

Final Conference: Guiding Cities to Deliver Regenerative Urban Transformation

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



Agenda

TIME	SESSION
08:30 – 09:00	REGISTRATION & NETWORKING COFFEE
09:00 – 09:30	<p>OPENING SESSION</p> <p>Welcome speeches:</p> <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	<p>SESSION 1 – SETTING THE SCENE: FROM POLICY VISIONS TO CITY ACTION: ADDRESSING THE URBAN REGENERATION CHALLENGE</p> <p>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></p> <p><u>Keynote:</u> Paola Lepori, Head of Biodiversity & Nature-based Solutions team at ICLEI Europe</p> <p><u>Session moderation:</u> Priscila Franco Steier, ICLEI Europe</p> <p>Discussion Panel:</p> <p>Issues discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why cities must act now?</i> • <i>How can cities most effectively respond to the environmental/climate and related spatial and social challenges of regenerative urban transformations?</i> • <i>What are the biggest barriers cities face in responding to these challenges: financial, regulatory, organisational, or social?</i> <p>Panellists:</p> <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 – **Francesco 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**