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# Nature-positive urban pilot projects on biodiversity in Costa Rica



**Improving framework conditions and measures to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, functioning ecosystems and pandemic prevention.**

## Framework conditions

Costa Rica ranks among the 25 most biodiverse countries in the world and is recognized for its nature conservation commitments and leadership. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic recession led one out of every eight households into poverty in 2020. Consequently, the pressure and incidence of extractive and unsustainable uses of natural resources increased.

A recent expert assessment has raised how investment in decarbonization could, in the short term, offset the persistent impacts that COVID-19 pandemic has had on employment and economic activity<sup>1</sup>. The vision of the National Decarbonization Plan is aligned with the vision of a nature-positive recovery and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Throughout the development of nature-positive recovery pilot measures, the Global Project "Design and first implementation steps of the Global Biodiversity Framework" (BioFrame), financed through the IKI initiative of the Federal Ministry for

the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), aims to develop solutions that improve urban well-being and contribute to conserving urban biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Costa Rica's Greater Metropolitan Area (GMA).

## Project approach

The GMA covers about 4% of the surface of Costa Rica, and approximately 60% of the Costa-Rican population lives there. The GMA is, therefore, where many of the economic sectors contributing to the country's GDP are concentrated.

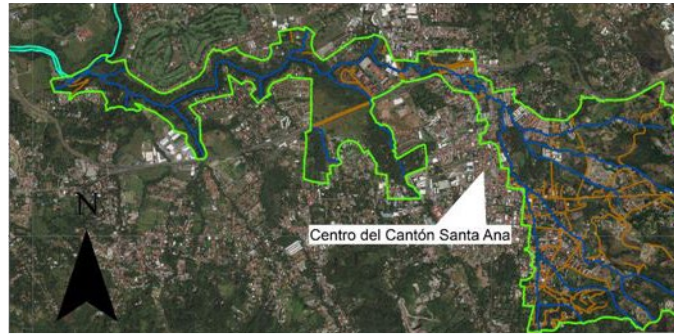
The pandemic had a greater impact in communities already experiencing high social vulnerability prior to 2020, most of them concentrated in the GMA.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD-Costa Rica), 2022. Una recuperación verde del COVID-19 en Costa Rica.

The pilot projects are being implemented through the Urban Green and Biodiverse Fund (FRUV, by its Spanish initials) which is operated through a partnership among BioFrame, the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy and *Fundecooperación para el Desarrollo Sostenible*, a Costa Rican foundation for sustainable development. The FRUV aims to support initiatives that promote green spaces within Costa Rica's Greater Metropolitan Area.

As a starting point, BioFrame developed a training workshop with the purpose of familiarizing participants with interlinkages between the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the necessity of a nature-positive economic development, and particularly to promote the implementation of urban biodiversity concepts and green businesses through small productive projects that contribute to the family income. 27 people (18 women and 9 men) representing 16 different entities, including 7 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and 9 civil society organizations, were trained over the course of two days.

After the introductory workshop, 18 grassroots organizations and universities applied for a project to receive a financial contribution, of which **three** were selected for implementation. The beneficiaries of these projects will be trained in 2023 to develop and implement their green business plans.



### Reforestation and potting soil production at Alto de Las Palomas Interurban Bio-corridor

Implemented by **Las Cabañas Housing Cooperative**, who manages a housing project and protects a micro basin with the aim to consolidate a new urban bio-corridor.

- **Protection of the micro-basin and restoring connectivity. The goal is to grow 540 plants and 400 trees during the first year.**
- **Production of 300 kg of potting soil** for forestation sites and commercialization that will employ a **local women association.**



### Urban Natural Trail of Wellness

Implemented by **La Libertad Park Foundation**, a national NGO that has established and manages one of the biggest urban parks which focuses on ecosystem restoration and is recognized as a space for social inclusion.

- Establishment of a recreational and educational trail that enhance the **development of guidance services** and other visitors related services by local entrepreneurs, MSMEs, associations and organized groups.
- Park visitors (200,000 per year) will be able to experience the trail as a **mechanism to raise awareness about benefits of nature-based solutions.**
- **Safe and constructive spaces for recreation and training** will be provided, especially for young people from vulnerable communities.

### The Green Station

Executed by the **Association of Development of Cipreses**, a community-based road maintenance small company that aims to foster green innovation for road infrastructure.

- **Improving skills**, broaden job opportunities and **income possibilities for 18 families from 3 different communities.**
- Establishment of an **innovative concept of bus station habitat** for pollinators and improvement of the landscape appearance.
- **Citizen awareness** through their interaction with nature in daily use spaces.





The business idea initially proposed by the implementing organizations is being elaborated through a co-design process accompanied by technical support that is complimentary to the implementation of the FRUV. As part of this process, potential partners for each project will also be identified to promote their involvement in the development of the project's business plan and enhance the consolidation of the business proposal.

It is expected that besides contributing to biodiversity conservation, all initiatives will contribute to job and income generation, thereby serving as an example for other institutions. *Fundecooperación* will use the experiences to leverage more funds to support Nature-positive Recovery entrepreneurs. For the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment, these experiences are key to demonstrate the multiple benefits of conserving and sustainably utilizing biodiversity in urban areas and to increase the opportunities of replication and upscaling across the country. In addition, Costa Rica will be supported in incorporating nature-positive elements

into their updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), in alignment with the goals of the new Global Biodiversity Framework. These experiences can be used as a reference during the update process.

### Sources

- [Nature-positive Recovery | Internationale Klimaschutzinitiative \(IKI\) \(international-climate-initiative.com\)](#)
- [Biodiversity relevant jobs | Internationale Klimaschutzinitiative \(IKI\) \(international-climate-initiative.com\)](#)
- [Fundación Fundecooperación para el Desarrollo Sostenible](#)
- ACCION Clima III: [NDC implementation Costa Rica and regional knowledge exchange](#)

Promote the implementation of **urban biodiversity concepts** and **green businesses** with financing potential.



Training of **27** people

on nature positive economic development in urban and peri-urban areas: 18 women and 9 men, representing 16 different entities.



Positive impact on **human and environmental health** and **economic development**.



**Citizen awareness** through their interaction with nature in daily use spaces.



**Income generation and job creation** as well as serving as an example for other **institutions**.



#### Urban Natural Trail of Wellness:

Protection of the micro-basin and restoring connectivity. **540 plants and 400 trees** will be planted.

#### The Green Station:

Creation of a **pollinator habitat** and improved landscape. Income improved for 18 families.

#### Reforestation and potting soil production at Alto de Las Palomas

**Interurban Bio-corridor:** Ecosystem restoration on a private land section of an urban biocorridor.

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