

# Local Action for Biodiversity



## ***Biodiversity & CEPA WorkNet*** **GUIDELINES to Step 1: Biodiversity & CEPA Assessment**

### **Background Information**

#### **What is the LAB Biodiversity & CEPA WorkNet?**

Many of the 21 LAB pioneers, who participated in the initial phase of the LAB initiative and who made it what it is today, have elected to continue and intensify their involvement by partaking in focused LAB WorkNets. The WorkNets concentrate on two topics in combination with biodiversity: Climate Change, and CEPA (communication, education and public awareness). These two WorkNets, selected by the LAB pioneers, can be done in isolation or in combination. The purpose of the WorkNets is to advance the work done by cities in the pioneer phase of LAB by focusing in on the topics that are considered of greatest importance to biodiversity and its management at the local level.

In the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Article 13 directs the Parties (national governments) to promote and encourage understanding and to develop education and public awareness programmes. This has since been interpreted to encompass communication, education and public awareness (CEPA). The CBD has developed a CEPA Toolkit, which is available at <http://www.cbd.int/cepa/toolkit/2008/cepa/index.htm>. Dr. Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary to the CBD, emphasised the important role that communicators play in biodiversity conservation in the following quote: *“In our increasingly urban world, people don’t realise that biodiversity is the foundation for life on earth and for the well being of people everywhere. We need to work to further develop our ability to tell the stories of biodiversity and its role in our lives to all citizens from the youngest to the oldest. As we approach the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, we need to harness the power and creativity of communicators and the media around the world, to encourage the actions to safeguard biodiversity.”*

It is not enough to tell people about biodiversity and the threats it faces in order to bring about positive change. The changes required will not come about by rational individual choice but require those in the field of biodiversity to start thinking differently about using communication, education and public awareness. CEPA plays an important role in gaining the cooperation and collaboration of both individuals and organizations to act on the drivers of biodiversity loss to ensure we reduce the loss of biodiversity.

#### **About these assessment guidelines**

The purpose of this set of guidelines is to assist your local (or regional) government in taking the first step in participation in the Local Action for Biodiversity CEPA WorkNet. The clear and concise documentation of all the



biodiversity-related CEPA activities (both internal and external) that your local government is currently implementing, as well as assessing those activities that are already in place, will help to develop strategies to improve these activities within the 3-year timeframe of the WorkNet. This forms the assessment component of the LAB CEPA WorkNet with the anticipated output of a collation of existing CEPA-related information. An analysis of the successes and challenges of these CEPA activities will assist with the identification of what is needed to inform the planning and implementation phases. The information is to be written up as a draft assessment report which will be presented and discussed at a LAB international workshop in mid-2010. At the workshop there will be opportunity to discuss problems with experts and to fine-tune the reports. Please note that the report is not necessarily to be printed as a glossy hardcopy.

The draft assessment report should include information pertaining to biodiversity-related CEPA activities which is held by your local government, as well as information from relevant organisations and groups partnering with or working within the jurisdiction of your municipality (guidelines and some examples to assist you are provided in the sections below). These could include other government departments, NGOs, business and industry, scientists, farmers and fishing associations, women's groups, schools, youth, tertiary institutions, consumer associations, media and community based groups.

The assessment should also cover what your desired outcome is with regards to communicating, education and creating awareness around biodiversity conservation.

**A special word of thanks to: Mumsie Gumede (CEO of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa - WESSA); Juliane Zeidler (Integrated Environmental Consultants Namibia - IECN); and Lawrence Sisitka for their valued input into the compilation of these guidelines.**



# Guidelines for Biodiversity & CEPA Assessment

## 1. Introduction

The assessment should begin by setting the scene and explaining briefly how and why your local government became involved in the LAB Project and subsequently, the LAB CEPA WorkNet (e.g. making reference to your LAB biodiversity report). Discuss the institutional structure and explain where biodiversity conservation, and in particular biodiversity communications, fits in to your local governments overall structure. Discuss the level to which biodiversity, and specifically communications relating to biodiversity, are integrated across local government sectors and policies within your municipality (i.e. to what level is biodiversity mainstreamed into other sectors and into city governance?). What is the level of engagement with politicians and decision makers around biodiversity related issues? Some of the information for this section may have already been collected for the compilation of your LAB Biodiversity Report, but it will help the reader if these elements are briefly summarized here, with an emphasis on CEPA aspects.

## 2. Internal communication around biodiversity

Research shows a direct link between high performance of an organisation and staff motivation. Investing in effective internal communication amongst the staff of an organisation is in reality investing in the output of the organisation. Effective internal communication forms an important element of successful CEPA approaches, which is not specific to the field of biodiversity but can be applied to all disciplines.

When assessing biodiversity activities internally, the assessment needs to cover the three spheres of CEPA i.e. *communication* (the sharing of the what activities are happening); *education* (which will include interactive activities (which provide the knowledge in order to be able to take the appropriate action) like training, skills development, seminars, workshops etc.); and *awareness raising* (i.e. putting local biodiversity issues high on the agenda for decision making as well as for 'actioning' and budgeting).

Discuss the internal staff communication within your local authority and whether it is effective in terms of reaching the correct target audience. Consider the list of critical internal role-players and the various biodiversity-related CEPA activities associated with them and assess whether they are best-fit in relation to the role-player (e.g. whether printing pamphlets is the best way to educate councilors?) Discuss whether the communication is delivered in a way that is clear and the messages are understood. Elaborate on whether the communication is one-way or two-way (incorporating feedback). Suggest ways in which internal communication can be improved.

Examples of communication that you can use to elaborate on the above if relevant to your situation include: newsletters; orientation

*Example* The City of Cape Town's Environmental Resource Management Department has expanded in the last few years from 30 staff to over 200 staff. Previously, the director held staff meetings every Monday morning where each manager would get the opportunity to report to the rest of the staff on what he/she was working on. However, when the staff component grew to over 200, it was no longer possible to house all the staff in one meeting room, nor was it practical in terms of time as staff were now housed in different buildings. As a result the meetings which were previously for all the staff became meetings for only the managers and other staff (i.e. non-managers) were left feeling excluded and detached from the department. A solution to this problem was the introduction of a staff newsletter called 'Green Piece' which includes information on the staff, and various projects, highlights birthdays and anniversaries, etc. The electronic newsletter comes out once a month and staff once again feel included and aware of what is happening in their department.



programmes; bulletin boards/communication boards; staff meetings; staff training; social events; policy manuals etc. Does your municipality have any of those internal communication tools in place?

### 3. Biodiversity CEPA activities

Describe the various biodiversity-related CEPA initiatives that you are implementing. These can be biodiversity-related activities that have recently been completed, are presently underway or are planned for the future. These can be done by your local government alone, or in partnership with organisations, institutions etc. If your municipality has too many to list, select the most important or interesting ones. If your municipality has a limited number of biodiversity-related CEPA initiatives to report on, describe existing CEPA initiatives that could include more of a biodiversity focus in future. Here are some elements to consider including:

- name of the project;
- target audience;
- brief description of the goals and objectives;
- level of public participation;
- key stakeholders;
- partners;
- key communication message/s;
- planning (i.e. timeframes);
- communication vehicles;
- budget;
- staff resources allocated to the project;
- monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Explain which initiatives have been successful and which have been more challenging why this might be. Indicators of success that can be used could include growth of budget over a number of years, an increase in the number of external stakeholders and/or partners involved in a biodiversity-related activity, and increase in the number of decisions taken that support biodiversity conservation. Here are some examples of the kind of initiatives you could describe:

- **Strategies**

Do you have a biodiversity communication strategy or an overarching environmental communication strategy for your municipality?

- **Campaigns**

Identify communication campaigns for any biodiversity activities that you are presently involved with. A campaign is defined as a series of operations undertaken to achieve a set goal. In your description of the campaign, you can use the above list to assist you.



- **Publications and resources**

Provide an overview of the publications and resources that you have recently/are presently working on. These can include: brochures; banners; booklets; posters; newsletters; DVDs; activity books etc.

- **Events and exhibitions**

Provide a summary of the various events and exhibitions that your branch/department are actively involved in and indicate whether they are once-off event or whether they occur on an annual basis. These can include: expositions; conferences and/or mini conferences; workshops; launches; festivals; open days etc.

*Example: Bonn Soil Week Event ('Bonner Bodenwoche')* In September 2007, under the framework of the statewide environmental campaign 'BODEN will LEBEN!' ('The soil wants to live!') conducted by the NRW Academy for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection (Natur-und Umweltschutzakademie Nordrhein-Westfalen - NUA), the City of Bonn, in co-operation with numerous partners, held the first 'Bonn Soil Week' ('Bonner Bodenwoche'). This event was aimed at presenting the soil as an important resource worthy of conservation. A kick-off event, a 'soil-action day' at the city's open-air market square, was then followed by a week of events spread throughout the city, conducted in co-operation with various partners.

- **Digital communications**

Identify the various digital communication activities that your municipality implements. These can include: websites; databases; internal electronic newsletters; image, presentation and DVD library; web-based awareness projects. Describe the level of organisation (i.e. whether or not the communication activities are organised and filed).

- **Environmental education**

Expand on who your target audience is with regards to environmental education, whether your involvement is targeted at schools (primary, secondary or tertiary education), other government sectors and/or the public. Discuss the various strategies that are used to integrate biodiversity into environmental education and discuss any environmental education programmes and projects and whether there are education centres based on nature reserves or in natural areas managed by your municipality.

*Example: 'Adopt a Coastline' programme (Joondalup, Australia)* One of the most successful, largest and longest running biodiversity awareness-raising programmes run by the city is the 'Adopt a Coastline' programme. The aim of the Programme is to encourage local school students to gain knowledge about the biodiversity values of the Joondalup coastline, and become involved in on-the-ground projects to restore, and protect damaged dune vegetation. The project sets out two main goals. Firstly to educate school children in an effort to lessen the fire lighting and vandalism occurring in the coastal precinct and secondly, to give students the opportunity to learn about their local environment and appreciate the value of local biodiversity.

- **Other**

If there are any other biodiversity-related activities that your municipality is involved with that do not fall under any of the headings above, please include them with a brief description of the project as outlined in the brief above.



*Example: A Wetland Protection Agreement between two cities (Nagoya)* Every year, migratory birds fly between breeding grounds and cross national and international borders. Wetlands, in particular, serve as feeding, breeding, and resting grounds for migratory birds. Because migratory birds travel across borders, conservation of wetlands requires international cooperation and it was for this reason that the City of Nagoya signed a Wetland Protection Agreement with the City of Greater Geelong in Australia. Through the Agreement (signed on the International Day for Biological Diversity in 2007), both cities have committed to promoting exchanges of information and personnel to work together on conserving and utilizing wetlands.

#### **4. Relationship with stakeholders and partners**

Discuss in detail the relationship that you have with stakeholders (defined in this document as the people or organisations that are vital to the ability of your department to fulfill its mandate; and partners. For each relationship include information such as:

- the communication approach used;
- whether the communication is formal or informal;
- frequency of communication and when it takes place as well as what is communicated (i.e. with regards to various projects and policies) etc.

Discuss whether you have any particularly strong partnerships (i.e. multilateral or bilateral relationships) and the nature of these relationships. Discuss your relationship with the general public and discuss how you feel the public perceives you. Also outline the relationship you have with other departments which you work with on biodiversity-related activities and in particular your municipality's communications department (if one exists).

#### **5. Relationship with media**

Discuss in detail the relationship you have with the media around biodiversity conservation. Is biodiversity an issue which gets exposure through the media? Include information such as:

- Channels of media (i.e. newspapers (local, national, or even international); television; radio; internet etc;
- Frequency of media exposure for biodiversity conservation; and
- Level of engagement with the media.

#### **6. Challenges**

Outline any key challenges that were not covered under section 3. Include both internal and external considerations that your municipality faces with regards to communication, education and public awareness around biodiversity activities. This can include budget constraints; lack of stakeholder engagement; lack of buy-in from a political level; staff limitations etc.



*Example: Lack of sufficient resources* The City of Cape Town recently produced a book on all of the beaches in Cape Town. While the book proved to be a very valuable resource, a lack of staff capacity prevented the book from being marketed to its full potential. For example, there were many suggestions as to how the book could be launched and marketed to the public which included a media launch at one of the local coastal venues, give-away competitions in various identified magazines and newspapers, and radio interviews. However, due to a staff shortage the physical launch did not take place and a 'soft launch' (i.e. the sending out of a press release to the media) was substituted.

### **Additional reading**

For additional reading, visit: <http://www.cbd.int/cepa/toolkit/2008/cepa/reading.htm>

To download a copy of the CBD CEPA Toolkit, visit: <http://www.cbd.int/cepa/toolkit/2008/cepa/index.htm>

### **Please take note!**

For the 2010 international LAB workshop, please bring your draft report as well as a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing your findings. Please submit a draft *of the presentation* to the LAB coordination team no later than *31 March 2010*. The LAB coordination team will comment on the presentation if assistance is required, and you will then present it at the workshop in mid-2010.

Please send your presentation by email to [andre.mader@iclei.org](mailto:andre.mader@iclei.org) or [shela.patrickson@iclei.org](mailto:shela.patrickson@iclei.org). Large files should be reduced (e.g. by converting to PDF files). End any queries to the same email addresses.

