

8. Marseille “Ville nature”: bringing nature back to cool the city

The Nature in the City Department aims to support a change towards a greener and more ecological city, therefore more sustainable and resilient to climate change by 2026, but also to move forward on the path to 100 climate-neutral cities. The objective is to increase the green in the city and create more shaded areas and green spaces as islands of freshness.

Tags: Renaturation strategic plan, Urban cooling, Urban biodiversity, Green spaces.

CHALLENGES ADDRESSED:

- **Long but infrequent waterings** that moisten the soil in depth rather than on the surface
- **Urban Heat Island effect:** due to human activities and the concentration of buildings and infrastructure.

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- **Modernize the management of green spaces** to improve the efficiency and sustainability of green space management.
- **Promote urban biodiversity** creating habitats that support a thriving urban ecosystem.
- **Educate and raise awareness among citizens.**
- **Provide more shaded areas** and create new atmospheres for city dwellers, to offer relief from urban heat, improve the aesthetic appeal of the city, and enhance the quality of life.
- **Use Infiltrate rainwater to benefit plants.**
- **Promote deep growth of plant roots** to provide better resistance of plants to drought episodes.

+ FACTS

Project type: Direction nature plan

Partners: Marseille city council

Beneficiaries: Marseille municipality

Date: 2020 - Ongoing

+ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Marseille's urban cooling strategy focuses on the preservation and revitalization of green spaces, including parks, urban gardens, and green corridors. By implementing a Renaturation Strategic Plan since 2020, the *Marseille Ville Nature*, the city has worked to restore nearly 12 hectares of new green areas, and 26 parks and gardens newly created or renovated, enhancing biodiversity and providing recreational spaces. To effectively implement those actions, the city council trained gardeners, technicians and engineers in parks and gardens in naturalist skills and having them carry out botanical surveys to improve and adapt their skills and align with the strategic lines of the strategy. Besides, the Direction of Nature in the City (DNV) organizes event-based

initiatives that actively involve citizens in the implementation of the project. These efforts aim to mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect, reduce flooding, and improve the city's resilience to climate change. Furthermore, the city aims to connect with partners, especially those in the Mediterranean region who share its aspirations for new societal models: sustainable, human-scale cities that rebuild the connection between citizens and nature.

The main objective is to integrate biodiversity and natural spaces into the urban environment, creating green areas accessible to everyone and promoting harmonious coexistence between the city and its natural ecosystem.

Among the project's outstanding actions are:

- The creation and expansion of parks and gardens.
 - The renaturalization of certain urban areas.
 - The protection and promotion of local biodiversity, including native flora and fauna species.
 - Raising public awareness through educational and participatory initiatives.
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+ IMPACTS AND RESULTS

- **The city of Marseille has created or renovated 26 large parks with 28 spaces**, from 2020, to offer deep breathing and biodiversity to the residents of Marseille.
 - **Creation of 300 natural urban wastelands** in the city so that nature can recover its right and more plants, less asphalt, for Marseille school environments.
 - **Saving up to 66% of water** in municipal parks and gardens through the smart irrigation.
 - **Creation of workshops, consultations, surveys** and questionnaires to reflect on the Natural City with its inhabitants.
 - **Creation of new collective Gardens** that represent new spaces of coexistence and biodiversity that allow everyone to discover the pleasures of gardening.
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