

## ANALISI AMBIENTALE E PROGETTAZIONE ECOSISTEMICA

Sondaggi, criticità e soluzioni applicative

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ECOSYSTEMIC DESIGN

Survey, critical issues and application solutions

Chiara Catalano, Andrea Balducci

### ABSTRACT

La frammentazione, il degrado ambientale e la perdita di habitat, dovuti all'urbanizzazione e al conseguente sviluppo delle infrastrutture, causano una forte pressione sulla diversità biologica e sul funzionamento degli ecosistemi; nei prossimi decenni, l'impronta delle aree urbane è destinata ad aumentare, esacerbando l'effetto dei cambiamenti climatici. In questo contesto, i progetti di sviluppo urbano rappresentano una grande opportunità per la sperimentazione e applicazione di nuove soluzioni con lo scopo di promuovere la biodiversità. Questo lavoro mira a individuare, da un lato la consapevolezza dei progettisti verso soluzioni che mirino al supporto della biodiversità, dall'altro come l'analisi spaziale e l'adozione di procedure parametriche possano ottimizzare la cooperazione tra ecologi e progettisti sin dalle prime fasi progettuali.

Fragmentation, environmental degradation, and habitat loss, due to urbanization and the consequent development of infrastructure, put a great deal of pressure on biological diversity and the functioning of ecosystems. In the coming decades, the ecological footprint of urban areas is set to increase, exacerbating the effect of climate change. In this context, urban development projects represent an excellent opportunity to experiment and implement new solutions which promote biodiversity. This work investigates, on the one hand, how aware designers are of solutions that aim to support biodiversity, and on the other hand, how spatial analysis and the adoption of parametric procedures can optimize cooperation between ecologists and designers from the early design stages.

### KEYWORDS

biodiversità, architettura, progetto, natura, design parametrico

biodiversity, architecture, project, nature, parametric design

**Chiara Catalano**, Architect and Urban Ecologist, is a Researcher at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) in Switzerland; she is a Member of the Green Space Development Research Group, where she carries out research on urban vegetation models and the implementation of green infrastructures. Her latest research project is aimed at the ecosystem design of the building envelope conceived as a habitat capable of hosting wild flora and fauna. Mob. +39 328/805.96.36 | E-mail: cata@zhaw.ch

**Andrea Balducci**, Environmental Engineer, holds an MSc in Environment and Natural Resources from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) in Switzerland. He collaborated with the Green Space Development Research Group of the Institute of Natural Resources Sciences of the ZHAW and gained work experience during an internship at the green building company Hydroplant AG (Switzerland) and the studio Laura Gatti (Italy). E-mail: andrea.balducci044@gmail.com

Come risultato del crescente numero di abitanti, le città stanno diventando sempre più densamente popolate e 'diffuse', mettendo così a dura prova i sistemi sociali, l'assistenza sanitaria e le infrastrutture ed esercitando una maggiore pressione sull'ambiente e sugli ecosistemi naturali (Apfelbeck et alii, 2020); infatti, la frammentazione e il degrado ambientale, la perdita di habitat e gli effetti dei cambiamenti climatici in atto stanno causando un grave e repentino declino della biodiversità a livello globale (Grimm et alii, 2008). A scala urbana, una delle strategie messe in atto per affrontare questioni come l'adattamento ai cambiamenti climatici, la giustizia ambientale e la conservazione della biodiversità è stata l'implementazione di quei servizi ecosistemici forniti da aree e spazi verdi (formali e informali) quale strategia. Ciò suggerisce che, sebbene la crescente urbanizzazione abbia attualmente un impatto negativo sulla biodiversità, questa costituisce anche una grande opportunità per sperimentare dei modelli alternativi di sviluppo sostenibile che prendano in considerazione gli ecosistemi e la loro conservazione (Opoku, 2019).

Se condividiamo la visione del 'net-positive design' (Birkeland, 2008) secondo la quale l'ambiente costruito debba restituire all'ambiente naturale più di quanto consuma, gli edifici dovrebbero non solo diventare 'eco-produttivi', ma anche compensare l'impatto ambientale legato allo sviluppo precedente, dando spazio agli ecosistemi indigeni e aumentando così i servizi ecosistemici in termini assoluti (Birkeland, 2009). Affinché ciò accada il futuro della biodiversità urbana dipende strettamente dalla cooperazione interdisciplinare (Ignatieva, 2010) e dall'integrazione degli obiettivi di conservazione biologica nella pianificazione a diverse scale (Garrard et alii, 2018). Pertanto, da un lato gli ecologi dovrebbero essere coinvolti fin dalle prime fasi di progettazione (Miller et alii, 2012), dall'altro i progettisti dovrebbero essere coinvolti nella pianificazione delle misure di conservazione (Ross et alii, 2015).

Tecnologie emergenti come il GeoBIM (Moretti et alii, 2021), ovvero la recente combinazione Building Information Modeling (BIM) e Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mostrano come la collaborazione tra progettisti ed ecologi permetta di individuare soluzioni con una migliore qualità ambientale (Moura and Campagna, 2018). In questa direzione, sono già stati sviluppati diversi metodi e approcci che fanno delle conoscenze ecologiche uno strumento progettuale, come nel caso dell'Animal Aided Design (AAD) di Weisser e Hauck (2017) e del Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) di Garrard e Bekessy (2015). L'AAD è una metodologia applicabile alla progettazione di spazi aperti urbani che tiene conto dei cicli di vita di alcune specie target e degli obiettivi di conservazione della biodiversità (Apfelbeck et alii, 2019, 2020); il BSUD è un approccio volto a supportare in maniera puntuale, ma non circoscritta, la biodiversità attraverso la creazione di nuovi habitat che favoriscano lo spostamento degli organismi attraverso diverse tipologie e densità di sviluppo urbano (Garrard et alii, 2018). Oltre alle metodologie citate, Gunnell, Murphy e Williams (2019) hanno pubblicato la guida tecnica *Designing for Biodiversity* che illustra come integrare sia nelle costruzioni nuove sia in quelle già esistenti (a basse o zero emissioni) del Regno Unito le specie che solita-

mente nidificano sugli edifici (ad esempio uccelli e pipistrelli), sulla base delle loro esigenze vitali.

Eppure, integrare dati ambientali o i cicli di vita di alcune specie target non è una pratica progettuale comune e dipende spesso dagli obiettivi specifici del progetto o dalla filosofia del gruppo di lavoro; infatti, vi è ancora incertezza su quali fattori e incentivi possano motivare pianificatori e architetti a integrare l'analisi spaziale ed ecologica sin dalle prime fasi progettuali, nonché considerare certi aspetti biologici legati alla fauna selvatica come parte integrante del processo compositivo e costruttivo, realizzando così delle vere e proprie 'ecolopes' (Ludwig, Hensel and Wolfgang, 2021).

**Obiettivi della ricerca** | L'obiettivo specifico del presente studio è quello di ottimizzare strumenti e modalità di cooperazione tra ecologi e progettisti attraverso: 1) l'integrazione di mappe di idoneità degli habitat nei metodi di progettazione; 2) l'adozione di procedure parametriche che automatizzino l'integrazione nell'involucro edilizio di elementi BIM a supporto di alcune specie selvatiche. Esso è stato condotto nell'ambito del progetto internazionale 'Design and Modelling of Urban Ecosystems – A spatial-based approach to integrate habitats in built ecosystems' (DeMo) che mira a sviluppare un quadro di riferimento multidisciplinare e un approccio per la progettazione di ecosistemi in aree costruite, facilitando la colonizzazione e lo spostamento delle specie animali e vegetali (Catalano et alii, 2021).

**Il questionario** | Per ottenere informazioni sulla consapevolezza e la disponibilità ad adottare strategie di progettazione ispirate a criteri ecologici, il questionario online Data Interoperability for Ecological and Spatial Oriented Design in AEC è stato preparato su Google Forms. Rivolgendosi a professionisti, accademici e studenti attivi nei settori dell'Architettura, dell'Ingegneria e delle Costruzioni (AEC), il link al questionario è stato condiviso in quattro modi (Tab. 1): spedito via e-mail ai contatti personali (A) e agli esperti elencati nel repository dell'Associazione Svizzera per l'Edilizia Sostenibile (B); pubblicato sul profilo LinkedIn di A. Balducci (C); proposto come attività agli studenti di Architettura del Paesaggio e Architettura da C. Catalano durante una lezione tenuta per il Laboratorio di Arte dei Giardini e Architettura del Paesaggio presso l'Università degli Studi di Palermo (D).

Il questionario conteneva 43 elementi (domande) raggruppati in 6 sezioni (Tab. 2). I nomi dei partecipanti sono stati codificati in base al pool degli intervistati, in ordine cronologico, e raggruppati in sei categorie professionali principali; mentre le risposte sono state raggruppate in base al tipo, alla categoria e all'esperienza lavorativa degli intervistati (Tab. 3). Considerando che le domande erano a scelta multipla e che alcuni intervistati rappresentavano più di una categoria professionale, la categoria 'multidisciplinare' è stata aggiunta a posteriori. La condivisione attraverso i suddetti canali ha prodotto quattro pool di intervistati, numericamente molto diversi tra loro, le cui risposte sono state raggruppate e successivamente analizzate in Excel (Build 13801.21092).

Su un totale di 60 intervistati, la metà era composta da architetti, seguiti da architetti paesaggisti (21%), da intervistati con un profilo multidisciplinare (8%), da pianificatori (5%) e infine da ingegneri

ambientali (5%). Agronomi, pianificatori ambientali, consulenti per la sostenibilità e la cartografia digitale erano rappresentati solo dal 2%. Le tipologie professionali degli intervistati erano composte principalmente da studenti (56,7%), seguiti da membri del settore privato (20%) e ricercatori (5%). Da questi risultati descrittivi si evince una sovrarappresentazione della categoria 'architetti' che rende il sondaggio statisticamente poco robusto; inoltre va tenuto conto che quasi la metà degli intervistati era costituita da studenti di Architettura italiani, pertanto i risultati non possono essere considerati come rappresentativi né della categoria professionale, né del panorama internazionale. In uno studio futuro si dovrebbero raccogliere dati per un tempo più prolungato sfruttando ulteriori canali di diffusione interattiva come seminari e workshops.

Le domande, volte a stimare la percezione dell'utente, sono state valutate in base alla scala Likert con valori assegnati da 1 a 5, dove 1 equivale ad 'assolutamente in disaccordo' e 5 ad 'assolutamente d'accordo'. Più della metà degli intervistati era 'd'accordo' o 'assolutamente d'accordo' sull'opportunità di integrare i programmi strategici di conservazione e tutela della biodiversità nella pianificazione urbanistica, attuabile coinvolgendo sin dall'inizio gli ecologi nei gruppi interdisciplinari di progettazione e pianificazione (Sezione 4). Questo risultato ha evidenziato quanto i progettisti siano ben consapevoli degli strumenti messi in atto a supporto della biodiversità urbana già in diversi contesti europei e che siano disposti ad adottare approcci basati sul dialogo multidisciplinare.

Tra gli approcci quali Geodesign, AAD, Wildlife-Inclusive Urban Design, BSUD, Property-specific Biodiversity Index (DGNB System, 2020), le Nature-Based Solutions (European Commission, 2015) sono risultate essere le più conosciute tra quelli citati, seguite dal BSUD e dal Singapore Index (Chan et alii, 2014). Tuttavia, alcune ambiguità sono emerse in merito al concetto di 'sostenibilità' (Hassan and Lee, 2015) che viene associato prevalentemente all'efficienza energetica e all'uso di materiali sostenibili, trascurando l'aspetto ecosistemico (Gunnell, Murphy and Williams, 2019). Non sorprende pertanto che una corretta valutazione della qualità dei biotopi o delle misure della biodiversità siano scarsamente considerate negli standard di valutazione di sostenibilità ambientale urbana (Catalano et alii, 2021).

Il 67% degli intervistati ha espresso la volontà di implementare in progetti futuri approcci che includano le specie target anche senza la richiesta esplicita da parte dell'Ente appaltante o la loro definizione nelle specifiche tecniche di progetto. Il 33% ha mostrato disponibilità a implementare tali strategie, mentre nessuno ha escluso la possibilità di farlo indicando tra gli ostacoli principali il programma specifico di progetto, l'incertezza su come selezionare le specie target, il presunto aumento dei costi dovuto all'attuazione e alla manutenzione delle misure volte a favorire la biodiversità, ma soprattutto la mancanza di misure legislative e norme specifiche. La disponibilità degli intervistati a completare il questionario lascia immaginare una loro familiarità con le strategie a sostegno della biodiversità o che fossero già sensibili al tema/approccio proposto.

Nella quinta sezione del questionario è stato chiesto di esprimere una preferenza nei confronti di alcune tipologie e soluzioni progettuali (Tab. 4)

Code	Target audience	Timeframe	Potential Respondent	Nr. of Responses
A	Professional personal contacts pool (researchers and professionals in the AEC sector)	20-25 October 2021	36 Email sent	19 (31%)
B	Experts listed in the Swiss Sustainable Building Association (NNBS, nnbs.ch/)	1st November 2021	52 Email sent	4 (7%)
C	Link posted on LinkedIn	15 November 2021	22 reactions 838 views	3 (5%)
D	Students of the "Landscape Architecture and Architecture" module of the University of Palermo	25 November 2021	Submitted to 34 students	34 (57%)

Tab. 1 | Target audience groups of the questionnaire and related response rates.

S	Title	Aim/Description	Nr.
1	Aim and the scope of the questionnaire	Introduce the respondents briefly to the topic and the aim of the questionnaire/research	
2	Privacy statement and GDPR1 compliance	Gather consensus on using the submitted data	
3	Demographic information	Assess the geographical and demographic distribution of the respondents such as category, role in the field of work etc.	4
4	Awareness and perspective	Assess the awareness and perspective of the respondents concerning biodiversity and ecological based designs but also to indirectly introduce and prepare them for the topic	8
5	Understanding and acceptance	Assess the respondent's preference towards the following designing approaches and solutions to support biodiversity: Self-contained, Inserted-Habitat, Envelope-Habitat and Green Infrastructure.	17
6	Ecological maps	Assess the respondents' understanding of different types of ecological information and their readiness to use this information in a real case study (renovation of a building façade).	10
	Data type and format exchange	Assess the preferences in term of file data and format (*.shp, *.dwg, *.dxf, *.ifc, *.pdf, etc.) related to the ecological information which would enable designers to integrate ecological and spatial data in their design workflow	2
	Education	Gather respondent opinions on which skills could/should be added to university curricula to enhance interdisciplinary cooperation	2

Tab. 2 | Questionnaire – Section (S) partition: Section aim and number of questions.

Data type	Data entry
Professional category	Architect; Landscape Architect; Ecologist; Environmental Engineer; Agronomist; Planner/Urbanist
Professional typology	Government Employees; Private Sector; Self-employed; Teacher Higher Education; Researcher; Student
Working experience	Less than 5 years; 6-10 years; 11-15 years; 16-20 years; more than 20 years

Tab. 3 | Questionnaire – General information about respondents' demographics.

che affrontano il rapporto biodiversità-architettura in maniera graduale (Stokes and Chitrakar, 2012). Tra le diverse tipologie di soluzioni integrate (Fig. 1) gli intervistati hanno valutato le soluzioni 'self-contained habitat' come non soddisfacenti dal punto di vista estetico e compositivo, preferendo soluzioni meglio contestualizzate nell'involucro edilizio come gli 'inserted-habitat' e gli 'envelope-habitat'. Tuttavia, le prime sono state criticate perché restano distinte dall'involucro – come nel caso di soluzioni prefabbricate – mentre le seconde per il loro costo e l'energia grigia ad esse associate a causa dell'uso estensivo di cemento armato.

Infine, il termine 'green infrastructures' è stato messo in discussione perché spesso trattato e frainteso come soluzione tecnologica, non necessariamente abbinata a un inverdimento consapevole. Inoltre, secondo alcuni degli intervistati (risposte aperte), le misure a sostegno della biodiversità promosse nel settore AEC sono per lo più rivolte agli spazi verdi aperti, trascurando le aree densamente costruite. Infine, poiché le suddette strategie sono considerate spesso solo nelle ultime fasi del progetto, esse vengono prevalentemente percepite come un costo aggiuntivo e quindi trascurate o addirittura scoraggiate.

I risultati della sesta sezione, volta a valutare la comprensione di mappe ecologiche da parte degli intervistati, hanno mostrato come queste siano ritenute nel complesso (da moderatamente a molto) utili come strumento compositivo, in particolare la 'land use suitability' e i 'vegetation profiles' (Tabb. 5a e 5b). Nello specifico, è emerso che la scala (livello di dettaglio) e la restituzione grafica (risoluzione) delle informazioni ecologiche siano considerate rilevanti. Un giudizio altrettanto positivo è stato espresso per pittogrammi e schemi come quelli rappresentati nell'opzione 'designed structures and habitats'. Alcuni degli intervistati hanno anche affermato che una relazione tecnico-scientifica che contenga i requisiti ecologici delle specie target corredato da mappe ecologiche, commentate ed esplicitate, sia necessaria per un uso consapevole delle informazioni ambientali. Quest'ultimo aspetto rispecchia la prassi consolidata che si verifica nei gruppi di lavoro multidisciplinari in cui diversi professionisti trasferiscono le loro competenze attraverso la produzione di documentazione specialistica. Sembra confermare questa interpretazione il fatto che i formati .dwg, .pdf e .dxf siano risultati essere i formati in cui sarebbe preferibile rendere disponibili i dati e le diverse rappresentazioni grafiche.

Inoltre, mappe e modelli 3D che rappresentino la struttura della vegetazione, gli habitat, ma anche le barriere infrastrutturali che influenzano il movimento e la dispersione delle specie sono state valutate come altrettanto utili. È interessante notare che il formato standard .ifc (industry foundation class) non figurava tra le tre opzioni più comuni (insieme a .3dm, .skp, .rvt e .obj). A questo proposito, i progettisti sarebbero favorevoli all'introduzione di discipline ecologiche di base nei loro curricula e di tematiche come l'ecologia urbana e le relazioni habitat-specie, nonché le connessioni tra diversi ecosistemi. In questo contesto, le competenze legate alla comprensione dei sistemi di paesaggio e dei servizi ecosistemici, definiti come i benefici che le popolazioni umane traggono, direttamente o indirettamente, dalle funzioni ecosistemiche, sono viste dalla maggior parte degli intervistati

Typology	Description	Examples
Self-contained	Independent constructions intended for wildlife occupation as freestanding assemblies or attached to the building facade. Often, these objects are different in terms of materials or aesthetics from the rest of the building structure or landscape where they are inserted. This approach allows for ease of relocation or modification as needs arise.	Artificial nesting boxes, beehives, lizard slabs, roosting platforms and feeding structures
Inserted-Habitat	Similar elements to self-contained habitats, except that the habitat space is physically integrated into the building as distinct component.	Prefabricated modular construction elements and bespoke solutions providing habitat for bird nesting, bats roosting, insect hotels and plant hosting modules.
Envelope-Habitat	Wildlife habitat features integrated across a façade or surface, so that they are part of the whole building. Intentional incorporation allows for creative design solutions. Envelope habitats may encourage transient wildlife rather than permanent occupation or nesting activity	Green walls and roofs, as well as ad-hoc modular construction elements and solutions providing habitat
Green Infrastructure	Designed ecosystems as a crossovers between architecture, landscape and urban design. It is intended towards higher ecosystem services as it is often coupled with ecological corridors and recreational areas, but also storm water and air quality management ones.	Several greeneries and habitats around and on the building including terraces, balconies, containers, facades, allays, parks, private gardens, green allotments.

Tab. 4 | Typologies of integrated and systemic solutions for building envelopes following Stokes and Chitrakar (2012) considered in the questionnaire.

come cruciali (Bolund and Hunhammar, 1999).

**Analisi Ecologica di specie target** | L'analisi ecologica è stata effettuata a scala territoriale per i comuni di Wädenswil e Richterswil nel Canton Zurigo (Fig. 2a), e rispettivamente a scala urbana ed architettonica per il Campus Grüental dell'Università di Scienze Applicate di Zurigo a Wädenswil (Fig. 2b) e l'edificio principale (GA) del Campus (Fig. 2c). La selezione delle specie target avifaunistiche e l'analisi della loro distribuzione è stata eseguita in base a un'indagine che ha valutato l'uso di cassette di nidificazione tra le 52 collocate intorno al Campus Grüental<sup>1</sup>, prendendo in considerazione le esigenze comuni tra le specie e la potenziale integrazione sull'involucro dell'edificio GA. In sintesi, per poter essere scelta, la specie doveva essere presente nell'area di studio e preferire come habitat gli insediamenti urbani e gli ecotoni (habitat che circondano l'edificio GA). Per completare il set di dati distribuzione a scala territoriale, sono stati richiesti al Centro Svizzero d'Informazione sulle Specie InfoSpecies e all'Istituto Ornitologico Svizzero, i punti di osservazione esatti degli uccelli selezionati. Tutte le coordinate sono state importate come feature puntiforme in ArcGIS Pro (2020) per ulteriori analisi spaziali.

Il processo di analisi ecologica proposto (Fig. 3) è stato ispirato da studi simili (Li et alii, 2002; Liang and Li, 2012; Store and Jokimäki, 2003) al fine di generare le carte ecologiche per l'idoneità delle specie target. Per generare l'Habitat Suitability Index (HSI), ovvero l'indice d'idoneità degli habitat, è stato richiesto un parere a esperti del settore per valutare, in base a una scala predefinita,

le categorie di copertura del suolo (NOAS04) e i profili di vegetazione (VP): le prime seguono la nomenclatura svizzera standard per l'uso del suolo (Federal Statistical Office, 2014) e constano all'interno dei confini comunali di 51 categorie, i secondi derivano dai profili di manutenzione del campus universitario (Brack et alii, n.d.) per un totale di 35 categorie. I punteggi dell'indice HSI sono stati espressi su una scala che va da 0 a 2, dove 0 è associato a 'nessuna influenza positiva' (compresi gli effetti negativi), 1 a 'influenza positiva' e 2 a 'influenza ottimale'. Le singole mappe sono state quindi analizzate e sovrapposte per ottenere una mappa generale di idoneità delle specie target basata sull'HSI, i requisiti di foraggiamento e di covata.

Riguardo le specie target e le mappe ecologiche, la Tabella 6 mostra le sei specie che hanno soddisfatto i parametri di selezione e l'Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) relativo a VP e NOAS04. L'elevata differenza di aree valutate positivamente o negativamente tra l'HSI-VP e l'HSI-NOAS04 suggerisce che mappe dettagliate basate su indagini sul campo (ad esempio, VP) sono necessarie per concepire un involucro edilizio meglio integrato nell'ambiente. Allo stesso tempo, mappe meno dettagliate ma gratuitamente accessibili e che coprono una scala più ampia (ad esempio, NOAS04) sono fondamentali per raccogliere un'indicazione sull'idoneità complessiva dell'habitat che circonda il caso di studio (in questo caso le due Municipalità). La combinazione delle due mappe di base (VP e NOAS04) ha permesso di determinare l'HSI per l'intero territorio comunale a scala e risoluzione diverse (Figg. 4a-4c).

#### Bird Nesting Aid: una procedura parametrica |

La modellizzazione e la parametrizzazione sono state sviluppate utilizzando Autodesk Revit 2022 e Dynamo Revit (v2.10.1.4002), un software di programmazione visiva usato per testare le capacità d'interazione della famiglia BIM Bird Nesting Aid (di seguito BNA) con informazioni ecologiche (ad esempio, mappe d'idoneità dell'habitat e requisiti di nidificazione).

La modellizzazione BIM parametrica è stata eseguita seguendo i tre passaggi che seguono (Fig. 5): a) Redazione di una tabella Excel con dimensioni specifiche della specie target per la nidificazione (i parametri BNA) derivate dalle linee guida delle cassette di nidificazione proposte da BirdLife Svizzera (2019), ovvero la distanza da terra, la larghezza, l'altezza anteriore, l'altezza posteriore, la distanza di apertura dal pannello superiore e il raggio di apertura; b) Modellizzazione del BNA parametrico, ovvero creazione di una famiglia Revit wall-based i cui parametri e vincoli coincidono con le dimensioni indicate nel foglio di calcolo Excel redatto nella fase precedente, inclusa la generazione di diversi piani e linee di riferimento necessari per il posizionamento e orientamento sul prospetto d'inserimento; c) Impostazione dello script visivo (eseguito in un'interfaccia più user-friendly con l'aiuto di Dynamo Player) del plug-in di Revit Dynamo per consentire l'interazione tra la tabella Excel, contenente i requisiti dimensionali di nidificazione, e l'elemento BIM parametrico in modo da adattare i parametri e le dimensioni in tempo reale in base alla specie target preposta.

Il BNA modellizzato in Revit è consistito, a titolo esemplificativo, in una semplice cassetta di ni-

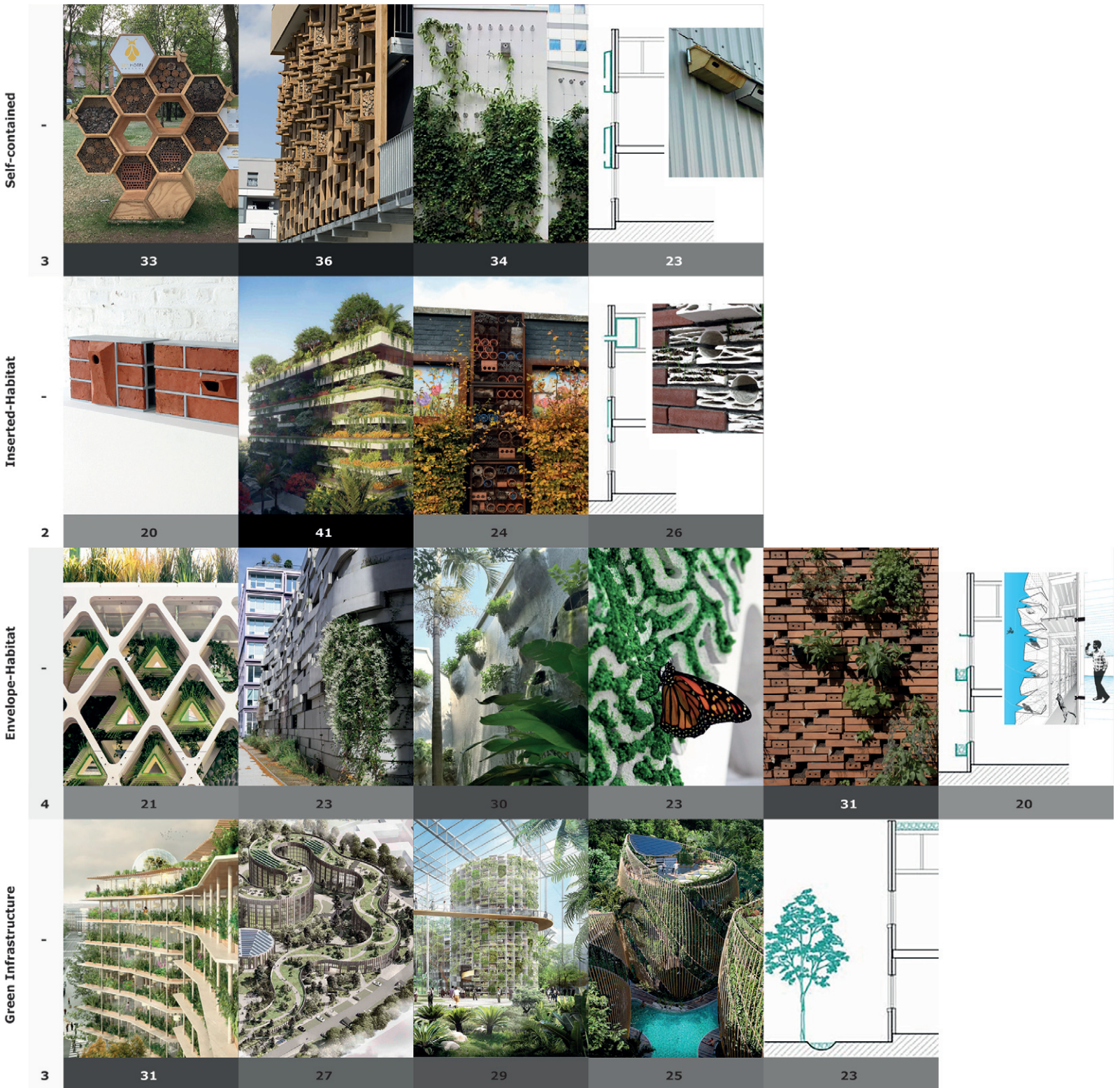


Fig. 1 | Design approach and typologies evaluation. The numbers above the figures represent the cumulative preference expressed by respondents; the cells were coloured accordingly with a grayscale gradient (white = minimum value, black = maximum value). The '-' refers to the respondents who discarded all the proposed options for each typology.

dificazione (Fig. 6a). Tutti i parametri, tranne il 'panel thickness' che è stato impostato come parametro 'type', sono del tipo 'instance' cioè in grado di variare per ogni elemento distinto BNA inserito nel modello di progetto (Fig. 6b). Lo script Dynamo adottato consta di tre fasi (Fig. 7a): 1) eseguire lo script Get Excel per leggere il file Excel ed estrapolare i nomi dei parametri (intestazioni) e le relative informazioni; 2) eseguire lo script Bird Nesting Aid per consentire la selezione e la modifica delle dimensioni dell'elemento BIM in base ai valori forniti dalla prima parte; 3) eseguire lo script Visual

Output per visualizzare l' 'id' e il 'name' delle specie target su un'interfaccia più user-friendly (Fig. 7b). L'elemento BIM 3D, grazie al lettore Dynamo, può essere adattato e modificato in tempo reale in relazione alle dimensioni delle specie target selezionate.

**Riflessioni conclusive** | La trasformazione digitale in corso sta spingendo i progettisti verso approcci che si avvalgono di tecnologie emergenti, di strumenti per l'analisi spaziale ed ecologica, e di una crescente collaborazione multidisciplinare con

ecologi e ingegneri ambientali. Come affermato da Dorney (1973), è quindi fondamentale per gli ecologi comprendere la filosofia, la metodologia e gli obiettivi delle discipline compositive e ingegneristiche al fine di sintetizzare le informazioni relative alla struttura e alla funzione degli ecosistemi in una forma utilizzabile e comprensibile da ingegneri, architetti, architetti del paesaggio e pianificatori.

I risultati del questionario hanno evidenziato che, anche se gli intervistati sono stati in grado di leggere e contestualizzare le mappe ecologiche e hanno mostrato una buona consapevolezza di

metodi e approcci a supporto degli ecosistemi naturali, la loro disponibilità ad adottarli sembrerebbe essere scoraggiata dalla mancanza di norme, misure legislative e, di conseguenza, di investimenti adeguati. Allo stesso tempo, i risultati confermano una delle intuizioni innovative alla base dell'approccio 'design for nature' introdotto da Catalano et alii (2021) cioè l'applicazione di strumenti di simulazione ecologica come, ad esempio, i modelli di distribuzione spaziale di habitat e specie in base a determinate condizioni microclimatiche e morfologiche in architettura, design e urbanistica. Ne consegue che per un cambiamento paradigmatico verso una progettazione inclusiva e biodiversa, i decisori dovrebbero incentivare e motivare progettisti e pianificatori a collaborare con naturalisti e ingegneri ambientali per poter interpretare in chiave compositiva ed architettonica i dati ecologici.

Inoltre, come affermano Zanni, Soetanto e Rujkar (2017), per fare un passo avanti verso lo sviluppo sostenibile, coadiuvato da nuove tecnologie (software, hardware e network), è necessario applicare un approccio strutturato, sistematico e centralizzato, creando cioè un Common Data Environment (CDE), un luogo virtuale dove raccogliere, gestire, condividere le informazioni e coordinare le azioni. A tal proposito, tra le questioni applicative da risolvere si dovrebbero annoverare non solo l'individuazione di un obiettivo comune tra le differenti figure professionali coinvolte, ma anche l'interoperabilità tra software comunemente usati, soprattutto tra gli ambienti GIS e BIM. Tale questione è attualmente affrontata da una cooperazione tra Autodesk ed ESRI che ha sviluppato il GeoBIM, una piattaforma web innovativa e facile da usare dove elaborare modelli BIM e collaborare interagendo con dati, provenienti da più sistemi, in un contesto spazialmente georiferito.

Il caso studio del modello BNA-BIM, presentato in questo contributo, è stato pensato come strumento agile e interattivo per visualizzare e integrare soluzioni costruttive sensibili alla flora e fauna selvatica in ambiente BIM. Lo script Dynamo potrebbe essere ulteriormente sviluppato per migliorare l'interazione tra l'elemento BIM e i parametri ambientali, ad esempio per automatizzare il posizionamento dell'elemento BNA-BIM sul prospetto più adatto e sulla base di mappe ecologiche e altri parametri ambientali, come la simulazione microclimatica. In presenza di un modello BIM-3D georeferenziato, l'istanza BNA potrebbe essere posizionata con esposizione e altezza ottimali in base alla distanza da usi del suolo e tipi di vegetazione idonei.

Prendendo spunto da questo caso studio, si potrebbe creare una libreria BIM di elementi 3D integrati per facciate, sviluppati secondo le necessità e i requisiti di diverse specie target come rettili, insetti e 'sistemi di vegetazione' che consenta, quindi, ai progettisti di tener conto del contesto ambientale e biologico fin dalle prime fasi del progetto. Come evidenziato da von Richthofen et alii (2018), la modellazione parametrica può aprire la strada ad approcci di progettazione espliciti, logici e replicabili, rendendone trasparente i processi e assicurandone l'applicabilità in altri contesti.

As a result of an increasing number of inhabitants, cities are becoming more densely populated and

LS	Land Use	Population Viability <sup>1</sup>	Presence Density <sup>2</sup>	Movement Ability <sup>1</sup>	Land Use Suitability
5	38%	30%	35%	28%	45%
4	42%	47%	32%	40%	33%
3	17%	17%	22%	22%	13%
2	2%	5%	7%	5%	5%
1	2%	2%	5%	5%	3%

**Tab. 5a** | Ecological map Evaluation. Likert Scale (LS): 1 = not useful; 2 = slightly useful; 3 = moderately useful; 4 = very useful; 5 = highly useful.

Note 1: Species viability and movement ability were modelled with SimOiko software (developed by TerrOiko); the dynamics of the metapopulation (viability and dispersion) are simulated according to the fecundity or the ability of a species to cross a certain land use.

Note 2: The species presence probability per pixel (density) was modelled by BIOMOD2 using climatic and land use data at the Switzerland level.

LS	Site Vegetation Profiles	Site Vegetation Profiles Suitability	Habitat Suitability	3D-Habitat Suitability	Designed structures and habitats
5	47%	37%	33%	32%	
4	35%	32%	38%	30%	32%
3	15%	22%	22%	20%	10%
2	2%	8%	2%	10%	0%
1	2%	2%	5%	8%	2%

**Tab. 5b** | Ecological map Evaluation. Likert Scale (LS): 1 = not useful; 2 = slightly useful; 3 = moderately useful; 4 = very useful; 5 = highly useful.

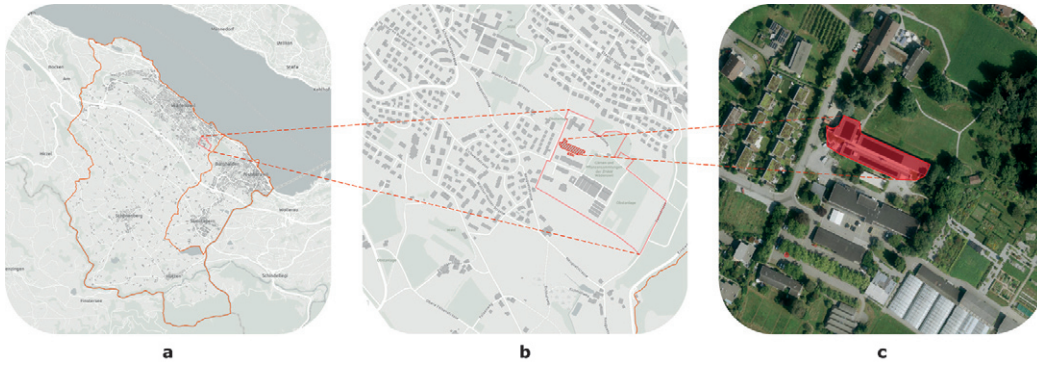


Fig. 2 | Study cases: a) Joint boundaries of the municipalities of Wädenswil and Richterswil (Switzerland) considered for the habitat suitability analysis in this study (base map esri ArcGIS pro); b) Campus Grüental perimeter; c) GA Building of Campus Grüental (Base maps a and b, esri ArcGIS pro; Orthophoto c, map.geo.admin.ch/).

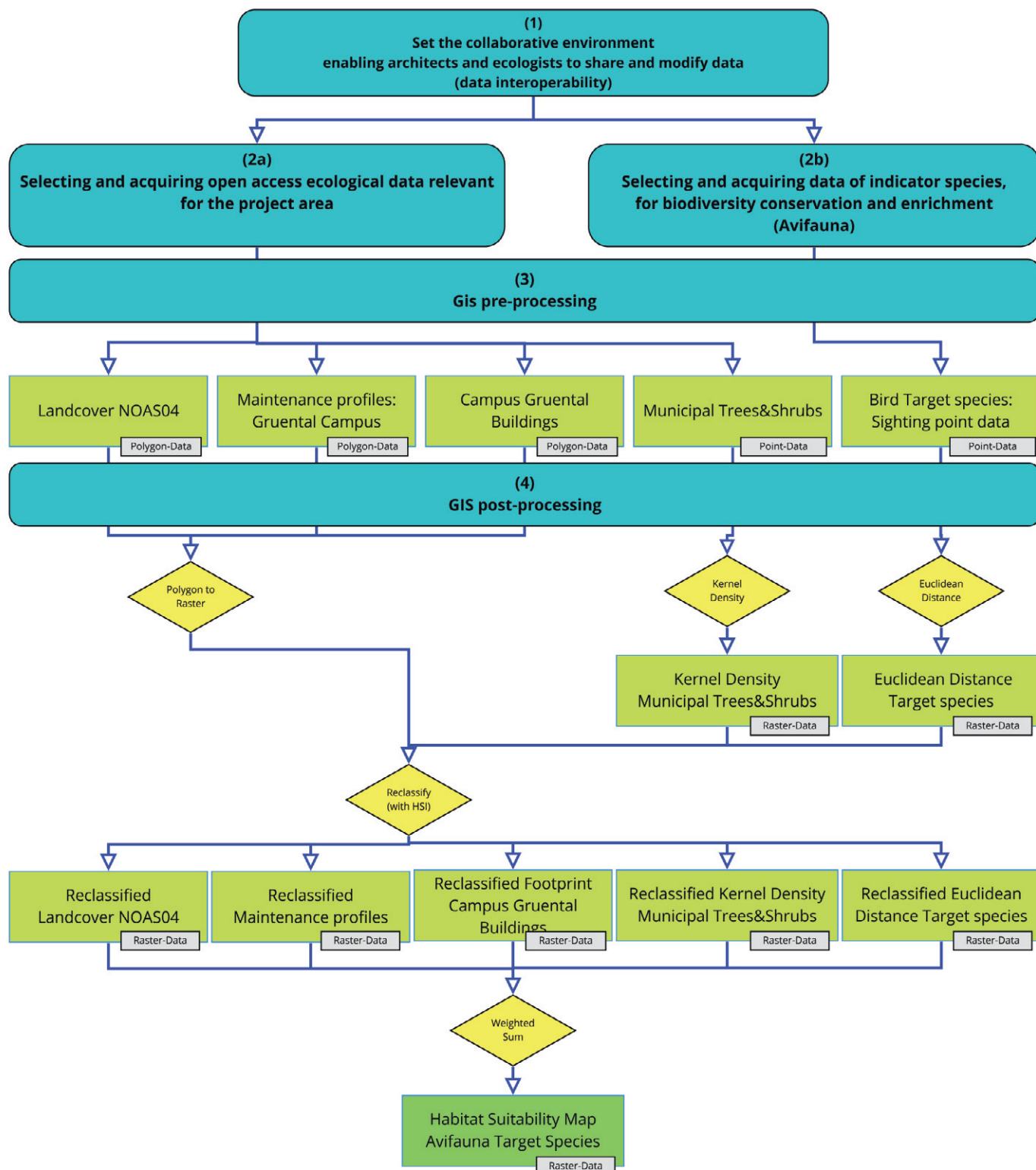


Fig. 3 | GIS-based Ecological Analysis Flowchart.

Taxon	Trivial name	Habitat <sup>1</sup>	Status/Danger <sup>1</sup>	HIS Expert-based estimation			
				Base maps	0	1	2
<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Eurasian Blue Tit	Deciduous forest, orchards, settlements	Common breeding resident (Least Concern, LC)	VP	28,6%	40,0%	31,4%
				NOAS04	49,0%	37,3%	13,7%
<i>Parus major</i>	Great Tit	Orchards, forest, settlements	Common breeding resident (LC)	VP	28,6%	40,0%	31,4%
				NOAS04	49,0%	37,3%	13,7%
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	Farmland, settlements	Regular, common breeder and migrant, extremely rare winter visitor (LC)	VP	14,3%	57,1%	28,6%
				NOAS04	49,0%	39,2%	11,8%
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Black redstart	Alpine habitats, settlements	Regular, common breeder and migrant, scarce winter visitor (LC)	VP	14,3%	57,1%	28,6%
				NOAS04	25,5%		2,0%
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	Farmland, settlements	Common breeding resident (LC)	VP	22,9%	40,0%	37,1%
				NOAS04	35,3%	54,9%	9,8%
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Farmland, orchards, settlements	Common breeding resident (LC)	VP	22,9%	40,0%	37,1%
				NOAS04	64,7%	27,5%	7,8%

**Tab. 6** | Target species selected and Habitat Suitability Index (HSI). The table shows the cumulative percentage of HSI for VP = Vegetation Profiles with a total of 35 categories related to the campus perimeter; NOAS04 = Swiss Land Use Statistics standard nomenclature with 51 land use categories within the municipalities' perimeter; the cells were coloured accordingly where 'white' was assigned to the minimum value and 'black' to the maximum; 0 = none or neutral influence; 1 = positive influence; 2 = optimal influence.

'sprawled', thus putting a strain on social systems, health care and infrastructure, and putting more pressure on the environment and natural ecosystems (Apfelbeck et alii, 2020); in fact, environmental fragmentation and degradation, habitat loss and the effects of ongoing climate change have caused a serious and sudden decline in global biodiversity (Grimm et alii, 2008). A strategy to address issues on an urban scale, such as adaptation to climate change, environmental justice and biodiversity conservation, has been to utilize the ecosystem services that are provided by green areas and spaces (formal and informal). This suggests that although increasing urbanization currently has a negative impact on biodiversity, it also represents an excellent opportunity to experiment with alternative models of sustainable development, which take ecosystems and their conservation into account (Opoku, 2019).

If we agree with the 'net-positive' design view (Birkeland, 2008), which posits that the built environment should give back more to the natural environment than it consumes, then buildings should not only become 'eco-productive', but they should also compensate for the environmental impact caused by previous development, by giving space to indigenous ecosystems, while increasing ecosystem services in absolute terms (Birkeland, 2009). For this to happen, the future of urban biodiversity depends closely on interdisciplinary cooperation (Ignatieva, 2010) and the integration of biological conservation objectives into planning at different scales (Garrard et alii, 2018). Therefore, on the one hand, ecologists should be involved from the earliest stages of design (Miller et alii, 2012), and on the other hand, designers should be involved in the planning of conservation measures (Ross et alii, 2015).

Emerging technologies such as GeoBIM (Morretti et alii, 2021), which is the recent combination

of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), show how an emphasis on collaboration between designers and ecologists can result in the identification of solutions which promote higher environmental quality (Moura and Campagna, 2018). In this regard, differing methods and approaches which use ecological knowledge as a design tool have already been developed. Some examples of this are Animal Aided Design (AAD), which was initiated by Weisser and Hauck (2017), and Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD), which was developed by Garrard and Bekessy (2015). The AAD approach can be applied to the design of urban open spaces by integrating the life cycles of some target species and biodiversity conservation objectives into the planning stages (Apfelbeck et alii, 2019, 2020); the BSUD approach aims at supporting biodiversity in a localised but not restricted manner, by creating new habitats that favour the movement of organisms through different urban development types and densities (Garrard et alii, 2018). In addition to the abovementioned approaches, Gunnell, Murphy and Williams (2019) have published a technical guide called Designing for Biodiversity, which illustrates how to integrate the species that usually nest on buildings (e.g., birds and bats) into both new and existing (low or zero-emission) buildings in the UK, based on their vital needs.

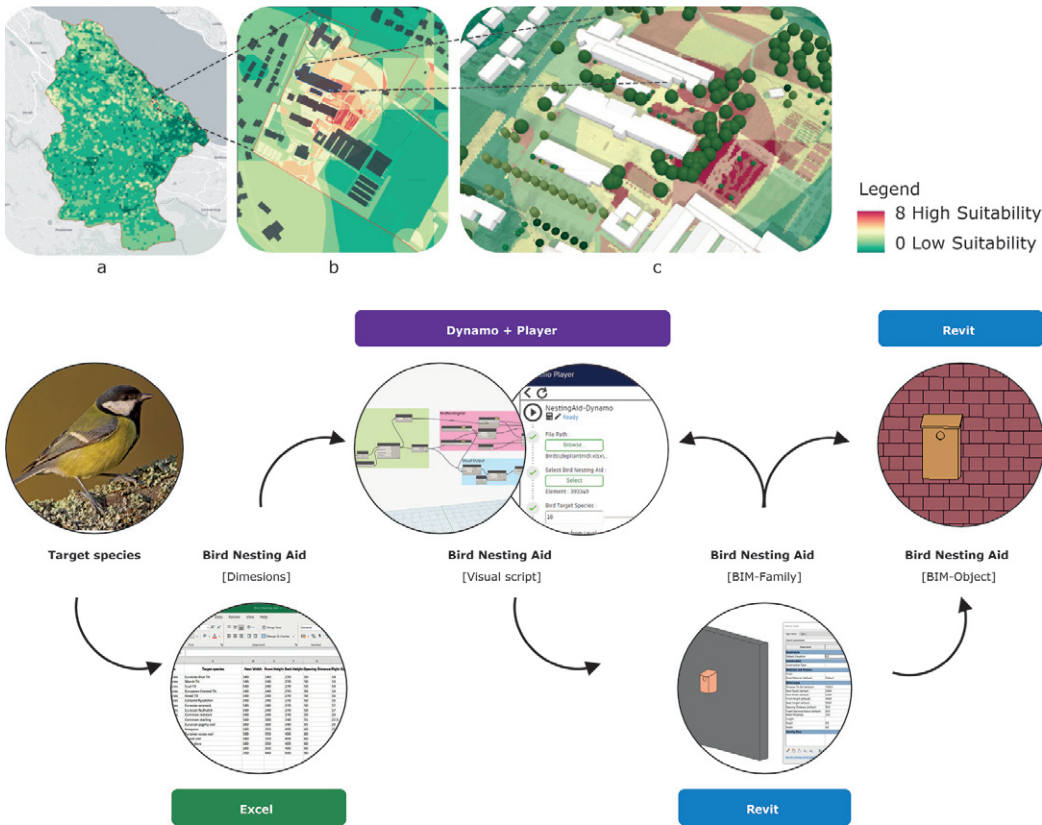
However, the consideration of environmental data or the life cycle of some target species in the architectural project is not yet mainstreamed and often depends on the specific objectives of the project or the philosophy of the working group; in fact, there is still uncertainty about which factors and incentives might motivate planners and architects to integrate spatial and ecological analyses from the early design stages, and to consider cer-

tain biological aspects related to wildlife. This should be an integral part of the architectural design and construction process to create real 'ecolopes' (Ludwig, Hensel and Wolfgang, 2021).

**Research Objectives** | The specific objective of the present study is to optimize tools and methods of cooperation between ecologists and designers through 1) the integration of habitat suitability maps into design methods; and 2) the adoption of parametric procedures which support selected wild species by automating the integration of specific BIM elements into the building envelope. The present study was conducted as part of an international project called Design and Modelling of Urban Ecosystems – A spatial-based approach to integrating habitats into built ecosystems (DeMo) which aims to develop a multidisciplinary framework and approach for the design of ecosystems in built areas and facilitates the colonization and displacement of animal and plant species (Catalano et alii, 2021).

**The questionnaire** | To gain insights into the level of awareness and readiness to adopt design strategies inspired by ecological criteria, the online questionnaire 'Data Interoperability for Ecological and Spatial Oriented Design in AEC' was prepared on Google Forms. Addressing professionals, academics and students who are active in the fields of Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC), a link to the questionnaire was shared in four ways (Table 1): sent by e-mail to personal contacts (A) and experts listed in the repositories of the Swiss Association for Sustainable Construction (B), published on A. Balducci's LinkedIn profile (C), or proposed as an activity to Landscape Architecture and Architecture students by C. Catalano during a lesson held for the Laboratory of Garden Art and





**Fig. 4** | Habitat suitability maps of the Eurasian Blue Tit based on the HSI, the foraging and brooding requirements: a) Landscape-scale generated on the base of NOAS04; b) Urban/building scale 2D View; c) Campus – 3D View, both generated by the combination of NOAS 04 and PV. The dashed red lines indicate the campus perimeter (a, b) and the GA-building (c). The colour coding represents the level of habitat suitability for the target species from green (low) to red (high).

**Fig. 5** | Parametric modelling workflow. Interaction among Excel (input data based on species requirements), Revit (parametrized BIM-Object) and Dynamo + Player (used to enable the interaction among Excel and Revit to obtain the final target species-specific BIM object).

Landscape Architecture at the University of Palermo (D). The questionnaire contained 43 elements (questions) grouped into 6 sections (Table 2). Participants' names were coded by the respondent pool, in chronological order, and grouped into six main job categories, while responses were grouped by the respondents' type, category, and work experience (Table 3). Considering that the questions were multiple choice and that some respondents represented more than one professional category, a new 'multidisciplinary' category was retrospectively added. The sharing of the link to the questionnaire through these channels produced four pools of respondents who were numerically very different from each other, and whose answers were therefore grouped and subsequently analysed in Excel (Build 13801.21092).

Out of a total of 60 respondents, half were architects, 21% were landscape architects, 8% were interviewees with a multidisciplinary profile, 5% were planners and 5% were environmental engineers. Agronomists, environmental planners, sustainability consultants and GIS specialists were represented by only 2%. The professional respondents were mainly students (56.7%), followed by members of the private sector (20%) and researchers (5%). From these descriptive results, an over-representation of the category 'architects' emerges, which makes the survey statistically not very robust. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that almost half of the respondents were Italian architecture students, so the results cannot be considered representative of either the profes-

sional category or the international landscape. In a future study, data should be collected over a longer period by exploiting additional interactive dissemination channels such as seminars and workshops.

The questions aimed at determining the users' perspective were evaluated using a Likert scale with values ranging from 1 to 5, in which 1 was equal to 'totally disagrees' and 5 to 'totally agrees'. More than half of the respondents 'agreed' or 'totally agreed' with the idea of integrating strategic biodiversity conservation and protection programmes into urban planning, by involving ecologists in interdisciplinary design and planning groups from the beginning (Section 4). This result highlighted how aware designers are of the tools put in place to support urban biodiversity in different European contexts and that they are willing to adopt approaches based on multidisciplinary dialogue.

Among approaches such as Geodesign, AAD, Wildlife-Inclusive Urban Design, BSUD, Property-specific Biodiversity Index (DGNB System, 2020), and Nature-Based Solutions (European Commission, 2015), the latter was the best known, followed by the BSUD and the Singapore Index (Chan et alii, 2014). However, some ambiguities emerged regarding the concept of 'sustainability' (Hassan and Lee, 2015), which is mostly associated with energy efficiency and the use of sustainable materials, neglecting the ecosystem aspect (Gunnell, Murphy and Williams, 2019). It is therefore not surprising that a proper assessment of biotope quality or biodiversity measures is not often considered in urban environmental sustainability as-

sessments and standards (Catalano et alii, 2021).

As many as 67% of the respondents expressed a willingness to implement approaches that support target species in future projects, even without the explicit request from the contractors or the technical specifications of the project. As much as 33% showed a willingness to implement such strategies, while no one ruled out the possibility of doing so. Nevertheless, several obstacles were brought to light, such as the specific project program, uncertainty concerning how to select the target species, an alleged increase in costs due to the implementation and maintenance of measures aimed at promoting biodiversity, and above all, a lack of legislative measures and specific norms. In general, these results suggest that the respondents, whose willingness to complete the questionnaire may indicate the fact that they were already familiar with biodiversity supporting strategies, may have already been sensitive to the proposed topic/approach.

In the fifth section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to express a preference for different types of design solutions (Table 4) which address the biodiversity-architecture relationship in a gradual manner (Stokes and Chitrakar, 2012). Among the different types of integrated solutions (Fig. 1), the interviewees evaluated the 'self-contained habitat' as not satisfactory from an aesthetic and compositional point of view, preferring solutions which can be better integrated within the building envelope, such as the 'inserted-habitat' and the 'envelope-habitat'. However, the former has been criticized because it remains distinct from the envelope – as in the case of prefabricated solutions – while the latter has been criticized because of its cost and due to the grey energy which goes into the extensive production of reinforced concrete.

Finally, the term 'green infrastructure' has been questioned because it is often treated and misunderstood as a technological solution, not necessarily combined with conscious greening. In addition, according to some of the respondents (open answers), the biodiversity supporting measures as promoted in the AEC sector mostly target open green spaces, neglecting the most densely built areas. Finally, since these strategies are often considered only in the last stages of the project design and implementation, they are predominantly perceived as an additional cost and therefore neglected or even discouraged.

The results of the sixth section, aimed at assessing the respondents' understanding of ecological maps, showed how overall these maps are considered (moderately to very) useful as a compositional tool, in particular, the 'land use suitability' and the 'vegetation profiles' (Table 5a and 5b). Specifically, it emerged that the scale (level of detail) and graphic restitution (resolution) of the ecological information are considered relevant. An equally positive opinion was expressed for pictograms and schemes such as those represented in the 'designed structures and habitats' option. Some of the respondents also stated that a technical-scientific report containing the ecological requirements of the target species accompanied by ecological maps, which are commented on and explained, is necessary for a conscious use of environmental information. This reflects the established practice that occurs in multidisciplinary

working groups, in which different professionals transfer their expertise through the production of specialist documentation. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the fact that the .dwg, .pdf and .dxf formats are the formats in which it would be preferable to make data and different graphic representations available.

Moreover, maps and 3D models representing the vegetation structure, habitats, and also infrastructural barriers influencing species movement and dispersion were considered equally useful. Interestingly, the standard .ifc (industry foundation class) format was not among the three most common options (along with .3dm, .skp, .rvt, and .obj). In this regard, designers would be in favour of introducing basic ecological disciplines into their curricula and themes such as urban ecology and habitat-species relationships, as well as connections between different ecosystems. In this context, understanding landscape systems and ecosystem services, defined as the benefits that human populations derive, directly or indirectly, from ecosystem functions, is also seen by most respondents as crucial (Bolund and Hunhammar, 1999).

**Ecological Analysis of target species** | An ecological analysis was carried out on a territorial scale for the municipalities of Wädenswil and Richterswil in the canton of Zurich (Fig. 2a), and respectively on an urban and architectural scale for the Grüental Campus of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Wädenswil (Fig. 2b) and the main building (GA) of the University Campus (Fig. 2c). A selection of a target bird species and an analysis of their distribution was carried out based on a survey which evaluated the use of nesting boxes among the 52 locations around the Grüental Campus<sup>1</sup>, taking into account the common needs between the species and the potential integration with the GA building envelope. In summary, to be chosen, the species had to be present in the study area and prefer urban settlements and ecotones (habitats surrounding the GA building) as habitats. To complete the spatial distribution dataset, the selected bird observation points were requested from the Swiss Species Information Centre InfoSpecies and the Swiss Ornithological Institute. All coordinates were imported as point features into ArcGIS Pro (2020) for further spatial analysis.

The proposed ecological analysis process (Fig. 3) was inspired by similar studies (Li et alii, 2002; Liang and Li, 2012; Store and Jokimäki, 2003) which set out to obtain target species' ecological and suitability maps. To generate the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI), an expert opinion was requested to assess, based on a predefined scale, both land cover categories (NOAS04) and vegetation profiles (VP): the first followed the standard Swiss nomenclature for land use (Federal Statistical Office, 2014) and consisted of 51 categories within the municipal boundaries, and the latter derived from the maintenance profiles of the university campus (Brack et alii, n.d.) for a total of 35 categories. The HSI index scores were expressed on a scale ranging from 0 to 2, where 0 was associated with 'no positive influence' (including negative effects), 1 with a 'positive influence' and 2 with an 'optimal influence'. The individual maps were then analysed and superimposed to obtain a general suitability map for the target species based on the HSI, and the foraging and the brood requirements.

Regarding the target species and ecological maps, Table 6 shows the six species that met the selection parameters and the Habitat Suitability

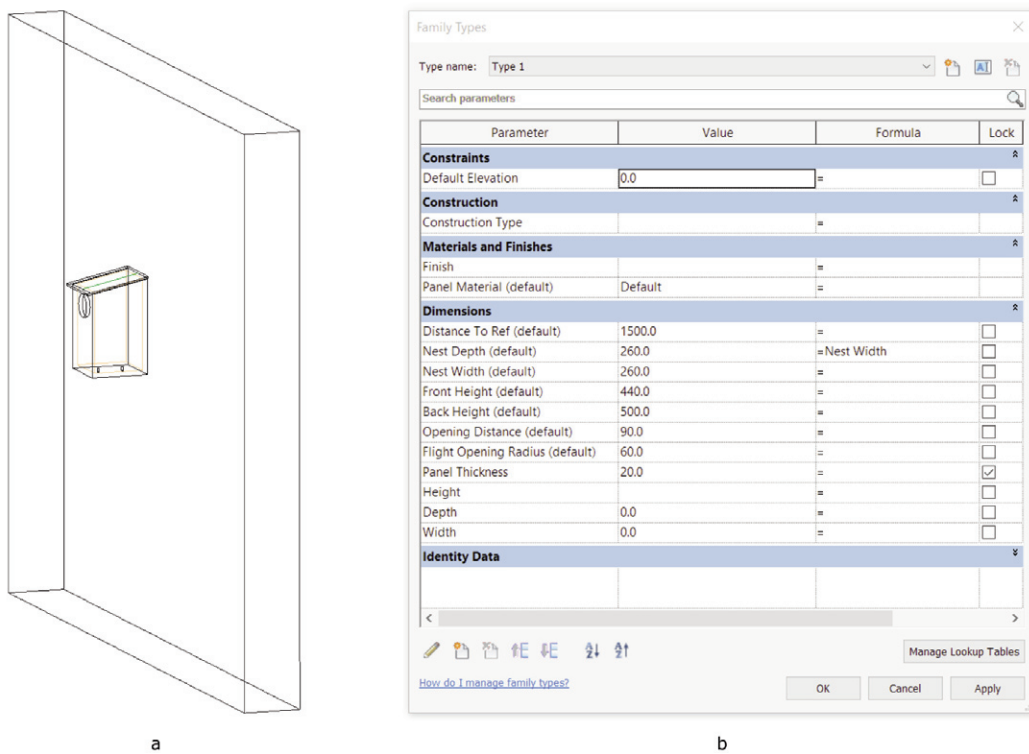
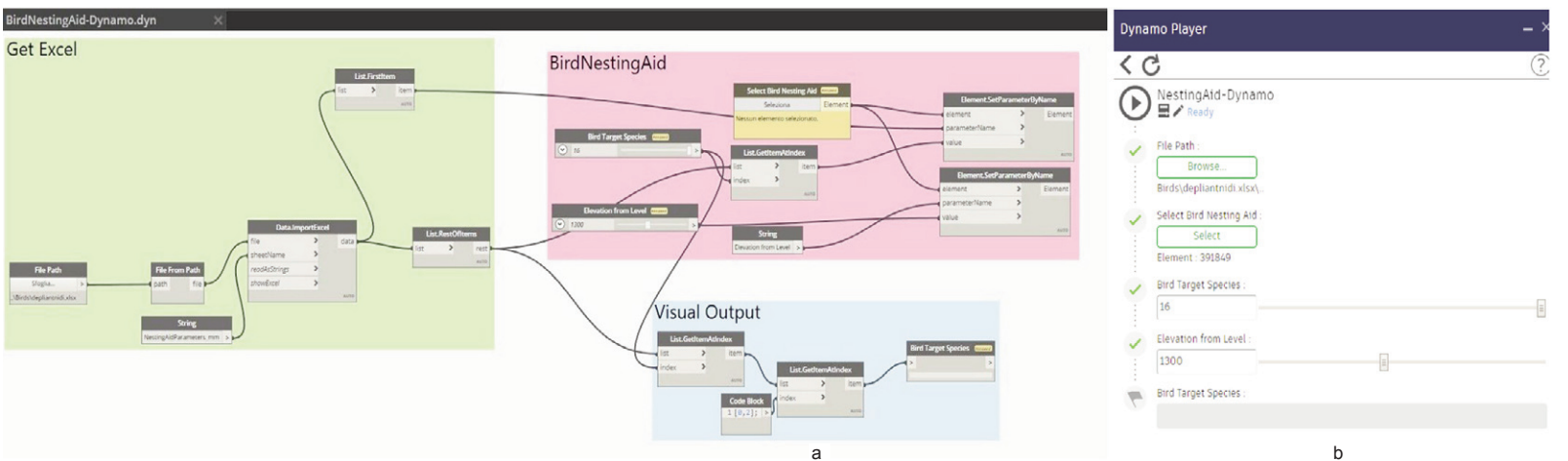


Fig. 6 | Revit Family model: a) 3D-View; b) Family Parameters.

Fig. 7 | Bird Nesting Aid implemented in Revit with Dynamo (a) and Dynamo player user interface (b).



Index (HSI) for VP and NOAS04. The high difference in positively or negatively assessed areas between HSI-VP and HSI-NOAS04 suggests that detailed maps based on field surveys (e.g., VP) are needed to design a building envelope that is better integrated into the environment. At the same time, less detailed but freely accessible maps covering a larger scale (e.g., NOAS04) are critical to assessing the overall suitability of the habitat surrounding the case study (in this case the two municipalities). The combination of the two base maps (VP and NOAS04) made it possible to determine the HSI for the entire municipal territory at different scales and resolutions (Fig. 4a-4c).

**Bird Nesting Aid: a parametric procedure** | The modelling and parameterization were developed using Autodesk Revit 2022 and Dynamo Revit (v2.10.1.4002), a visual programming software used to test the interaction capabilities of the BIM Bird Nesting Aid family (hereinafter BNA) with ecological information (e.g., suitability maps of the habitat and nesting requirements).

The parametric BIM modelling was carried out following three steps (Fig. 5): a) Drafting of an Excel table with specific dimensions of the target species for nesting (the BNA parameters) derived from the nesting box guidelines proposed by BirdLife Switzerland (2019), namely the distance from the ground, the width, the front and the rear height, the opening distance from the top panel and the opening radius; b) Modelling of the parametric BNA by creating a wall-based Revit family whose parameters and constraints coincided with the dimensions indicated in the Excel table which was drawn up in the previous phase, and generation of different planes and reference lines to obtain position and orientation constraints on the facade; c) Setting up the visual script (executed in a more user-friendly interface with the help of Dynamo Player) of the Revit Dynamo plug-in to allow interaction between the Excel table, containing the nesting dimensional requirements, and the parametric BIM element in order to adapt the parameters and dimensions in real-time according to the target species in question.

The BNA modelled in Revit consisted, as an example, of a simple nesting box (Fig. 6a). All parameters, except the 'panel thickness' which was set as the 'type' parameter, are of the 'instance' type i.e., able to vary for each distinct BNA element inserted in the model (Fig. 6b). The Dynamo script consisted of three phases (Fig. 7a): 1) Run the Get Excel script to read the Excel file and extrapolate the parameter names (headers) and related information; 2) Run the Bird Nesting Aid procedure, to allow the selection and modification of the size of the BIM element according to the values provided

by the first part; 3) Run the Visual Output, to display the 'id' and the 'name' of the target species on a more user-friendly interface (Fig. 7b). The 3D BIM element, thanks to the Dynamo reader, can be adapted and modified in real-time concerning the size of the selected target species.

**Concluding remarks** | Ongoing digital transformation is pushing designers towards approaches that make use of emerging technologies, tools for spatial and ecological analysis, and increasing multidisciplinary collaboration with ecologists and environmental engineers. As stated by Dorney (1973), it is therefore essential for ecologists to understand the philosophy, methodology and objectives of the compositional and engineering disciplines, so that they can synthesise information about the structure and function of ecosystems into a form that can be used and understood by engineers, architects, landscape architects and planners.

The results of the questionnaire highlighted that, although respondents could read and contextualize ecological maps and showed a good awareness of methods and approaches that support natural ecosystems, their willingness to adopt them seems to be discouraged by a lack of norms and legislative measures and, consequently, inadequate investment. At the same time, the results confirm one of the innovative insights behind the 'design for nature' approach introduced by Catalano et alii (2021), namely applying ecological simulation tools such as spatial distribution models of habitats and species in architecture, design and urban planning, based on certain microclimatic and morphological conditions. It follows that for a paradigm shift towards inclusive and biodiverse design, decision-makers should encourage and motivate designers and planners to collaborate with naturalists and environmental engineers so that ecological data can be interpreted from an architectural perspective.

Furthermore, as Zanni, Soetanto and Ruikar (2017) stated, to take a step towards sustainable development, supported by new technologies (software, hardware, and networks), it is necessary to employ a structured, systematic, and centralized approach, which creates a Common Data Environment (CDE), a virtual space to collect, manage, and share information, and coordinate actions. In this regard, among the application issues to be solved, these should not only include communication difficulties due to the different objectives and purposes of the professional figures involved, but also the interoperability between commonly used software, especially between GIS and BIM environments. This issue is currently being addressed by the cooperation between Autodesk and ESRI with their new ArcGIS GeoBIM soft-

ware. Together, they have developed an innovative and easy-to-use web platform, where BIM models can be processed and collaborated on by interacting with data from multiple systems in a spatially geo-referenced context.

The case study of the BNA-BIM model, presented in this contribution, was designed as an agile and interactive tool to visualize and integrate construction solutions sensitive to wildlife in a BIM environment. The Dynamo script could be further developed to improve the interaction between the BIM element and environmental parameters, e.g., to automate the positioning of the BNA-BIM element at the most suitable elevation and based on ecological maps and other environmental parameters, such as microclimate simulation. In the presence of a geo-referenced BIM-3D model, the BNA instance could be positioned with optimal exposure and height based on distance from suitable land uses and vegetation types.

Taking this case study as a starting point, a BIM library of integrated 3D elements for facades, developed according to the needs and requirements of different target species such as reptiles, insects and 'vegetation systems' could be created, thus allowing the designers to take into account the environmental and biological context from the early stages of the project. As highlighted by von Richthofen et alii (2018), parametric modelling can pave towards explicit, logical and replicable design approaches, making their processes transparent and ensuring their applicability in other contexts.

## Acknowledgements

The article was written jointly by the two authors and coordinated and supervised by C. Catalano. A. Balducci prepared the questionnaire, the Revit model, and the Dynamo visual script elaborated the ecological maps and analysed the data. Thanks to: M. Meslec (IFM-ZHAW), P. Ochsner (IUNR-ZHAW) and S. Pasta (CNR-IBBR) for

the valuable suggestions; J. R. Parry (ZHAW) for the revision and improvement of the version in English language; G. Kunz, T. Bischof and N. Baumann for providing their expert opinions used to determine the Habitat Suitability Index; A. Scott, Associazione Apicoltori Mantovani, ChartierDalix Architects, D. Gedge, F. Hofstra, Filcris Ltd, Husos Architects, Kragh and Berglund Architects, Lars Gitz Architects, M. Joachim (Terreform ONE),

M. Nardella and O. Tudose (Fabrikaat), M. Stokes and R. M. Chitrakar, P. Maupetit, Sanzpont Arquitectura, Sasaki, Stefano-Boeri-Architetti, T. Lamphier, for the images in Fig. 1 and Tab. 4; Animal Aided Design Studio, TerrOiko and the Grünraumentwicklung and Geoinformatik research groups at Zurich University of Applied Science (ZHAW) for the images in Tab. 5. The present work was developed within the Framework of the DeMo Project –

Design and Modelling of Urban Ecosystems (01/03/2020-31/12/2021) coordinated by C. Catalano and funded by the ZHAW (Sustainable Campus Living Lab – Campus@LSFM). More information on the webpage: [zhaw.ch/en/research/research-database/project-detailview/projektid/3536/](http://zhaw.ch/en/research/research-database/project-detailview/projektid/3536/) [Accessed 24 March 2022].

## Notes

1) The survey was carried out in 2019 by L. Venetz, student of the Bachelor of Natural Resource Sciences, and T. Kimmich, head gardener and responsible for maintenance, planning and development of the gardens at the Grüental Campus of ZHAW.

## References

- Apfelbeck, B., Jakoby, C., Hanusch, M., Steffani, E. B., Hauck, T. E. and Weisser, W. W. (2019), “A Conceptual Framework for Choosing Target Species for Wildlife-Inclusive Urban Design”, in *Sustainability*, vol. 11, n. 24, 6972, pp. 1-20. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.3390/su11246972](https://doi.org/10.3390/su11246972) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Apfelbeck, B., Snep, R. P. H., Hauck, T. E., Ferguson, J., Holy, M., Jakoby, C., MacIvor, S. J., Schär, L., Taylor, M. and Weisser, W. W. (2020), “Designing wildlife-inclusive cities that support human-animal co-existence”, in *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 200, 103817, pp. 1-11. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2020.103817](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2020.103817) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- BirdLife Svizzera (2019), *Nidi Artificiali per gli animali – Un aiuto per la fauna dei diversi ambienti*. [Online] Available at: [birdlife.ch/sites/default/files/documents/Depliant\\_Nidi\\_web.pdf](http://birdlife.ch/sites/default/files/documents/Depliant_Nidi_web.pdf) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Birkeland, J. (2009), “Communicating ecologically positive development”, in Wood, P. and Smitheram, J. (eds), *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference of the Association of Architecture Schools in Australasia (AASA)*, The Association of Architecture Schools in Australasia, New Zealand, pp. 1-10. [Online] Available at: [eprints.qut.edu.au/28467/](http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28467/) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Birkeland, J. (2008), *Positive Development – From Vicious Circles to Virtuous Cycles through Built Environment Design*, Routledge, London. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.4324/9781849772235](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849772235) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Bolund, P. and Hunhammar, S. (1999), “Ecosystem services in urban areas”, in *Ecological Economics*, vol. 29, issue 2, pp. 293-301. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009\(99\)00013-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(99)00013-0) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Brack, F., Hagenbuch, R., Wütschert, D., Sadlo, F. and Huber, J. (n.d.), *Qualitätsindex und Qualitätsmonitoring für Städtische Freiräume – Forschungsbericht*. [Online] Available at: [vssg.ch/public/upload/assets/2996/200830\\_Q-Index\\_Forschungsbericht\\_ohneAnhang.pdf?fp=1](http://vssg.ch/public/upload/assets/2996/200830_Q-Index_Forschungsbericht_ohneAnhang.pdf?fp=1) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Catalano, C., Meslec, M., Boileau, J., Guarino, R., Aurich, I., Baumann, N., Chartier, F., Dalix, P., Deramond, S., Laube, P., Lee, A. K. K., Ochsner, P., Pasturel, M., Soret, M. and Moulherat, S. (2021), “Smart Sustainable Cities of the New Millennium – Towards Design for Nature”, in *Circular Economy and Sustainability*, vol. 1, issue 3, pp. 1053-1086. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1007/s43615-021-00100-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s43615-021-00100-6) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Chan, L., Elmquist, T., Holman, N., Mader, A. and Calcaterra, E. (2014), *User’s Manual on the Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity (also known as the City Biodiversity Index)*, National Parks Board, Singapore. [Online] Available at: [cbd.int/authorities/doc/Singapore-Index-User-Manual-20140730-en.pdf](http://cbd.int/authorities/doc/Singapore-Index-User-Manual-20140730-en.pdf) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- DGNB System (2020), *New Construction, Buildings Criteria Set – Version 2020 international*. [Online] Available at: [static.dgnb.de/fileadmin/dgnb-system/downloads/criteria/DGNB-Criteria-Set-New-Construction-Buildings-Version-2020-International.pdf](http://static.dgnb.de/fileadmin/dgnb-system/downloads/criteria/DGNB-Criteria-Set-New-Construction-Buildings-Version-2020-International.pdf) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Dorney, R. S. (1973), “Role of ecologists as consultants in urban planning and design”, in *Human Ecology*, vol. 1, issue 3, pp. 183-200. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1007/BF01531180](https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01531180) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- European Commission (2015), *Towards an EU Research and Innovation Policy Agenda for Nature-Based Solutions & Re-Naturing Cities – Final Report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on ‘Nature-based Solutions and Re-Naturing Cities’ (Full Version)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. [Online] Available at: [data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/765301](http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/765301) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Federal Statistical Office (2014), “Swiss land use statistics – Standard Nomenclature NOAS04 – Basic categories and aggregations | Publication”, in *Federal Statistical Office*, 05/09/2014. [Online] Available at: [bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases/publications.assetdetail.171190.html](http://bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases/publications.assetdetail.171190.html) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Garrard, G. E. and Bekessy, S. A. (2015), *Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design – Creating urban environments that are good for people and good for nature*. [Online] Available at: [ggarrardresearch.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/busd-final\\_reduced-size2.pdf](http://ggarrardresearch.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/busd-final_reduced-size2.pdf) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Garrard, G. E., Williams, N. S. G., Mata, L., Thomas, J. and Bekessy, S. A. (2018), “Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design”, in *Conservation Letters*, vol. 11, issue 2, e12411, pp. 1-10. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1111/conl.12411](https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12411) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Grimm, N. B., Faeth, S. H., Golubiewski, N. E., Redman, C. L., Wu, J., Bai, X. and Briggs, J. M. (2008), “Global Change and the Ecology of Cities”, in *Science*, vol. 319, issue 5864, pp. 756-760. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1126/science.1150195](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1150195) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Gunnell, K., Murphy, B. and Williams, C. (2019), *Designing for Biodiversity – A Technical Guide for New and Existing Buildings*, RIBA Publishing, Boston.
- Hassan, A. M. and Lee, H. (2015), “The paradox of the sustainable city – Definitions and examples”, in *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, vol. 17, issue 6, pp. 1267-1285. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1007/s10668-014-9604-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-014-9604-z) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Ignatieva, M. (2010), “Design and Future of Urban Biodiversity”, in Müller, N., Werner, P. and Kelcey, J. G. (eds), *Urban Biodiversity and Design*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford (UK), pp. 118-144. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1002/9781444318654.ch6](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444318654.ch6) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Li, X., Li, D., Li, Y., Ma, Z. and Zhai, T. (2002), “Habitat evaluation for crested ibis – A GIS-based approach – Habitat evaluation for crested ibis”, in *Ecological Research*, vol. 17, issue 5, pp. 565-573. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1703.2002.00515.x](https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1703.2002.00515.x) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Liang, C. and Li, X. (2012), “The Ecological Sensitivity Evaluation in Yellow River Delta National Natural Reserve”, in *CLEAN – Soil, Air, Water*, vol. 40, issue 10, pp. 1197-1207. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1002/clen.201200051](https://doi.org/10.1002/clen.201200051) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Ludwig, F., Hensel, M. and Wolfgang, W. (2021), “Ecolopes – Gebäudehüllen als biodiverse Lebensräume”, in *Bauen von morgen – Zukunftsthemen und Szenarien*, Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung (BB-SR), Bonn, pp. 84-89. [Online] Available at: [researchgate.net/profile/Ferdinand-Ludwig/publication/358396408\\_ECOLOPES\\_-\\_Gebäudehüllen\\_als\\_biodiverse\\_Lebensräume/links/61fffb14b44cbe4227286feb/ECOLOPES-Gebäudehüllen-als-biodiverse-Lebensräume.pdf](https://researchgate.net/profile/Ferdinand-Ludwig/publication/358396408_ECOLOPES_-_Gebäudehüllen_als_biodiverse_Lebensräume/links/61fffb14b44cbe4227286feb/ECOLOPES-Gebäudehüllen-als-biodiverse-Lebensräume.pdf) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Miller, A. Z., Sanmartín, P., Pereira-Pardo, L., Dionísio, A., Saiz-Jimenez, C., Macedo, M. F. and Prieto, B. (2012), “Bioreceptivity of building stones – A review”, in *Science of The Total Environment*, vol. 426, pp. 1-12. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2012.03.026](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2012.03.026) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Moretti, N., Ellul, C., Re Cecconi, F., Papapesios, N. and Dejaco, M. C. (2021), “GeoBIM for built environment condition assessment supporting asset management decision making”, in *Automation in Construction*, vol. 130, 103859, pp. 1-14. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/j.autcon.2021.103859](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.autcon.2021.103859) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Moura, A. C. and Campagna, M. (2018), “Co-design – Digital tools for knowledge-building and decision-making in planning and design | Co-Progetto – Strumenti digitali per la costruzione della conoscenza e il supporto alle decisioni nella progettazione collaborativa”, in *Disegnarecon*, vol. 11, n. 20, pp. ED.1-ED.3. [Online] Available at: [disegnarecon.univaq.it/ojs/index.php/disegnarecon/article/viewFile/388/288](http://disegnarecon.univaq.it/ojs/index.php/disegnarecon/article/viewFile/388/288) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Opoku, A. (2019), “Biodiversity and the built environment – Implications for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”, in *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, vol. 141, pp. 1-7. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2018.10.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2018.10.011) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Ross, M. R. V., Bernhardt, E. S., Doyle, M. W. and Heferman, J. B. (2015), “Designer Ecosystems – Incorporating Design Approaches into Applied Ecology”, in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, vol. 40, issue 1, pp. 419-443. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-121012-100957](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-121012-100957) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Stokes, M. and Chitrakar, R. M. (2012), “Designing ‘other’ citizens into the city – Investigating perceptions of architectural opportunities for wildlife habitat in the Brisbane CBD”, in *QUThinking Conference – Research and Ideas for the Built Environment – Brisbane, 09 November 2012*. [Online] Available at: [eprints.qut.edu.au/85337/](http://eprints.qut.edu.au/85337/) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Store, R. and Jokimäki, J. (2003), “A GIS-based multi-scale approach to habitat suitability modeling”, in *Ecological Modelling*, vol. 169, issue 1, pp. 1-15. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3800\(03\)00203-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3800(03)00203-5) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- von Richthofen, A., Knecht, K., Miao, Y. and König, R. (2018), “The ‘Urban Elements’ method for teaching parametric urban design to professionals”, in *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, vol. 7, n. 4, pp. 573-587. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2018.08.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2018.08.002) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Weisser, W. W. and Hauck, T. E. (2017), “Animal-Aided Design – Using a species’ life-cycle to improve open space planning and conservation in cities and elsewhere”, in *BioRxiv | The preprint server for biology*, pp. 1-14. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1101/150359](https://doi.org/10.1101/150359) [Accessed 24 March 2022].
- Zanni, M. A., Soetanto, R. and Ruikar, K. (2017), “Towards a BIM-enabled sustainable building design process – Roles, responsibilities, and requirements”, in *Architectural Engineering and Design Management*, vol. 13, issue 2, pp. 101-129. [Online] Available at: [doi.org/10.1080/17452007.2016.1213153](https://doi.org/10.1080/17452007.2016.1213153) [Accessed 24 March 2022].