

# LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CONSERVATION:

## WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED FOUR YEARS AFTER THEIR RECOGNITION AS MEMBERS OF THE IUCN ?

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### The indispensable contribution of subnational governments to IUCN

Local and regional authorities play a fundamental role in preserving biodiversity and restoring nature. The French Committee of the IUCN has contributed significantly to the involvement of local authorities in the governance of the IUCN. This dynamic took root in 2007 with the study "Local authorities and biodiversity... the missing link in IUCN's action", which highlighted the challenges and framework for the active participation of local authorities in biodiversity conservation.

In 2012, at the World Conservation Congress in Jeju (Republic of Korea), an ambitious motion, supported by both the French and Spanish committees, laid the foundations for this recognition.

This work culminated in 2021 at the World Conservation Congress in Marseille (France) when the motion to include subnational authorities in IUCN governance was adopted. This historic decision gave local authorities full membership status, highlighting their role in promoting environmental justice.

The actions undertaken by IUCN member communities have focused on five pillars with a clear objective: to preserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable prosperity.

#### I. Protecting life at all times and in all places

With the IUCN declaring nearly 30% of known species as threatened and listing them on the Red List, local authorities have made it their mission to preserve these species and restore their protected areas.

This commitment is reflected in ambitious plans, such as the 2019-2030 Biodiversity Plan joined by **the State of Vaud**, and the integration of the **City of Fontainebleau** into the European Natura 2000 network, guaranteeing the protection of its remarkable forests. **Cape Town**, for its part, has launched the Biodiversity Spatial Plan, enabling all municipal services to harmonise their environmental responsibilities.

The fundamental commitment from local authorities is reflected in tangible actions such as the reintroduction of the fartet in Andalusia, initiated by **the Consejería de Sostenibilidad, Medio Ambiente y Economía Azul, Junta de Andalucía**. More broadly, these "natural treasures" are now treated with diligence in order to reconcile biodiversity protection with human development.

One notable example is the 50-year moratorium on seabed exploration and exploitation introduced by the **Government of New Caledonia**, ensuring the long-term protection of this fragile ecosystem. In the same vein, other cities have stepped up their efforts to protect nature: **Suncheon City** is working to restore Suncheon Bay; **Buenos Aires** is creating ecological reserve ;

**Valencia** is restoring mining areas; and **the Canary Islands** are taking strong measures to protect Saladar de Jandia.

These multiple actions underscore the determination of local authorities to promote their territories while preserving their unique character.

#### II. Adapting the territory to tomorrow's climate

Biodiversity conservation is also emerging as a lever for urban resilience. While nearly 60% of the population lives in cities, these spaces are not always adapted to new climate challenges: air pollution, soil artificialization and even water stress. Cities and urban communities must constantly innovate to ensure a healthy and sustainable living environment for their citizens.

This improved land management goes hand in hand with the protection of water resources. Some cities are mobilising their residents, as is the case in the **Municipality of Antigua Guatemala**, which organises river clean-up days. Others prefer to invest in improving their water networks and treatment plants, such as **Xunta de Galicia**.

Forest restoration and carbon capture remain a strategic focus. While **the Ile-de-France region** is investing in urban forests to develop cool islands, **Hamilton City** is seeking to restore its natural vegetation by 2 to 10% by 2050.

Their goal is the same: to reintroduce nature into the city to encourage the return of wildlife, particularly birds.

Some cities, notably **Paris** and **Yerevani Qaghaqapetaran**, are also planning to introduce environmental impact and biodiversity measures to monitor and improve air quality.

Other policies are being implemented to address priority issues, such as plastic pollution in cities. The **Scottish Government** has a recycling rate of 70%, reflecting a proactive and structured policy on urban waste management.

### III. Making nature a shared common good

In its manifesto entitled "The Future of Life, Our Values for Action" and published in 2021, the French Committee of the IUCN promotes harmony with living things on all scales. This balance lies in knowledge and understanding of the natural world. Conceiving of nature as a shared common good implies rethinking education and promoting active citizen participation.

Major educational programmes are being rolled out around the world, such as EDUCABOSC, initiated by the **Dirección General de Medio Natural y Evaluación Ambiental, Consejería de Agricultura, Generalitat Valenciana**, the field school for farmers in the province of **Cachi**, and the **Suncheon** Eco-College. To ensure wider access to environmental information, some local authorities are developing digital tools such as Gaïa, a citizen portal run by **the Consellería de Medio Ambiente e Ordenación do Territorio, Xunta de Galicia**.

Other initiatives, such as the CITBIO project in **Curridibat**, allocate certain public spaces to the cultivation of native plants, allowing everyone to explore and experiment with a respectful relationship between humans and living things.

Other territories, such as **the region of Murcia**, are structuring their economies around a circular and social system, thereby limiting energy loss and waste production.

### IV. Creating a liveable environment for all

For several years, the IUCN has devoted considerable effort to nature-based solutions (NbS) that combine conservation and sustainable ecosystem management to address social, economic and environmental challenges.

The responses by the infranational governments to these challenges are as diverse as the issues themselves. **The Vice Consejería Sostenibilidad Ambiental, Gobierno Vasco** has proposed an ambitious Social Housing Plan for 2036. The objective is clear: to support the Basque population's right to housing by steadily increasing the supply of affordable housing, while integrating accessibility and energy efficiency criteria as structural policies. Similarly, **the Secretaría del Medio Ambiente del Gobierno de la Ciudad de México** has put in place two specific instruments (the Local Climate Action Strategy 2021-2050 and the Climate Action Programme 2021-2030) to promote low-carbon development based on the principles of the circular economy, social inclusion and human rights. a commitment that is also being pursued by the province of **Li Shui Ren Min Zheng Fu**.

These proposals are far from isolated. Many local authorities are adopting restrictive measures to protect natural and landscape heritage, such as the **State of Vaud**, which adopted the LPrPNP law in 2023. **The Forest Wildlife & Environment Department of the Government of Gilgit Baltistan** has created many protected areas with the aim of subjecting 70% of the territory to sustainable management, including the development of agricultural forestry.

Finally, with the rise of tourism, global ecosystems are increasingly under threat. To counter this phenomenon, **the Department of Territory, Housing, and Ecological Transition, Government of Catalonia** is focusing on the development of sustainable ecotourism. It is even preparing to host the Global Ecotourism Forum at the end of October 2025, bringing together international experts and leaders to discuss the major trends in ecotourism.

## V. Local alliances for global action

To structure their actions and strengthen their influence, some local authorities are joining forces and coordinating around common projects. This set of initiatives reflects a shared desire to integrate biodiversity into public policy at all levels.

With this in mind, **the Cape Town** Biodiversity Spatial Plan builds on the Bioregional Plan adopted in 2015 and extends to all cities in the department, promoting the sharing of environmental responsibilities. For its part, **the Cross River State Ministry of Environment** has joined the Great Green Wall to combat degradation, desertification and food insecurity.

In France, this approach to cooperation is being rolled out at regional level with a number of networks (SESAME, NextGen, PRTR) led in particular by **the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region** and **the Bouches-du-Rhône Department**. To protect the South Region from fires and raise public awareness of fire prevention, the region is funding a Regional Forest Guard programme. In addition, in the Bouches-du-Rhône, the SESAME tool is the result of collaboration between Cerema, INRAE and the Department, with the aim of coordinating vegetation restoration actions linked to ecosystem services.

Internationally, **the government of Quebec** with the close collaboration of **the government of Catalogne** and **Regions4** is fervently supporting Motion 122 on e-vote. In this regard, they want to promote a strategy of including subnational authorities in all IUCN activities, highlighting the importance of these actors in the quest for resilience.

Finally, UNESCO remains a key player in this multi-stakeholder alliance, with, among other things, the development of its network of biosphere reserves in **the Canary Islands** and **Fontainebleau**.

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October 11 from 7 to 9 p.m



French Pavilion



Maud Lelievre



Eddie  
Andrews



Marc Vilahur  
Chiaraviglio



Oscar Mora  
Altamirano



Edgar  
Perez



Jacob  
Martin-Malus



Tony Nello



François  
Moreau



Jorge Liber  
Saltijeral Giles



Sonigitu  
Asibong Ekpe



Yann  
Wehring

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# THE SUBNATIONALS GOVERNEMENTS MEMBERS OF THE IUCN

 <b>Buenos Aires Ciudad</b> Buenos Aires	 <b>ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ՊԱՐԿԱՊԵՏԱՐԱՆ</b> Yerevani Qaghaqapetaran	 <b>Québec</b> Québec	 <b>Municipio de La Estrella</b> La Estrella	 <b>CURRIDABAT</b> Curridabat
 <b>Carchi PREFECTURA</b> Carchi	 <b>DÉPARTEMENT BOUCHES DU RHÔNE</b> Bouches du Rhône	 <b>Région Île de France</b> Île de France	 <b>RÉGION SUD PROVENCE ALPES CÔTE D'AZUR</b> Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur	 <b>Hamilton City Council</b> Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa Hamilton
 <b>PARIS</b> Paris	 <b>Fontainebleau</b> Fontainebleau	 <b>GOUVERNEMENT DE LA NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE</b> Nouvelle-Calédonie	 <b>Municipalidad de La Antigua Guatemala</b> La Antigua Guatemala	 <b>CROSS RIVER STATE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT</b> Cross River
 <b>GOBIERNO DE LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO</b> México	 <b>SECRETARÍA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE</b> Gilgit-Baltistan	 <b>Jeju</b> Jeju	 <b>CITY OF CAPE TOWN</b> Cape Town	 <b>MURCIA</b> Murcia
 <b>Junta de Andalucía</b> Consejería de Sostenibilidad, Medio Ambiente y Economía Azul Andalucía	 <b>Gobierno de Canarias</b> Consejería de Transición Ecológica, Lucha contra el Cambio Climático y Planificación Territorial Canarias	 <b>XUNTA DE GALICIA</b> CONSELLERÍA DE MEDIO AMBIENTE, TERRITORIO E VIVENDA Galicia	 <b>Generalitat de Catalunya</b> Departament d'Acció Climàtica, Alimentació i Agenda Rural Cataluña	
 <b>GENERALITAT VALENCIANA</b> Conselleria de Agricultura, Desenvolupament Rural, Emergència Climàtica i Transició Ecològica Valencia	 <b>EUSKO JAURLARITZA GOBIERNO VASCO</b> EKONOMIAREN GARAPEN, JASANGARRITASUN ETA INGURUMEN SAILA DEPARTAMENTO DE DESARROLLO ECONÓMICO, SOSTENIBILIDAD Y MEDIO AMBIENTE Vasco	 <b>canton de vaud</b> LIBERTÉ PATRIE Vaud	 <b>The Scottish Government</b> Riaghaltas na h-Alba Ecosse	 <b>SUN CHEON</b> Suncheon

With the participation of:

 <b>AIX MARSEILLE PROVENCE</b>	 <b>Les Eco Maires</b>	 <b>VILLE DE MARSEILLE</b>	 <b>Regions4</b> Sustainable Development	 <b>CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC</b>
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