

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 1, AUGUST 2025

COST ACTION 23148 EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO URBAN FORESTRY

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Urban forests have been proposed by European Commission as a strategy to support climate adaptation capacity and sustainable development in the urban areas where over 70% of the EU's population live.

Urban forests produce numerous ecosystem services which reach significant levels when trees reach maturity. Unfortunately, urban trees have an average lifespan of 30 years resulting in failing ecosystems services.

It is therefore essential to approach urban forestry from a sustainable and integrative viewpoint. The current approach is unable to fulfill the strategies of the European Commission due to lack of standardisation and scattering networks. New tools and better integration of different knowledge pools are urgently needed.

The Action will bring together a pan-European network of scientists and stakeholders.

Working Groups:

WG1: Inventory of indicators and assessment methods;

WG2: Urban green space management policies

WG3: Stewardship: building cross-sectoral and inclusive management partnerships;

WG4: Dissemination and promotional materials



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MARCH 10-11, 2025

BRATISLAVA

The General Assembly welcomed 110 participants from across Europe, with 38 attending in person and 72 online. This hybrid meeting marked a significant step forward in promoting collaboration and research in urban forestry.

Day 1: Preparations and Discussions

- Official welcome by Prof. Šajgalík (President, Slovak Academy of Sciences) and Dr. Michniak (Director, Institute of Geography)

- Presentation and discussion with the Bratislava City Council on the topic "Inventory of Public Greenery in Bratislava"

- Presentation of COST CA23148 goals by Dr. Dieter Anseeuw

Day 2: Lectures and Working Groups discussions

- Prof. Francesco Ferrini (University of Florence): Urban biodiversity for city resilience and climate adaptation

- Dr. Martin Mokoš (University College London): LiDAR, photogrammetry, and satellite imagery for monitoring forests



ACTIONS' PROGRESS

WORKING GROUP 1

The objective of working group 1 is to identify relevant indicators and methods to assess the quality and functioning of urban forests. Our primary quality criteria are to ensure that the indicators and methods are scientifically robust and that we strive towards uniformity and harmonization across EU countries. We also seek to define benchmarks and goals for the different indicators in line the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDGs).

We have started a process to identify indicators and methods for regulating, cultural, supporting and provision ecosystem services delivered by the urban forest, as well as those related to reporting on the current state of urban trees and the urban forest, assessing risks associated with urban trees, and disservices. These categories align with those proposed in Memorandum of Understanding for this Action.

Step 1 in this process is the preparation of an inventory of indicators and methods from the scientific literature for each of our primary categories. Working group 1 has developed an online workbook using Google Sheets to enable ease of completion by many contributors simultaneously, and already has received over 90 entries from working group members.

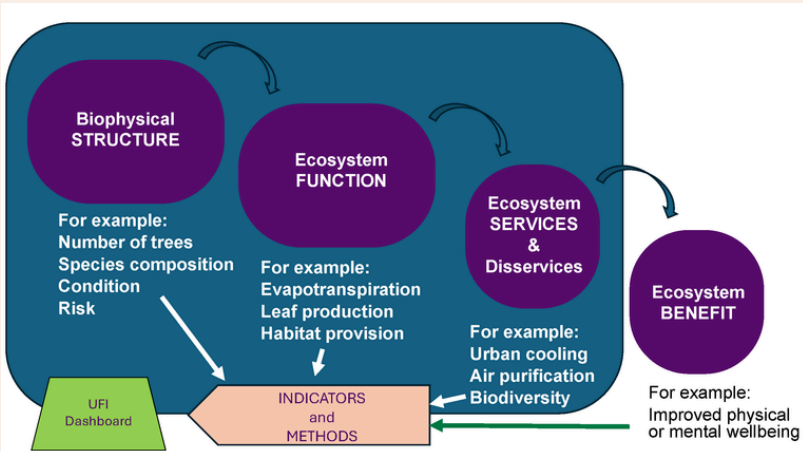
The completion of each category is being overseen by a dedicated leader, and we are most grateful for their dedication to this task:

- Regulating and provision ecosystem services: Associate Professor Alessio Fini, University of Milan, Italy
- Supporting and cultural ecosystem services: Dr Claire Narraway, Research Lead Earthwatch Europe, UK.
- Current state of urban trees and the urban forest: Dr Benno Augustinus, Scientist, WSL, Switzerland.
- Risks and disservices: Associate Professor Zennure Ucar, İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Türkiye.

Step 2 in the process will be a review of the entries in the inventory and a consideration of their suitability against our objective and that of the longer term plan of the Action to create an Urban Forest Index and reporting dashboard on urban forest performance across European cities.

While Steps 1 and 2 will be iterative, with each review leading to the identification of gaps and a plea for new entries and knowledge specific to each gap, we are actively seeking entries to our Inventory ahead of our first review.

If you can add to our Inventory or the next steps of working group 1, please get in touch or sign up via the Cost Action landing page: CA23148 - European Network for the Integrative Approach of Urban Forestry (INTUF) and we look forward to seeing you at a future working group 1 meeting.



Flow diagram based upon the Ecosystem Services Cascade model showing the relationships between urban forest form and condition, and the functions, benefits, and disbenefits they provide, each of which hold potential as indicators on urban forest performance to be reported within an UFI (Urban Forest Index) dashboard of performance.



ACTIONS' PROGRESS

WORKING GROUP 2

As part of COST Action CA23148 INTUF, **Working Group 2** is conducting a comparative analysis of Urban Forest Management Plans (UFMPs) from municipalities across Europe—a key output of our Action. We aim to collect at least 8–10 UFMPs per country by 1 July 2025. Members are encouraged to reach out to researchers, city officials, or relevant networks to obtain UFMPs and upload them to the [Drive](#) and [Excel sheet](#) directly. If non-members from municipalities wish to contribute, please ask them to email the files to COST.intuf@gmail.com. Your input is essential for balanced representation and the success of this study.



WORKING GROUP 3

Working Group 3 Stewardship: building cross-sectoral and inclusive management partnerships.

WG3 goal is to seek processes to give the stakeholders not only information but also the tools to share their opinion and be aware of the necessity of their participation.

We will focus in how to access to the stakeholders through different communication levels, first by analysing the common challenges in effective communication with the stakeholders, then helping in the development of tools that can construct this communication, proposing an structure for an active public participation of stake holders in urban forestry and finalizing by identifying the challenges in capacity building and different barriers for implementation.

WORKING GROUP 4

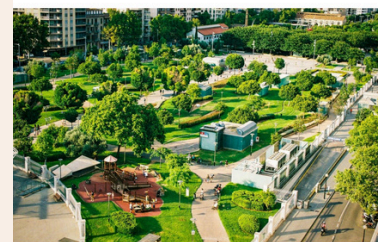
Working Group 4 has finalized the Dissemination Strategy for COST Action CA23148 INTUF, setting a clear framework to ensure our research findings reach and influence a broad spectrum of stakeholders — from policymakers and practitioners to researchers, NGOs, and the general public. The strategy emphasizes a multi-channel approach, combining online tools such as an updated project website, active social media presence, webinars, and multimedia content, with offline activities like conferences, workshops, policy roundtables, and community engagement events.

A key priority is tailoring messages to different audiences: scientific publications and technical guidelines for professionals, accessible executive summaries for decision-makers, and engaging materials like brochures, roll-ups, infographics, and fact sheets for the wider public. Special focus is placed on capacity building, particularly for young researchers and participants from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs), through training programs, mobility grants, and mentorship opportunities.

WG4 has also developed the official INTUF logo, which will be used consistently across all outputs to strengthen the Action's identity. In the coming months, WG4 will coordinate the production of further dissemination materials, including policy briefs, educational handbooks, and promotional campaigns, ensuring that INTUF's results have a long-term legacy and contribute to stronger, more resilient urban forestry practices across Europe.

Dissemination Strategy and Plan

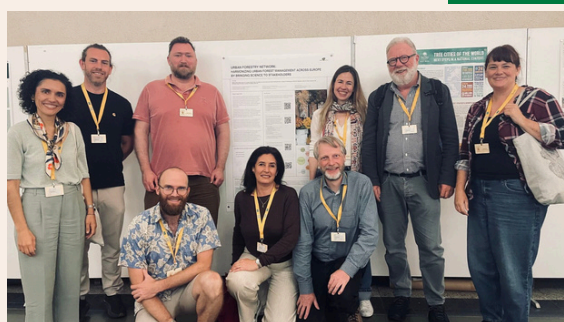
COST ACTION_CA23148
European Network for the Integrative Approach of Urban Forestry (INTUF)





ACTIVITIES & FUTURE PLANS

URBAN FORESTRY NETWORK AT EFUF 2025 (ETH ZÜRICH)




Members of our COST Action participated in the European Forum on Urban Forestry, where Ana Macias presented the project. This was a great opportunity to engage researchers and practitioners, invite collaboration, and share our open calls.


Participants returned with new ideas and energy for upcoming activities.


HACKATHON


Join our hands-on workshop dedicated to meta-analysing urban forest management plans from across Europe.

 6-10 October 2025

 Location: University of Novi Sad (Serbia)

 Open to PhD candidates and postdocs

 **! Deadline: 28th August 2025**

 There is no registration fee! Participants from COST countries are eligible for full reimbursement of travel and accommodation. Other applicants are welcome if they can provide their own funding.

This hackathon is a unique opportunity to:

- Collaboratively analyse diverse urban tree strategies using both qualitative and quantitative tools.
- Gain practical experience with tools such as Python, R, and data science methods.
- Contribute to a meta-study that may shape future policy and practice in urban forestry.
- Work towards a co-authored academic publication on urban forestry management.
- Work alongside leading experts and passionate early-career researchers in an interactive and supportive environment.
- Encourage open exchange and discussion between students and trainers, creating a rich space for learning, mentorship, and shared insight.

We welcome applicants with interests or expertise in:

- Urban forest management and planning
- Urban forest ecosystem services
- Urban forest policy


Apply here: <https://lnkd.in/ddypdwhQ>


CALL FOR HACKATHON PARTICIPANTS


6-10
Oct 2025

Join our hands-on workshop dedicated to meta-analysing urban forest management plans from across Europe.

 6-10 October 2025

 University of Novi Sad (Serbia)

 Open to PhD candidates and postdocs

 There is no registration fee!

Participants from COST countries are eligible for full reimbursement of travel and accommodation. Other applicants are welcome if they can provide their own funding.

More information and application here:



Join our COST Action URBAN FORESTRY NETWORK

Apply to join the project and participate in our working groups.

