URBAN NATURE PLANS +
Short Brief

Process overview for urban nature plans

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Nature belongs in our cities and urban nature plans are a key! This short brief provides an overview of the process.

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Urban Nature Plans (UNPs) are a framework that involves both a process and product that supports local governments to integrate their work across departments in order to meet their social and environmental goals and commitments. UNPs create, consolidate, and curate information, plans, data, visions and goals. Ultimately, they are also a possibility for ambitious action.

We will introduce you to the process for UNPs and guide you through 10 actionable steps and real-life examples that can help cities put nature_and_biodiversity at the centre of_urban planning. From gaining political commitment to engaging communities in co-design, UNPs provide a roadmap for transforming urban spaces into natural, vibrant, healthy and inclusive environments.
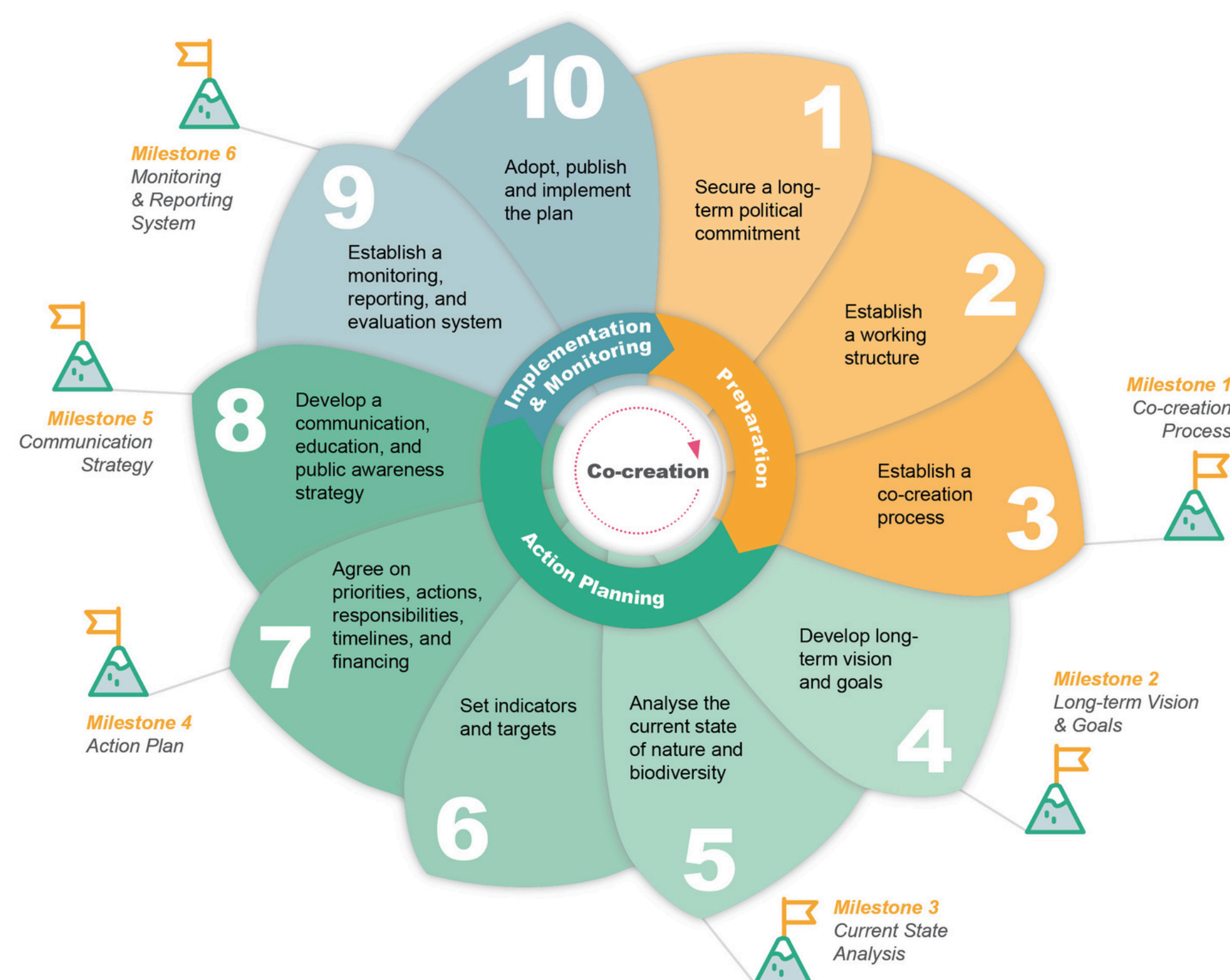
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Steps in UNPs include: (1) Political commitment; (2) Working structure; (3) Co-creation process; (4) Long-term vision and goals; (5) Current state of nature and biodiversity; (6) Indicators and targets; (7) Priorities, actions, responsibilities, timelines, and financing; (8) Communication, education, and public awareness strategy; (9) Monitoring, reporting, and evaluation system; and (10) Adopt, publish and implement the plan.

Step 1: Securing Political Commitment

A strong political foundation is crucial for successful implementation. Cities like Mannheim have led the way by securing public endorsements from city councils and mayors, demonstrating that urban nature is a priority. By fostering collaboration across departments and stakeholders, political commitment ensures that nature-based solutions are integrated into urban planning.

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Step 2: Establishing a Working Structure

A clear and organised working structure is essential for moving the plan forward. Paris provides a stellar example with its Biodiversity Plan, where interdepartmental working groups from sectors such as transport and urban planning collaborate to align resources and expertise, ensuring that nature goals are embedded into all city policies.

Step 3: Establishing a Co-Creation Process

Inclusive planning is at the heart of UNPs. The Natura Plan 2030 in Barcelona demonstrates how meaningful community involvement can shape policies. Through workshops, digital tools, and participatory platforms, the city ensures that all voices, from citizens to NGOs, contribute to the development of urban nature initiatives.

Step 4: Developing a Long-Term Vision and Goals

Setting a long-term vision for urban nature is essential. Cities like Belgrade are envisioning green spaces as fundamental parts of urban development, with a focus on protecting and enhancing biodiversity. By creating a comprehensive Green Infrastructure Strategy, Belgrade ensures that green spaces are part of the city's long-term urban planning.

Step 5: Analysing the Current State of Nature and Biodiversity

Before progressing, cities must assess the current state of their natural assets. Barcelona's data-driven approach, which maps habitats and assesses ecosystem health, helps the city make informed decisions on where to prioritise conservation efforts and how to address challenges like pollution and climate change.

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Step 6: Setting Indicators and Targets

Clear, measurable targets ensure that progress can be tracked. Mannheim, through its Freiraum Mannheim 2030 strategy, is defining indicators like green space accessibility and ecological connectivity to track its progress toward a greener, more biodiverse city.

Step 7: Action Planning and Funding

Successful implementation of UNPs requires concrete action and sufficient funding. Burgas has integrated urban greening into its broader development plan, securing funding to support initiatives such as green corridors and wetland restoration, demonstrating how funding can support nature-based solutions.

Step 8: Communication and Public Awareness

Raising awareness of the benefits of urban nature is key to securing public support. Paris has engaged citizens through communication campaigns, public consultations, and educational programmes on the importance of urban biodiversity, ensuring a strong connection between the public and the city's green initiatives.

Step 9: Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

Regular monitoring ensures that UNPs are on track. Barcelona uses monitoring tools to track ecosystem health and involves citizens in data collection, ensuring transparency and allowing the city to adapt its strategies as needed.

Step 10: Adoption and Implementation

Once UNPs are developed, cities must adopt and implement them, ensuring success through formal adoption by city councils. Belgrade is integrating its urban greening strategies into legal regulations, ensuring that green spaces are incorporated into new developments, with compliance mechanisms to ensure enforcement.

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Summary

UNPs present a clear, actionable path for cities across Europe to prioritise nature, biodiversity, and resilience. By following these 10 steps, cities can create inclusive, healthy, and sustainable urban spaces that benefit everyone. From securing political commitment to engaging local communities, UNPs empower cities to bring nature back into the heart of urban life and tackle the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and urbanisation.

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