

Final Conference: Guiding Cities to Deliver Regenerative Urban Transformation

10 February 2026 | Hybrid
spinPLACE | Bankowa 5 St. | Katowice



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the European Union

Agenda

TIME	SESSION
08:30 – 09:00	REGISTRATION & NETWORKING COFFEE
09:00 – 09:30	OPENING SESSION Welcome speeches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcin Krupa – Mayor of the Katowice City • Darko Fercej – UPSURGE Project Coordinator, E-Institute • Claire Kwiatkowski – Project Officer, European Commission
09:30 – 10:45	SESSION 1 – SETTING THE SCENE: FROM POLICY VISIONS TO CITY ACTION: ADDRESSING THE URBAN REGENERATION CHALLENGE Objective for this session: <i>Present and discuss the current policy landscape related to regenerative transition of cities, the emerging obligations, opportunities and challenges for cities related to the EU Nature Restoration Law</i> <u>Keynote:</u> Paola Lepori , Head of Biodiversity & Nature-based Solutions team at ICLEI Europe <u>Session moderation:</u> Priscila Franco Steier , ICLEI Europe Discussion Panel: Issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why cities must act now? • How can cities most effectively respond to the environmental/climate and related spatial and social challenges of regenerative urban transformations? • What are the biggest barriers cities face in responding to these challenges: financial, regulatory, organisational, or social? Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paola Lepori, ICLEI Europe • Martin Grisel, Director at EUKN (European Urban Knowledge Network) • Małgorzata Bartyna-Zielińska, City Council of Wrocław • Helena Jadwiszczok-Molencka, the Silesian Marshal's Office

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10:45 – 11:15 COFFEE-BREAK

**11:15 – 13:00 SESSION 2 – INNOVATIONS FOR DELIVERING REGENERATIVE URBAN
TRANSFORMATION: KEY UPSURGE ACHIEVEMENTS TO ADDRESS THE CITIES' CHALLENGES**

Objective for this session: *Highlight the key innovative achievements developed and tested under the UPSURGE project that may help cities effectively address the challenges of strategic planning, implementation and monitoring of regenerative actions*

Introduction:

Key challenges of the Regenerative Urban Transformations addressed by the UPSURGE project – **Darko Fercej**, E-Institute

5 cluster presentations:

- **UPSURGE innovations to support fit-for-purpose NBS design** – Thomas Martinez, The Tarrasense Conditioning Association [LEITAT]
- **UPSURGE innovations in support of NBS & communities engagement/society relations** – Christina Haderer & Janine Maier, University of Passau [UPASS]
- **UPSURGE innovations for fit-for-purpose NBS implementation and upscaling** – Jennifer McKinley & Bakul Budhiraja, Queen's University Belfast [QUB], Simon Elliott, University of Antwerp
- **UPSURGE innovations for a holistic NBS environmental sensing and effectiveness monitoring** – Ronald Chenú Abente Acosta, Opencontent Società Cooperativa [OC]
- **UPSURGE innovations to support NBS strategic planning to enable regenerative transitions in cities** – Tadej Zuman, POR Consult, d.o.o./GCE

13:00 – 13:30 LUNCH

**13:30 – 14:30 SESSION 3 – REGENERATIVE INNOVATION IN PRACTICE: SPOTLIGHTS FROM THE UPSURGE
PILOT CITIES**

Session moderation: Jennifer McKinley & Bakul Budhiraja [QUB]

City Reflections on Key Innovative NbS and Highlights in Engagement Process

- Maribor – Matjaz Fras
- Katowice – Lech Marek
- Budapest – Enikő Korpos
- Belfast – Debbie Caldwell
- Breda – Coen de Nijs

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14:30 – 16:00 **SESSION 4 – SCALING NATURE-BASED INNOVATION ACROSS EUROPE**

Session moderation: **Janine Maier & Christina Haderer [UPASS]**

Navigating Sustainability and Scalability: Insights from UPSURGE Comparative Assessments and Simulations – **Jennifer McKinley & Bakul Budhiraja [QUB]**

Patras as an upscaling case of UPSURGE innovations – **Konstadinos Konstadakopoulos / Vasilios Kantzaris [PATRAS]**

Discussion Panel with UPSURGE demo cities:

Overcoming Challenges in Upscaling Nature-Based Solutions in Cities:

Representatives of Cities:

- Maribor – Matjaž Fras
- Katowice – Edyta Sierka
- Budapest – Éva Beleznay
- Belfast – Debbie Caldwell
- Breda – D.J. Coort

Topics: *Key Challenges in design and implementation phases and Lessons learnt from deployment and engagement* –> how to upscale NBS based on UPSURGE Learnings

16:00 – 16:15 **COFFEE-BREAK**

16:15 – 16:45 **SESSION 5 – CONNECTING THE DOTS: THE EU REGENERATIVE LIGHTHOUSE & URBANBYNATURE”**

Launch of the UrbanByNature Services Portfolio as the UPSURGE legacy – **Priscila Franco Steier, ICLEI Europe**

16:45 – 17:15 **WRAP UP AND CLOSING REMARKS**

Key takeaways by **Darko Fercej** – UPSURGE Project Coordinator, E-Institute

Closing Remarks – **Franceso Molinari**, Advisory Board Member of the UPSURGE project and specialist in R&D and innovation policy, innovative public procurement, and living labs

17:15 – 18:30 **NETWORKING**