
SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. UN-Habitat is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system. The agency serves as custodian for SDG 11 on sustainable urban development, a key component in the realization of the 2030 Agenda, as well as for the [New Urban Agenda and its collaborative implementation](#).

UN-Habitat supports national, subnational, and local governments, partners, and stakeholders in addressing their development challenges through sustainable and inclusive urban development. The agency embraces sustainable urbanization as a transformative force to reduce poverty, social exclusion, spatial inequality, environmental vulnerabilities, and multidimensional crises. It has also articulated pathways towards sustainable urbanization, with accompanying expertise, services, and tools.

By virtue of its interdisciplinary approach, UN-Habitat is well positioned to integrate the benefits that flow from biodiversity conservation and underpin human well-being within and around cities. UN-Habitat was an active member of the CBD Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity and, along with UNEP and UNESCO, has supported the implementation of CBD's [Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity](#).

What do we do?

UN-Habitat has extensive experience on the topic of urban and territorial planning and management for strengthened biodiversity and ecosystem services. The agency has supported the preparation of evidence-based spatial asset inventories, participatory methodologies, and planning models. It has also led assessments that help developing countries address the alignment of urban policies sensitive to all social, economic, and ecological contexts across all levels of governments.

UN-Habitat's methodologies guide and support local governments and urban actors to better understand, customize, and undertake inclusive and integrated urban planning processes. They are adaptable to almost any local context. In regards to pro-biodiversity interventions, UN-Habitat has developed a [novel methodology](#) of analysis and intervention. This multidisciplinary mapping methodology maps and projects risks related to urban expansion, biodiversity loss, and climate change. The integration of the three enables cities to prioritize interventions along a preserve- conserve-restore-create spectrum that responds to varying states of natural habitat in urban areas. The methodology is also modular and can be plugged into existing tools and benchmarks to enhance local environmental planning. For example, it can help characterize the presence and quality of biodiverse habitats (e.g. identified through the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity).

The tool also pairs well with other spatial assessments and methodologies, such as UN-Habitat's City-wide and Green Public Space Assessment, and Our City Plans Toolbox, by ground truthing its recommendations and highlighting high risk and potential land use conflict zones.

Supporting the GBF

UN-Habitat has been working with governments at multiple levels to strengthen their capacities in developing sustainable urban development strategies that are proactive in the protection, prevention, promotion, measurement, and monitoring of urban biodiversity. In regard to the GBF, UN-Habitat will contribute towards the achievement of **GBF Goals A and B** as well as **GBF Targets 1 and 12**. Target 12 is particularly germane to UN-Habitat's mandate because it aims for improved quantity, quality, and connectivity of and access to green and blue spaces in and around cities.

The second UN Habitat Assembly in June 2023 adopted a resolution entitled '[biodiverse and resilient cities: mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning](#)'. The resolution welcomes GBF target 12 and 19 and requires UN-Habitat to encourage a shift to urbanization that takes into account biodiversity and ecosystem services and calls on UN-Habitat, in collaboration with partners, to establish an international expert advisory group, develop a toolkit, and demonstrate the use of those tools in projects that deliver more biodiverse and resilient cities.

Where we can help

Based on its expertise working across multiple geographical and political scales, UN-Habitat understands cities and biodiversity whether their impacts are local, nearby, or far away. While much of our technical assistance continues to contribute to the collection and analysis of urban data and participatory urban planning and design within cities, we also assist on the development of urban policy, legislation, and governance at subnational and national scales. In addition to our work creating and restoring green and blue spaces within cities, we are increasingly providing advice on biodiversity preservation and conservation at the periurban edge of cities. Moreover, UN-Habitat leverages partnerships with training institutions and delivers quality needs assessments, tools, and trainings that bring together local and national governments, civil society, and academia to create new ways of working and positively impact their capacities to manage urban challenges in the long term.

Further contacts

Mr. Andrew Rudd, Urban Environment Officer, Programme Development Branch, UN-Habitat. rudd@un.org

Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati, Law Division, United Nations Environment Programme, balakrishna.pisupati@un.org

Social media handles/webpages

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/un-habitat-united-nation-human-settlements-programme-](https://www.linkedin.com/company/un-habitat-united-nation-human-settlements-programme/)

Facebook: [facebook.com/UNHABITAT](https://www.facebook.com/UNHABITAT)

Twitter: twitter.com/UNHABITAT