

North-West Europe

MONA

Capacity building plan

(first version)

Document/Deliverable name	D.3.4.1 Capacity building plan (first version)
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Status (Final, Draft)	Final
Comments	Update of the detailed capacity building plan for the second half of the project, incorporating lessons learned from the pilot implementation, planned for period 6.
Date	10 January 2025





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1. About MONA

From 2023 to 2027, the MONA project aims to promote sustainable tourism in natural areas by encouraging a shift to more sustainable modes of transport in national parks, implementing inclusive route planning and encouraging all park users to adopt more sustainable behaviour.

The growing interest in nature-based tourism has led to a significant increase in the number of visitors to nature reserves, making them important tourist attractions. However, this increase in visitor numbers has also had negative impacts on park resources, such as traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, and parking problems, which affect the perception of visitors and are a nuisance to residents. As a result, effective traffic management in national parks has become crucial to enable sustainable tourism. This is where the MONA (MOdal shift, routing and nudging solutions in NAture areas) project comes in.

Launched in 2023, MONA aims to promote sustainable tourism in and around the protected areas of north-western Europe to benefit nature, the environment, visitors, and the local economy. The project does so by promoting a modal shift, supporting sustainable transport, implementing inclusive route planning, and encouraging visitors and stakeholders to adopt more sustainable behaviour. Together, these strategies will help to manage visitor flows, reduce negative impacts on the local environment, and promote inclusive access to nature reserves.

The key activities carried out by MONA project partners include:

- Evaluation of local impacts and development of innovative strategies: MONA partners monitor and assess the impacts of visitors and local mobility options on natural areas. Based on their findings, they develop new solutions to minimise observed harmful impacts and increase the overall sustainability of nature-based tourism in north-western Europe.
- Solution testing: All strategies developed by the MONA partners will be tested for their suitability in local contexts. In particular, the project focuses on joint testing of modal shift, route planning and behavioural nudging solutions. This will allow them to identify which strategies are truly effective in promoting more sustainable transport and visitor behaviour.

The MONA project brings together eight nature reserves and three knowledge and dissemination partners in Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

2. Capacity building plan

This document is part of Working Package 3, focusing on capacity building and the communication of project approach & results by providing supporting materials, training schemes and advocacy including a final event. Specific objective 3 is to build capacity for stakeholders across NWE through a guidebook, joint training scheme and agenda-setting activities, reaching at least 120 regional and local tourism and mobility experts, providers and policymakers.





WP3 kicked off with Activity 3.1: User Needs Assessment for Capacity Building Activities, aimed at understanding the priorities, current state of expertise, experience, and skills gaps within the target groups of MONA as the basis of the capacity building plan and Activity 3.2: Associated organisation involvement: dissemination towards and involvement of nature areas and tourism boards.

The capacity building plan represents the primary result of Activity 3.4, which focuses on a joint training scheme. The plan defines timing, content, target audience, location, format and roles of partners in the joint training scheme and is going to be updated at the project midterm.

The joint training scheme builds on the updated version of Activity 3.1: User Needs Assessment for Capacity Building Activities and D3.1.1 User Needs Assessment Report.

As the pilots are being implemented and deliverables completed, this also becomes part of the scheme. The joint training scheme will provide a combination of physical and e-learning sessions. Three annual cycles of learning activities will take place that feature three webinars and one physical meeting coorganised with the nature areas. The learning materials will be gathered at dedicated web pages.

The scheme is directed at external professionals working on mobility and sustainable tourism, in /around nature areas in NWE. WP 3 activities are complementary and supportive of all other WPs.

The deliverable is developed by POLIS, in cooperation with BUAS and KU Leuven, and supported by the project coordinator.

The report is completed in Project Period 3 but some updates to the report will be done continuously and then as planned, the final version will be done in in Project Period 6.

3. Target groups

MONA aims to reach its target groups across North-West Europe (NEW) with the project outcomes and lessons learned on sustainable tourism through three clusters of solutions - modal shift, routing and nudging. Effective communication is crucial for achieving this goal, as is the implementation of the capacity-building plan, which includes a comprehensive training scheme.

The main target groups defined by user needs assessment are nature areas and mobility & tourism experts, providers and policymakers across NWE, of which at least 120 individuals will be reached through the training scheme implemented in three cycles by the end of the project.

The lessons learned via MONA will be transferred through the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) network for further learning and uptake. All other nature areas in the network will be invited to take part in the training scheme.

Professional audiences in NWE within the MONA activities include:

- Nature areas
- Nature conservation professionals





- Destination marketing organisations and tourism service providers
- Mobility and tourism experts and policymakers at local/regional public authorities
- Mobility and tourism service providers

Table 1: Target group-project partners

Number	Name of the organisation	Country
1	VisitBrabant Nederland (VB)	NL
2	Breda University of Applied Sciences Nederland (BUAS)	NL
3	KU Leuven (KUL)	BE
4	BENEGO - Grenspark Kalmthoutse Heide (BE) GKH	BE
5	National Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug Nederland NPUH	NL
6	Natuurmonumenten - National Park Veluwezoom (NPV)	NL
7	Montagne de Reims Regional Park (PNRMR)	FR
8	Regional Park Scarpe-Escaut (PNRSE)	FR
9	Tourism Province of Antwerp (TPA)	BE
10	Tourismus Zentrale Saarland GmbH	DE

Table 2: Target group - Associated organisations

Number	Name of the organisation	Partner
		responsible
1	Wageningen Universiteit	NPUH
2	Mission Coteaux, Maisons, Caves de Champagne -	PNRMR
	Patrimoine mondial	
3	Agence Aube-Marne de l'Office national des forêts	PNRMR
4	Regionaal Landschap Kempen & Maasland vzw	TPA
5	Toerisme Vlaanderen	TPA
6	Biosphärenzweckverband Bliesgau	TZS
7	Luxembourg for Tourism (LFT)	TZS
8	Nationalparkamt Hunsrück-Hochwald	TZS
9	Nederlands Bureau voor Toerisme & Congressen VB	
10	Gemeente Lelystad	VB
11	Van Gogh Nationaal Park	VB





Associated organisations will participate in one physical partner meeting per year, which in years 2, 3 and 4 (see Table 3.) will also feature the physical workshop as part of the training scheme cycle.

Target group-external stakeholders

External stakeholders will be involved both as active participants in capacity budling events (speakers) and as audience. This group will involve:

UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES in NWE

The baseline and impact measurements and monitoring framework (WP1; developed in multidisciplinary setting) help to enhance both theoretical and practical knowledge of the complex relationships between visitors, residents, nature, environment, and mobility. The results will provide policy and sector advisors with better insights to base their advices on. Outreach will happen by the knowledge partners in MONA (WP1 A11).

- NATURE AREAS IN EUROPE (NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARKS)
 All nature areas in Europe can learn from the project outcomes and take up solutions in their nature areas. This target group is reached through the project partner networks, including dedicated national associations of nature areas (participating as associated organisations) as well as the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (via PNRMR and PNRSE). Nature areas are specifically invited to join the training scheme.
- DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS AND TOURISM SERVICE PROVIDERS IN NWE As a result of MONA visitors are better spread and opportunities are explored for new sustainable tourism products (nudging visitors and stakeholders towards sustainable choices) which are relevant for e.g. tourist offices, hotels, restaurants, but also entrepreneurial farmers and landowners. DMOs can take part in the training scheme. Local stakeholders /entrepreneurs will be involved by each nature area (WP2 A3).
- MOBILITY EXPERTS AND TOURISM POLICY MAKERS AT LOCAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
 The MONA outcomes, including the monitored pilot impacts and effects, strategy
 development, and monitoring framework, are shared with mobility, tourism, economic and
 spatial planning policy makers at local public authorities in the project's pilot locations + those
 part of the POLIS network (50 local authorities). They can use this to tackle mobility issues
 towards nature areas in their municipality.
- MOBILITY EXPERTS AND TOURISM POLICY MAKERS AT REGIONAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES The MONA outcomes, including the monitored pilot impacts and effects, strategy development, and monitoring framework, are shared with mobility, tourism, economic and spatial planning policy makers at regional public authorities in the project's pilot locations + POLIS' network (30 regional authorities). In many cases the responsibility for mobility and spatial planning goes beyond municipal borders.
- MOBILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS IN AND AROUND NATURE AREAS
 In the eight nature areas in the project, mobility service providers will be directly involved in
 the pilots around the modal shift as local stakeholders. These are both traditional public
 transport operators as well as new shared mobility operators. Indicatively this concerns NS,
 ProRail, Keolis Syntus, NMBS, SNCF, SaarVV / Ministerium für Umwelt, Klima, Mobilität, Agrar,
 und Verbraucherschutz. 76 Target Group Specification
- VISITORS OF THE NATURE AREAS will, as a result of MONA:



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Experience less busy nature areas >Have better access to nature areas because of routing to their doorstep, (new) sustainable transport options and better communication >Bring less harm to nature and nuisance to residents because they are better spread and show more sustainable behaviour >Recreate more often nearby home, which improves their health. The nature areas receive around 2 to 4 million visitors annually.

- DISADVANTAGED GROUPS AS POTENTIAL VISITORS OF NATURE AREAS MONA aims to reduce obstacles to visiting nature areas on: >Mobility, i.e. no access to cars, insufficient supply of other transport modes >Physical disability: accessible routing & entry points (in addition to legal requirements) >Social obstacles i.e. unfamiliarity with visiting nature areas This target group will be more precisely defined based on the analyses in WP1, after which the approach will be finetuned in the pilots.
- RESIDENTS IN AND AROUND NATURE AREAS
- People living within or close to nature areas benefit from the improved sustainable access options, the reduction of traffic, less traffic congestion, more available parking spaces, less unauthorised parking and noise, no road blockages, as well as possible local economic impulses on sustainable tourism options. Predictability of the visitor flow and crowdedness can help to plan local life better. Outreach happens through the nature areas directly (WP A3).

4. Capacity budling programme

4.1 Programme Purpose

Based on the UNA (A1) a capacity building plan including a joint training scheme is established. The Learning Exchange & Capacity-Building for Policy Improvement is a key pillar of the MONA project activities and contributes to the wider goals of the Interreg NWE Programme, the Policy Learning Platform.

The Policy Learning Platform was established to boost both, NEW and, EU-wide policy learning and capitalise on practices from nature parks development policies. It offers policy advice, policy solutions and Good Practices to policy makers.

In much the same way, the activities of A3.4 will boost policy learning, exchange and capacity for policy improvement directly within the project consortium before key learnings and exchanges are disseminated beyond the project via the planned actions of WP3: capacity building and transferring lessons in NWE.

4. 2 Programme Objectives

Activity 3.4 also provides the opportunity to share and exchange policy advice and policy solutions within the MONA project consortium and the local stakeholders engaged as part of the project. This programme will therefore contribute to the sharing and exchange of the estimated three annual cycles of learning activities (so 3 schemes) that will take place that feature three webinars and one physical





meeting co-organised with the nature areas per one project year, starting in project period 3 (July-December 2024).

The results and outputs will be published on the MONA subpage and POLIS website, to be shared within POLIS network to gather and reach wider audience.

Thereby, the activities of the Learning Exchange & Capacity-Building for Policy Improvement will enable the act of exchange between stakeholders from the project partner cities and ultimately build policy improvement capacity directly within the project.

4.3 Interdependencies with other MONA activities

The Learning Exchange & Capacity-Building for Policy Improvement Programme is informed by interdependencies with previous MONA project tasks, D1.11.1 Communication Strategy (POLIS), D1.6.1 A report providing an integrated view of the results of the baseline visitor surveys (BUAS&KUL), D3.1.1 User Needs Assessment Report (POLIS), and D .1.1.1 Report including case studies and conclusions (BUAS&KUL).

4.4 Interdependencies with other MONA activities

As part of the A3.4., this methodology provides the basis for MONA project partners to select which of their sustainable urban Needs Assessment & Learning Profiles and Expectations. Additionally, Task includes a "Needs Assessment & Learning Profiles" internal report that establishes the current organisational and individual learning preferences present amongst the partners of MONA.

Based on a multicriteria analysis of the partners (and associated partners) needs against the transferability elements of each taks, a 'soft' matchmaking tool will be developed by lead partner VB and POLIS and applied to the participating stakeholders to match "frontrunners/ sharers" with "receivers" of experience. This will "channel" the inspiration offered by existing innovative decision-making tools and integration methodologies for sustainable mobility to/to/at tourism areas.

4.5 Stakeholders' Identification and Engagement

Stakeholder participation, and therefore engagement, is a key activity of the project and critical to the successful exchange of Good Practices amongst the projects' policy actors. To this end, the MONA project team identified and engaged the relevant to the project stakeholders from the first steps of the project implementation.

4.5.1. Internal vs local stakeholders

A key objective of the MONA project is to increase inclusivity within sustainable mobility and tourism planning processes. As such, there are efforts made within the project to engage a wider range of stakeholders at the local level of each PP in the learning exchange and capacity-building actions. However, there is also a distinction to be made between the wider local stakeholders and the more directly involved internal stakeholders or policy actors. These internal stakeholders, or policy actors, may not be directly involved in the project itself, but should be encouraged to take part in specific activities such as the webinars and in-person peer-learning opportunities.





Therefore, within the MONA project, there is a key distinction to be made between stakeholders. Some activities, primarily in-person peer-learning opportunities, are intended for PP's and local/regional stakeholders. However, the project does aim to extend engagement beyond this initial group via the organisation of the webinars.

Internal stakeholders are those directly involved in the MONA project, such as VB. **Local stakeholders**, are additional organisations relevant to the project that are interested in the learning materials produced. Each project partner has already identified local stakeholders in project period 1.

Additionally, those affected by policy decisions, such as citizens or end users/visitors, are part of the target groups, not the local stakeholders. Citizens can be included in the project learning activities through representation, like via citizens' associations.

4.1.1 Contact Information & Data protection

Contact information of potential stakeholders should not be shared outside of the project consortium and only the local partners should be in contact with local external stakeholders using the contact details recorded in the database.

4.6 Topics in focus

Within WP1, key outputs developed are eight strategies for nature areas to achieve sustainable tourism through the three clusters of solutions: modal shift, routing, and nudging. Working package 3 is focused on capacity building and the dissemination of the MONA approach & results by delivering the supporting materials, training schemes and advocacy, including a final project event, focusing on those three clusters of solutions.

During the first project period, POLIS, as a lead on communication and capacity building with support from BUAS and KUL, engaged with all partners to identify their priorities, current knowledge and expertise and to recognise skill gaps within clusters of solutions. BUAS and KUL reviewed the literature and profiles of nature parks (project partners). This together served as the foundation for the User Needs Assessment and will be used for the development of the capacity-building plan.

The primary needs and priorities identified are outlined below:

Cluster A: Modal shift

Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug(NL)

- Defining aims and mapping the stakeholders and processes for creating a regional vision of sustainable leisure mobility.
- Identifying motivations for the usage of current transport modes and barriers for not choosing (if) sustainable modes.
- Knowledge transfer on public transport (train) stations as part of the nature experiences: stations as gateways to the parks.





•	How to encourage the usage of sustainable mobility hubs and shared mobility.
•	How to improve visitor information (app, map, other?) in general, and at the public transport stations.

Grenspark Kalmthoutse Heide (BE)

- Limiting pressure on parking spaces next to natural areas (trends of parking reduction in urban areas versus parking extensions in natural areas).
- Enhancing the information quality at public transport stations to improve accessibility to parks via trainsBridging short distances from train stations to the parks: what are the options there (e.g. micromobility; shuttle buses; etc) – good/bad examples.

•

- Utilizing supplementary route networks extending from primary nature routes to farming areas through dedicated cycling routes, such as cycling highways.
- Diversification of the entry points to the natural areas (popular areas/less frequented ones having in mind the context of over-tourism. How to objectify and communicate towards target groups?

Parc Naturel Régional de la Montagne de Reims (FR)

-	Sustainable mobility governance in nature areas.
•	Examples of nudging as a tool to improve visitors' behaviour once in nature (*both here and in cluster
	C)
•	Communication techniques – more attraction – more people – more cars? How to change the paradigm.
•	Barriers and how-to solutions for changing from car-centric mobility to other, more sustainable
	transport modes.
•	How do understand you your experience of overtourism? Is there a way to estimate the tourism capacity
	of the nature area?
•	Spreading the visitors over the whole protected area: examples and experiences in the context of
	mobility.

Cluster B: Routing

<u>Visit Brabant</u>

- Connecting to the typology of nature areas and the types of visitors attracted to them.
- Customer journey of the visitor and moments within it that we can influence the visitor for the specific behaviour (specifically spreading to another location).
- Re-arranging the entry points and marketing of entry points.
- Counters and monitoring.
- Role of transport operators in promoting sustainable transport entry points in nature areas ->
 identifying decisions, motivations and communication messages that result in car-centric mobility in
 nature areas.
- Possibilities for new starting points (e.g. farms, local businesses, etc).





Reviving train stations as tourist starting points.

Nationaal Park Veluwezoom/ Natuurmonumenten (NL)

• How to reorganise car traffic around nature areas (turning in search of parking spots).

Parking registration information system examples: pros and cons.

Incentives to use trains for access to nature areas (or shuttle from the train to the park).

Ideas of new entry points (e.g. farms; restaurants; etc).

Toerisme Provincie Antwerpen (BE)

Monitoring of the hiker's activities: counting devices examples, best and worst practices.

How to communicate the data from the counting/monitoring data in the real-life format?

Spreading of the flows: best and worst practices.

 Several types of active mobility users using the same roads – how to communicate the need to spread to different groups of infrastructure users.

Cluster C: Nudging

Parc Naturel Régional de la Montagne de Reims (FR)

- What are the clear obstacles to changing from a car to another transport modes?
- Examples of nudging as a tool to improve visitors' behaviour once in nature.
- How do understand you experience overtourism?
- Is spreading visitors a good idea or not: examples and experiences.
- Is there any added value for nature in getting more people to the nature area?
- Connecting to the mobility field is new: governance of this process.

Tourismus Zentrale Saarland (DE)

- What is available in the literature on nudging?
 Connect typologies of nature areas to the types of visitors.
 Different tools/methods to change travel behaviour
 Active mobility behaviour: how to ensure people do not walk off the official walking trails
 - How to regulate access to trails in relation to seasonality requirements within nature areas.

Potential additional needs and interests may be added to the training programme and developed further in Activity 3.4., D.3.4.1.



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4.7 Skills, training needs and competencies

The analysis of results of the survey distributed among all partners and associated organisations, uncovered additional needs, challenges, interests, and priorities. These primary topics to be addressed while planning capacity building are important as they emerged from this examination, shedding light on the following aspects:

- ✓ Skills and competencies,
- \checkmark Specific training needs, barriers and challenges to be addressed
- ✓ Preferred Outcomes of capacity building
- \checkmark Format and topics preferred for the practical guide to Sustainable Tourism in Natural Areas

The main findings in terms of those categories showed additional priorities and need to be tackled through knowledge transfer, capacity building webinars and workshops, and the main Guidebook to be developed (Activity 3.3., D.3.3.1).

Current skills and competencies within project partner organisations

- ✓ Able to develop plans and implement these in the field by own departments, or with cooperating stakeholders.
- ✓ Knowledge of target groups, markets and the way how they can be reached with marketing and communication.
- ✓ Some parks have project organisation specialists in traffic management, recreation & tourism, ecology and project management.
- ✓ Expertise in stakeholder management.
- ✓ Some parks conducted multiple research projects on sustainable mobility, in collaboration with the academic sector.

Specific training needs to be addressed in webinars and workshops

Broad topics:

- Similar situations of pilots to be developed through MONA, that are already in further stages of development.
- From strategy (vision) to implementation (of the measure) best practices.
- Regional vision on sustainable mobility with all relevant stakeholders. What should be part of a sustainable mobility vision?
- Understanding the causal effect of sustainable mobility interventions in natural areas.
- Communication platforms or tools that would facilitate better interaction and collaboration between nature areas and stakeholders.





- Destination management organizations: learning more about what they can do, even if they are not directly in charge of mobilities

Specific expertise:

*For all aspects in MONA - Modal Shift, Routing & Nudging - Do's/don'ts t

- Monitoring visitor flows.
- Nudging techniques to help define the phase of the customer journey to change the decisionmaking process of visiting an area and the mobility choice.
- Data collection (and interpretation).
- Equipment maintenance (financial planning).
- Strategies to monitor visitor behaviour throughout the whole nature area.

Format and topics preferred for the practical guide to Sustainable Tourism in Natural Areas

- Modal Shift, Routing & Nudging Do's/don'ts t
- Modal Shift, Routing & Nudging best cases examples
- Case studies about routing solutions to manage and reduce motorised traffic could be useful in our case.
- Mobility strategies
- Stimulating a modal shift (ideally involving nature area)
- Sustainable mobility/recreation terminology.
- Accessibility policies and activities.
- How can nature areas use communication strategies to guide visitor flows?
- How can shared mobility such as bike services effectively help (if at all helpful) to reduce parking problems?
- Monitoring (impacts on nature)
- Nudging tools and measures.
- Usable action sheets, methodological guide to implementing measures.

Challenges and barriers to be overcome through positive examples in trainings:

- Travel behaviour change (User groups & user conflicts)
- Ecological impact through veering off-path (partly due to apps/GPS).
- Collaboration with stakeholders, managing the process of involvement and dealing with the complexity of a joint approach (e.g. the municipalities that are involved, resistance from inhabitants, and the complexity of decision-making)
- Cooperation & finance A common approach is needed.





- How to ensure political support
- Legislative and administrative barriers

Preferred methods to be used in training events and materials to be shared:

- eLearning's tools
- Video tools and Seminars
- Presentations, Q&A sessions/schemes, small group discussions
- Newsletters (after main events)

General conclusions:

- There are multiple existing skills across partnerships but also gaps in knowledge and expertise so peer-to-peer learning within consortia is needed to address those gaps and showcase the best practices.
- Some partners have all the contact details of local authorities and stakeholders needed to be involved in training and some need help from capacity building lead.
- The format preferred for the guidebook is for it to be an e-learning tool understandable for all and still attractive and easy to use/ read.
- Most local stakeholders in Germany and France do not speak English so the training sessions would have to be translated to German and French.
- Avoiding broad topics in webinars

5. Report on main capacity-building outputs

To conclude Task 3.4, POLIS will compile the experiences generated by the capacity-building programme into one report on the main capacity-building outputs, and finalise in MONA guidebook final version.

This report will provide a summary of the information shared by stakeholders. Feedback from stakeholders on the shared good practices should include practical recommendations on various levels

MONA - D.3.4.1 Capacity building plan (first version)

Commented [BL1]: Experiences generated by the learning and capacity building programme will be summarized in the "Report on main capacity building outputs" (POLIS, M32). The report will summarize the

information shared by the stakeholders on each GP, which is also expected to include practical recommendations on various levels (i.e. policy/ planning, regulation, technical interoperability.

governance/ participation and cooperation, digitalization and data management, etc.) for the GP adoption from other regions.





covering policy and planning, regulation, technical interoperability, governance, participation and cooperation, digitalisation and other good practices adoption by other/all nature areas.

All PPs are expected to compile records of the outputs of each local capacity-building activity, these records will be collected by POLIS to generate the final report on main capacity-building outputs, to be published in M54.