

BUSINESS CASES FOR BLUE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

BEGIN

City-to-City Learning Programme 2021: Key Takeaways

Hosts: London Borough Enfield, Kent County Council, Antwerp, CIRIA,
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BGI & THE BUSINESS CASE: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Best practices and key lessons learnt when writing a business case to raise funding and support for BGI

To successfully raise funding for a BGI project it's crucial to build a business case that sets out justification for intervention or ambition for investment. A compelling business case is clear, well structured, and written with the target audience in mind.

Research demonstrates four key steps to developing a BGI business case: define vision, objectives and expected outcomes; identify and assess all relevant impacts; develop an evidence-based business case for the BGI intervention; communicate everything clearly.

During the Business Case City-to-City Learning Workshop the London Borough of Enfield, Kent County Council, and the City of Antwerp shared lessons learnt from achieving funding and support for their recent BGI projects.

The key takeaways from the session here should be read alongside the [BEGIN guide to Developing a Compelling Business Case](#), which outlines the steps and requirements for a successful business case in detail.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Think to the Future and Include Maintenance

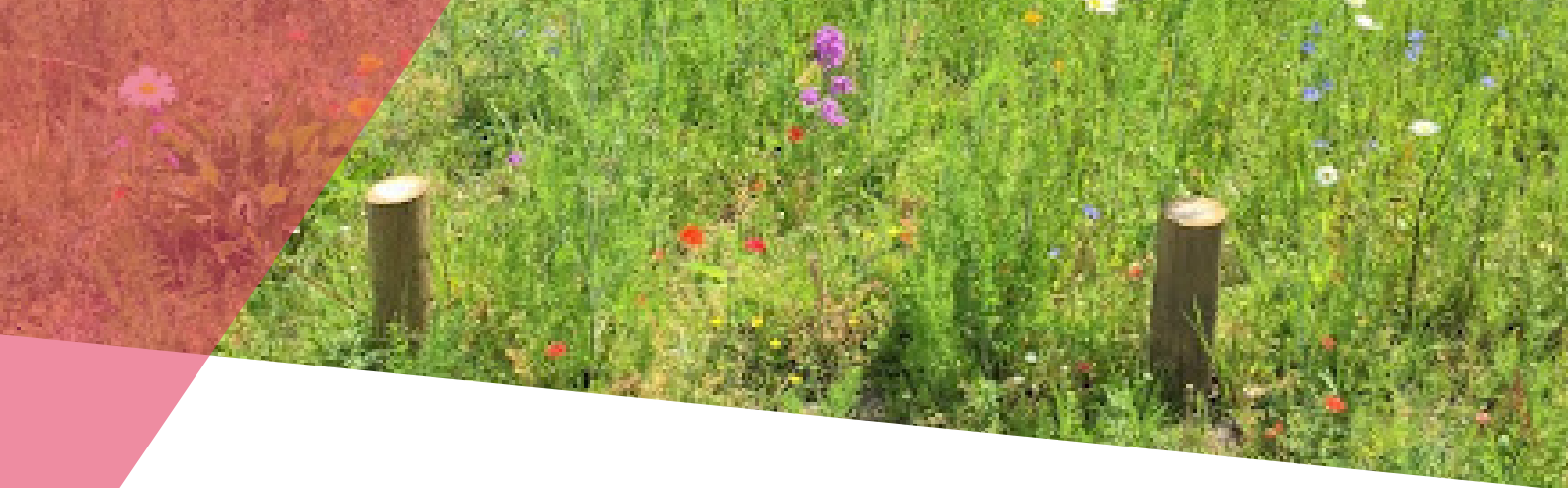
BGI projects typically require different ongoing maintenance to grey infrastructure. To set a project up for long-term success, use the business case to **account for both the capital investment and ongoing maintenance**. This could look like projections for ongoing requirements and responsibilities, additional funds to support the community in maintenance, or training to help existing teams adapt to new processes. Kent typically

proposes maintenance for 2-3 years, enough time to establish change and a **new way of working** and build the team's experience. Antwerp also involves maintenance from the design stage, which ensures preparation, but can also downsize ambition. Include **funding for maintenance and education** of team members from the get-go to ensure long-term upkeep and success.

Move from Consultation to Engagement

It's fundamental when developing a business case to assess **community motivation** and ensure that residents understand the various options. To effectively explore the different solutions takes more than sending letters – **repeated engagement, including listening to residents** will help ensure the results are well received, **meet local needs**, and that there will be **community support** for ongoing maintenance. In Kent listening to residents resulted in improved biodiversity (wildflowers), replacing

proposed fences with bollards and removing some hedging. Kent County Council found that fundamental to good engagement with residents is **continuity** – regular assurance, through letters, activities, or notifications, maintains trust and interest, especially when work needs to pause (for seeding, for example). Kent also highlighted how **partnering with a third-party** to [conduct community engagement](#) helped avert resident's pre-conceived ideas about the council, **creating room for trust in the process**.



Adapt to your Audience

There's no template to the business case, and it's key to **tailor your arguments**, presentation, and form to each specific audience. The UK, for example, is particularly concerned with economic justification, requiring projects to demonstrate that they meet strategic and management requirements.

The London Borough of Enfield highlighted that a business case can be pitched at a range of scales – **micro, medium, and macro** – and recommended determining the scale of the project before deciding where to go for funding and, as such, how to present the business case to meet funding requirements.

Provide a Justification for Intervention

Central to a successful business case is the justification for intervention. This requires gathering and **presenting evidence** such as flood hazard mapping, carbon capture projections, and health impact predictions. Enfield's experience with strategic sustainable drainage systems (Strategic SuDS) has explored how SuDS can attract funding from multiple

different sources by demonstrating the wider benefits of the approach. They used flood risk management as a starting point then expanded the business case to other benefits. The scheme reduced property damage due to flooding, but also improved health, and achieved traffic calming. **All wider and core benefits should be backed up with evidence.**

Don't Underestimate the Importance of Partnerships

Partnerships can be crucial to building a convincing business case and delivering BGI projects successfully. BGI means the strict division of above and below ground needs to be left behind. In Antwerp, the city districts, typically responsible for street level design and financing, are partnering with sewer companies to co-finance and co-design BGI. Partnering has

increased **integration and efficiency** and improves both teams' capacity for calculating and justifying interventions. In Enfield, SuDS can be integrated into existing projects, **reducing costs to almost nothing, if different departments cooperate.** Enfield have invited different teams to SuDS seminars to identify and target these missed BGI opportunities.



BGI & BUSINESS CASES WORKSHOP

Hosts: London Borough Enfield, Kent County Council, The City of Antwerp, CIRIA

This City-2-City Online Learning Workshop was organised in the framework of the BEGIN project. BEGIN's aim is to create more attractive, enjoyable and sustainable climate-proofed cities. The workshop is part of a series of peer-learning workshops during which host cities from the BEGIN network learn from each other's best practices in various blue green infrastructure (BGI) challenge areas, brainstorm new ideas and think about the next steps for their BGI practices.

During the BGI & Business Cases workshop, partner cities shared their experiences and results building a business case to gain support and funding for BGI projects. This document outlines the key lessons learnt.

Other workshops and briefs in this series:

BGI & Health, BGI & Biodiversity, BGI & Art and Community

Reference this document:

De La Haye, A., Van Herk, S., Aivalioti, S., Giraldo, P., (2021): Blue Green Infrastructure & Business Cases: Key Takeaways; BEGIN city-2-city learning programme 2021

