



**Regions4**

Sustainable Development



REGIONS for  
BIODIVERSITY  
Learning Platform

# Global Challenges, Regional Solutions:

The Regions for Biodiversity Learning  
Platform, Two Years of Lessons Learned



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
The R4BLP after two years of its creation.....	4
 <b>R4BLP Topics</b> .....	4
Agriculture and Biodiversity .....	4
Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security, a case-clinic .....	9
Invasive Alien Species .....	10
Ecosystem Based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.....	12
The Sustainable Use of Pollinators.....	14
Marine and terrestrial protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures for achieving ABT 11 .....	15
Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals at a Regional Level .....	18
 <b>Conclusions</b> .....	20
Global challenges, regional solutions.....	20



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Author

Renata Gomez, Regions4

### Review and edits

Sabrina Courant and Rachel Lévesque, Québec  
Pablo Gil-Gruart

### Design

Santiago Neira, Gravity Estudio Creativo

### Special thanks to all the regional governments and their representatives who are an essential part of the R4BLP:

Ainhize Butrón Mota, Basque Country

Belén Guerrero, Azuay

Elisabetta Maria Rossi and Maria Grazia  
Pedrana, Lombardy

Eulàlia Comas and Susana Rivero, Catalonia

Lori Frater, Wales

Mamadou Ndong Touré, Gossas

Palawan Council for Sustainable Development,  
Palawan

Paul Dale, São Paulo

Roger Rivero, Campeche

Sabrina Courant and Rachel Levesque, Quebec

Teru Kisuna, Aichi



## DISCLAIMER

The analysis, results, and recommendations are those of the authors and of Regions4 Secretary. These do not necessarily represent the views, opinions or positions of member regional governments or those who responded the survey.

## ACRONYMS

**ABTs:** Aichi Biodiversity Targets

**ACSNG:** Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity to the CBD

**BSAP:** Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

**CBD:** Convention on Biological Diversity

**COP:** Conference of the Parties

**EbA:** Ecosystem Based Approach

**Eco-DRR:** Ecosystem Based Disaster Risk Reduction

**IAS:** Invasive Alien Species

**MEAT:** Marine Protected Area Effectiveness

**NbS:** Nature Based Solutions

**PAF:** Priority Action Framework

**R4BLP:** Regions for Biodiversity Learning Platform

**SCBD:** Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

**SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The R4BLP is a flagship initiative of Regions4 that began as a pilot project to test the practical application of a learning platform and address the significant gap in support and resources available to subnational governments. The pilot project confirmed its feasibility, and the R4BLP graduated to a full-time platform at COP13 (2016). After two years of its creation, the platform is now a global community of 12 proactive regional governments working together to conserve and protect biodiversity, encourage healthy ecosystems, and promote sustainable livelihoods for their citizens.

The R4BLP is an open source of technical support, expertise and on-the-ground knowledge for leading subnational regions, despite the stage of development of their BSAPs. By creating multilateral exchanges and a collaborative and participatory environment, the members are able to work collectively over common obstacles and challenges and find solutions to advance the global biodiversity agenda to implement the CBD and the ABTs.

The following report details the lessons learned produced in 2017 and 2018 and showcase the importance of decentralized initiatives to contribute to global efforts to halt biodiversity loss. This two-year report includes discussions, best practices and lessons learned on topics such as agriculture and biodiversity, food security, IAS, EbA to climate change, the sustainable use of pollinators, marine and terrestrial protected areas and the regional implementation of the SDGs.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE R4BLP AFTER TWO YEARS OF ITS CREATION

The fight against biodiversity loss is central to the subnational level of government. Due to their strategic position, subnational governments<sup>1</sup> implement and ensure the vertical integration of biodiversity policies and strategies

that can generate the necessary changes to meeting nationally agreed targets. Their pivotal role in the completion of the CBD's goals is increasingly being recognized worldwide, and the gap in support and resources available at the subnational level is closing as leading regions pave the way towards the achievement of the ABTs and the SDGs and soundly contribute to the global dialogues.

The R4BLP, an initiative tailored for and built by regional governments is a good example on how a global community of regional leaders can work together to conserve and protect biodiversity, encourage healthy ecosystems, and promote sustainable livelihoods for their citizens. Launched at the thirteenth meeting of the COP 13 in Cancun, Mexico, December 2016, the R4BLP is a collaborative environment for cross-jurisdictional exchange, mutual learning and technical capacity building that cultivates partnerships among its 12 members, regions from both the north and south.

In its first two years, the members of the learning platform, the regions of Aichi (Japan), Azuay (Ecuador), Basque Country and Catalonia (Spain), Campeche (Mexico), Goias and Sao Paulo (Brazil), Gossas (Senegal), Lombardy (Italy), Palawan (Philippines), Québec (Canada), and Wales (UK) have shared knowledge and technical advice in the topics of:

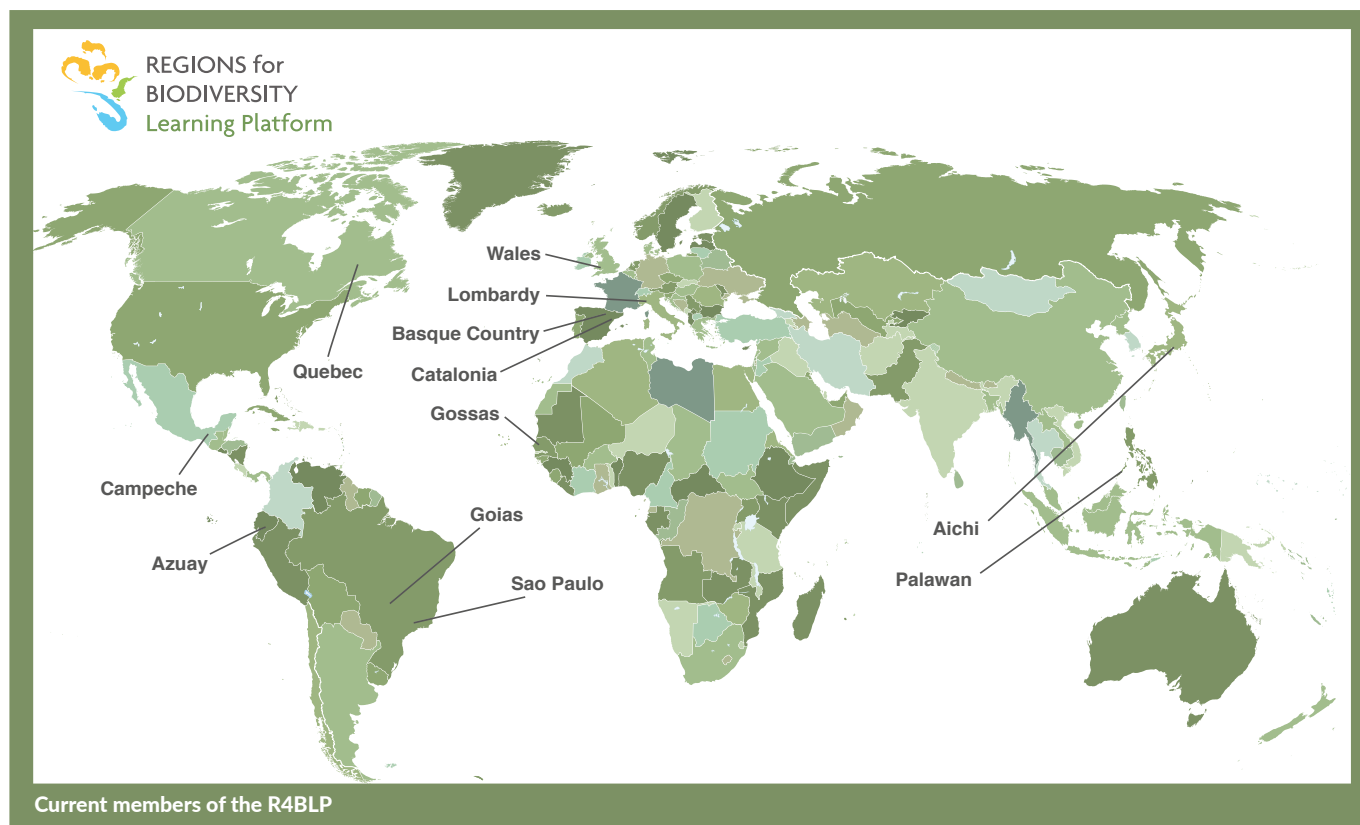
- Agriculture and Biodiversity;
- Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security;
- IAS;
- EbAs to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction;
- The Sustainable Use of Pollinators;
- Marine and terrestrial protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures for achieving ABT 11; and
- Localizing the SDGs at a Regional Level.

In this context, the participating regions share their unique perspective, identify common obstacles,

---

<sup>1</sup> Subnational governments: the first immediate level of government below the national and above the local. It involves regional governments such as states, provinces, domains, territories, lander, cantons, autonomous communities, oblasts, etc., depending on the country. Subnational governments are distinct from "local governments", which include all levels of government below the subnational.





recognize best practices and develop innovative and creative solutions. More importantly, they have the ambition of serving as a support system to assist each other in streamlining the phases of design, development, and implementation of biodiversity initiatives.

To ensure a comprehensive approach to policy development, the R4BLP also considers biodiversity in the context of other relevant agendas, including the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially the SDG 14 – Life Below Water and 15 – Life on Land, respectively, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the CBD’s Ecosystem Approach – a framework for action adopted by the Parties for the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way and at the appropriate spatial scales.

The members’ unique knowledge of their territories and their ability to innovate and find solutions to critical issues to biodiversity has made the R4BLP successful in information sharing. The shared technical knowledge has also proven to be a powerful way of contributing to the CBDs global dialogue on key matters to biodiversity.

The members of the learning platform launched, during the 22nd meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (Montreal, July 2018) a report on the state of IAS in their territories, titled: Subnational government’s achievement towards ABT 9 and SDG Target 15.8. Additionally, they have submitted comments to the CBD Guidelines for Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, as a result of a learning session.

In every session, two or three members of the platform were invited to present their expertise or case clinic as main presenters, while the rest of the members contributed to the dialogue with comments, questions and suggestions. Therefore, the topics included in this report present the experiences of the regions invited to present in each specific topic, and not the totality of initiatives taking place in each member region. The following report comprises the most relevant lessons learned, challenges and solutions of some of the leading regions that are part of the platform and that shared their knowledge and efforts in the context of the learning platform, in the two years of its creation.



Image 1 - Aerial drone view of cultivated farmland and fields during the summer in Wales, UK / Credits: Shutterstock.com

## R4BLP TOPICS

### AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY

*Agricultural biodiversity is a broad term that includes all components of biological diversity of relevance to food and agriculture, and all components of biological diversity that constitute the agricultural ecosystems, also named agro-ecosystems: the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms, at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels, which are necessary to sustain key functions of the agro-ecosystem, its structure and processes ([COP decision V/5, appendix](#)).*

Agriculture and biodiversity are intrinsically linked. The interactions among genetic resources, the environment and the management practices used by farmers are a combination of both natural selection and human intervention. A nourishing interaction and a healthy biodiversity will ensure the production of food, fiber, fuel, among other essential products; maintain ecosystemic services and sustain people's livelihoods, and allow adaptation to climate change.

The important roles of subnational governments on the implementation of the CBD, especially by adopting in their agendas the subnational BSAPs and incorporating this vital perspective will enable healthy farming systems that will consequently encompass socio-cultural, economic and environmental benefits.

## WALES

Wales's recently implemented legal framework focuses on issues of sustainable development, specifically in this case on agriculture and biodiversity, and how these also align with the SDGs. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) envisions the integration of the SDGs by mainstreaming sustainable development principles on decision-making processes of all institutions.

More specifically, the Welsh Environment Act 2016 fosters an ecosystem approach and the implementation of the 12 principles adopted by the CBD. Also with a view to the ABTs, the Act includes actions of co-benefits and ecosystem resilience, particularly through a new strengthened biodiversity duty, especially at the local level and, more importantly, it provides a holistic legal framework for climate change and integrated action on mitigation and adaptation.

When it comes to agriculture and biodiversity, Wales has a very strong initiative called the Nature Fund Pilot Scheme, which was a £5 million grant program, with the aim of tackling the decline in biodiversity and improving natural resources management, delivering direct benefits to the communities involved. This pilot scheme took place between 2013 and 2015. Out of 20 projects, 19 involved ideas and initiatives from local farmers and communities throughout the country. Furthermore, the implementation of

a non-traditional grant approach as a financing method encouraged bottom-up partnerships. Using methodologies such as workshops and calls for projects, local communities were involved in the decision-making and implementation. This not only allowed communities' better involvement but also built ownership and shared benefits on conservation efforts.

As a result of the successful pilot experience, the Nature Fund was replaced by the Sustainable Management Scheme, with grants ranging from a minimum of £10,000 to a maximum of £5,000,000. This funding scheme has two broader objectives: addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving community resilience to climate change impacts.

## CONNECTIVITY WORK IN THE DUHONW CATCHMENT

This collaborative farmer-led project takes practical action at a landscape scale and seeks to build ecosystem resilience with the establishment of wildlife corridors, which will deliver wider environmental benefits including improved water quality and storage within the catchment. Some 19,500 m of corridors will be established to the Welsh Government agro-environment specification.

Find out more at: <https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/?lang=en>

## WALES'S LESSONS LEARNED

- Consultations were done through workshops, NGOs and through collaboration with other members of the civil society via call for projects. The Nature Fund had a fundamental bottom-up approach and the local farmers were the ones who decided which topics and projects they wanted to develop. The ownership of their projects enabled to create knowledge, and in most of the cases, it included training exercises to improve capacities in the longer-term.
- The new legislative framework created the opportunities and the funding from the Welsh Government enabled the implementation of the actions that materialized the objectives of the law. It's important to note that the grants foresaw the concrete means to implement the regional legislation, through the projects proposed by local NGOs, farmer groups and communities.
- The Sustainable Management Scheme was able to replace the pilot experience thanks to the lessons learned. It became a long-term solution that is currently at phase two of implementation. Once the 5-year phase is over, its continuation will be reviewed and approved. The Scheme is part of a separate funding concept line, specific for the implementation of approved laws from the Welsh government.
- Having direct collaboration and engagement of local communities encouraged local farming practices and knowledge. Instead of proposing different management practices, the Sustainable Development Scheme ensured the engagement of the local population.
- Moving away from traditional grant giving to this collaborative solution is that the farmers and communities involved were able to go beyond



Image 2 - Branch of an apricot tree, fruit, held by the farmer's hand, full of pink flower buds that are about to bloom, on an agricultural farm where produces fruit, petals, march, spring, sun, Lombardy, Italy / Credits: Shutterstock.com





Image 3 - Cultivated hills in Oltrepo' Pavese (Lombardy, Italy) / Credits: Shutterstock.com

the “here and now”, and think on the long-term scenario. The Welsh Government was able to make a difference by working with them on the ground and allowing them to create the project proposals themselves, which ensured the sustainability of those practices once the funding was over.

## LOMBARDY

Lombardy's LIFE Gestire 2020, is a project focused on the integration of funds, with a longer duration and a consistent budget. The project's objectives are to implement environmental plans and/or strategies at a relevant territorial scale, including the management of the network Natura 2000, taking into account the participation of different stakeholders, and promoting the coordination and mobilization of other European national or private funds (integration with complementary funds).

In the region, the ABTs are pursued through the PAF for biodiversity. Even though it is coordinated by regional governments, the project is based on a broad range of partners. Especially they collaborate with expert NGOs operating in the region. With a specific budget for implementation of around €17 million, it counts with both internal and external funding.

In this context, the Life Gestire 2020 project is responsible for the implementation of a significant part of the PAF. It focuses on governance and management models of Natura

2000, the conservation status of habitats and species, public awareness and monitoring. Basically, each of these actions is covered by detailed activities, including training cycles for public officers, the establishment of a system for Natura 2000 management and others.

## WHAT IS THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK?

Natura 2000 is a network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected in their own right. It stretches over 18 % of the EU's land area and almost 6 % of its marine territory, which makes it the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world.

The aim of the network is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

## LOMBARDY'S LESSONS LEARNED

- From the implementation of this cross-cutting project, Lombardy reaffirmed the need of mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors to address its loss in an integrated manner, especially by linking it to territorial planning and agricultural policies.

- The regional government of Lombardy did not promote specific agriculture or forest management techniques, instead they shared best practices and promoted a wider range of training activities. Additionally, a group of technicians and experts on the field worked permanently with the farmers to promote knowledge sharing.
- The network Natura 2000 is key to the success of the projects and essential to the enlargement of protected areas across Europe. Being part of the network is an added value to a territory. The legislative framework of the European Union enables the possibility of raising the economic benefit of these certified areas.
- The LIFE Gestire 2020 was developed with the financial assistance from EU funds that arrived at different Ministries and Departments, therefore the project helped improve inter-sectorial collaboration which ensured the success of the project implementation.
- Regarding the safeguarding of ecological corridors, the regional government works with different models depending on the geographical area, adapting solutions to each environment.

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

### CHALLENGE: HOW TO INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Most of the agricultural production of the R4BLP members rely on industrial practices, such as aerial application of chemicals and the use of genetically modified seeds. The case of Goiás (Brazil) is particularly interesting since the vast majority of production of the state is based on

soy, sugar cane, corn, manioc, rice, and beef. This is fueled by a high international demand making the scale of production overwhelming.

Many rural agricultural areas are situated near protected areas, which results in major impacts and unforeseen consequences on the surrounding landscape. In this sense, the challenge for Goiás that relates to the realities of many of the members of the platform, was to identify innovative market strategies to incentivize commodity producers near protected areas to be environmentally friendly, while still maintaining their capacity of production and profitability.

## SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGE

The theme of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security is clearly a universal issue that is relevant across the R4BLP. In that sense, the solutions that can potentially work for Goiás may also apply to similar regions worldwide. The debate and exchange among the R4BLP's members led to the following useful solutions on how to improve the current scenario for an even more successful result:

- Marketing: Completing the circle for small farmer recipients of government subsidies by also providing them a space to sell their products at a government-organized farmers market, that is promoted to the public and raises awareness about environmentally friendly practices that protect biodiversity. The margins for family farming operations are minimal so this type of arrangement allows them to focus on their specialization and eases the burden of marketing and selling their products so they can be more competitive.



Image 4 - Rio Verde, Goiás, Brazil, April 05, 2006. A high clearance sprayer on a soy field / Credits: Shutterstock.com





Image 5 - Indigenous Latin American woman is harvesting ripe coffee berries on organic coffee farm. Food and drink coffee background. / / Credits: Shutterstock.com

- **Protected Areas:** Particularly when it comes to protected areas, whenever agriculture is allowed, it is important to establish clear guidelines for the production of organic products, which would then be recognized by a clear government certification, in the form of a label or brand. The production in those areas can be key to changing the general mindset in terms of combining agriculture and biodiversity conservation, as it is mandated by the Strategic Plan of Action 2011-2020 and the ABTs.
- **Public Awareness:** Another solution was to establish multidisciplinary teams that would help in the definition and implementation of state-sponsored measures, for instance, labels and public information campaigns. Help the public relate by informing them what species and ecosystems they are protecting by supporting producers that adopt environmentally friendly practices.

## INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

*IAS has taken over and affected native forms of life in almost every ecosystem type on Earth and have altered all major taxonomic groups<sup>2</sup>. Luckily, since the launch of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the ABTs, the responses to control IAS have positively transformed policies at a national and subnational level. According to the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 (GBO-4), 55%*

<sup>2</sup> IUCN (The World Conservation Union). 2000. IUCN Guidelines for the Prevention of Biodiversity Loss Caused by Alien Invasive Species. Prepared by the Species Survival Commission Invasive Species Specialist Group, and approved by the 51st Meeting of the IUCN Council. Gland, Switzerland. Available at: [http://www.issg.org/pdf/guidelines\\_iucn.pdf](http://www.issg.org/pdf/guidelines_iucn.pdf)

*of the Parties of the Convention have enacted IAS national legislation, and 82% of them have signed multinational agreements to prevent the spread and to promote the control/eradication of IAS in their national territories.*

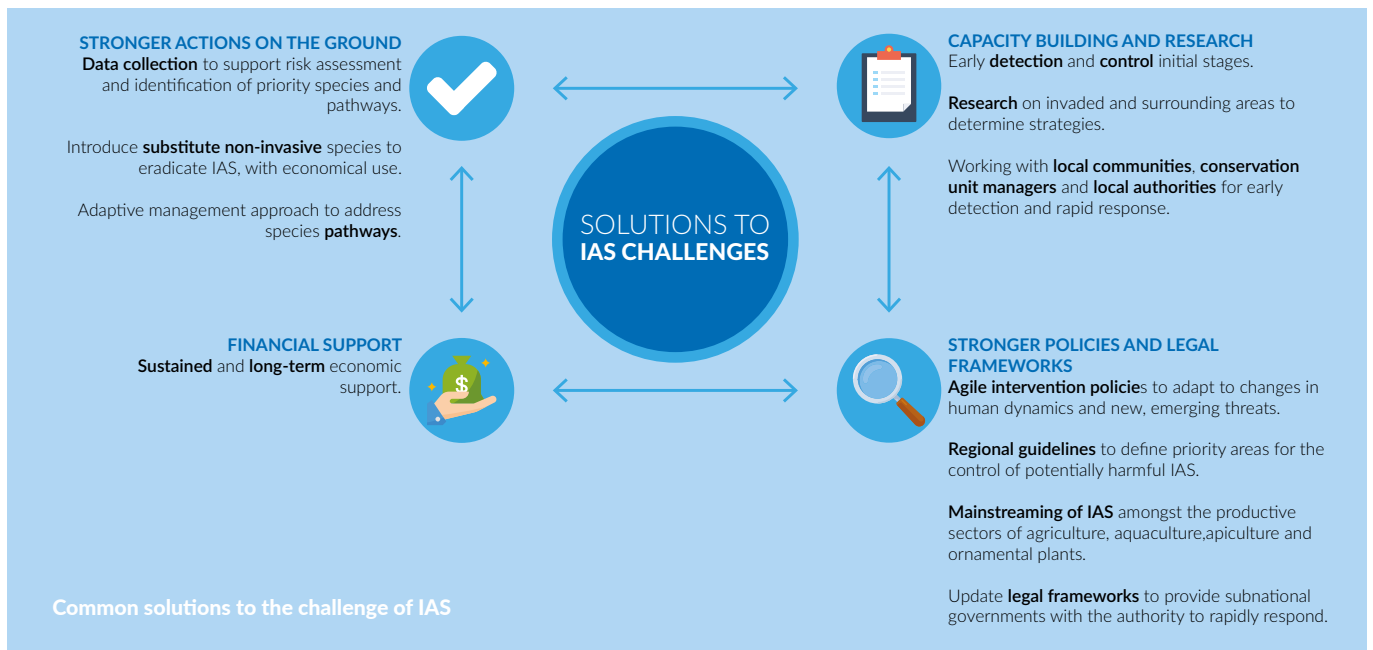
The R4BLP member regions worked deeply on this subject and carried on two webinar sessions and produced an extensive report to gather information on the pressing issue of IAS in 23 regions of the world.

## REGIONAL EFFORTS TOWARDS ABT 9 AND SDG 15.8

The report “Subnational governments achievement towards ABT 9 and SDG Target 15.8” (July 2018) had the objective to identify common threads and challenges, lessons learned and raise a common voice on the matter.

The participating regions shared success stories that demonstrate innovative solutions to control, and in some cases, eradicate invasive species. Subnational authorities play a vital role in not only the implementation of actions but also in identifying pathways of introduction, early detection and rapid response.

To find out more, please visit: [www.regions4.org](http://www.regions4.org)



The sub-national governments of Aichi, Azuay, and Lombardy shared their experiences in dealing with IAS in their territories. The three regions advanced innovative solutions for what needs to be done and what their challenges are. The

proposed solutions are relevant to all regions and can be useful for other subnational decision-makers worldwide with local adaptations to the different realities.



Image 6 - Red Squirrel / Credits: Shutterstock.com



## EBA TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

*EbA is the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. EbA aims to maintain and increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems and people in the face of the adverse effects of climate change (SCBD 2009).*

*Eco-DRR is sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems to reduce disaster risk, with the aim of achieving sustainable and resilient development (Estrella and Saalismaa 2013)*

The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of natural resources,

and it's based on 12 guiding principles that are interlinked and that speak directly to the efforts subnational governments do in their everyday work. Principle 2 specifically refers to the need for implementing management strategies in a decentralized manner to the lowest appropriate level with the objective of reaching greater efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. Similarly, principle 7 refers to the importance of undertaking the approach at the appropriate spatial scale.

In that sense, [Decision X/33](#) (October 2010) by the COP 11 recommended addressing climate change impacts on biodiversity through the management of the ecosystems. This led to deep research on experiences related to EbAs to climate change adaptation and Eco-DRR (COP 12). The CBD published its results in the [Technical Series No.85](#) (2016), providing a synthesis of experiences, analysis of challenges, lessons learned and design and implementation methodologies. Later on, COP 13 (Cancun) proposed guidelines for its implementation.



Image 7 - OROZKO, SPAIN - FEBRUARY 21, 2017: shepherd guide his sheep herd at basque country rural village, Spain / Credits: Shutterstock.com

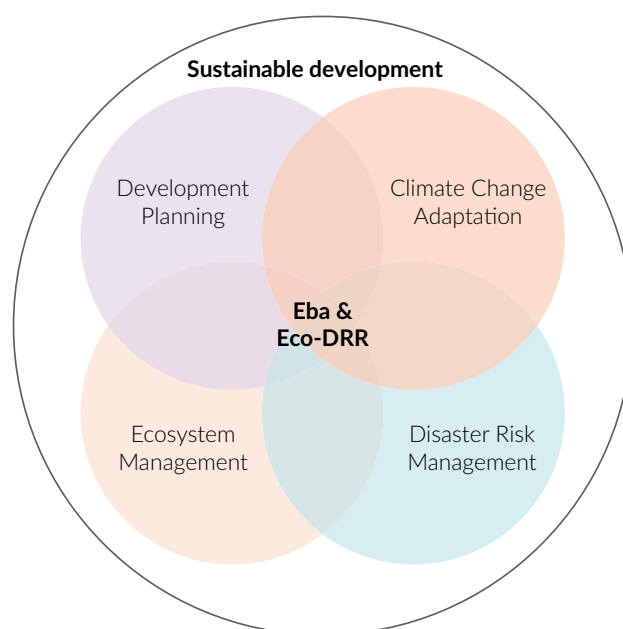


Figure 1: Ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and disaster risk reduction (EbA & Eco-DRR) utilizes ecosystems and biodiversity to integrate climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and development planning to provide benefits for people and nature beyond adaptation and disaster risk reduction within the overall framework of sustainable development (adapted from Midgley et al., 2012, DEA & SANBI 2017, and Sudmeier and Ash 2009)



EbA and Eco-DRR are cross-cutting approaches closely related to maintenance, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem. Additionally, they also include community-based adaptation, integrated water resources management, nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, etc. Moreover, both fields emphasize community engagement through participatory processes which are a fundamental part of the SDGs.

## **BASQUE COUNTRY**

The Environmental Framework Programme of the Basque Country 2020 is part of the innovative solutions to climate change taken by the region in the past years. The document ends a cycle of strategic environmental planning that started in 2002 and marks the start of a new stage of an environmental policy, aimed at using the social and economic opportunities in the region by improving environmental conditions to create wealth, employment and wellbeing.

The innovations proposed in the new environmental policy framework highlight the role that the three Provincial Councils and the local councils play in the process of implementing the actions on the ground to facilitate an efficient deployment of the public policies in the territory as a whole. Additionally, it is important to note the essential role of the numerous stakeholders in the region who work to improve the environment, including the private sector and local communities that are increasingly more committed to protecting the environment.

Their Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and first Action Plan 2020 details the goals and actions regarding the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach. The goal: Halting the loss and degradation of habitats and species, and improving their conservation status to move towards becoming a resilient and multifunctional territory. The Action Plan details in its action 9 the importance of encouraging the resilience of the ecosystems by integrating the climate change variable in the management of the natural environment.

Their vast experience allowed them to document their learnings in the report “Climate Change in the Basque Country: 28 Best Practices”, that details their efforts on EbA and NbS to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. These experiences are even more relevant because they detail efforts carried in different types of ecosystems (coastal, estuarine, riverine, terrestrial) and its implications to various terrestrial planning (urban, peri-urban, Biosphere Reserves, RAMSAR Convention wetlands, and Natura 2000 Network sites).

## **TOOLS AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS THAT ENABLE EBA AND ECO-DRR APPROACHES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY:**

### **[Environmental Framework Programme of the Basque Country 2020](#)**

In brief, this document: describes the new environmental challenges facing the Basque Country; sets the targets and main measure for 2020; and provides the authorities, general public and private sector with the necessary clarity and predictability in relation to environmental issues.

### **[Climate Change Strategy of the Basque Country to 2050](#)**

KLIMA 2050 is the Basque Climate Change Strategy, an instrument shared by all the Ministries of the Government to strengthen and extend the measures implemented so far. KLIMA 2050 is in line with the vanguard Europe and is the Basque Country's pledge to sustainable human development.

### **[Climate Change in the Basque Country: 28 Best Practices](#)**

The document details the lessons learned from the projects being implemented by the private sector and public authorities to address the challenges of climate change in their territory.

These lessons learned aim to facilitate the fulfillment of the targets of the Climate Change Strategy of the Basque Country to 2050, i.e. to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

## THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF POLLINATORS

*Pollination is a vital phenomenon to life on Earth. More than one ¼ of food crops benefit from pollinators, which represents an annual market value of US\$ 235 – 577 billion. Yet the threat to them continues to grow. By losing animal pollinators, we jeopardize an important link to agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, food security, food safety, and nutrition.*

According to the Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production<sup>3</sup> of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the status and trends on the issue is the following:

- Wild pollinators have declined in occurrence and diversity (and abundance for certain species) at local and regional scales in North West Europe and North America.
- The number of managed western honey bee hives has increased globally over the last five decades, even though declines have been recorded in some European countries and North America over the same period.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List assessments indicate that 16.5 percent of vertebrate pollinators is threatened with global extinction (increasing to 30 percent for island species). There are no global Red List assessments specifically for insect pollinators. However, regional and national assessments indicate high levels of threat for some bees and butterflies.

<sup>3</sup> IPBES (2016). The assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on pollinators, pollination and food production. S.G. Potts, V. L. Imperatriz-Fonseca, and H. T. Ngo, (eds). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 552 pages.

- The volume of production of pollinator-dependent crops has increased by 300 percent over the last five decades, making livelihoods increasingly dependent on the provision of pollination. However, overall these crops have experienced lower growth and lower stability of yield than pollinator-independent crops.

## SAO PAULO'S LESSONS LEARNED

Sao Paulo is the most industrialized state in Brazil, however, agriculture plays an important role. The state has more than 3,500 species of native bees, which are being threatened by the overwhelming demand for monoculture farming. The main challenges facing its conservation and its sustainable use include the following land-use change, pesticide use, lack of knowledge of local communities on native pollinators and its sustainable use, low diversity of attractive plant species in restoration projects, competition with IAS of bees, forest fires and deforestation.

One of the actions the state government of Sao Paulo has taken to address this issue, is having constructive dialogues with private land-owners, NGOs and academia to find a comprehensive solution to the increasing threat to pollinators. The sugarcane sector is particularly involved in these dialogues and is implementing a voluntary protocol on pollinator protection.

Currently, there is a Technical Group on Pollinator Protection that works to implement the actions included in the Wild Fauna state law, the standards for commercialization of native bee honey and the Protocol for the Transition to Agro-Ecological Agriculture.



Image 8 - Big swarm of bees in front of the beehives / Credits: Shutterstock.com

Main Challenges		Possible Solutions
Monoculture Farming	Lethal and sub-lethal effects of the use of pesticides on native bees	Mid and long-term toxicological research and international technical collaboration on the topic  Regulate aerial application of pesticides
	Role of the neonicotinoids and fipronil on bees poisoning	
	Lack of knowledge of good practices on pesticides use, preparation, application	
Ecological Restoration	Lack of nesting sites	The abundance of attractive native flowering species is an opportunity to explore a solution  Fundamental to consider the essential role of pollinators in all restoration projects
	Availability of pollen and bee glue or propolis	
Public Awareness and Education	Lack of public awareness on the essential role of pollinators on food security and biodiversity conservation	Include the topic of pollinators and native bees on school content  Encourage public awareness on the ecological services pollinators provide

## MARINE AND TERRESTRIAL PROTECTED AREAS AND OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR ACHIEVING ABT 11

*By 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape (ABT 11).*

Spatial protections can achieve a variety of objectives, from species and habitat protection to biomass increases as well as foster equitable

governance frameworks that can enable and support monitoring and enforcement. Marine and terrestrial protected areas are accepted as an important tool to protect biodiversity, mitigate human impacts, restore species diversity and ecosystem function and provide an insurance policy against broad-scale climate impacts. Progress is being made towards this ABT 11, with more than a doubling of Marine Protected Area (MPA) coverage since its adoption, in 2010. As MPAs and “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OEABCM) are being implemented, a broader understanding of elements to achieve biodiversity conservation is emerging. Often, large, long-lasting and no-take MPAs deliver maximum benefits to ecological outcomes, while stakeholder inclusion, co-governance and clearly defined economic benefits or economic alternatives that ultimately are key elements for achieving social outcomes.

## OEABCMs

OEABCMs can result from sector-based initiatives and can be simply, although not exclusively, categorized into non-fishery and fishery measures where the outcome of in situ conservation must be demonstrated. Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), depending on elements of biodiversity protection within the designated area, can contribute to ecological and social benefits including protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as access rights, food security and co- governance.

## PLAN NORD

The aim of the Plan Nord is to promote the potential for mining, energy, tourism, and social and cultural development in Québec north of the 49th degree of latitude. It will create jobs and wealth for northern communities and for Québec as a whole while ensuring respect for the northern population and the environment. By harmonizing the economic, social and environmental aspects of the Plan Nord, the Québec government intends to make it a responsible, sustainable and unifying project for Québec society.

## QUÉBEC

In the year 2000, the Québec government committed to protecting at least 8% of the territory and in one year, exceeded the target by 8.14%. In 2010, they launched the [publication](#) of an overview of the quality of Québec's network of protected areas for the 2002-2009 period. Committed to ABT 11, Québec intends to reach it, particularly by doing the following activities:

- [The Plan Nord](#): By 2020, establish protected areas in 20% of the area covered by the Plan Nord, of which at least 12% will comprise boreal forest north of the 49th parallel.
- [The Maritime Strategy](#): By 2020, establish, in collaboration with the federal government, a representative network of protected areas covering at least 10% of its sea area.

## QUÉBEC'S LESSONS LEARNED

- The availability of the science-based ecological reference framework for defining Québec's biodiversity, which was used throughout a systematic conservation planning process, allowed taking the representativeness of all Québec's natural ecosystems into account.
- In 2002, a new act introduced newly protected area designations where industrial rights were withdrawn while ensuring the continuation of some low impact activities (e.g.: seasonal hunting, maintenance of existing cabins, recreation). This allowed for the creation of 100 new protected areas ranging from 1 to 11,871 km<sup>2</sup> (average of 690 km<sup>2</sup>), all IUCN category II.
- The majority of the newly created protected areas were located on public land, therefore the environmental certification procedure undertaken by logging companies was a smooth



Image 9 - Mont Tremblant National Park panoramic view with autumn colors, Canada / Credits: Shutterstock.com



process; however, consultation with local communities was a necessary step. Counting with the communities' approval of the boundaries of those areas was an essential step before the start of formal protection.

- In addition, the government set up three private stewardship programs with an overall budget of \$CAN 47 million between 2002 and 2013. These programs helped to protect close to 200 km<sup>2</sup> of very rich biodiversity habitats in southern Québec.
- Québec's protected areas network is based on using the highest IUCN criteria.
- Québec is the legal entity for reporting on protected areas, which means that the federal government uses Québec's statistics.

## PALAWAN

Palawan's marine protected areas are amongst the most famous of the world since one of them, the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park, was designated by UNESCO as World Heritage Site for being home to nearly 400 species of fish and birds. The richness of Palawan's biodiversity and the increasing recognition as a tourist destination has heightened their need to innovate solutions and find a sustainable way of maintaining both resources (natural and economic) and, more importantly, secure local communities support in doing so.

At the end of 2017, six northern town mayors agreed to create and manage the Northeastern Palawan Marine Protected Area Network which will address unsustainable fishing practices, one of the major threats to marine conservation. The executives of Roxas, Dumarán, Araceli, Taytay, El Nido, and Linapacan agreed to a series of commitments to protect the MPA in their localities in an

effort to, together, improve the environmental conditions as well as the economic opportunities of the selected MPA.

The MPAs involved in the agreement are mainly comprised of mangrove, seagrass and coral reef ecosystems that, in the case of the Caramay MPA, serve as the habitats of green groupers (*Epinopelus coioides*), endangered dugong (*Dugong dugon*) and a high-priced lobster (*Panulirus homarus*), all with high market and ecological value. These three species eventually became the flagship species of the Roxas Pride Campaign, implemented with the objective of raising awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation.

## PALAWAN'S LESSONS LEARNED

- The success rate in a conservation area or in an MPA is dependent on the communities' engagement as Palawan was able to prove. The most important lesson learned was the need to implement a communication campaign on the importance of preserving the most endangered ecosystem and species in the region.
- The 18 coastal barangays<sup>4</sup> and the 14 conservation areas within these territories, that were part of the public awareness campaign, showed damage due to the intrusion into the MPA core zone and illegal, destructive, fishing practices. The need to raise awareness was the first fundamental step to achieving success.
- To ensure that the Roxas Pride Campaign responded to the local communities' knowledge of the area and that the language used was familiar, the campaign based all its information documents and workshops on a series of surveys with local actors. A consultation process was a necessary step to achieve positive results.

<sup>4</sup> Barangay formerly referred to as barrio, is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward

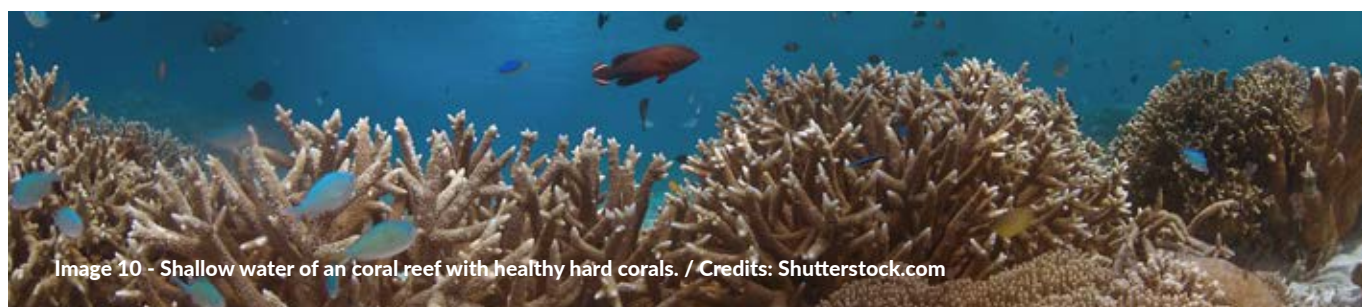


Image 10 - Shallow water of a coral reef with healthy hard corals. / Credits: Shutterstock.com

- The surveys proved that local fishermen were unaware of the areas that were restricted or protected and some did not know that there was even an MPA. Therefore, the public awareness campaign and workshops were carried out not only with local fishermen but also with their families and public schools to ensure the message on the importance of conservation was received by the whole community.
- The Northeastern Palawan Marine Protected Area Network activities implemented as part of the campaign also helped empower the work of the Management Committee. The results of the entire project achieved an increase for the MEAT (Marine Protected Area Effectiveness) baseline level which moved from a score of 38 in 2012 to a MEAT score of 60 in 2014 for an MPA level 2.
- A successful public awareness campaign that engages local communities from the beginning of its development proved to be successful for Roxas. The PCSD is currently replicating the model into 13 other MPAs in the province.

## LOCALIZING THE SDGs AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

*Biological diversity is the foundation for life on earth, contributing to human welfare, well-being and health and it is, therefore, also the foundation for achieving the SDGs 2030.*

One of the core elements for a successful localization of the SDGs is a territorial approach. It stands for more than just a geographical concept, but rather an approach that simultaneously addresses urban, rural and natural areas, integrating the multiple dimensions of a territory, such as the social, cultural, environmental and economic ones.

As the members of the R4BLP have experienced, it means designing public policies and services based on the citizens' needs, especially focusing on urban-rural linkages. In this context, the role of regional governments is fundamental.

Regional governments from all parts of the world have a crucial and unique role to play in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, given their proximity to the level where actions are more likely to produce measurable results. Based on their own competences and enabled by their much-needed territorial perspective, regional governments are working towards the definition of strategies and plans that builds upon national and global guidelines and efforts. Some regions are taking the necessary step to establish adequate legal and institutional frameworks, and take action towards the achievement of the SDGs, as we will see from Catalonia's example.

## CATALONIA

The most recent efforts of localizing the Agenda 2030 into the actions of the Catalan Government can be traced back to 2015 when several working groups were created and embedded into the work of all 13 Ministries in the region. The Advisory Council for Sustainable Development of Catalonia (CADS) guided the efforts and in 2016, launched "The 2030 Agenda: Transform Catalonia, Improve the World", with contributions from experts and members of the civil society that gave impulse to the government pledge of developing a National Plan for the Implementation of the SDGs.

It was in 2017 when an Inter-Ministerial Commission was created to lead such plan, and a Technical Committee started working on the draft



Image 11 - Wolf standing on a rock / Credits: Shutterstock.com

document, alongside with 17 working groups. The CADS assisted and worked very closely with both bodies to deliver a first draft (July 2017), containing 750 commitments and key actions, including deadlines for their accomplishment, responsible ministries and indicators for their assessment.

Currently, the 750 commitments are under review, which proved that the SDGs are one of the priorities of the regional government and are at the core of the new 2030 Vision for Development Cooperation and its 2019-2022 Master Plan.

## CATALONIA'S LESSONS LEARNED

- Having the support of an independent to all Ministries Advisory Council was the biggest lesson learned for Catalonia. Indeed, having an expert institution lead the dialogue set the tone of the future negotiations and eased the process of setting strong commitments regarding the SDGs implementation in their region.
- Identifying the challenges of each of the SDGs implementation is key to plan for the future and, at the same time, prepare solutions. When it comes to SDG 15 Life on Land, Catalonia realized the importance of incorporating green infrastructure into

their ecological connectivity and ecosystem services strategies, as the core feature of spatial and urban planning, thus reinforcing the effectiveness of policies designed to protect and manage their natural heritage.

- It is essential to ensure the active management of natural areas that are already protected with the appropriate tools and resources to secure results and, where necessary, increase the number of areas with the highest level of protection.
- Establishing a modern, effective system of governance that enables the development of a legal and planning framework regarding natural heritage and biodiversity, in line with current scientific knowledge and criteria for conserving and managing biodiversity on a worldwide scale, is important.
- A clear focus on the new challenges and being able to respond rapidly to those is fundamental, especially in regards to protected species. In the case of Catalonia, there is a strong focus on improving the system for controlling illegal trafficking and online trade. Additionally, it is a challenge to continue supporting and creating reception centers for abandoned exotic fauna and to increase coordination among the institutions dealing with these matters.



Image 12 - Barcelona, Spain - may 15, 2018: views of the RCD Espanyol stadium and the Splau shopping center from the Llobregat river / Credits: Shutterstock.com



# CONCLUSIONS

## GLOBAL CHALLENGES, REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

The R4BLP graduated to a full-time project at the 5th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments at COP 13 (Cancun, 2016). It proved successful in addressing the significant gap in support and resources available to subnational governments and it is now a global community of 12 leading regional governments, willing to share their experiences while contributing to the global dialogues on biodiversity.

Since the beginning of the learning platform, the members realized the importance of sustaining continued dialogues with the SCBD and the Parties to the Convention in order to link their priorities to those being discussed at the global level. The fruitful dialogues and exchanges shaped the work plan of the platform and in doing so, generated contributions that highlighted the importance of decentralized initiatives and their contribution to the greater, collective effort of halting biodiversity loss.

Some of the most important lessons learned that comprehensibly respond to the different realities portrayed in the regions of Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Europe that participates in the learning platform, are:

- The national-subnational continued dialogued and public policy alignment is

of fundamental importance to significantly contribute to the global efforts;

- Stronger and continued dialogues with the Parties to the CBD and other global forums and aligned priorities is essential while remaining attentive to local realities to remain nimble and able to respond to policy needs quickly and with an innovative approach;
- Local and indigenous communities' engagement in ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions is a fundamental step towards a successful implementation on the ground;
- Public awareness and open participation of civil society in environmental issues must be strengthened with technical capacity building with small and large-scale farmers, stakeholders and all communities involved;
- Capacity-building in public institutions and sustained long-term funding for research in key issues, as well as technical cooperation among regional networks and learning platforms, is essential to the continued growth of technical expertise and knowledge;
- A legal framework must be backed by long-term planning, and supported by sustained, long-term budget.

The aim of the R4BLP is to take this messages and lessons learned into the future and plan for a stronger learning community that is able to actively participate in the global dialogues and take a leading role in the achievement of the biodiversity global targets to 2020 and beyond, in support of the Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments for Biodiversity.

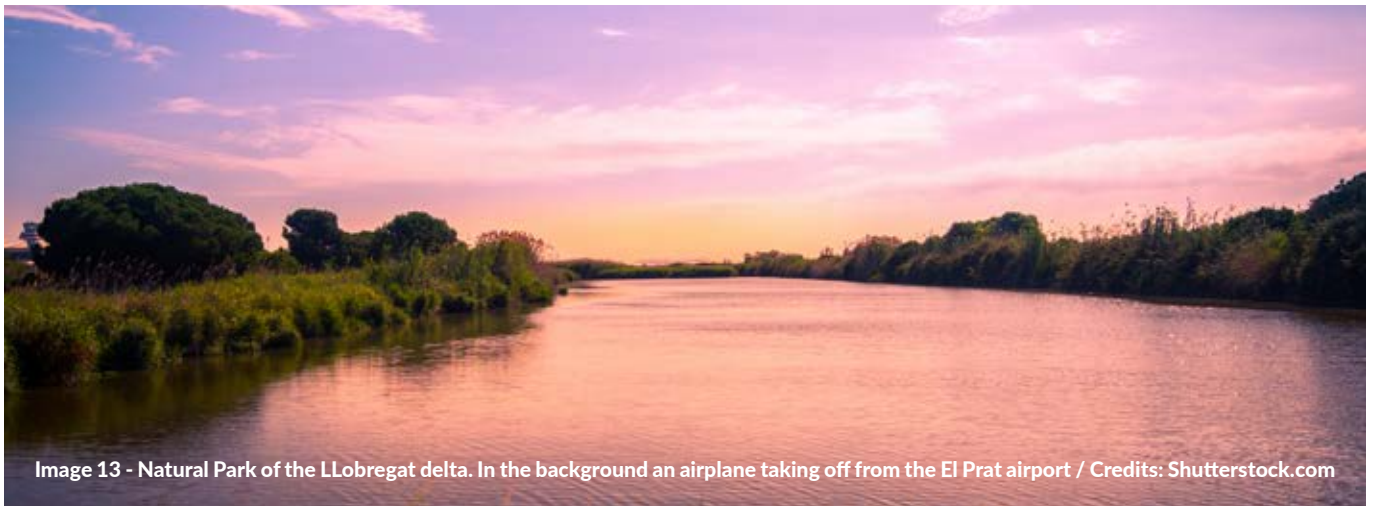


Image 13 - Natural Park of the Llobregat delta. In the background an airplane taking off from the El Prat airport / Credits: Shutterstock.com



# LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1 - Aerial drone view of cultivated farmland and fields during the summer in Wales, UK.....	6
Image 2 - Branch of an apricot tree, fruit, held by the farmer's hand, full of pink fower buds that are about to bloom, on an agricultural farm where produces fruit, petals, march, spring, sun, Lombardy, Italy.....	7
Image 3 - Cultivated hills in Oltrepo' Pavese (Lombardy, Italy) .....	8
Image 4 - Rio Verde, Goias, Brazil, April 05, 2006. A high clearance sprayer on a soy field .....	9
Image 5 - Indigenous Latin American woman is harvesting ripe cofee berries on organic cofee farm .....	10
Image 6 - Red Squirrel.....	11
Image 7 - Orozko, Spain - February 21, 2017: shepherd guides his sheep herd at Basque Country rural village, Spain.....	12
Image 8 - Big swarm of bees in front of the beehives.....	14
Image 9 - Mont Tremblant Natonal Park panoramic view with autumn colors, Canada.....	16
Image 10 - Shallow water of an coral reef with healthy hard corals.....	17
Image 11- Wolf standing on a rock.....	18
Image 12 - Barcelona, Spain - May 15, 2018: views of the RCD Espanyol stadium and the Splau shopping center from the Llobregat river.....	19
Image 13 - Natural Park of the Llobregat Delta. In the background an airplane taking off from the El Prat airport.....	20

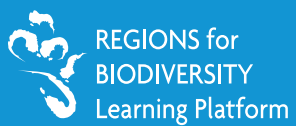
## ABOUT REGIONS4



Regions4 (formerly known as the nrg4SD) is a global network that solely represents regional governments (states, regions and provinces) before UN processes, European Union initiatives and global discussions in the fields of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. Regions4 was established in 2002 at the World Summit in Johannesburg and currently represents 42 members from 20 countries in 4 continents. Through advocacy, cooperation and capacity building, Regions4 empowers regional governments to accelerate global action. For more information, visit: [www.regions4.org](http://www.regions4.org)

[@Regions4SD](#) | [#Regions4Biodiv](#) | [info@regions4.org](mailto:info@regions4.org)





 Chaussée d'Alsemberg 999- B-1180, Brussels, Belgium

 [www.regions4.org](http://www.regions4.org)

 [info@regions4.org](mailto:info@regions4.org)

 [@Regions4SD](https://twitter.com/Regions4SD)

[#Regions4Climate](#) [#RegionsAdapt](#) [#Regions4Biodiv](#) [#Regions4SDGs](#)