

Medellín, Colombia:

Cuenca Verde Water Fund

Model: Non-Commercial Convening

CuencaVerde is a Water Fund in Medellín. Within ten years, it achieved **conservation and restoration** actions across 6,500 hectares of land and facilitated over 500 biodiversity multi-stakeholder protection agreements.



THE CHALLENGE

Deforestation, unsustainable farming, and urban encroachment are threats to the region's water security. Moreover, a lack of **targeted public or private investment** made it difficult for the city government to respond adequately.



HOW IT WORKS

In 2013, Empresas Públicas de Medellín (EPM), a conglomerate of public companies, with the support of the Mayor, the Nature Conservancy, and private companies, established CuencaVerde as a non-profit organisation.

Driven by a business 'champion', several companies each provided US\$200,000 as seed capital. By 2022, CuencaVerde had raised US\$9 million, mostly from EPM, as well as **from the city government and various private companies**.

Today CuencaVerde convenes private and government partners to strengthen water and biodiversity governance and management through nature-based solutions.

The Fund runs active programming, including restoration projects with companies, capacity building, and awareness raising - like its community ambassador programme, 'GuardaCuencas'.



In addition to the city's leadership role in setting up the initiative - the head of the city's Environment Department is a member of CuencaVerde's board and the Mayor approves EPM funding - there is a **working relationship**, in that the Fund participates in city projects and vice versa. Private sector involvement is facilitated through tax incentives for contributions to a non-profit.



LESSONS

Through the establishment of specific funds, cities can create **governance structures** that enable and support multi-stakeholder collaboration to address specific climate issues by crowding in investment and expertise.

CuencaVerde carefully tracks its investments and achievements. Outlining **clear benefits** by quantifying return on investment and impact where possible, helps to drive investment in climate actions.