

The IENE 2026 Declaration

A Global Vision for One Humanity, One Planet, One United Future

Those who build infrastructure also build the future of living landscapes.

This declaration expresses the shared commitment of the IENE to a new vision for transport and energy infrastructure. It recognises that social wellbeing, biodiversity, climate, and mobility are inseparable parts of one shared future.

Humanity is entering a decisive decade. Climate change, biodiversity loss, global security risks, resource constraints, and growing demands for equitable mobility are reshaping the way infrastructure must be conceived. The decisions we make today will determine not only the way how people move, but shape the landscapes, ecosystems, and communities we hand over to future generations.

While IENE completes 30 years of activity on biodiversity and infrastructure, the year 2026 marks the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035), declared by the UN General Assembly to raise global ambitions for transport in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. IENE welcomes this Decade and offers this declaration as a contribution to it. Its second Focus Area already acknowledges transport as a growing source of pollution, habitat loss and fragmentation, and other environmental degradation, and calls for reduced transport emissions alongside biodiversity-, habitat-, and ecosystem-sensitive infrastructure planning, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. However, ecological connectivity and biodiversity are not yet named among its headline priorities or progress-monitoring indicators. Closing that gap is exactly what this declaration calls for.

Our Vision

**One humanity, one planet, one united future.
Together, we build infrastructure as the resilient, connected backbone of
living landscapes where people and nature thrive.**

Our Shared Understanding

- There is only one future for people and nature, and it must be created together.
- Transport and energy infrastructure shape landscapes – by severing ecological and social connections as much as by connecting places.
- Those who build infrastructure are also landscape builders and transformers, sharing responsibility for ecological connectivity, biodiversity, and human wellbeing.
- Grey and green infrastructure should be planned as a single, integrated system, providing the essential framework of landscapes to support both people and nature.
- The purpose of infrastructure is to provide exchange, communication and accessibility within ecological limits – and this is true for nature as well as for people.

Turning this vision into wise decisions and effective action — from the earliest design choices to final operation and maintenance — is the work ahead.

Our Commitments

Step 1: Engaging Society needs

A strong social foundation is not abstract — it means health, safety, fairness, and belonging in daily life.

- Support social development, improving human well-being, recognising the interdependence of healthy societies and healthy ecosystems.
- Protect human health and safety by minimising transport-related risks, pollution, and environmental degradation.
- Ensure equitable, affordable, and accessible mobility for all citizens across urban and rural areas.
- Strengthen social cohesion and territorial development by reducing inequalities and ensuring that infrastructure benefits are shared fairly.
- Encourage sustainable travel behaviour by improving accessibility and reducing unnecessary travel demand.
- Respect, preserve, and enhance cultural heritage, local identity, and the social values of landscapes and communities.

Step 2: Mobilising Sustainable Economy

Prosperity within limits: the economy that finances our infrastructure must serve long-term value, not growth alone.

- Promote sustainable economic development rather than economic growth alone, creating long-term prosperity while respecting environmental limits and societal needs.
- Accelerate the transition to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient, and an economy ensuring that climate action does not undermine biodiversity or ecological integrity.
- Encourage public and private investment that delivers true long-term environmental and social values.
- Mobilise green finance and sustainable investment to support resilient, low-carbon transport systems that deliver measurable biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, and nature-positive outcomes.
- Promote financial markets and investment mechanisms that integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles with environmentally responsible financing and corporate accountability.
- Strengthen sustainable supply chains, innovative mitigation, and responsible resource management.

Step 3: Governing Responsibly

Good infrastructure is governed as carefully as it is built — with transparency, evidence, and a genuine voice for nature.

- Hold decisions about infrastructure to transparent, inclusive processes that give affected communities and nature itself a genuine voice.
- Ensure that biodiversity, ecological connectivity, climate resilience, and social needs are systematically integrated into infrastructure decision-making at strategic, programme, and project levels.
- Strengthen the development, sharing, interoperability, and responsible management of data to support evidence-based planning.
- Promote research, innovation, and knowledge exchange that contribute to sustainable transport development.

- Establish and standardise monitoring systems that enable adaptive management and continuous learning across projects and borders.
- Strengthen monitoring, reporting, and accountability throughout the infrastructure lifecycle, using measurable indicators to demonstrate whether environmental, biodiversity, connectivity, and social objectives are being achieved.
- Measure success by the accessibility, connectivity, and resilience infrastructure delivers to both humans and nature, not only by the capacity it provides.
- Contribute evidence and expertise to the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport and advocate for ecological connectivity and biodiversity to move from supporting text into its headline priorities and progress-monitoring indicators.

Step 4: Working Differently

This is one shared undertaking, not two professions working side by side — ecological and engineering expertise must become one.

- Unite ecological and engineering expertise into a single professional culture, rather than two disciplines working in sequence.
- Build ecological connectivity and landscape-scale thinking into professional practice, recognising infrastructure as part of a wider ecological network rather than as a series of isolated projects.
- Strengthen collaboration between engineers, ecologists, planners, and society.
- Share data and evidence, tools, and experience openly, so that good practice travels as freely as the infrastructure it improves.
- Harness green digital transformation to improve transport efficiency, environmental performance, and infrastructure management — and, where possible, to reduce the need for travel itself, so that mobility becomes a choice rather than a necessity.

Step 5: Planning Within Limits

Ask how much is enough before how much can be built: planning begins within ecological boundaries, not beyond them.

- Promote planning within a safe and just operating space defined by ecological boundaries and social needs.
- Plan infrastructure to achieve ecological and social goals, not simply to accommodate projected demand.
- Apply a necessity test at strategic plan and programme level, before any new investment in development is done, to determine whether new infrastructure is required at all.
- Prioritise measures that improve accessibility and mobility while avoiding unnecessary growth in transport demand and infrastructure capacity.
- Support innovation that reduces ecological footprints and transport demand, not innovation that licenses further growth.
- Advance landscape integration throughout the entire infrastructure lifecycle.
- Apply the mitigation hierarchy systematically, with avoidance of impacts as the first priority, followed by minimisation and restoration, and compensation or offsetting only for unavoidable residual impacts.
- Seek measurable biodiversity net gain and nature-positive outcomes where appropriate, while recognising that compensation cannot substitute for the avoidance of significant or irreplaceable biodiversity impacts.

Step 6: Designing Infrastructure

Design is an act of stewardship — every choice shapes the landscape that people and nature will share for generations.

- Recognise infrastructure planning as an act of landscape stewardship.
- Promote ecological connectivity as a core planning and design objective, not an afterthought.
- Restore the primacy of avoidance in infrastructure planning, as the first step of the mitigation hierarchy, ahead of minimisation, restoration, and compensation.
- Design infrastructure to achieve measurable biodiversity and nature-positive outcomes, including ecological restoration and, where appropriate, biodiversity net gain.
- Ensure that climate mitigation and adaptation measures are designed and implemented without creating new pressures on biodiversity, ecological connectivity, or ecosystem integrity.
- Guarantee safe, affordable, and accessible mobility for everyone, regardless of income, ability, or location.
- Prioritise improving accessibility before expanding transport capacity.

Step 7: Deliver and Operate Resilient Infrastructure

What is built must also last and adapt, remaining accountable to the same ecological and social limits that shaped it.

- Deliver infrastructure that supports sustainable development through resilience, adaptability, safety, and long-term performance while remaining within ecological limits.
- Promote sustainable sourcing of construction materials and responsible management of supply chains.
- Maximise circularity through efficient resource use, reuse, recycling, and low-carbon construction.
- Apply life-cycle thinking throughout planning, construction, operation, maintenance, renewal, and decommissioning.
- Ensure that operation and maintenance sustain ecological connectivity, biodiversity outcomes, and the effectiveness of mitigation and restoration measures throughout the infrastructure lifecycle.
- Accelerate the deployment of mobility solutions, vehicles, clean technologies, and sustainable power sources where they demonstrably improve environmental and social outcomes — while avoiding rebound effects and increases in transport demand that undermine those benefits.
- Ensure infrastructure remains resilient to climate change and future societal needs.
- Monitor and report systematically on the long-term environmental, biodiversity, connectivity, climate, and social performance of infrastructure, with clear responsibilities for corrective action where intended outcomes are not achieved.

Call to Action

We invite all those who decide, plan, finance, build, manage, and use transport and energy infrastructure to join us in creating a space where people and nature flourish together. The future will not be built by engineers or ecologists alone – it will be built together for **One Humanity, One Planet and One United Future.**