



# The economic and social values of urban green space: Insights from the IPBES Values Assessment



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# Why Carbon-Smart Urban Green Infrastructure matters

Carbon-Smart UGI provides opportunities to sequester and store carbon in urban environments.

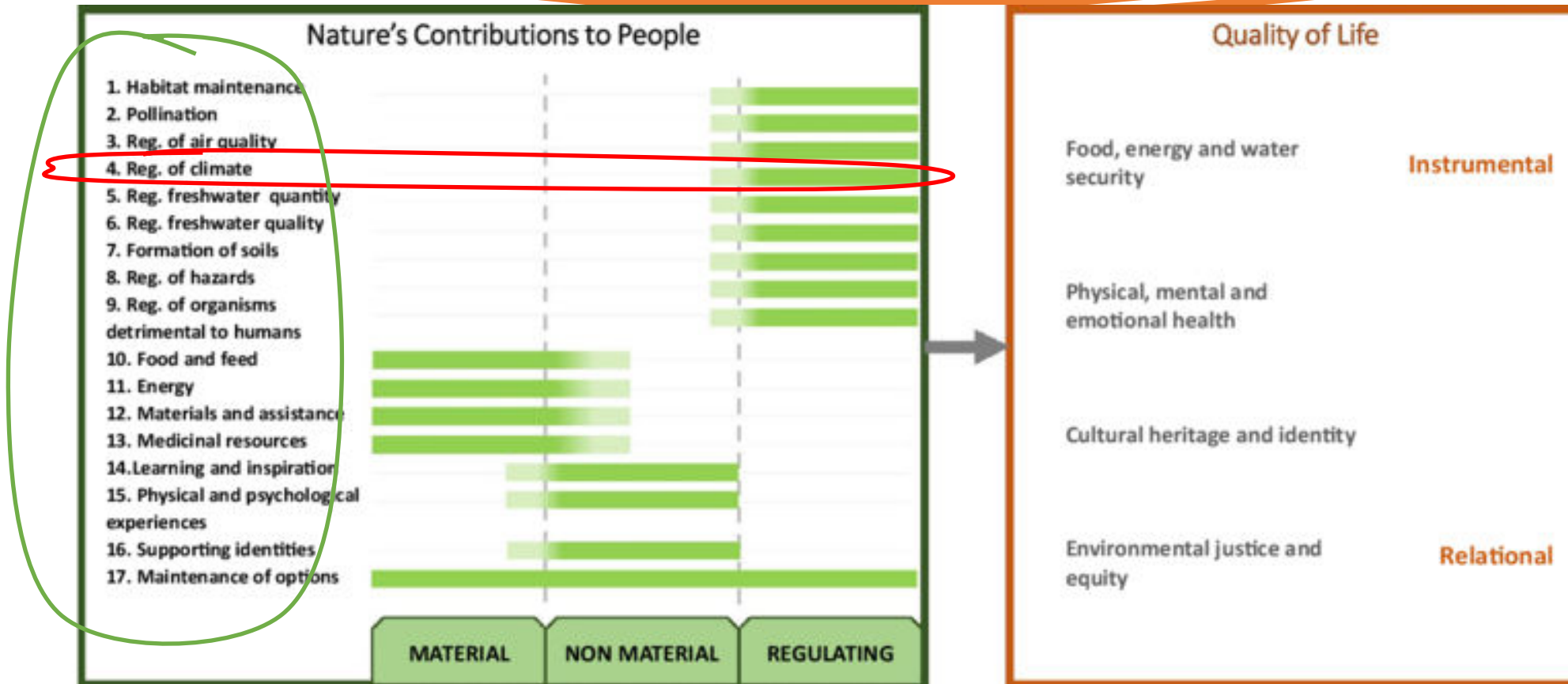
Urban infrastructure may also deliver a wide range of ecological, social and economic co-benefits to people and nature.

The IPBES '*NCP framework*' and '*Typology of Nature's Values*' provides a useful tool to identify and evaluate these co-benefits.



# IPBES NCP framework

Useful to identify the wide range of material, non-material and regulating NCPs associated with carbon-smart urban green infrastructure and link them to quality of life indicators

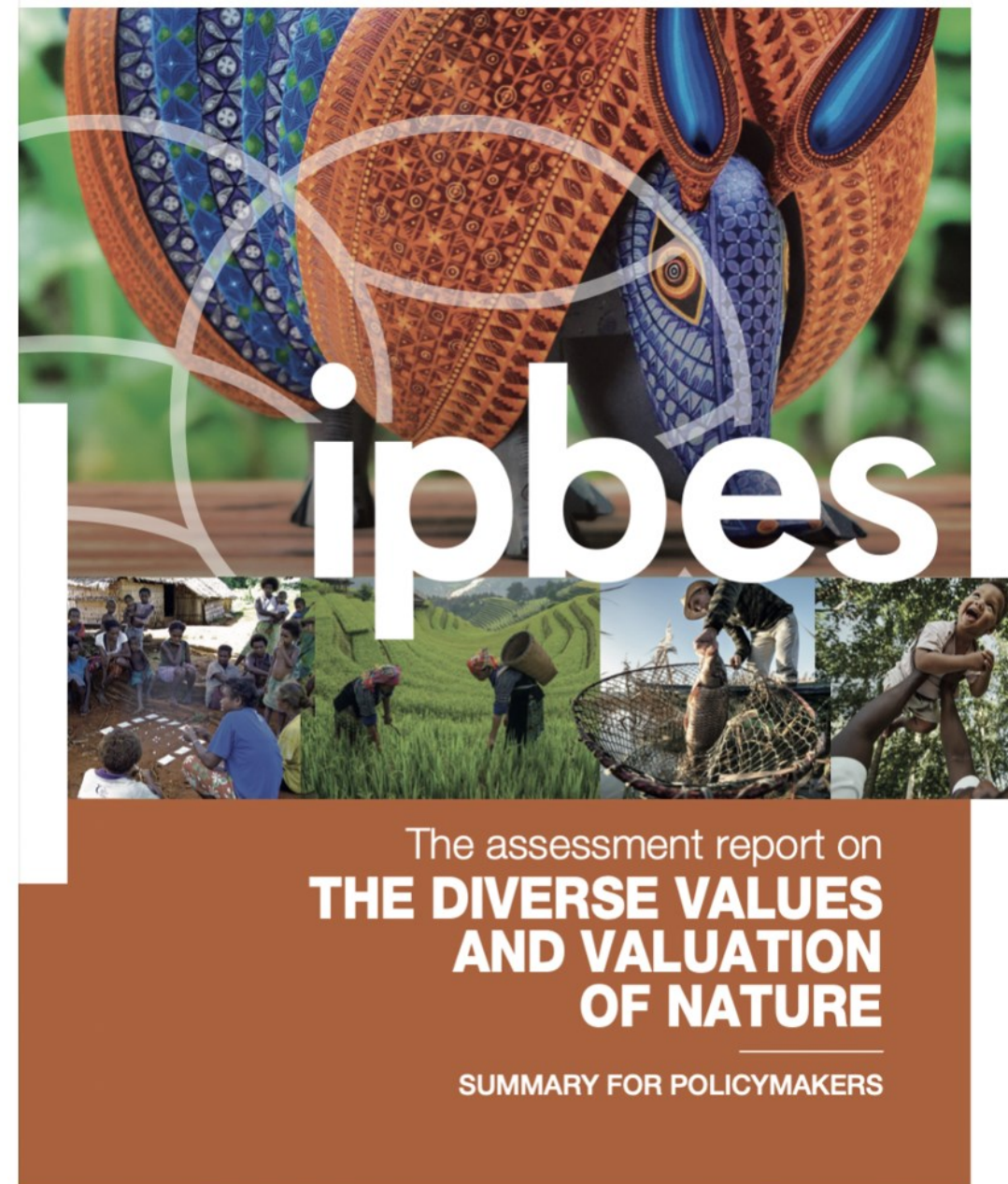


Díaz et al. (2018) and (IPBES 2018)

# IPBES 'Values Assessment'

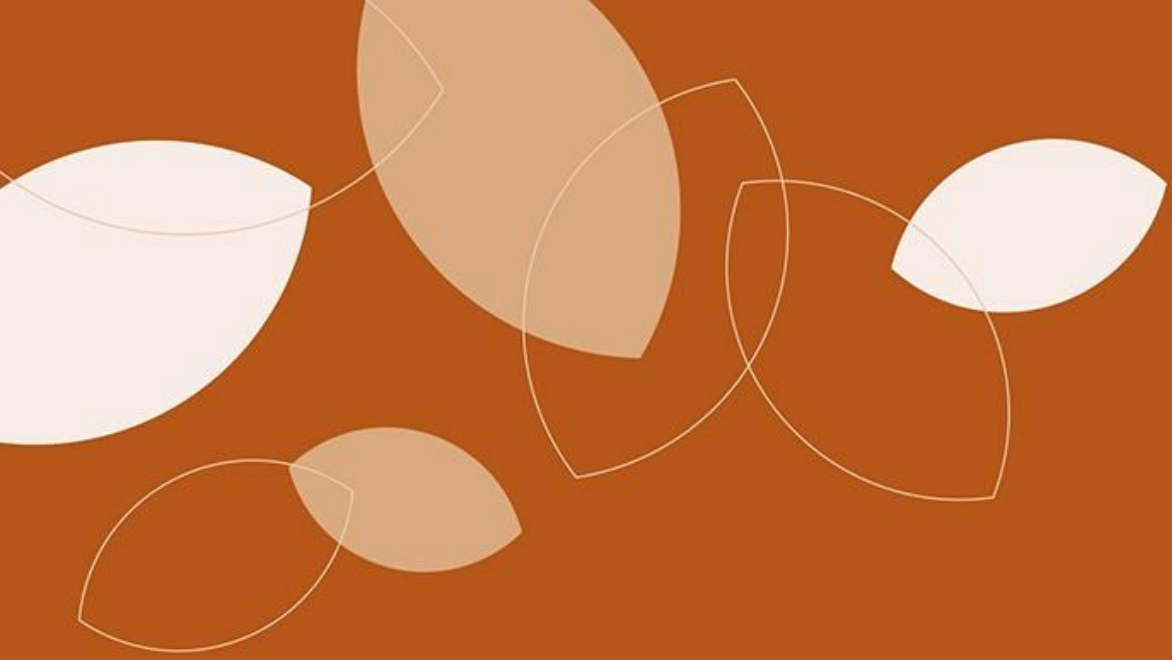
## Summary of Policymakers report

- The SPM was approved by the 140 member states of the IPBES in July 2022.
- Key sections
  - A. Understanding the diverse values of nature.
  - B. Measuring and making visible the values of nature
  - C. Leveraging the diverse values of nature for transformative change towards sustainability.
  - D. Embedding the values of nature for transformative decision-making for sustainability.



Suggested citation: IPBES (2022): Summary for policymakers of the methodological assessment of the diverse values and valuation of nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. U. Pascual, P. Balvanera, M. Christie, B. Baptiste, D. González-Jiménez, C.B. Anderson, S. Athayde, D.N. Barton, R. Chaplin-Kramer, S. Jacobs, E. Kelemen, R. Kumar, E. Lazos, A. Martin, T.H. Mwampamba, B. Nakangu, P. O'Farrell, C.M. Raymond, S.M. Subramanian, M. Termansen, M. Van Noordwijk, A. Vatn (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 37 pages. [DOI:10.5281/zenodo.7043608](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7043608)

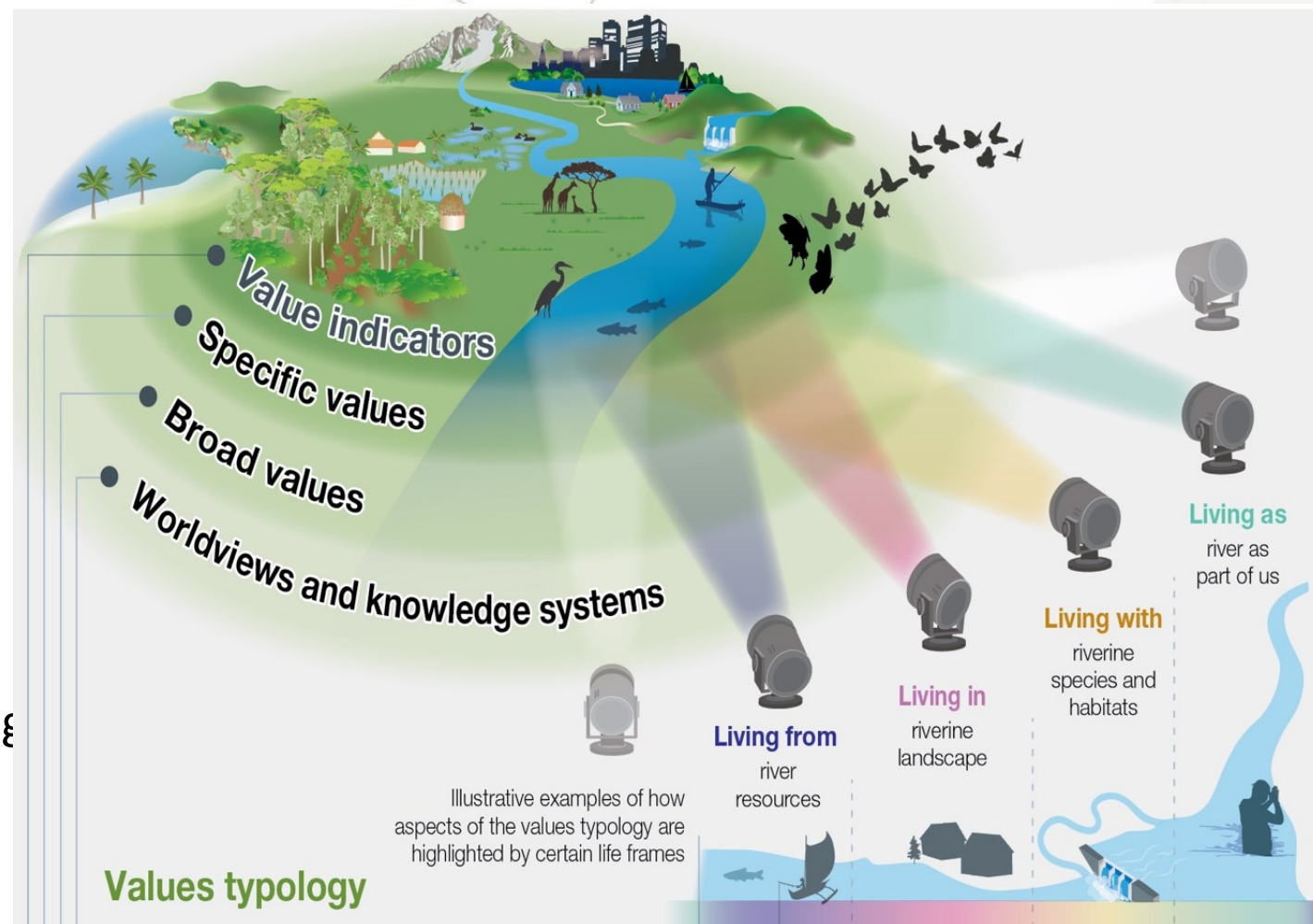




# How do people value nature?

## How does the IPBES Values typology progress our understanding of nature's value?

- It explicitly acknowledges different **worldviews** and **knowledge systems**, including ILK.
- It recognises the importance of deeply-held '**broad**' values (such as legal rules and social norms) that are embedded in institutions.
- It goes beyond '**instrumental**' values by also recognising the importance of '**relational**' and '**intrinsic**' values.
- It recognises various **indicators of nature's value** and suggests approaches to integrating them into decision-making.
- It promotes the use of **lifeframes** (*living from, in, with and as nature*) to spotlight nature's diverse values.



# Urban green spaces hold multiple types of value:

## Instrumental values

- The direct benefits that urban green spaces provide to people
- e.g. climate regulation, flood control, health and wellbeing, recreation.

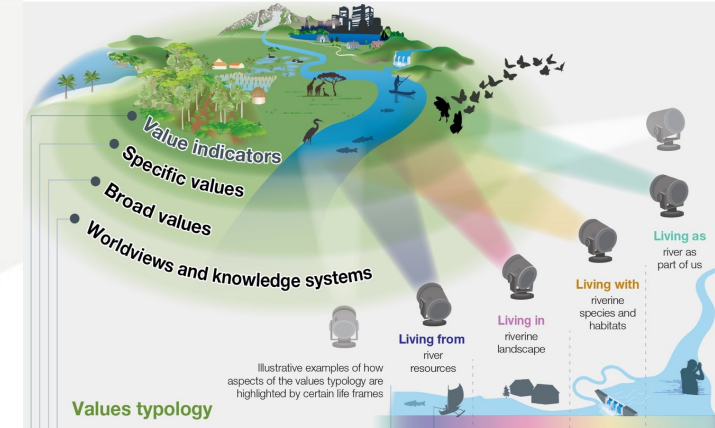
## Relational values

- Reflect the importance of relationships, identities, responsibilities, and meanings that emerge through people's interactions with urban green spaces. Relational values are often non-substitutional.
- e.g. sense of place, care, stewardship, cultural identity, everyday encounters with urban wildlife

## Intrinsic values

- What does this space mean for non-human life itself?
- e.g. the right of species and ecosystems to exist and flourish in cities independent of human use

**In urban contexts, green spaces are valued not only for the services they provide to people (instrumental values), but also for the relationships, identities, and responsibilities they sustain (relational values), and for the moral significance of the non-human life they support in its own right (intrinsic values).**



# Operationalising IPBES Values in Urban Green Spaces

**The Life Framework: Urban green spaces support different ways of living with nature, each linked to distinct values.**

**Living from nature: Instrumental values**

– Climate regulation, health, recreation, ecosystem services

**Living in nature: Relational values**

– Sense of place, identity, everyday wellbeing, cultural meaning

**Living with nature: Relational + intrinsic values**

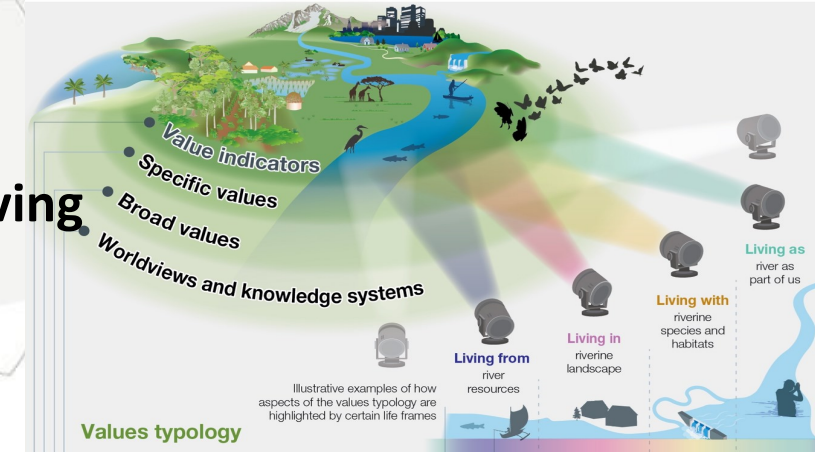
– Coexistence, care, stewardship, urban biodiversity

**Living as nature: Intrinsic values**

– Ethical responsibility, multispecies justice, rights of nature

**Key message:**

**Operationalising IPBES values in cities requires moving beyond instrumental benefits to recognise relationships and moral commitments to non-human life.**





# How can we measure nature's values?

# There is no shortage of methods and approaches to value nature.

Over 50 different methods to assess nature's values have been applied in diverse social- ecological contexts around the world.



# Example: MUST project

Choice experiment to value UGS enhancements in Finnish cities

## Care for forests



Mostly benefits: **Other species**  
 Area size: **400 m<sup>2</sup>** (medium)  
 Distance from home: **600 m**

*Improve the state and biodiversity of forest nature (e.g. by adding deadwood)*

Donation: **20 €**

A

## Improve water bodies



Mostly benefits: **People**  
 Area size: **100 m<sup>2</sup>** (small)  
 Distance from home: **300 m**

*Add recreational opportunities (e.g. swimming, fishing) and prevent urban floods*

Donation: **20 €**

B

Do not make a donation

Donation: **0 €**

C

Attribute	Level	WTP per HH
Habitat type	Forest	€8.92
	Waterbodies	€9.52
	Meadows	-
Focus of management	Other species	€19.77
	People	-
Size of habitat	100m <sup>2</sup>	€-21.63
	400m <sup>2</sup>	-



How to leverage nature's values for  
transformative change to just and sustainable  
futures.



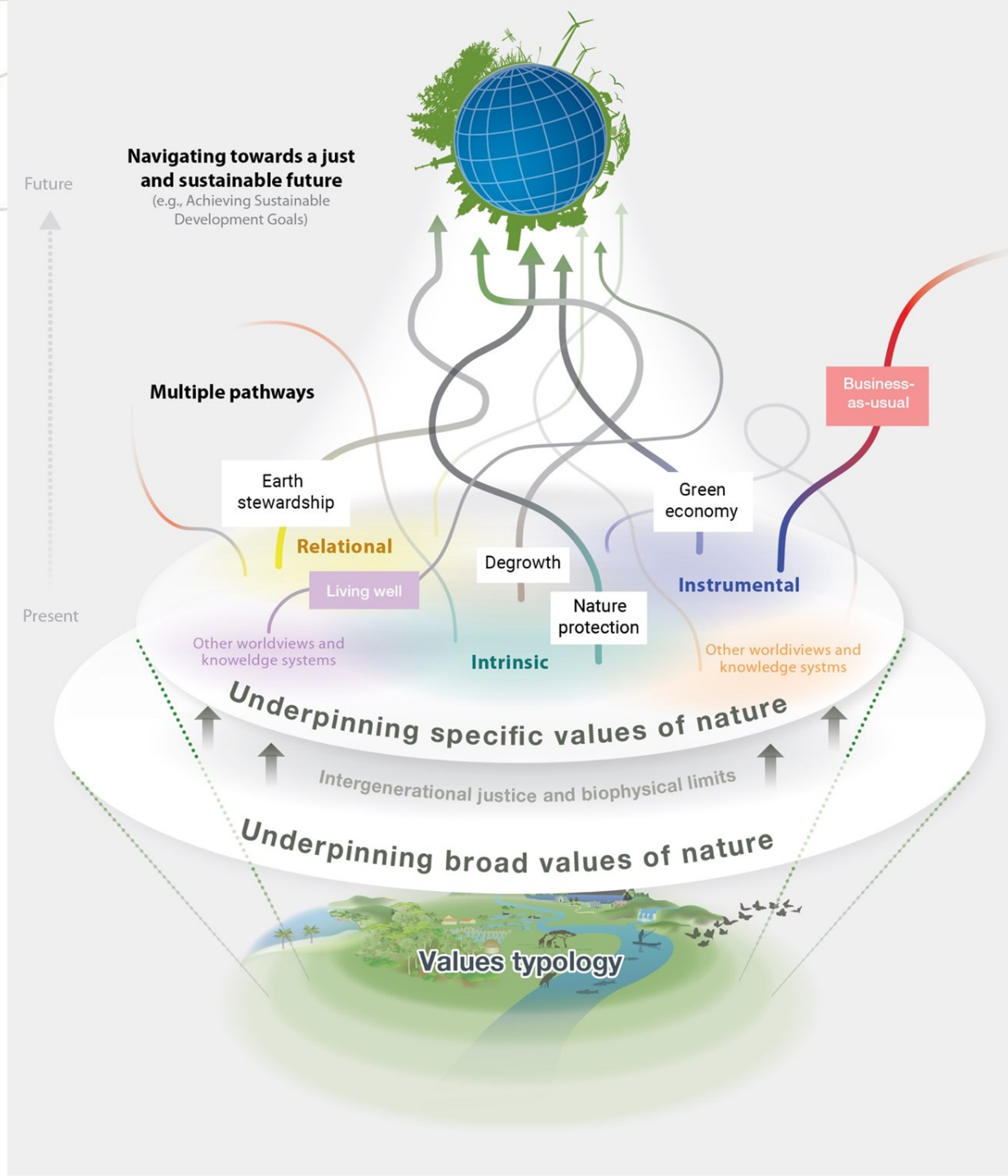
**More equitable and sustainable policy outcomes** are more likely to be achieved when decision-making processes:

- recognize and balance the **representation of the diverse values of nature**, and
- **address social and economic power asymmetries** among actors.

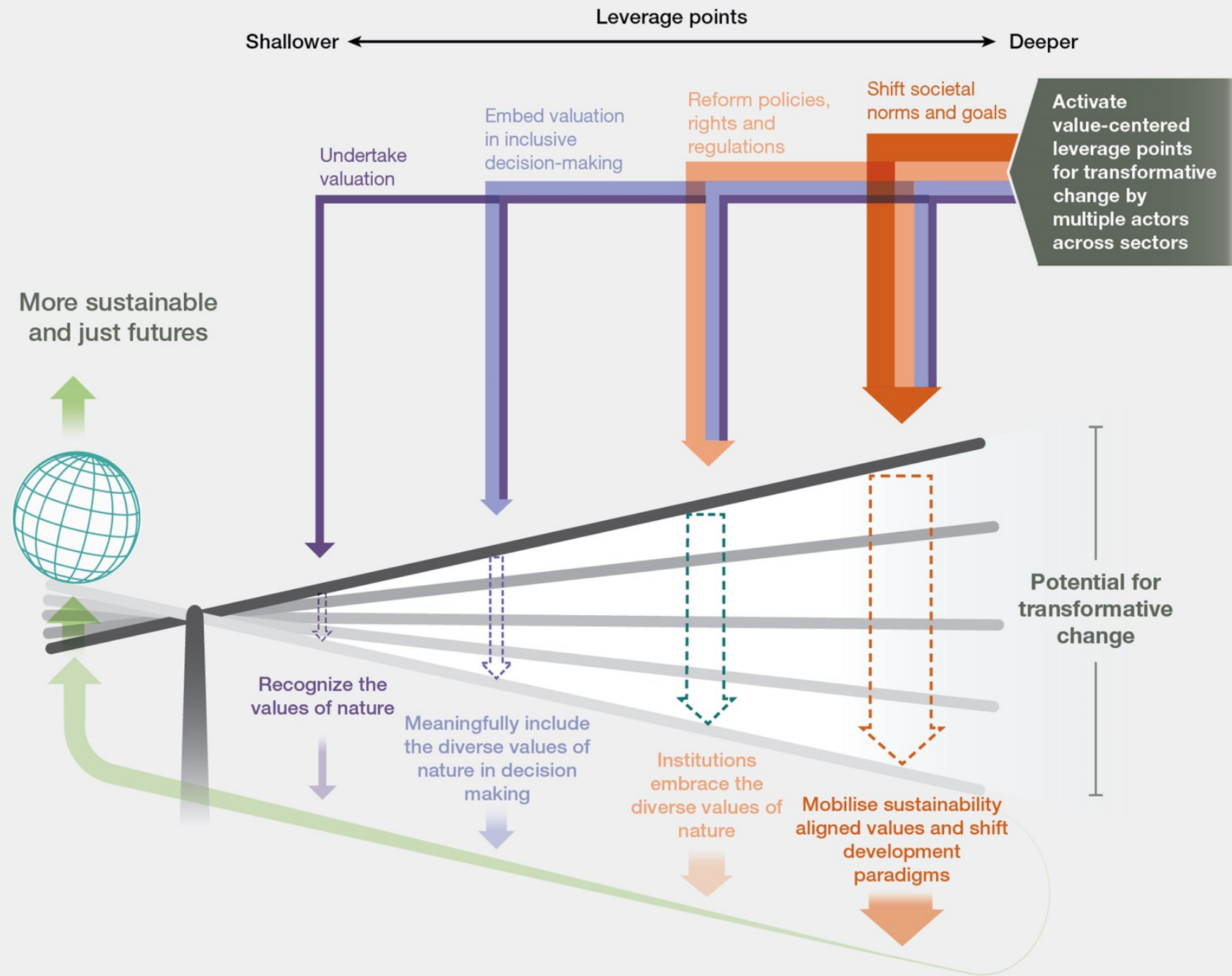


# Transformative change needed to address the global biodiversity crisis requires:

- Shifting away from a narrow set of values that over-emphasize short term and individual material gains (e.g. business-as-usual scenario)
- To alternative pathways that nurture multiple sustainability-aligned values across society.
- Such change requires empowering civil society and changing societal structures and institutions.



**Four key *leverage points* can help catalyze transformation towards sustainable and just futures.**



# Valuation can support policymaking across the different stages of the policy cycle



# Concluding thoughts

## Enhancing Carbon-Smart Urban Green Infrastructure: Insights from IPBES



IPBES provides a pathway for carbon-smart urban green infrastructure that is not only climate-effective, but also socially just and ecologically transformative.

**1. Move beyond carbon alone:** Carbon-smart UGI should not focus only on sequestration or offsets, but recognise multiple benefits and trade-offs across climate, biodiversity, and well-being.

### **2. Embed plural values in decision-making**

- Instrumental values → climate regulation, health, ecosystem services
- Relational values → place, care, stewardship, everyday nature
- Intrinsic values → biodiversity and non-human life matter in their own right

### **3. Use the Life Framework (living from, in, with and as nature) to operationalise values**

**4. Enable more just and resilient urban futures:** Integrating IPBES values into carbon-smart UGI supports multifunctional, socially inclusive, and biodiversity-rich cities, avoiding narrow, carbon-centric solutions.



Links to the reports

<https://ipbes.net/the-values-assessment>





**#ValuesAssessment**

**Thank you!**

**¡Gracias!**

**Merci!**