

Insights from Paris' UNE!



URBAN
NATURE
PLANS +



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The UNE in short

UNE participants met to experience nature in Paris, start working with indicators for biodiversity and participatory governance, play with communication methodologies, begin discussions around justice and equity and urban greening, and - as a bonus we enjoyed sunshine, tasty pastries, parks, green roofs, and historic buildings.



Day 1

With a warm welcome and open discussion with Paris, Deputy Mayor Christophe Najdovski started our exchange with a discussion of the city's ambitious efforts to transform itself into a 'garden city'. He highlighted how Paris is reclaiming streets and rooftops for green spaces in response to growing public demand for a more liveable environment. *"Our motto is that we are trying to green the city everywhere we can,"* he emphasised. A [successful referendum](#) approved the pedestrianisation and greening of a further 500 streets by 2030, reinforcing Paris' leadership in urban planning and biodiversity regulation.

A group of people are gathered around a table in a workshop setting. They are looking at a presentation screen on the left, which displays text about 'Green City' and 'Green City'. The screen also shows a small graphic of a green city. The people are engaged in a discussion, with some looking at documents on the table. The table is covered with various items, including papers, a pen, and some food containers. The background features a wall with several framed images of green plants and a small shelf with a plant.



Term	Meaning	Examples
<i>Impact / Priority</i>	<i>The overarching change you aim to achieve</i>	1) <i>Increase in biodiversity</i> 2) <i>Improving air quality</i>
<i>Outcome / Objective & Targets</i>	<i>A specific, measurable change contributing to the priority</i>	1) <i>More butterflies in parks (X more by Y date)</i> 2) <i>Reduction in respiratory diseases (X % fewer cases by date Y)</i>
<i>Output / Actions</i>	<i>Concrete measures implemented to achieve the objectives & targets</i>	1) <i>Butterfly friendly habitat created in parks</i> 2) <i>Introduction of zero-emission zones in cities</i>

The following **communication activity** focused on crafting audience-specific messages about indicators and impacts. Participants practiced message development by considering personas and choosing relevant indicators to communicate effectively.

Aïsha, 34-year-old non-binary person who works as a construction worker and loves to build and create.



On a **visit to Chappelle Street**, the City of Paris shared how a lower-income neighbourhood has been transformed through strategic greening, while keeping social housing. The guided tour explored community gardens, green streets, and accessibility improvements, raising questions about preventing gentrification and ensuring urban greening benefits all residents - human, animal, and plant. A **photo essay exercise** accompanied this walk - participants documented urban nature through images and reflections, which will be shared through the project's media channels. Stay tuned to our social media channels where these photo essays will be shared soon.



Day 2



After a warm cup of coffee or tea, UNE Participants reviewed the [Nature Restoration Regulation](#) (NRR) and its implications for cities, as well as the consultation process with National governments related to the development of National Restoration Plans. In a lively 'fishbowl' and breakout group format, cities discussed their experiences with planning and implementing restoration activities and generated input into the UNP+ upcoming policy brief. Specifically, time was spent discussing effective regional and national cooperation, tools and methods for planning and implementing projects, as well as challenges and opportunities to connect UNPs with the NRR.

After a break for lunch in the park at the Garden House, UNE participants regrouped to discuss **participatory governance, action, and indicators**. We started to discuss different aspects of and approaches to justice and equity, and to identify what participatory governance indicators might be relevant for the Greening Cities might work with in the UNP+ project. This is just the beginning!



The day ended with a long walk in "**Parks Through Time**." This tour guided by the City of Paris, compared historic and modern park designs in two parks - Martin Luther King Park and the Batignolles Square. The walk highlighted both successes and setbacks in sustainable urban planning, particularly in balancing green infrastructure with technological feasibility and cultural heritage.



Key learnings



Public demand for liveable green spaces is growing as most Parisians no longer own cars.



Businesses can support green initiatives, but relying on them for public funding is risky and unsustainable. What incentives can ensure businesses contribute fairly without cities becoming dependent on their funding?



Green initiatives are often met with resistance due to lack of awareness, vandalism or social inequality. How can cities engage residents from the outset to ensure long-term public support for urban greening?



Barcelona has shown that urban trees save the city €62 million a year - proving that clear cost-benefit analyses strengthen political support. Standard indicators are essential to measure the economic and environmental benefits of urban nature.



Private investment in urban greening is valuable, but transparent mechanisms are needed to prevent greenwashing. How can cities ensure that private funding really serves the public interest and not corporate image building.



While there are many excellent resources available to cities developing urban nature plans, different terminology can make it difficult to navigate between them. Streamlining vocabulary and raising awareness of common synonyms could improve accessibility and usability.



There are many inspiring examples of urban greening schemes in Paris. The contrast between the urban nature designed by the city and the projects carried out by private contractors was particularly striking - although in some places private contractors also made a successful contribution. As not all cities have their own planning departments, the question arises as to how they can better support private contractors in realising their visions for urban greening.



Community organisations can promote urban greening, but clear rules, such as the Charte Main Verte for community gardens, are needed to ensure that publicly funded green spaces remain accessible to all. Community gardens, although managed by local groups, must remain open to visitors for a certain number of hours each week and cannot function as private spaces.



Paris is investing in studies to help building owners green their buildings. Without financial incentives, cities focus on providing guidance.



Behavior change, incentivisation, and community engagement are critical if we want to create livable, healthy, and thriving urban areas for people and nature - people don't always care, until they are directly affected. There are ways to motivate and incentivise people by identifying what affects them - financial incentives for planting, improving air quality, making spaces beautiful.



One spatial leverage area for greening cities is for cities to work in neighborhoods with social housing.



We need to change policy so that we are creating resilience to prevent crisis, but also to enable flexibility in responding to it. For example, when we invest in planting trees, we need to invest in maintaining and caring for them and consider irrigation mechanisms to not lose the investment.



Defining where nature should be measured is an ongoing debate—city center vs. outskirts. In Mannheim, the city center is 80% sealed mechanisms to not lose the investment.

Interested in more in-depth content?

Presentations from the sessions:

- [Indicators and beyond](#)
- [Communication activities](#)
- [Policy Dialogue on the NRR](#)
- [Participatory Governance Indicators](#)

Further links:

- [Paris' greening activities and biodiversity conservation programme \(video\)](#)
- [Paris' greening activities and biodiversity conservation programme \(photos\)](#)
- [Before and after Paris photo exhibition](#)



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Visual impressions



Figure 1: Bercy Park



Figure 2: Site Visit I - Chapelle Street



Figure 3: Site Visit I – Chapelle Street



Figure 4: Policy Dialogue



Figure 5: Site Visit II - Martin Luther King Park.



Figure 6: Site Visit II - Square des Batignolles