17.5 Trust in decision-making procedure and decision-makers

Project Name: CONNECTING Nature (Grant Agreement no. 730222)

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Trust in decision-making and decision-makers	**Participatory Planning and Governance**
Description and justification	'Political trust' is used as a common term to measure how positively citizens regard governmental decision-making actors, institutions and processes (Seyd 2016). Political trust is considered both an important prerequisite for as well as outcome of good governance. The absence of trust shows citizens' dissatisfaction and withdrawal from the political process, and it may result in citizens who do not want to pay taxes or follow rules (Bouckaert and van de Walle 2003; van Ryzin 2011). The same holds true for nature-based solutions planning, delivery and stewardship: citizens are more likely to actively participate when they trust local decision-making and decision-makers, while at the same time co-production of nature-based solutions might enhance trust (cf. Djenontin and Meadow 2018; Ferretti et al. 2018). However, political trust is a complex concept for which it is difficult to identify a commonly accepted definition (Bouckaert and van de Walle 2003; Seyd 2016; Parker et al. 2015). Trust has been the focus of multiple disciplines, including psychology, sociology, political science, economy and organisational science (Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies 2017). Despite the myriad of definitions and operationalisations of trust within and across disciplines, Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies (2017) identify agreement about two features related to trust: a degree of 'risk' and 'interdependence'. A trusts B to do X, which is in A's interest. This yields a risk because A cannot be certain as to whether B indeed carries out X. In the case of political trust, risk becomes relevant when governments exert a certain degree of power over citizens, which can be either used properly or abused. The condition of interdependence implies that the interests of one party cannot be achieved without reliance on the other party. In the case of trust in government, if citizens want the government to solve pressing social problems, they are dependent on government organisations to deliberate on decisions, carry out policy measures, and monitor their effects. Government, on the other hand, depends on citizens to cooperate and act according to certain rules for its policies to have any effect (ibid.). Based on these two conditions, definitions of political trust lean on Mayer et al.'s (1995, p. 712) definition of trust, which originates from organisational science literature (Seyd 2016; Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies 2017): trust is "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action

important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". In this definition, the expectation of the vulnerable party (i.e. citizen) is central: the trust of person A in another person or organisation B rests on a judgement by A about how far B will act in a way consistent with their (A's) interests (Seyd 2016). This expectation is based on the perceptions that people have of 'the other': trust in government consists of the extent to which it is considered 'worthy of trust' by its citizens (Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies 2017). Accordingly, trust is often measured via beliefs or judgements on A's part that B manifests particular features or qualities that induce trust (or distrust) in A – rather than an intention or behaviour (Seyd 2016). The content of a trust belief relates to A's judgement that B possesses the qualities that render them worthy of trust (ibid.; Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies 2017).

Based on this, and to gain a more specific understanding of how trust works and can be measured, Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies (2017) devised a 'citizen trust in government organisations scale'. The scale distinguishes between different dimensions to determine a governmental organisation's perceived trustworthiness: (1) perceived competence (the extent to which a citizen perceives a government organisation to be capable, effective, skilful and professional), (2) perceived benevolence (the extent to which a citizen perceives a government organisation to care about the welfare of the public and to be motivated to act in the public interest); and (3) perceived integrity (the extent to which a citizen perceives a government organisation to be sincere, to tell the truth, and to fulfil its promises). These dimensions respond to criticism about conventional measures of political trust, which employ single-item survey measures (ibid.; Seyd 2016). To trust rests on judgements about a number of different considerations, rather than comprising a singular, generalised evaluation.

Another concern is that survey items that squeeze a range of potential evaluations into a single expressed opinion risk understate the level of uncertainty and ambivalence in people's attitudes towards different governmental bodies or even people. Along these lines, scholars emphasise that the object of political trust (who/what is trusted) needs to be clearly defined. Political trust can relate to different levels and bodies of government, e.g. national, regional and local governments, the parliament or the civil service (Bouckaert and van de Walle 2003; Parker et al. 2015). Political trust can also relate to different type of people or office holders – politicians or public officials – as well as individual persons, e.g. the president or prime minister (Parker et al. 2015). Accordingly, Parker et al. (2015) contend that trust in government reflects trust in the federal or national government, which can be distinguished from trust in incumbent political leaders, trust in state government and presidential job evaluations.

In addition, there needs to be a clear separation between its components and its potential causes – especially when aiming to establish causal relations. Findings reveal that levels of trust

	cannot simply be attributed to the good or bad functioning of an institution; they may in fact be entirely unrelated to what government is or does (Bouckaert and van de Walle 2003). Economic and political performance, institutional context, political culture, changing behaviours and values, citizen-state relationships, opportunities for citizen participation and critical events might all be important factors influencing political trust (ibid.; Kim and Lee 2012; Parker et al. 2015). Thus, if one also aims to explain the feelings of (dis)trust that A has for B, the antecedents of that trust lie in three places: (a) the characteristics of A, notably their propensity to trust; (b) the characteristics or past behaviour of B, notably the extent to which these reveal trustworthy qualities; and (c) the context in which B operates, notably whether they are faced with appropriate incentives and sanctions. Importantly, the indicators to capture levels of trust must be clearly distinguished from those to capture the reasons for that trust (Seyd 2016).
Definition	Political trust is defined as the willingness of citizens to be vulnerable to the actions of governmental decision-making and decision-makers based on their expectation that governments perform a particular action important to them, irrespective of their ability to monitor or control that other party (cf. Mayer et al. 1995). Political trust comprises evaluations of the trustworthiness of governmental decision-making and decision-makers, based on three dimensions (Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies 2017): **1) perceived competence:** the extent to which a citizen perceives a government organisation to be capable, effective, skilful and professional; **2) perceived benevolence:** the extent to which a citizen perceives a government organisation to care about the welfare of the public and to be motivated to act in the public interest; **3) perceived integrity:** the extent to which a citizen perceives a government organisation to be sincere, to tell the truth, and to fulfil its promises.
Strengths and weaknesses	+ Important measure of citizens' perceptions of and satisfaction with local government related to the nature-based solution implementation - Difficult to establish causal relations between measures of political trust and nature-based solutions implementation - Data collection could be time-consuming
Measurement procedure (P) and tool (T)	☒ *Quantitative P*: Scale inventory/Questionnaire (survey procedure, paper-and-pencil administration, computer-based administration) o T: 9 items at measuring respondents' perception of policies adapted or implemented ☒ *Qualitative P*:

	o T: case study methodology – semi-structured interviews, case study analysis, participant and non-participant observation o T: participatory data collections methods, such as focus group
Scale of measurement	The levels of political trust can be evaluated based on responses to survey questions using a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree (Seyd 2016; Grimmelkhuijsen and Knies 2017). **(1) Perceived competence** 1.a) The municipality of XX is capable. 1.b) The municipality of XX wastes a lot of public money. 1.c) Local politicians generally know what they are doing. **(2) Perceived benevolence** 2.a) Local politicians act in the interest of citizens. 2.b) The municipality of XX carries out its duty very well. 2.c) Local politicians keep their commitments. **(3) Perceived integrity** 3.a) In the main, local politicians tell the truth. 3.b) Governmental officials (e.g., civil servants)* tell us as little about what they get up to as they can. 3.c) When things go wrong, local politicians admit their mistakes. *Civil servants are higher level non-political government paid officials. They are not elected to office—they applied for their posts and are senior public servants or government administrators.
Data source	
Required data	✓ Essential: questionnaire scoring on trust ✓ Desirable: qualitative data on nature-based solutions governance processes and underlying determinants of levels of trust
Data input type	Quantitative (quantitative and qualitative, if participatory data collection methods, and/or participatory action research are opted for)
Data collection frequency	Aligned with NBS implementation and timing of targeted objectives
Level of expertise required	☒ Methodology and data analysis requires medium level expertise in social science research ☒ Quantitative data collection requires no expertise ☒ Qualitative data collection requires medium level expertise in social science research
Synergies with other indicators	

Connection with SDGs	Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
Opportunities for participatory data collection	Participatory methods (e.g., participatory data collection methods, and/or participatory action research) may be applied to collect data on nature-based solutions governance processes and underlying reasons of levels of trust to reveal underlying challenges and opportunities.
Additional information	
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