

Media Fact Sheet

The Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity – Roadmap

29 May 2008

Singapore's Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan, proposed to develop a "City Biodiversity Index" as an evaluation tool at the High Level Segment of the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn, Germany.

According to the United Nations¹, the world population will form half of the world population for the first time in 2008. Following this trend, the world population is expected to be 70% urban in 2050. With increasing urbanisation, the demands of economic activities will place greater pressure on our natural resources and environment.

Currently, there are no well-established indices to measure biodiversity in cities. Hence, it is useful to formulate a methodology for benchmarking the biodiversity and environmental stewardship of cities.

10-12 February 2009

The National Parks Board (NParks) hosted the first expert workshop on the development of the City Biodiversity Index in Singapore.

The purpose of the meeting is to identify appropriate measurable indicators and variables to develop a benchmarking tool to assist cities in the benchmarking of their biodiversity conservation efforts over time.

A total of seventeen technical experts on biodiversity indicators as well as city executives and city representatives responsible for implementation and/or management of biodiversity and urban projects and programmes attended this workshop in the development of the index as an evaluation tool.

March 2009 – September 2009

NParks worked with the Task Force on Cities and Biodiversity to test the Singapore Index in several cities. Work includes:

¹ '2007 Revision of World Urbanisation Prospects' published by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

- Creation of a Technical Task Force, including Dr. Nancy Holman, Mr. Peter Werner, Professor Thomas Elmqvist, Mr. Andre Mader, Ms. Elisa Calcaterra, Mr. Oliver Hillel and Dr. Lena Chan, Dy Director, National Biodiversity Centre.
- Face-to-face meetings at the Urban Nature Forum and ICLEI World Congress, 11-18 June 2009, Edmonton, Canada.
- Finalising a User's Manual for the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity.

In acknowledgement of Singapore's innovative contribution and leadership, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has formally named the index, "The Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity" or the "Singapore Index" in short.

Next Steps

Currently, seven cities (Curitiba, Joondalup, Edmonton, Brussels, Montreal, Nagoya and Singapore) have test-bedded the draft Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity by evaluating their availability of data. At least 10 other cities have indicated interest in test-bedding the Singapore Index.

At the second Curitiba Meeting on Cities and Biodiversity, Minister Mah will give an opening address as the Guest of Honour on 6 Jan 2010. He will speak about the development of the Singapore Index and encourage cities to participate in its testing and refinement.

With 2010 being designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Biodiversity, NParks is planning to launch a series of programmes to raise Singapore's profile internationally, to gain support for the adoption of the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity at the Conference of the Parties (COP10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2010. The Singapore Index has to be endorsed before cities can adopt it.

On the home front, NParks is striving to raise Singaporeans' awareness of our rich biodiversity assets (both terrestrial and marine), and is undertaking projects that will enhance the richness of our biodiversity by organising a series of activities to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity 2010.

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