



## Key messages - *BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming Cities' Relationship with Nature*

### I. Top-line messages

- The World Economic Forum is calling on the world's cities to transform their relationship with nature and lead the way in tackling the interconnected biodiversity and climate crises.
- A new report, *BiodiverCities by 2030*, sets out why and how public and private urban leaders must take action to uphold their cities as 'living systems' whose economic, social and ecological functions are in balance.
- **'Nature-positive' investments** - such as Nature-based Solutions for infrastructure or returning land to nature - **could create more than 59 million jobs in cities worldwide and generate over \$1.5 trillion in annual business value by 2030**. The analysis finds that spending \$583 billion on interventions that enhance nature and reduce urban impacts on biodiversity can secure significant economic benefits as cities become more resilient, liveable and competitive.
- In addition to setting an inspiring vision for cities to live in harmony with nature by 2030, the report provides actionable solutions and stipulates the shifts required for cities to put nature first in their decisions on infrastructure, governance, economy, health and wellbeing.

### II. Key findings and recommendations

#### *Rebalancing cities' relationship with nature*

- While cities are the engine of the global economy - contributing 80% of the world's GDP - their exponential growth in recent decades has come at the expense of nature. Unchecked urban expansion is undermining nature's critical contributions to society - such as air quality, flood and drought prevention, and food security.
- **44% of global GDP in cities (\$31 trillion) is estimated to be at risk of disruption from nature loss**, and more than 1.4 billion people living in the world's largest urban centres are threatened by natural hazards. With cities projected to host three quarters of the world's population by 2050, urban leaders and decision-makers must prioritize nature in their investment decisions to both improve the resilience and liveability of their cities, and to secure a sustainable future for humanity.

#### *The business case for BiodiverCities*

- **Embracing nature-positive interventions is not just an imperative but also an opportunity for urban leaders and decision-makers to build more resilient and competitive cities.**
- **By investing in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for infrastructure - such as prioritizing reforestation to smother heat waves or flooding from storms - cities can derive significant benefits.** NbS for infrastructure are 50% cheaper than 'grey', man-made alternatives and deliver 28% greater added value in terms of direct and environmental benefits. With less than 0.3% of current spending on urban infrastructure going to NbS, there is a significant investment opportunity for cities to tap into – estimated to reach up to \$113 billion annually in 2030.



- **Cities can also gain from returning land to nature** – for example repurposing or rewilding grey infrastructure or encouraging the shared use of existing spaces for working and living. Such ‘land-sparing interventions’ could be worth an additional \$469 billion in annual investment opportunities in 2030, and generate additional revenues for cities as they become more attractive to residents and tourists.
- **In total, this \$583 billion investment opportunity in nature could generate \$1.5 trillion in annual business value for investors by 2030**, and possibly significantly more with the introduction of new technologies and markets. **This investment could create more than 59 million jobs by 2030** – equivalent to 1.5% of the projected global labour force.

### *Three shifts to enable cities to live in harmony with nature*

- **Realizing the *BiodiverCities by 2030* vision requires three shifts in urban development models, and the contribution of all parts of society.** Put together these shifts form a roadmap that urban leaders, working closely with public and private decision-makers, can follow to transform to unlock nature’s benefit.
- **Firstly, cities must embrace a ‘systems approach’ to urban governance that considers the needs of all stakeholders, accounts for the value of natural ecosystems**, and moves away from legacy models in which decisions are driven by cost efficiencies and ad hoc urban planning. This shift requires ownership by top levels of government, strong coordination and leadership at city level, and policy that fosters innovation and holds the private sector accountable for its impact on nature.
- **Secondly, cities must reintegrate nature into their spatial planning decisions, and restore the ‘natural layer’ as the backbone of their development.** This means preserving natural habitats within and around cities, renaturing degraded land (through, for example, community-based tree planting) and ‘growing smart’ by embedding nature in new or upgraded infrastructure, such as green corridors along high streets and green roofs on new buildings.
- **Thirdly, action is needed to make nature an attractive investment to financial markets and drive private funding into cities’ natural capital.** This includes adopting standardized biodiversity data to inform investment decisions and creating new markets and models to de-risk private investments in nature.

### III. **About the report and the *BiodiverCities by 2030* initiative**

- Produced in collaboration with Arup and AlphaBeta, the report is a key output of the [BiodiverCities by 2030](#) initiative, led jointly by the World Economic Forum and the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute, and championed by the Government of Colombia. The initiative aims to support city governments, businesses and citizens, to make choices that enable cities to live in harmony with nature by 2030.
- This report builds on the work of the World Economic Forum’s [New Nature Economy Report \(NNER\) series](#). The series explains why nature-related risks matter to business, which transitions are needed to move towards a nature-positive economy, and how business can be a part of the solution, paving the way to create new opportunities and generate sustainable value. Each NNER report helps business leaders and policymakers take informed action in contributing to a nature-positive economy.