Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans: Learning from the Global LBSAP Studios 2026

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BACKGROUND

In 2010, the 193 Parties (192 national governments and the European Union) who were signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted Decision X/22 at the tenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties in Aichi/Nagoya, Japan. Adoption of the Decision also meant endorsement of a "Plan of Action on Sub-National Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2010-2020)". Local Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (LBSAPs) are a mechanism for implementing the CBD. Initial guidelines were developed in 2013 with support of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, The United Nations University (UNU-IAS), and the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD) together with a network of cities and experts and the first Global LBSAP Studios. However, these guidelines were based on Aichi Biodiversity Targets at the local level, through alignment with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) (https://cbc.iclei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/LBSAP-Guidelines.pdf). However, these guidelines need to be revised and adjusted to the new the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), launched in 2023, particularly target 12:
https://www.cbd.int/gbf

The practical guidelines have the objective of "how to" develop LBSAPs placing strong emphasis on alignment with national NBSAPs, and sub-national BSAPs, where they exist, and provide local governments and cities with step-by-step information for organizational planning, the construction and content of the strategies and action plan, and pragmatic solutions for mainstreaming and implementing the LBSAP. This city-biodiversity studio is an important mechanism to develop conceptual and practical approaches to better integrate biodiversity into the local planning process and provide inputs to the revision of the previous guidelines to adjust them to the the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

GLOBAL LBSAP STUDIOS 2026

Fifteen universities from eight countries have joined the Global LBSAP Studios 2026 initiative to hold studios focused on Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (LBSAPs). Some of those universities were involved in the Global LBSAP Studios initiative in 2013. Instructors work with students to define the geographical scope (one area of the city or the whole city; urban, peri-urban, or rural) and the thematic scope (health, buildings, business, law, climate change adaptation, NBSs, etc.). The studio exercise aims to: (i) Develop conceptual and practical approaches to better integrate biodiversity into the local planning process; (ii) Carry out an exercise of developing a Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBSAP) for a specific local context based on available guidelines published in 2013; and (iii) Provide constructive feedback on the LBSAP guidelines and ways they can be improved. Many of the studios interacted with governments and other stakeholders, such as NGOs and communities.

Key Messages: Lessons and Recommendations

Global targets should be translated into local responsibilities and spatial action (Manchester and Armenia). Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework emphasizes biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, ecological connectivity and restoration. The document should make clearer how contemporary global targets translate into local responsibilities and spatial action.

LBSAP should go beyond the social-ecological aspects and the boundaries of the administration (Curitiba). LBSAP should be an integrated approach aimed at understanding urban biodiversity not just as a species inventory or set of green areas, but as a strategic dimension of urban planning, environmental governance, climate adaptation, and ultimately improvements in quality of life.

LBSAP should prioritize the integrity of complex ecosystems and spatial connectivity (Shanghai, Curitiba, and Armenia). Since ecological processes often cross administrative boundaries, conservation measures within a single administrative unit are insufficient to meet the needs of species migration, genetic exchange, and ecological process maintenance. Therefore, it is necessary to transcend traditional administrative boundaries, identify key ecological spaces from a regional perspective, and establish a continuous ecological network.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be powerful instruments to collect and systematize data on urban biodiversity (Shanghai, Curitiba, and Armenia). Emerging technologies should be incorporated in the tools for helping in the development and implementation of LBSAPs. They can collect data in the field and also analyze primary and secondary information. Also, the use of citizen science engagement methods, when done well, can having lasting impact on.

The LPSAP process can be iterative, not sequential, with feasibility tested from the outset and explicit feedback loops between evidence, strategy, implementation and monitoring (Manchester and Curitiba). The

apparent linearity of the LBSAP process was another recurring concern. Studios found that progression from baseline to mapping, strategy and action frequently had to be reversed once implementation constraints became apparent. Ecological suitability did not necessarily imply feasibility: apparently suitable sites could be constrained by disturbance, ownership, regulation, hard infrastructure or maintenance.

The guidelines should distinguish cartographic continuity from functional, species-specific connectivity (Manchester). They should encourage testing whether species can reach, use and remain within connected habitats. Connectivity also requires greater precision. The Rochdale Canal appears continuous on strategic maps, yet students demonstrated that different species encounter very different networks of barriers and opportunities. A continuous waterway or green corridor is not necessarily ecologically continuous.

T***he action-planning stage should therefore require a long-term stewardship and maintenance plan, identifying who maintains an intervention, with what resources, how frequently, and how its ecological performance will be assessed (Manchester and Salvador).*** Maintenance emerged particularly strongly from the studios, as the plans were not implemented. Responsibility and accountability were another recurrent concern. Studios encountered strategic statements calling for habitats or corridors to be 'improved' without sufficient clarity about who should undertake the work. The guidelines should require every action to identify a lead actor, delivery partners, resources, timeframe, maintenance responsibility and opportunities for community involvement.

Priority for action should be given to most vulnerable areas (Salvador). Implementation depends on prioritizing actions and navigate budgetary conflicts and competing interests regarding urban development and land-use demands. To be effective in vulnerable areas, the guide would require specifically to address potential barriers for prioritizing action in low-income vulnerable areas.

National Plans can limit local action if they do not have local inputs (Wa). Certain cities lack biodiversity action plans and as they rely on the national strategy, which limits the ability to address context-specific biodiversity challenges.

Encourage the empowerment of local organizations and citizens in the LBSAP process (Bhopal and Armenia). Instead of having a separate process of Biodiversity assessment, a local biodiversity management committee should have power to integrate biodiversity protection and promotion in urban planning process, with the support of a multidisciplinary committee comprising of ecologists, geologists, environmental planners, landscape architects, environmental enthusiasts.

Biodiversity cannot be treated as an additional 'green' layer in architectural design (Manchester and Armenia).

Students increasingly understood architecture as a means of connecting ecological evidence, governance and spatial decision-making since the beginning. They also found that ecological suitability does not necessarily mean practical feasibility, particularly where disturbance, hard infrastructure, regulation and maintenance constrain implementation.

Response to climate risks depends on the public sector's capacity to plan and implement NbS (Salvador and Armenia). Urban resilience is shaped by resources, infrastructure, and social capital, all of which are unevenly distributed across neighborhoods, lacking particularly in poor areas of the city.

Cultural ecosystems services can be a driver for biodiversity conservation or lead to negative impacts, if not properly managed (Bhopal). Religious activities result in the disposal of flowers, idols and other organic and inorganic materials in the ecosystem. In the absence of designated disposal and collection systems, this waste and water pollution can deteriorate the visual and ecological quality of the ecosystem. Engaging religious stakeholders can make them a key force for ecosystem management.

Important assessment tools to ensure compliance with local and national biodiversity policies are often ineffectively used (Armenia). Even if tools like Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are used out to ensure compliance of project and program comply with biodiversity protection and restoration policies, there could be very poor follow up mechanisms to ensure that specific action mandated or recommended by EIAs are in fact implemented.

Planning instruments to support the integration of water bodies into city planning, but they are not integrated (Belém). In many cities, several planning instruments exist to integrate rivers into decision making processes, but there is an institutional, scalar, and temporal fragmentation that undermines the integrated governance of these socio-ecological systems, turning rivers into structural vectors of territorial risk, deepening socio-environmental vulnerabilities and exacerbating spatial inequalities.

Indigenous People are listened during environmental planning processes, but their inputs are not always included in the decision-making processes (São Paulo). Indigenous people have often been consulted for urban and environmental plans. Their have unique knowledge on the biodiversity. However, their inputs are not incorporated into the main decision-making processes.

In larger urban areas, there are fragments of traditional knowledge that used to anchor greater interest in biodiversity conservation and restoration (Armenia). Urban communities at times lack understanding of biodiversity, its importance, and threats to ecosystem integrity, but they also have species knowledge through traditional practices such as wild plant harvesting or daily interaction with rural vendors that visit cities to sell their bio-based goods. There is more potential to anchor awareness raising in such informal activities. Schools can also integrate greater degree of information, extra-curricular activities to incite interest and curiosity of biodiversity that is in and around cities.

LBSAPs can avoid negative effects of Nature-based Solutions (NbS), such as maladaptation and net-harm screen (Quezon City). LBSAP can prevent that NbS to climate change interventions lead to habitat conversion, inappropriate species selection, invasive-species risk, water and carbon effects, transfer of risk to other places or groups, displacement, tenure impacts, lifecycle emissions, unequal benefits, maintenance failure, and residual risk.

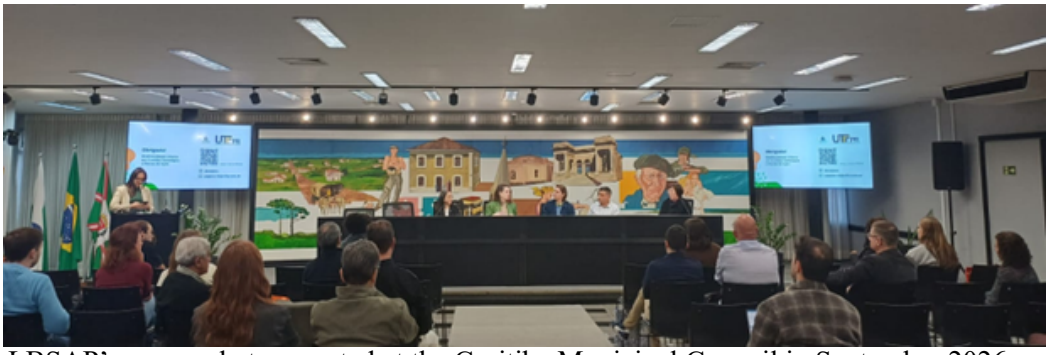
LIST OF STUDIOS

STUDIO 1 – Architect as Researcher in Rochdale Canal, Manchester, by Manchester School of Architecture (MSA), UK Manchester, United Kingdom.



Rochdale Canal (by Nurul Mohamad Azam).

STUDIO 2 – LBSAPs for Curitiba by the Graduate Program in Urban Environmental Sustainability (PPGSAU) at the Federal Technological University of Paraná (UTFPR).Curitiba, Brazil.



LBSAP's proposal at presented at the Curitiba Municipal Council in September 2026.

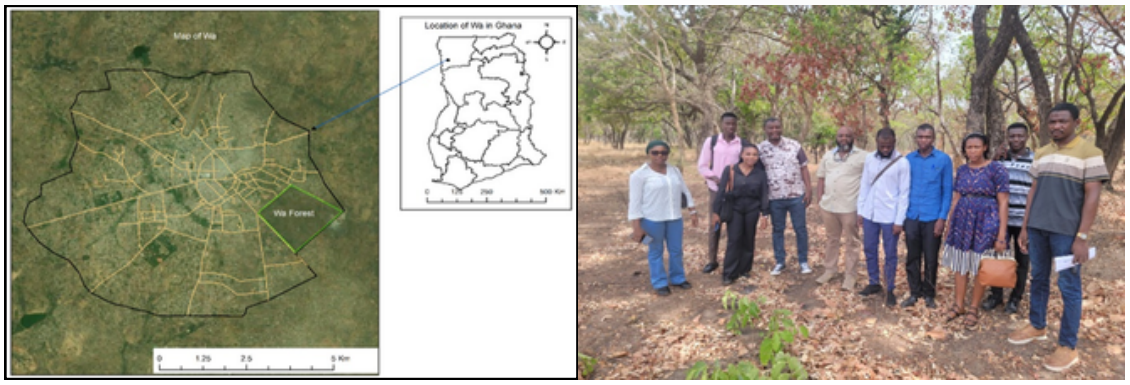
STUDIO 3 – Demonstration Zone in Yangtze River Delta Lab of Biodiversity Conservation and Perception of Urban Nature - Bio-CPU Lab, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University Shanghai, China.

STUDIO 4 – LBSAP in Itapagipe Peninsula by the Public Administration and Social Management program at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). Salvador, Brazil.



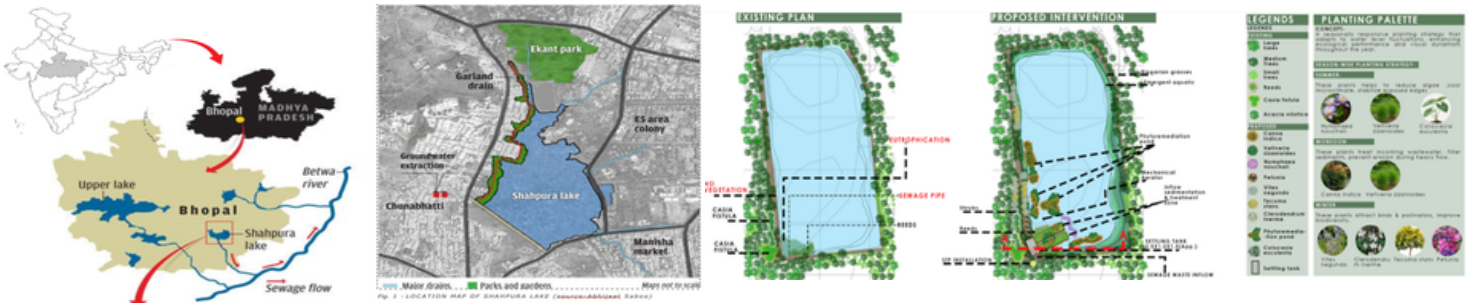
Field work in of Itapagipe Peninsula (photo by Andrea Ventura).

STUDIO 5 – LBSAP in the Wa Forest Reserve by the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies, W Wa, Ghana



Wa Forest and UBIDS LBSAP team.

STUDIO 6 – Urban forest patch and an Urban waterbody by the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT), and the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) Bhopal, Bhopal, India.



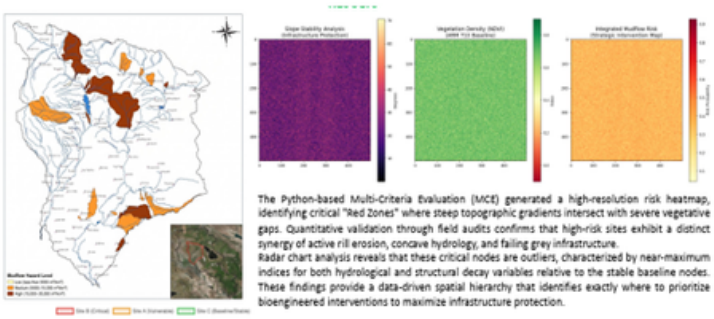
LBSAP Studios in Ekant Park and Shahpura Lake in Bhopal and proposed interventions.

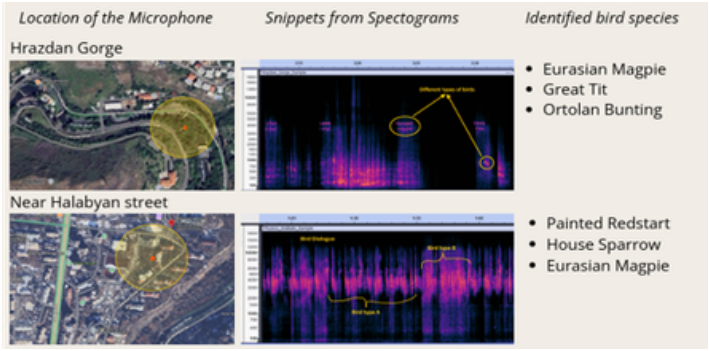
STUDIO 7 – Challenges for the integration of urban rivers in urban planning by the Nucleus of Advanced Amazonian Studies of the Federal University of Pará (NAEA-UFPA) Belém, Brazil

STUDIO 8 – Integrating Indigenous People into LBSAP by FGV EARTH, a research center at the São Paulo School of Management of the Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV EAESP São Paulo, Brazil

STUDIO 9 – Climate-linked Biodiversity Action by ADMU Field School, Ateneo University, Quezon City, The Philippines

STUDIO 10 – Local action that can advance KMGBF and national targets at the city and neighbourhood levels, course-based studio at the American University of Armenia (AUA) in Yerevan, Armenia





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