



WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE



28-29 May 2024, Istanbul, Türkiye

Urban Nature Program Expert Meeting: Urban Nature, Green Urban Infrastructure, and Climate Adaptation

Hosted by the World Bank's [Global Platform for Sustainable Cities \(GPSC\)](#), the Expert Meeting brought together selected Cities, MDBs, experts, partner organizations, and architectural firms worldwide to discuss some of the key issues and challenges facing cities in planning and investing in urban nature. Representatives showcased diverse and innovative approaches to integrating nature into urban planning, which ranged from biodiversity conservation to climate resilience and community engagement. Participants identified common challenges, such as limited access to finance, and discussed the need for aligning economic incentives with environmental goals to attract investment and more collaboration between public and private sectors.

The meeting also marked the first gathering of the [Urban Nature Program](#) after its launch at CoP28 and provided an opportunity to consult on the work program and the shared vision for the Urban Nature Program. Participants highlighted the role of international collaboration through the Urban Nature Program in developing and sharing good practices and scaling impactful solutions, noting that local actions, while essential, are insufficient without global coordination. As a next step, the Program will convene the Leadership Forum on Urban Nature and Green Infrastructure at the COP16 CBD Summit in Cali, Colombia.

List of Participants

Cities:

- Berlin, Germany
- Cape Town, South Africa
- Copenhagen, Denmark
- Curitiba and São Paulo, Brazil
- Guangzhou, China
- Istanbul, Türkiye
- Paris, France
- Seattle, USA

Experts and Partners:

- C40
- CONCITO
- ICLEI
- UNEP

- Guangzhou Urban Planning and Design Research Institute
- Guangzhou Transportation Planning and Research Institute
- University of Pennsylvania
- Rehwaldt Architectural Firm
- Toronto Metropolitan University
- WBCSD
- WRI

Finance institutions:

- French Development Agency (AFD)
- Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB)
- Development Bank for Southern Africa (DBSA)
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- World Bank

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
Agenda overview	5
Day 1 Summary.....	6
Welcome and opening remarks.....	6
Welcome	6
Overview of the Urban Nature Program and the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC)	6
Box 1: Questions from the audience on the Urban Nature Program	7
Session 1. Planning Urban Nature and Biodiversity	7
Sharing cities' policies and actions	7
Berlin, Germany	7
Cape Town, South Africa	8
Copenhagen, Denmark	8
Curitiba, Brazil	8
Guangzhou, China	9
Paris, France.....	9
São Paulo, Brazil	9
Istanbul, Türkiye.....	10
Seattle, USA.....	10
Discussions and reflections on the city presentations.....	11
Recommendations for the Urban Nature Program.....	11
Session 2. Investing in Nature - Green Urban Infrastructure (GI) Investment.....	12
City of Konya, Türkiye	12
Box 2: What is green and blue infrastructure?.....	12
Box 3: Key components of Konya's Green and Blue Infrastructure Investment Framework	13
Martin Luther King Park, Paris, France.....	13
French Agency of Development (AFD)	13

Reflections and discussions on the investment in GI	14
Wrap up for Day 1	14
Day 2	15
Session 3. Initiatives and Activities by Organizations	15
Overview of initiatives and activities by organizations.....	15
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	15
World Resources Institute (WRI)	15
ICLEI.....	15
C40.....	16
World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)	16
CONCITO.....	17
University of Pennsylvania.....	17
Toronto Metropolitan University.....	17
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	17
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	18
Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).....	18
Planning for Urban Nature Program	18
Preparing for the COP16 CBD Summit	19
Site visit	20
Annex. Site visit information.....	21
Ataturk Urban Forest	21
Buyukdere Ataturk Nursery	21

This report was compiled with contributions from Peter Griffiths and Yuna Chun.

Agenda overview

Day 1	
Welcome and opening remarks	
09:00 – 09:10	Welcome
09:10 – 09:30	Tour de table
09:30 – 09:50	Overview of the Urban Nature Program and the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC)
Session 1. Planning Urban Nature and Biodiversity	
09:50 – 11:00	Sharing cities' policies and actions
11:00 – 11:20	Coffee break
11:20 – 12:30	Discussions and reflections on the city presentations
	Recommendations for the Urban Nature Program
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
Session 2. Investing in Nature – Green Urban Infrastructure (GI) Investment	
13:30 – 15:00	Green infrastructure Framework for City of Guangzhou, China
	City of Konya, Türkiye
	Matin Luther King Park, Paris, France
	Sharing information from other cities and participants
15:00 – 15:20	Coffee break
15:20 – 17:00	Reflections and discussions on the investment in GI
17:00 – 17:05	Wrap up for Day 1
17:30	Reception
Day 2	
Session 3. Initiatives and Activities by Organizations	
09:00 – 10:30	Overview of initiatives and activities by organizations
10:30 – 11:30	Planning for Urban Nature Program
11:30 – 11:45	Coffee break
11:45 – 12:15	Preparing for the COP16 CBD Summit
12:15 – 12:30	Wrap up for the expert meeting
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
14:00 – 17:30	Site visit

A man in a dark suit and tie stands at a wooden podium, addressing an audience. Behind him is a large projection screen displaying the title "Sustainable Urban Infrastructure and Climate Adaptation" along with the dates "May 28-30, 2024" and location "Istanbul, Turkey". The screen also features logos for UN-Habitat, UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, and various other international organizations. In the foreground, the backs of several audience members' heads are visible as they sit at tables with water bottles.



Welcome

Tuğba Ölmez Hancı, Head of Parks, Gardens and Green Areas Department in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality welcomed participants to Istanbul, highlighting the importance of local and global collaboration and knowledge exchange around biodiversity. Istanbul is working to restore wetlands, hillsides and waterways and is invested in finding solutions that can be scaled with tangible impact.

Overview of the Urban Nature Program and the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC)

Xueman Wang, GPSC Program Manager, World Bank, shared an overview of the [Urban Nature Program \(UNP\)](#) and [the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities \(GPSC\)](#). The GPSC, as the lead agency for the [GEF-8 Sustainable Cities Integrated Program](#), plans to integrate the UNP as the flagship of the nature pillar. The overall aim of the UNP is to support cities in pursuing nature-positive and resilient urban development. She also introduced the latest knowledge product, the Compendium for City Good Practice Series. The first in the series is [How Paris Is Leveraging Nature For Climate Resilience](#).



Box 1: Questions from the audience on the Urban Nature Program

How will the UNP enable cities in countries with strong central governments?

The UNP will work with cities in building technical capacity at the local level, including increasing capacity in smaller cities.

How to scale locally funded initiatives with significant finance?

Engage in vertical and horizontal collaboration – national government’s commitment to nature is important to unlocking finance alongside building relationships with MDBs, IFIs, and the private sector.

What experience is there in combining topics, like health, with nature?

The UNP provides an opportunity to share evidence around the role nature-based investment can play in responding to other challenges, like health. The Guangzhou wetland restoration project, for example, includes a health value.

Session 1. Planning Urban Nature and Biodiversity

Session 1 was opened and moderated by Ingrid Coetzee, Director, ICLEI.

Sharing cities’ policies and actions

Berlin, Germany

Berlin Slides

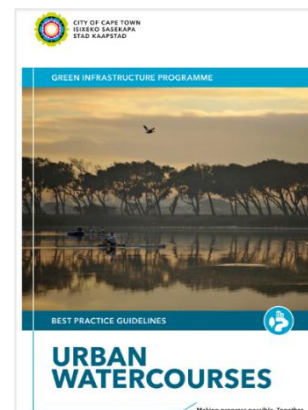
Simone Bröschke, Senate Department for Mobility, Transport, Climate Protection and the Environment, shared Berlin’s plan to be climate-neutral by 2045. Securing urban green and blue space before and as part of development requires legally binding instruments, capacity building, governance approaches for cooperation, exchange of good practice, and financial resources. She also introduced the [Berlin Urban Nature Pact](#), which is an action-oriented plan to halt and reverse biodiversity loss in Berlin and in cities across the world and will be signed by mayors at COP16, due to take place in Cali, Colombia between 21 October 2024 and 1 November 2024.



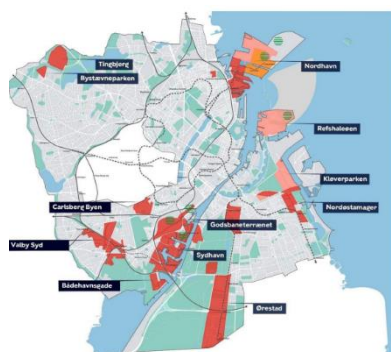
Cape Town, South Africa

Cape Town Slides

Bronwen Griffiths, Head of the Sustainable Partnerships & Financing, Environmental Management Department, shared how the city developed an overarching sustainability approach by integrating the environmental framework into the spatial development plan. She also highlighted that nature-based solutions are being used as the most cost-effective and sustainable way to secure Cape Town's water supply and to meet future water demands.



[Best Practice Guidelines: Urban Watercourses](#)



Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen Slides

Sabina Zwergius Teilmann, Chief Consultant, highlighted that cities need support in making the nature-business case, securing the appropriate land/space, and addressing conflicting legislation. She also shared how the city has integrated biodiversity and climate adaptation within comprehensive municipal planning, and presented Copenhagen's storm surge protection project, which includes a focus on housing needs and new green areas.

Curitiba, Brazil

Curitiba Slides

Felipe Maia Ehmke, Director of Climate Change, Secretary of the Environment, and Nathalia Oenning Ribeiro, Project Director, Urban Planner, Instituto de Pesquisa e Planejamento Urbano, presented how the Curitiba Master Plan has harmonized its urban nature/climate action with national policies and international commitments. They also shared key challenges around flooding, urban drainage, heat waves, and drought. The Belem Linear Park Project is using a project matrix of nature-based solutions, resilience, biodiversity, and urban renewal to respond to these challenges. They also highlighted the importance of having solid governance mechanisms to enforce climate adaptation actions.



Guangzhou, China

Guangzhou Slides 1

Guangzhou Slides 2

Ye Shanhu, District Mayor, Panyu District, Guangzhou Municipality, China, presented Guangzhou as a landscape-integrated city and shared the city's approach to sustainable urban cooling, restored biodiversity, and green networks, as a first pilot city to carry out the China Sustainable Cooling Project. He also discussed how cities could package profitable projects with nature projects to increase financial viability, leverage ecological benefits for developmental advantages, and implement them in a sustainable manner.

Christiane Eberts, Director for Rehwaltdt Architecture Firm, Germany, provided details on the Panyu green infrastructure construction plan, which seeks to reverse the negative impact of an increase in built-up area in recent decades on ecological quality. Integrating green and blue infrastructure into wider spatial planning is being used as a tool to pilot the restoration of ecosystem services across the megacity.

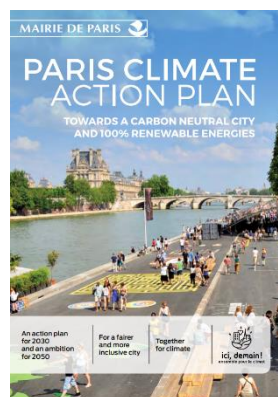


Introducing the idea of compensation to mitigate the impact of new buildings and infrastructure.

Paris, France

Paris Slides

Thomas Pérez-Vitoria, Deputy Head of the Urban Ecology Agency in the City of Paris, introduced the city's diverse plans and strategies, highlighting the [Paris Climate Action Plan](#) and the Bioclimatic Urban Masterplan, which prioritize protecting the population from the consequences of climate change by greening, cooling, and adapting the city, while reducing inequalities. He also shared that achieving this is both a technical and cultural challenge, given the city's architectural history, which results in constraints on land-use and strict regulations. Despite the challenges, Paris is advancing its nature-positive transformation with ambitious greening goals and mandates, such as adding 100 hectares of neighborhood greening spaces and 150 hectares of green buildings.



[Paris Climate Action Plan \(C40 summary\)](#)

São Paulo, Brazil

São Paulo slides

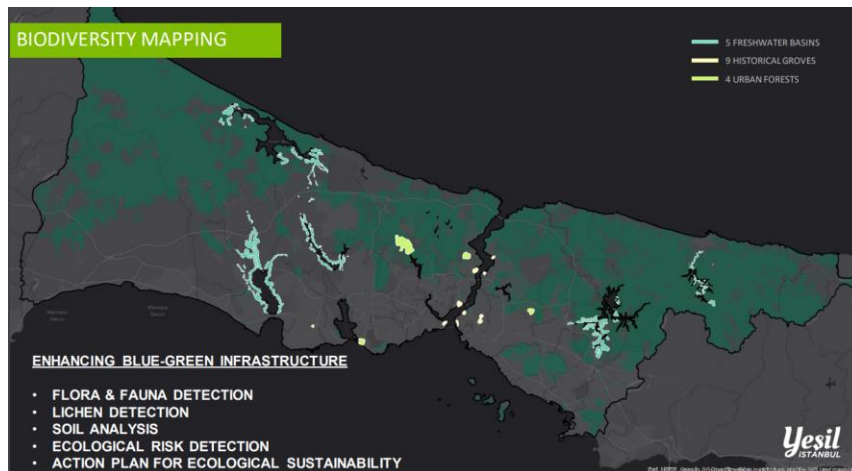
Rodrigo Pimentel Pinto Ravena, Environmental Secretary of São Paulo, spoke on the need to protect and expand São Paulo's green assets and shared the city's approaches to investing in nature. He emphasized the significance

of securing land to protect biodiversity, highlighting São Paulo's efforts in purchasing land and forests for conservation. Additionally, the city actively monitors its inventory of natural assets using remote satellite sensing and ground sensors to track progress and identify heat islands, vegetation decline, and fire risks for targeted interventions.

Istanbul, Türkiye

Istanbul Slides

Yalçın Kaya, Director of Plant breeding Research Center, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, presented the Green Istanbul initiative and shared how biodiversity mapping is being used to target ecological conservation efforts, including monitoring flora and fauna, developing pollination pathways, reducing light pollution, and increasing surface permeability. Istanbul also actively works with the community to raise awareness, encouraging activities such as tree trails or exploratory programs for children, and presenting green awards.



Seattle, USA

Seattle Slides

Anthony-Paul Diaz, Superintendent/Director of the Seattle Parks and Recreation, shared how parks are Seattle's fabric of identity, in which 99% live within a 10-minute walk to a park, and how the Green Seattle Partnership is part of community outreach and an education program to increase public buy-in for investing in parks and green infrastructure. Community members volunteer time, while professional crews do technical work and the city coordinates and provides an additional layer of support.

The slide is titled "Green Seattle Partnership" and features the "GREEN SEATTLE PARTNERSHIP" logo in the top right corner. It displays four photographs of community members engaged in various activities: a group of people standing together, a person working on a log in a stream, a person using a tool in a forest, and a person holding a sign. Below each photo is a descriptive goal: "Improving human health through access to nature", "Building wildlife habitat and improving Puget Sound health", "Strengthening neighborhood cohesion", and "Increasing climate adaptation and resiliency". The slide concludes with the hashtag "#SeattleShines" and a rainbow-colored bar.

Discussions and reflections on the city presentations

Moderated by Nina-Marie E. Lister, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Director of the Ecological Design Lab at Toronto Metropolitan University.

A discussion followed, with participants reflecting on the city presentations. This is briefly summarized below:

- Nature represents critical infrastructure and investment with core value, extending beyond traditional grey investments.
- Co-creation is important for engaging the next generation of voters, including involving children (i.e., future voters and politicians) in the benefits of investing in nature.
- Policies, plans, and investments need to emphasize the key value biodiversity and nature brings to achieving economic and social outcomes.
- Recognizing the interconnectedness of wildlife in human flourishing is critical.
- Sharing knowledge is important, especially given the considerable number of shared challenges between across the Global North and South, including lack of finance.
- Strengthening nature will require a hybrid green/grey infrastructure approach.
- Inclusion can be an important metric for prioritizing the location of green investments.
- Aggregated local level data on how nature investment will reduce the cost of climate change can help to better target nature as infrastructure investments.

Recommendations for the Urban Nature Program

- Help build/articulate the business case for investing in nature (e.g., cost-benefit analysis, potential cost savings from disaster avoidance, improvements in public health, the economic implications of inaction, and risk assessment).
- Strengthen the business case by consolidating data from diverse organizations to provide a robust foundation of evidence.
- Develop case studies specifically tailored to the UNP's objectives and target audience, showcasing successful implementation of nature-positive development.



Session 2. Investing in Nature - Green Urban Infrastructure (GI) Investment

Moderated by Christoph Pusch, Practice Manager, World Bank

City of Konya, Türkiye

Konya Slides

Xueman Wang, GPSC Program Manager, World Bank, started by introducing green and blue infrastructure (see Box 2).

Box 2: What is green and blue infrastructure?

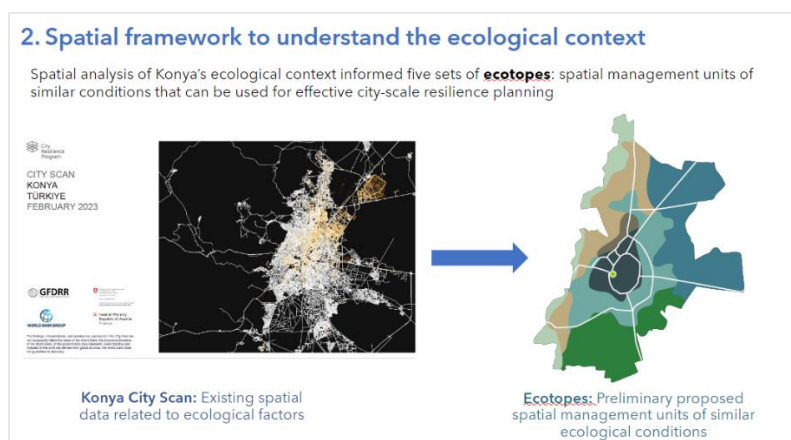
Cities across the world are experiencing more regular extreme weather events, with shared challenges including extreme heat, wildfires, flooding, drought, plant and wildlife extinction, and land subsistence.

Green and blue infrastructure protects cities from these risks by leveraging ecological functions that are best suited to local conditions. Flood water, for example, can be slowed or diverted by plants to support urban cooling or filtered to increase potable groundwater supply or to reduce subsistence.

Examples include:

- Green streets
- River rehabilitation
- Public spaces rehabilitation
- Buildings and surrounding areas
- Rain gardens
- Groundwater infiltration ponds
- Permeable pavement

She presented the steps Konya is taking, including developing a spatial framework to group similar ecological systems to support city-scale resilience planning. These “ecotopes” include air, earth/water, biota (plants and animals), and human/social, and are being used to develop an investment plan that targets key risks and strengths. City scan and geospatial analysis were used to understand the city’s landform and identify areas of risk and tailor green and blue infrastructure into the context.



Green connectivity is becoming an increasingly important aspect of urban competitiveness. An Urban Nature Framework encourages cities to maximize benefits by thinking about holistic and integrated change.

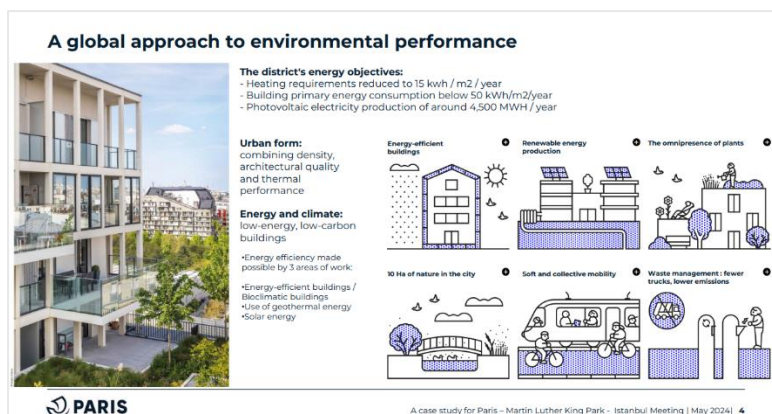
Box 3: Key components of Konya's Green and Blue Infrastructure Investment Framework

- Konya's need for climate resilience through Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Frameworks for ecological opportunities and priorities
- Analysis of Green and Blue Infrastructure Pilot Projects
- Investment recommendations
- Advancing Konya as a global leader in Green and Blue Infrastructure

Martin Luther King Park, Paris, France

MLK Slides

Jérôme Saint-Chely, Landscape Designer of the City of Paris, shared the redevelopment of a major brownfield site using nature-based solutions to improve urban cooling and water management. The large central park and energy-efficient, low-carbon buildings are designed for climate adaptation, while the mixed-ownership structure enables the city to tackle multiple challenges, including the social housing targets.

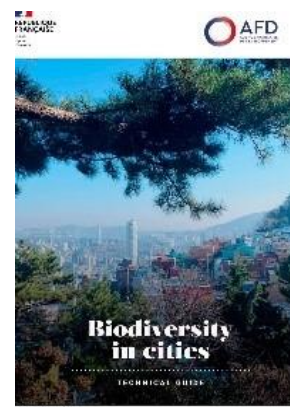


The new inner-city neighborhood prioritizes energy efficiency, reduced waste, and improved biodiversity.

French Agency of Development (AFD)

AFD Slides

Zeren Erik Yaşar, Sovereign Climate and Environment Manager, AFD, shared that 30% of the AFD's climate budget (i.e., €1bn) is dedicated to biodiversity, which is increasingly being mainstreamed into investment planning. However, she added that biodiversity finance could be challenging to diversify, given that it is usually done via grants or linked to grey infrastructure, and pointed out that it requires tailor-made support based on the local ecosystem and needs. She shared an AFD project in a Turkish city to modernize existing wastewater treatment facilities to improve the marine environment and protect wetland biodiversity, using blue and green corridors with NbS to restore a polluted area. AFD sees nature and education as the only investments that keep growing, address several human needs, and preserve the future, using nature-based *design* to target the city. [Biodiversity in Cities](#) is a technical guide to quantifying the value of biodiversity in urban projects and public policies financed by AFD, with a key message that investment should seek to reduce, interconnect, diversify, and evaluate (RIDE)



Reflections and discussions on the investment in GI

Moderated by Matthijs Bouw, Professor, Architect, Urbanist, University of Pennsylvania.

A discussion followed, with participants reflecting on the city presentations. This is briefly summarized below:

- Design projects that evolve over time to adapt to climate uncertainty. Incorporate phased developments and flexible designs that can adjust to changing environmental conditions and societal needs.
- Incentives (e.g., lower interest rates or longer terms), effective methods of monitoring the value added from green and blue infrastructure projects (e.g., reduced maintenance costs), and mechanisms to recover the cost of the investment (e.g., utility bill user charges) can be used to accelerate investment.
- Including green (and social) ambitions within a wider investment package can help improve the projects' investability.
- Implement blended finance models to attract private sector investment. Link economic benefits upfront with sustainability outcomes to create viable business cases that align with environmental and social goals.
- Promote public support by localizing solutions and emphasizing tangible benefits. Tailor projects to meet diverse community needs and demonstrate how nature-based solutions contribute to economic growth and societal well-being. (e.g., the evidence base for the benefits of green projects, such as higher school outcomes for children near wetlands or reduced fire and flood risk, is growing.)
- The competition for land use and high acquisition costs means green and NbS need to be integrated.

Wrap up for Day 1

Xueman Wang, GPSC Program Manager, World Bank, closed Day 1 with the following four takeaways:

- **Land Use Planning vs. Ecological Planning (Green Connectivity):** Addressing land scarcity in urban areas requires a delicate balance between traditional land use planning and ecological considerations such as green connectivity. (e.g., Singapore is an example of effective integration despite competing demands.)
- **Incentivizing Cities to Invest in Nature:** City leaders face term limits, necessitating innovative revenue-generating strategies to incentivize investing in nature.
- **Financing Challenges:** While climate finance is established, nature financing lags. MDBs respond to client demands but require a two-way effort to stimulate demand through technical studies. Engaging the private sector is crucial but it may focus on short-term returns.
- **Integration of Grey and Green Infrastructure:** Enhancing urban resilience involves not just rehabilitating streets but also revitalizing natural features like rivers, exemplified by concepts such as sponge cities.

Day 2

Session 3. Initiatives and Activities by Organizations

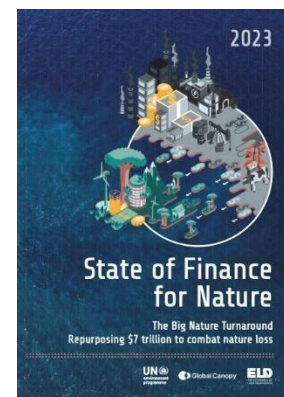
Overview of initiatives and activities by organizations

Day 2 was opened by Sharon Gil, City Lead, UNEP, who also moderated the Overview of initiatives and activities by organizations.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

[UNEP Slides](#)

Sharon Gil, Cities Lead, UNEP shared that while \$200bn a year is now invested into nature-based solutions, almost \$7tn in investment is accelerating nature loss. [Generation Restoration](#) is an initiative to repurpose investment to combat nature loss by showing the extent to which nature and biodiversity are central to combating climate change and pollution. This initiative can also be leveraged to support the [Urban Nature Program](#).

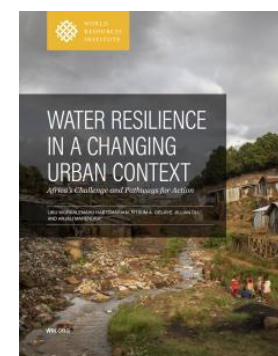


[State of Finance for Nature 2023](#)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

[WRI Slides](#)

John-Rob Pool, Senior Manager, Nature-Positive Urban Development, Cities Program, WRI, spoke on biodiversity interventions aimed at urban, food, land, and water transition, which are highlighted across [UrbanShift \(GEF-7\)](#), [Cities4Forests](#), and [Urban Water Resilience in Africa](#). A [geospatial data dashboard](#) presents the interdependencies across nature and planning. Meltem Bayraktar, Senior Manager, Urban Efficiency and Climate Program, WRI Türkiye, shared WRI's regional focus on urban mobility, urban development, urban efficiency, and climate.



[Water Resilience in a Changing Urban Context: Africa's Challenge and Pathways for Action](#)

ICLEI

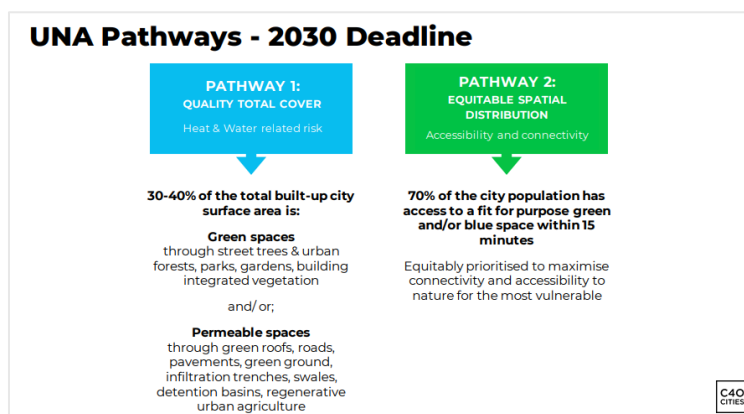
[ICLEI Slides](#)

Ingrid Coetzee, Director of Biodiversity, Nature & Health, spoke on how ICLEI's five interconnected development pathways – low emission, nature-based, equitable and people-centered, resilient, and circular – enable local governments to create holistic change across entire urban ecosystems.

C40

C40 Slides

Jessy Appavoo, Head of the C40 UrbanShift, shared how the [Urban Nature Accelerator](#) is encouraging the signatory cities to raise ambitions and focus on improving the quality of green and permeable spaces or increasing the accessibility to green and blue spaces as practical steps to leveraging nature to resolve multiple urban challenges in the next 2-5 years.



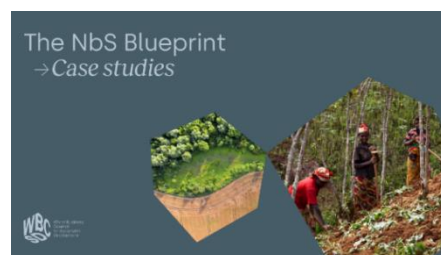
World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

WBCSD Slides

Roland Hunziker, Director of the Built Environment, shared that the private sector is using different standards and language to disclose their net zero achievements compared to the public sector. An implementation bias in favor of established grey approaches and limited understanding of the full range of benefits of more sustainable solutions means building emissions are still going up despite every building needing to be net zero by 2030.

Challenges that needed to be overcome include:

- Measuring all emissions (“whole life carbon” allows companies to place their contribution within an integrated value chain).
- Including the carbon cost within real estate and infrastructure valuations.
- Increasing building efficiency and circularity to reduce waste.
- Building a shared evidence base across the public and private sectors.



[Nature-based Solutions Blueprint](#)

He also highlighted the following four key messages from the WWF’s [A Playbook for Nature-positive Infrastructure Development](#):

- Despite the emphasis on nature-positive approaches in infrastructure development, few such projects have been implemented globally.
- There is significant interest in nature-based solutions to complement traditional infrastructure, but implementation largely favors established methods like reforestation and sustainable drainage systems.
- The full spectrum of benefits from nature-based solutions is not well understood or quantified, hindering wider adoption.
- There is a call to expand the evidence base and share global examples to promote nature-positive infrastructure.

CONCITO

[CONCITO Slides](#)

Anna Esbjørn, Program Director for CONCITO's Cities Program, shared how Denmark was working to scale climate action plans across all 98 Danish municipalities through its [DK2020](#) initiative. It focuses on nature-based thinking, integrating it from projects to processes to create resilient and livable cities. (See [Adaptation approaches in Danish municipalities' climate action plans](#).)



University of Pennsylvania

[University of Pennsylvania Slides](#)

Matthijs Bouw, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, spoke of the importance of systematically reintroducing nature everywhere and designing at a planetary scale to respond to the climate crisis. He shared examples and research on using design to mitigate biodiversity loss and data analytics to scale the bankability of ecosystem-based adaptation measures in urban areas, including Hotspot Stoplight, which illustrates how low-capacity cities can understand their trajectory and identify interventions.

Toronto Metropolitan University

[Toronto Metropolitan University Slides](#)

Nina-Marie E. Lister, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Director of the Ecological Design Lab at Toronto Metropolitan University, shared the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing in Los Angeles and Waterfront Toronto proposals. These illustrated how roads and other connective infrastructure can also be used to connect the functionalities of ecosystems. The Toronto Waterfront is a long-term project to reduce flooding, and reintroduce traditional species, while leveraging local community knowledge and providing affordable housing.



Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Nat Pinnoi, Infrastructure Sector Senior Economist, presented nature as a key concept of AIIB's commitment to financing sustainable infrastructure and the [Nature as Infrastructure report](#) to highlight a growing focus on integrating nature into investment given the increased frequency of extreme weather events coupled with deteriorating urban infrastructure. He also shared the Inner Mongolia-Ulanhot Green and Climate-resilient Urban Development Project, which focused on improving climate-resilient urban infrastructure and the ecosystems, especially the wetlands for flood and waterlogging risk reduction.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Caroline Vexler, Principal of Nature Finance and Policy, highlighted the [Green Cities Program](#), which collaborates with municipalities over 12 to 18 months on risk assessment and a Green City Action Plan (GCAP) that includes a pipeline of projects to finance and policy interventions (e.g., Moldova's GCAP, co-financed by EIB, Green Climate Fund, to address severe pollution and flooding through the blend of green and blue infrastructure.)

Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

Muhammed Sayed, Climate Finance Specialist, shared DBSA's focus on funding low-carbon, resilient infrastructure and working with innovative financing mechanisms to mainstream nature into infrastructure investment (e.g., Green Climate Fund, etc.), as well as efforts to quantify the value of biodiversity projects (e.g., coupling water management and ecology) to better fund them.

Planning for Urban Nature Program

UNP Work Plan Slides

Xueman Wang, GPSC Program Manager, World Bank, shared the proposed vision and objectives and 2024-25 work plan for the UNP, with an objective to raise the ambitions through city mayors (e.g., Mayors Forum at COP16). Using targeted expertise to support projects already being conceptualized and developed within cities may accelerate impact.



A discussion moderated by Sharon Gil, City Lead, UNEP, covered a range of points, including:

- Prioritizing integrating nature into climate agenda.
- Developing a clear 'sales pitch' around why cities and finance institutions should invest in nature that translates globally.
- Leveraging existing tools and good practice, like the [Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity](#), in the design of projects and as an evidence base.
- Creating a safe space for a pre-tending conversation between the private and public sector to increase alignment and impact.
- Defining basic or universal definitions around the quality and/or quantity of green infrastructure that can help local advocacy.
- Incentivizing funding for grey infrastructure to include green from the conceptualization phase.

Preparing for the COP16 CBD Summit

Preparing for COP16 Slides

The [2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties \(COP16\)](#) will be held in Cali, Colombia, from 21 October to 1 November. Ingrid Coetzee, Director, ICLEI, shared that Colombia promotes ‘peace with nature’ and wants to have a positive impact on smaller cities as well, with bilateral meetings between mayors a valuable opportunity for shared learning and improved trade relations. The UNP will organize a Mayors Forum on the margins of the COP.



Urban Nature Program Expert Meeting participants at the close of the meeting.

Site visit



Tuğba Ölmez Hancı, Head of Parks Gardens and Green Areas Department in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (center left addressing crowd) provides an overview of the Atatürk Büyükdere Nursery.

En route to Atatürk Büyükdere Nursery, representatives from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality shared information on the Atatürk Urban Park (see Annex).

Participants were guided through Atatürk Büyükdere Nursery by representatives from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, who talked about the history of the nursery and current projects aimed at providing the evidence base for sustainable biodiversity practices across the municipality.

Annex. Site visit information

Ataturk Urban Forest

The expansive Atatürk Urban Park, also known as 'Atatürk Kent Ormanı,' sprawls over 1,000 hectares in Hacıosman, featuring three serene ponds and winding hiking trails. Following a redesign rooted in ecosystem restoration principles, this verdant oasis now boasts a range of amenities including a cozy cafeteria, a bustling sports field, a delightful children's playground, an urban agriculture area, a lively fairground, and a scenic viewing spot. It is a haven for hiking enthusiasts, offering a choice of trails: the Çıtkuşu Trail (1.8 km), the Water Trail (2.8 km round trip), and the Forest Trail (3 km).

Thanks to decades of replanting efforts, the forest hosts over ten distinct species of trees, creating a thriving habitat for avid birdwatchers and providing endless nature exploration for kids. Among the forest's avian inhabitants, you will commonly encounter robins, wrens, blackbirds, and nightingales. Unlike many other parks in Istanbul where an average of 15 bird species are found, the Atatürk Urban Park boasts an impressive variety, with up to 30 species recorded. Along the tranquil ponds, lucky visitors might catch glimpses of kingfishers, mallards, cormorants, waterfowl, and the majestic grey heron that calls the valley ponds home. And keep an eye out for parrots, occasional but delightful visitors to the park's lush groves.



Buyukdere Ataturk Nursery

The Atatürk Büyükdere Nursery stands as a testament to Türkiye's commitment to environmental sustainability and green initiatives. Located in a serene corner of Büyükdere - Sarıyer district, this nursery serves as a vital hub for cultivating and nurturing a diverse array of plant species. Established in honor of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, the nursery plays a crucial role in preserving the country's natural heritage and promoting green spaces within urban environments. With its state-of-the-art facilities and dedicated staff, the

Atatürk Büyükdere Nursery not only contributes to the beautification of Istanbul but also serves as an educational center for sustainable gardening practices and environmental conservation.

The project, covering an area of 250,000 square meters, was implemented in 2023 through a partnership between Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and MESA company. Developed with a design aimed at preserving the historical and cultural values of the region, alongside urban production and incorporating various functions, the project aims to create a new and active green space. The goal is to establish structures capable of serving in education, R&D, recreation, and production areas.

