

**the
Mantova
challenge**



**the
“Tree Cities
of the
World”
programme**



**World Forum on
Urban Forests
Mantova 2018**

the “Tree Cities of the World” programme

Since 2007, more than half of the world’s people live in cities (United Nations, 2014). Trees deliver key benefits that improve the livability of modern cities for urban communities. They clean the air and filter waters while cooling walkways, parks, and buildings with their shade. They improve business districts and increase property value while lowering crime and consolidating social cohesion. Trees also decrease the onset of non-communicable diseases thus reducing public health costs. Being in a leafy urban landscape improve people’s mood as well as learning patterns in children.

All these factors provide an important contribution to the improvement of living conditions in urban environments that are increasingly affected by a number of socio-economic and environmental challenges. Now more than ever, a quality urban environment requires trees to be an integral part of places where people live, work, play, and learn.

What is the “Tree Cities of the World” programme?

The *Tree Cities of the World* programme is an international recognition programme celebrating cities and towns committed to the creation of an enabling environment for their urban forest and trees to be maintained, sustainably managed and duly celebrated. Purpose of the programme is to:

- Provide core standards for community forestry programs around the world;
- Create a global network of communities willing to share and learn about best practices for successfully managing city trees and forests;
- Raise and foster city residents’ awareness on the key role of urban trees as core green infrastructure towards a more sustainable and resilient model of city;
- Improve the quality of life for city residents around the world by encouraging the establishment and sound management of urban trees and forests.

Joining the *Tree Cities of the World* programme represents a formal commitment by cities to meet the core standards to be recognized as *Tree Cities of the World*. Once it meets the standards, the urban community of the city receive the designation of *Tree Cities of the World*. From the largest mega-cities to the smallest villages, this recognition programme is meant to celebrate leadership and efforts in urban forestry at the community level.

Why is it worth for cities to join?

Joining the Green Tree City programme can:

- represent a first formal step towards the promotion and implementation of a *green vision* for the city;
- help raise local awareness on the importance of a sustainable and efficient management of urban forests and trees as a means to improved livelihood and well-being of the local community;
- facilitate the inclusion of the city in a global network of communities willing to share and learn about best practices for successfully managing city trees and forests;
- allow having the successful results of the efforts and investments done by a city towards improved sustainability and resilience formally recognized;
- increase the visibility of the city and, thus, improve tourism and businesses; and,
- provide access to guidance on how to meet the given standards and, thus, on how to create an enabling environment for urban forests and trees to maximize their contribution to the local livelihoods and well-being.

Which Cities can join the “Tree Cities of the World” programme?

Any entity of municipal government with the power and authority to establish and carry out an operational plan for the planting, care, and removal of city-managed trees can submit the application to join the programme and be acknowledged *Tree Cities of the World*.

How Can a city be recognized as a “Tree Cities of the World”?

To be acknowledged as a *Tree Cities of the World*, a city must prove that it meets the five core standards listed below:

Standard 1: Create a “Tree Board”

A clear, written statement by municipal leaders delegating responsibility for city trees management within the municipal boundary to a staff member (i.e., City Arborist), a city department (i.e., Forestry Section), or a group of citizens (i.e., Tree Board) is in place.

Examples:

- Village elders select seven residents to serve as the “Tree Board” to develop a planting plan
- City Sustainability officer is assigned the role of “developing a tree

- canopy plan” for the city
- [add international examples here...]

Standard 2: Set the Rules

The management of local urban trees and forest resources is centered on a set of best practices and industry standards, adopted as city policies that describe how work must be performed, urging and supporting the development of urban forests, where the rules apply, when they apply, and penalties for non-compliance.

Examples:

- City adopts International Society of Arboriculture Best Management Practices for all tree works
- Village Tree Board creates a list of best trees to plant and tree species to be protected
- Developers are required to preserve tree canopy during construction projects in the city
- [add international examples here...]

Standard 3: Know What You Have

An updated inventory or assessment of the local tree resource is available so that an effective long-term plan for the planting, care, and disposition of city trees can be established.

Examples:

- The city has a recent tree canopy assessment that leads to a goal for increasing canopy
- There is a tree inventory that shows a reliance on a small number of tree species being planted
- [add international examples here...]

Standard 4: Allocate the Resources

A dedicated budget is allocated annually for the routine implementation of the city plan for trees management.

Examples:

- The city has a budget that allocates the average annual maintenance cost for each city-owned tree
- Governments within a mega-city region assign a portion of regional transportation tax revenue to tree planting along roadways
- Create public-private partnerships for managing trees
- Create alliances with the health sector to use savings on health care to plant trees
- [add international examples here...]

Standard 5: Celebrate Achievements

An annual celebration of trees addressed to raise local awareness on the key importance of urban trees and forests and to acknowledge the contribution from private citizens and staff members to the implementation of the city tree programme is in organized. To this aim, a public recognition of city trees - using Arbor Day or other named events – would be key to communicating the importance of trees to the community.

Examples:

- City celebrates Arbor Day, with a public ceremony and festival;

- The local Tree Board distributed tree seedlings for residents to take home and plant;
- The city Sustainability Office manages a public relations campaign during one month with educational posters on all public transit that explain the benefits of trees and designating Arbor Month.
- [add international examples here...]

Who Is promoting the “Tree Cities of the World” programme

The *Tree Cities of the World* Programme has been developed and supported by Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and is supported by a number of other partners. It aims to connect hundreds of cities around the world in a new network dedicated to sharing and learning from one another successful approaches to managing community trees and forests.

ADF has a long history of incentivizing positive behavior among communities in the United States through the *Tree City USA* recognition program. By setting core standards for municipal forestry programs, Tree City USA has grown since 1976 to connect 3,500 American cities and towns in a network of shared experience and practice. With the creation of a new vision statement in 2014, the Arbor Day Foundation seeks to help solve some of the world’s biggest challenges: poverty, hunger, clean water and air, climate change, and species loss due to deforestation.

FAO supports the development of urban and peri-urban forestry (UPF) actions, projects and strategic planning tools contributing to the promotion of a sustainable and resilient model of city development through the sound management of the trees and forests of the city and their integration in the planning of the urban environment. The FAO Forestry Department, through its UPF Programme, participates in the efforts to raise awareness and build knowledge about UPF by producing normative tools, putting information within reach, sharing policy expertise, providing a meeting place for nations, and bringing knowledge to the field.

Other partners include [to be further developed/discussed]