

GPSC Urban Nature Forum

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

9:00 to 16:00

November 6, 2025

Meeting Room Velazquez, Windsor Guanabara Hotel, Rio de Janeiro

Jointly Organized by

Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) - World Bank
International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Briefing Package



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Introduction

The Urban Nature Forum will gather mayors, city representatives, and international partners to explore how cities are integrating nature-based solutions into planning, design, and infrastructure. The Forum will highlight innovative strategies and partnerships that connect biodiversity, resilience, and climate action in the urban context.

The Forum will provide a platform to exchange experiences, identify practical pathways for scaling-up green and blue infrastructure, and strengthen collaboration through the GPSC Urban Nature Network.

For reference, the **full agenda** is provided as **Annex 1**. The list of participating cities and organizations is provided in Annex 2.

Venue and Time

09:00 to 16:00, November 6, Windsor Guanabara Hotel, Room Velázquez,
Address: Avenida Presidente Vargas- Centro 392, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, Brazil

Languages

English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (simultaneous interpretation provided)
Please arrive between **08:45 and 08:55**

Opening Session (09:00–09:15)

The session will be opened by Mr. Ming Zhang, Global Director for the Urban, Resilience and Land Global Department of the World Bank, followed by a brief presentation on GPSC's urban nature program by Ms. Xueman Wang, Program Manager of the GPSC, and remarks by Alope Barnwal, Thematic Lead of the GEF Secretariat.

Session 1 – Rethinking the Built Environment – 90 mins (09:15–10:45)

Description

The session will discuss innovative strategies adopted by cities that integrate nature into land use planning, public spaces, and urban fabric. It will demonstrate how cities are shifting from the conventional “grey” built environment to “green” infrastructure, embracing pathways to achieve low-carbon futures, greater resilience, and shared prosperity.

Arrangement

The session includes presentations of good city practice followed by round table discussions:

- **Presentation of city practice (20 MIN):** Curitiba, Montreal, Nairobi, and Ningbo

Each presenter will have five minutes to present one of the most innovative strategies or policies that integrates nature into land use planning, highlighting the following:

- What is this policy or strategy?
- What are the impacts?
- Why is it successful (or what advice you can give to other cities)

Strictly five minutes for each speaker. Speakers may use 1 to 3 slides to support their talk. The PPT must be sent to the GPSC team by November 3 at the latest.

- **Roundtable discussion among cities and participants (60MIN)**

This session is intended to be a dialogue and an exchange among the participants. After some reflections by the two discussants, the moderator will open the floor for discussions, which is organized in two rounds:

Round 1:

- **What are the biggest challenges – list the top 3 challenges, for cities to incorporate “green” and “blue” infrastructure into grey infrastructure?**

Round 2:

- **What are the key “ingredients” for making this shift successful, including what support is needed for cities**

We request that each participant prepare your insight and suggestions in advance and share them with other cities. No PPT will be used for this segment. Since we have a large number of participants, we encourage each of you to participate in the discussions.

For each round, city representatives will be first invited to share their views and then open the floor for other participants.

Session 2 – Scaling Up Green and Resilient Infrastructure through Multistakeholder Collaboration (11:15–12:30)

Description

The Urban Nature Network brings together planners, architects, scientists, engineers, financiers, and city leaders to define a shared vision for scaling up nature-positive urban solutions.

Arrangement

Each organization is invited to share its perspectives on how to build a shared vision and common strategies to promote nature-positive urban development, especially how its initiatives can contribute to the Urban Nature Network and support cities in pursuing this agenda. No PPT will be used, and each speaker has a maximum of 3 minutes.

UNEP, ICLEI, C40, WRI, IFLA, Urban-Hub, AIPH, EBRD, IADB, DBSA

After interventions from the organizations, Cities participants are invited to reflect and comment on:

- With many initiatives around the world, from the perspectives of cities, what would be an efficient way to channel the support to cities?

Session 3 – Unlocking Financing for Resilient and Green Urban Infrastructure (14:00–16:00)

Description:

This interactive session will highlight how cities and financial institutions (FI) collaborate to design and finance green and resilient urban infrastructure. Through short, dynamic City–FI presentations, the session will showcase real-world projects, innovative financing approaches, and scalable models.

Format:

- **Opening remarks (5 min)** – Moderator introduces objectives.
- **Presentations by FIs (20 min)** – IFC and EBRD to present market trends and financing experiences.
- **City–FI paired presentations (60 min)** – 5 pairs, 10 minutes each.
 - *City representative*: Overview of project (6 min).
 - *FI representative*: Description of support and lessons (4 min).
- **Interactive discussion (30 min)** – Open dialogue with all participants.
- **Closing reflections (5 min)** – Moderator wraps up.

Instructions:

- Each participating FI — IFC, IBRD, EBRD, IADB, and DBSA — will invite one partner city to jointly present a green and resilient infrastructure project.
- Cities participating in the paired presentations will be **contacted in advance** by the GPSC team to coordinate content and pairing.
- Cities are invited to prepare a short presentation **highlighting a past or planned project**, while FI representatives will complement the presentation with remarks on how the institution has supported (for past projects) or plans to support (for upcoming projects) the city through project preparation, implementation, or financing. The FI can also draw on and share experiences from elsewhere.
- Projects may focus on **climate adaptation, resilience, and nature-based solutions, as well as innovative financing structures**.
- Each presenting city representative will have **6 minutes**, using a **shared slide deck** with their FI partner.
- Please focus your remarks on **key project objectives, financing structure, and lessons learned**.
- **A one-slide PowerPoint template will be provided** to facilitate preparation and ensure consistency across presentations
- Other representatives are invited to actively participate in the open discussion segment.

Resources to Be Shared in Advance:

- City presentation guidance and template

Annex 1. Agenda

Thursday, November 6 – URBAN NATURE FORUM

Venue: Windsor Hotel

Address: Av. Atlântica, 656 - Leme, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 22010-000, Brazil

TIME	OPENING SESSION
9:00-9:15 (15 MIN)	<p><u>Opening Remarks</u></p> <p>Ming Zhang, Global Director, Urban, Resilience and Land, World Bank Group</p> <p>Presentation on Urban Nature Program</p> <p><u>Remarks by the GEF Secretariat</u></p> <p>Aloke Barnwal, Thematic Lead, Urban and Infrastructure, GEF</p>
SESSION 1: Rethinking the Built Environment	
9:15- 10:45 (90 MIN)	<p>The session will discuss innovative strategies adopted by cities that integrate nature into land use planning, public spaces, and urban fabric. It will demonstrate how cities are shifting from the conventional “grey” built environment to “green” infrastructure, embracing pathways to achieve low-carbon futures, greater resilience, and shared prosperity.</p> <p>Presentation of city practice: Curitiba, Montreal, Nairobi and Ningbo <i>(TBC - 5 mins per speaker)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presenters will be invited to share an innovative strategy or policy example that integrates nature into urban land use planning <p>Roundtable discussion among cities and participants</p> <p>This session will start with reflections by the discussants. The floor is then open to all the participants to exchange their views, organized in two rounds on two related topics:</p> <p>Round 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the biggest challenges – list the top 3 challenges, for cities to incorporate “green” and “blue” infrastructure into grey infrastructure? <p>Round 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the key “ingredients” for making this shift successful, including what support is needed for cities

<p>10:45-11:15</p>	<p>For each round, city representatives will be first invited to share their views and then open the floor for other participants. This is a moderated interactive exchange. No PPT will be used. A briefing package will be sent out to each city and organization to facilitate the discussion. An initial list of the roundtable discussion is included in this agenda.</p> <p>Conclusions and summary by the moderator</p> <p>Coffee Break</p>
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SESSION 2: Scaling Up Green and Resilient Infrastructure through Multistakeholder Collaboration

<p>11:15-12:30 (75 MINS)</p>	<p>This session brings perspectives of urban planners, architects, scientists, engineers, financiers, and other key stakeholders on urban nature. It will demonstrate the importance of establishing a shared vision across stakeholders promoted through the GPSC’s Urban Nature Network.</p> <p>Interventions by organizations (35 mins)</p> <p>UNEP, ICLEI, C40, WRI, IFLA, Urban-Hub, AIPH, EBRD, IADB, DBSA</p> <p><i>Each speaker will be invited to share their perspectives on the role in building a common strategy to scale up green infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>(3 mins each speaker)</i></p> <p>Discussion with cities (30 mins)</p> <p>Cities participants are invited to reflect and comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With many initiatives around the world, from the perspectives of cities, what would be an efficient way to channel the support to cities? <p>Conclusion and summary by the moderator (5 mins)</p>
<p>12:30-14:00</p>	<p><i>Lunch Break</i></p>

SESSION 3: Unlocking Financing for Resilient and Green Urban Infrastructure

<p>14:00-16:00 (120 MINS)</p>	<p>This interactive session will highlight how cities and financial institutions (FI) collaborate to design and finance green and resilient urban infrastructure. Through short, dynamic City–FI presentations, the session will showcase real-world projects, innovative financing approaches, and scalable models.</p>
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Opening Remarks by Moderator (5 mins)

Presentations by FIs (20 mins)

- IFC and EBRD: Market trends and project examples of sustainability-linked debt instruments.

City-FI Joint presentations (60 mins)

Each participating FI — IFC, IBRD, EBRD, IADB, and DBSA will invite one partner city to jointly present a green and resilient infrastructure project. The session will be designed as an interactive dialogue between the city and the FI team, showcasing collaboration and lessons learned.

Cities are invited to prepare a short presentation highlighting a past or planned project, while FI representatives will complement the presentation with remarks on how the institution has supported (for past projects) or plans to support (for upcoming projects) the city through project preparation, implementation, or financing. The FI can also draw on and share experiences from elsewhere. A one-slide PowerPoint template will be provided to facilitate preparation and ensure consistency across presentations.

Projects may focus on climate adaptation, resilience, and nature-based solutions, as well as innovative financing structures.

- 5 FI–City pairs each delivering a 10-minute joint presentation:
 - City Representative: Overview of a green/resilient project - past or planned. (6 min)
 - FI Representative: Description of FI’s support (e.g., advisory, preparation, financing) and reflections on lessons or scalability. (4 min)

Interactive Discussion (30 mins)

Open dialogue with all participants

Closing Reflections (5 mins)

Closing remarks

16:00-
16:05

Annex 2. List of Cities and Organizations

List of Cities *

1. Barranquilla
2. Belize City
3. Bogota
4. Brazzaville
5. Bulawayo
6. Cali
7. Castries
8. Cebu
9. Copenhagen
10. Curitiba
11. Douala IV
12. Glasgow
13. Guatemala City
14. Harare
15. Joe Gqabi
16. Johannesburg
17. Konya
18. Lima
19. Lo Espejo
20. Manaus
21. Mendoza
22. Mexico City
23. Montreal
24. Nairobi
25. Ningbo
26. Toronto
27. Novi Sad
28. Panama City
29. Placencia
30. Pointe Noire
31. Quezon City
32. Samborondon
33. San Pedro Town
34. Santiago
35. Sao Paolo
36. Seattle
37. Sofia
38. Thulamela
39. Toamasina
40. Ulaanbaatar
41. Vhembe
42. Zrenjanin

List of Organizations

- AIPH (International Association of Horticultural Producers)
- C40 (C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group)
- Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association
- DBSA (Development Bank of Southern Africa)
- EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)
- GEF Secretariat (Global Environment Facility Secretariat)
- ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability)
- IDB (Inter-American Development Bank)
- IFC (International Finance Corporation)
- IFLA (International Federation of Landscape Architects)
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)
- UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)
- Urban-Hub (Urban Hub Network / Platform)
- WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development)
- World Bank (The World Bank Group)
- WRI (World Resources Institute)

* (as of October 22)