

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

Preparing for Tomorrow

Strategy 2010-2015

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The Mission

ICLEI's Mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability with special focus on environmental conditions through cumulative local actions.

I. Moving in a changing environment

Cities and local governments operate in a rapidly changing world.

- *Human expansion* is happening at a rapid pace: Every minute, the world population grows by 141 people – 6.2 million per month. The population is expected to grow from 6.8 billion today to 9.2 billion by 2050.
- *Urbanization* happens equally rapidly. The urban population grows by 75 million people every year. By 2050, it is expected to almost double from 3.4 billion in 2008 to 6.4 billion; two thirds of humanity will then be living in towns and cities.
- *Global environmental change* proceeds fast. Every twenty minutes, a plant or animal species becomes extinct. Up to half of the presently existing species may become extinct by 2100. 884 million people have inadequate access to safe drinking water. 3900 children die every day from water borne diseases. The concentration of carbon dioxide in the air has risen from the pre-industrial level of 280 parts per million to more than 380 ppm today. This is the highest level experienced within the last 800,000 years and it is creating a massive human-made greenhouse effect on Earth.

- The *ecological footprint* of humanity on this planet has become unsustainable. In 2008, humanity used about 40 percent more resources than nature could regenerate that year. If we continue using natural resources and producing waste at current rates, by the early 2030s we will require the resources of two planets to meet our needs. This “overshoot” is at the root of the most pressing environmental problems we face today: Climate change, declining biodiversity, shrinking forests, fisheries collapse are several of the factors contributing to soaring world food prices, for example.

Our ability to respond

- We are moving toward becoming an “urban planet”. As we see the increasing inability of governments to address the critical trends, and as we witness the weakening of the global multi-lateral governance mechanisms, we realize that the onus of effecting rapid transformation of our economies, infrastructures and lifestyles shifts to cities and local governments.
- We are witnessing a geo-economic and geo-political shift of influence and development dynamics from the old industrial economies to the emerging economies of countries such as China and India, which together represent over a third of the world’s population.

This is the backdrop for ICLEI’s mandate, profile and role over the coming decade.

II. Responding to change – leading on change

Rapid action, radical solutions

- The pace of global environmental change, the trends of degradation of global ecosystem services and the overshoot of the human footprint on Earth require an acceleration of local efforts.
- Even if the entire ICLEI Membership performed in a state-of-the-art manner, and if we were to extrapolate these efforts into the future, we would not reach a sustainable level of resource consumption and pollution in communities, i.e. a sustainable ecological footprint of our cities.
- Therefore, experts confirm what all of us feel: We must act more rapidly and pursue more radical¹ solutions.

The Vision

Connecting leaders

ICLEI is a growing **Association** of cities and local governments leading the way in sustainable development with worldwide presence, which connects leaders in strategic alliances, which prepares cities for the future, whose voice is heard, and which is attractive to be a member of, work for and partner with.

Accelerating Action

ICLEI is a high-energy, flexible **Movement** of local governments working together in national, regional and international networks; engaging in global campaigns for sustainability, participating in performance-based programs, advancing through an international exchange of experiences and solutions – a movement which is supported by campaigns, programs and strategic alliances.

¹ Definition of “radical”: From latin “radix” = root. (1) going to a root ; (2) departing markedly from the usual or customary; (3) favoring or effecting fundamental changes in current practices, conditions, or institutions [source: www.thefreedictionary.com]

Gateway to Solutions

ICLEI is an effective sustainability and environmental **Agency** strengthening local governments' capacity to find radical solutions and act rapidly; providing advanced knowledge and delivering training to local planners and decision makers; showing creativity and excellence in developing innovative methods and tools; serving as cities' and local governments' gateway to solutions for the future.

Leading change

- ICLEI's role in the global concert of institutions must be that of a leader, a driver, an accelerator, a connector. ICLEI will be a pathfinder by providing leadership and direction in managing rapid transformation.
- We will raise and support pioneers, innovators and new champions among local governments worldwide.
- We will drive foresight and innovation among our membership. We will share the cutting-edge experiences of our leading Members with the entire membership and reach out to more local governments and seek more radical solutions to advance sustainability.
- We will request that our members commit to rapid and radical action, that they document progress, and report on achievements.
- We will further good governance and stakeholder engagement in local policy and planning processes.
- We will continue innovating local management methodologies, tools and practices, and pioneering forward-oriented solutions.
- We will team up with partners from the business and expert sectors to identify the best solutions for local governments in the areas of technology, organization, management and finance.
- We will enhance the management of knowledge of advanced solutions for the benefit of our membership and staff.
- We will convince the international community to recognize and include local experiences and actions in global sustainability solutions and agreements.

III. Our organization

III.1 The power of global membership

ICLEI combines the power of a global membership association with regional and national membership networks:

- The global network creates opportunities for advocacy at the United Nations and multilateral negotiating bodies, offers the chance to form partnerships with international organizations and multinational companies, gives access to a global knowledge base, and allows for networking among globally leading cities, as well as engagement through global congresses, dialogues and programs.
- Regional and national membership networks allow Members to advocate for sustainability at the national and sub-national government levels and to engage in programs tailored to their needs and local conditions. Our regional secretariats and country offices offer participation in projects as well as opportunities for exchange and learning.

- While serving our Members, we reach out to the wider local government community in order to involve them in our activities and raise their interest in joining our association.

The association's governance will be adjusted to improve its effectiveness.

Activities 2010-2015:

- Develop the way we work with our Members with the aim of offering:
 - basic and advanced types of membership.
 - recognition of Members according to their performance.
- Enhance the involvement of, and the support given to, Members in the Global South
- Enhance our governance structure, to meet the goals of:
 - maintaining a Member-based, democratic structure.
 - securing effective engagement of elected Executive Committee members.
 - balancing global and regional representation in the association's global governance.
- Set up regional, national and thematic networks within our membership.

III.2 Serving our membership: a global group of offices

ICLEI operates through a World Secretariat, and a number of strategically located offices on all continents² as well as sub-national, liaison and project offices. The network of connected, yet independent operational centers ensures cohesion and resilience while allowing for the development of individual strengths – comparable to a family.

While all of ICLEI works under the mission, mandate and principles of the global ICLEI Charter, our offices are managerially and –and mostly legally and financially – independent. World Secretariat, Regional Secretariats and Country Offices are interconnected through affiliate agreements and form a group.

Activities 2010-2015:

- Stabilize and strengthen existing offices and establish new offices with a focus on emerging economies.
- Establish a Regional Secretariat for Eastern Asia.
- Establish an Asia Secretariat.
- Build a presence and first programs in China.
- Set-up and strengthen thematic centers.
- Increase inter-office cooperation across regions through global programs and multilateral cooperation projects.

² ICLEI Offices (2010)

World Secretariat: Bonn, Germany

Regional Secretariats: Africa, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, Oceania South Asia, Southeast Asia

Country Offices: Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, U.S.A.

Other offices: EU Liaison Office Brussels; Indonesia project office; Australia Regional Office for Western Australia; India Southern Center in Hyderabad; USA Regional Offices for California, Midwest, Northeast/Mid-Atlantic, Pacific Northwest and Islands, South Central, Southeast, Western States

IV. Building capacity

ICLEI is a knowledge based organization. Our key strengths are the motivation, encouragement, knowledge and experience one Member can provide to others.

Activities 2010-2015:

- Build a systematic knowledge management structure to capture information on cities, methods, tools and technological solutions and make it available to Members and offices.
- Build scientific and research capacity by linking to a network of universities and research institutes in order to help bridge the gap between science and practice.
- Develop new ways of Member-to-Member exchange using web based systems and encouraging self-organized, ICLEI facilitated, thematic Member communities.
- Use the international network to develop and make available global best practice programs.
- Build the Young Municipal Leaders Initiative as a prime international networking and capacity-building opportunity on sustainability issues for young local-level politicians.

V. Our partnerships

ICLEI connects leaders. We will foster and establish relationships, partnerships and synergies that unleash creativity and innovation.

We will continue connecting cities and local governments to the United Nations and other international bodies. We will forge multi-stakeholder partnerships, form strategic alliances and join forces with leading institutions from the academic, expert, business and NGO sectors.

Goals for 2010-2015:

- Build new partnerships and foster existing ones such as with UNEP, UN-HABITAT, IUCN, REEEP, EMI, WEF, and others, with the aim of giving our Members access to partners' services and resources.
- Develop a series of dialogues between businesses and municipal leaders on eco-efficient and resilient urban infrastructure through, among others, cooperation with the World Economic Forum and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development.
- Identify and secure knowledge partners for our main themes in order to ensure that we deliver technical excellence.

VI. Our advocacy

ICLEI serves as a global entry point for cities and local governments to engage with the United Nations and international and national policy processes.

Goals for 2010-2015:

- Continue and widen advocacy work on behalf of local government worldwide, wherever possible in cooperation other global associations of local government, in particular vis-à-vis the Conferences of the Parties to the UN Framework Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and the UNEP Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum.
- Advocate increased powers of, and access to revenue by, local governments with the United Nations and governments.
- Advocate direct access to climate finance and other funds by local governments and an inversion of climate finance mechanisms to enable the implementation of needs-driven local development.

VII. Our goals and programs

ICLEI will support its Members in taking rapid transformative action and applying radical solutions to become sustainable, planet-friendly cities, towns, counties and regions. The core of our program activities focuses on the key areas of transformation.

ICLEI's initial campaigns and programs have evolved to cover a broader range of themes, which include:

- *Management of global environmental goods:* Climate, Biodiversity, Water, Food.
- *Municipal planning and management:* Sustainability management, land use and development, climate change adaptation and resilience management, procurement.
- *Transformation of infrastructures:* : Transport, building, energy.
- *Policy innovation:* Local Agenda 21 with stakeholder involvement, green economy, security, social development.

All of these activities contribute towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

ICLEI's offices will define and offer program modules for global, regional and country projects, which respond to Members' expectations and are tailored to the conditions in their respective areas.

We will offer our Members and other cities and local governments an engagement of choice. We will offer local governments and their leaders, decision-makers and departments, multiple entry points to access our programs and services. There will be opportunities for engagement in *global* initiatives, programs, networks and events. Other initiatives, programs, projects and events will be organized and offered at *regional or national* levels.

We apply effective formats for our work:

- *Sustainability Trough Environmental Performance (STEP)* programs guide participating cities through five-milestone process.
- Global, regional and thematic *networks* offer the opportunity to exchange information and experiences, to search for information and to look for project partners.
- *WorkNets* offer the opportunity to work together on a project towards a defined goal.
- *Campaigns* are aimed at awareness raising and mobilization of local governments for concerted action towards sustainability, often supporting our advocacy efforts.
- *Commitment Programs* mobilize local governments to make a specific commitment, usually by signing a declaration of commitment.

Goal 1: Integrated sustainability policy

Preparing a city for the future means taking a holistic, long-term perspective and devising an integrated sustainability policy. ICLEI Member local governments should lead by example.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Continue and strengthen our work on sustainability management, building systems, creating tools and innovating processes.
- Develop a framework for unified measuring and reporting of select sustainability performance indicators by Member local governments, such as the STAR Community Index piloted in the USA.
- Engage Members in calculating cities' ecological footprints as an information and awareness raising tool for the public.
- Use the opportunity of the Rio+20 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in the year 2012 as an opportunity to review the effectiveness of local sustainability action in the past and to devise a

strategy for cities and local governments to accelerate action and pursue more radical solutions.

Goal 2: Resource-efficient city

Eco-efficient cities will gain a competitive advantage in an era of shrinking global resources and growing global and urban populations. All Member local governments should practice an effective resource management.

ICLEI will build on significant global achievements when working with cities and local governments for more resource-efficiency.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Launch and coordinate the *Incheon Eco-efficiency Challenge*.
- Promote *ecoBUDGET*® worldwide. Support introduction and application of *ecoBUDGET* by 100+ Member local governments.
- Offer *Water and Sanitation* program modules to cities and local governments in more regions, drawing on the methodology, tools and experiences of the Water Campaign in Australia and water projects in Africa.
- Transform global, cutting-edge research results on integrated urban water management into training modules and project opportunities.
- Actively cooperate with the world Water Council, UN-Water, UN-HABITAT, international water Association and other international institutions in the field. Pursue a more active role in the World Water Forum and the Stockholm Water Week to enhance awareness of the importance of urban water governance and management.
- Develop program module addressing urban *Food Security*, especially through urban agriculture, that can be taken up by regional offices.

Goal 3: BiodiverCities securing ecosystem services

The benefits of ecosystem-based local planning and management are multiple. Cities and local governments have a key role to play.

ICLEI encourages cities, local and sub-national governments worldwide to commit to biodiversity action through its Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Programme, in partnership with IUCN, and its various global, regional and national entry points, commitment levels, platforms and tools.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Encourage cities, local and sub-national governments worldwide to commit to biodiversity action, in particular by signing the “*Durban Commitment*” developed by the 21 global Pioneer Cities of LAB.
- Maintain and enhance ecosystems services through improved biodiversity management at the local level, for example, by developing “*BiodiverCities*” and “*Cities in Biodiversity Hotspots*” initiatives under LAB and roll these out worldwide, combining a global network of pilot cities with regional/national program offerings.
- Continue to build on existing partnerships, and create new ones, mainly through the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Convene the next global “*Urban Nature*” symposium on local biodiversity and ecosystem services alongside the 2012 ICLEI World Congress.
- Promote the global implementation of “*The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) chapter for Local and Regional Decision Makers*” developed under UNEP.

- Promote Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) at the local and sub-national levels.
- Continue international advocacy work on biodiversity vis-à-vis the Convention on Biological Diversity in line with the Local Government Biodiversity Roadmap and through the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity.

Goal 4: Low carbon and climate neutral cities

Low-carbon, or even climate-neutral cities, will be the signposts to sustainability. Ultimately, all Member local governments should establish climate action plans and integrate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions into their planning and investment structures.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Engage 80 percent of the global membership in the *Cities for Climate Protection* program (program brand may vary by region) or in an integrated mitigation/adaptation program.
- Act as custodian of the International Local Government GHG Emissions Analysis Protocol (IEAP), further develop it, and care for its transformation into an ISO Standard.
- Provide greenhouse gas accounting software (such as HEAT+) through ICLEI offices.
- Build the *carbons Cities Climate Registry* as the definitive mechanism through which cities register and report their climate commitments, actions and performance to the global public. Operate “carbons” as the operating system of the Registry.
- Engage 100+ local governments in the global Climate Neutral Cities Network, a partnership program with UNEP. Partner with and support external low-carbon cities programs in all regions.
- Continue Local Government climate advocacy through the *Local Government Climate Roadmap*. Continue supporting and acting as Secretariat of the World Mayors Council on Climate Change.
- Promote the Global Cities Covenant on Climate (*Mexico City Pact*) as a campaign to firm up cities’ and local governments’ commitments to local climate action and reporting.

Goal 5: Resilient community

Low-risk cities show low vulnerability to climate change, natural and industrial disasters and economic shocks. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction planning by all Member local governments will be key to facilitating sustainable communities.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Offer *Resilient Cities/Communities* or climate adaptation programs (brands may vary) to Member local governments in all regions, including the development of, and access to, methodologies and tools.
- Promote the “*Making cities resilient: My city is getting ready*” campaign, the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign of the United Nations which ICLEI is a partner of, and seek support for its implementation in cities.
- Annually organize the *Resilient Cities world congress* in Bonn and profile it as the world’s foremost, multi-partner, global forum on cities and adaptation to climate change.
- Continue building the *Mayors Adaptation Forum* as a mechanism for local decision makers to learn, exchange, formulate actions and voice opinions.

Goal 6: Green infrastructure

The eco-efficient, resilient and low-carbon development of a city requires green urban infrastructure. Smart infrastructure requires smart systems design, not only single efficient technologies. Green

infrastructure development means looking at the variety of urban infrastructures, identifying possible efficiency gains through linkages between different infrastructures, new operational and business models, as well as financing models.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Build *Local Renewables* program modules to support cities in systematically basing their energy supply on energy efficient and locally renewable energy sources; offer this program to Members in all regions.
- Promote *sustainable construction* and *green buildings* through among others, our involvement in UNEP's Sustainable Building and Construction Initiative (SBCI).
- Develop *EcoMobility* program modules to support cities in basing their transport policies and planning on the priority order of: walking – cycling/wheeling - public transport – car for people and goods movement; promote eco-friendly vehicles offer this program to Members in all regions. Lead the Global Alliance for EcoMobility and develop a viable business model for the Alliance.
- Promote concepts for ecological, affordable housing in cooperation with UN-HABITAT and the World Economic Forum's Affordable Housing Initiative.
- Support Members through projects on sustainable sanitation.
- Support Members through projects on urban sustainable material and waste management.

Goal 7: Green urban economy & jobs

A viable local economy will be based on cradle-to-cradle material cycles and an appreciation of human labor over energy-intensive technology. Sustainable procurement by all Member local governments will drive the market green, create green jobs, and support future-oriented industries.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Develop and provide tool kits for Members helping them to work with the business sector and other stakeholders to develop a green urban economy and green jobs.
- Build on *Local Action for Employment* training modules to support Members in stimulating employment and the creation of green jobs.
- Offer the *Sustainable Procurement Program* (brand may vary) in all regions, and engage 200+ Member local governments worldwide in *Sustainable Procurement* program activities.
- Develop *Procura Exchange* into a global network and forum.
- Continue and strengthen engagement in UNDESA's and UNEP's activities on *Sustainable Production and Consumption* and UNEP's *Sustainable Building & Construction Initiative*.
- Continue the *EcoProcura*[®] conference series and partner with the International Green Purchasing Network on further editions of the *International Green Purchasing Conference*.
- Continue ICLEI's *Greening Events* Initiative and support Members in the planning of green events and initiatives such as Pilgrim Cities.

Goal 8: Healthy & happy communities

The ultimate goal is for local communities to enjoy health and happiness. Whether on a modest or more affluent economic footing, local governments must promote community vitality, health, education, culture, and good governance.

Programs and activities 2010-2015:

- Continue disseminating learnings and products from the Local Agenda 21 initiative, especially aspects related to good governance, public engagement and social sustainability. Support local

governments in engaging citizens and communities in healthy and sustainable living and community development.

- Explore opportunities for the global roll-out of a *Safe & Healthy Communities* program.
- Make the methodology, tools and learnings from the *Local Agendas for Peace & Security* pilot project in Latin America available to ICLEI offices worldwide.
- Support local governments in introducing a local “happiness index” drawing on the Kingdom of Bhutan’s experiences with replacing the GDP through “Gross National Happiness”.

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Epilog

In October 2010, ICLEI celebrates its 20th anniversary at the Future of Cities world congress in Incheon, South Korea.

At the United Nations Headquarters in New York in 1990, ICLEI was created to halt the degradation of global ecosystems through concerted, multi-local action.

Two years prior to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, ICLEI prepared input to and introduced the “local authorities” chapter of Agenda 21 into the UN Rio Declaration, thus initiating the Local Agenda 21 Campaign – with more than 10,000 local governments engaged, the first and largest global campaign of cities and towns the world has seen.

Only eight months after the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at 1992 Earth Summit, ICLEI responded and launched the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign – the first and largest global campaign of local governments combating greenhouse gas emissions.

In 1996, ICLEI launched its Eco-Procurement Initiative – the first and largest international network for public sustainable procurement.

ICLEI initiated Local Action for Biodiversity – the only global program on urban biodiversity management.

ICLEI pioneered local best-practice case studies, developed tools such as *ecoBudget*[®] and piloted Triple Bottom Line for local authorities.

ICLEI has achieved results that the planet notices.

Over the last 20 years:

- We have built a global sustainability network of 1,200 local governments of all sizes in 70 countries.
- We work with our Members through a network of 13 offices on all continents, which hold technical expertise and experience.
- We have developed common methodologies and created innovative tools which are applied throughout the local government community worldwide.
- We have provided leadership in linking local governments to global policy processes and multilateral environmental agreements.
- We have instigated a movement of about 10,000 local governments that have engaged their citizens in Local Agenda 21; created a network of 1,000+ cities that have undertaken climate action planning and set voluntary targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction; worked with over 100 local governments on freshwater management; supported dozens of municipalities in the use of innovative sustainability management systems; and engaged more than 20 global cities in biodiversity management.
- The efforts of more than 1,000 cities participating in the CCP Campaign resulted in annual emissions reductions of more than 60 million tons CO₂eq.

However, what ICLEI once piloted has now become mainstream. Whilst this development can and must be applauded, it does require ICLEI to sharpen its profile and address the related entrepreneurial challenges. In addition, a growing number of institutions and organizations have entered the field of cities & environment, especially cities & climate change, and the competition for financial resources has increased.

ICLEI's distinct strengths lie in our bottom-up energy and movement, our mission and drive, our foresight and creativity, and our international convening power. Our future profile will build upon these strengths.