

INTERACT-BIO DIALOGUE SUMMARY: BRAZIL, EUROPEAN UNION AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Sharing experiences on implementing nature-based solutions across the Atlantic



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INTERACT-Bio
Integrated action on biodiversity



1. Framing the context

An international seminar about Nature-based Solutions (NbS) was held in Brazil's capital city, Brasilia, in July, 2018. The event was organized by both ICLEI South America and ICLEI WS, as well as Strategic Studies and Management Center (CGEE), the Ministry for Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication (MCTIC) and the European Union (EU), through the program Sector Dialogues, and had the objective to promote discussions on how to face the urban challenges using NbS and improve resilience and quality of life in cities.

The dialogue reunited representatives of various countries as well as many local and regional leaders, like mayors and governors. Academics, Non-Governmental Organizations and private sector were also present. During this two-day event, there were workshops, field works and conferences about Nature-based Solutions, ongoing projects in EU countries and Brazilian cities and how to adapt European experiences to Brazil's context.

This dialogue was extremely important since it contributed to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (Aichi Targets), which sought 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 4 – to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all -, Goal 11 - to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable –, Goals 14 and 15 - to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, and Goal 17 - to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



2. Emerging themes

2.1. EU-Brazil Sector Dialogue

The event was an initiative of the Sectoral Dialogues Program. During the conference, case studies of European cities that have adopted SbN were presented, in order to demonstrate that the problems faced by urban areas have similarities in different places and that it is possible to solve them, or at least mitigate them, using biodiversity.

It was important to highlight that NbS must be applied at the local level and need the participation of governmental actors, communities, academics and the private sector. The communication and cooperation between those actors is crucial for the NbS to be effective and achieve the benefits it is supposed to give.

Once the European context was presented, the conference focused on the possibilities to apply NbS in the Brazilian environment and context. Speakers also presented case studies and ongoing projects that addressed NbS in Brazilian cities like Campinas, Londrina, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia and Recife.

2.2. Sharing Nature-based Solutions

During the seminar, ICLEI and the Connecting Nature project launched a platform about NbS that gives cities around the world access to support and technical knowledge developed by European cities and partner researchers. The platform will host webinars and workshops to exchange experiences between cities and train companies to develop services that include NbS. Brazilian researchers, NGOs and other partners will also benefit from the platform.

To better introduce the platform, ICLEI organized two workshops entitled “Co-creating NbS – involving urban society through the NbS platform” and “NbS potential in Brazilian cities – exploring experiences and challenges through the NbS Platform”, where participants could experience the co-creation of NbS, discuss the concept and think on the potentials of NbS to solve urban problems in Brazilian cities. The initiative was received as a great opportunity to engage and catalyze the transition from grey infrastructure to green infrastructure in cities and business in Brazil.

2.3. Challenges in Brazil

Although the event made clear the relevance and efficiency of NbS in cities by showing case studies and policies adopted to enhance their use, the participants could still point out a few challenges and difficulties they faced when thinking about implementing NbS in Brazilian context.

The discussion sessions allowed to explore and debate those challenges. For example, many mentioned that throughout the country there was still a lack of knowledge about the economic viability and efficiency of NbS and the benefits they could offer. Limited financial resources in the public sector was also highlighted, as well as the highly sectorized governance structure that makes cooperation and integration among different spheres and areas of government more difficult.

2.3. How can ICLEI help to overcome the challenges?

The event shared successful case studies and strategic plans, discussed challenges to be faced, raised limiting regulations in different contexts in Brazil and in the EU. In addition, participants were interested in the new NbS platform and showed their demands to better use NbS in their own cities. This was a very positive feedback for ICLEI and showed that there are still many opportunities to work together with cities and other actors to implement more sustainable alternatives for urban development and management.

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

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