

# URBAN NATURE PLANS +

## Short Brief



**What are Urban  
Nature Plans?**



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# URBAN NATURE PLANS + WHAT?



This short brief provides an entry point to better understand the background and foundations for urban nature plans.



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# URBAN NATURE PLANS + WHAT?



In the UNP+ project, we are striving to make urban nature the norm, not the exception. By working with cities, we aim to halt biodiversity loss and enhance urban ecosystems, fostering healthier and more resilient communities.

A primary goal for the UNP+ project is to develop a Capacity Building Programme (CBP) that facilitates Urban Nature Plans (UNPs) in cities across Europe in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy call for all cities over 20,000 inhabitants to do so.

## **What are Urban Nature Plans?**

Urban Nature Plans (UNPs) serve as an overarching framework articulating, formalising, and showcasing the commitment of local governments to promoting and protecting biodiversity and urban nature as well as green infrastructure and nature-based solutions (NbS).



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# Insights from Barcelona



Current policies and practices often fall short when it comes to biodiversity conservation in our cities. Urban Nature Plans (UNPs) are a strategic framework that helps bridge this gap by formalising the commitment of local governments to promoting biodiversity and urban nature. They help by aligning goals and supporting collaboration to increase natural spaces and biodiversity, supporting healthy and thriving urban environments.



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The EU Biodiversity Strategy (see Box 1 below) and the EU Nature Restoration Law (see Box 2 below) encourage local governments to leverage the power of UNPs in mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions (NbS), enhancing biodiversity and urban nature, and achieving global environmental targets. The European Union encourages all cities over 20,000 residents to deliver UNPs as part of urban sustainability planning.



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## Box 1: What is the Biodiversity

**The EU Biodiversity Strategy is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments, including in relation to urban ecosystems to achieve its objectives.**

**The strategy aims to build resilience to future threats such as the impacts of climate change, forest fires, food insecurity, and disease outbreaks - including by protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade.**

**The strategy contains specific commitments and actions to be delivered by 2030, including: Establishing a larger EU-wide network of protected areas on land and at sea; Launching an EU nature restoration plan; Introducing measures to enable the necessary transformative change; and Introducing measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge.**

**UNPs are not a stand-alone document, they are a long-term framework and strategy as well as an iterative management and planning process, and a concrete product. Ultimately, UNPs are a framework involving both a process and product as well as a possibility for ambitious and strategic action.**

**A core to thriving and impactful UNPs is a commitment to meaningfully and appropriately engage stakeholders (including multiple departments in local governments) in co-creation. This requires tailoring communication about urban nature to a variety of audiences, and ultimately transforming urban spaces into biodiverse, healthier, and more resilient areas for future generations.**



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## Box 2: What is the Nature Restoration Law?

**The EU Nature Restoration Law is the first continent-wide, comprehensive law of its kind. It is a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which sets binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters.**

**Europe's nature is in alarming decline, with more than 80% of habitats in poor condition. The regulation combines an overarching restoration objective for the long-term recovery of nature in the Europe's land and sea areas with binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species. These measures should cover at least 20% of Europe's land and sea areas by 2030, and ultimately all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.**

**Restoring wetlands, rivers, forests, grasslands, marine ecosystems, and the species they host will help: increase biodiversity; secure the things nature does for free, like cleaning our water and air, pollinating crops, and protecting us from floods; limit global warming to 1.5°C; build up European resilience and strategic autonomy, preventing natural disasters and reducing risks to food security.**



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