Increasing the benefits of nature experience (for health and wellbeing) in the general population through an interactive online/digital platform

(working title)

**Call:** CHANSE

**Submission:** April (internal submission)

**Duration:** 36 months (Autumn 2022 - Summer 2025)

**Max. funding amount:** 1.5 Mio €

**Consortium:** 4 main Partners from 4 countries

**Lead Partner:** The University of Edinburgh

Jule Hildmann (PhD), Outdoor Environmental Education, Moray House School of Education; Arno Verhoeven, School of Design, Edinburgh College of Arts

**Project summary**

Engaging with nature and the outdoors has significant benefits on human health and wellbeing (H&W). While the academic knowledge base on this is expansive, there is little awareness of or practical competence implementing this research in the general population. Public expenses on H&W-related costs are significant, and the simple remedies connected to nature experience (NE) are hardly utilised. This is particularly so in people in socio-economically deprived settings who are also hit most hardest by the pandemic.

Outside In provides an interactive online platform per project country that makes the existing research, knowledge and resources around the H&W benefits of nature engagement available to the general population. These resources include, amongst others, background information and research finding, practical guidance on self-led outdoor and NE activities, and local/regional initiatives to connect to.

Artificial-Intelligence (AI) enhanced features in the platform are employed to

* Structure and arrange content for optimise usability
* Increase and personalise interaction of users with (and thereby hopefully their benefit of) the resources
* Connect and enhance the platforms in the 4 European project countries
* Collect research data on user behaviour and benefits, differences between countries and demographic user groups
* Create new content and resources based on preliminary findings from the data collected

The evaluation will employ a multi-method qualitative and quantitative methodology. Public engagement and knowledge exchange with different stakeholders are a continuous process during Outside In. To ensure internal coherence and maximised impact, a design approach is applied to the entire project.

**Key activities**

Some core interventions, public engagement, and research activities include:

* Design, evaluate, and scale a set of multi-media resources that aim to
	+ raise awareness of the benefits of nature experience on MHW.
	+ enable people to identify existing resources already accessible to them.
	+ increase practical knowledge and skills on how to create and integrate nature experiences into their daily lives – with consideration of current and general restrictions and barriers participants might face.
* H&W data collection from different population samples
	+ General users of digital resources (e.g., online discussion, feedback and resource-related interaction tools, survey)
	+ Case studies (interviews, MHW-related cell phone app, non-invasive medical measures)
* Ongoing knowledge exchange and impact activities
* Collaborate with interdisciplinary academic experts and influential partners to reach and engage different populations and maximize impact.

**Innovation**

Outside In contains several innovation factors:

* Combination and creation of a high impact, evidence-based resource tool kit (sustainable, accessible)
* Augmented effects through stakeholder involvement and sustainability-oriented design approach
* Once established, the toolkit and guidelines present a highly cost-efficient public health prevention tool that effectively saves high health, social and economic H&W-related expenses.
* Interdisciplinary design and project team ensuring that the platform and AI-features optimise the practical impact and societal reach intended.

**Main Deliverables**

* AI-enhanced online platform
* Set of online resources
* Project web site (with open access resources, public engagement functions, etc.)
* Set of print and other non-digital resources
* Various media outputs
* Project report (incl. interdisciplinary literature review, research findings and implications)
* Guidelines (academic recommendations, policy recommendations, guidelines for practice)
* Research data sets

**Expertise / Consortium**

Outside In is delivered by a team with interdisciplinary expertise on

* Health & wellbeing
* Nature experience, outdoor learning
* Design

The consortium currently consists of the following Partners with these primary responsibilities:

**The University of Edinburgh (School of Education; Edinburgh College of Arts; UK)**: Lead Partner; project coordination and management; interdisciplinary expertise on nature experience, outdoor learning, and Design; main contributor to research activities; knowledge exchange and impact coordination.

**Transfer Centre for Neuroscience and Learning; University of Ulm, Germany:** Expertise on Health & wellbeing; Platform and research in Germany, Switzerland, Austria (to be confirmed).

**Collaboration Partners:** We collaborate with NGOs, public services and other stakeholdersfor public engagement**,** to generate resources and disseminate findings.