

# Positioning nature-based solutions in policy: Learning from Quito's successes

## Using Ordinances in Quito

### Key Points

1. NbS is being promoted as an option for decreasing the effects of climate disasters such as landslides, floodings and heat waves.
2. Protecting Quito's natural remnants strengthen water catchment management, biodiversity protection through policy creation.
3. Quito has been mainstreaming NbS in the recent years through inclusion in ordinances and long term plans aiming towards climate change adaptation. However, there is a need for increasing knowledge of NbS among all stakeholders and also to state clearly their roles regarding NbS in the city.

The concept of NbS has been included as part of local regulation in Quito in recent years. This scenario has produced many implications due to mainstreaming being done from the Municipality. For example, stakeholders still lack knowledge about NbS potential, therefore, there are still some uncertainties regarding the technical and economic feasibility of NbS projects. On the other hand, raising awareness about NbS is changing the way stakeholders value nature and is being seen as a tool for climate disaster risk management.

An Ordinance is legislation built at municipal level. In Quito, this type of legislation must be aligned to the city long term plans such as the PMDOT and PUGS and country level legislation such as the Constitution and others. This type of legislation can be more demanding compared to its national equals if required. For example, vehicle emission standards in Quito are stronger than national ones. Also, Ordinances offer more flexibility to approve city wide projects including policy tools for its increased technical and economic feasibility.

### Real World Example:

- Ordinance 041 approved in September 2022 aims to establish a regulatory framework of protection, encouragement and preservation of urban vegetation aligned with Quito's Urban Green Network. NbS is aimed to be promoted as part of greening efforts within the urban area of the city in addition to sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Green and Blue Ordinance project, soon to be approved (before July 2023). This ordinance promotes climate resilience against natural disaster risks through green and blue infrastructure implementation. NbS are heavily present in the ordinance as a mean to reduce vulnerability against climate effects but also for conservation, water catchment and the promotion of permeable areas within urban areas. Implications are greater since NbS is still a novelty in Quito therefore the approval of this ordinance is considered a major breakthrough as it changes the way how nature is conceived by the population and reaches a major role in the city's planning.

- Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan 2021-2033 (PMDOT in Spanish) states NbS as a climate change adaptation policy that reduces social and economic gaps while increasing access to green spaces.
- Land Use and Management Plan 2021-2033 (PUGS in Spanish) establishes NbS as part of the Urban Building Standards, more specifically related to the design of public spaces encouraging permeable areas, green infrastructure, community gardens and others.

### Policy relevance and implications:

Ordinances are a great option to mainstream NbS in Quito. Because PMDOT and PUGS consider NbS as part of long-term planning for the city, political support is improved and increases the probability of main stakeholders being part of the development of NbS related ordinances. Relevant stakeholders had expressed their concerns about natural disasters and how Quito is building its resilience around them to reduce the population vulnerability to such effects. Climate risks such as floods or landslides are increasingly being part of the NbS pitch in Quito and, because of its multiple benefits, more local legislation is being considered for approval. Recently, the Urban Trees Ordinance, which contains NbS content, passed. Moreover, the even more NbS specific Green and Blue Ordinance project is expected to be approved this year. Clever Cities Quito expects to contribute to this Ordinance by including the NbS Urban Plan content to its standards in order to increase NbS mainstreaming.

The sanction process of the Green and Blue Ordinance helped to identify the need of reorganizing municipal roles and to find sources for NbS project funding. NbS in Quito still is in the early stages of development and mainstreaming, therefore, including NbS in current and future regulation is a huge step for increasing the generation of NbS projects in the city.

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