



POLICY BRIEF 05

## Green corridors to connect urban ecosystems



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### Insights from São Paulo's Municipal Plan for Protected Areas, Green Areas and Open Spaces

This policy brief presents contributions from the city of São Paulo, Brazil. The city is pursuing the establishment of green corridors as a strategy to reverse the negative effects of urbanisation processes. This brief presents the **Municipal Plan for Protected Areas, Green Areas and Open Spaces (PLANPAVEL, 2022)** and a pilot project carried out as part of the plan. Learnings underscore the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration for an effective governance structure and the role communication strategies play in fostering public awareness and support.

#### Key Messages

- Green corridors represent an important evolution in the development of policies for the planning, design and management of green areas, as they are potentially low cost and can in some instances be rapidly implemented, delivering many benefits.
- Green corridors are more than fauna and flora corridors, but also instruments for environmental education, showcasing local environmental heritage, and raising residents' awareness of nature within the city.



IMAGE: São Paulo City Council

### Connecting urban ecosystems via Nature-Based Solutions

Green corridors represent an important addition to policies addressing the planning, design and management of green areas. They are potentially low cost and can in some instances be rapidly implemented, delivering many benefits. However, realising

their potential benefits requires intentional and politically strategic action. In São Paulo, the implementation of green corridors was achieved through an integrated participatory methodology designed to guarantee their social and environmental relevance.





## The participative design of PLANPAVEL

Planpavel was the result of multiple participatory workshops conducted with technicians from different City Hall departments. Specific thematic Working Groups focused on the axis of protected areas, concepts and typologies, governance and management, legislation, related projects, participatory process and communication were articulated in an Inter-Secretariat Working Group (GTI, in Portuguese), coordinated by the Municipal Secretariat for Green and Environment (SVMA), with technical cooperation from the Institute of Energy and Environment at the University of São Paulo (IEE/USP).

The resulting municipal plan's propositions, formulated based on the work of the GTI, was submitted to public consultation through an electronic platform. A collaborative map was also made available to invite and record suggestions for the creation and improvement of parks, squares, and other types of green areas. The final plan proposes, among other measures, the implementation of a network of green corridors of various typologies to promote the connection of different system components and maximise ecosystem services in São Paulo and its metropolitan region.



IMAGE: São Paulo City Council

## Strategic Actions

The PLANPAVEL Action Plan brings together 75 actions, in line with the principles and objectives of the environmental policy and territorial ordering set out in the City's Strategic Master Plan (PDE), aligned with other green plans and the Municipal Climate Action Plan (PlanClima SP). The plan has an implementation horizon of ten years, with actions planned for the short term (2022 to 2024), medium term (2022 to 2027) and long term (2022 to 2032).

The network of corridors is made up of different typologies, which vary according to their predominant objective: Atlantic Forest ecological corridors conserve forest remnants; green corridors foster the interconnection of different types of public or private green areas, ie. different categories of parks; and the pollinator corridors and dark corridors promote biodiversity.



IMAGE: São Paulo City Council



## A pilot project to kick off the Plan's implementation

Currently, SVMA is developing studies for a pilot project to connect the Ciência Park with the Consciência Negra Park. With 72,000 m<sup>2</sup>, this green corridor will not only connect the two parks, but will be an important element in the creation of a regional system of protected green areas, together with Mata Sete Cruzes Park and Guaió Basin Protected Area.

Studies are in progress to create visual communication for the green corridor to show its importance as an environmental heritage of the city. There are plans to show the project to

surrounding schools as a way of publicising the importance of the corridor and gaining further public support.

The resulting green corridor is not only a fauna and flora corridor, but an instrument for environmental education, recognition of the territory and for raising residents' awareness of nature within the city. It is also an opportunity to deepen the integration between SVMA, stakeholders and policymakers in the local context to implement Nature-based Solutions (NbS).



IMAGES: São Paulo City Council

## Policy Recommendations

- Multisectoral collaboration is necessary for successful NbS implementation at the city level, both in terms of knowledge (biology, geography, landscaping, sociology, engineering, architecture, etc.) and institutional representation (Secretariats of Local Government, Environment, Education, etc.).
- Prior to implementation, a series of preliminary meetings among technical groups, with the aim of defining greening guidelines, can help achieve mutual understanding and define shared strategic objectives.
- It is important to establish joint conception processes with local stakeholders through participatory councils and activities, increasing awareness of the environmental and urban importance of green corridors.

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