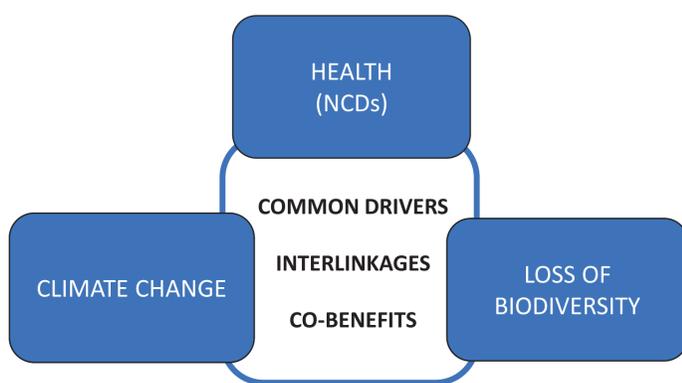


# NATURE STEP TO HEALTH

## A multisectoral programme to public health and environmental work in Lahti region

### BACKGROUND

The doubling prevalence of many non-communicable diseases is associated with urbanisation, air pollution, passive lifestyle and lack of connection to the nature. These non-communicable diseases cause significant costs to the economy and reduce the quality of life of individuals. Physical inactivity increases the risk for many non-communicable diseases such as mental disorders whereas visiting natural environments may reduce body stress levels affecting mental wellbeing. Biodiversity loss may further exaggerate risks for zoonotic diseases and chronic diseases associated with inflammation such as asthma and allergies. Co-leading transformative changes with the healthcare sector empowers local communities and municipalities to improve the health of people and the planet simultaneously. Mainstreaming climate change and biodiversity into healthcare sector, and vice versa, promotes finding synergies in solutions and achieving a more integrative transformation.

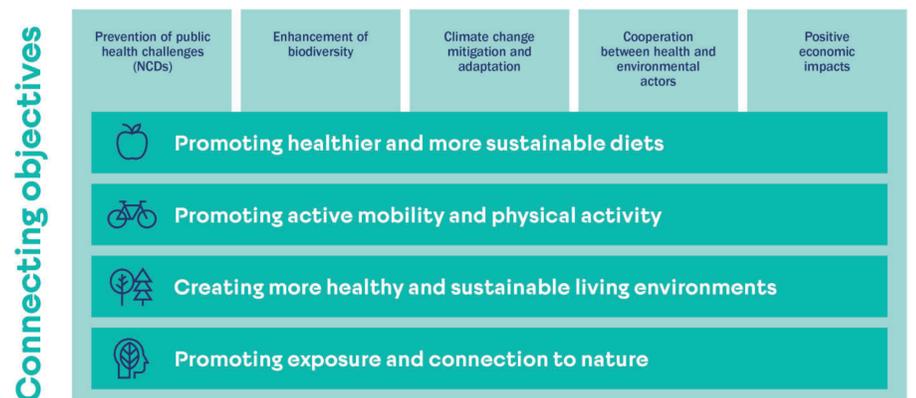


1. Environmental change is interlinked with the constantly rising healthcare costs of the Western European countries.

### NATURE STEP TO HEALTH

Lahti Regional Health and Environment Programme 2022-2032 (Nature Step to Health) jointly addresses the health and environmental goals of Päijät-Häme region in Finland. Implementation of the programme brings together various collaborating stakeholders: public authorities, higher education and research institutes, local communities, and businesses to find new ways to prevent non-communicable diseases and to promote wellbeing while reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and climate change. The impact of the programme on health, environment and economy is monitored using statistical data, surveys, questionnaires, and multidisciplinary studies as well as via overall feedback.

### Aims and objectives



2. Nature Step to Health -programme in a nutshell

### IMPLEMENTATION

There are already 33 multi-sectorial projects in the region that promote the goals. For example, two projects promote cycling, one among the unemployed and the other among the healthcare employees, by easing renting city bikes or offering bikes as employee benefits, and by providing free communal physical activity counselling. Connection to nature is promoted by eight projects, ranging from experiments with microbial diversity to supporting wellbeing by green structures or nature surroundings. Healthy and sustainable nutrition is promoted by four projects. Päijät-Sote has initiated projects related to the programme, including training the personnel on environmental-friendly health and social services.



The programme consists of numerous cross-sectoral projects and smaller actions and events.

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