



ICLEI 2008

Partnerships & networks for urban biodiversity

- Cities and regions around the world have embarked on biodiversity action. They wish to share experiences, exchange their views on successful and unsuccessful measures, and on their strategies for halting biodiversity loss.
- Cooperation and partnership on a global, regional and national level is needed.
- This fact sheet highlights initiatives dealing with biodiversity and local government: Local Action for Biodiversity, Countdown 2010 and the “Cities and Biodiversity” Initiative.

Urban biodiversity: why local action is key

Urban biodiversity is biological diversity of urban areas. The species (plants and animals) that are responsible for this diversity and the interactions between them and their environment reflect the character and quality of urban ecosystems. Urban biodiversity is heavily influenced by humans: how land is used and built up, and through economic, social and cultural dynamics.

In more densely populated areas, urban biodiversity consists mostly of species that have adapted to the urban environment: from falcons nesting on roof tops to weeds growing in the pavement. Less dense cities and those with a shorter history of human impact may still have important original natural areas and species.

Urban biodiversity should be seen in a wider con-

text: Although urban areas comprise only 2.8% of the Earth’s surface, cities and their inhabitants play a crucial role beyond their border. Part of the reason for this is that nature in the urban context is accessible nature, and it has been proven that people need access to nature

in order to foster concern for nature and support for environmental initiatives.

Urban biodiversity is much more than the visibility of animals and plants in our cities. It is becoming the symbol for the dependency of mankind on natural resources.

Local governments are locally and globally relevant actors as

- they all need functioning ecosystems to provide municipal services,
- they are responsible for conserving and improving the biodiversity within their own territory,
- they care for more than half of the world’s population living in urban areas and are dependent on natural resources from outside,
- urban inhabitants & economies consume 75% of the world’s resources,
- they can influence the awareness of their citizens which can determine behaviour as individuals and decision makers.

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Local Action for Biodiversity



Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) is a global urban biodiversity initiative launched by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in 2006. Initiated by the City of Cape Town and supported by the City of eThekweni (Durban), a first pilot project (2006-2009) works with a selected group of 21 local and regional governments from around the world. These LAB participants represent over 54 mil-

lion inhabitants and a variety of different ecosystems.

The overarching aim of LAB is to improve biodiversity management at the level of local government, in recognition of their enormous potential for contributing locally to conserving the global common good of biodiversity.

Through supporting the biodiversity efforts of LAB cities, their knowledge, experience, methodologies and documents are gained which are then available to many more cities and towns.

Local Action for Biodiversity project goals

1. Support the project cities in their local work,
2. Facilitate lesson-sharing,
3. Produce good practice biodiversity case examples,
4. Promote mainstreaming of biodiversity,
5. Profile and promote the importance of urban biodiversity,
6. Raise the status of local government's management of biodiversity, and
7. Lead the way for the next generation of participating cities.



Methods and strategies for local action

The LAB steps

All LAB cities undergo the following five steps. Soon they can share with others how to best gain local support, approach biodiversity management strategically and get plans implemented.

Step 1 Assess:

Local governments compile biodiversity reports that assess the current state of biodiversity and its management.

Step 2 Commit:

Local Councils express their commitment by signing the Durban Commitment on urban biodiversity.

Step 3 Plan:

Local governments and stakeholders compile long-term local biodiversity strategies & action plans.

Step 4 Commit:

Local Councils sign a commitment to implement their long-term local biodiversity strategy & action plans.

Step 5 Implement:

Local governments launch five new on-the-ground biodiversity initiatives.

The Local Action for Biodiversity programme will continue beyond its pilot phase. As a joint ICLEI-IUCN initiative, many more cities and towns will be offered support to follow in the pioneers' footsteps. Together with ICLEI, cities, towns and regional governments can initiate national and further international cooperation projects. Projects are planned for providing toolkits, guidebooks, interactive web sites, conferences and exchange workshops.

Vision for the future:

- Advocacy for urban biodiversity will increase.
- Facts and figures will demonstrate the relevance of local government in the management of urban biodiversity.
- Mayors will convene to showcase achievements.
- Local governments will receive increased authori-

ty and resources to better manage biodiversity.

- Projects and initiatives will start everywhere in the world.
- ICLEI will design with partners a global programme on Local Action for Biodiversity.
- Funders will be approached to enable local action.
- Many more cities will participate in global efforts.

Local Action for Biodiversity will enter into a new phase with more cities, more partners and more ambitious goals.

The LAB project team works in the ICLEI Africa Secretariat in Cape Town, South Africa.

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COUNTDOWN 2010

SAVE BIODIVERSITY

Countdown 2010 is a powerful network of active partners working together towards the 2010 biodiversity target.

By signing the Countdown 2010 commitment all those who want to be involved can express their readiness to act as well as to cooperate. Partners of Countdown 2010 are national, regional and local authorities, nature protection institutions, companies, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions from all continents.

Each partner commits additional efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The secretariat, hosted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 biodiversity target and assesses progress towards 2010. An Assembly of all partners meets annually to review the overall direction

of Countdown 2010. In its implementation, Countdown 2010 is guided by a core Advisory Board.

Countdown 2010's specific objectives are to:

- Gain maximum public attention for the challenge of saving biodiversity by 2010;
- Encourage and support the full implementation of all the existing binding international commitments and necessary actions to save biodiversity;
- Demonstrate clearly what progress the world makes in meeting the 2010 biodiversity target.

Tilburg in Holland was the first local government to sign CD 2010 in the year 2005. Since then more than 180 cities, towns and regions have followed.

By signing Countdown 2010 a commitment for action is given. IUCN and its partner for local governments, ICLEI, are jointly giving support to turn commitment into action.

www.countdown2010.net

The Countdown 2010 Declaration

Biodiversity – the web of life on earth – is essential to the quality of human well-being, and it is a crucial element in sustaining the social, economic and spiritual dimension of all societies worldwide. Yet, biodiversity continues to decline. Political commitments have been made to stop this trend by 2010. Further steps need to be taken to honour this commitment and to translate it into action. We the undersigned will take every practical opportunity to:

Support the commitments to halt or significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, made by:

- World Environment Ministers in the Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in the Netherlands 2002;
- World Heads of State in the Plan of Implementation at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002;
- World Heads of State in the United Nations World Summit Outcome in New York 2005;
- a number of biodiversity related conventions and regional processes since 2001.

Encourage decision makers at all levels, in both the public and the private sector, to contribute to these commitments and to:

- Increase public awareness and participation for biodiversity conservation, including the promotion of exemplary activities towards the 2010 biodiversity target;
- Better integrate biodiversity considerations into all relevant sectors of public policy and economy;
- Undertake serious efforts to adapt human activities to the needs of natural systems;
- Support the development of suitable monitoring and indicator tools to assess the state of biodiversity.

Commit ourselves to encourage and assist decision makers and societies in achieving the 2010 biodiversity target, notably through:

- Actively promoting Countdown 2010 to focus attention and mobilise resources for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target;
- Significantly reducing our own impact on biodiversity.

Your Signature

www.countdown2010.net



Cities and biodiversity: A global initiative

The global initiative Cities and Biodiversity is the answer from a variety of actors, primarily from local governments and UN agencies, to the growing understanding that local governments must and do play a crucial role towards improved biodiversity management and conservation.

Participants in the initiative today include UN agencies such as the CBD Secretariat, UNEP, UN-HABITAT and UNESCO, local government associations, such as ICLEI and UCLG, and international

organisations such as IUCN.

The initiative is also based on the outstanding commitment of selected cities, first of all the hosts cities to CBD related activities: Montréal, Curitiba, Bonn, Nagoya, Johannesburg.

The key elements forming the initiative are

Global Partnership for Urban Biodiversity (cooperation),
World Mayors Council on Climate Change (representing local government), and
Local Action for Biodiversity (projects with and for cities).

The goals are:

- To advocate for urban biodiversity on a global level,
- to highlight the relevance of local governments' responsibilities and activities,
- to support projects of city networks on biodiversity, allowing projects such as LAB to expand and consolidate lessons learned,
- to reach developing country cities by involving donors that would offset the cost of managing projects and ensuring exchanges and technology transfers.



This document is part of a series of factsheets that are intended to provide guidance and information on biodiversity management to decision-makers at the local and regional level. For more detailed information on how local and regional authorities have contributed to stopping biodiversity loss, please visit our web site www.countdown2010.net/lara or contact us directly. All factsheets can be downloaded from www.countdown2010.net/lara.

Facts & Figures

Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexities of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
Convention on Biological Diversity

Urban biodiversity ...

is biological diversity of urban areas. It is heavily influenced by the built environment and the economic, social and cultural dynamics of these densely populated places.

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ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
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Local Action for Biodiversity
www.iclei.org/lab

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