

INTERACT-BIO DIALOGUE SUMMARY: METROPOLITAN REGIONS, MANAGEMENT AND INDICATORS

Mainstreaming methodologies for working efficiently with ecosystem indicators

29-30 October 2019 | Environmental Education Center-CEAM, Belo Horizonte, Brazil



INTERACT-Bio
Integrated action on biodiversity



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1. Framing the context

Cities nowadays face many environmental challenges that can be mitigated by improving biodiversity conditions in those areas, thus enhancing the influence area of Ecosystem Services (ES). The benefits of investing in ES can be seen not only in cities but also in adjacent areas, with improvement of agriculture, water supply, milder temperatures, better air quality and people's welfare.

Together with UFZ, ICLEI carried out a workshop on Ecosystem Services Indicators, with the objective to discuss how the indicators could be mainstreamed as strategic tools to support management process and monitoring the ecosystem services in the context of the three metropolitan regions present at the event – Campinas (RMC), Belo Horizonte (RMBH) and Londrina (RML). The event was held in Belo Horizonte, from October 29th to 30th, 2019, in the Environmental Educational Center (CEAM) located inside the Mangabeiras Park and was attended by municipalities representatives, universities, Ministry for Regional Development, metropolitan region and other public agencies.

This dialogue contributes to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020. Also, it links to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The dialogue aligns with targets 1 and 2,

which promotes awareness of biodiversity values and integration into development and planning processes. In terms of SDGs, the event aligns with the goal 11, to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, goal 14 and 15 to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

2. Emerging themes

2.1. Introducing the methodology

The dialogue started with a brief introduction of basic concepts that support the methodology, like “what are ecosystem services”, “what are the indicators” and “what makes a good indicator”. Then, it was requested that the participants pointed out who was the target audience that would be benefited by the services. This part was important in order to create good indicators, since the efficiency of this tool depends on strategic vision of communication and how the information will reach those who need it.



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Later, the participants were invited to think about what questions should be answered by the indicators to better delimit a purpose for their use. Once all those steps were taken, a conceptual map was created, addressing the central question, causes, effects, secondary effects, ways to mitigate the negative effects and possible solutions. By creating the map, it was easier to comprehend the situation as a whole and understand how each factor was related to the others.

The second day started with Costa Rica case study and the concept of green city. The next activity involved identify and select indicators while considering how to collect information on that indicator and how to communicate it later.

2.2. Major challenges

The representatives of the three metropolitan regions were divided in groups, so they could work on the context of their municipalities. For Campinas, the main challenge was the green areas disconnection, a problem that has already been addressed and the main target of the RECONNECTA-RMC program. In this workshop, the participants could better understand the threats and causes of the fragmentation, such as disorientated urbanization, unproductive or abandoned rural areas, bad management, lack of information and lack of financial resources.

Meanwhile, Belo Horizonte and Londrina addressed the same challenge: the decrease of water resources. During the exercise, the participants of each metropolitan region were able to identify some of the causes of the decrease, like water pollution, loss of riparian forest, soil impermeability and waste of water. By recognizing those causes, the groups were able to think over solution possibilities. They proposed a few solutions based on economical instruments, such as payment for ecosystem services and incentives, and policies, like regularization campaigns and enhanced inspections on priority areas.

2.3. How can ICLEI help to take action?

Even though many cities face environmental problems, each one has its own context and priority challenges that need to be addressed. By promoting events and workshops where local and regional stakeholders can learn and discuss strategies, ICLEI can strengthen the framework and enhance the coordination between cities with similar challenges in order to enable the exchange of experiences and expand the range of options to apply methodologies in each locality.



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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



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for Sustainability



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