



Mainstreaming Urban Nature-Based Solutions

Align with strategic priorities

Nature-based solutions can be advanced by aligning with existing priorities, such as on climate change, circular economy, and healthy urban living, and by generating narratives and evidence that articulate their wider benefits. Green roofs became a compulsory measure in new development projects in many German cities by leveraging the country's Binding Land Use Plan. Thames Water and a local UK organisation secured lottery funding to transform water reserves into recreation sites, prompting doctors to prescribe visits to these sites to improve health and well-being. Building on synergies at the European Union level is one means to realise these opportunities. The European Union's Biodiversity Strategy was positioned by various EU institutions as an integral part of the broader Europe 2020 Strategy, and of relevance to ministers for economic and financial affairs, rather than only the Environment Council.



The Environmental and Planning Vision of the Netherlands built on synergies with the Environment and Planning Act (*Omgevingswet*) to establish **health promotion and protection** as a key pillar of spatial planning. The Act streamlines legislation across multiple domains such as environmental management, spatial planning, water management, and mobility. Since local and regional authorities have the option to add an additional layer of environmental regulation based on local challenges, the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure advised regional and local authorities how to pursue health promotion and protection in their policies and visions. Nature-based solutions play an important role in health promotion through improving recreation, social cohesion, and absorbing pollutants.



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Promising Pathways for Sustainability Goals



Climate Change

With the race to reach 'net zero' targets and build back resilience, nature-based solutions are increasingly seen as a critical tool for responding to climate change. Whether by cooling cities and reducing energy demand or providing new ways of managing flooding, nature-based solutions are gaining support globally. We identify four pathways through which mainstreaming is taking place: recognising their potential as a climate solution; investing to reduce climate risk; integrating climate action with other sustainability goals; and learning through practical experience on the ground.

Biodiversity

As the world seeks to develop a transformative agenda for biodiversity over the next decade, we explore how mainstreaming nature-based solutions can enable cities to conserve, restore and thrive with nature. Four pathways are identified based on regulating for 'no net loss' of biodiversity, developing co-governance arrangements for public-private finance, integrating biodiversity with existing sustainability priorities, and integrating biodiversity into urban development and the built environment.

Social Inclusion

Nature-based solutions such as new parks, rooftop gardens, and tree-lined streets play an important role in improving wellbeing and enhancing community spaces. However, the potential for gentrification and displacement of lower income groups means that these solutions must actively foster social inclusion and tackle inequalities. We identify three pathways that strengthen social inclusion: broadening community participation, securing genuine political commitment and policies that support social inclusion, and pursuing social inclusion measures as a way of achieving health and wellbeing.

Economic Regeneration

Nature-based solutions can create economic regeneration through increasing economic activity and employment and by improving the quality of life. Nature-based solutions both directly contribute to economic vitality and well-being, and leverage new forms of economic activity in cities that generate opportunities. Mainstreaming for economic regeneration takes place through developing partnerships for investment, increasing our knowledge of their economic value, seizing opportunities emerging from other sustainability initiatives, and stimulating market demand for nature-based solutions.

Sustainable Development Goals

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