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CARBON-SMART URBAN GREEN as a climate solution for cities

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trateginen **титкімиs**

Urban green needs to be taken seriously in climate actions

- Carbon neutrality targets 2035 pressures for urban growth, pressures for forestry
- The need to harness the potential of urban green urban forests, parks, streets plantings and yards







How can urban green be utilized more efficiently as a multifunctional climate solution?





Carbon-smartness as a way to

- improve the carbon sequestration of green structure
- secure carbon sinks in urban planning,
- develop low-emission practices for landscape construction and management,
- produce other vital ecosystem services





Policy recommendation for cities



1. From carbon footprint to multifunctional carbon handprint

- Vegetation is the most cost-effective way to produce carbon handprint
- Carbon handprint of urban green is multifunctional: in addition to climate benefits it produces other ecosystem services.





2. Focus on the amount of green

- Climate benefits are directly dependent on the amount of urban green and its potential to store carbon
- Maintaining existing urban vegetation and soil is the primary way to enhance carbon sinks.
- When building new areas, it is important to ensure sufficient space and favourable growing conditions for urban greenery





2. Focus on the life cycle of urban green

- The life cycle of urban green should be as long as possible to increase carbon storage.
- This also compensates the initial emission peak caused by the carbon released from the growing media used for planting.





3. Carbon-smart landscape construction and management

- Attention to low-carbon practices.
- Focus on the soil: fostering the microbiological processes of the soil, preserving the existing soil and utilising recycled soil, compost, or biochar-based solutions
- Carbon storage of the soil can be also strengthened by management e.g. by leaving leaf litter on ground.





4. Social sustainability as part of the climate solution

- Different values and viewpoints regarding urban green spaces must be considered and balanced: climate targets, biodiversity, cityscape, recreation. Synergies must be strengthened.
- Carbon-smartness needs to be promoted in a socially sustainable and just manner.
 Participation in decision-making increases the social acceptability and respect of urban green.





5. More climate benefits with more efficient steering instruments

- Urban green and its climate benefits need actions in all planning levels from strategic level to implementation tools.
- Development needs: climate impact assessment methods for urban green, carbon calculator for green factor, life cycle assessment methodology for urban green





For more information: <u>Policy recommendations for cities</u> <u>and municipalities – CO–CARBON (cocarbon.fi)</u>

