

eNaBLS

BeWell
Living Lab
Vytautas Magnus University

eNaBLS' Lithuanian Living Lab "BeWell"

Coordinated by

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
MCMXXII

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Transforming Campus Ecosystems into Real-Life NBS Labs

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The Rationale

Addressing biodiversity loss and climate resilience requires converting academic campuses into active, real-life environments for experimentation and learning.

The **Lithuanian Living Lab** (BeWell) utilises campus green infrastructure - primarily the VMU Arboretum, Kamša Forest, and green spaces - as a physical and digital platform for biodiversity restoration. By connecting higher education, TVET institutions, municipalities, and local communities, BeWell embeds Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) into formal study programs and public environmental action.

The Core Question

How can campus green spaces and digital arboretums empower students and communities through hands-on NBS learning?

Key Pillars & Goals

- **Formal Accredited Curriculum:** Launching a new accredited 3 ECTS course (*Nature-Based Environment Protection Solutions*) within Applied Ecology.
- **Arboretum Real-Life Lab:** Utilising physical and virtual arboretum spaces for citizen science, biodiversity monitoring, and co-creation.
- **HE–TVET–Community Synergy:** Uniting university students, vocational learners, regional parks, and municipal actors in hands-on meadow and forest restoration.

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Bringing the BeWell Living Lab to Life

The 3-Phase Implementation Journey

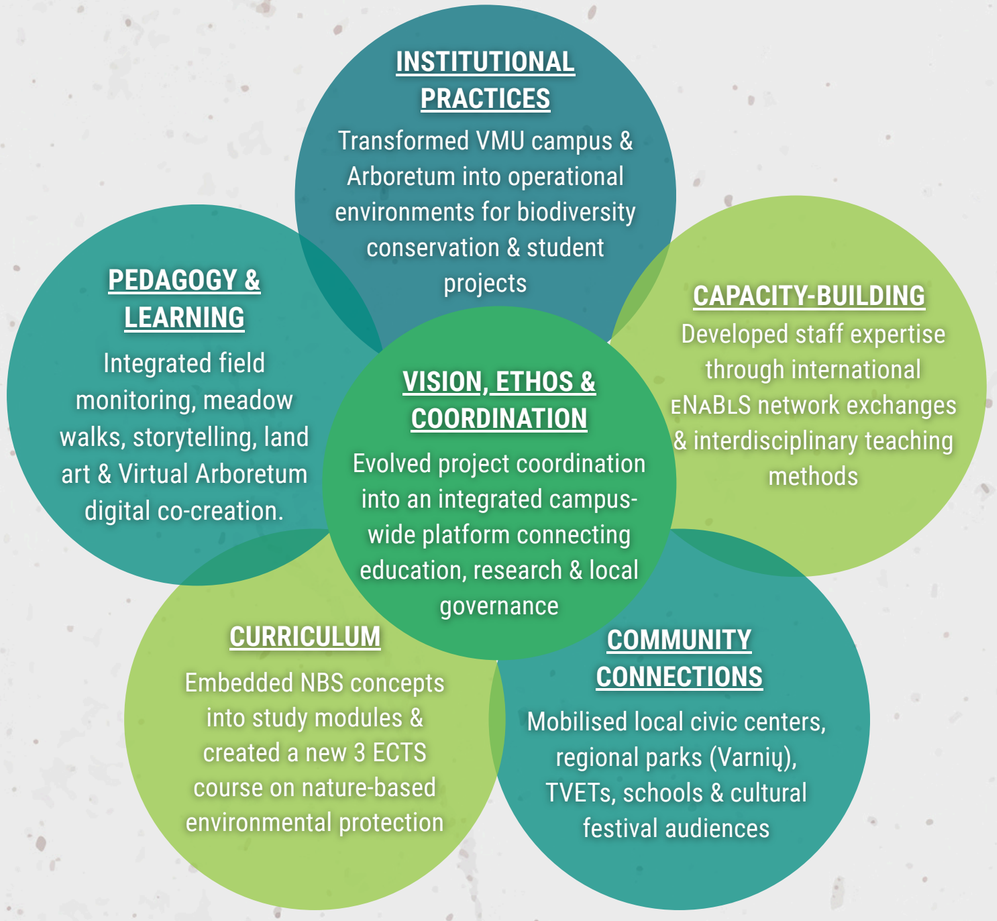
STEP 01 — **Plan & Co-Design:** Mapped VMU campus infrastructure (Arboretum, Kamša Forest) and established phased co-creation frameworks with Kaunas District Municipality.

STEP 02 — **Experiment & Diversify:** Launched citizen science monitoring, Climate Fresk workshops, creative land art, and joint meadow restoration with local communities.

STEP 03 — **Embed & Digitalise:** Accredited the 3 ECTS NBS course, piloted the Virtual Arboretum digital tool, and expanded HE–TVET joint educational activities.

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The Whole Institution Approach (WIA)



"From Campus Spaces to Experiential Learning": Combining physical field activities in the Arboretum with digital co-creation enabled students and citizens to move from passive learning to active biodiversity stewardship.

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National Ecosystem & Strategic Scaling

Core Partner Network



Digital Innovation & Creative Engagement

- **Virtual Arboretum Platform:** Developed a digital learning and zoning tool allowing stakeholders to interactively explore campus NBS designs.
- **Culture & Emotional Connection:** Merged ecological science with land art, music, and reflective nature walks to reach non-conventional audiences.

Long-Term Legacy

Accredited 3 ECTS NBS Course

Formally integrated *Nature-Based Environment Protection Solutions* into VMU's Applied Ecology degree, securing permanent educational delivery.

Physical & Digital Campus Lab

Established the VMU Arboretum and Virtual Arboretum as permanent, multi-stakeholder assets for continuous TVET, university, and civic learning.

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