

UNDRR's contribution to the Nature-Based Solutions Workstream

Making Cities Resilient by Integrating Nature-Based Solutions into Urban Planning

1. Context and rationale

Nature-based solutions are central to building the resilience of cities

More than one half of the world's population lives in urban areas, most of which are highly exposed to natural and man-made hazards. Urbanization that takes place without risk-sensitive urban planning, increases cities vulnerability to climate change and natural and man-made hazards.

An important component of building resilience in cities is investing in nature-based solutions through restoring and preserving the existing, or putting in place new ecosystem services that may protect cities from the impact of climate change or extreme weather events such as heatwaves and floods. Ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) is the sustainable management, nurturing of natural buffers and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that reduce disaster risk by mitigating hazards and by increasing livelihood resilience¹.

In order to enhance ecosystems' protective functions in this time of increased urbanization and climate crisis, integrating the critical ecosystem services into city's policies and planning becomes ever more important. Through the Making Cities Resilient Campaign (MCRC), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and its partners have been supporting local governments in defining coherent risk reduction policies and practices that include nature-based solutions into urban planning.



2. An overview of the contribution

Phase 2 of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign – a focus on nature-based solutions

UNDRR and its partners are working towards sustainable urbanization. The Making Cities Resilient Campaign (MCRC), launched in May 2010, leverages local governance to address a multitude of urban risks. The Campaign is a UNDRR-led partnership that aims to actively engage local governments and urban communities worldwide on resilience and disaster risk reduction. Phase 2 of the MCRC is being put in motion for 2020-2030 with a focus on assisting Local Governments in designing and implementing policies and plans that build the resilience of their cities. Cities participating in the campaign (currently 4,270 and growing) will be encouraged to adopt nature-based solutions as a sustainable tool to build their resilience.

¹ www.IUCN.org

3. How does the contribution leverage living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change?

Using ecosystem services to enhance cities' resilience and reduce disaster risk

UNDRR recognizes the important economic as well as cultural value and multiple benefits that healthy ecosystems offer to cities; acting as natural buffers for reducing risks and contributing to urban resilience and sustainability.

Relevant ecosystem services may include: water retention or water infiltration; afforestation; urban vegetation; floodplains; sand dunes; mangrove and other coastal vegetation; and pollination. Many ecosystem services that are relevant to the city's resilience may be provided well outside its geographical area. If cities do not preserve their ecosystems, the capacity of these ecosystems to provide important services to communities like food, firewood, medicines and protection from natural hazards is significantly threatened.

The Making Cities Resilient Campaign provides a platform with extensive reach to:

- Raise awareness of the impacts of environmental change and degradation of ecosystem on disaster risk.
- Recognize the value and benefits from ecosystem services for disaster risk prevention and protect and /or enhance them as part of risk reduction strategies for cities.
- Promote better management of critical ecosystems to strengthen resilience to disaster.
- Integrate ecosystem services for more urban resilience into urban land use management, urban design and into relevant investment projects.
- Consider natural buffers in the rural hinterland of the city and wider region and cooperate with municipalities there to establish a regional approach of land use planning to protect the buffers.
- Strengthen existing ecosystem management based on risk scenario assessments.
- Anticipate changes from climate trends, urbanization and planning to enable ecosystem services to enable ecosystem services to withstand these.

4. How might the contribution support both climate, mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in coming years. They may include:

- a. Increasing the resilience of urban-dwellers to climate change and extreme weather events;
- b. Reduce vulnerability of, in particular, poor communities to the impact of climate change;
- c. Improve the natural ecosystems ability to sequester greenhouse gases;
- d. Impact on realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (in particular SDGs 1, 2,3,6,11,13,15,17);
- e. Offering spaces for leisure and cultural activities by adding green spaces to urban environments;
- f. Food security by offering urban gardens;
- g. Minimizing species extinction and ecological losses and fostering an increase of biodiversity.

5. Which countries and organizations are involved in the contribution?

The participating local cities and countries can be found using this [link](#) and partner organizations via this [link](#).

6. How have stakeholders (for example local communities, youth and indigenous peoples, where applicable) been consulted in developing the contribution?

Diverse stakeholders including local governments, civil society, the private sector and community-based organizations have been actively engaged in the Making Cities Resilient Campaign since 2010. The proposition is to use this platform to enhance engagement with this body of stakeholders to encourage the integration of nature-based solutions into the options that cities and their citizens are putting in place to address resilience and disaster risk reduction, particularly in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

7. Where can the contribution be put into action?

As of August 2019, 4,272 cities globally have signed up to the Making Cities Resilient Campaign. This number is increasing constantly.

8. How will the contribution be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?

The Campaign works to develop a global network of local governments committed to reducing risk, building more resilient cities and promoting city-to-city learning exchanges and increased cooperation. The Campaign also engages in a wide range of meetings and technical support activities with city leaders, both internationally and regionally.



The Campaign aims to ensure that the commitments made by governments are integrated into the local context. Serving as a means for realizing the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Development Agenda, the Campaign has shifted its focus to implementation support, partner engagement, investment-cooperation opportunities, local action planning and monitoring of progress.

Private sector partners are increasingly being engaged as well as connected with local governments and other development partners, to actively contribute to the development of products and services, tools and technical support, towards innovative urban risk reduction solutions.

9. Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstreams (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?

This initiative contributes to Climate Action workstreams including: infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; and social and political drivers and has the potential to be leveraged to make greater contributions to industry transition, energy transition and mitigation strategies.

10. How does this contribution build upon examples of experience to date? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?

UNDRR has nine years of experience in engaging diverse stakeholders across a significant number of global cities and the MCRC provides a unique platform to link and integrate with other existing initiatives towards a common goal.

11. What are the mechanisms for funding (with specific emphasis on potential for partnerships)

UNDRR with key partners (e.g. The World Bank, World Council on City Data, ICLEI, UCLG, IFRC, UN-Habitat, Rockefeller Foundation) is identifying funding possibilities for Phase 2 of the MCRC.

12. What are the means of stewardship, metrics for monitoring?

The Campaign has produced a number of tools to help local leaders assess, monitor, document and improve their disaster risk reduction activities: namely, 1) the “Ten Essentials” for Making Cities Resilient Checklist, a standardized approach to resilience has been available and applicable to all cities to measure and monitor their resilience from early 2017; 2) the Handbook for Local Government Leaders on How to Make Cities More Resilient and 3) the Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities. These and other relevant tools can be found using this [link](#).

13. What is the communication strategy?

The MCRC communication strategy focuses on sharing the positive experiences of model cities who apply the principles of the Campaign. These are shared and promoted with partners and on social media. This year’s collection can be read using this [link](#).

Furthermore, the MCRC is represented at a number of key high-profile events globally, such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Urban Forum, which attract thousands of attendees each year.

Since the Campaign’s activities are directed mostly at local authorities, peer-to-peer advocacy is vital to its promotion and supported through field-visits and joint workshops.

The Campaign website will be fully redesigned in 2020 to reflect on the action-oriented focus of Phase 2.

14. What are the details of proponents (indicating the degree of commitment among the countries and organizations that are named)?

Making cities resilient is about building an ever-widening network of alliances for disaster risk reduction. Each campaign partner promotes urban disaster resilience in their areas of influence. By drawing on each other's expertise, partners lend substance to the policy-making and technical dimensions of the campaign, lending rigor to our advocacy.

Partners support the campaign within the bounds of their organization, by designating a campaign focal point, supporting specific activities outlined in the campaign strategy and linking up directly with local governments. Partners share relevant experiences, best practices, tools or resources and technical information related to all aspects of urban resilience through the campaign website, as well as relevant activities, trainings and workshops.

A list of current partners can be viewed at this [link](#).