

Urban Nature Exchange #1

The **first Urban Nature Exchange** session brought together cities and researchers to explore **how green infrastructure boosts urban resilience**. Barcelona, Mannheim, and Paris shared examples of greening projects addressing dense urban challenges. The University of Helsinki presented a **systemic framework to help cities plan and assess urban nature** more effectively. The session emphasised **co-creation, political support, and cross-city learning as key** to successful urban naturing.

Key Take-Aways

1

A **structured framework** for integrating **green infrastructure** into **urban planning is essential** to ensure that cities can align green projects with broader urban goals such as resilience, social equity and environmental health. Such an approach helps cities **address local challenges by maximising the benefits of green spaces**, similar to the holistic assessments used to value ecosystem services.

Urban green spaces provide a **wide range of services**, including cultural, social and environmental benefits. Cities **need to measure** these services **using multiple indicators** to assess accessibility **and identify gaps**. By quantifying services such as thermal regulation, carbon dioxide reduction and social cohesion, cities can target improvements to enhance the functionality of green spaces and ensure equitable access for all communities.

2

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Urban growth and densification often lead to challenges in maintaining accessible green spaces. A **balance** must be struck **between increasing green infrastructure and meeting the needs of urban populations**. Effective urban nature planning requires **creative solutions** that reclaim public spaces, manage land use, and consider the social and environmental impacts of green space implementation.

Successful urban nature **projects require flexibility in planning and decision-making**. Cities need to be open to adapting their plans based on **evolving needs**, such as climate adaptability or community feedback. Engaging in participatory processes and working across departments and sectors ensures that green spaces meet diverse community needs and environmental goals, creating sustainable urban ecosystems.

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Urban nature projects often involve **trade-offs between competing priorities** such as economic growth, biodiversity conservation and social equity. Cities need to manage these trade-offs carefully, taking into account both **immediate needs** and **long-term sustainability**. Ensuring that green spaces are adaptable, resilient and beneficial to both people and nature requires a balanced and context-specific approach that is aligned with broader urban objectives.