

# Biodiversity & Nature-based Solutions at ICLEI Europe

**Urban sprawl is rapidly depleting biodiversity and degrading natural ecosystems, while poor land-use planning is resulting in social and economic issues within and around cities.**

In order to create a healthy environment to live and work in, local governments must reconcile their development ambitions with nature by integrating multi-functional, biodiverse and interconnected green and blue spaces in their cities. These can act as Nature-based Solutions (NBS), tackling challenges such as poor air quality, vulnerability to climate change-related risks like flooding or heat waves, deteriorating health of citizens, and bringing urban communities closer together. As a long-term advocate of the importance of urban biodiversity and green spaces, ICLEI Europe supports local governments in embedding NBS into policies and planning processes. By working with cities to implement NBS and promote biodiversity, ICLEI Europe also helps them to reduce the impacts of climate change, thus creating a cohesive urban society and nature-positive economy.



Our experts in NBS and biodiversity offer training and technical assistance to local and regional governments and represent them in European and global policy processes in order to:

- ✦ Help bend the curve in global biodiversity and ecosystem loss with bold, effective local contributions;
- ✦ Ensure local governments play a strong political role and have a say in developing and achieving relevant policy frameworks and goals, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the renewed "Subnational Plan for Action", the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 or the European Green Deal;
- ✦ Provide high-quality technical and policy support to establish and implement systemic biodiversity and urban greening programmes and projects.

*“ Cities have a key role to play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity as well as in taking bold actions to bring about transformative change that will halt biodiversity loss. Växjö has recently taken steps towards integrating ecosystem services into our local Comprehensive Plan. Healthy biodiversity and the ecosystem services that it provides are key for the well-being of our citizens and will help to build resilient cities. ”*

**Cheryl Jones Fur,**

(Member of ICLEI's European Regional Executive Committee)  
Councillor, Växjö,  
Sweden



## ICLEI INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

### 3 x frameworks and initiatives

#### - how ICLEI is involved and how cities and regions can get involved

Led by the Scottish Government and its key partners such as ICLEI Europe, the UN Secretariat of the CBD, the European Committee of the Regions and the Quebec Government, the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) lays out biodiversity aspirations and commitments of local and subnational governments, in terms of what they can contribute and want to see in a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Your city can show its support by signing the declaration [online](#).

ICLEI Europe brought the perspective of its member cities to the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#) and the [EU Nature Restoration Law](#) by participating in the consultation process and closely collaborating with the European Committee of the Regions. ICLEI Europe is also a driving force in the [transition towards a nature-positive economy](#).

As an official global partner to the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#), ICLEI as a whole will play an active role in shaping the decade ahead to highlight the relationship of cities with nature, with significant and long-term commitments, and by connecting our constituents to the UN Decade. ICLEI Europe's [position paper on land degradation and soil ecosystems](#) will frame our activities.

NBS mainstreaming can be supported by **international and European Standardisation**. ICLEI Europe engages in various standardisation bodies relevant to introduce experiences and innovations of ICLEI members in biodiversity and NBS at the international and European levels, e.g. as [Chair of CEN/TC 465 Sustainable Cities and Communities](#).

## IMPACT

Involved in **20+** past and ongoing Nature-based Solutions projects

Supported **85+** cities in the planning and/or implementation of NBS, and gathered many more to learn from and with pioneering cities

Supporting **20+** cities in breaking the ground for Urban Greening Plans by pioneering NBS plans even before the EU called for such plans in the Biodiversity Strategy

## OPPORTUNITIES

ICLEI Europe coordinates [NetworkNature](#), an umbrella platform for all EU-funded NBS projects, which helps those interested in implementing NBS connect with peers, learn about the latest knowledge in the field and open collaboration pathways. **Join the community!**

Interested in collaborating with us in **project proposals** and obtaining EU funding to increase ambition for NBS and biodiversity in your city? ICLEI Europe offers you its long-standing experience and success in acquiring projects and its network of 200+ partners.

Learn from and connect to more than 2500 local and regional governments worldwide who work on NBS and biodiversity. **Sign up to become a member of ICLEI!**

## RESOURCES

[CitiesWithNature](#) and [RegionsWithNature](#) are shared, interactive platforms recognised by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as an official vehicle through which subnational governments can report on their biodiversity commitments and ambitions. They offer guidance and lots of tools and resources to become a biodiverse city and region. Sign up on the websites or write to [biodiversity-europe@iclei.org](mailto:biodiversity-europe@iclei.org)!

[UrbanByNature](#) is a facilitated capacity-building programme promoting exchange among cities, researchers and SMEs and building bridges with the NBS communities in Brazil and South America, in China, Korea, and the Caucasus and South-Eastern Europe as well as in Spain, Scotland and Flanders. Participation in the programme is open and free of charge with new opportunities coming up regularly for other regions worldwide. **[Register today!](#)**

ICLEI members have access to a variety of tools and resources that share the expertise of pioneering cities in NBS implementation, such as the [Making Urban Nature Bloom](#) handbook, the ICLEI-authored [Guide for Pollinator-friendly Cities](#), the [REGREEN factsheets](#) on NBS best practices and the [proGReg](#) and [CLEVER Cities NBS Co-Creation Guidelines](#).

## Connect with us:

- ✉ [biodiversity-europe@iclei.org](mailto:biodiversity-europe@iclei.org)
- 🌐 [www.iclei-europe.org/topics/biodiversity-nature-based-solutions](http://www.iclei-europe.org/topics/biodiversity-nature-based-solutions)



## ICLEI Europe

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network working with more than 2500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development.