



Coffee Table for Biodiversity

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Iines Reinikainen

Kazuichiro Taira

Laura Montén

Kazuki Mori

Design for Government course at Aalto University

Our Team



lines Reinikainen
MA in Creative Sustainability



Kazuichiro Taira
MA in Spatial Planning
and Transportation



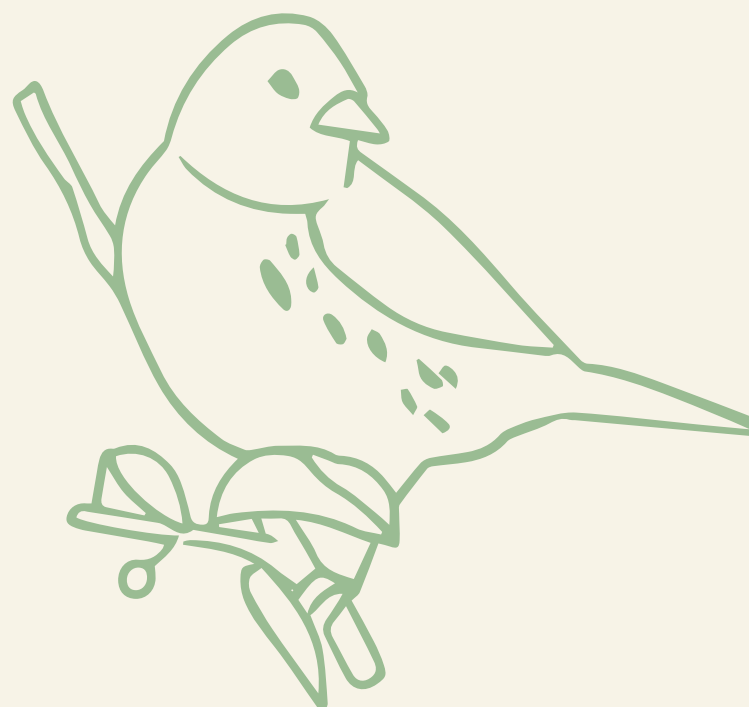
Laura Monten
MA in Collaborative
and Industrial Design



Kazuki Mori
MA in Collaborative
and Industrial Design

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Executive Summary

Project Brief

The given problem was to define a future of sustainable nature recreation. To address this problem, we conducted multiple research ranging from desk research to interviews, a questionnaire, and fieldwork.

Issue Framing

Our research showed that biodiversity in Finland has been declining year by year, despite multi-layered strategies and enormous efforts by Metsähallitus. For example, the proportion of threatened species is augmented from 8% in 2000 to 12% in 2019.

By synthesising our research results, two major issues were identified: 1) the lack of tangible and holistic actions for biodiversity; 2) the lack of shared understanding and co-creation between departments of Metsähallitus. Behind these problems, the structural and spatial fragmentation inside Metsähallitus were revealed.

Our solution

To tackle these issues, we have developed our ideas by conducting additional research, exploring types of intervention and identifying best practices.

Our proposal, 'Coffee Table for Biodiversity', is to have regular meetings for biodiversity, bringing together different actors and increasing conversation beyond departments and organisations in a specific area. Several ideas would be agreed at the coffee table, and each participant has the responsibility for implementing them into reality. Participants include conservation, recreation and forestry departments from Metsähallitus, a research institution, NGOs and activists.

A pilot project could start in Nuukio and surrounding areas. After the pilot and evaluation period, it can be expanded to the national level.

By implementing this idea, Metsähallitus would become a facilitator of nationwide discussion on biodiversity in Finland, providing opportunities to communicate and collaborate with various stakeholders.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief:

Towards the future of sustainable nature recreation

Metsähallitus is an organisation that manages one-third of Finland's area, including forests and coasts.

The number of visitors to Finnish national parks is increasing year by year, especially during the period of the coronavirus outbreak. Such visitor numbers inevitably strain the nature of Finnish national parks.

The original aim of the project was to balance increased visitor numbers and the sustainability of Finnish nature.



1.2 Our Approach

Through conducting the research, we identified that the biodiversity in Finland is decreasing rapidly, and this problem requires consideration beyond the recreation aspect. From this understanding, we set 2 focal points (described in detail in the latter part of the report).

Two focus points

- ▶ **Biodiversity loss**
- ▶ **Metsähallitus internal structures and operations**

2. Research Methods

2.1 Roundtable and interviews

A roundtable and 11 interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, from visitors to the Nuuksio National Park and environmental activists to Metsähallitus employees. These interviews provided multifaceted understandings of the problem from a human-centred perspective.

Interviewee list

Metsähallitus	Lead Service Designer Specialist, Visitor Data Specialist, Tourism Specialist, Nature Conservation Foreman, Nuuksio National Park Director, Forest Management
HALTIA	Service Manager
Activist	Roskapäiva Founder Conservation Specialist (WWF)
Visitor	Local resident of Nuuksio Frequent visitor of Nuuksio

2.2 Desk Research

By examining documents and web pages from the EU level to the Metsähallitus level, we attempted to understand how the higher-level strategies and actual activities relate to each other. Academic articles and newspapers gave us an insight into how Finnish society perceives Finnish nature and Metsähallitus' activities.

Summary of research references

- ▶ EU, ministry and municipality level: strategies and programmes
- ▶ Metsähallitus: reports, summaries, principles and programmes concerned with conservation, recreation and forestry
- ▶ Other relative organisations (SYKE, LUKE, BIOS, SMY, HALTIA, etc.)
- ▶ Academic articles
- ▶ Newspapers

2.2 Field Work

We conducted fieldwork in the Nuuksio National Park to experience visitors' perspectives. Several insights were gained: the lack of explaining prohibited activities and the difficulty of getting to certain areas without using a private car.

2.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was conducted online, and 41 answers were obtained to get a better understanding relationship between the proximity of residence, visitor behaviour, knowledge of harmful practices, participation in regeneration activities, etc.

Highlighted questions

- ▶ Do you consider yourself a 'local' of Nuuksio National Park?
- ▶ Do you consider the environment while visiting Nuuksio? How?
- ▶ If regenerative activities are offered in Nuuksio, how often would you join?

Summary of the questionnaire

The questionnaire results showed no association between frequency of visits, knowledge of impacts on biodiversity and identification of oneself as 'local'. However, it indicated two interesting results.

1) **Lack of educational opportunities**

97% of respondents were not aware of the nature conservation projects taking place in Nuuksio National Park

2) **Lack of opportunities to participate in regenerative activities**

75% of respondents answered they would like to participate in regenerative activities, although a WWF interviewee stated that '(activities) are always full immediately when we open the registration'. That indicates that there are not enough regenerative activities provided.

3. Issue Framing

3.1 Problem Understanding

Objectives and means for biodiversity



Created from Metsähallitus (2016, p.13)

There are multi-layered goals, strategies and action plans for biodiversity in Finland. Based on these strategies, Metsähallitus have implemented activities such as METSO, HELMI and LIFE programme (e.g. Metsähallitus, 2018). As a result, the forest stock in Finland is gradually increasing (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2021).

However, the situation is not necessarily improving. The percentage of threatened species has increased from 8% in 2000 to 12% in 2019 (Prime Minister's Office, 2020), and the valuable trees for habitats are decreasing (Metsähallitus, 2022, p.69).

Saimaa Ringed Seal
conserved by LIFE programme

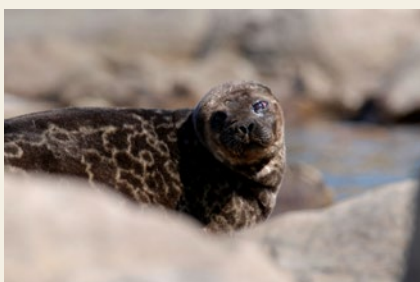
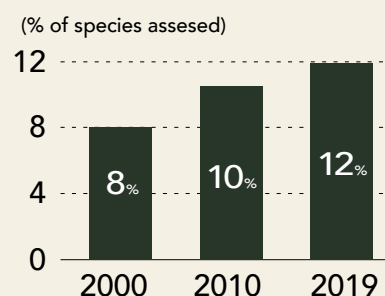


image: Taskinen, T. (n.d.)

Percentage of endangered species



Created from Prime Minister's Office (2020)

3.2 Defining the Problem



Different paths, same forest

In addition, an evaluation of the Finnish Biodiversity Strategy showed that the tourism impact is one of the least significant factors (Auvinen et al., 2020). With that, by exploring a larger leverage point and a holistic approach beyond the recreational aspect, a problem inside Metsähallitus was revealed: ‘walking in the same forest, but different paths’. Even though the different departments operate in the same environment, they cannot almost see each other from their paths and do not know where others are heading.

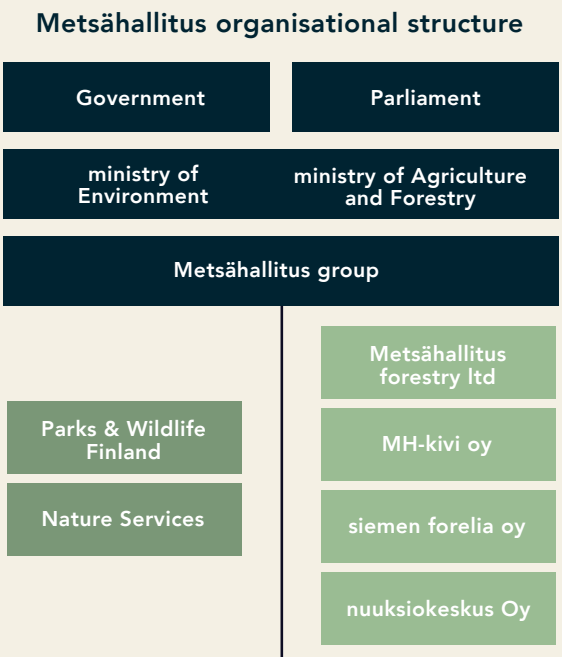
What does this metaphor mean? It symbolises the gap inside Metsähallitus within the understanding of biodiversity and cooperation, which ultimately questions the effectiveness of their activities. Despite the same goal and ideal of conserving biodiversity, each department interprets the issue within biodiversity differently. This issue is rooted in the organisational structure.

Different paths I: Rooted fragmentation

Metsähallitus has two main divisions: Parks & Wildlife Finland (mainly responsible for conservation and recreation) and the forestry department.

Their activities are based on a ‘Tulostavoite (goal chart)’ shared among steering ministries and Metsähallitus. However, these goals and budgets are already fragmented by the departments.

In addition, most targets are at an abstract level and can be interpreted arbitrarily by the departments.



Created from Metsähallitus (2022, p.110)

“ Forestry and Parks and Wildlife Finland have completely separate budgets. This is why it is so hard to co-operate.

Specialist in Visitor Data, Metsähallitus

“ The goals are too easily interpreted depending on which professional or department reads them.

Lead service designer, Metsähallitus

Different paths II: Spatial division

Because Metsähallitus covers such a large area in Finland, there are not enough opportunities for employees within Metsähallitus to communicate and collaborate across their own departments on a daily basis. Some interviewees also implied that they used to have cross-departmental conversations during coffee breaks, but such a culture has declined as Metsähallitus has become a larger organisation.

“ It would be more efficient and increase the knowledge of the area to centre the work in smaller areas than currently.

Foreman, Nuuksio National Park, Metsähallitus

Comparing perceptions of different departments articulates a distance between them clearly: while conservationists have alerted ongoing issues for biodiversity, a person from the forestry department said, ‘I don’t see that our actions cause any negative effect on biodiversity now or in the future. I think the situation currently is very good’.

Supportive quotes

“ Sometimes information is not going through the organisation. Sometimes one team is acting before others have decided what to do.

Foreman, Nuuksio National Park, Metsähallitus

“ The effect of our actions is very big because we own so many forest areas and other habitats, but we don’t know the overall impact of Metsähallitus’ actions on biodiversity.

Specialist, Nature Conservation, Metsähallitus

“ There are holes in the organisational structure of what should be done, but it is not anyone’s responsibility. Nobody is, for example, considering areas that would need the collaboration of Nature Services and Forestry.

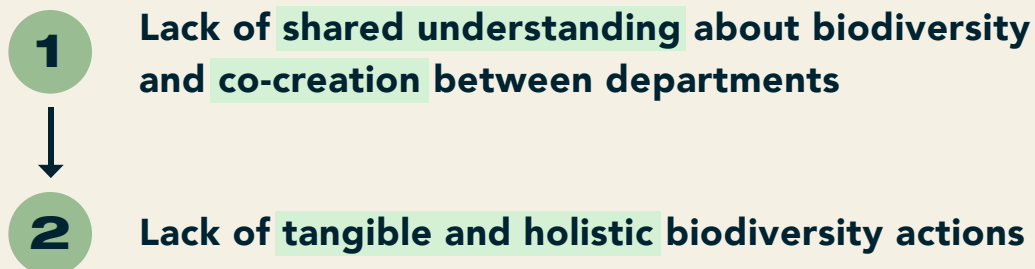
Lead Service Designer, Metsähallitus

“ Only by common understanding and cooperation we can commonly improve nature conservation.

Specialist in Visitor Data, Metsähallitus

3.3 Issues

Underpinned by our research results and analysis, we concluded there are two issues with a causal nature:



Metsähallitus has made enormous efforts to address biodiversity loss. However, most of those are initiated only by the conservation department, and tangible actions are not enough implemented in concrete ways in other departments. Due to the lack of cooperation and information flow on the biodiversity issue, the holistic approach that would consider the whole Metsähallitus' impact on biodiversity has not been achieved, and as a result, the effects are so far unclear.

Biodiversity loss is a wicked problem that requires a holistic and collaborative approach to solve (Sharman & Mlambo, 2012). In order to implement such tangible and holistic actions, it is essential to foster a shared understanding and co-creation involving all different departments in a particular area.

“ There should be more co-work to take care of the areas. Nature cannot be divided by departments.

Foreman, Nuuksio National Park, Metsähallitus

4. Solution Development

4.1 Design Intervention

Types of intervention

	Influence	Engage	Design	Develop	Resource	Deliver	Control
'softer' powers	Advising	Listening	Connecting	Championing	Charging	Nudging	Devolving
	Lobbying	Informing	Engaging	Agreeing	Incentivising	Educating	Providing assurance
	Agenda setting	Consulting	Analysing	Partnering	Contracting	Building	Licensing
	Role Modelling	Convening	Forecasting	Planning	Co-funding	Providing	Regulating
	Auditing	Collaborating	Modelling	Commissioning	Targeting	Reforming	Intervening
	Governing	Negotiating	Testing	Interpreting	Investing	Safeguarding	Enforcing
	Publishing	Running elections	Piloting	Codifying	Funding	Preventing	Sanctioning
More 'formal' powers	Scrutinising	Setting standards	Evaluating	Legislating	Recovering	Protecting	Prosecuting

Patterns of action

Created from Gov.uk (2020)

We explored our approach through a toolkit called ‘Government as a System’ cross-suiting styles of action (Gov.uk, 2020). By considering a proper leverage point to impact on our issues significantly, we identified ‘Governing’, ‘Collaborating’ and ‘Modelling’ as key elements.

Key approaches

- ▶ **Governing:** to establish and set up a formal structure as a board.
- ▶ **Collaborating:** to collaborate with different actors from across the system to deliver outcomes.
- ▶ **Modelling:** to design different scenarios, shaping and deciding on delivery models.

4.2 Best Practices

Best practices gathered from around the world have provided a certain direction for tackling these issues.

For example, Betuyab, a tourism management organisation in Turkey, is one of the best cases of engaging and collaborating with various stakeholders in a particular region. In this case, Betuyab achieved a declaration that no new tourism investment would be allowed in the area.

Case: Belek Tourism Investors Association (Betuyab)



image: Visit Belek (n.d).

Belek Tourism Investors Association (Betuyab), located in a coastal region in Turkey, is a tourism management organization established in 1988 by regional investors with the backing of the Ministry of Tourism (Sustainable Tourism, n.d.). It includes investors, local residents, official organizations and institutions, and relevant ministries (Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environment, etc.).

Achievements

- ▶ All investors in the area handed over control to Betuyab to develop the region.
- ▶ In the interests of sustainability, it was decided that no new tourism investment would be allowed in the area.

The reason for its success

- ▶ Betuyab has all the power in the decision making over the area and is not divided into different departments.
- ▶ Betuyab focuses on the specific area, which allows stakeholders to work closely despite the involvement of various actors.

4.2 Validation

By synthesising our approaches and best practices, we came up with a feasible idea to increase the quality and frequency of communication between departments: 'creating a board' for biodiversity.

The validation of our idea with Metsähallitus showed that creating a board would be a viable solution to bridge different departments. In addition, it indicated that our intervention would be necessary to be a more 'soft', informal and action-oriented approach rather than a larger and formal board, based on their experiences of former projects and organisational structure.

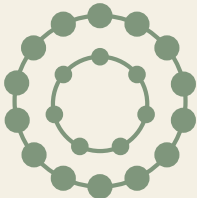
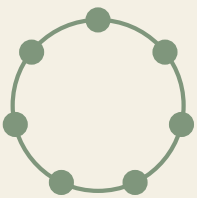
“ There was something good about the old park areas that were small, and people met in everyday manners. ... We had more regional directors who knew the area ... and had close conversations with forestry. More human-sized was better.

Specialist in Visitor Data, Metsähallitus

“ We used to have regional offices where we would meet people from different departments during coffee breaks.

Director, Forest Management, Metsähallitus

Comparison of large and small format

	Large-scale	Small-scale
		
Outcome	large strategies	tangible actions
Frequency	low	high
Formality	formal	casual
Stakeholders	wide interests	more focused

5. Proposal

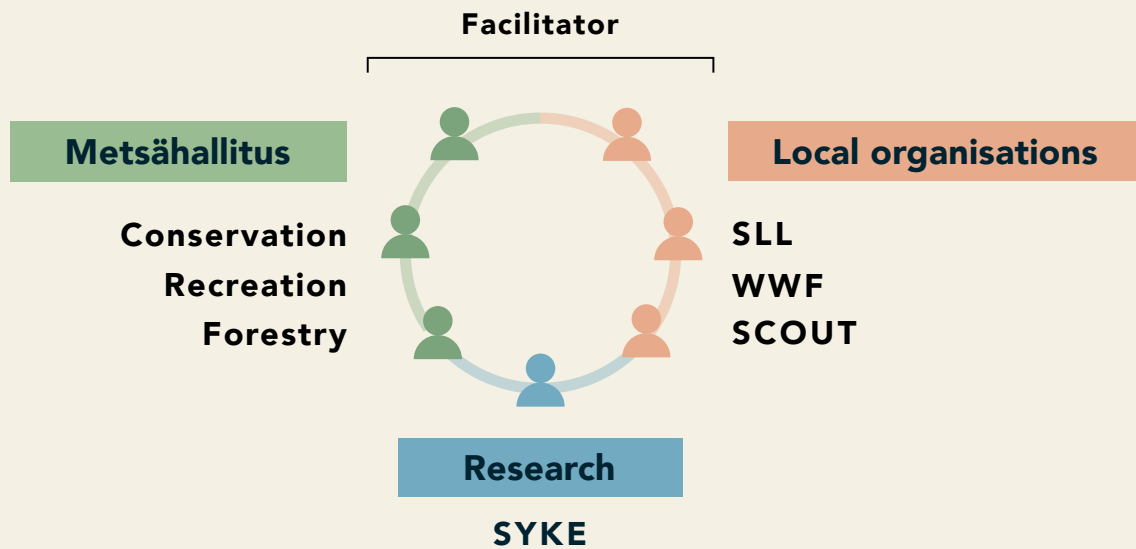
5.1 Coffee Table for Biodiversity

Overview

'Coffee Table for Biodiversity' is a reintroduced feature in organizational communication. It is established to organize regular meetings to discuss biodiversity, bring together different stakeholders, and increase understanding of a specific area. Led by a facilitator, participants are expected to discuss ongoing issues and their ideas, agree on several concrete solutions to improve the state of local biodiversity and implement these ideas into reality.



5.2 Coffee Table Structure



Involved stakeholders

From Metsähallitus, the departments of conservation, recreation and forestry should be present. In addition, several stakeholders would be invited to the coffee table.

- ▶ **SYKE** (Finnish Environment Institute)
SYKE can contribute with the most on-date scientific knowledge and benefit themselves by getting the latest information and data from the practitioners of Metsähallitus.
- ▶ **SLL, WWF and SCOUT**
They are local organisations that know the specific issues in the area and already have established cooperation with Metsähallitus. They can give a voice to the citizen side and also be actual actors in the implementation of concrete actions.
- ▶ **One facilitator**
The person outside the Metsähallitus encourages collaboration and co-creation between participants in a more informal and lively way.

Our proposal is focused primarily on the internal communication within Metsähallitus. However, every department and stakeholder represents a small part or perspective of biodiversity. That is why it is essential that all different stakeholders gather, share and talk about what they are working on and what challenges they are facing.

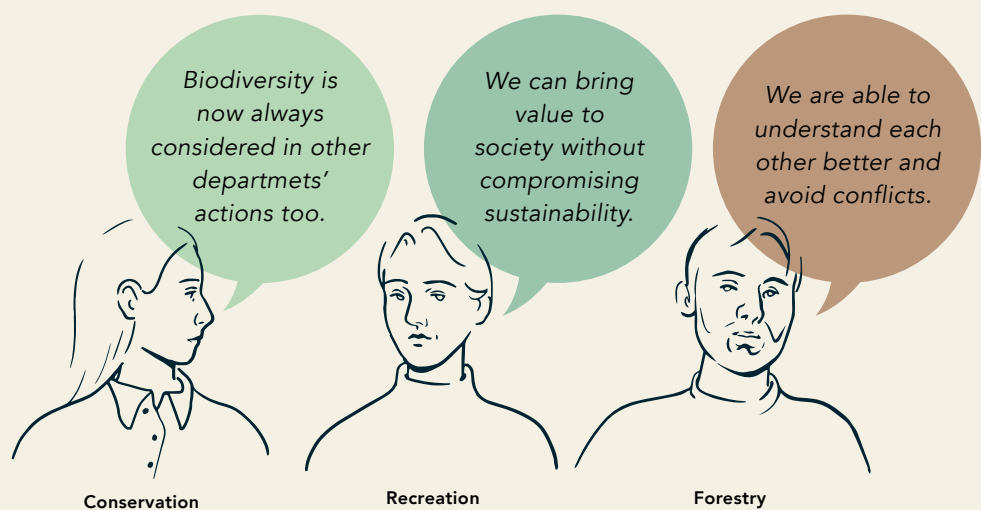
5.3 Possible Changes

Adopting this proposal would bring three possible outcomes: 1) building a common ground inside Metsähallitus based on scientific knowledge, 2) implementing tangible and holistic actions for biodiversity, and 3) realising co-creation both inside and outside Metsähallitus.

Before		After
Lack of shared understanding about biodiversity	→	Common ground inside organisation, based on scientific knowledge
Biodiversity visions and strategies without actions	→	Tangible and holistic actions for biodiversity
Lack of collaboration between stakeholders	→	Co-creation inside and outside Metsähallitus

5.4 Participant incentives

Each participant can bring their own concerns to the coffee table. Our interviews revealed that all the departments have different perspectives on the benefits of a coffee table. For example, a conservation specialist demands that biodiversity is adequately considered throughout the organisation. For a forestry director, it is crucial to avoid misunderstandings inside and outside the organisation. In addition, potential participants besides Metsähallitus regard Metsähallitus as one of their essential partners to collaborate with due to the amount of naturally valuable areas owned by the state. The coffee table can respond to each of these concerns.



6. Pilot Implementation

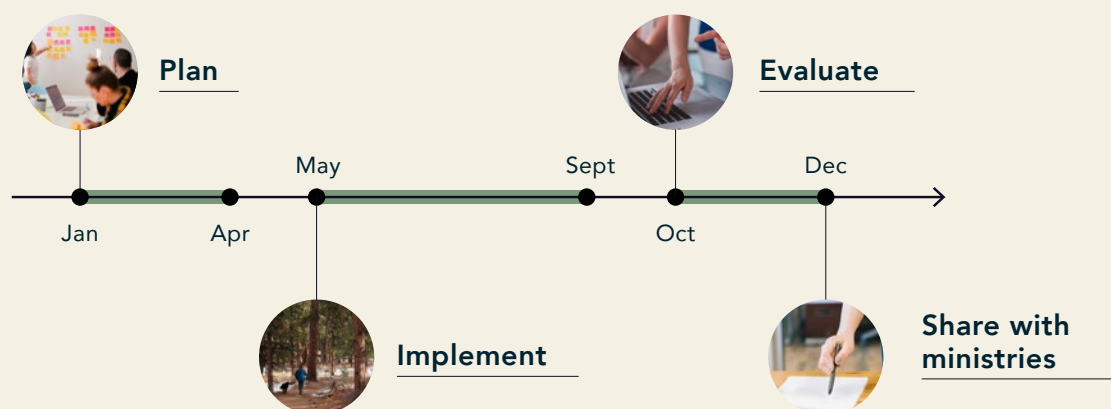
6.1. Pilot Practicalities

We suggest that the Coffee Table for Biodiversity starts in Nuuksio National Park and its surrounding forests as a pilot. The frequency of the meeting can be four to eight times a year. The outcome of such discussions focuses on biodiversity and can create conversations and implement regenerative activities.

- ▶ **Area:** Nuuksio + surrounding areas
- ▶ **Frequency:** 4-8 times/year, defined by participants
- ▶ **Outcome:** Establish a holistic biodiversity-led action plan
and open dialogue with higher-level relative actors

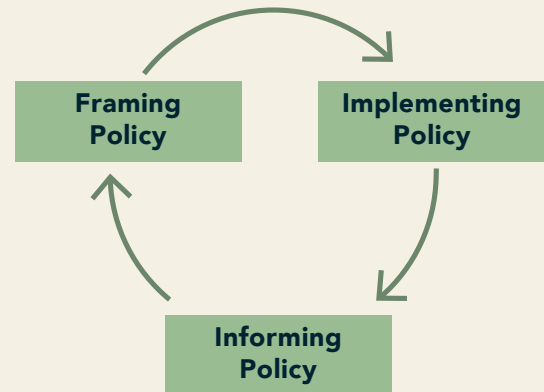
6.2 Yearly Schedule

Planning can be set from January to April, and implementation can start from May to September. Afterwards, the actions can be evaluated. The evaluation includes a conversation with steering ministries to share feedback from practitioners and external actors.



6.3 Feedback Cycle for Policy-making

Because the operations of Metsähallitus are dependent on the goals and budgets given by the Government, biodiversity loss has always been a political subject. Our solution is not only to implement the existing policies but also to inform new ones. The nationwide feedback will keep biodiversity in political discussion continuously.



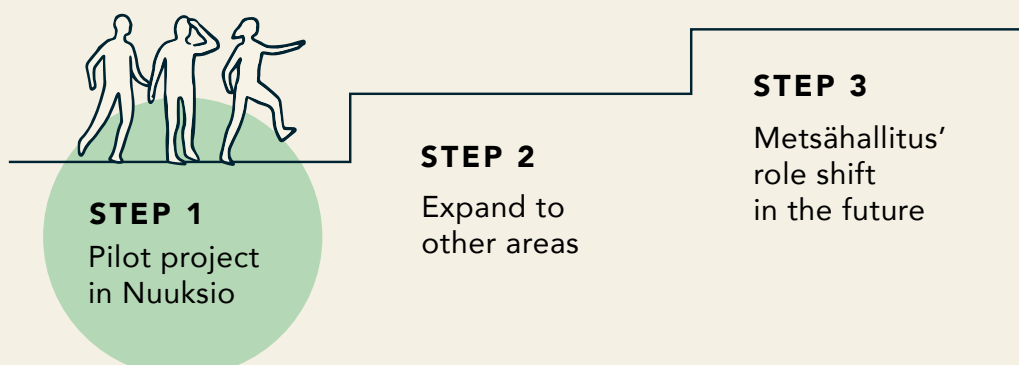
Created from Juninger, 2013

6.4 Steps of Change

Our suggestion looks at the future.

- ▶ **First step:** Start and evaluate the pilot in and around Nuuksio.
- ▶ **Second step:** Expand to the national level.
- ▶ **Third step:** This will invite a major shift in Metsähallitus' role in Finland.

Currently, Metsähallitus is recognised as the organisation in charge of recreation, conservation, and forestry. However, by expanding coffee tables to the national level, Metsähallitus would become the host of nationwide biodiversity discussions in Finland, providing a meeting point for practitioners, scientists, and citizens to come together and work together for biodiversity. In other words, in the future, Metsähallitus could be the facilitator of a livable environment for future generations.



7. Reflection

In this report, we identified issues of the lack of tangible and holistic actions, shared understanding and co-creation for biodiversity in Finland between departments inside Metsähallitus. Based on these findings, we proposed the Coffee Table for Biodiversity to overcome the communication and collaboration inside Metsähallitus and organisations. Our proposal requires to go beyond borders between departments or organisations, but it would impact essential aspects of solving biodiversity loss.

Firstly, we believe that our efforts were well achieved in two ways: 1) we were able to take a multifaceted view of the given problem by planning various research, including desk research, interviews, fieldwork and a questionnaire from an early phase; 2) we tackled the fundamental issue beyond the given problem frame, identified and developed tangible enough but leveraged ideas.

On the other hand, shifting our focus from the visitor aspect to the internal aspect of Metsähallitus was a considerable challenge. In order to have a practical impact on any situation, we often need to go beyond the border of the issue, as we did in this case. However, in such a stretched issue framing, it is quite difficult to find a specific point of view that can solve the problem and can be accepted by a client. We have conducted multiple validations in our process, but ideally, more validation could have been considered to make the solution more feasible and acceptable.

However, we are convinced that our idea contributes to the improvement of biodiversity in Finland. We wish the problem of biodiversity loss would be solved urgently, and Metsähallitus would play a pivotal role in facilitating the transition to a sustainable future for Finnish biodiversity.

Lastly, we would like to express our appreciation to all those who participated in our interviews and questionnaire, our mentor Hella Hernberg, the course director Núria Solsona Caba, and Susanne Nylund and Liisa Kajala from Metsähallitus.

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Appedix

Questionnaire (1/2)

Are you currently living in the city of Espoo? / Asutko tällä hetkellä Espoossa?*

Yes, I live in Espoo. / Kyllä, asun Espoossa.

No, but I work or study in Espoo. / En, mutta opiskelen tai teen töitä Espoossa.

No, but I live in Helsinki metropolitan area. / En, mutta asun pääkaupunkiseudulla.

No, but I have a summer cottage or similar in Espoo. / En, mutta minulla on kesämökki tai muu vapaa-ajan asunto Espoossa.

No. / En.

Have often do you visit Nuuksio National Park? / Kuinka usein vieraillet Nuuksion kansallispuistossa?*

I have never visited. / En ole koskaan vieraillut.

Sometimes (under once a year). / Joskus (alle kerran vuodessa).

1-2 times a year. / 1-2 kertaa vuodessa.

3-6 times a year / 3-6 kertaa vuodessa

Once a month or a bit more. / Kerran kuussa tai hieman useammin.

Weekly. / Viikottain.

Do you consider yourself as a 'local' of Nuuksio National Park? / Koetko olevasi 'paikallinen' Nuuksion kansallispuistossa?*

Yes / Kyllä

No / En

How do you usually travel to Nuuksio National Park? / Miten yleensä matkustat Nuuksion kansallispuistoon?

Walking or bicycling / Kävelen tai pyörällä

Public transportation / Julkisella liikenteellä

Private vehicle / Yksityisautolla

How long does it take you to travel to Nuuksio from your home by your usual transporting method? / Kuinka kauan matka kotoasi Nuuksioon kestää tavanomaisella kulkumuodollasi?

Less than 15 mins / Vähemmän kuin 15 minuuttia

Less than 30 mins / Vähemmän kuin puoli tuntia

Between 30 mins - 1 hour / Puolesta tunnista tuntiin

More than 1 hour / Enemmän kuin tunti

In the next questions we will ask in more detail about your visiting and experiences in Nuuksio. If you are not visiting, please skip the following questions. / Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat vierailuasi ja kokemuksiäsi Nuuksiossa. Jos et ole koskaan vieraillut, voit ohittaa seuraavat kysymykset.

Where do you get your information from to plan your visit to Nuuksio National Park? You can pick several. / Mistä yleensä hankit tietoa Nuuksion kansallispuistossa vierailua tai sen suunnittelua varten? Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.

Website of Nuuksio: Nationalparks.fi / Nuuksion nettisivuilta: Luontoon.fi

Google maps

Social media / Sosiaalisesta mediasta

Blogs / Blogeista

On-site (such as info boards, info center) / Paikan päällä (esim. infotauluista, infokeskuksesta)

HSL App / HSL Reittiopas

Questionnaire (2/2)

What activities do you think are permitted in Nuksio National Park? Indicate which activities are permitted. / Mitkä seuraavista teoista ovat mielestäsi sallittuja Nuksion kansallispuistossa? Merkitse sallitut.

- Walking / Kävely
- Cross-country skiing / Maastohiihto
- Swimming / Uinti
- Canoeing / Melonta
- Cycling / Pyöräily
- Use of motor vehicles / Moottoriajoneuvojen käyttö
- Pets without leash / Lemmikit ilman hihnaa
- Picking berries and mushrooms / Sienien ja marjojen poimiminen
- Making a fire / Tulenteke
- Picking non-edible plants / Ei-syötävien kasvien keräily

Have you ever done any of these actions in Nuksio National Park? You can pick several. / Oletko tehnyt mitään seuraavista Nuksion kansallispuistossa? Voit valita useamman.

- Picking up mushrooms or berries / Poiminut sieniä tai marjoja
- Making a bonfire on a designated area / Sytyttänyt nuotion sille merkitylle alueelle
- Making a bonfire out of a designated area / Sytyttänyt nuotion jonnekin muualle
- Stayed a night / Viettänyt yön
- Walking your dog without leash / Kävelyttänyt koiraa ilman hihnaa
- Mountain biking / Maastopyöräily
- Walking off-trail / Kävellyt merkityn polun ulkopuolella
- Visited in a group bigger than 4 / Vierailut isommassa kuin neljän joukkiossa
- Participated in social events / Osallistunut tapahtumaan
- Leaving trash behind / Roskannut
- Posting a picture in social media / Julkaissut kuvan sosiaalisessa mediassa
- Found a nesting animal / Löytänyt pesivän eläimen

Do you think there are currently any environmental issues considering Nuksio National Park? / Koskeeko jokin ympäristöongelma mielestäsi Nuksion kansallispuistoa tällä hetkellä?

Do you consider the environment while visiting Nuksio? How? / Huomioitko ympäristöä jollakin tavalla vieraillessasi Nuksiossa? Miten?

Have you learned something about biodiversity or sustainability while visiting Nuksio national park? / Oletko oppinut jotain luonnon monimuotoisuudesta tai kestävydestä vieraillessasi Nuksion kansallispuistossa?

- Yes / Kyllä
- No / En

Do you know if there are any ongoing nature conservation projects in Nuksio National Park? e.g. filling up forestry ditches. Please let us also know if you don't know. / Tiedätkö, onko Nuksion kansallispuistossa jokin käynnissä oleva luonnonsuojeluprojekti? Kerro myös, mikäli et tiedä.

- No / En

If regenerative activities are offered in Nuksio, how often would you join? / Jos Nuksiossa olisi tarjolla luontoa uudistavaa toimintaa, kuinka usein voisit kuvitella osallistuvasi?

- I wouldn't or couldn't join. / En haluaisi tai pystyisi osallistumaan.
- I think I could join a few times a year. / Voisin osallistua muutaman kerran vuodessa.
- I would to join once a month. / Voisin osallistua kerran kuussa.
- I can join once a week. / Voisin osallistua kerran viikossa.

Why don't you want to participate or what is important for you to want to participate? / Miksi osallistuisit tai et osallistuisi?

If you have any opinions or any experiences on Nuksio National Park, please share! / Jos sinulla on muita mielipiteitä tai kokemuksia Nuksiosta, voit jakaa ne tässä!