Nature-Positive Cities: Guidelines for rehabilitating nature in the urban era

Consultation paper

January 2024

Contents

Context

The World Economic Forum's Nature-Positive Cities initiative, in collaboration with Oliver Wyman, is outlining *"Nature-Positive Cities: Guidelines for rehabilitating nature in the urban era"* and publishing its **draft framework** for consultation.

This is the first of a series of reports aiming to:

1. Establish a shared definition of the key **attributes and enablers** for nature-positive cities.
2. Draw a **transition pathway with clear guidelines and** actions for achieving a nature-positive urban transformation.
3. Offer a set of **exemplary projects, solutions and initiatives** that cities can implement to progress in their nature-positive transition.
4. Spark **cities' commitments** to deploy nature-positive interventions and solutions.
5. Activate the **involvement of the private sector** and civil society organizations.

Conscious of the numerous experts and initiatives working on this important topic, this document is being published for public consultation draft and feedback will be carefully considered and processed via email[1].

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Questions for the reader

We invite the readers to provide open feedback as well as specific contributions according to the following questions:

Section 1: Nature-positive attributes

1. This report presents a synthesised framework for cities to categorise and operationalise their nature-positive vision and objectives, and to easily track progress and impact is provided. According to this framework, nature is broken down in three broad realms: land, water, natural resources.

    a. Is the categorization into the three nature realms (land, water, natural resources) sufficiently comprehensive and synthetic for practical purposes at the same time?

    b. Which alternative framing could be considered (still prioritizing a simplified approach for city decision-makers to follow)?

2. The "Biodiversity" realm is considered as an outcome of efforts made on the above-mentioned three nature realms. Is this categorization effective? Should biodiversity be treated on its own?

3. The report defines "nature-positive city" as a city that has developed an action plan to deliver on a set of strategic objectives on the nature realms following the AR^{3}T framework.

    a. Are the strategic objectives defined for each realm under the AR3T framework comprehensive?

    b. Are there other fundamental aspects that should be included in the definition of "nature-positive city"?

Section 2: Enabling cities' nature-positive transition

4. This report suggests six enablers to overcome key challenges outlined by city leaders preventing a nature-positive transition: financing, governance, policy and regulation, risk and impact management, communication and citizen engagement, and human capital.

    a. Do the enablers cover all the key areas that cities should address to advance in the nature-positive transition?

    b. Which area is of foremost priority when it comes to drafting a nature action plan and effectively deploying a nature-positive development strategy?

5. The report outlines a list of no-regret actions that cities should consider as ideal first steps to advance in their nature-positive journey following a self-assessment process across each enabler.

    a. Should other no-regret/priority actions be considered as key enablers to advance in the nature-positive journey?

    b. Can you provide case studies and/or guidelines for the actions outlined that you have observed in real life?

    c. Where and how do you see the private sector contributing to this readiness? Can you provide concrete examples or success stories?

We also welcome any other relevant materials, case studies or success stories.

1.   Nature-positive attributes

A crucial shift is required in environmental action, moving from solely tackling climate change to also protecting nature in a more comprehensive way. This section offers an introduction to nature and cities. It starts by delving into the fundamental attributes of nature and explaining its role and relevance in the urban context. Later, a definition of a "nature-positive city" is developed by adapting the global "nature-positive" definition to such nature-related attributes. Last, existing frameworks and targets to guide city level action in safeguarding nature are presented.

1.1.   Climate-Nature nexus

For decades, the conventional discourse and actions related to sustainability have predominantly focused on mitigating climate change by cutting carbon emissions.

This pursuit, while fundamental, highlights a global carbon-centric approach that overlooks the interconnectedness between nature and climate, between the biosphere and the atmosphere.

Climate change is expected to be one of the leading drivers of nature loss in the second half of the 21st century[2]. The rising concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is directly and indirectly damaging ecosystems, which further accelerates climate change given that healthy ecosystems play a vital role in climate change mitigation: currently, terrestrial and marine ecosystems capture half of the CO_2 generated by humans[3]. Furthermore, functioning ecosystems also provide climate change adaptation, as they contribute to natural flood storage and cooling effects during heatwaves, buffering climate risks and boosting societal resilience.

The global community is therefore compelled to broaden environmental efforts and safeguard nature in a holistic sense, avoiding and reducing current impacts, restoring biodiversity and ecosystems, and supporting governments and businesses in becoming nature-positive.

1.2.   Definition of Nature

According to Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), nature comprises all non-human living entities and their interaction with other living or non-living physical entities and processes.[4]

This report focuses on three key nature realms: **land, water, and natural resources** (see Figure 1).

This categorization of nature realms into **land, water, and natural resources** is the result of a careful study of various scientific frameworks describing the complex dynamics of nature, as well as a consultation process with local governments and city leaders, to ensure a relevant, efficient, and streamlined approach.

The "Biodiversity" realm, i.e., the diversity of species, is considered for the purpose of this paper as a result of nature regeneration. It is important to note that while all ecosystems interact with and depend on the atmosphere, we specifically address air as a climate-related topic within this framework.

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[2] UNEP, *Five drivers of the nature crisis*, 2022, https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/five-drivers-nature-crisis.

[3] European Commission, *Nature's role in climate change*, 2009, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2016-11/nature_and_climate_change_en.pdf.

[4] Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, 2019, https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment

By focusing on these three nature realms, we aim to provide a structured and straight-forward approach to the integration and operationalization of nature-positive objectives within cities.

Figure 1: Simplified framework of nature and natural capital[5]

Preserved biodiversity
Variability among living organisms

◼ Climate realms ◼ Nature realms
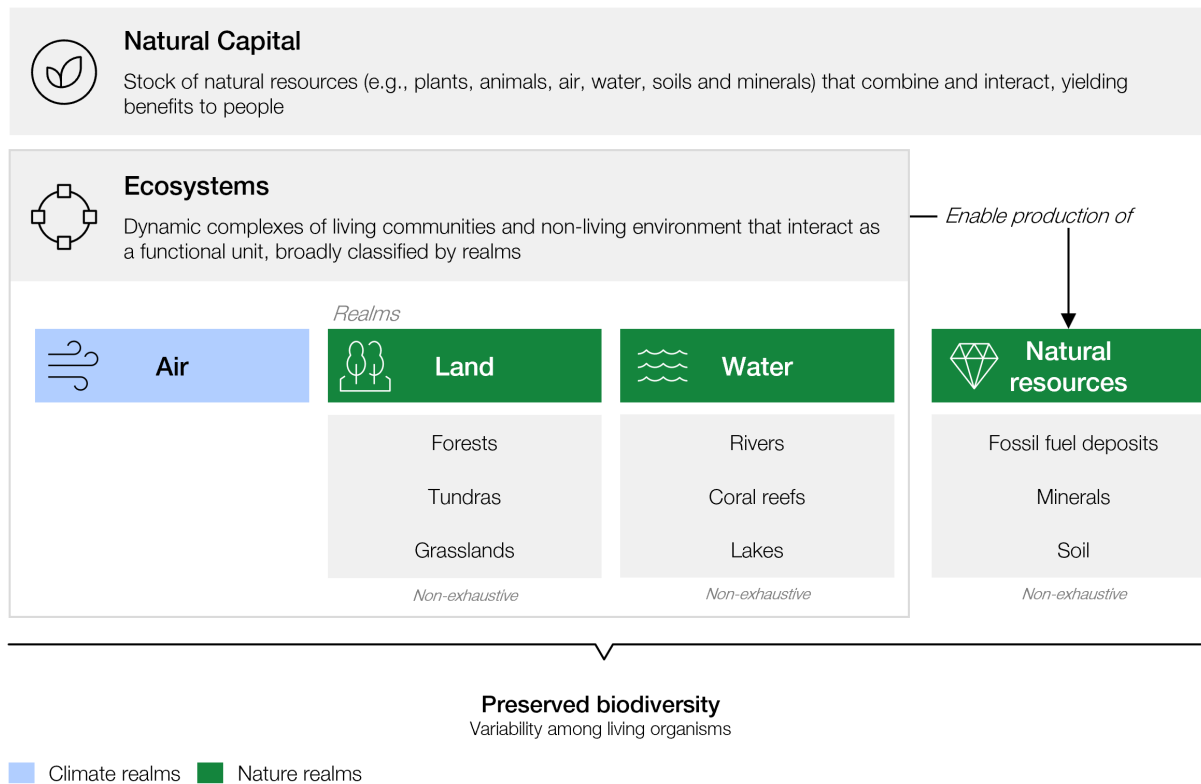
1.3.   Why cities would benefit from acting on nature

In this section, we outline the case for city leaders to positively act on nature as a means to improve citizens' wellbeing, maintain socio-economic stability, and ensure resilience and prosperity in the long term.

1.3.1. Nature-related services

The natural elements that form ecosystems support human wellbeing and urban living. These "services" are known as Nature Contributions to People (NCPs)[6] and can be clustered into:

• Supporting services (e.g., nutrient cycling).

• Regulating services (e.g., water purification).

• Provisioning services (e.g., forest products).

• Cultural services (e.g., recreation and tourism).

Based on the contributions provided, there is a significant interdependence between the economy and nature – in this context referred as natural capital (Figure 2). 44% of the GDP in cities worldwide is susceptible to potential disruptions caused by the loss of nature[7].

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[5] Adapted using frameworks and definitions by IPBES, SBTN, UNEP and CBD.

[6] Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, 2019, https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment

[7] Economic Forum, *BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming Cities' Relationship with Nature*, 2022, https://www.weforum.org/biodivercities-by-2030/insight-report/

Figure 2: Nature and the economy[8]

Dependencies

Impacts
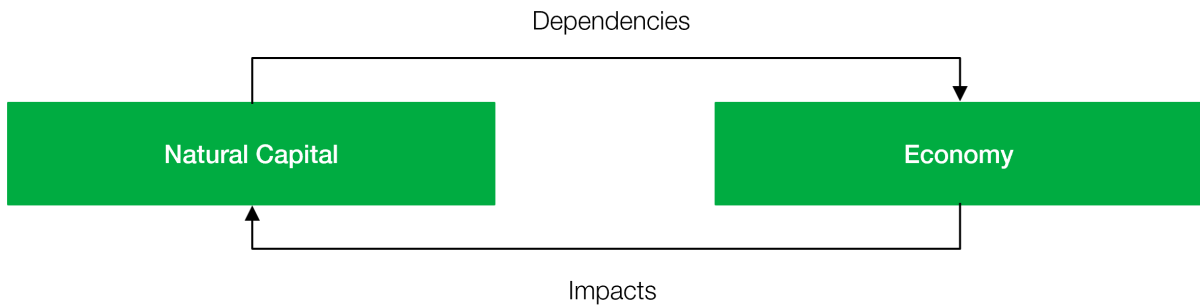
In addition to helping sustain economic activity, healthy natural ecosystems yield many benefits to cities (see Figure 3).

Take for example mangroves and swamps. These are sanctuaries of flora and fauna that can effectively absorb, store and infiltrate water, thereby dampening waves and blocking storm surges. If the existing mangroves in the Philippines were lost, 24% more people would be affected by flooding, and damages to residential and industrial properties would increase by 28%[9]. Globally, it is estimated that mangroves alone save a staggering $65 billion yearly in storm and flood damages[10]. Wetlands not only are effective in controlling floods, but they have proven to be peerless carbon sequesters – hoarding up to four times more carbon than terrestrial forests[11]–, and provide shelter for over 300 threatened species that guarantee food security to millions of people[12].

Figure 3: Examples of ecosystem management actions and benefits provided for cities.[13]

Plant new street trees to increase building shade	Create wetlands	Maintain green spaces	Free watercourses of sewer water outfalls
Decreased ambient air temperature, carbon storage and sequestration	Stormwater regulation	Recreational services, aesthetic services	Nutrient filtering

[8] Oliver Wyman, *The Emerging Regulatory Agenda: Improving transparency of nature-related risks in Africa*, 2023, https://www.oliverwyman.com/content/dam/oliver-wyman/v2/publications/2023/jul/the-emerging-regulatory-agenda.pdf

[9] World Bank, *Valuing the Protection Services of Mangroves in the Philippines*, 2017, https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/272251501076806254/pdf/117757-REVISED-Mangrove-Protection-Services-V2-0727.pdf.

[10] Earth Security, *Financing the Earth's Assets: The Case for Mangroves*, 2020, https://www.earthsecurity.org/reports/financing-the-earths-assets-the-case-for-mangroves.

[11] Robert Twilley et al., *Why protecting 'blue carbon' storage is crucial to fighting climate change*, 2019, https://www.greenbiz.com/article/why-protecting-blue-carbon-storage-crucial-fighting-climate-change.

[12] The Nature Conservancy, *State of the World's Mangroves*, 2021, https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/state-of-world-mangroves/.

[13] Richards, Daniel et al., "Urban ecosystems: A new frontier for payments for ecosystem services". *People and Nature*, 2019; pp. 249–261. https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.20

1.3.2. Nature-related risks

As outlined in the previous section, society - and cities - depend on nature and its contributions (NCPs). Harming nature means that the fundamental services that nature provides and that humans depend on will in turn, with time, disappear. Safeguarding nature means an opportunity for cities to be more resilient, prosperous and liveable.

Established in 2021, the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) has been focused on addressing the direct and indirect implications of environmental degradation in economic growth and developing a cross-industry framework to assess, report, and act on nature loss.

This framework provides a taxonomy of risks and opportunities that are relevant for cities[14]:

- **Physical risks:** posed by extreme weather events like hurricanes, floods and heatwaves cause damage to buildings and infrastructure, impact essential services, and result in loss of life.
- **Transition risks:** come from shifts in policy, regulations, markets, and technology that are required to reverse environmental degradation. Such changes can also lead to reputational consequences that affect relationships with citizens, communities, and other stakeholders.
- **Systemic risks:** arise from cascading effects of physical and transition risks that impact broader natural and socioeconomic systems, such as large-scale loss of ecosystem services impacting the broader financial system.
- **Opportunities:** arise when businesses incorporate nature into operations and enterprise risk management strategies. Businesses can increase corporate resilience, make advances towards achieving their net-zero targets, decrease costs by adopting resource-efficient processes, enhance their reputation and avoid litigation and clean-up costs.

1.4.   What is a nature-positive city?

1.4.1. The nature-positive concept

The nature-positive concept is not new and has been recognized as a global societal goal defined as 'Halt and Reverse Nature Loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050'[15] in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). [16] Defining "nature-positive" is a complex task, as it encompasses a broad range of objectives and actions. The AR^{3}T framework established by SBTN[17] provides a good way to contextualize this goal a future state of nature that is greater than the current state.[18] This means going beyond minimizing harm, and aiming to restore and regenerate the state of nature (see Figure 4).

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[14] Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), *The TNFD Nature-related Risk & Opportunity Management and Disclosure Framework*, 2022, https://tnfd.global/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/220321-TNFD-framework-beta-v0.1-FINAL.pdf.

[15] Nature Positive, *The Definition of Nature Positive*, 2023, https://4783129.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/4783129/The%20Definition%20of%20Nature%20Positive.pdf

[16] Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), *2030 Targets (with Guidance Notes)*, 2023, https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/

[17] Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN), *Science-Based Targets for Nature, Step 4. Act*, https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/how-it-works/act/.

[18] Science Based Targets Network (SBTN), *Abridged Glossary for Initial Guidance*, 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OY92TszQtoX1IvpSEySoA8KODsYm8LOM/edit

Figure 4: The AR³T framework
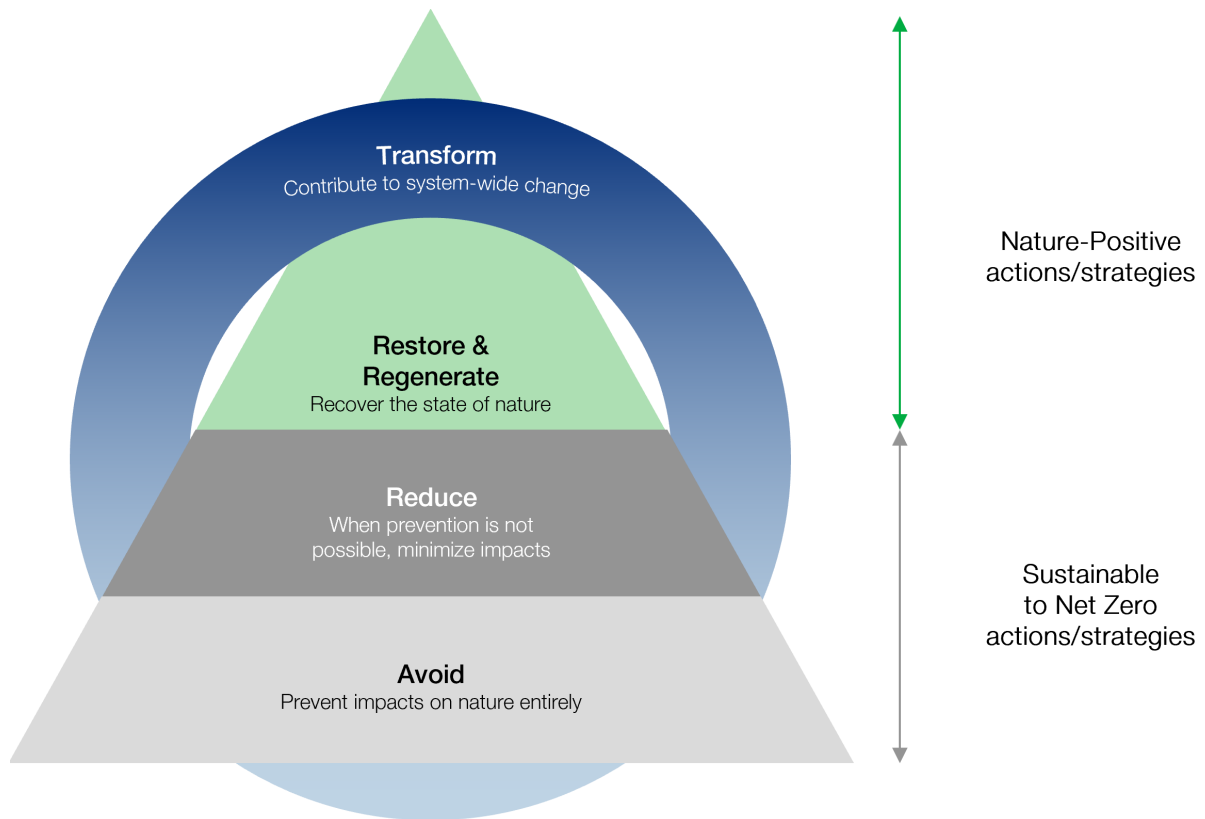
1.4.2. Defining nature-positive cities

The nature-positive movement has been gaining significant momentum:

• The G7 leaders have recently announced a paradigm shift towards a "nature positive" approach.[19]

• 88 heads of State have signed the Leaders Pledge for Nature to reverse loss of biodiversity by 2030.[20]

• 126 Nobel Laureates support the nature-positive goal in the Our Planet, Our Future statement.[21]

• More than 700 businesses part of the Business for Nature network have called for nations to implement immediate actions to reverse loss of nature.[22]

• In the finance sector, the new Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures is tackling direct investments for a nature positive future.[23]

• Youth leaders have also been calling for increasing harmony with nature to be a focus of governments' efforts.

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[19] G7 Cornwall UK, *G7 2030 Nature Compact*, 2021, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50363/g7-2030-nature-compact-pdf-120kb-4-pages-1.pdf

[20] https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/

[21] The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021, *Our Planet, Our Future, An Urgent Call for Action,* https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2021/04/nobel-prize-laureates-and-other-experts-issue-urgent-call-for-action-after-our-planet-our-future-summit

[22] https://www.businessfornature.org/call-to-action

[23] https://tnfd.global/

- At COP28, ten multilateral development banks (MDBs) announced common principles to track nature-positive finance.[24]

With cities being at the centre of the global agenda, and urban leaders and decision-makers being called to improve the resilience and liveability of their cities and secure a sustainable future for humanity, there is an untapped opportunity for cities to use the AR^{3}T framework and adapt the generic nature-positive ambition into concrete strategic objectives across the three nature realms.

We therefore define a "nature-positive city" as a city that has developed an action plan to deliver on four strategic objectives following the AR^{3}T framework (Avoid, Reduce, Restore & Regenerate, Transform - see Figure 4), and has defined and committed to clear science-based targets to achieve these objectives (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Cities and the AR^{3}T framework

Realms		Land	Water	Natural resources
Strategic objectives	**Avoid**	• Protect areas and land use	• Prevent water pollution	• Transition to green energy sources
	Reduce	• Develop green urban spaces to mitigate city development impact	• Reduce water consumption • Utilize treated/renewable water	• Reduce waste • Improve energy efficiency
	Restore & Regenerate	• Rehabilitate land • Reverse desertification	• Rehabilitate wetlands and shorelines • Ensure water quality standards	• Promote sustainable forestry and agricultural practices
	Transform	• Integrate nature considerations into urban planning and city policies	• Ensure sustainable water management policies	• Adopt circular economy

1.5. Nature-related targets for cities

The above sections emphasize that there is not just a risk but an opportunity for cities to spearhead initiatives that promote a future in harmony with nature.

While committing with nature preservation and restoration is a good starting point, it is however insufficient. To ensure that efforts are effectively nature-positive, cities must define and commit to SMART nature-related targets.

1.5.1. Overview of existing targets

In recent years, countries and prominent international organizations have developed frameworks to guide both the private and public sectors in their pursuit of nature and climate targets.

At the **corporate-level**, significant progress has been made in defining methodologies, and setting science-based climate targets for companies. As of September 2022, more than 80%

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[24] European Investment Bank (EIB), *Multilateral Development Banks Announce Common Principles to Track Nature-Related Finance*, 2023, https://www.eib.org/attachments/lucalli/20230329_mdb_common_principles_for_tracking_nature_positive_finance_en.pdf

of the world's 500 largest companies have set carbon emission targets[25] (although less than half have been validated by the Science-Based Targets initiative SBTi[26]).

While progress on setting biodiversity targets has been significantly slower (only 5% of global Fortune 500 companies have committed to biodiversity targets[27]), recent guidance from the Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN) is making significant strides to address this gap.

In the **public sector**, a further distinction must be made between national-level and urban-level climate targets. At the **national-level**, climate targets were established in the Paris Agreement in COP21, while nature targets were addressed in the landmark Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) during COP15. The GBF sets forth four global goals and 23 targets to guide countries in their efforts to safeguard biodiversity and promote sustainable development. At the **urban-level** however, while there exist some guidance on the methodology required to assess climate impact, there is currently a lack of a comprehensive framework to define and assess nature targets (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Internationally recognised targets[28,29,30,31,32,33,34]
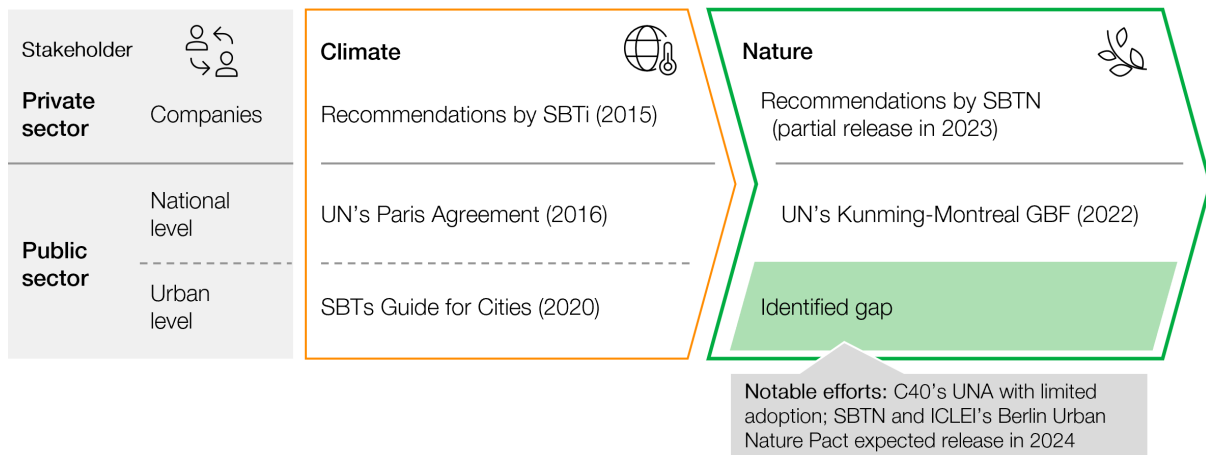
In the efforts of downscaling global and national targets for nature, some international organizations have proposed frameworks and tools specifically tailored for cities.

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[25] McKinsey and Company, *Where the world's largest companies stand on nature*, 2022, https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/where-the-worlds-largest-companies-stand-on-nature#/

[26] Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), *SBTi Monitoring Report*, 2022, https://sciencebasedtargets.org/reports/sbti-monitoring-report-2022.

[27] McKinsey and Company, *Where the world's largest companies stand on nature*, 2022, https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/where-the-worlds-largest-companies-stand-on-nature#/

[28] Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), *SBTi Criteria and Recommendations for Near-Term Targets*, 2023, https://sciencebasedtargets.org/resources/files/SBTi-criteria.pdf

[29] Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN), *The first science-based targets for nature*, https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/how-it-works/the-first-science-based-targets-for-nature.

[30] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), *The Paris Agreement*, https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement.

[31] United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*, 2023, https://www.cbd.int/gbf.

[32] Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN), *Science-based Climate Targets: A Guide for Cities*, 2020, https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SBTs-for-cities-guide.pdf

[33] C40 Cities, *Urban Nature Accelerator*, 2021, https://www.c40.org/accelerators/urban-nature.

[34] Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN), *Take action as a city*, https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/take-action-now/take-action-as-a-city.

Resource box. Selected frameworks and tools on nature action for cities[35]

- **Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity.** Suggests a scoring system for cities to self-assess their biodiversity conservation efforts, aligning with the Aichi targets. Read more.

- **Urban Nature Indexes by IUCN.** Provides a systematic approach to measure urban biodiversity and ecosystem health in cities using a list of science-based indicators, expanding the Singapore Index based on the GBF and also assessing peri-urban impact. Although the Indexes do not set any specific targets, they include comprehensive guidelines to gauge the impact on nature and monitor progress. Read more.

- **ICLEI's CitiesWithNature Action Platform.** Provides a self-evaluation and reporting platform for cities to set commitments and specify actions to address, in alignment with the targets of the broader Global Biodiversity Framework. Read more.

- **Earth System Boundaries by Earth Commission.** Set critical thresholds to sustain nature contributions to people in key environmental domains, and effectively represent science-based targets, some of which take place at city level. The Earth Commission is currently working on developing principles to translate these boundaries to cities. Read more.

- **Edinburgh declaration.** Calls upon parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to recognise the vital role of subnational governments, cities and local authorities in implementing the GBF. This statement was signed in 2020 by the governments of Scotland, Wales and Quebec, and sub-national organizations such as ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Regions4 Sustainable Development and the Group of Leading Subnational Governments toward the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (GoLS). Read more.

- **Urban Nature Accelerator by C40 Cities.** Rallies city-level pledges to support greener and more resilient cities by 2030, with interim qualitative commitments and two non-science-based targets on green/permeable spaces and access to green spaces. Read more.

Further international strategies have the aim to drive nature-related commitments from cities. Such is the case of the European Union's Biodiversity Strategy, which invites cities with populations exceeding 20,000 inhabitants to develop urban greening plans[36].

In addition, some cities have independently advanced in developing city nature action plans, of which nature targets are core elements (Table 1).

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[35] Other relevant resources include: CBD Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, SDGs, SBTs for Cities for Climate, SBTs for Business for Nature, ICLEI Berlin PACT, IUCN Global Standard for Nature-Based Solutions, Living Cities, Nature Positive, Planetary Boundaries, Ecological Footprint, UN-HABITAT New Urban Agenda, EU Biodiversity Strategy, EU Nature Restoration Law, European Green Capital/Green Leaf/Biodiversity Award, European Urban Biodiversity Index, FAO's Framework for Ecosystem Restoration, LBSAP: Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, UN Race to Resilience, Cities4Forests, Climate Action Plan, UN-HABITAT New Urban Agenda, UN-HABITAT Prosperity Index, World Bank's Urban Sustainability Framework

[36] ICLEI Europe – Local Governments for Sustainability, *Tackling the climate and biodiversity crises in Europe through Urban Greening Plans,* 2021, https://iclei-europe.org/fileadmin/templates/iclei-europe/lib/resources/tools/push_resource_file.php?uid=zc60RNjO.

Table 1: Non-exhaustive examples of targets set by cities[37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45]

Realm	Target	Date	City
Land	Ensure 70% of population is within a 15-min walk from a green area	2030	Athens
	Increase urban forests area by 10% (approx. 3,000 hectares)	2050	London
	Plant 2 million more trees	2030	Edmonton
	Increase canopy cover from 22% to 40%	2040	Melbourne
	Green 80% of city buildings	2030	Singapore
	Enhance 170 ha of parks with more lush vegetation and natural landscape	2026	Singapore
	Use regional plants only in at least 70% of biodiversity areas created	2030	Paris
	Improve health of at least 90% of tree population	2040	Melbourne
Water	Reduce per capita water consumption by 33% from 2006 levels	2030	Vancouver
	Increase alternative water supply capacity by 100%	2030	Durban
	Create or restore 50+ wetlands in the city	2030	Paris
	Reduce annual solid pollution load discharged to waterways via stormwater	2030	Sydney
	Restore 40 km of rivers and streams	2050	London
	Protect coastlines (e.g., City-East, Sungei Kadut and Jurong Islands)	2030	Singapore
Natural resources	Reduce waste going to landfill and incinerator by 50%	2030	Milan
	Stop sending any recyclable waste sent to landfill	2026	London
	Produce 30% of Singapore's nutritional needs locally and sustainably	2030	Singapore
	Reduce desalination energy consumption by over 40%	2025	Singapore
	Mandate all new buildings to be carbon-neutral	2030	Vancouver
	Reduce the amount of waste generated by each citizen by 15%	2030	Dubai
	Install photovoltaic modules equating to 1% of electricity consumption	2025	Copenhagen
	Reduce energy consumption in existing public housing (HDB) by 15%	2030	Singapore

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[37] C40 Cities, *Advancing towards zero waste declaration*, 2018, https://www.c40.org/news/global-cities-and-regions-advance-towards-zero-waste/

[38] C40 Cities, *Urban Nature Accelerator*, 2021, https://www.c40.org/accelerators/urban-nature

[39] Singapore, *Singapore Green Plan 2030*, 2021, https://www.greenplan.gov.sg/targets/

[40] City of Melbourne, *Urban Forest Strategy: Making a great city greener 2012-2032*, 2011, https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/urban-forest-strategy.pdf.

[41] City of Vancouver, *Vancouver Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*, 2014, https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/greenest-city-2020-action-plan-2015-2020.pdf.

[42] City of Durban, *Durban Climate Change Strategy*, 2022, https://www.durban.gov.za/storage/Documents/Climate/DCCS_Strategy.pdf.

[43] City of London, *London Environment Strategy*, 2018, https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_environment_strategy_0.pdf.

[44] City of Sydney, *Environmental Strategy 2021-2025*, 2021, https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/environmental-strategy; *Greening Sydney Strategy*, 2023, https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/greening-sydney-strategy; *Urban Forest Strategy*, 2023, https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/urban-forest-strategy.

[45] City of Paris, *Plan Biodiversité de Paris 2018-2024*, 2019, https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2021/02/17/fbb551749cd3dabdf2b730d5f4097629.pdf

1.5.2. Targets for nature-positive cities

There are several challenges to the process of setting nature-related science-based targets for cities, including:

- Wide variety of nature frameworks, metrics and indicators.

- Lack of agreement on how to define city boundaries.

- Definition of context-sensitive targets that cater to different types of cities (e.g., coastal vs. inland, developing vs. mature, etc.).

- Equity and cultural considerations given that values of biodiversity vary across landscapes and locations.

- Harmonization of environmental targets with other legitimate goals for cities.

In 2020, leaders from CDP, ICLEI, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, Durham University, WWF, and The Biodiversity Consultancy started a formal dialogue on science-based targets for nature in cities, and have since lead relevant efforts in this field.

In 2023, with the aim of aligning on a common roadmap for the definition and adoption of nature-related targets for cities, the 20+ experts and organizations[46] came together in Cambridge, UK, to address this very topic and identify gaps and challenges when defining a target setting methodology and reporting mechanisms.

There are currently two main initiatives working on defining comprehensive nature-related targets for cities:

- **ICLEI's Berlin Urban Nature Pact.** Building on the Edinburgh declaration and following extensive consultation process with dozens of cities worldwide, the Pact proposes a set of SMART targets within the CitiesWithNature Action Platform[47]. The targets cover seven topics of biodiversity action:

  - Green infrastructure, trees and forests.
  - Blue infrastructure and water management.
  - Food and agriculture.

  - Education and nature experience.
  - Soil health.
  - Co-habitation.
  - Species and habitats.

- **SBTN's Guide to set nature targets for cities**. The Science-Based Targets Network is currently developing guidelines with a simple methodology for cities to set their own science-based targets for nature taking into account the local context and other relevant considerations.

Both initiatives plan to release proposed targets in late 2024.

The 2023 Cambridge workshop was as step in the journey to achieve clear guidelines to set nature-related science-based targets for cities, and will be followed by a continuation of collective efforts.

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[46] These include WEF, UNEP-WCMC, Australian National University, C40 Cities, CDP, UN Climate Champions, ICLEI, IUCN, Metabolic, SBTN, The Biodiversity Consultancy, The Nature Conservancy, UNEP, UN-Habitat, Urban Biodiversity Hub, World Resources Institute.

[47] CitiesWithNature, *Berlin Urban Nature Pact*, 2023, https://citieswithnature.org/berlin-urban-nature-pact/.

1.6. The urban journey towards nature-positive action

The very idea of transitioning towards nature-positive urban development models can be daunting for city leaders and decision-makers. Targeted efforts to rehabilitate and re-instate nature within the built environment will likely take years if not decades, and combining efforts with climate actions aimed at reducing emissions is a complex endeavour. While some initiatives have a clear business case, others that need to be implemented will be costly —and risky, particularly if they involve bets on new technologies or business models. Without meaningful pressure from regulations or other incentives from local governments a conventional financial case can be hard to make.

The next section will explore strategic enablers allowing cities to accelerate their nature-positive transition and draw recommended actions they can take to improve their readiness.
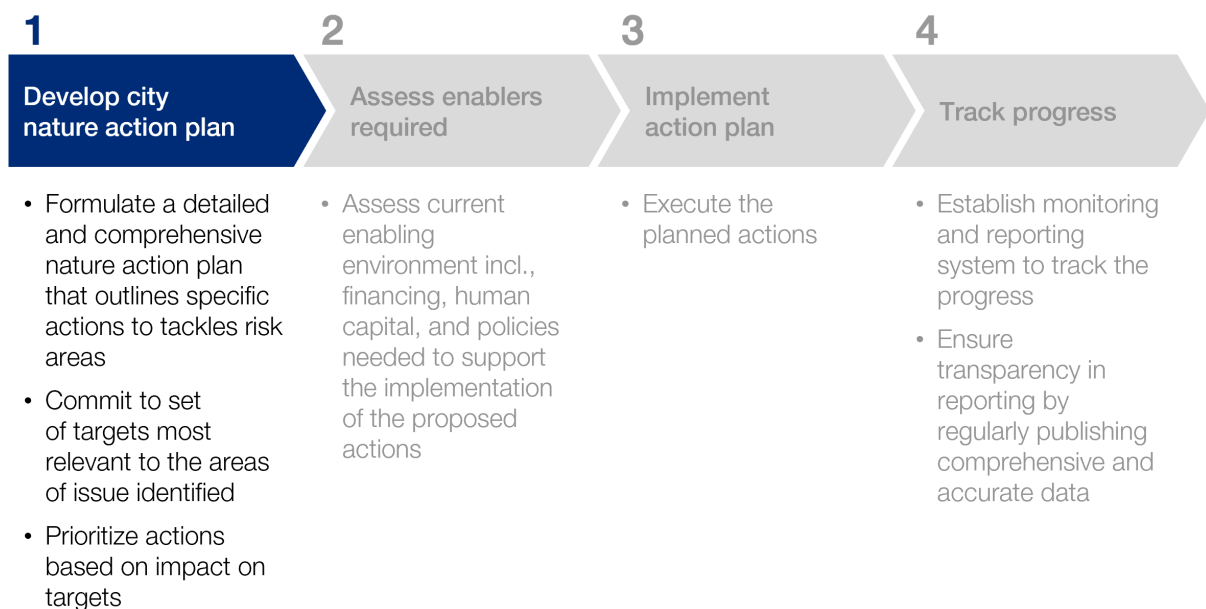
2. Enabling cities' nature-positive transition

A nature-positive transition is often delayed until risks have clearly materialized — in particular climate risks such as extreme weather events that affect the city's infrastructure or population in a way that could have been prevented.

When cities assess the urgency of addressing climate and nature risks, it is imperative for them to recognize that the true cost of such action should consider the potentially higher costs and risks they will encounter if no action is taken. This type of assessment, challenges local governments to extend their focus beyond the immediate impacts of climate on cities and embrace a broader agenda. This agenda should encompass the opportunity to rehabilitate nature and thrive in a low-carbon and nature-positive environment.

There are four key steps for cities to progress in their nature-positive (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Overview of cities' nature-positive journey.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Develop city nature action plan	Assess enablers required	Implement action plan	Track progress
• Formulate a detailed and comprehensive nature action plan that outlines specific actions to tackles risk areas • Commit to set of targets most relevant to the areas of issue identified • Prioritize actions based on impact on targets	• Assess current enabling environment incl., financing, human capital, and policies needed to support the implementation of the proposed actions	• Execute the planned actions	• Establish monitoring and reporting system to track the progress • Ensure transparency in reporting by regularly publishing comprehensive and accurate data

2.1. Develop a city nature action plan

The first step in this journey is to create a city nature action plan.

While there is growing attention to mapping out climate and nature action, local city involvement in nature is still at a very early stage. Some cities are starting to recognize issues like biodiversity loss, but only a few have established clear targets, and these commitments vary widely.

> Focus box: Cities' nature action plan
>
> • **Singapore**'s "Green Plan" nature action plan complete with more than 10+ nature-positive targets for 2026 and 2030, centred around sustainable water management, biodiversity conservation, and prudent use of natural resources, in line with the Planetary Boundaries framework by the Earth Commission.
>
> • **Vancouver**'s "Greenest City Action Plan" has shown dedication to integrating nature-positive strategies into its urban planning initiatives, as well as a commitment to 15+ nature targets.

A city nature action plan will help cities define their nature goals and provide a vision for achieving key objectives. For example, setting requirements for reporting on nature could help cities identify crucial metrics and ensure consistent communication of progress.

At the most basic level, the action plan should include:

- Clear commitments to nature targets tailored to the city's local context.

- Plans to create an enabling environment for implementing nature-positive interventions.

- A list of planned nature-positive interventions.

- A framework for collaboration between the public and private sectors to advance nature-positive efforts together.

Figure 8: Overview of cities' strategic framework.
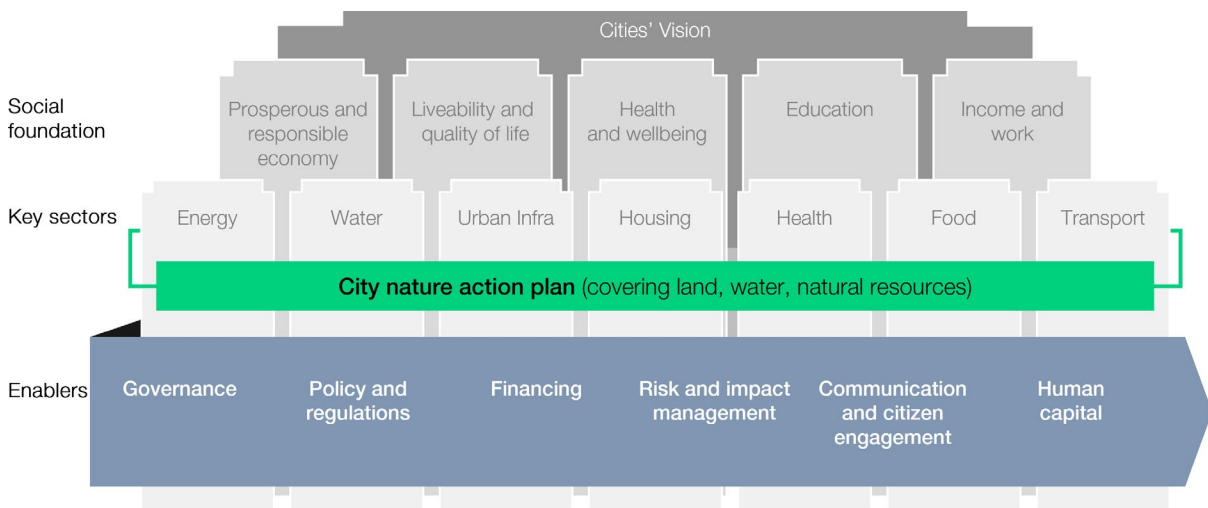
During the formulation of the action plan, cities are advised to adhere to several guiding principles to ensure its efficacy and alignment with the overall vision. These guiding principles are as follows:

a. **Avoid political short-termism**. Governments are often swayed by public opinion, media and short-term political cycles, which can derail policies to address complex, longer-term challenges. Without defined budgets, policies, regulations or detailed sector plans and targets to underpin pledges, it is hard to evaluate progress.

Guiding questions for city leadership	• How can policies in place be upheld beyond this political term? • What measures could we propose that effectively target long-term issues? • Is funding for these measures guaranteed for the required years even if there is a change of leadership?

b. **Ensure integration of nature plan with overall city strategy and climate plan**. Leveraging best practices and lessons learned from the drive to achieve net-zero emissions will be crucial for developing nature capabilities at the required speed. Similarities in the risks between nature and climate, such as transition risks and the need for transition planning, make a collaborative effort fundamental.

Guiding questions for city leadership	• Have we sought the collaboration from city's strategic leadership as well as sector's representatives to develop the city's nature action plan? • Does the nature action plan mention the areas of overlap with overall city strategy and climate plan? • Is there any misalignment between the ambitions or actions outlined in each plan?

c. **Integrate nature goals within other sectors and within broader development planning frameworks.** Cities should strive to infuse nature-related topics into every facet of local government structures. This entails integrating nature considerations into policy-making processes, incorporating environmental perspectives into decision-making frameworks, and fostering an organizational culture that prioritizes nature preservation and sustainability. The most important public policy decisions affecting ecosystems are often made by agencies and in policy arenas other than those charged with protecting ecosystems. For example, the Poverty Reduction Strategies prepared by developing-country governments for the World Bank and other institutions strongly shape national development priorities, but in general these have not taken into account the importance of ecosystems to improving the basic human capabilities of the poorest[48].

Guiding questions for city leadership	• Have we engaged all the relevant city departments in the process of crafting the nature action plan? • Which local decision-making processes in place take nature and/or climate as an input? • What efforts have we made to socialize nature considerations into all city government departments?

d. **Consider local context in the development of the plan and strategies**. Recognizing the uniqueness of each city's ecological, social, and economic landscape is paramount in the development of a successful action plan. Cities should undertake a comprehensive assessment of their local context, taking into account the specific environmental challenges, biodiversity hotspots, and community needs. By tailoring the nature action plan to the specific characteristics and requirements of the local environment, cities can develop targeted strategies that effectively address the pressing nature-related concerns within their jurisdiction. This contextual approach ensures that the action plan is not only relevant but also responsive to the specific challenges and opportunities present in the local landscape.

Guiding questions for city leadership	• Have we thoroughly assessed the local environment context (e.g., local city boundary) prior to defining the plan? • Do our ambitions reflect our main risks and capacities, both from an environmental and socioeconomic perspective? • Have we engaged local associations and/or conducted citizen consultations during the action plan definition?

[48] Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Board, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being*, 2005, https://www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.356.aspx.pdf

Figure 9: Overview of process to develop a city nature action plan[49,50,51]

Prepare	Design	Implement
Assemble the team	**Understand local context**	**Craft and disseminate**
Convene core team and advisors, ensuring enough seniority, technical knowledge and inter-departmental and multi-stakeholder representation	Identify main environmental, social, economic issues and risks faced by the city	• Write and edit the materials
	Evaluate political landscape and applicable policies and regulations	Present to city staff and generate buy-in
Agree on project governance, incl. citizens engagement mechanisms	Assess the status, threats and opportunities of Natural Capital and NCPs in the city	Launch public awareness campaigns
Determine resources needed	**Define the nature strategy and action plan**	**Implement the action plan**
Estimate human, technical and financial resources necessary	• Establish vision and overarching principles	• Execute the nature action plan
• Obtain funding (public/private sources)	• Identify key priority areas cascading into short- and long-term goals	• Integrate core principles intro broader city plans and development processes
Establish the timeframe	• Commit to SMART targets on relevant indicators for each goal	Manage stakeholders and share knowledge
• Define the project timeframe and deadlines, ensuring alignment with relevant milestones (e.g., elections and budgetary cycles)	• Develop an action plan towards those targets, incl. responsible teams, resources needed and timeframes	**Monitor and evaluate**
• Agree on plan time span (e.g., 5/10 years)		Periodically evaluate and report on progress
		Update strategy and action plan if needed
		• Establish a continuous feedback mechanism

Dependencies: Governance | Policy and regulations | Financing | Risk and impact management | Communication and citizen engagement | Human capital

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Focus box: Local Nature Strategies and Action Plans

The Convention on Biological Diversity webpage features a repository of Subnational and Local Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans which can be accessed here.

Selected examples include Vancouver's Greenest City 2020 Action Plan and the Greening Sydney Strategy.

2.2. Current challenges impeding the transition to nature-positive

Despite various cities globally making commitments to sustainability -or even comprehensive city nature action plans as outlined in the previous section- challenges persist that impede their transition toward a nature-positive economy. These barriers, underscored by local governments, provide valuable insights into how progress in the transition.

Detailed below are the main challenges highlighted by local governments:

Financing nature-positive interventions and balancing funds allocation amidst competing strategic priorities. Cities' budgets are often limited by the funding provided by national governments. A key hurdle for cities consists in securing funds for actions on nature, without failing to consider the long-term maintenance these interventions often entail.

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[49] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *NBSAP training modules version 2.1 – Module 8. Biodiversity planning for states, provinces, cities and other local authorities; how to develop a sub-national biodiversity strategy and action plan*, 2011, https://www.cbd.int/doc/training/nbsap/b8-train-biodiversity-plan-subnational-en.pdf.
[50] ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability et al., *Biodiversity and Municipal Planning: Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Guidelines*, 2016, https://cbc.iclei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/LBSAP-Guidelines.pdf.
[51] European Commission, *Urban Greening Plan Guidance Draft*, 2022, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/urban-greening-platform_en

Balancing the demand for further urban development due to rapid urbanization. The ever-growing demand for urban development, spurred by rapid urbanization driven by population influx, migration, and informal settlements, necessitates a careful equilibrium between development and conservation. This challenge is further compounded by structural and environmental constrictions, including issues like space constraints and the protection of key ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots. A set of incentives and regulations must be put in place to ensure environmental preservation precedes any urban intervention.

Inspiring citizens' engagement and support among public. Incorporating citizens' perspectives and behaviours is of paramount importance to the long-run success of these initiatives. This not only includes garnering public support but also fostering a unified consensus on the value of sustainability and conservation in the pursuit of these goals.

Monitoring nature-related data tracking progress through standardized metrics and nature-targets.

Establishing and incentivizing the use of comprehensive metrics on nature for both public and private sector that capture the multifaceted impacts of nature initiatives is essential. While the development of science-based targets related to nature is a complex endeavour undertaken by relevant international organizations (refer to section 1.5), cities are entrusted with gathering nature-related data for public use, and measuring progress across predefined indicators, which can often prove to be a challenging task.

2.3.   Required enablers to overcome these challenges

The establishment of an environment that mitigates risk and maximizes the potential of private investment is a fundamental step to enable a nature-positive urban development and foster private sector participation in nature-related initiatives at the city level. To that end, cities must action key measures across essential areas, including:

1. Governance
2. Policy and regulations
3. Financing
4. Risk and impact management
5. Communication and citizens' engagement
6. Human capital

Figure 10: Overview of cities' key enablers and sub-components

Enablers	Governance	Policy and regulations	Financing	Risk and impact management	Communication and citizen engagement	Human capital
Definition	Structures, units, official roles and processes in place to oversee nature-positive efforts	Incentives and requirements that guide and promote the implementation of nature-positive solutions	Resources and mechanisms to obtain sufficient and timely funding for nature-positive solutions	Processes and systems established to identify, assess and manage the risks and impacts of nature-positive solutions	Strategies and channels used to engage the community and communicate the benefits of nature-positive solutions	Availability, talent and capabilities of the human resources in charge of nature-positive solutions
Sub-components	Governance structure and processes	Policy and regulations	Funding	Risk management	Communication	Internal resources
			Financing processes	Impact management	Community engagement	External resources

2.4. Assessment of the enabling environment

As outlined in the previous section, cities can face several roadblocks when trying to advance their nature-positive transition and implement their nature action plans. An organizational maturity in key enablers will pave the way for a more sustainable and effective transition.

Table 2: Mapping city's enabling environment for nature action against organizational maturity (non-exhaustive)

Enabler	Sub-component	Starting and developing	Advanced and leading
Governance	Governance structure and processes	• Management position overseeing sustainability, nature or climate actions. • City governance structures not specialized. • Fragmented processes (e.g., shared processes for nature and climate topics). • Nature data scattered across city departments, private entities, NGOs.	• Advanced, tried and tested, city governance structures. • Integrated and standardized processes for managing, reporting and overseeing climate and nature risks and actions in place. • Governance roles trained on connection between nature and wider ESG risks. • Digitized and aggregated database on nature data accessible by public.
Policy and regulations	Policy and regulations	• Basic environmental regulations adopted to foster nature/green infrastructure initiatives.	• Regulatory frameworks in line with nature action plan and tailored to local needs. • Adoption and compliance measures are in place. • Policy consultation process for nature topics involves all relevant stakeholders. • Incentives to encourage nature/green infrastructure initiatives in place. • City procurement processes include net-zero considerations.
Financing	Funding	• City budget accounts for to nature agenda.	• City actively identifies and maintains active sources of funding (e.g., grants, loans) to advance on nature agenda. • Processes to leverage funding from MDBs are structured. • Incentive schemes are in place to promote investment in green/nature solutions.
	Financing processes	• Financing processes for nature projects are assessed based on standardized approach and economic and social benefits are considered.	• Financing mechanisms for minor-scale nature-related projects in place (SMEs, residential communities, etc.) are available. • Standardized and tested public-private partnership mechanisms incentivized.

Enabler	Sub-component	Starting and developing	Advanced and leading
Risk and impact management	Risk management	• Initial assessment of nature-related risks conducted. • Monitoring framework implemented.	• Comprehensive assessment of nature-related risks conducted and impact assessed. • Monitoring framework implemented and aligned with priorities of nature action plan. • Knowledge sharing practices are in place, e.g., to partner with other cities affected by similar risks.
	Impact management	• Baseline data and metrics identified and monitored. • Initial nature-related objectives outlined within nature action plan.	• Science-based nature SMART targets defined. • Commitments validated using third-party stakeholders. • Impact across nature realms monitored with clear and standardized KPIs.
Communication and citizen engagement	Communication	• City communication strategy includes fundamental messages on climate hazards and impact on nature. • Basic educational campaigns launched to improve outreach to citizens and increase public's sensibility to nature risks.	• Regular reporting on nature actions and progress across set targets. • Nature is a key component of city's communication strategy to showcase impact and raise public awareness and instil sense of environmental stewardship. • Extensive educational campaigns in place.
	Community engagement	• Local schools and community groups encouraged to learn about nature topics. • Feedback mechanism in place to gather input from citizens and other stakeholders. • Partnerships to promote and stimulate the uptake of NbS with community organizations and other stakeholders encouraged.	• Sustainability is a core part of the city's identity, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship. • Citizens engaged in co-creating nature-based projects. • Citizens' perspectives have shifted towards nature-positive behaviours.
Human capital	Internal resources	• Nature and climate topics included in city officials' basic training (e.g., nature-positive planning, financial mechanisms, etc.).	• City leadership upholds a culture of continuous learning and innovation on nature and climate topics. • Training curriculum across public institutions, private sector and education well integrated with sustainability topics. • International events leveraged for learning and showcasing efforts.

Enabler	Sub-component	Starting and developing	Advanced and leading
	External resources	• Environmental specialists hired to support planning and implementation of nature projects.	• Structured incentive systems in place to attract and retain talent in the field of sustainability. • Regular engagements with universities and research institutions for technical expertise are conducted.

2.5.   Actions to improve the enabling environment

When prioritizing an advanced and leading enabling environment, urban leaders will require guidance on concrete actions to address challenges and improve cities' capacity and maturity to advance in a nature-positive transition.

While prioritized actions should be tailored to each city's local context, the below table (Table 3) outlines a list of no-regret actions that cities could consider as first steps.

Table 3: Key actions for cities to advance across enablers and sub-components.

Enabler	Sub-component	City-level action
Governance	Governance structure and processes	• Establish specialized committees or working groups, with a flexible and coordinated mandate responsible for overseeing, reporting on, and promoting nature-related initiatives. • Integrate strategic nature objectives within broader development planning frameworks. • Ensure streamlined governance processes for approvals of nature positive interventions. • Define feedback and grievance resolution mechanism specific to nature positive interventions. • Leverage specialized external advisory to refine resolutions and roadmaps. • Develop and maintain central data and information portal on nature and biodiversity accessible by the public to facilitate informed decision-making. • Increase transparency and accountability of government and private-sector performance in decisions that affect ecosystems. • Adopt a cross-sector and multi-stakeholder approach to decision making processes for nature projects. • Include dedicated capacity within city government to interface with NGOs, MDBs, philanthropies, etc.
Policy and regulations	Policy and regulations	• Engage with finance and environment national and subnational authorities to influence government's policy agenda on nature. • Develop nature-focused policy roadmaps taking learnings from climate-related policy roadmaps. • Collaborate with local or metropolitan authorities where ecologically-relevant scales go beyond city boundaries (e.g., water basins).

Enabler	Sub-component	City-level action
		• Address "policy failures" in public procurement which can prejudice nature-conscious innovation. • Implement policy support measures encouraging investment in applied nature research, development and demonstration (RD&D), protection of intellectual property and support for public-private cooperation, and show a transparent pathway to adoption once the technology has been successfully demonstrated. • Eliminate subsidies that promote excessive use of ecosystem services (and, where possible, transfer these subsidies to payments for ecosystem services). • Engage in voluntary nature local-level networks to ensure collaboration with similar cities and participation in guidance drafting.
Financing	Funding	• **Explore existing funding sources (e.g., from MDBs) to carry out nature-positive interventions at city-level.** • Clarify city commitments on infrastructure spending and communicate pipeline of relevant investments likely to be supported (to provide long-term stability for institutional investors and insurers). • Implement mechanisms of payment for ecosystem services such as "city nature credits", feed-in tariffs and quota schemes to incentivize uptake of nature-related projects. • Implement mechanisms to enable consumer preferences to be expressed through markets, e.g., certification schemes. • Integrate nature taxonomies and values into city accounting (where allowed by regulation) or other frameworks.

Financing	Financing processes	• Address barriers that cities may face to access finance beyond nature-related funding, e.g., improve credit worthiness.
		• Embed criteria for compliance with environmental, social and governance quality goals into financing mechanism.
		• Introduce incentives and de-risking measures aimed at first-mover financiers such as measures taking on margin and innovation risk and low interest rate financing.
		• Introduce policies aimed at reducing investment risk for financial institutions investing in nature-projects:
		  – Develop measures to reduce the insurance-related costs associated with innovation risks of nature-positive interventions through equipment or performance guarantees.
		  – Encourage diversification of capital sources, including funds from a range of public and private financial institutions.
		• Encourage the incorporation of nonmarket values of ecosystems in resource management and investment decisions.

Risk and impact management	Risk management	• **Map current and most pressing climate risks aligned to broader city nature action plan.** • Ensure transparency of nature-related risks to public. • Enable the advancement of measurement of nature risks by the public sector by ensuring that nature-related data is easily accessible from public sources.

Enabler	Sub-component	City-level action
		• Maintain a list of species with their conservation status (e.g., Singapore red data list).
	Impact management	• Deliver a biodiversity/nature audit for the city. • Disclose key dependencies on nature. • Establish baseline data and define metrics/indicators linked to nature-related targets. • Compile case studies on and assess best practices that have been implemented. • Implement digital tool to provide up-to-date information on the state of implementation of the actions, and targets dashboard to showcase progress to the quantified targets set by the strategy.
Communication and citizen engagement	Communication	• Launch extensive educational campaigns on nature-related issues aimed at influencing preferences towards safeguarding the state nature. • Launch awareness campaigns aimed at reducing aggregate consumption of unsustainably managed ecosystem services. • Ensure transparency on transition pathways and plans. • Address contrarian messages from parties opposing to nature-positive actions. • Seek benefit-sharing and build consensus over the best solution(s) to address challenges.
	Community engagement	• Identify and engage with local organizations and other stakeholders to align on key nature goals and messaging (e.g., NGOs, academic institutions). • Encourage private sector participation through e.g., innovation competitions or incubator programmes. • Facilitate participation with external stakeholders which could inform, engage, or consult. • Encourage empowerment of groups particularly dependent on ecosystem services or affected by their degradation, including women, indigenous peoples, youth and elderly.
Human capital	Internal resources	• Assess internal capacity, detect skills and knowledge gaps, and implement re-skilling and up-skilling strategies. • Provide extensive training for committee board members and leadership officials on nature related topics. • Include nature topics on basic training addressed to all city officials. • Encourage active participation in the stewardship of the environment for all sectors. • Promote knowledge-transfer across organizations on nature-related issues. • Promote partnerships with regional and international organisations e.g., ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as an indication of our commitment to biodiversity conservation at the global level.
	External resources	• Hire environment specialists incl. academia representatives to support the delivery of nature-related initiatives. • Develop plan to strengthen nature education, incl. guidelines for the integration of nature conservation into school curricula.

[Examples provided for each prioritized action]

Focus box. Governance: Specialized committee on green urban development

The city of Barcelona established the "*Consulta Del Green and Urban Landscape*" made up of representatives of associations, committees, bodies and professional orders and by the technicians of the Environmental Protection Department with consultancy, control, support and guidance tasks regarding the political choices concerning the green, as guided by the Regulation of public private green and urban landscape.[52]

Focus box. Policy and regulation: Coordinating policy requirements and funding with national government

The United Kingdom will mandate starting 2024 real estate developers to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain when building new housing, industrial or commercial developments. Complementing this policy change, local planning authorities are expected to receive £15 million from the national government to prepare[53].

Focus box. Financing: Natural capital accounting

There are nascent initiatives and standards around natural capital accounting, such as the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting's Ecosystem Accounts, adopted by the UN Statistical Commission and the Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) initiative and set up by the UN, the EU and five other countries, including China and India[54]. At a country level, France has taken the lead on natural capital, transitioning from a voluntary to a binding approach, whereby asset managers and corporate issuers are obliged to disclose biodiversity- and climate-related risks by mid-2022, through the concept of double materiality.

Focus box. Risk and impact management: Climate risk and vulnerability assessment

Quezon City, the most populated city in the Philippines, was one of the first cities to conduct a climate risk and vulnerability assessment following C40's CCRA framework[55]. This led to the crafting of the Quezon City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2014-2020, which was subsequently integrated with the City's Enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2050[56].

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[52] C40, *Planned Actions to Deliver Commitments,* 2022, https://www.c40.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Urban_Nature_Accelerator_22_V2.pdf

[53] Government of the United Kingdom, *Biodiversity Net Gain moves step closer with timetable set out*, 2023, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/biodiversity-net-gain-moves-step-closer-with-timetable-set-out.

[54] United Nations, *Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services Project - NCAVES, System of Environmental Economic Accounting*, https://seea.un.org/home/Natural-Capital-Accounting-Project.

[55] C40 Cities, *Rapid Climate Change Risk Assessment Module*, 2021, https://c40.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#36000001Enhz/a/1Q0000001lFk/ZD1x.n06W.hTZSuQCP6K5Sw7sq6K0jR05vziOK_to1w.

[56] Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), *Strengthening the Climate Resiliency of Cities and their Communities in Asia. Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment. Training guide for cities*, 2022, https://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/comfy/cms/files/files/000/006/058/original/CDP_Resourcepack.pdf.

Focus box. Communications and citizen engagement: City Nature Challenge

The City Nature Challenge started in 2016 as a competition between the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County to photograph, catalogue and identify observations of wildlife using the iNaturalist app, but has since expanded to 450 cities worldwide[57]. Additionally, cities are taking advantage of this event to organize complementary activities and awareness-raising campaigns[58].

Focus box. Human capital: Capacity building training in Maseru, Lesotho

The UN's Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility in Lesotho has identified several investments opportunities to promote resilient communities, enhance water provision and reverse environmental degradation. This funding is channelled through Performance Based Climate Resilience Grants, so increasing the knowledge of local government officers is key to the success of these initiatives. The Facility organised a training workshop with city officers to increase their skills and knowledge on audit and internal control, planning procedures, and climate-proofed investments[59].

2.6.   Co-benefits of an improved enabling environment

In the previous sections we have proposed a set of actions cities can undertake to enhance their enabling environment and increase their maturity to assess and address their impacts on nature. Such transformations to create an enabling environment for a nature-positive transition can also deliver additional benefits to the city:

Operational efficiencies from enhanced processes and transparency in the city governance. By streamlining their operations, cities can achieve a more efficient resource allocation, reduced administrative burdens, and improved decision-making processes. This can have a positive impact on other services provided by the city, and simplify the relationship with private sector companies.

Opportunities to reduce risks. By improving their climate risk management frameworks, cities will be better prepared to address other risks (e.g., large-scale accidents, conflict related shocks).

Increased investment from MDBs and ESG-aligned investors. By introducing a facilitating policy environment, a city can streamline access to financing from MDBs, private sector and philanthropies to conduct complementary initiatives that deliver great value to the city.

Enhanced spirit of innovation. Pushed to respect nature boundaries and limit urban sprawl, cities will be compelled to accommodate the rise in urbanization by leveraging strategies of compact, mixed-use cities. This will require innovation stimulus and increase in overall city efficiency. Cities like Singapore and San Francisco have emerged as pioneers in implementing these strategies due to their unique geographical constraints. These cities have had to rely on heightened levels of creativity and innovation to effectively function within their boundaries.

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[57] City Nature Challenge, 2023, https://www.citynaturechallenge.org/.

[58] University of California, Davis, *Kicking off the 2023 City Nature Challenge Sacramento*, 2023, https://education.ucdavis.edu/blog-entry/kicking-2023-city-nature-challenge-sacramento

[59] United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), *Building capacity an essential aspect of adaptation action*, 2022, https://www.uncdf.org/article/7637/building-capacity-an-essential-aspect-of-adaptation-action.

Replication of governance and communication mechanisms. The engagement mechanisms created for nature topics can easily be replicated for other undertakings by the city. A similar case can be made for the communication channels and resources leveraged to increase the outreach of nature-positive interventions. Ultimately, this will contribute to foster a greater sense of community within the city.

Talent and culture. By fostering an experimental culture an engaging with a network of pioneering solution providers, cities can become innovation hubs, attracting top talent, and spearheading groundbreaking interventions in many different sectors.

In summary, improving the city government capacity to address nature issues will position a city in a privileged stance to address key urban development priorities.

Concluding remarks

Kindly note this is a draft version for public consultation. We welcome any feedback on the report before the final version is published.

Please refer to the first section of this document to find the guiding questions for detailed feedback and input.