



# EUROPEAN URBAN RESILIENCE FORUM

## 2024 TOPICAL REPORT 2

### THEMATIC STREAM: WATER RESILIENCE AND THE BLUE ECONOMY IN AND BEYOND THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION



## TOPICS OVERVIEW

The potential of our oceans is vast, but years of exploitation have led them to be devastated. Rising sea levels are causing severe flooding in many European cities, underscoring the urgent need for adaptation. This stream explores water as a core element of urban and regional resilience through four sessions.

Key topics included:

- a. **Concrete regional and local nature and water-based adaptation solutions** to address increasing **droughts** and **floods** in Europe
- b. The need for improved EU, National and regional **policies and regulations on water resilience**
- c. Accelerating the **transition to a blue economy** for the sustainable use of natural assets in the Mediterranean and beyond

## MAIN TAKE-AWAYS

Water resilience responsibilities are often unclear across government levels, underscoring the need for clear accountability. Creating specific roles and building skills within each level of governance is crucial to effectively tackle water resilience issues, foster targeted solutions, and secure suitable funding.

It is important for cities to monitor and collectively leverage the water-focused initiatives promoted across various EU directorates, aligning them toward a unified goal to accelerate water resilience action. Climate services are essential tools for supporting data-driven decision-making and multi-level policy development.

A significant barrier to achieving effective water resilience is the lack of capacity to understand and implement alternative approaches, such as nature-based solutions (NbS). These solutions not only tackle environmental issues but also enhance human well-being through the One Health concept, linking environmental and public health. Projects like [GoGreen Routes](#), [EcoDaLLi](#) and [NBRACER](#) demonstrate how multi-level decision-making and the integration of NbS can improve watershed restoration and bolster climate resilience.

The Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus approach strengthens Nature-based Solutions

(NbS) by highlighting their interconnected benefits across sectors. By integrating science and fostering collaboration, it shows how NbS, like green roofs or wetland restoration, enhance water resilience, biodiversity, and climate adaptation. Projects like [CARDIMED](#), and [MULTISOURCE](#), apply the WEFE nexus to address sustainability challenges holistically.

Policy is more than a brief of scientific recommendations; it should be driven by everyone. However, without building capacities to understand the challenges and recognize the potential of alternative approaches, such as nature-based solutions, this shift is difficult to achieve.

Water resilience is a societal responsibility that demands long-term vision and inclusive, evidence-based communication. It requires both top-down and bottom-up approaches, engaging cities as communities, not just authorities. Capacity-building efforts should span across stakeholders, bridging gaps and breaking down silos to foster effective adaptation.

In light of increasing water-related disasters, there is a pressing need for improved EU, national, and regional policies on water resilience. Stakeholders have urged the European Commission to advance the Water Resilience Law, addressing the challenges of transitioning to a sustainable, water-conscious future amidst conflicting demands.



## EXAMPLES FROM CITIES

### BARCELONA

#### Coastal Adaptation Strategy

Barcelona has implemented a comprehensive coastal adaptation strategy including artificial reefs and a monitoring system for beach conditions. The city utilises real-time data from shoreline cameras to manage beach overcrowding and water quality, ensuring resilience against climate change impacts.

### MUNICIPALITY OF DRAZ

#### EcoDaLLi Project

It focuses on restoring floodplains and wetlands to manage water levels. This green infrastructure project aims to prevent flooding and drought while engaging local communities and businesses for collaborative water management.

### MILAN

#### Master Plan 2030 and Air & Climate Adaptation Plan

These initiatives focus on enhancing resilience against pluvial flooding, extreme winds, and heatwaves by increasing green spaces and improving air quality. Key objectives include creating a healthy, inclusive, and accessible city while ensuring sustainability and participatory governance. The ACP is linked to various strategies and aims to transition from planning to implementation, with projects targeting adaptation and mitigation.

### LAHTI

#### Gogreenroutes

The municipality of Lahti has implemented a 'health forest.' The City is part of the GoGreenRoutes Horizon funded project, which seeks to connect NbS to health. As part of the project, Lahti developed an original NbS, "the health forest", close to the healthcare centre in the Kintterö area. It was co-designed with the medical staff of the healthcare centre, and it supports patients' recovery and aims to strengthen intergenerational connections as well. As such, this NbS is addressing different societal challenges and has various impacts, primarily in terms of health but also in terms of social cohesion and inclusion as well as in terms of citizens engagement via the co-designing process. The success of this project has also inspired the municipality of Lahti to design two "mini health forests" directly in the city centre, to simultaneously improve citizens' health and wellbeing, reduce air pollution, and tackle the urban heat island effect.

### PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR

#### CARDIMED

This climate adaptation initiative in the PACA region focuses on renaturing urban areas, reducing flood risks, and enhancing biodiversity while improving quality of life. Coordinated by SEMI, the project will implement micro-forests and unseal 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of soil to mitigate heat island effects, improve air quality, and provide edible fruits. Green roofs and vegetated pergolas will manage rainwater, while tree planting in parking areas boosts vegetation cover and biodiversity. At the St. Jerome site, green corridors will reduce runoff and connect to a river renaturation project. In St. Charles, green infrastructure will integrate into the renewal of the Marseille railway district. The project will plant 300 fruit trees and reuse 1,500m<sup>3</sup> of water annually. By aligning with PACA's climate plan, this initiative demonstrates scalable solutions for urban resilience and sustainability across the region.





## SESSIONS

- Workshop: [Climate services towards better informed policies and decisions for climate-resilient development](#)
- Workshop: [Rising to the Challenge: Nature-Based Solutions for Water Resilience in Europe](#)
- [SB4. Navigating Forward: Policies for a Water-Resilient Europe](#)
- [PS6. Advancing coastal and water resilience in the EU: encouraging the implementation of multi-level Decision-making frameworks](#)

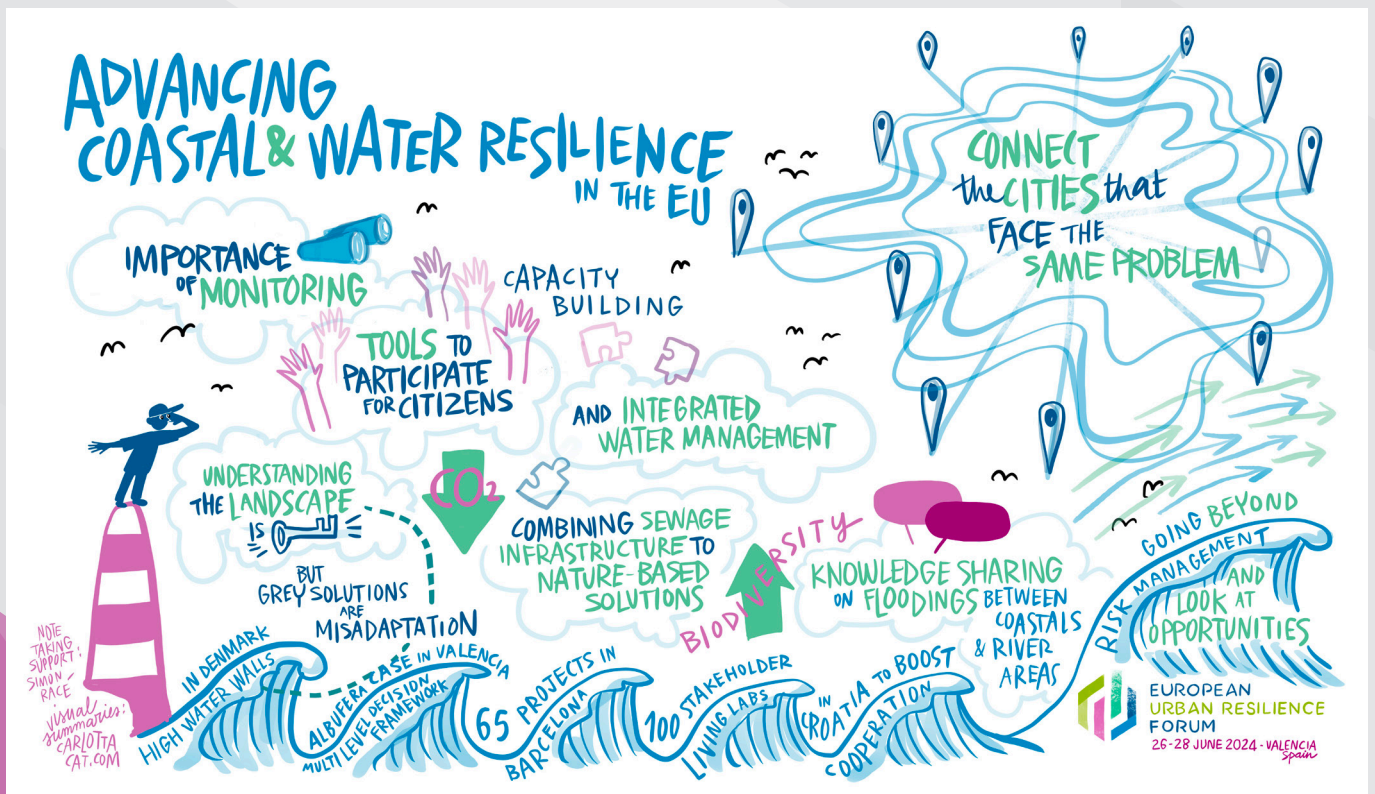


Click here to have a look at all the [EURESFO24 event pictures](#)

## RESOURCES

- Triple A Toolkit: <https://reachout-cities.eu/triple-a-toolkit>
- City hub Climate Stories: <https://reachout-cities.eu/climate-stories>
- Urban Resilience Approach: <https://reachout-cities.eu/urban-resilience>
- Nature-based Solutions for Health: <https://gogreenroutes.eu>
- **CARDIMED** will use **innovative digital tools** for stakeholder engagement, including digital storytelling and an augmented reality mobile app for citizen science. To ensure alignment with community needs, we are conducting citizen focus groups at all demonstration sites.
- **MULTISOURCE**: Co-design Framework: Engaging with the stakeholders on NBS for Water Treatment. [Document available here.](#)

Click here to have a look at all the [EURESFO24 graphic recordings](#)





# EUROPEAN URBAN RESILIENCE FORUM

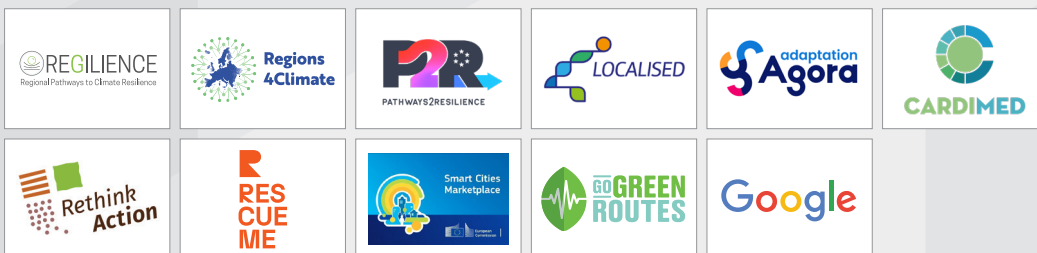
26 - 28 June 2024

Valencia, Spain

## MAIN ORGANISERS



## CO-ORGANISERS



## SUPPORTERS



## IN COOPERATION WITH



## MEDIA PARTNER

