



# Accelerating urban nature-based solutions:

A Latin American-European collaboration

Barcelona • 15–17 May 2024

#UrbanNatureConnectsUs



**CONEXUS**

Urban nature connects us  
Conectados por la naturaleza urbana  
Conectados pela natureza urbana

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Cities face urgent global and local challenges to support biodiversity, social cohesion, wellbeing, livelihoods and resilience to climate change. We need nature-based solutions and restored ecosystems to address these priorities. Invaluable experience and good practice exist around the world in many different socio-cultural, ecological and governance contexts. **There is now a huge opportunity to move forward... faster... together.**

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### Date and location:

15–17 May 2024

### Venue:

IEC Barcelona, C/ del Carme,  
47, 08001 Barcelona, Spain.

<https://goo.gl/maps/FPbRkogTvFyxVK7C8>



The conference will showcase latest thinking on urban nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. The event will:

- Strengthen links between NBS research, policy and innovation.
- Provoke exciting discussions of emerging concepts and frameworks to improve the quality and impact of NBS and associated research.
- Motivate new ways of thinking about urban nature; fostering new collaborations addressing this urgent societal challenge.



## Intended audience:

This conference is open to anyone with an interest in nature-based solutions. Participants from all sectors are welcome; including, local and national governments, policy-makers, NGOs, business and academia.

The conference is organised with the kind support of the European Union through its Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation Programme. It is hosted by the CONEXUS project and partners including city Life-Labs in:

- **Barcelona** (Spain) • **Bogota** (Colombia)
- **Buenos Aires** (Argentina) • **Lisboa** (Portugal)
- **Sao Paulo** (Brazil) • **Santiago** (Chile)
- **Torino** (Italy).

## Outline programme:

### 14 May

Evening reception.

### 15 May

#### Morning:

Plenary research-policy-practice dialogues and impact of NBS in addressing societal challenges.

#### Afternoon:

Site visits to Barcelona city-centre NBS demonstrators and pilot projects.

### 16 May

Themed workshops and seminars.

### 17 May

Plenary synopsis, future developments and a celebration of the city and its nature.

## Registration:

The conference programme will be developed through competitive abstracts submission. Registration is not yet open. Abstracts of up to 300 words should be submitted by 30 November 2023 and must clearly address only one of the four themes:

- **Social, cultural and educational priorities**
- **Ecological and environmental qualities**
- **Economics, values and work**
- **Governance, politics and planning**

Your abstract should present novel work and be a unique contribution to the field of NBS research; empirically-based work will be prioritised in the selection process, but conceptual and opinion pieces are welcomed. Feedback on abstracts will be provided with an indicative outcome, along with suggestions.

Conference fees: €100–200 (details to be provided in due course). Registration including payment of conference fees must be completed by 15 December 2023. Places at the event are strictly limited and the organisers will select successful abstracts to present at the event – we cannot guarantee participation of delegates and only registered participants may enter the conference. We welcome feedback and invite you to take part in this vital event.

**We hope to see you in Barcelona in 2024!**

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### Conference Themes:

- Social, cultural and educational priorities
  - Ecological and environmental qualities
  - Economics, values and work
  - Governance, politics and planning
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### Social, cultural and educational priorities:

Urban contexts for NBS present a fascinating range of opportunities, challenges and avenues for people, both in terms of engagement and social cohesion, but also as regards the ways in which those relationships develop and how these impacts on success or failure of NBS. The complexity of land ownership, fragmentation of habitats, and historical community development all add vital nuances that differ greatly from rural settings. New green deals and environmental sustainability programmes tend to call for greater justice and inclusivity in addressing global challenges including action on climate and biodiversity. Co-creation has been central to many NBS programmes and initiatives, but participatory or co-design processes should not automatically be considered as a means through which social inclusion can be fostered. Arguably, the links between education and NBS also need strengthening, e.g. by supporting educators in using new pedagogies, tools and materials. What are the implications of these imperatives and how can these goals be mobilised in the urban myriad of complex, evolving and exciting environments?

### Key questions:

- What are the contemporary issues around social inclusion and NBS?
- How are community connections made, broken, enhanced or degraded?
- What are the key participatory processes at play and how can these be assessed?
- How can the deeper integration of nature in city planning, development and management be achieved?
- What is the role of education in the development of NBS, and vice versa, and how can educators be supported in using new pedagogies, tools and materials?

## Ecological and environmental qualities:

Urban areas are subjected to multiple socio-ecological challenges, including climate change, increasing urbanisation and loss of vegetation and biodiversity. Urbanisation is one of the key drivers for degrading ecosystems and biodiversity loss – By 2030, cities are expected to cover 3 times as much land as they did in 2000, with much of the expansion occurring in biodiversity hotspots, largely leading to isolated patches of green. Cities face urgent challenges to act on biodiversity, climate change and equitable access to green spaces and their essential ecosystem services. Networks of urban NBS offer great potential for supporting urban resilience by providing ecological connectivity, recreational spaces, and mitigating air pollution, flooding and urban heat islands. Several cities are planning ahead by incorporating policies for enhancing greening and biodiversity, such as the Restoration Law on no net loss by 2030 from the European Union. Identifying nature-based solution initiatives that are enabling increasing canopy cover, conserving biodiversity, restoring ecosystem functioning is crucial for mainstreaming the role that urban areas can play in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

This session will present NBS in Europe, Latin America and beyond that look at enhancing the ecology and environment in urban areas by addressing the following questions.

### Key questions:

- Are cities planning NBS as networks of projects? And how are this addressing no net loss and canopy increase?
- How are cities including biodiversity in their restoration activities, and what are the ecological processes that are being monitored when implementing these NBS?
- What are the impacts of NBS on ecosystem services and functioning being measured?
- How are cities contributing to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem service provision through a network of NBS? And how can we support the adoption of networks of NBS?
- What can we share to enhance the replicability of successful examples of NBS? Can we establish global standards?





## Economics, values and work:

Definitions of NBS call for economic benefits and cost effectiveness.

But what is the evidence for this in urban settings and how is this framed? What could be the role of urban NBS in future economy? Cities in Europe, Latin America and beyond face different issues and have differing contexts for funding and economic valuation (including monetary assessment), but also share some constraints and solutions. This session will examine and explore how cities are responding to the challenges and opportunities around data, policy and action. It will provide space for dialogue and highlight innovative approaches and good practices, including partnership approaches, networks, and capacity building programmes.

### Key questions:

- What are the key markets for urban NBS and how does knowledge of their benefits and values affect uptake and viability?
- How does urban NBS valuation relate to funding for planning, construction and maintenance?
- What are the shared and differing NBS valuation issues (constraints and solutions) in cities in the Global South and Global North?
- What new examples exist of innovative valuation approaches that enable the uptake and funding of urban NBS?

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## Governance, politics and planning:

The governance of NBS, ranging from political leadership to community action, is pivotal for addressing global sustainability challenges. In this session, we investigate commonalities and differences in governance, politics, planning, and management practices across different socio-political contexts. Seeking inspiration from science and practice, the session discusses how implementation and mainstreaming of NBS critically depends on organisational capacity of actors, on collaborations across silos, scales and sectors, and on reflexivity on successes and challenges, taking into consideration justice impacts across communities and cultural groups. Approaches to co-governance of NBS are at the centre of this session. Examples and case studies from across the world are used to explore governance, planning and management practices towards just transformations through NBS. We in particular welcome insights on innovative strategies to promote procedural and recognition justice in complex socio-political contexts.

### Key questions:

- What governance approaches and policy instruments are proving invaluable in securing the uptake of NBS?
- How do different stakeholders and citizens participate in NBS governance, planning and long-term management and what mechanisms exclude them?
- What examples and stories exist of integration or disintegration across geographies, sectors and hierarchies?
- How to develop and apply approaches for the monitoring of co-governance and co-production processes to inform NBS as a reflective practice?
- What evidence is there of NBS programmes and initiatives continuing beyond political timescales and of innovative approaches?

# Project Partners



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