

UNP+ Case Study: Belgrade

How Serbia's capital is laying the foundations for greener, more connected urban development

Belgrade, one of the UNP+ **Greening Cities**, is taking important steps to integrate biodiversity and green infrastructure into its urban fabric. With strong academic, civil society and international partnerships, the city is strengthening its capacity to plan, coordinate and implement nature-based solutions. While institutional barriers remain, Belgrade's developing **governance approaches and collaborative momentum illustrate** how cities can begin **embedding nature into urban development**.



Challenges

- Fragmented governance:** Belgrade's 20 secretariats each have their own strategies, but limited coordination across departments leads to missed opportunities and tensions.
- Weak enforcement and communication:** Although urban planning regulations require minimum green space ratios for new developments, implementation and monitoring are often inconsistent due to a lack of interdepartmental dialogue.
- Limited legal mandate for co-creation:** Without a dedicated institutional requirement, citizen and stakeholder engagement risks remaining occasional rather than continuous.
- Siloed decision-making:** Cooperation between key departments - especially urban planning and construction - is hindered by poor communication and competing priorities.

Enabling Factors

- The draft **Green Infrastructure Strategy** (DGIS) proposes a new unit in the Secretariat for Environmental Protection to coordinate all green infrastructure work.
- The **DGIS Action Plan embeds green infrastructure expertise across institutions**, including those responsible for education, housing and utilities, in order to promote biodiversity.
- By 2026, Belgrade plans to assign a **green infrastructure expert** within both the Department of the Main Urban Planner and the Urban Planning Committee, ensuring nature is represented in all urban decisions.
- Participation in EU and Horizon 2020 projects** has equipped Belgrade with experience in co-creation, reflexive monitoring and multi-stakeholder coordination.

Good Practices

- Belgrade created a **40-member cross-sectoral Task Force** for the Green Infrastructure Strategy, using innovative **co-creation tools** like World Café sessions and role-play - unprecedented in local policy work.
- Legal framework for participation:** Serbia's **planning and construction laws require public consultation at key stages**, and the **Nature Protection Law** supports participatory approaches. Together, these frameworks create a **solid basis for strengthening co-creation** in future UNP processes.
- The DGIS includes a **measure to develop an integrated GIS-based database on green infrastructure**, harmonising environmental and planning data for better monitoring and decision-making.

Key Learnings

- Establishing **clear governance** structures is the **first step** toward effective urban nature planning.
- Collaboration** with NGOs and academia **can build trust** and extend municipal capacity.
- Integrated **digital tools** are **essential** for monitoring and **policy coherence**.
- Reforms** can **turn ad-hoc collaboration into lasting structures** for urban greening.