

**World Economic Forum: Davos 2025 #WEF25**

## **Bridging the Gap: How to Unlock Investment in Urban Biodiversity for Global Cities**

**Nature&People Foundation presents an innovative mechanism to promote public-private partnerships for nature-based solutions in urban environments**

**Davos, 22nd January 2025**

The Nature&People Foundation today introduces an innovative financing mechanism, the Urban Biodiversity Standard (UBS), at the World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos. The UBS underpins the creation of Urban Biodiversity Credits (UBC), designed to unlock investment in urban biodiversity globally.

The UBS has been developed by the Nature&People Foundation with the support of a multidisciplinary team, including lawyers led by Mishcon de Reya, scientists led by the University of Seville, and public policy experts. This team has been coordinated by Evertree, an innovation hub.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2025 identifies biodiversity loss and extreme weather events as major long term threats to the planet, both of them very relevant to cities. Urban areas are expected to house around 70% of the world's population by 2050.

To better understand these challenges, the Foundation has commissioned Evertree and AG Forest to conduct a comprehensive report examining the impact of urbanization on biodiversity loss and the intensification of the heat island effect in twelve major global cities. The cities analyzed include: New York, London, Madrid, Washington D.C., Nairobi, Shanghai, Sydney, Buenos Aires, Medellín, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos and Sao Paulo.

Key findings reveal that over the last 20 years rapid urbanization in the cities under study has brought a decline in green urban areas and as a direct consequence an increase of 24% of the heat island effect, which means that these cities are 2.5°C warmer than 20 years ago. Biodiversity loss further aggravates social fragmentation and compounds inequalities, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable urban solutions.

With the world surpassing 1.5°C of warming in 2024 for the first time, nature-based solutions (NbS) are increasingly recognized as essential for climate adaptation. According to global technology intelligence firm ABI Research, public and private investment in green urban infrastructure in 2022 was \$606 billion across a wide range of green assets. However, current funding levels fall far short of what is needed to meet global climate and biodiversity goals.

To bridge this gap, innovative solutions are required. The UBS sets out the rules for the development of UBCs, creating a transparent and efficient market for biodiversity credits.

Juan Costa Climent, Chairman of the Nature&People Foundation, commented: “I passionately believe that investing in urban biodiversity is the most cost-effective way to address many of today’s global challenges. I am confident that UBCs will encourage much-needed investment and improve the quality of life for city dwellers around the world.”

The UBC is a digital or non-digital asset representing an increase in vegetation intended to deliver ecosystem services that are critical to address specific challenges in a particular city or urban area. One credit is generated annually for every 100 m<sup>2</sup> of new vegetation cover, for a maximum of 20 years. This mechanism reflects a continuous contribution to biodiversity enhancement and provides a pathway for private investment in urban nature initiatives.

The sale of UBCs can generate additional revenue for cities, helping governments reduce fiscal deficits. Moreover, UBCs can be used as collateral for financing, improving access to loans or enabling the issuance of sustainability-linked and green bonds backed by these credits.

The Foundation is currently piloting two projects in Formentera and Rio de Janeiro, with the support of Balearia and Conservation Collective, and plans to expand the scope of pilot initiatives in 2025 to include additional cities and regions.

On February 18th, 2025, the Nature&People Foundation will launch a consultation process on the Urban Biodiversity Standard (UBS). This inclusive initiative invites participation from cities, researchers, project developers, investors, and biodiversity market players. The consultation will refine UBS’s rigorous, science-based approach, ensuring the standard supports targeted solutions to urban challenges like air pollution, flooding, and the heat island effect.

## **Notes for Editors**

### **About the Nature&People Foundation**

Nature&People Foundation is a not-for-profit organization based in the United Kingdom, dedicated to promoting urban biodiversity by connecting nature conservation with urban development. Through fostering public-private partnerships and establishing a biodiversity credit market, the Foundation positions biodiversity as a core component of sustainable urban development.

The UBS was made possible thanks to the leadership of the Foundation's board members Antonio Beltrán García, Jeremy Eppel, Juan Costa Climent, and Teodoro García-Egea, as well as the dedicated work of Sara Eppel, Jimena Villamizar, and Alexander Rhodes. The methodology combines in-depth knowledge of urban biodiversity, cutting-edge scientific research, and advanced satellite detection techniques, resulting in an Urban Biodiversity Credits portfolio designed to attract private investment for funding urban nature initiatives.

### **Evertree**

EverTree is an innovation hub and consulting firm established under Spanish law. It brings together a multidisciplinary team with expertise in ecology, biology, engineering, economics, banking, and law. EverTree's mission is to develop biodiversity-based solutions that create value for cities, businesses, and society, driving sustainable progress and fostering innovation in urban and ecological systems

For more information or to arrange a personal meeting, please contact:

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