

MEDIVERCITIES – Local Action for Mediterranean Biodiversity

A network of Sub-national authorities to support the CBD 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and other relevant regional agreements

MEDIVERCITIES has been created in response to the decision X/22 which encourages the Parties to cooperate with sub-national and local level towards the achievement of the Aichi Targets.

Decision X/22 endorsed the Plan of Action on Sub-national Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity and welcomed the initiative of Montpellier, France, to hold the First Meeting on the Implementation of this Plan of Action on 17-19 January 2011. This meeting has been followed by a joint capacity-building workshop for the Mediterranean region held in Montpellier, France from 17 to 19 January 2012 and greeted the suggestion of Ms. Hélène Mandroux, Mayor of Montpellier, to launch the Mediterranean network of cities engaged in biodiversity named "MediverCities". This network will gather subnational governments, local authorities, cities and their partners in collaboration with the National Governments. It is planned to be launched in mid-April 2013 in Sarajevo.

Objectives

The objective of the network is to **improve the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its NBSAPs in the Mediterranean region at the local level through the involvement of national and sub-national governments, local authorities, cities and their natural partners, as well as other relevant networks**. MEDIVERCITIES will also serve as a model which can be applied in other regions.

This network aims at being complementary to already existing networks or legal frameworks, so it will not be strictly limited to the scope of the CBD.

The terms of reference for members of this network are:

- The protection of biodiversity at the local level according to the Convention on Biological Diversity objectives, such as the Aichi Targets, and other relevant regional legal instruments such as the Barcelona Convention :
- To mainstream biodiversity at the local scale through land-use planning
- To reduce the ecological footprint of Mediterranean Cities
- To facilitate and catalyze knowledge-sharing
- The provision of capacity building regarding funding requests or applications in support of biodiversity projects,
- The promotion and advocacy of the interests of the Mediterranean local authorities to decision makers such as national governments or the international institutions (EU, EU bodies such as the Committee of Regions, the Arab League, etc.).

As the Secretariat of the network is implemented in Montpellier, France, MEDIVERCITIES will be registered with the status of a French association.

Role of partners

The Steering Committee, ICLEI, the City of Montpellier and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity are the main partners in this project and will coordinate the next steps of the network.

Steering Committee

- Haris Piplas, University of Sarajevo/Technical University of Berlin, Bosnia
- Khaled Allam Harhash, Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Egypt
- Danijel Katicin, Mayor of Tkon, Croatia
- Patrick Berger, Director of the Green Spaces Department of Montpellier, France
- Oliver Hillel, Programme Officer, Secretariat of the CBD
- Georgi Hristof, Macedonia, Network of Association for Local Authorities (NALAS)
- Maruxa Cardama, Secretary General, Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD)
- Kobie Brandt, Vice-President for Africa and Director, ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center
- Salima Demnati, Director, Regional Observatories of the Environment and Sustainable Development (OREDD), Morocco
- Edmond Panariti, Deputy Mayor, Tirana, Albania
- Mohammed Mahassneh, Palestinian territories
- Eulalia Comas, Generalitat de Catalunya, Spain
- Simon Woodsworth, Region Languedoc Roussillon, France
- Florence Clap, IUCN-France
- Chantal Van Ham, IUCN-Europe
- Michel Sarrailh, Saint-Orens-de-Gameville

ICLEI

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is the world's largest, longest-existing, association of local and regional governments dedicated to sustainable development. The ICLEI Cities and Biodiversity Center, based in Cape Town, South Africa, has a longstanding history of working on biodiversity and ecosystem management. Since 2006, it has run ICLEI's flagship global biodiversity initiative, Local Action of Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Pioneer Project, in partnership with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) thereby supporting local governments across the world to manage their ecological resources. ICLEI's role in the Medivercities network is to : i) facilitate the sharing of knowledge, tools, guidelines, and best practices; ii) provide technical assistance to local government members on the basis of demand, drawing from the experiences and methodology of LAB Pioneer Project; and iii) promote the network with a view to recruiting additional members.

City of Montpellier

The City of Montpellier hosted the first MEDIVERCITIES workshop and dedicates permanent staff on this project as a Secretariat for the network. The City is also interested in building an internet platform to respond to the information sharing target. It would also be present at the future meeting in Sarajevo and will try to get its twin cities into the network.

City of Sarajevo

As an active member of MEDIVERCITIES, the city government of Sarajevo will host the next meeting.

IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is committed to mobilize the expertise on biodiversity conservation of its large network and exchange best practices to help local and regional authorities to develop natural solutions for valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services and integrate biodiversity into local, regional and urban planning. IUCN is developing partnerships with all those willing to contribute to turn nature into a major asset of rural and urban development and to achieve truly sustainable future.

The IUCN Europe Secretariat and IUCN National French Committee are both part of the Steering Committee and represented by Ms. Chantal van Ham and Ms. Florence Clap.

UNEP Coordination Office, Barcelona Convention

The Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution would, in alignment with the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), work on the regional implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Indeed, the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, MAP's advisory body, adopted the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development. Over the four main objectives of the Strategy is the improvement of governance at the local, national and regional levels. Over the seven priority fields of action is the sustainable management of the sea, the coasts and the marine resources. This gives a base for a co-operation between the UNEP/MAP and the UNEP/SCBD.

Japan Biodiversity Fund

The Japan Biodiversity Fund would partially support the Sarajevo meeting. After this one-time support to event, the network will be able to operate and raise its own funding.



Each of the 21 coastal State is Party to the Convention and Palestinian Authority has been granted the status of Observer.

Development of the activities of the network

The network will be open to any Mediterranean¹ sub-national government, local authority or city (and their associated networks) interested to join². Conditions attached to the membership include: signature of the Sarajevo Declaration and the Charter of Medivercities (drafts provided for validation), the development of local biodiversity strategies and action plans in line with the respective national one and the CBD, and undertaking at least one biodiversity project.

Concerning the management of the network, MEDIVERCITIES will be represented and co-ordinated by the Steering Committee. The City of Montpellier is in charge of the Secretariat.

Partners will support the secondment, by ICLEI, of a staff to coordinate activities and exchange experiences. Monitoring of the status of activities will take place during each meeting.

The activities of the network will include:

- Mobilisation of local authorities to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity: On the one hand, biodiversity provides resources and services necessary to human well-being and therefore needs to be protected and sustainably managed. On the other hand, local authorities are often not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process as well as in environmental policy implementation, where they could play a relevant part in sustainable development in general.
- Sharing of information: In order to improve the efficiency of local actions, the network is based on information sharing. The participants will provide the outputs of local research to the other network members. E-news can also be a good way to promote the activity of the network to the public.
- Develop regional tools and guidelines for ecosystem management
- Provision of expertise, best practices and implementation capacity through the exchange of experts: MEDIVERCITIES will encourage the exchange of experts between participating authorities and agencies (decentralized cooperation). This will give the opportunity to members with limited resources to improve the efficiency of their actions by identifying the best practices that suit their situation and take relevant actions.
- Communicate biodiversity to new audiences through an electronic platform and information sharing for instance.

The network will also implement digital means of communication that will be available for the Sarajevo meeting:

- The City of Montpellier will develop a website dedicated to MEDIVERCITIES and available in three Mediterranean languages (French, Arabic and English), including logos.

The representation of local authorities on the regional and international stage requires a visible and recognisable organisation :

- Develop a leadership;

¹For the purposes of this proposal, the Mediterranean designates the 22 CBD Parties in the Mediterranean basin, identified by the Mediterranean climate or culture

²Other institutions and stakeholders involved in Mediterranean biodiversity governance may also join; however, their participation will be linked to their cooperation with related sub-national governments and local authorities.

- Be a cooperation partner for other international and regional organisations such as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity or the Committee of Region (EU body) ;
- Get an observatory status in some international or regional organisations (e.g. the Mediterranean Commission on sustainable Development UNEP/MAP) ;
- Enable the broadcast of MEDIVERCITIES work and its outcomes through international meetings such as the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It is expected that Ms. Helene Mandroux, Mayor of Montpellier, will make an announcement at the *Cities for Life : City and Sub-National Biodiversity Summit*, showcasing MEDIVERCITIES and offering it as a model for replication in other regions.