

URBAN NATURE PLANS +

Short Brief



**Who is key to
involve in urban
nature plans?**



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This short brief provides an entry point to better understand the need for collaboration and co-creation in urban nature plans.



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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.

Who is key to involve in urban nature plans?

First and foremost, UNPs need the support and commitment from the City Mayor and/or the City Council or an equivalent decision-making body. It is paramount that local governments take a leading role in UNPs.



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Second, the development and implementation of UNPs need to be in close cooperation, coordination and consultation between different levels of government, relevant authorities, local citizens, and local stakeholders. The Local Planning Authority needs to establish appropriate structures and procedures.

And third, integrated planning and implementation is needed in terms of interdepartmental consultation and cooperation at local governments, close collaboration with relevant authorities, and a transparent and participatory co-creation approach.



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Insights from Burgas



Urban nature is a constant in Burgas. The sandy beaches in the city attract both locals and tourists, offering recreational spaces that integrate seamlessly with the urban environment. The area is also a crucial stopover along the migratory routes of various bird species, earning it the moniker of an "air highway" for migrating birds. Additionally, the nearby Strandzha Natural Park and the Burgas Mineral Springs add to the city's natural allure. Approximately 20% of the municipality's land area is protected due to its impressive biodiversity and serves as a sanctuary for endangered species of migrating birds, fish, and mammals. This commitment to preserving natural habitats underscores Burgas' dedication to environmental conservation and sustainable urban development.



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Interdepartmental consultation and cooperation at the local level to ensure consistency and complementarity of the UNPs with local policies, strategies and measures in related policy areas (such as water; transport; land-use and spatial planning; green infrastructure, energy; health; air and soil quality; and waste).

Close collaboration with the relevant authorities (i) at the different levels of administration and government (such as district, municipality, agglomeration, region, and Member States) and (ii) in neighbouring urban areas, in particular to improve ecological connectivity. This exchange needs to involve in particular those bodies and authorities with responsibility for relevant green infrastructure for the nature and biodiversity of the urban areas, such as those responsible for neighbouring or connected ecosystems.



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Box I: Citizen Science

There is significant potential of citizen science both for collecting data and for empowering citizens to participate in an evidence-based dialogue on the value and quality of urban nature. The European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme is a great example of a citizen science initiative. Butterflies can serve as important biodiversity indicators due to their high sensitivity to environmental changes. Additionally, they are easy to identify, even for beginners, and their beauty often evokes emotional connections which can help to effectively drive societal transitions and actions. Overall, citizen science can create opportunities for public participation in environmental monitoring, fostering deeper connections between urban residents and their natural surroundings.



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Box 2: City Leadership

The City of Paris provides a stellar example of ambitious urban greening biodiversity strategy 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 plans and policies. The City of Barcelona has similarly demonstrated innovation through its Nature Plan 2030, which prioritizes citizen-driven transformations like the Cristòbal de Moura Street green corridor. Meanwhile, the City of Mannheim has leveraged partnerships with local businesses to monitor urban biodiversity, exemplifying how cross-sector collaboration can amplify the impact of urban nature plans.



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