

LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

A SERIES OF LOCAL CASES



City of Walvis Bay, Namibia

Biodiversity: an asset for future development

SUMMARY: Walvis Bay is blessed with a rich biodiversity and very special but fragile ecosystems. Its ecosystems comprise the Namib Desert dunes and associated gravel plains, the Walvis Bay coastline and lagoon, the ephemeral Kuiseb River Delta and other ecosystems. This presents various development opportunities (e.g. tourism), which simultaneously poses a threat to these local assets. The Municipality of Walvis Bay meets the challenges in controlling human activities impacting on the fragile ecosystems through various environmental management policies, strategies and programs.

Biodiversity & biodiversity management in Walvis Bay

Biodiversity: a basis for economic development in Walvis Bay

The coastal area between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund is probably the most intensively utilized along the Namibian coast and it also contains some of the most important and most sensitive natural habitats. Apart from their ecological value and the high biodiversity in the area, these habitats also attract large numbers of tourists. Film shooting and tourism are some of the main sources of income in the coastal areas of Namibia; therefore it is in the interest of Namibians that these habitats are utilized and managed in a sustainable manner. Degraded environments may become unstable not only ecologically but also socio-economically, becoming less able to support people and their livelihoods.



Aerial view of Walvis Bay showing its variety of ecosystems

Managing human activities in a fragile environment

Following years of intense Local Agenda 21 processes, the importance of environmental management was realized by the political leadership in Walvis Bay, which led to the establishment of the Environmental Management section within the Department of Water, Waste and Environmental Management in 2001. Its task is to manage and raise awareness on environmental matters within the jurisdiction of Walvis Bay. From the beginning of Namibia's independence, environmental and development issues have been combined. In a country as arid and dependant on natural resources as Namibia, this association is critical to the future of the country. This is why the Namibian constitution explicitly promotes development through sustainable resource use and the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Walvis Bay's Integrated Environmental Policy

Walvis Bay established a suite of management plans, policies and programmes to address the impacts of human activities on its fragile environment, including the Walvis Bay Integrated Environmental Policy. The Policy covers all the areas under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Walvis Bay. It indicates the directions that the Walvis Bay Municipality will take in the forthcoming years to fulfil its responsibilities in managing the environment of Walvis Bay together with the town's residents and institutions. It is a statement of purpose that commits the municipality to certain principles, policy directions, and tools.

Dune Protection and Management

The Dune Belt Management Plan and Regulations were developed to promote sustainable utilization and improve environmental protection in the Dune Belt Area. The primary challenges to managing and protecting the dune ecosystems are disturbances caused by irresponsible recreational activities of which the most damaging is off-road driving. Zoning of the area for specific uses is one of the key strategies addressed by the Dune Belt Management Plan and Regulations to achieve better regulation of activities within the entire dune belt area. The responsibility of managing the Dune Belt Area has now been assigned to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

Coastline Strategic Environmental Assessment

Walvis Bay's Coastline Strategic Environmental Assessment (CSEA) for the coastline between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund provides protection of the coastline environment and guides the Municipal Council in decision-making, integrating environmental and urban planning and development issues. The CSEA also promotes sustainable development and awareness.

For more info on this project, contact:
David Uushona or Olavi Makuti
www.walvisbaycc.org.na

Involvement in international initiatives

The Municipality of Walvis Bay, an ICLEI member city, is one of only five African municipalities participating in ICLEI's Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Project. According to David Uushona (Manager: Solid Waste and Environmental Management) the LAB status is an important achievement for Walvis Bay. "As you know the municipality has implemented and successfully managed the Local Agenda 21 target goals, through various environmental awareness and conservation initiatives. Being recognised as an LAB city underscores not only our efforts to create more awareness of environmental issues, but also signals the high regard international organisations like ICLEI have for the work we have been doing in our port city" says Uushona.



Walvis Bay Mayor, Derek Klazen (with David Uushona in the background), signing a pledge supporting the Walvis Bay Local Action 21 programme's revised Integrated Environmental Policy

City contacts & profile



Resourceful biodiversity management with limited capacity in perhaps the driest city in the world.

The **CITY OF WALVIS BAY**, with a population of about 60,000, is situated between the Namib Desert and Atlantic Ocean, on the west coast of Namibia. It lies between the Swakop River in north and the Namib Desert sand dunes and gravel plains to the east with its boundary extending to the Namib Naukluft Park. To the south are the 12,600 hectare Walvis Bay wetland and the adjoining delta of the ephemeral Kuiseb River in the south. The Walvis Bay Lagoon has been proclaimed a RAMSAR site, and is one of southern Africa's richest and coastal wetlands, supporting up to 250,000 birds in peak summer season.

Name: David Uushona, Manager, or Olavi Makuti, Environmental Officer
Department: Water, Waste & Environmental Management
E-mail: duushona@walvisbaycc.org.na or omakuti@walvisbaycc.org.na
Website: www.walvisbaycc.org.na

LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY is a global urban biodiversity initiative of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in cooperation with IUCN. This pilot project of 21 cities around the globe focuses on the key roles that local governments play in conserving the world's biodiversity and retaining the relationship between people and nature. See: www.iclei.org/lab; lab@iclei.org

COUNTDOWN 2010 is a powerful network of more than 600 partners working together towards the 2010 biodiversity target. Each partner commits additional efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The secretariat – hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 biodiversity target and assesses progress towards 2010. See: www.countdown2010.org

CITIES & BIODIVERSITY is an initiative of local governments and UN agencies to increase awareness on the relevant role of cities and towns for conserving and managing biodiversity. See: www.iclei.org/biodiversity

THE "CITIES & BIODIVERSITY CASE SERIES" is started in 2008 on the occasion of the UNCBD Conference of the Parties (COP) 9 in Bonn/Germany in May 2008. Funding is provided by UNEP, with co-funding from ICLEI, IUCN and the City of Bonn. The case descriptions are compiled by the "Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB)" project team in the ICLEI Africa Secretariat and ICLEI's International Training Centre.

© ICLEI, 2008. Pictures, texts and quotes are free of use with a reference to this source.