



European Green Capital Award 2025

Brescia application City Introduction and Context

City Introduction and Context

Please provide the following information:

1. An overview of the city and a general background to the application, including examples of environmental, social and economic sustainability in the city.
2. A description of the key environmental challenges which the city faces, including factors which have influenced the city's development.
3. The following two maps:
 - a. Map 1 should show the layout of urban areas, geographical and other features across the city.
 - b. Map 2 should show the city in the context of the wider surrounding area.

Please also complete the following tables:

Table 1: Benchmarking Data - City Introduction and Context

Indicator		Units	Year of data
Population	199'749	Number of inhabitants	31/12/2022
Area	90.3	km ²	2022
Population Density	2'212	Inhabitants/km ²	2022
GDP	33'683 (*)	€/capita	2022

(*) referred to the province (1'253'157 inh)

Table 2: Other commitments and awards

Commitment/Awards	Yes/No	Description
Signed Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy 2030	X	When: [June 2020]
Signed Green City Accord ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	When: [-]
Winner of other City Awards	X	[Italian Capital of Culture 2023]
Other commitments at European level ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	[-]

(max. 1000 words and five graphics, images or tables plus the two requested maps as detailed above)

¹ environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/green-city-accord_en

² For example signed [Climate Pact](#), etc.

Brescia is a city within the Lombardy region (northeastern part of Italy), with nearly 200'000 inhabitants and 90 km², in a Province Country Seats of 205 municipalities and about 1'200'000 inhabitants.

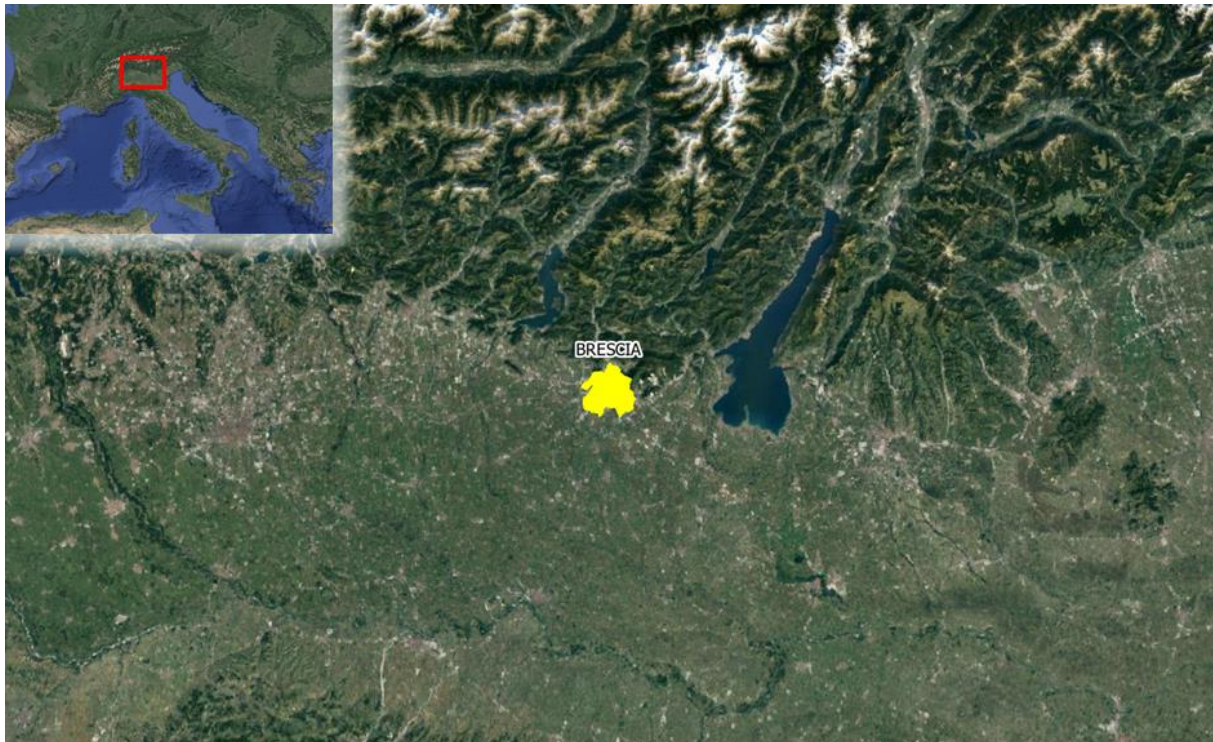


Figure 1: Brescia location

The city lies along the Piedmont corridor and is located between Lake Garda and Lake Iseo. It is bordered to the north by the Brescian Pre-Alps, forming hills in the city, and to the south by vast rural areas. Indeed, Brescia is part of the largest agricultural system in Europe: the Po' Valley. The territory is marked from north to south by the Mella River, while the network of secondary rivers crosses the urban fabric and contributes to the irrigation of the southern areas.

In Roman times, "Brixia" was one of the most important cities in northern Italy, along the Gallic Way. The archaeological heritage was recognized as a UNESCO Site in 2011.

Until the end of the 19th century, Brescia was composed of the urban core and a few historic settlements. The following century saw rapid growth with numerous metallurgical industries and an exponential increase in population. The high demand for housing and infrastructure led to rapid urban expansion and the consequent loss of green areas. In the second phase of urban development (the 1980s and 1990s), many industries were closed, and the city inherited huge empty spaces that represent an environmental and social problem.

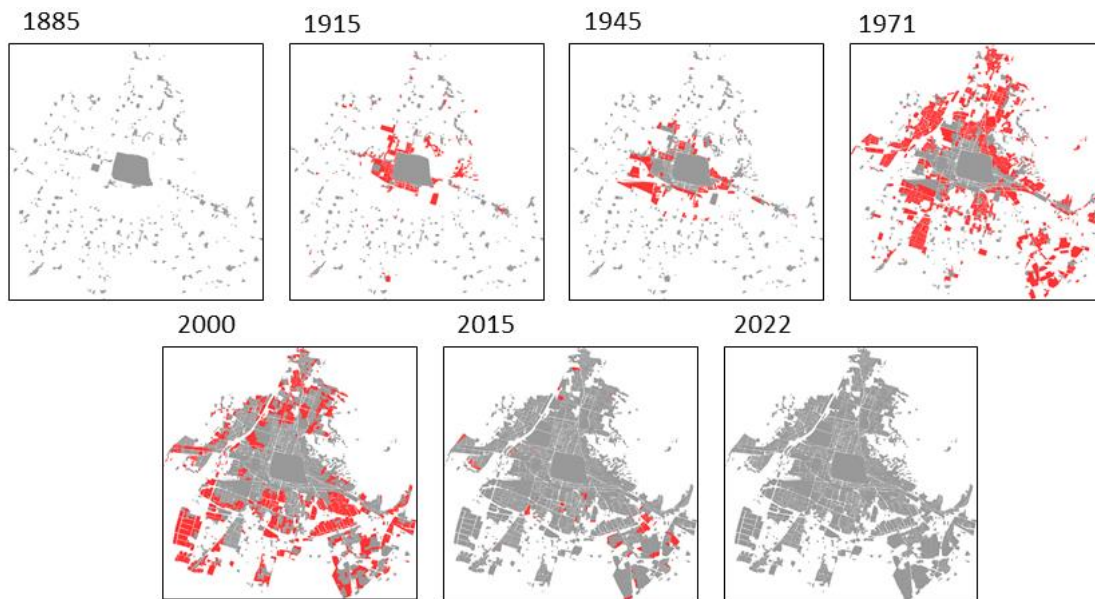


Figure 2: Urban sprawl in the last three centuries

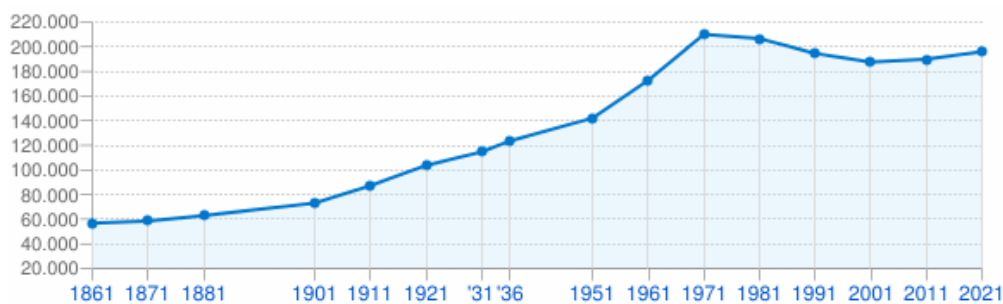


Figure 3: Population demographic trends

At the beginning of the 2000s, green areas policies changed: from green as a decorative element to pleasant spaces to live in, to be maintained and safeguarded, enriching their biodiversity. The most important goal is the preservation of existing green spaces and their improvement, including the reforestation of areas near major traffic roads to mitigate pollutants.

Since 2002, green preservation has been implemented with the approval of Brescia Hills Local Park of Supra-municipal Interest (LPSI) covering an area of about 44 km². In 2018, the Quarries LPSI was established to promote land regeneration of the southeastern portion of the city of 9 km² and the recovery of naturalness. Brescia is also characterized by large public green areas (3'800'000 m²) and a very high number of trees (over 120'000).

Since 2002, the city's Strategic Urban Plan (SUP) have emphasized the theme of conservation, adaptation, and transformation of the built environment. The 2016 SUP calls for a drastic reduction in land consumption, focusing on the regeneration of dismissed buildings rather than on the use of agricultural areas, and the strengthening of the services and infrastructure network. Concerning the issue of brownfield redevelopment, the SUP introduces urban planning and building measures aiming at ensuring their productive rehabilitation and promoting their reuse.

The Caffaro industry caused several environmental problems in the 20th century, contaminating the soil, subsoil and groundwater with chlorinated organic substances and heavy metals. For this reason, in the early 2000s, it was recognized as a Site of National Interest. In order to decontaminate these

areas, 90'000'000 € were allocated by the Italian government and a further 20'000'000 €, financed by municipal, national and PNRR funds, are spending to restore public spaces (schools, parks, and sports areas).

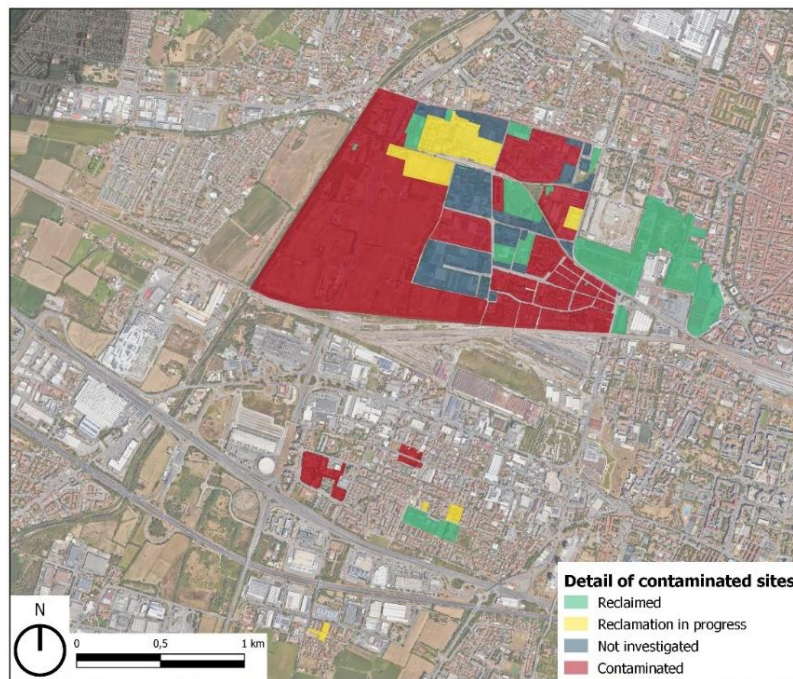


Figure 4: Land reclamation status

Despite the complexity of the issue, Brescia has been involved in several environmental initiatives, by signing:

- in 1994, the Aalborg Charter by adhering to Agenda 21;
- in 2020, the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy 2030;
- in 2021, the City Charter for Climate Neutrality.

In recent decades, international policies have introduced the issues of sustainability and resilience of territories into political, administrative and urban planning language, moving from “classic” to the new tactical urbanism, directly involving citizens. In 2014, the Urban Center officially introduced participatory planning in shared decision-making processes.

Moreover, in 2018, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan outlines sustainable mobility policies over the next decade. Connections are provided by the subway line (which extends 13 km) and the bus network is protracted to the hinterland. The city has a cycling network of about 230 km complemented by the "Bici-Mia" sharing service. In order to promote environmental quality and active mobility, on the one hand, pedestrianisation of monumental streets and squares has been implemented, on the other hand, restricted traffic zones in the city centre and 'Zone 30' in the city districts have been activated. In addition, the public electric charging service is growing.

Despite the virtuous policies promoted on an urban scale, unfortunately, the city's location within the Po' Valley does not favour a marked improvement in air quality: exceedances of PM10 and PM2 and ozone limits are numerous and frequent.

In 2016, the European Commission in the “European Strategy on Heating and Cooling” document emphasized how the synergistic use of waste-to-energy, district heating and cogeneration systems

could promote decarbonization and the production of cleaner and cheaper energy. Since 1972, Brescia has been creating an integrated system of energy production, district heating and heat recovery from industries. Over the years, the expansion of the district heating network, the introduction of cogeneration systems (1978-1982: Lamarmora and Nord power plants), and the waste-to-energy Plant (Termoutilizzatore - 1998) allowed the system to evolve, becoming an internationally recognized example of circularity and efficiency. The Environment and Energy System has contributed significantly to improving air quality and reducing climate-changing emissions.

In 2021, Brescia approved the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan. It includes public and private actions to raise awareness on energy issues, promoting successful projects and new actions.

Human pressure, the effects of pollution, and climate change require a visionary approach to seeking long-term mitigation solutions. The first organic document related to risk assessment was the Municipal Emergency Plan (2017) and then the Climate Transition Strategy (2021), both aimed at promoting actions against climate change by 2030.

The city is equipped with planning tools showing how the future is already designed in the present. The administrative policies introduced in the last decade will allow the city to continue working for the community, making it more resilient and able to cope with transformation and change.

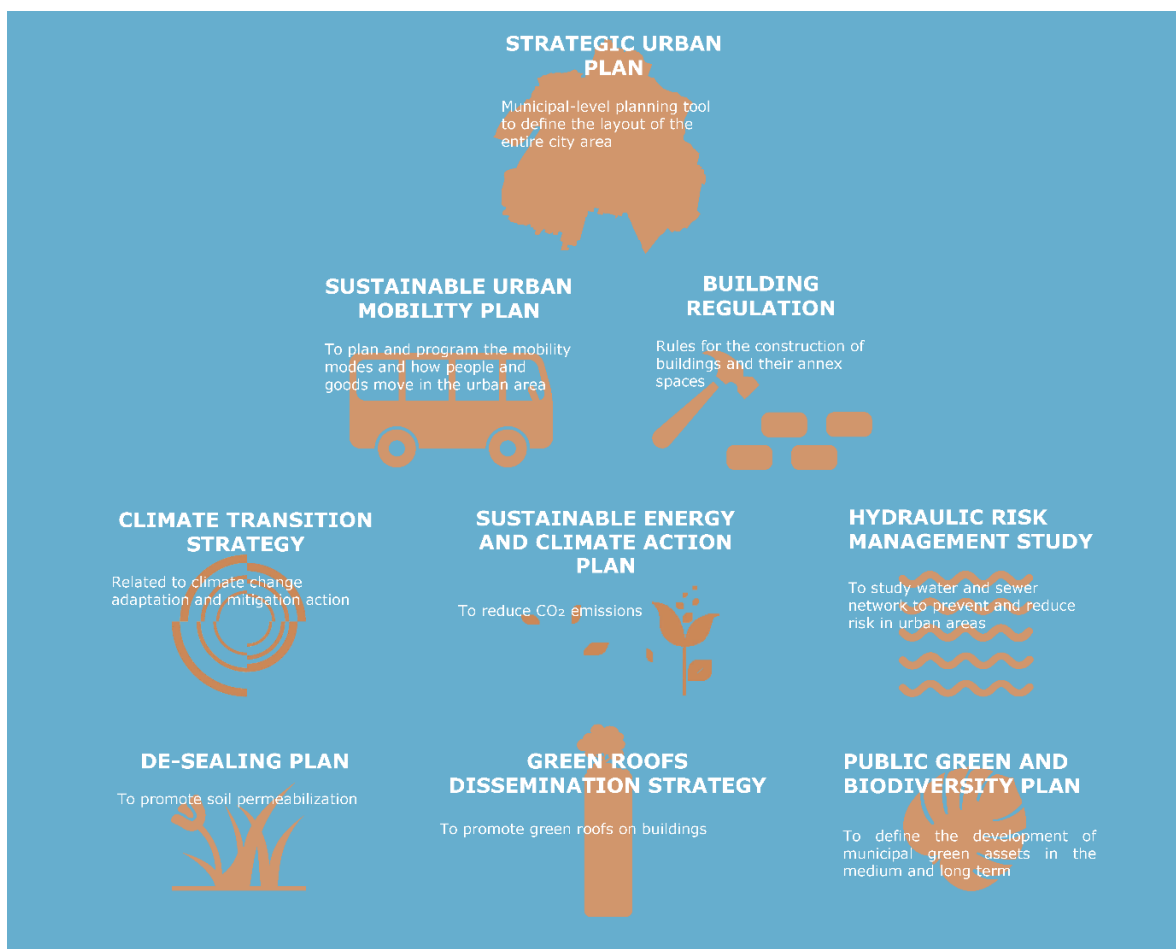


Figure 5: General and sectoral planning instruments

Word Count Check

Please complete the below word count check.

Section	Number of words in graphics/images/tables	Number of words in body of text	Total number of words in graphics/ images/ tables and body of text	Max. words
Introduction	0	984	984	1000