

INTERACT-BIO DIALOGUE SUMMARY: BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND METROPOLITAN MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP I

Mainstreaming ecosystem services as a tool for sustainable urban development

06-07 November 2017 | City Hall, Belo Horizonte, Brazil



INTERACT-Bio
Integrated action on biodiversity



INTERACT-BIO DIALOGUE SUMMARY: BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND METROPOLITAN MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP I

Mainstreaming ecosystem services as a tool for urban sustainable development

1. Framing the context

Nature provides ecosystem services that are essential for the quality of life in cities. In this sense, learning about ecosystem services helps to understand and recognize the benefits of nature in urban areas, thus encouraging restoration and conservation of natural landscapes as well as the inclusion of biodiversity in local development and urban planning.

Together with UFZ, ICLEI held conferences and workshops entitled “Biodiversity, ecosystem services and metropolitan management” in three different cities and their respective metropolitan regions — Belo Horizonte, Campinas and Londrina. This dialogue is the first part of this set of events that had the objective to introduce ecosystem services - and its benefits - to decision makers and stakeholders. The 1st workshop was held in Belo Horizonte and was attended by representatives of the city hall as well as representatives of other municipalities of the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH).

The event was divided in two parts: an open conference and a private workshop for subscribed participants. The conference was attended by several speakers that presented the Ecosystem Services (ES) and its benefits for the cities and the people living in them.

After those presentations, the participants of the workshop made a technical visit to the municipal park Américo Renné Giannetti, in order to identify the ecosystem services present in that area and later apply their knowledge in other predetermined green areas. Also, during the workshop the participants worked towards delimiting a work plan for integrating the ES into development and management processes as well as sign a cooperation term between Belo Horizonte and the municipalities of the RMBH.

This dialogue contributed to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (Aichi Targets), which aims to raise awareness of biodiversity values and its integration into management, development and urban and territorial planning process. It is also aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), specifically with goal 11 - to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable — and with goals 14 and 15 - to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.



INTERACT-BIO DIALOGUE SUMMARY: BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND METROPOLITAN MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP I

Mainstreaming ecosystem services as a tool for urban sustainable development

2. Emerging themes

2.1. Identifying priority ecosystem services

The first activity of the workshop was a technical visit to the Américo Renné Giannetti Municipal Park. Then, the participants were divided in work groups to analyze different areas: Lagoa da Pampulha (a lake), Serra do Curral (a ridge) and Várzea das Flores e Rio Betim (lowland and a river).

As a result of the analysis many work groups pointed out the clean water as one of the major ecosystem services provided in their study areas. All three areas have water springs as well as lakes, rivers and/or aquifers that are used as water supply. Climate regulation and extreme events were also cited frequently. Natural vegetation has been recognized for preventing soil erosion and flooding, improving water quality and helping to mitigate the high temperatures that occur in urban areas. Combining the restoration of vegetation and watercourses, it is possible to guarantee water security for people and environmental quality in urban areas.

2.2. Major challenges

Even though there are many crucial ecosystem services provided, the participants could point out many threats to those services and the green areas. In terms of clean water, the study areas presented problems related to contamination and quality reduction caused by either lack of proper sanitation or mining activities. Another threat mentioned was the high soil sealing caused by the urbanization process — which reduces the infiltration of water in the soil, thus reducing the water stored in aquifers.

As for climate regulation and extreme events, such as landslides and floods, it was pointed out that there are many irregular occupations in protected and risk areas. This activity causes deforestation, which increases erosion and soil impermeability. Also, since the constructions are irregular, there is no proper sanitation. This increases the damage for water supply as well as the occurrence of extreme events.

2.3. How can ICLEI help to overcome these challenges?

Considering that the main problems were consequences of a metropolitan management that does not consider nature and biodiversity in its processes, ICLEI had the role of technically supporting decision makers and sharing experiences from other cities that have similarities with Belo Horizonte and that were able to integrate ecosystem services into urban planning processes. Finally, ICLEI financed demonstration projects to show that it is economically possible to include nature and biodiversity in the city's planning and development processes.



INTERACT-BIO DIALOGUE SUMMARY: BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND METROPOLITAN MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP I

Mainstreaming ecosystem services as a tool for urban sustainable development

3. Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework implications

Going forward, the dialogue and the points raised can be viewed through the Post-2020 lens, specifically in point 5 of ICLEI's 10 Point Framework, which promotes the creation of an enabling environment that supports the mainstreaming of the multiple social and health benefits of nature at the local and subnational levels to improve the quality of life and resilience of communities, enhance social cohesion and lead to financial benefits and savings for both individuals and governments. In addition, Point 3 promotes the creation of an enabling environment for significantly increased private sector investment and development aid in nature-based solutions at local and subnational levels, as they are closer to the mainstreaming sectors and best positioned to build and sustain functional and resilient ecosystems and urban-rural linkages. In this regard, both points highlight the necessity for the issues raised in this dialogue to be addressed, as their resolution can prove to be hugely beneficial to Brazil and the Post-2020 agenda.

INTERACT-Bio project at a glance

Full title: Integrated subnational action for biodiversity: Supporting implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans through the mainstreaming of biodiversity objectives across city-regions

Funded by: the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI)

Project duration: Four years - January 2017 to December 2021

Project countries: Brazil, India and Tanzania

Supported by:



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

based on a decision of the German Bundestag



Local Governments
for Sustainability



Cities Biodiversity
Center



HELMHOLTZ
CENTRE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
RESEARCH – UFZ



www.interactbio.iclei.org



biodiversity@iclei.org



#INTERACTBio