Biodiversity and Human Health - linkages in Israel’s Policy

Dr. Anna Trakhtenbrot
Head of Biodiversity Section, Ministry of Environmental Protection
anatrak@sviva.gov.il

CBD Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Biodiversity and Human Health for the European Region

Helsinki, 24 October 2017
Israel National Strategy on Human Health and the Environment

- Join responsibility of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environmental Protection
- Focus on prevention of environmental hazards to human health
- Biodiversity included under themes of spatial planning and of disease vectors (incl. invasive species)
- Challenge – integration of actions by the health sector to promote the health benefits of biodiversity
Israel National Strategy and Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation

- Inter-ministerial, headed by MoEP, under development.
- Effects on biodiversity and consequences for human health are recognized:
  - Intensification of invasive species introductions and increase of vector-borne disease spread.
  - Intensification of wild fires.
  - Threats to water resources quantity and quality (e.g. toxic cyanobacteria blooms).
Urban planning

- Urban nature surveys were carried out by 24 municipalities out of circa 100.
- MoEP provides financial and professional support.
- Mainstreaming into the municipal urban planning system is a pre-requirement.
- Collaboration with environmental NGO’s and municipal environmental units.
- Challenge – generating the linkages with the local government public health sector.
Israel National Ecosystem Assessment

- I-NEA promoted by MoEP, carried out by Ha’Maarag partnership.
- Assessment of ecosystem services in 6 ecosystems, incl. the urban ecosystem.
- A chapter on ecosystem benefits to human health.
- Substantial knowledge gaps found on the national level (Interim Report, 2016).
Closing the knowledge gaps

- Regional scale - Carmel MAB Biosphere Reserve ES assessment
  - Health benefits are assessed in a questionnaire
- Academic research
  - Urban biodiversity effects on physical and mental health and wellbeing
  - Green spaces effects on pregnancy outcomes
- Challenge – securing designated funding

- Ministry of Environmental Protection
Thank you