



TOWARDS POST-2020 EXPERTISE ON #36

WORLDBIO: SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PROMOTING TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK



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“WBIO22 IS AN INNOVATIVE EVENT INTEGRATING SCALES, FROM GLOBAL, THROUGH REGIONAL, TO NATIONAL, SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL. THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CBD WELCOMES THE PROPOSAL FROM THE SAO PAULO STATE GOVERNMENT FOR A BILATERAL AGREEMENT, SUPPORTING THE WBIO AS A PROCESS, WITH SEVERAL PARTNERS, LIKE REGIONS4 AND ICLEI.”

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary

Catalyzing the successes of Subnational and Local Governments (SNLGs) is vital for transformative change and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) objectives. Starting in Sao Paulo in 2022, this initiative supports participative implementation of the Edinburgh Process and contributes to the future Global Partnership on SNLGs for Biodiversity, reinforcing existing networks.

The CBD established the vision of “Living in harmony with nature” by 2050. For this to happen timely, transformative change¹ is necessary, through the multi-scalar implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The mandate and influence of subnational and local governments (SNLGs) on land- and seascapes, and on production and consumption, make them critical actors in the implementation of the framework and the mainstreaming of biodiversity. Since 2010, a Plan of Action coordinates these efforts for the Parties to the Convention, with impressive results. Thanks to an innovative consultative process and a formulation of goals, called the Edinburgh Process, a revised and expanded 10-year plan is expected to be agreed to complement the post-2020 framework at CBD COP15.

Over 50,000 subnational governments and around 1 million local authorities collectively contribute most of the resources, human, technical and financial, to the CBD – yet they still need to be brought together to fully cooperate on the implementation of the future UN biodiversity framework.

1. THE ORIGINS - A PROCESS TO FORMULATE POLICIES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

Endorsed in 2010 by the national governments having ratified the CBD, the Plan of Action for the engagement of subnational and local governments (SNLGs), such as provinces, municipalities, metropolitan authorities, counties and villages, is now reflected in the majority of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans submitted by the Parties to the Convention Secretariat. Since 2020, the Edinburgh Process ⁴, led by the Scottish government reached out to Parties and their SNLGs in order to gather recommendations from the perspective of SNLGs for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and made significant proposals to extend, update and enhance the Plan of Action, outlining new areas for engagement. This updated Plan of Action is incorporated in a recommendation by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation to the Conference of the Parties (document CBD/SBI/REC/3/14) ⁵. CitiesWithNature ⁶, a shared platform for cities and their partners to engage and connect for a more sustainable urban world, reports more than 230 signatories, including New York and Sao Paulo cities.

Cantareira State Park in Sao Paulo - urban-rural linkages for water, temperature regulation and ecotourism. © SIMA

¹ Defined by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service as “fundamental, system-wide reorganizations across technological, economic, and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values” (IPBES 2019, <https://zenodo.org/record/3553579>).

² The Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

³ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-22-en.pdf>.

⁴ See Dialogue with #18 The Edinburgh Process – Empowering local and subnational governments for an effective and inclusive biodiversity framework, available on : <https://4post2020bd.net/resources/dialogue-with-18-edinburgh-process/>

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/recommendations/sbi/?m=sbi-03>

⁶ <https://citieswithnature.org/new-york-city-becomes-200th-city-to-join-global-citieswithnature-initiative/>

⁷ See Mobilization of #6 – Local and subnational actors: the spearheads of biodiversity solutions in motion, available on <https://4post2020bd.net/resources/local-and-subnational-actors-the-spearheads-of-biodiversity-solutions-in-motion/>

Another past contribution was Bio2020, an event hosted by the State Government of Sao Paulo, Brazil, that gathered subnational and local actors, including representatives of municipalities, states, metropolitan regions, biosphere reserves, the private sector and civil society, to discuss perspectives of Brazilian stakeholders regarding key points for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, generating the Sao Paulo Letter ⁸.

The participation of SNLGs in the implementation of the objectives of multilateral agreements is first a matter of principle, as SNLGs represent and work on behalf of populations that provide and gain from the ecological, social and economic costs and benefits of the agreements. Some traditional populations that already live in harmony with nature have often been historically burdened by top-down conservation policy interventions, and listening to them is critical to achieving socially positive solutions. SNLGs are also well-positioned to mainstream biodiversity due to holding closer ties to various businesses, civil society, youth, local communities and indigenous peoples.

Utilizing the agency of SNLGs is more likely to succeed and transform human-nature interactions than exogenous and one-size-fits-all interventions coming solely from higher levels of governance, since local actors possess greater knowledge about local biophysical and social contexts, rules and values, and on the interests and expectations of local actors – a point also made in principle 2 of the Convention’s Ecosystem Approach which states that “management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level”.

The outcomes of the Edinburgh Process and the mobilization started by the Bio2020 ⁷ event in Brazil called for coordinate efforts to bring together subnational and local actors relevant to the implementation of the framework. The expanded Plan of Action already proposes a menu of alternative approaches, for a break-through towards a living process. However, a multi-level and multi-stakeholder network established along a set of criteria and objectives over time (a platform) is key towards real territorial governance from mainstreaming-oriented territorial actors. Such a process within the Global Partnership can support the Advisory Committees strengthen and accelerate existing platforms and networks like CitiesWithNature, RegionsWithNature. It can also complement the regular Summits parallel to the Conferences of the Parties (CoP), joining forces in: (i) cataloging, leveraging, and disseminating transformative actions, (ii) democratizing knowledge to consolidate the framework, focusing on pilot projects, and (iii) facilitating access to investments and finance, resources and partnerships, technology transfer, and capacity-building.

2. KICKING OFF - COMING TOGETHER FOR TRANSFORMATION IN THE WBIO2022

The hybrid WorldBio2022 event, hosted by the State of Sao Paulo, ICLEI, Regions4 and the Secretariat of the Convention, and facilitated by the “Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework – EU support” project, ACIA and GIZ, on June 7-9, 2022 in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil, brought together over 400 participants from SNLGs and their organizations, national governments, businesses and finance players, and organized civil society, reinforcing the stage for the engagement of SNLGs and improving advice for long-term implementation until 2030.

Through preparatory events and meetings and intense discussions, WBio2022 aligned actions along five themes, detailed through working groups, which can guide future implementation, monitoring and feedback at related events and activities:

- 1. Messaging for governance:** communication, environmental education, and societal awareness (CEPA).
- 2. Urban-level action:** optimizing nature-based solutions for urban design and development, managing the urban metabolism, restoring urban ecosystems.
- 3. Green & blue economy:** subnational action, land- and seascape governance, and financial and incentive instruments for projects and actions at territorial scales, considering vertical and horizontal integration.
- 4. Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)** – identifying public-private synergies for connectivity.
- 5. Science, knowledge generation, and monitoring:** science-based indicators, reporting and capacity building in technology transfer for the activities of the platform.

Strategically speaking, the successful Edinburgh Process started an important work that needs to be scaled up, in a joint effort to go beyond the surface.



Conserved forests in the Parakanã Indigenous Lands, Pará State, Brazil - Partnerships between SNLGs, Indigenous Peoples, and local or traditional communities are essential for guaranteeing the human and territorial rights while protecting biodiversity. © Sacha Siani.

“THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE STILL DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THE CONVENTION AND ITS TOOLS. A SIGNIFICANT IMPLEMENTATION MOVEMENT AND A QUANTUM LEAP IN TERMS OF GLOBAL COORDINATION NEEDS TO BE OPERATIONAL TO ENABLE EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION BY SNLGS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST-2020 GBF AND A PLAN OF ACTION BY CBD COP16. T.”

Claudio Maretti, Independent Researcher, at WBio2022

3. THE ROAD AHEAD - TOWARD SNLGS’ IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK AND THE PLAN OF ACTION

Building upon the Edinburgh Process, the WorldBio2022 event discussed solutions for a long-term and global effort to implement the post-2020 GBF at the territorial and urban levels.

The implementation of the CBD can be accelerated and improved as a consequence of the adequate management of territories and the linkages that connect urban centers of production and consumption with rural, productive land- and seascapes and conservation areas.

In this sense, the concepts of planning for sustainable land- and seascapes, and of teleconnections, through an “urban-rural metabolism” converge, creating new population dynamics, and allowing for necessary social and economic changes and ecological solidarities. Urbanization and ecosystems are profoundly intertwined. As urbanization takes over more land and has greater impacts on ecosystems, there is growing demand on ecosystem services (food, fiber, water, energy, etc.). Flows of people, goods, services, information, capital, etc. define and drive urban-rural linkages in complex and intricate patterns. Environmental education and the design, assessment and governance of economic incentives and subsidies are additional key responsibilities of SNLGs.

So, what has WBio2022 achieved to help in this process?

First, the continuity of such an event could provide a regular milestone and stocktaking event and methodology for further stocktaking. Sao Paulo State is ready to develop an agreement with the Secretariat of the CBD, in consultation with existing and new partners in the Edinburgh Process and the Global Partnership on SNLGs for Biodiversity, and can support existing and new partners in designing a coordination event as a regular feature, possibly inspired by the functions of the Convention’s original body for the regular review of its implementation, the so-called “Working Group on the Review of Implementation” (WGRI).

This potential coordination movement for implementation needs to support the set of policy tools that will result from contributions by the successful Edinburgh Process, textual contributions from the partners to the draft targets and strategies of the framework on pollution, climate change, ecosystem services, valuation of nature, mainstreaming, sustainable consumption, incentives, capacity building and resource mobilization (draft targets 7, 8, 12, 14, 14, 16, 18, 19), as well as to the Plan of Action itself. It could review, and convey the information of appropriate CBD bodies, outcomes of Parties’ work in leveraging contribution of SNLGs to relevant targets of the GBF and document their impacts and effectiveness on the global biodiversity framework and its indicators. It could also assist in enabling connections with focal points at national level and with the Convention Secretariat and contribute towards reporting and review of the implementation of the Convention and the global framework.

Second, the WorldBio event proposes to continue the Edinburgh Process’ multi-level, multi-stakeholder coordination arrangement, aligned along five priority action areas to accelerate implementation and responding to the Convention’s Action Agenda for non-state Actors. A multi-stakeholder movement can help transform the implementation rate of the global biodiversity framework, as it can catalyze action on the territory: land, coast, wetland, island, sea, mountain or freshwater, where resource managers and people in general are naturally led to cooperate. SNLGs are well-positioned, and have experience, in integrating nature into development solutions; they are well-positioned to lead on links to business and finance concerns, and close to people and nature.

Third, it identified dozens of significant projects aligned with the five action areas, including some listed below. Future events of this initiative can be convened by the original organizers to build a better geographical balance in further developing projects that would contribute to the implementation of the GBF and Plan of Action.

“THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS WAS HIGHLIGHTED THROUGH ALL SESSIONS DURING THE WBIO2022, WHICH IS WHY WE CHOSE THIS EVENT TO ANNOUNCE CITIES4BIO-DIVERSITY, A SUSTAINABLE FINANCING MECHANISM FOR INVESTING IN NATURE, IDENTIFYING REVENUE STREAMS THAT GENERATE SUSTAINABLE RETURNS BASED ON DATA TO TRACK THE PERFORMANCE OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURES”.

Yuna Chun, Urban Development Analyst, The World Bank, at WBio2022

⁸ <https://www.infraestruturameioambiente.sp.gov.br/en/2020/02/bio2020-ends-with-sao-paulo-charter-to-the-biodiversity-cop-in-china/>

² Dasgupta, P. (2021), The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review. (London: HM Treasury) <https://cutt.ly/AYkL5wr>

³ LTAM, CBD/SBI/3/13

⁴ See CBD/SBI/3/CRP.8: Engagement with Subnational Governments, Cities, and other Local Authorities to Enhance Implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. <https://cutt.ly/TYkLZLj>

⁵ See CBD article on Fast-tracking action in support of post-2020 global biodiversity framework. <https://cutt.ly/6YkLVZc>



Agroforest nursery in Abaetetuba, Pará State, Brazil. © Sacha Siani

A PATH FOR TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

PROJECT	ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION
Reconecta RMC	RMC Municipal Governments, AGEMCAMP/Sao Paulo State Government and partners (SIMA, GAEMA, CBHs and ICLEI / INTERACT-Bio)	Cooperation between 20 local governments from the Metropolitan Region of Campinas for conservation and exchange of technical knowledge, incl. ecological corridors and connectivity.
Cities4Biodiversity	The World Bank Group	Sustainable financing mechanism for investing in biodiversity conservation, identifying revenue streams with sustainable returns based on the performance of green infrastructures.
Cities and Biodiversity III	ICLEI	Science-policy platform for research aligned with IPBES reports. The University of Sao Paulo and the community of Madrid will potentially support its coordination.
Urban–Rural Linkages and Ecosystem Restoration	UN-Habitat	Reference publication for land and ecosystem restoration showing linkages between urban and rural areas.
Expansion of successful regional projects	ICLEI, Regions4 & collaborators ojects	Expansion of the Regions 4 Biodiversity Learning Platform, Working Groups (WG), INTERACT-Bio and Urban Natural Assets projects; translation of the RegionsWithNature and CitiesWithNature.
Capacity building	ANAMMA & ABEMA	Brazilian States and municipalities environmental entities associations, developing plans for building capacity of officers on nature-based solutions, reinforced by the WBio Process proposal.
Urban Agroecology	Niteroi Municipal Government	Mayor Axel Graef leads on SDG-focused “whole of government” solutions on land and seascape planning, promoting family farms and agro-ecological economic models around protected areas to address food insecurity, school food and manage urban sprawling.
Paraná Mais Verde	Paraná State Government	Offsetting the CBD Secretariat’s carbon emissions via ecosystem restoration and native reforestation since CBD COP8.
ReflorestaSP	Sao Paulo State Government	Participative plan to restore 1.5 million hectares, reach 30% of native vegetation (12,5% of Brazil’s NDC) and improve management of 50% of marine protected areas.
Arco Verde	Comunidad de Madrid	Green Corridor connecting 25 municipalities with 3 parks around Madrid and its Metropolitan Area with access to Nature and citizen participation.

WorldBio2022 contributed to an integrated approach with CBD COP15 in Montreal and its 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities, the CitiesWithNature and RegionsWithNature platforms, the Regions4 Biodiversity Learning Platform, and the Group of Leading SNLGs towards Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It supports advocacy by the Advisory Committees on SNLGs in the Global Partnership, as proposed in the draft Plan of Action. Its main outcomes were not documents – but the enthusiasm, guidance exchanged, and building blocks for the implementation of the Plan of Action and relevant GBF targets.

If we are to “build back better”, governments in the CBD need to reach a significantly higher level of coherence and synergies between levels of government and key players. To achieve the GBF objectives, we need a quantum leap on integrated land-and seascape governance approaches’ application, addressing perverse subsidies, and to accelerate green and blue subnational and local solutions at the level of orders to magnitude.

“WORLD BIO2022 IS A FACTORY OF PROJECTS ENHANCING INCLUSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN TRANSITIONING TO AN ECONOMY HARMONIOUS WITH NATURE, AN INSTRUMENT ON THE WAY TOWARDS COP15. AFD HAS THE AMBITION TO PRIORITIZE PROJECTS THAT HELP PROTECT 30% OF THE PLANET.”

Katia Fenyves, Climate Finance Expert, Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

Against a backdrop of concurrent global challenges, the stage for CBD COP 15 shows unprecedented levels of interest, commitment and leadership from key non-state actors towards integrated solutions. WorldBio2022 contributes to this goal catalysing transformation among actors. SNLGs contribute to the momentum and compromise critical at the COP in Montreal.

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