

Blue Access Scotland

An inclusive and sustainable blue space infrastructure for disabled people in Scotland

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Hydro Nation Scholars Programme

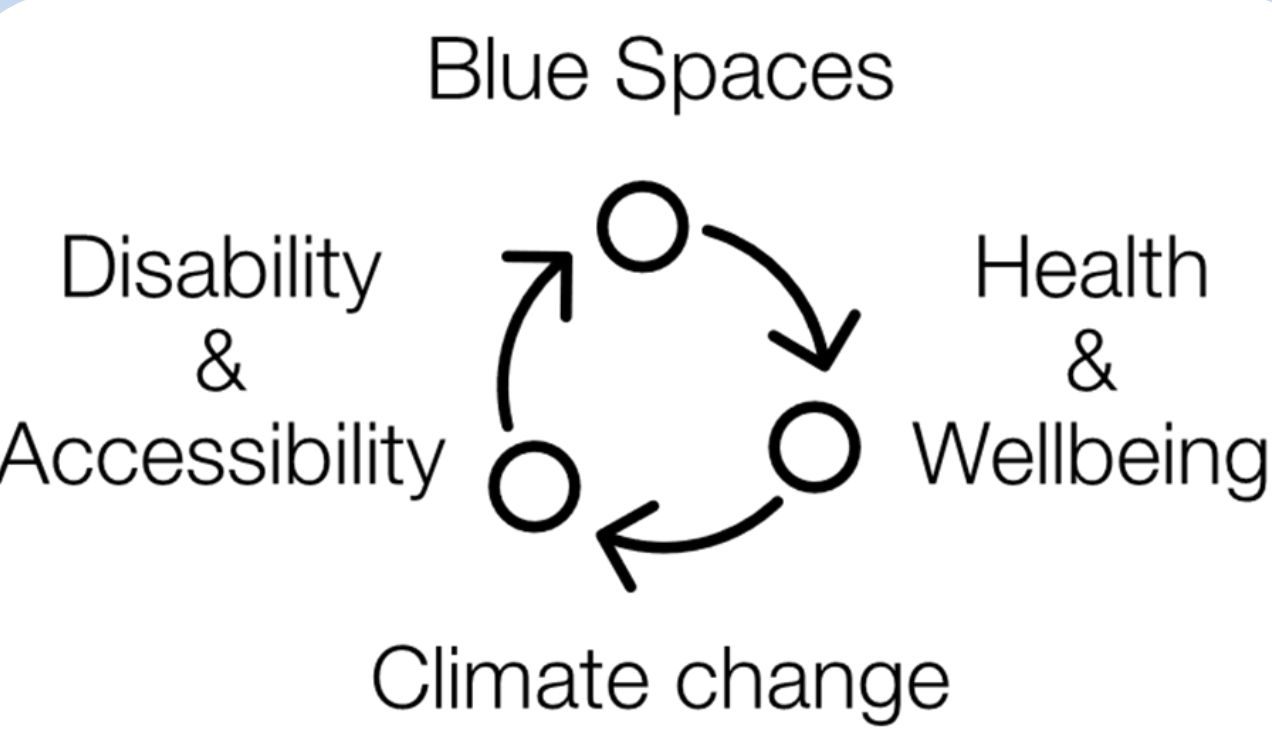
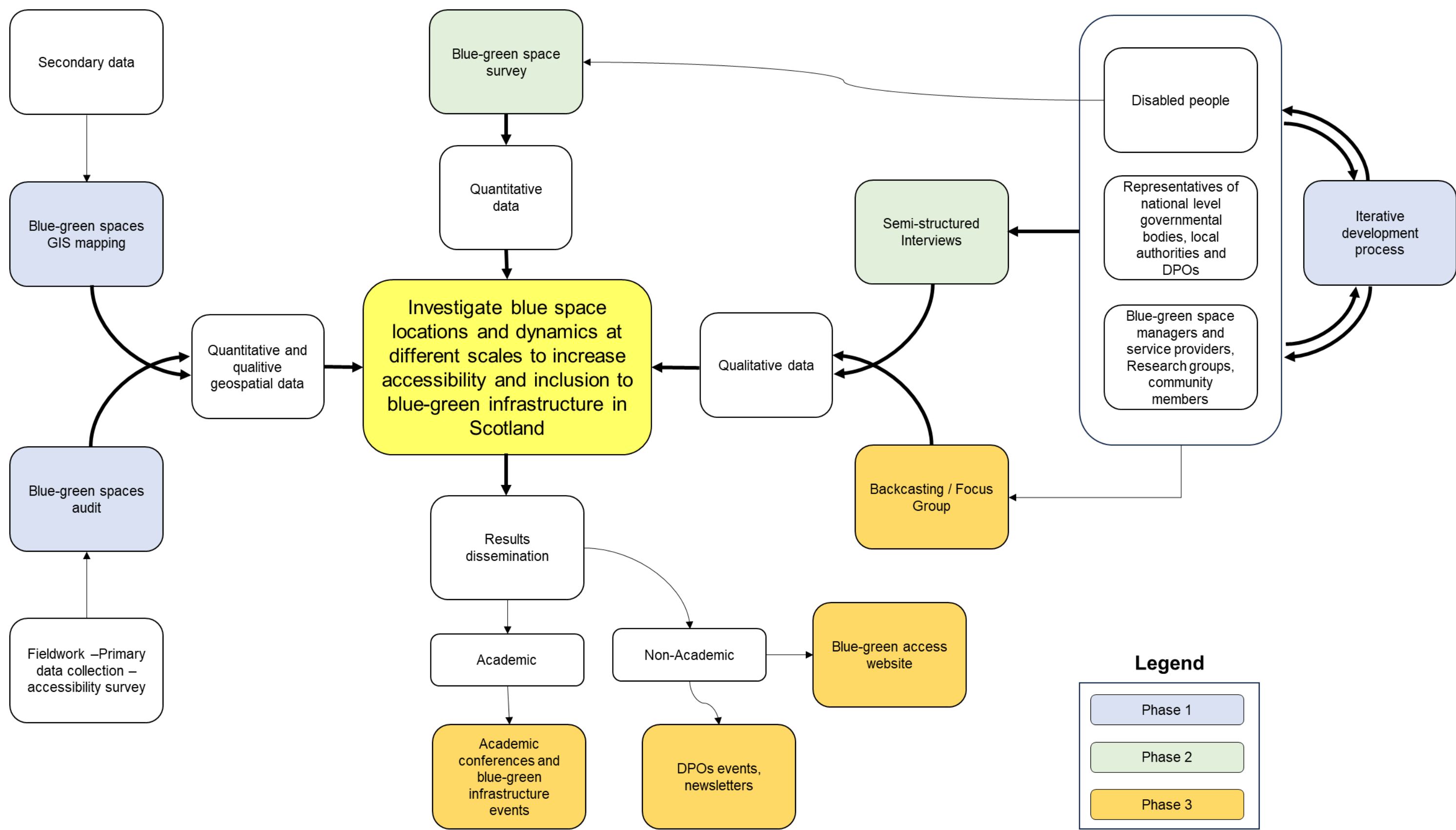
Introduction

This research aim is to investigate blue space locations and dynamics at different scales to increase accessibility and inclusion to blue-green infrastructure in Scotland

Objectives

- 1-Map and assess the quality and accessibility of different blue-green space locations and typologies.
- 2-Examine the lived experiences of disabled people in relation to access and use of blue-green spaces in Scotland.
- 3- Investigate the accounts of local and national authorities, Disabled People Organizations, blue-green space managers and service providers regarding blue-green infrastructure and services in relation to disabled people.
- 4-Produce –using participatory methods involving disabled people community, institutional and private stakeholders— a collective vision, and strategy for accessible and inclusive blue-green spaces in Scotland.

Methods



- The importance of blue spaces is embedded in several Scottish policies—Water-resilient Places Framework (2021), NHS Scotland - Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy (2022), National Planning Framework - 4 (2023), to name some.
- Interactions with blue spaces can lead to improvements in mental health (Pouso et al., 2021), better mood (Vert et al., 2020), increased socialization opportunities (de Bell et al., 2017), and a potential reduced risk of premature mortality (Smith et al., 2021).
- Existing inequalities and the uneven burden of climate change across society has highlighted the importance of ensuring that blue-green initiatives are developed in ways that assure justice, equality, and inclusion — particularly towards people historically marginalised (Semple, Fountas and Fonzone, 2021).
- Nature based health and health enabling places, are central in the work of policy makers, practitioners, and researchers in Scotland and internationally (Britton et al., 2020).
- Among marginalised collectives, people with health problems and disabilities are less likely to spend time outdoors compared to others in Scotland (Colley, Irvine and Currie, 2022)

Results

Preliminary findings suggest that people in the most deprived communities live in environments with comparatively less coastal area.

Most disabled people and people over 65 also live within areas with limited availability of high-quality blue spaces.

Future

Key step 1- Blue space accessibility audit (Obj.1)

Complete the blue space accessibility audit within the Tay Cities region study area [Until Jul 2024]

Key step 2 - Quantitative survey (Obj.2)

Develop and disseminate a quantitative survey aiming at collecting data related to blue spaces preferences and use patterns, perceived benefits, facilitators and barriers to blue access participation [Until Dec 2024]

Key step 3 -Semi-structured interviews (Obj.2-3)

Prepare and conduct conducted semi-structured interviews with disabled people, representatives of national governmental bodies and local authorities, and blue space managers and service providers [Until Apr 2025]

Key step 4 -Iterative development process (Obj.2-3)

Continue the iterative development process with the different actors involved with blue space inclusion and accessibility for disabled people in Scotland

Key step 5- Backcasting: envisaging alternative futures for blue space accessibility and inclusion (Obj.4)

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