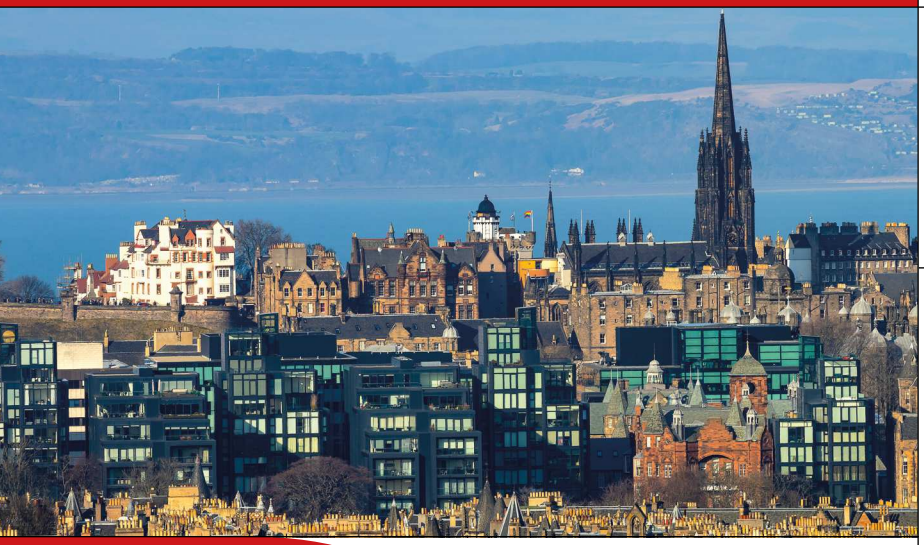
POST 2020
BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK
EU SUPPORT

TOWARDS POST-2020 DIALOGUE WITH #18

THE EDINBURGH PROCESS – EMPOWERING SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK



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To reach ambitious biodiversity goals and implement CBD COP15 decisions, subnational governments, cities, and local authorities must not only be included as stakeholders but become an integral part of gathering insights and informing action. The Edinburgh Process captured these ambitions via consultations, webinars, and outcome-oriented initiatives.

"THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, CITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACROSS THE WORLD, STAND READY TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF DELIVERING THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK AND PLAY A STRONGER ROLE IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION."
Roseanna Cunningham, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

To meet the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050, transformative change is required, starting with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Whilst it is up to parties to the Convention to negotiate the new global biodiversity framework, Subnational and Local Governments (SNLGs) have a vital role in its implementation and the mainstreaming of biodiversity, with two thirds of biodiversity legislation adopted and enacted at the subnational and local level in some parts of the world. It is therefore essential that this key role is recognised in the framework but also that national governments involve their SNLGs in its development, implementation, and monitoring. The SNLGs are willing partners; however, this resource is not always being used to its full potential.

The Edinburgh Process, led by the Scottish Government and its partners, has brought together the SNLGs constituency, including cities, to gather their views through consultations and online events. Its aim is to feed these views into the development of the post-2020 framework, and to also encourage SNLGs to engage with their national focal points during both its development and more importantly in its implementation, in line with the whole of government approach.

Pretoria sunrise, 245 Paul Kruger Street, South Africa

1. GATHERING THE VIEWS OF THE SNLG CONSTITUENCIES THROUGH AN INCLUSIVE CONSULTATION

Today there is a gap between the ambitions of SNLGs to be involved in the development and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the reality. For example, 53% of SNLGs have a Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBSAP), but only 35% have contributed to their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and 25% to the related national reports. However, a further two thirds expressed their wish to contribute to both. This is one of the main findings from the consultation carried out as part of the Edinburgh Process, established by the Scottish Government and its partners, in conjunction with the CBD, to address this gap and engage the subnational constituency in the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The aim was to ensure that their views were taken into account not only in the development of the framework but also in its implementation.

To cope with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, what would have been a physical meeting in Edinburgh became a series of online consultations and events. This allowed the Edinburgh Process to engage more widely and equitably than would have been possible otherwise. The views of over 400 global participants with an equal gender balance and representation from all UN regional groupings were captured. Participants represented SNLGs, including cities (41%), national governments (14%), subnational networks (13%), academics and experts (14%), and youth (1%).

The Edinburgh Process held three main consultations, supported by online meetings and thematic sessions, to gather views on the draft global biodiversity framework, elements for an updated Subnational Plan of Action, and on the Edinburgh Declaration.

ADDRESSING KEY BIODIVERSITY ISSUES FACING SNLGs

Most respondents felt that the key biodiversity issues for the subnational constituency were addressed in the framework, with two thirds agreeing and a third agreeing somewhat. However, a number of areas for improvement in the framework were raised. One of the key themes was that the role of SNLGs needed to be clearly recognised within all relevant sections of the framework to ensure that it is politically relevant, vertically integrated, and that governments at all levels feel responsible for its implementation. SNLGs are uniquely placed due to their statutory role in implementing biodiversity legislation and actions (up to 70% in some regions) and their closeness to their communities. Rather than just as stakeholders to be consulted, they should be considered as integral partners in implementing the framework, in line with the whole of government approach. Subnational and local governments are also well placed to address biodiversity mainstreaming, in line with the long-term strategic approach, due their closer links to stakeholders, including businesses, NGOs, youth, local communities, and indigenous peoples.

RAISING THE LEVEL OF AMBITION

The overall level of ambition in the Zero Draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework was generally considered towards what is needed to set us on the road for recovery by SNLGs. However, this will ultimately depend on the ambition of state parties over the final round of negotiations of the text.

Indeed, not all SNLGs were convinced that the final framework would deliver the transformative change that is required to put us on the path to recovery for the benefit of planet and people. Respondents highlighted that there shouldn't be distinct levels of ambition between national, subnational, and local governments, but rather all jurisdictions should feel challenged to raise the bar of the desired ambition for the next framework in order to engender meaningful action.

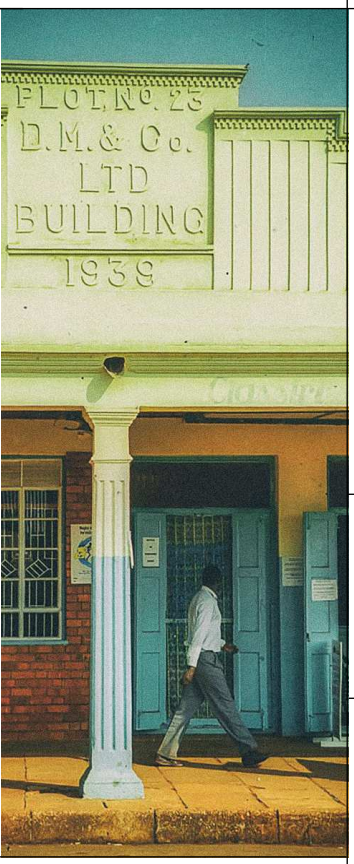
"AT THE DAWN OF A NEW DECADE, THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE ACTIONS WE TAKE NOW TO REVERSE THE UNPRECEDENTED LOSS OF NATURE AND SECURE OUR INCREASINGLY URBAN FUTURE. IT IS AT THE SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL THAT ACTION HAS A DIRECT IMPACT, AND THIS IS WHERE THE NEW GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK WILL BE IMPLEMENTED."

Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal and ICLEI's Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity

THE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Having the monitoring framework considered as an integral part of the overall global biodiversity framework is a step forward from the previous Aichi targets, where indicators were adopted only after a number of years. However, SNLGs were not confident that the current framework was sufficient to allow monitoring of the action targets at the subnational level with over two thirds saying it was only partially sufficient or insufficient.

It is important to ensure that those wishing to monitor and report on the implementation of their commitments can do so through the next framework.



Cape Town, South Africa

A more direct inclusion of implementation by all levels of government is therefore required. There is a need to have elements or indicators on the participation of SNLGs, including for the adoption of LBSAPs and promotion of nature-based solutions [1].

SNLGs also need to have a clear role and responsibility regarding those indicators that relate to data that they are best suited to collect and provide through the development of tools for use at all levels. It is also important that the resources—both human and financial—to carry out monitoring activities are adequate. In this regard, the use of citizen scientists in monitoring should be encouraged to empower and engage communities.

2. DEVISING AN SNLG ACTION PLAN FOR COP15 AND BEYOND

One of the main objectives of the Edinburgh Process was to review CBD Decision X/22, Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities, and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020), from the local and subnational government perspective, and to make recommendations for a renewed Decision to be adopted at COP15. Based on the online consultation responses, the SNLGs constituency is calling for a more ambitious dedicated Decision to replace Decision X/22. The key elements, or principles, recommended by this constituency to be addressed in a renewed and stepped-up dedicated Decision, are:

+ ensuring inclusion, as appropriate, of subnational and local governments, which are part and parcel of government and essential partners in supporting the implementation of the CBD, both in 2030 milestones and 2050 goals;

+ mobilising resources [2] for increased investment in biodiversity action at subnational and local levels, by creating enabling conditions for greater investments in biodiversity action by subnational and local governments and encouraging them to reprioritize their own resources;

+ reinforcing the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity across the whole of government and identification of the efforts that subnational and local governments specifically need to undertake to support biodiversity mainstreaming across jurisdictional, cross-cutting, and sectoral policies;

+ building SNLGs' capacity by ensuring adequate human, financial, and technical means, commensurate to their responsibility and jurisdictions, so that actions taken at the subnational and local levels can contribute effectively to the implementation of NBSAPs and strengthen their capacity to implement nature-based solutions;

+ tailoring communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) initiatives, instruments, and actions to the subnational and local contexts;

+ supporting subnational and local governments to improve decision-making through better access to biodiversity data; and developing a monitoring system that facilitates data collection by subnational and local governments that will then be aggregated at national level for reporting and evaluation;

+ facilitating international cooperation among subnational and local governments, as well as their membership in alliances or networks to accelerate biodiversity action.

These principles will be presented to the CBD parties at appropriate events in the post-2020 global biodiversity process, as recommendations from the SNLGs constituency in the call for a new, dedicated, and more ambitious Decision and Plan of Action to be adopted at COP15.

"THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AT NATIONAL, SUB-NATIONAL, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVELS BECAUSE MANY OF THE ON-GROUND ACTIVITIES WILL TAKE PLACE AT THAT LEVEL. THE SUPPORT OF SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IS THUS FUNDAMENTAL FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST-2020 FRAMEWORK. THE COMMITMENTS OUTLINED IN THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION SIGNAL THAT OUR CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT IS VITAL TO MEET THE 2050 VISION FOR BIODIVERSITY."
Francis Ogwal, OEWG Co-Chair

3. THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION

The conclusion of the Edinburgh Process is that to achieve the transformative change required to put biodiversity of the road to recovery, SNLGs need to be actively involved in implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in line with the whole of government approach.

Participants wanted to make a clear political commitment to this effect, outlining the contribution they could make, calling on parties to the CBD to match that ambition, and to engage with them in implementing the actions required.

The result of this commitment is the Edinburgh Declaration.

[1] For more information: Harriet Bulkeley and McKenna Davis. "Nature-based solutions: Harnessing the potential for ambitious post-2020 biodiversity outcomes", Towards Post-2020 Expertise on #7

[2] For more information: Julia Tasse. "Instilling biodiversity into budgets and financial schemes: How to shift towards a greener system?", Towards Post-2020 Expertise on #8

Flowering heather on the north coast of Scotland

The declaration, which was initially signed by the Scottish Government and Edinburgh Process Partners, will remain open for signature until COP15 in order to gather the strength of the subnational constituency into a single voice.

The Declaration also sets out 10 commitments from SNLGs with regard to the post 2020 global biodiversity framework. These set out how SNLGs will deliver the framework, including by:

+ recognising the overall value of nature and integrating it into planning, management and governance instruments;

+ implementing appropriate actions that deliver on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework goals and action targets;

+ aligning biodiversity strategies and actions and our monitoring and reporting efforts with NBSAPs;

+ increasing resource mobilisation; mainstreaming biodiversity across public, private and business sectors; communicating, educating and raising public awareness;

+ strengthening capacity-building;

+ providing opportunities for knowledge exchange;

+ sharing best practices across subnational, City, and local levels;

+ delivering convergence with other intergovernmental agreements and processes.

The Edinburgh Declaration builds upon the Aburra Valley [3] (Colombia) and Carta de São Paulo [4] (Brazil) Declarations, as changes required at all levels and in all sectors can only be achieved collectively to set nature on the path to recovery.

The **Edinburgh Declaration**'s list of signatories will be regularly updated towards CBD COP15.

Sign the Declaration here.

THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION

Call for action

We subnational governments, cities, and local authorities therefore call upon parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to;

I. *Take strong and bold actions to bring about transformative change, as outlined in the IPBES global assessment report, in order to halt biodiversity loss.*

II. *Recognise the vital role of subnational governments, cities, and local authorities in delivering the 2050 vision of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the 2030 mission as set out in the Zero Draft document; and to explicitly place that recognition throughout the framework text, including the monitoring framework for the goals and targets.*

III. *Support the adoption at COP15, of a new dedicated Decision for the greater inclusion of subnational governments, cities, and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; that builds upon and renews the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities, and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020) as endorsed under Decision X/22; and that significantly raises ambition for subnational, city, and local implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework throughout the next decade.*

IV. *Establish a multi-stakeholder platform that ensures representation of subnational governments, cities, and local authorities to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.*

We, subnational governments, cities, and local authorities, stand ready to meet the challenge of delivering, alongside parties, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to ensure investment and play a stronger role in the implementation of the framework through a renewed and significantly stepped-up Plan of Action for subnational governments, cities, and local authorities for the coming decade.

[3] Aburra Valley (2019), Medellin Declaration of Metropolitan Areas to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework https://cutt.ly/hgCc2st

[4] Carta de São Paulo (2020) - BIO2020 – Brazilian Perspectives for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework https://cutt.ly/dgCvt7W

Youtube page https://cutt.ly/jgCvSsr

Cover page picture
Edinburgh looking south over the Royal Mile.
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CBD COP 15 ___ KUNMING 2021
TOWARDS A GLOBAL DEAL FOR NATURE & PEOPLE

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The Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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