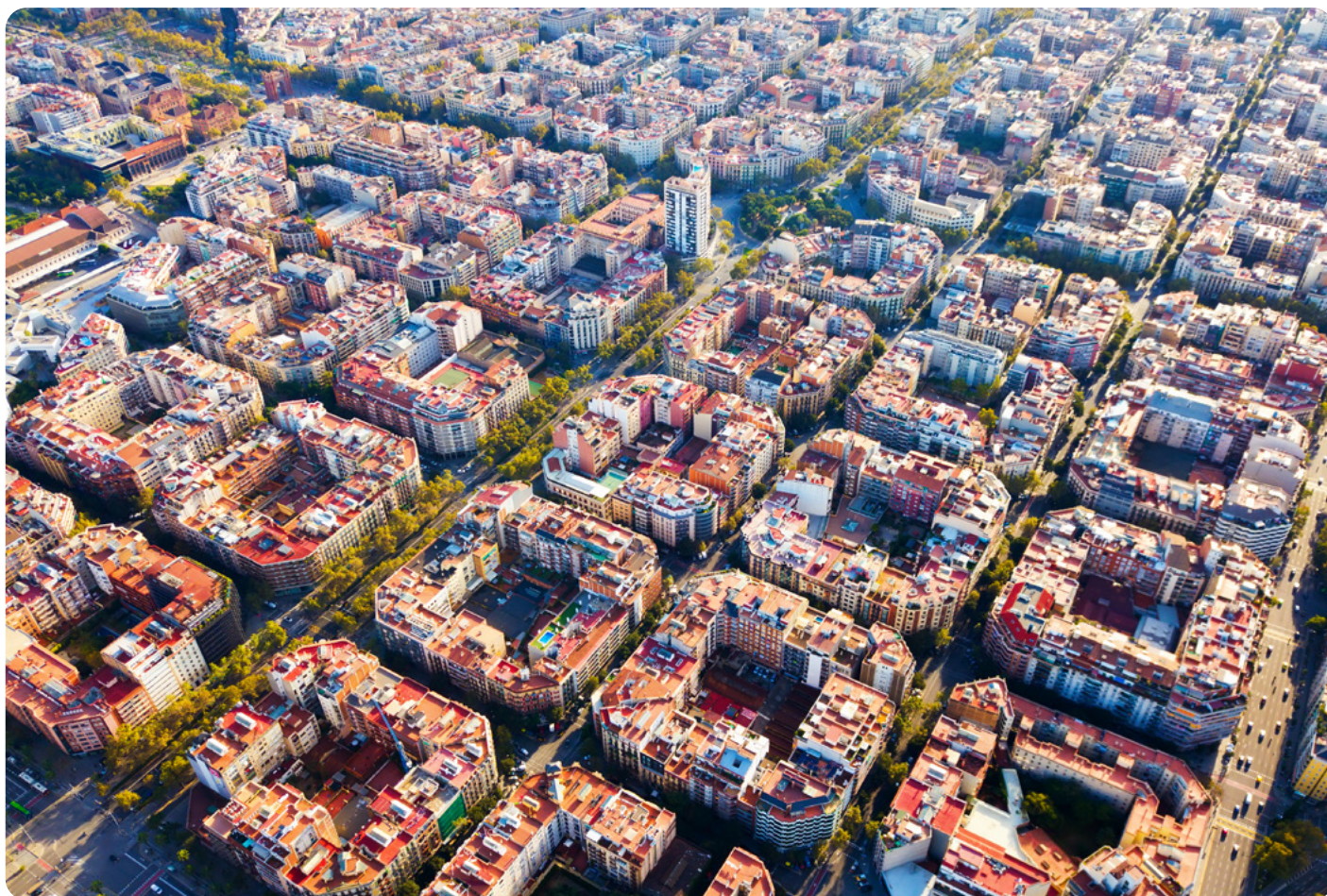
Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is a mutual agreement to create a respectful and productive environment for reaching the common goals of the project and crucial for co-learning.

Within the Co-learning Forum, a Code of Conduct is an important step of fostering an inclusive and respectful space. A code of conduct should be developed very early in the project together with the consortium and based on the goals of the project, before the Co-learning Forum is conducted. This can be developed during the ramping up period.

The Code of conduct must be workshopped and adjusted by project members to ensure ownership, which can be done at the Co-learning Forum and can change over time if needed. Participants are presented the code of conduct in plenary, and reminded of the code of conduct before small group discussions and workshops.

In Conexus, the Code of Conduct was developed from the Principles of Co-learning during the first ramping up period. **See example opposite.**



Example: Code of Conduct for Conexus Co-learning Forums

Based on the Guiding Principles for Co-learning

Decolonization of knowledge: We will take notice of the need for balancing directions of learning and avoid typical north-south, academia-practice single-directional knowledge transfer approaches. We should be aware of any Eurocentric biases that may exist in this EU-funded project, and ensure that knowledge is applicable in all contexts.

Mutual learning: Everybody can contribute, and everybody can learn something. Citizens, practitioners, researchers, and government officials, all have knowledge of equal value and we encourage an exchange and learning in all directions. Co-production is not only the sharing of experiences but also the merging knowledge to create in unison.

Context-based learning: We come from different geographical locations and must respect and be curious to learn from one another. We acknowledge the importance of context-sensitive knowledge and learn from all processes developed at and by Life-labs and pilots.

Citizen involvement and ownership: We need to move beyond the academic context in this task and truly involve civil society and citizens in the co-production of NBS knowledge.

Gender equality: We will implement a gender dimension to learning processes in our forum. Gender is important in discussions like this as it can shape the discussion in terms of who has a voice or not.

Openness and inclusiveness: We will facilitate open and welcoming sessions for discussing a range of different views, expressing different perspectives in a respectful and curious manner. We strive for a diversity of voices in all our sessions.



Multilanguage approach

Language is a central element of co-learning. As appropriate for the project, a multilanguage approach can be applied in an attempt to balance dynamism of discussions where a high level of knowledge exchange will occur. Even if the common language of the project is used for plenary sessions, the multilanguage approach creates spaces where all participants feel comfortable contributing their knowledge and language does not become a barrier for participation. The main focus is on facilitating small group discussions in different languages to allow for meaningful and equitable exchanges.

Tools to assist the multilanguage approach:

- Selection of language preferences in registration.
- Small group discussions available in all relevant languages
- Translated materials should be provided – briefing materials and guiding questions should be provided to small group facilitators and volunteers in advance of the event. Co-learning forum programs, site information, group activity instructions and Miro boards (online) should also be available in relevant languages.
- Language mediators (see list of roles, below)
- Small group discussions in different languages
- Online – language mediation in the chat function. An identified language mediator in the group can summarise the main information in the chat function as a way to encourage multilanguage exchange.
- Online – automated captions are often available as an additional function in online meeting platforms, sometimes a small fee is necessary to activate the plug-in. Automated captions still have limited accuracy and can vary in their useability.
- Simultaneous translators – this works well in online meetings when plenary presentations or roundtable events are planned. It is also possible in face-to-face events for larger plenary presentations or conferences where the equipment and technology is available, but is not as applicable to the scale and purpose of a Co-learning Forum. It will incur an additional cost.



Online whiteboard tools

Online whiteboard tools for collaborative mapping and brainstorming are a great tool for online small group discussions and workshopping activities. These tools support co-learning by enabling multiple participants to collaborate simultaneously, regardless of their physical location. This real-time collaboration allows participants to contribute, edit, and share ideas in a workshop environment, fostering an exchange of and building on ideas (co-production of knowledge). We have worked with the tools Miro and Mural but many others exist with varying functionalities including mindmapping, drawing and integration of images and media.

Be aware that some participants may not have used these tools previously and may need to include 5 minutes of testing or support to start operating. The tools are relatively intuitive and do not need additional downloads or log-ins to get started.

A note-taker and facilitator should be assigned in the sessions with online whiteboard tools. The facilitator can ask the questions and ensure that a balanced discussion is being held, with all participants able to contribute. The note-taker can assist in recording what is being said, if participants prefer to discuss rather than write notes on the board.

The whiteboard space needs to be well prepared in advance, including any guiding questions and instructions, translated into the language of the small group discussion. Provide clear instructions of what is expected of the participants. We have found it beneficial to allow participants to contribute on the whiteboard in whichever language they feel most comfortable in, to foster an inclusive environment.

To work on the board, participants simply click on the link provided (shared in the chat function). We recommend instead of sharing your screen in a video call (eg Zoom, Teams), that you ask all participants to open the whiteboard platform (eg Miro) in their own screen and work on the whiteboard in real time. Leave the microphone on and the video call session ongoing in the background so you can talk to each other through that platform whilst working on Miro and have the chat function available for participants who are not comfortable in using the whiteboard function. The whiteboard saves automatically and can be downloaded as a pdf record after the session is finished.



Online polls

Online interactive polls are an effective tool that can be used in both online and face-to-face activities to increase engagement and interaction within the group. We have used Mentimeter but other interactive poll tools are available with different functionalities. Participants are asked to log-in to the poll via their phones or computers, and answer a few short questions. Answers from the participants will appear in real-time on the screen, for example in a graph format or word cloud. The live responses create a dynamism that can be a good way to start a discussion, establish baselines and data on the spot, or to debrief.

This tool can only be used if wifi is available and participants have access to their phones or computers.

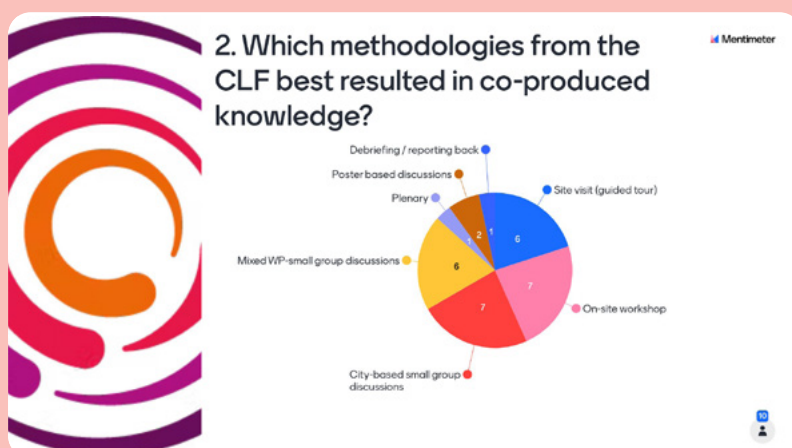
Example: CLF Debriefing

At the end of each CLF the CLF Coordinators included a Mentimeter poll to get an overview of how we were tracking in terms of co-learning and co-production of knowledge. The Mentimeter poll was held live as part of the wrapping up of the CLF and moderated as answers came in to discuss.

The poll included the same questions:

- 1 What was the most important outcome of the CLF?
- 2 What were the methods that best led to co-production of knowledge?
- 3 Which sessions had the most impact for project goals?
- 4 How do you assess the CLF against the guiding principles of Co-learning?
- 5 Any other feedback?

The tool assisted in the reflections and building our learning into the next ramping up period and planning and implementing the next CLF.



An excerpt from the Mentimeter debriefing poll at a Conexus CLF



Pre-conference reading material

Supporting materials for the Co-learning Forum should be sent out as pre-workshop reading material in advance. **These materials may include:**

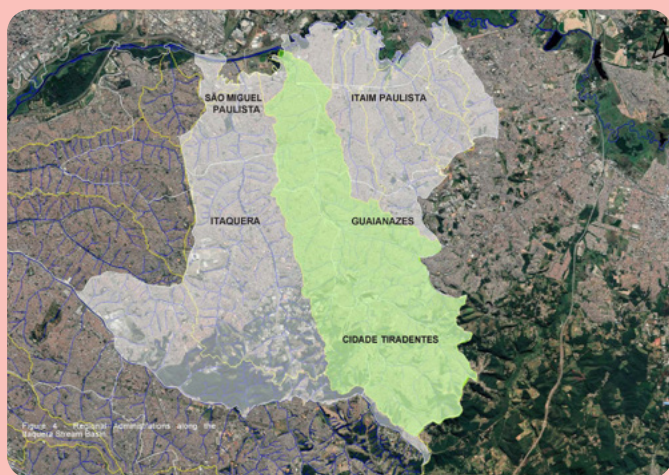
- a detailed programme, including guiding questions and purpose of each workshop,
- draft documents to be workshopped
- instructions for pre-workshop activity if relevant (eg “each pilot brings their data for a specific indicator to the session”)
- briefing notes for volunteers (facilitators, note-takers, language mediators)
- site visit materials, information about the case study that will be visited
- Research papers or materials

Supporting materials need to be sent out approximately two weeks prior to the event. Pre-conference reading material has the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the knowledge production and inputs gathered for the delivery of tasks’ results. It cannot be guaranteed that all participants will read pre-conference materials, but they will likely be more prepared for discussions and the workshops can be as productive as possible. This could be addressed by collating preparatory material regarding each task in advance of the CLF, as part of the learning ramping-up.

That said, selected materials should be appropriate and relevant to the task, and easy for participants to read through before the event. The materials should not overwhelm, but rather help to orient and prepare participants for the CLF.

Example: Pilot information booklet, Cabeceiras do Itaquera Park

Prior to the site visit to Cabeceiras do Itaquera Park and on-site workshop, the municipal host organisation Sao Paulo developed a detailed information booklet about the pilot site, the background and context (including the ecological, socio-economic, historic and geographical context), so that participants could be better prepared and be able to provide more qualified inputs into the workshop. The booklet was distributed digitally prior to the site visit, in four languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and English). Printed copies were also provided before the 2 hour bus ride to the site, and many participants used the opportunity to read through the information on the bus ride as well as supporting information to refer to during the site visit and on-site workshop.



Itaquera Stream Basin, from Cidade Tiradentes to the Tietê River

THE ITAQUERA STREAM BASIN

As previously described, Cabeceiras do Itaquera Park is located at the headwaters of Itaquera Stream, in the homonymous basin and tributary of the Tietê River. The Itaquera Stream Basin has 46 km², the third largest in the city, and the Itaquera Stream is approximately 17 km long from its source to its mouth with the Tietê River. Itaquera Stream has two main contributors, Itaquera-Mirim and Guaratiba.

The basin encompasses five Regional Administrations: Cidade Tiradentes, Guaiánazes, Itaim Paulista, Itaquera and São Miguel Paulista, all with socioeconomic similarities, such as a low rate of formal employment, income below the municipal average, significant presence of irregular occupations and subdivisions, among others.

Along the Itaquera Stream, adjacent or close to it, there are the Guaratiba Linear Park – Núcleo Estação, Consciência Negra Park, Chico Mendes Park and Vila do Rodeio Park, and the planned APA do Iguatemi, Lajeado – Santa Etelvina, COHAB Juscelino, the expansions of Guaratiba Linear Park and Cabeceiras do Itaquera itself. With the exception of Guaratiba Linear Park, all parks were located in areas with significant tree vegetation, constituting the largest green areas within the Itaquera Stream Basin (fig. 3). These parks were implemented with the objective of preserving the vegetation, the springs of the bodies of water that feed the Itaquera Stream, drainage and regeneration of ecosystems, while the Guaratiba was also planned as a territorial reorganization from its location along the Itaquera Stream.

Itaquera Stream has the potential to be the element of urban restructuring of the basin, in line with Articles 272 and 273 of Law 16.050/2014. In macro territorial analysis, the stream can be the structuring of green areas in its extension, on one side the Mata Sete Cruzes Park and on the other the Várzeas do Tietê Park. In addition to this, there are opportunities for new linear parks along the river, which could be implemented in conjunction with other sectoral plans for housing, mobility and drainage.

Briefing material for volunteers

In order to ensure an effective co-learning environment, volunteer roles and responsibilities should be identified a few weeks in advance of the Co-learning Forum (facilitator, note-taker, language mediator). These volunteers should then be provided with clear briefing information in the relevant language that covers the following topics:

- What is expected of me as facilitator/note-taker/language mediator?
- What is the code of conduct for the small group discussions?
- Title, objectives and guiding questions for each small group discussion
- Screenplay (time available, detailed schedule)
- Names of facilitators and other volunteers
- Practicalities and technical support (for online events, include the contact information of technical support, information about the online tools being used, and links to the whiteboard tools).





6. List of required roles in CLF activities

CLF Coordinator/s

An important role to ensure a coordinated, facilitated approach to co-learning throughout the transdisciplinary project is an appointed CLF Coordinator or coordinating team. The primary objective of the CLF Coordinator/s is to promote cohesion and exchange between tasks and activities within the project. The CLF Coordinator is responsible for facilitating all aspects of the CLF ramping up, preparations and implementation. In on-line CLFs the CLF Coordinator also becomes the event “producer”, responsible for the platform and technical elements.

Small group facilitators

The role of the facilitator is not as the “expert” or presenter but rather to facilitate discussion in a group of 5–8 participants and make sure everyone has a chance to contribute to the topic. Everyone has experience to share, or questions we can all learn from.

Before the session, facilitators should have been briefed by the session coordinators and provided with supporting material they will need for the session (translated into the language of the session).

At the beginning of the session facilitators are required to present the purpose of the activity and how results will be used, in line with ethics requirements.

Guiding questions should be provided to assist in starting the discussion. Facilitators are encouraged to think in advance about how to start the conversation – often a short round of introductions and then a call to ask for experiences or stories can help to get the ball rolling. The guiding questions are just that, a

guide. Facilitators have the mandate to discuss another issue that is relevant to the topic if that is the wish of the group, and flexibility is key, whilst remembering the purpose of the session.

Online facilitators are responsible for facilitating the oral discussion in the online breakout session and the online whiteboard discussion if using one. If recording, it is the responsibility of the facilitator to inform the group and start recording. The chat function is available and can be used for sharing websites, resources etc but participants are encouraged to have an oral discussion in the small groups.

It should be clear how the reporting back or debriefing will happen, and who is responsible for reporting the groups findings. If a person from the group needs to be selected for the reporting back, do this at the beginning of the session.

Note-takers

The note-taker is a support to the group and facilitator, and responsible for a written record of the session. The note-taker is an important role that should be identified in advance if possible, so there is time to brief and prepare. The note-taker is responsible for keeping time and reminding the facilitator when it is time for a break or when the session is coming to an end.

In online sessions, note-takers are responsible for monitoring the chat function if there is any required action and operating the online whiteboard if one is being used. Any technical issues with the digital meeting platform or whiteboard function are the responsibility of the technical help.



Language mediators

A language mediator can be appointed if parallel sessions are not provided in one of the common languages. The language mediator is not a translator but can assist in capturing and conveying the main messages orally if something is unclear. This role supports the facilitator if there are any language misunderstandings between the session language and the “common” language, for example English.

The breakout sessions will be multilingual. The facilitator/host will present in the identified language of the session and each participant is encouraged to intervene by using the language they are most comfortable with, and the language mediator can assist on the spot between the session language and the “common” language. By doing so we hope to create an inclusive space for knowledge sharing and make sure everyone can contribute.

If presentations are used in multilingual sessions, it is recommended they are made in the common language, to help people to follow the language.

If online, the chat function can be used by the language mediator to capture the main points of the speaker. Online platforms often can provide automated live captions (with varying success).

Technical support

Online meetings should always have a technical support person, who is free from other tasks such as MC, facilitation or notetaking and does not participate in breakout groups. This person should be identified at the beginning of the CLF and is responsible for running the breakout groups, the chat function, and if participants have difficulties connecting, sharing documents or other issues.

For face-to-face events, technical support assists with presentations, sound and light and venue logistics. This can be a member of the local host team and should be identified in advance of the CLF.

MC

The MC is responsible for introducing the speakers and sessions coordinators, following the programme and timekeeping. The role can also include announcing the programme at the beginning of the day and other important information in plenary, summarising information from sessions, and letting participants know when sessions are starting. MC is responsible for timekeeping and programmatic information and usually a member of the coordinating team who has in-depth knowledge of the programme.

The MC has a responsibility to actively seek equal participation in groups in their sessions.

Local host

Local host is the project team located in the city where the CLF will take place. The local hosts are responsible for venue, arranging catering, technical and transport logistics, and coordination with local political or organisational representatives. The local hosts are also responsible for organising site visits and on-site workshops if applicable. The hosts can also assist with an information pack to participants, including a list of accommodation in different price categories and other practical information for getting around the city. If conducting site visits, the local hosts are responsible for producing a risk analysis.

Session coordinators

Session coordinators are project WP or task owners who are responsible for developing the individual session. The session coordinators are responsible for developing the session and choosing the methods and tools that best meet their purpose (see the catalogue at **section 5** of this handbook), preparing the required materials, briefing volunteers and collecting materials after the session for the ongoing work in the task/WP.

Session coordinators have a responsibility to actively seek equal participation in groups in their sessions.



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