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2021 was critical in many ways. More than ever, cities, towns, and regions are at the front line of a constantly changing world. Local and regional governments need to rapidly act on changes occurring in nearly every dimension of urban life.

The development challenges, including the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the increasing impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the lack of resilience in urban systems, are particularly visible. The only way forward is to reverse this trend via urgent action from subnational governments and re-orient the patterns of our daily life with holistic and integrated solutions designed to create systemic change.

This year, the ICLEI network has elected its new global leadership and adopted the ICLEI Malmö Commitment and Strategic Vision 2021-2027 which lays out how the network will advance integrated sustainable development in the next six years, both locally and globally.

Reviewing 2021, the ICLEI East Asia Secretariat has expanded partnerships with subnational governments and institutions in the region, and has devoted itself to delivering projects and programs tailored to local and regional needs.

Like previous years, the Secretariat continued carrying out research projects, delivering capacity-building activities, and facilitating East Asian cities’ engagement in international events under a variety of programs. For instance, with both Seoul and Beijing having set ambitious climate targets, ICLEI East Asia completed a comparative study on the climate policies of the two capitals, aiming to provide in-depth recommendations that could boost the two cities’ climate efforts, following their respective national governments’ commitment to carbon neutrality.

In the meantime, ICLEI has joined hands with several global partners in delivering a capacity-building project for Mongolian policymakers and urban practitioners. The project aims to empower them to develop and implement low-carbon and resilient action plans at city levels, using science, technology, and innovation instruments. In addition, ICLEI East Asia has also supported Ulaanbaatar in developing its first GHG inventory.

Under nature-based development, the ICLEI Beijing Office and the ICLEI European Secretariat co-delivered the six-part UrbanByNature webinar series, facilitating knowledge and expertise exchange in mainstreaming nature-based solutions in urban development between actors in China and Europe. And despite the postponement of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP-15), ICLEI has continued working closely with the key stakeholders in preparing for the 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities & Subnational Governments, which will be held as an official parallel event during the resumed part of the Conference.

Last but not least, under resilient development, ICLEI contributed to finalizing the Technical Guidelines for Urban Climate Change Adaptation (UCCA) for Chinese Cities under a technical assistance project funded by the Asian Development Bank, and has co-delivered training workshops with UNDRR on integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction to cities in China.

2022 is a make-or-break year for the living world. As always, ICLEI will work closely with local and regional governments in the network, help connect them with the most critical insights and partners, and amplify their voices in the global arena. With the five integrated pathways as guidance, ICLEI East Asia will continue to support subnational governments in the region to design and implement integrated solutions in jointly creating a sustainable and resilient urban world!
ABOUT ICLEI

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125 countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

East Asia Secretariat

Hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, ICLEI East Asia has developed various local and regional programs, as well as exchange platforms, to help accelerate sustainable development in the region under ICLEI’s five pathways. By providing technical consulting, training and information services for capacity building and knowledge sharing, we support Members in China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia in pursuing sustainable urban development.

To further extend our support to cities in China, ICLEI East Asia opened its Beijing Office in March 2018.

Membership

Globally, ICLEI Membership has been active in over 125 countries worldwide. By the end of 2021, 91 local governments in the East Asian region have joined the global network as Members.
GOVERNANCE

ICLEI Council

ICLEI is democratically governed by our Members through the ICLEI Council — the overarching decision-making and guiding body. The Council approves the ICLEI Strategic Plan with a six-year scope and has the sole power to amend the Charter and elect the Global Executive Committees — the GexComs — portfolio seats.

Chaired by elected President and Vice Presidents, the GexCom is composed of up to 6 appointed Members and Representatives from the 9 Regional Executive Committees — the RexComs — and represents ICLEI towards international institutions. It has the authority to make strategic decisions concerning the organization.

ICLEI East Asia RexCom

The 2021 East Asia RexCom Annual Meeting was held virtually on 23 December for the regional leadership and offices to exchange ideas and catalyze local actions in East Asia, and to maintain sustainability and climate ambition along the recovery.

In this year, Kyoto has formulated a new action plan which paves the way towards a decarbonized society by 2050; Seoul is looking to reduce emissions in buildings, transportation, forestry, energy, and waste; whereas Suwon is pushing forward the momentum of carbon neutrality by promoting concepts such as eco-friendly mobility, as well as nature-based and human-oriented development.

On the other hand, Changchun is prioritizing actions on accelerating the building of an ecologically solid city and advocating a green and low-carbon lifestyle; and New Taipei has announced its three Net-Zero Blueprints for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

At the conclusion of the meeting, all RexCom Members and ICLEI offices expressed the need for strengthening regional and international cooperation in the fight against climate emergency, and in realizing a green transition and recovery from the pandemic. They have also mutually acknowledged the shared weight of responsibilities, and look forward to making a step closer to a sustainable future in the coming years.

2021-2024 GexCom Leadership

President
FRANK COWNIE
Mayor | Des Moines, USA

First Vice-President
KATRIN STJERNFELDT JAMMEH
Mayor | Malmö, Sweden

Vice-President
MINNA ARVE
Mayor | Turku, Finland

Vice-President
ATISHI MARLENA
Member of Legislative Assembly | National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

2021-2024 East Asia RexCom

Chair
DAISAKU KADOKAWA
Mayor | Kyoto, Japan
Low Carbon & Climate Mitigation

Vice Chair
IN-DONG CHO
Acting Mayor | Seoul, South Korea
Air Quality & Regional Cooperation

GexCom East Asia Seat
TAE-YOUNG YEOM
Mayor | Suwon, South Korea
Sustainable Urban Mobility

Changchun
XIAN ZHAO
Vice Mayor | Changchun, China
Green Circular & Resource Efficient Economy

New Taipei
CHENG-TA HSIEH
Deputy Mayor | New Taipei
Resilience & Climate Change Adaptation

Advisory Member
PRO. HIRONORI HAMANAKA
Chair | ICLEI Japan

Advisory Member
ALEX ZHANG
Director | Eco-Forum Global GexCom Member
2021 OVERVIEW

Closed-Door Meetings

2021 ICLEI East Asia RexCom Meeting
23 DEC / Virtual

1st Annual Meeting of the East Asia Clean Air Cities Network Secretariat
29 OCT / Seoul, South Korea / Virtual

Webinars

Sustainable Urban Renewal - Experience from Chinese and German Cities: Chengdu
3 FEB / Virtual

Asia LEDS Partnership
Peer Learning Session on Beijing’s Emission Trading System
11 MAR / Virtual

UrbanByNature China

#1 Introducing Nature-based Solutions and the UrbanByNature programme in China
30 JUN / Virtual

#2 Enabling Conditions and Barriers to Implementing Nature-based Solutions
18 AUG / Virtual

#3 Planning Nature-based Solutions with Citizens and Other Stakeholders
27 OCT / Virtual

#4 Technical Implementation of Nature-based Solutions
24 NOV / Virtual

Integrating Clean Air and Climate Action in Cities: Lessons Learned on Co-benefits in Asia
16 JUN / Virtual

Urban Transitions Alliance
City-Business Cooperation and Investing in the SDGs
17 JUN / Virtual

Warm-Up Event for the CBD COP-15 Parallel Event 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities & Subnational Governments
Reinforce Local and Subnational Governments’ Actions and Contribution: Edinburgh Process for Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
9 JUL / Virtual

UrbanShift

Global Launch: Transforming Cities for People and Planet through Integrated Urban Development
21 SEP / Virtual

India’s ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework
24 NOV / Virtual

Training & Workshops

ICLEI-UNDRR
Resilient Cities Training Series
Shanghai Changning Workshop
14-15 APR / Shanghai Changning, China / Hybrid

Beijing Workshop
21-22 APR / Beijing, China / Hybrid

Wrap-up Workshop
23 APR / Beijing, China / Hybrid

ICLEI-SHRDC
Capacity Building on Climate Change Policies
28-30 APR / Seoul, South Korea / Virtual

Training Workshop on Integrating SLCPs into Plans and Initiatives
10 SEP / Virtual

2021 International Workshop on Urban Climate Change Adaptation Program
30 NOV / Virtual

Leveraging Science, Technology and Innovation for Low Carbon and Resilient Cities
16-17 DEC / Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia / Hybrid
Global Forums & Sessions

ICLEI World Congress 2021-2022: Virtual Launch
13-15 APR / Malmö, Sweden / Virtual

Eco Forum Global 2021
Mayors’ Forum on Green Development
12 JUL / Guiyang, China

5th Beijing International Forum on Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions
6-7 SEP / Beijing, China / Virtual

Daring Cities 2021
4-8 OCT / Bonn, Germany / Virtual

15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Part 1
11-15 OCT / Kunming, China / Virtual

5th International High-Level Forum on Sustainable Urban Development
High-level Dialogue on Promoting Green Lifestyle for Livable Cities and Regions
26 OCT / Chengdu, China & Seoul, South Korea / Hybrid

Seoul Mayors’ Forum on Climate Change 2021
Emission Reduction through Circular Actions
Zero Emission in Transportation Sector
27 OCT / Seoul, South Korea / Virtual

International Seoul Forum on Air Quality Improvement 2021
28-29 OCT / Seoul, South Korea / Virtual

UNFCCC COP26 · Multilevel Action Pavilion
East Asia and Oceania Time4Multilevel Action Dialogues: Local Governments Driving Accelerated Action in the Climate Emergency
3 NOV / Glasgow, Scotland / Hybrid

Incheon Forum on Low Carbon Cities
23-24 NOV / Incheon, South Korea / Virtual
Every three years, ICLEI hosts its World Congress to showcase how cities, towns and regions across the network are advancing sustainable urban development worldwide. The Congress connects local and regional governments with their peers and strategic partners, and provides a platform for discussions that will inform and enhance their work towards a sustainable future.

Despite the restrictions related to the pandemic, ICLEI and the City of Malmö, Sweden, joined hands in creating a year-long experience to bring together the global network. The Virtual Launch of the ICLEI World Congress 2021-2022 was held on 13-15 April 2021, providing an all-digital experience with high level, insightful and global discussions.

On this occasion, the Network also announced its newly elected leadership (page 5), and officially adopted the ICLEI Malmö Commitment and Strategic Vision 2021-2027, together with the ICLEI Malmö Action Plan 2021-2024, laying out how the Network will advance sustainable urban development for the next six years, as well as the actions that...
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The first part of the Meetings, held between 11-15 October 2021, addressed the agenda items that have been identified as essential for continuing operations of the Convention and the Protocols. On this occasion, two short joint statements on behalf of the local and subnational major group,

CBD COP-15 Part 1

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OUR STRATEGIC VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ACTING THROUGH FIVE PATHWAYS
In the urban era, cities, towns and their surrounding regions are centers of opportunity and prosperity and, indeed, act as important hubs of economy, innovation and co-creation, production, consumption, as well as social and cultural interaction. At the same time, numerous cities, towns and regions are places where deep poverty and inequity prevail, and where severe natural degradation proliferates with ecosystems pushed past their thresholds.

Local and regional governments across the ICLEI Network have recognized the warning signs of global challenges, and have responded through the new ICLEI Malmö Commitment and Strategic Vision 2021-2027, which was built on the five pathways set out by the Network in Montréal in 2018, aiming to facilitate deep and lasting systemic change globally.

The five ICLEI pathways towards low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development are designed to create systemic change. They serve as a basis for sustainable urban development that considers the complexity of urban systems, and provide a framework enabling local and regional governments to think holistically and design integrated solutions that balance the patterns of human life and the built and natural environments.

ICLEI East Asia incorporates different pathways and helps local and regional governments advance sustainable urban development. Often, our activities are guided by a predominant pathway or set of pathways. But we design our works to integrate as many pathways as possible into any given activity, such as a project, partnership or initiative.
East Asia Clean Air Cities Network

The East Asia Clean Air Cities Network (EACACN) Secretariat, hosted by ICLEI East Asia, continues to serve as a unique regional inter-city cooperation platform for sharing best practices and building capacity on clean air actions. EACACN initially began as the East Asia Clean Air Cities initiative in 2016, based on a regional partnership among 9 local governments in China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia and managed by ICLEI East Asia, in response to the urgent need for air quality improvement in the region. Since then, EACACN has grown into a network of 14 local governments across East and Southeast Asia, with stronger operational capacity and commitment.

This year, the first annual meeting of the EACACN Secretariat was held virtually on 29 October, as part of the International Seoul Forum on Air Quality Improvement 2021. The meeting brought together representatives from local governments and partner organizations in the region to share progress and pending issues, identify opportunities for cooperation, and discuss the direction and focus areas of EACACN’s activities based on its three-year action plan. The key outputs of the meeting have been translated into operational strategies that shape the Network’s work plan delivery in 2022.

Going forward, EACACN plans to reinvigorate its activities by putting focus on providing practical solutions in integrating air quality management and climate action planning, fostering an ongoing dialogue among key stakeholders, and exploring follow up activities to translate commitment and strategies into action.

Integrating Air Quality and Climate Planning in Cities in Asia

With more than half of the world’s population classified as urban residents, whether the world achieves global climate change goals increasingly rests on cities. Yet, many policymakers at the city level place clean air and public health before mitigating climate change. Fortunately, since emissions contributing to air pollution and climate change...
Knowledge Sharing and International Engagement

Like previous years, ICLEI East Asia actively supported the coordination of the 2021 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions and the International Seoul Forum on Air Quality Improvement 2021. By working closely with the Beijing Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau and the Seoul Metropolitan Government, ICLEI contributed to the shaping of the forum agendas, engaging international participants, as well as facilitating fruitful dialogues between local governments from different regions.

At the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26), ICLEI and the Scottish Government jointly organized the Multilevel Action Pavilion as a sharing and cooperation platform for local governments. On 3 November, ICLEI’s East Asia Secretariat, Japan Office, Korea Office, and Oceania Secretariat co-organized a dialogue session, inviting representatives from Beijing (China), Yokohama, Toyama (Japan), Suwon, Jeollanam-do (South Korea), and Yarra (Australia) to exchange their climate ambition and efforts in moving towards a carbon-neutral and climate-safe future.

ICLEI will continue supporting the two cities’ climate cooperation, and showcase the project deliverables through international channels, sharing Seoul and Beijing’s practices and experiences with cities in other parts of the world.

Comparative Study of Climate Policies in Seoul and Beijing

Both Seoul and Beijing have set ambitious climate targets, following their respective national governments’ commitment to carbon neutrality. The two capitals have demonstrated strong potential to serve as the testbeds for South Korea and China’s path towards a carbon neutral future. Against this background, ICLEI East Asia, as a long-standing partner for environmental cooperation between the two cities, conducted a comparative climate policy analysis to promote knowledge exchange and provide policy recommendations. This study builds upon the first comparative study that focused on air quality management in the two metropolises.

This project gives an up-to-date analysis of Seoul and Beijing’s climate policies by summarizing the strategies, institutional arrangement and sectoral actions that have been delivered by the two capitals in the past decade. In-depth recommendations were then provided to boost the two cities’ climate efforts based on the analytical results of their earlier actions. In addition, the project has contributed to strengthening the climate cooperation between the two Northeast Asian capitals when the topic of carbon neutrality is drawing worldwide attention.

ICLEI will continue supporting the two cities’ climate cooperation, and showcase the project deliverables through international channels, sharing Seoul and Beijing’s practices and experiences with cities in other parts of the world.

ICLEI-SHRDC Capacity Building on Climate Change Policies

Since 2016, ICLEI East Asia has been co-organizing annual training on urban sustainability for local government officials in the region with the Seoul Human Resources Development Center (SHRDC). Due to the pandemic, a three-day online training was delivered in late April for 28 local governments...
Launched in 2011, the Asia Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) Partnership (ALP) is a voluntary regional network of individuals, governmental and non-governmental organizations active in designing, promoting, and implementing LEDS.

Under ALP, ICLEI East Asia produced two case studies, summarizing Beijing and Ulaanbaatar Cities’ achievement in reducing GHG emissions. As a follow-up, an online peer-learning session dedicated to the case on Beijing’s Emission Trade System was held on 11 March for ALP members to learn about the city’s experience, and to have direct exchange with representatives from the Beijing Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau. The case study on building energy efficiency and thermal retrofitting in Ulaanbaatar was finalized and released in early 2022.

Asia LEDS Partnership

Launched in 2011, the Asia Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) Partnership (ALP) is a voluntary regional network of individuals, governmental and non-governmental organizations active in designing, promoting, and implementing LEDS.

In its latest Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Mongolia has ambitiously set the new target of a 22.7% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to the business-as-usual scenarios via domestic efforts. Yet, a lack of understanding regarding cities’ GHG emissions status and reduction strategies — especially in the capital city Ulaanbaatar where over 50% of the country’s total population reside — has significantly constrained NDC implementation.

In particular, to support Chinese cities in planning and taking action in relevant sectors for achieving carbon neutrality by 2060, the training included an in-depth session on policy design and planning for climate-neutral mobility (or decarbonized transport), and a session on integrating climate change and air quality management. By introducing ICLEI’s tools and methodologies, and presenting international best practices — including experiences from the training host city Seoul — the training stimulated inspirational exchanges among the participants.

The annual ALP Forum gathers policymakers, donors, practitioners and experts involved in low-emission and climate-resilient development in Asia, to exchange best practices and explore opportunities for collaboration. During the 2021 Forum, which ran virtually from 24 August through 9 September, ICLEI East Asia supported promoting the thematic sessions on WeChat to encourage Chinese audience engagement.

In 2022, ALP will enter a new phase which aims to further advance the development of national strategic plans in Asia, by engaging multiple stakeholders, and promote economic growth while reducing GHG emissions without causing trade-offs to other environmental pressures.

GHG Inventory Development and Regional Cooperation on Climate Action in Ulaanbaatar City

In its latest Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Mongolia has ambitiously set the new target of a 22.7% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to the business-as-usual scenarios via domestic efforts. Yet, a lack of understanding regarding cities’ GHG emissions status and reduction strategies — especially in the capital city Ulaanbaatar where over 50% of the country’s total population reside — has significantly constrained NDC implementation.

Building on the previous engagement and the technical support ICLEI has provided to the officials from ICLEI member and project cities Beijing, Chengdu, Jinan, Sichuan Province, Lianyungang and Shijiazhuang Yuhua District.

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Municipality of Ulaanbaatar in committing to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) and completing its very first climate data reporting on the CDP-ICLEI Track (previously the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System) in 2020, ICLEI East Asia partnered with the Climate Campaign in 2021 and supported the Municipality in developing its first GHG inventory. The project is funded by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Through the program, ICLEI East Asia conducted a needs assessment to understand the local context, and further developed a systematic capacity building plan for the Municipality based on the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC) — a robust framework for accounting and reporting city-wide greenhouse gas emissions that provides interactive training modules and templates dedicated to the specific identified group of government officials. A Regional-and-Local workshop was delivered in the first quarter of 2022, bringing together local and national practitioners from Mongolia, South Korea, and Germany for knowledge exchange.

The project has strengthened Ulaanbaatar’s climate ambition to build a GHG inventory system through robust knowledge, tools, and materials. ICLEI will continue working with Ulaanbaatar and more cities on low-carbon development through delivering high-quality GHG inventories and climate action planning.

### Improving Energy Efficiency of Residential Building in Ulaanbaatar

Through the Building Efficiency Accelerator (BEA) program, ICLEI East Asia has maintained close relationships with Mongolia’s capital city Ulaanbaatar since 2017, and has been supporting the city in delivering its commitment to improve building efficiency through various programs and activities. Among which, the proposal of “Energy Performance Contracting for Residential Retrofitting in Ulaanbaatar City” project, co-developed by GGGI Mongolia and ICLEI East Asia was shortlisted under the 6th Call NAMA Support Projects (NSPs) in 2019. Following the Detailed Preparation Phase extended through 2020-2021, the project is looking to enter the Implementation Phase in 2022.

The proposed project aims to create a financing mechanism for Ulaanbaatar to carry out thermo-technical retrofitting to 375 precast residential building blocks. It is expected that the project will lead to GHG emissions reduction by 219,553 tCO2e, and over 53,000 residents will directly benefit from improved thermal comfort, indoor air quality, and increased value and lifespan of the buildings. ICLEI East Asia was leading the work packages of financial mechanism design and stakeholder engagement, to ensure the primary beneficiary — i.e. the household — would be supporting the retrofitting project.
Knowledge Sharing

The transportation sector accounts for 23% of global greenhouse gas emissions each year. They are also expected to grow at a rapid rate, posing a major challenge to efforts to reduce emissions in line with global goals. Under the framework of the Seoul Mayor’s Forum on Climate Change 2021, ICLEI co-hosted the thematic session “Zero Emission in Transportation Sector” with the host city Seoul, convening actors from both the public and private sectors to look at the various measurements and interventions aimed at achieving decarbonized and zero emission transport.

Sustainable Mobility and EcoLogistics

Mobility Transition Roadmap: Decarbonizing Transport to Achieve Carbon-Neutral and Sustainable Urban Mobility

To achieve the Paris Agreement on climate change, the transport sector is an integral part of the net-zero sector and urgently needs to reduce its annual emissions from 7.7 to 2-3 billion tons (Gt) by 2050. However, transport is also one of the most challenging sectors to decarbonize, and is linked with a host of sustainability impacts, from air pollution, to health and equitable access. In particular, air pollution still remains a major political issue — less than 8% of the population living in Asia can breathe ‘clean air’ that meets the stringent World Health Organization standards.

Low- or zero-emission mobility is essential to achieving the global sustainability and climate goals. To make this possible, transition and implementation at the city level is of the essence. However, the capacity gaps, combined with short-term or siloed planning tools and perspectives, are roadblocks to the carbon-neutral ambition.

The Mobility Transition Roadmap, initiated in 2021, is a flagship program of ICLEI East Asia that aims to support subnational governments in creating a sustainable urban mobility system to achieve their carbon-neutral goals, while creating co-benefits in SDGs and air quality. Taking a systems perspective to achieve carbon neutrality and sustainability goals in urban mobility, the program supports cities through three pillars: (1) Transition Roadmaps; (2) Policy Analysis; and (3) Policy Dialogues. ICLEI East Asia is partnering with the New Climate Institute and EACACN in creating the transition methodology with the support of Seoul, and will continue to work with Chinese cities in applying the tool.

EcoLogistics

By 2050, 96% of urban growth will occur in the less developed areas in East Asia, and the new urban centers will see the sharpest increase in carbon emissions corresponding to the burgeoning demand for goods and services from the growing consumers.

In 2021, ICLEI released the report EcoLogistics in East Asia: the Frontier for Sustainable Urban Mobility, analyzing the logistics situation, policies and institutional framework, strategies, and challenges of Seoul, Suzhou, and Taoyuan. It highlights the importance of incorporating EcoLogistics into long-term sustainable mobility policy planning and steps city governments can undertake to kick start the transformation process through stakeholder collaboration, proper financing and demonstration projects.
Urban Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions

All life depends on nature. Cities and towns of all sizes critically rely on the healthily interconnected ecosystems within and around them, which provide diverse life-sustaining and enhancing contributions, making it possible for all living creatures to thrive.

Forward-thinking governments from cities and regions are continuing looking for opportunities to work with nature. The course for the next decade will be charted at the UN Biodiversity Summit, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, launched in 2021 aiming to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean will also get into full swing.

Road to Post-2020

Globally, ICLEI acts as one of the key partners in the preparation and running of the Edinburgh Process, which was jointly led by the Scottish Government and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and implemented with the support of a number of global partners, as part of the CBD Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) work program. In 2020, a series of online information sessions and online consultations were held with local and subnational governments on their role in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and targets, which will be agreed at CBD COP-15.

The key outcomes of the Process include the Edinburgh Declaration and a call on CBD Parties to adopt a renewed decision and ambitious Plan of Action for 2020-2030, outlining the vital role of local and subnational governments in the implementation of the new global framework.

Ning Liu, the Chinese Negotiator of CBD COP-15, delivered a keynote speech at the virtual dialogue in co-hosted by ICLEI East Asia and the Scottish Government in July / Source: ICLEI East Asia
To engage Chinese local governments into the process by familiarizing them with its contents and main outcomes, ICLEI East Asia and the Scottish Government co-hosted the virtual dialogue “Reinforce Local and Subnational Governments’ Actions and Contributions: Edinburgh Process for Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework” on 9 July. The virtual dialogue was also the first warm-up event of the 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments.

Over 100 participants from across China and from different time zones attended. On this occasion, representatives from Yunnan Province, Kunming City, Aichi Prefecture, Shenzhen City, and Beijing City were invited to showcase their local biodiversity actions and their engagement in the global advocacy. In particular, ICLEI East Asia has been facilitating the COP-15 host city Kunming in joining the Process and signing the Declaration.

Since 2021, the ICLEI Beijing Office has also been working closely with the ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center on localizing the CitiesWithNature platform for local governments and practitioners in China to exchange their experiences and knowledge on promoting urban biodiversity. In addition, ICLEI has also worked closely with the Singapore National Parks Board on translating the revised Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity into Chinese, aiming to provide a practical tool for local governments in China to assess and enhance their local biodiversity. In the coming years, ICLEI will further develop relevant capacity building programs and join hands with Chinese cities in planning and implementing pilot projects on mainstreaming urban biodiversity.

Edinburgh Declaration

The Edinburgh Declaration sets out the aspirations and commitments of the Scottish Government, Edinburgh Process partners and the wider subnational constituency of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in delivering for nature over the coming decade. So far, over 230 subnational, city and local authorities have signed the Declaration.

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CBD COP-15 and the 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP-15), initially scheduled to be held in 2020 in Kunming, Yunnan Province of China, has been postponed and transformed into a two-step process.

The first part of the meetings, held between 11-15 October 2021, addressed the agenda items identified as essential for continuing operations of the Convention and the Protocols, and set the stage for adopting an effective new global framework for the next decade at the resumed meetings in 2022.

On this occasion, two short joint statements, coordinated by Regions4 and Government of Québec, the Group of Leading Subnational Governments toward the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the European Committee of the Regions, ICLEI and the Edinburgh Process Partners, were read by ICLEI on behalf of the local and subnational major group at the opening meeting and the closing plenary of High-Level Segment, amplifying subnational governments’ voice, ambitions and commitments in the international advocacy.

The second and resumed part of COP-15 is scheduled to be an in-person meeting in Kunming in 2022, and will address the remaining agenda items, including the finalization and adoption of a new global framework. As an official parallel event to COP-15, ICLEI will co-host the 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments with partners including the CBD Secretariat, China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Yunnan Province, Kunming City, and China Environment News, providing a platform for national governments to engage with their local and subnational peers, and an international space where cities, towns and regions from around the world can showcase their practices and achievements, and jointly promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in cities, as well as a healthy and vibrant urban environment at the local level.

Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity

The City Biodiversity Index, also referred to as the Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity or the Singapore Index, is a self-monitoring tool for cities to evaluate and benchmark their biodiversity conservation efforts. The Index, first launched in 2008 and part of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Technical Series, is named in recognition of Singapore’s contribution and leadership. The updated and revised Index — published in September 2021 — comprises 28 indicators that measure native biodiversity, ecosystem services and the governance and management of biodiversity, has remained the most comprehensive index on this topic, and will assist cities in implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework by helping them build capacities in setting priorities for biodiversity conservation actions and budget allocation.
ICLEI East Asia continues working closely with the European Secretariat on EU-funded Horizon 2020 projects that promote methodologies on integrating nature in cities, demonstrate best practices of nature-based solutions, and strengthen communication and capacity of cities and subnational governments.

**UrbanByNature**

UrbanByNature is a facilitated capacity-building program to empower local governments all around the world to harness the boundless potential of nature for sustainable urban development. Powered by ICLEI, the Horizon 2020 projects Connecting Nature and CLEVER Cities, and the support of the CitiesWithNature platform, the program promotes exchange among cities, researchers, SMEs and NGOs to build bridge with the nature-based solutions communities across Europe, Asia, Latin America and other international regions.

Together with the ICLEI European Secretariat, the ICLEI Beijing Office held the six-part webinar series tailored to the needs and interests of local governments and stakeholders in China from June 2021 through February 2022, facilitating knowledge and expertise exchange in mainstreaming nature-based solutions in urban development between relevant actors in China and Europe.

The webinar series guided participants through seven steps, namely the UrbanByNature methodology — Join, Explore, Prioritize, Commit and Plan, Implement, Monitor, and Upscale — reflecting a co-creative approach of actively engaging neighborhoods in realizing green, blue, and resilient cities. All materials from the series are available on the program page and ICLEI East Asia’s website.

**REGREEN**

REGREEN aims to promote urban livability through fostering nature-based solutions in Europe and China. The European-Chinese cooperation is a core element of REGREEN with its consortium consisting of universities and research institutes from China and Europe. Joining the consortium, ICLEI East Asia will provide support to the development and application of tailored nature-based solutions approaches in Chinese cities and facilitate European-Chinese communication.

Source: Linnea Svensson Arbab
To support cities moving towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and circular economy, ICLEI East Asia launched the Green Circular Cities Coalition in 2019, presenting an opportunity for cities across the world to become global leaders in urban circular transitions.

During the Seoul Mayor’s Forum on Climate Change 2021, which was held virtually on 26-27 October, the Coalition co-hosted the thematic session “Emission Reduction through Circular Actions”, presenting best practices of cities in utilizing commonly wasted resources. On this occasion, Minna Arve, Mayor of the Coalition city Turku, Finland, and Vice President of ICLEI, shared the city’s commitment to realizing environmental and socioeconomic impacts through actions and regional collaboration, and its ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2029 along the Circular Turku Roadmap, which promotes systemic shifts towards a resource-wise society through circular economy solutions, with a special focus on food and nutrient cycles, energy systems, building and housing, mobility and logistics, and water cycles. Given Turku’s robust target and experience, ICLEI East Asia is currently pairing the city with a potential Coalition city in China for exchange on synergies between circularity and carbon neutrality.

Moving forward, the Coalition will support cities’ engagement in areas of thematic interests. Specifically, under the EU-funded SWITCH-Asia Program, the partner consortium formed by the China National Institute of Standardization, the China Textile Development Center, ICLEI and the Regional Activity Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production, will kick-start a four-year project (2022-2025) on transitions to circular economy practices in textile and apparel MSMEs along the life-cycle in Huzhou and Shaoxing, including objectives of: improved sustainable management, resource efficiency and adoption of circular economy principles by the local textile and fashion industry; conditions enabled for a conducive policy environment among key stakeholders in the two cities; as well as increased access of textile and apparel industry to financing for eco-design, recycling investments and clean technology transfer.
Regional Circular Cities Research

ICLEI Circulars

In 2020, ICLEI joined hands with the SUN Institute Environment & Sustainability, to re-evaluate ICLEI’s stance and stock-taken its offers in the Circular Development Pathway. As one of the main project deliverables, the ICLEI Circulars platform was officially launched in March 2021 by the ICLEI World Secretariat to facilitate works related to the circular economy transition at the local level across regions. In particular, the ICLEI Beijing Office contributed to the content development of the platform’s China Hub, profiling the priorities, achievements and needs of the cities of Changchun, Chengdu, Datong, Shenzhen, Tianjin, and Hong Kong.

Circle Lab for Cities

Funded by the MAVA Foundation, the Circle Lab for Cities program supports cities worldwide to take the next step in their journey on planning and implementing circular development at the local level, with the support of online and offline tools. Under the program, ICLEI East Asia is tasked for the implementation with up to two cities in China.

The program is now in the city selection cycle. A series of cities engagement missions will be carried out in 2022, which include introducing circularity and assessing where the city stands through ICLEI’s Circular City Action Framework and surveys; performing data assessment and sector selection based on materials, greenhouse gas and circular hot-spots; following-up with policy actions tracker activities and a final deliverable of roadmap recommendations for the selected city.

Knowledge Sharing

80% of food is expected to be consumed in cities by 2050, and the amount of food waste and loss is exponentially increasing.

Funded by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, ICLEI East Asia conducted a research project on the food systems in Seoul, Hiroshima and Sapporo through a circular lens, and synthesized their efforts as the publication Best Practices of Circular Food Production and Consumption in Japan and Korea: A Handbook for Local Governments. The Handbook was published in both English and Chinese in April 2021, which is also a case-reading complementary to the City Practitioners Handbook: Circular Food Systems released by the ICLEI World Secretariat in the same year.
ICLEI East Asia, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Office for Northeast Asia and Global Education and Training Institute (UNDRR ONEA-GETI), provided a series of training to 4 local governments in China between 2019-2021, to strengthen their capacities on disaster risk reduction, as well as on designing and implementing urban resilience in the context of climate change.

Following the training sessions held in Ningbo (2019) and Chengdu (2020), another 2 two-day training workshops were delivered to the local governments of Shanghai Changning and Beijing respectively in mid-April 2021. A total of over 50 representatives from the departments of emergency management, ecology and environment, climate change, spatial planning, and multiple sub-district offices under the two local governments participated in the workshops.

The training allowed the participants to expand knowledge on climate change adaptation and urban resilience, and stimulate new ideas on how their jurisdictions can enhance their own capacities. In particular, with the support of leading experts from multi-disciplinary backgrounds, the participants applied UNDRR’s Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient Scorecard, and conducted preliminary assessment on the jurisdictions’ current status in disaster risk reduction and resilient development.
Following the training series co-delivered by ICLEI East Asia and UNDRR ONEA-GETI, representatives from the four Chinese local governments — Ningbo, Chengdu, Shanghai Changning and Beijing — as well as experts who have engaged in the training series, voiced out further needs on increasing urban resilience knowledge and capacity in the wrap-up session, especially due to the fact that building resilience cities is included in the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Outline of Vision Goals for 2035 released by the national government. ICLEI has summarized the gaps and needs of Chinese cities in the project working report Making Cities Resilient: Progress in China and Next Steps.

ICLEI East Asia is now partnering again with the UNDRR on a new project Making Cities Resilient 2030: Strengthening Local Disaster Resilience in China, with specific objectives of localizing urban resilience strategy in China and ensuring its applicability in supporting Chinese cities towards formulating, reviewing, and implementing disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilient city strategies and action plans. It will also create, in coordination with the national government, a multi-stakeholder platform or mechanism for resilient cities in China to stimulate long-term engagement and sustainability of Chinese cities on the resilience roadmap and to empower knowledge exchange and sharing with other cities in Asia-Pacific and beyond. The project will kick off in 2022.

Mainstreaming Urban Climate Change Adaptation in China

The Asian Development Bank Technical Assistance Project Mainstreaming Urban Climate Change Adaptation in the People's Republic of China was scheduled to be completed by December 2021. Changde, Xi’xian and Zhuhai are of the project cities. As a core consultant of the technical team, ICLEI contributed to the closing 2021 International Workshop on Urban Adaptation to Climate Change and the finalization of the Technical Guidelines for Urban Climate Change Adaptation (UCCA), a deliverable to the China’s Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MoHURD) that aims at providing a step-by-step approach for Chinese cities to assess their climate change risks and vulnerabilities, and to plan and implement adaptation actions accordingly. The document was written based on the critical importance for climate-proofing existing cities and infrastructures, planning new urban areas to be climate change resilient, and establishing early warning systems for disaster preparedness and response.

During the year, the ICLEI East Asia and Oceania Secretariat worked closely with the pilot city Zhuhai in conducting assessment, summarizing learnings, and proceeding with relevant reports, delivered the city-specific recommendations on adaptation action, covering aspects of governance, climate risks and vulnerabilities, as well as the following priority sector areas: buildings and housing, roads and transport, power supply, and water supply.

Moving forward, ICLEI East Asia will further discuss with MoHURD on potentially disseminating and applying the guidelines to other Chinese cities interested in taking a systematic approach on climate change adaptation.
Urban-Rural Assembly

Funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and coordinated by Technische Universität Berlin, the Sino-German research and development project Urban-Rural Assembly (URA) aims at managing inclusive transformation-to-sustainability processes at the urban-rural interface of Huangyan-Taizhou region in China. The project follows a systematic and inter-disciplinary approach, covering topics including social-spatial practices, material cycles, landscapes and spatial typologies, ecosystems, mobility and migration, as well as governance and policies.

Moving into the Research and Development Phase (10/2020-09/2024) of the project, ICLEI East Asia continues supporting the coordination among consortium partners in China and Germany, and has brought in Foshan New City and Chengdu as Observer Cities.

Under the framework of the 5th International High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development held in Chengdu on 26-27 October, the project consortium co-hosted the “High-level Dialogue on Promoting Green Lifestyles for Sustainable, Green and Livable Cities and Territories: Leveraging the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in Integrated Urban Planning” with China’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the China Center for Urban Development (CCUD), UN-Habitat, and Chengdu City. The Dialogue looked at how urban-rural linkages present a new opportunity to synergize development plans and strategies to leverage the interdependence and support sustainable and high-quality growth for urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. ICLEI East Asia will further conduct more policy analysis and Science-Policy Dialogues (SPD) to mainstream the urban-rural linkages approach to cities and regions in China.

UrbanShift

Following its earlier engagement in completing the Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Assessments (ISUDA) desk research for the 7 Chinese Cities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)’s Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot under GEF-6, ICLEI East Asia moves on to participate in the implementation of the Sustainable
Knowledge Sharing

Under the Urban Transitions Alliance webinar series, ICLEI facilitated the engagement of **Shijiazhuang Yuhua District** in the session “City-Business Cooperation and Investing in the SDGs” on 17 June, to share the strategy the district is currently implementing, aiming to find triple-win solutions for the government, the private sector and citizens, where resources and commitments from the local businesses could be harnessed in creating environmental and climate benefits, strengthening employment opportunities, and hence, better achieving the SDGs.

Leveraging Science Technology & Innovation for Low Carbon and Resilient Cities

**Mongolia** has been facing serious challenges associated with climate change. The country’s annual mean air temperature has increased by over 2°C during the past half century, while the precipitation has been decreasing, leading to chronic drought and extreme climate-driven hazards. Such adverse impacts of climate change has made the topics of low carbon development and urban resilience more urgent than ever before.

In 2021, ICLEI East Asia joined hands with the Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre (CCRCC) of Mongolia, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and the innovative Green Development Program (iGDP) in delivering the capacity building project “Leveraging Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Low Carbon and Resilience Cities,” which was designated to empower policymakers in Mongolia to develop low-carbon and resilient action plans at city levels through the application of various STI instruments.

Under the project framework, ICLEI East Asia contributed to the organization of the International Forum on Low Carbon Cities held in Incheon, and the development of a total of 20 case studies on relevant topics, which will be published in 2022. In addition, a hybrid two-day workshop was also co-delivered by ICLEI and project partners in December 2021, during which around 60 national and municipal policymakers, urban practitioners, as well as experts from academia and industries in Mongolia were provided with opportunities for extensive exchange with experts from **Seoul, Shenzhen, Chengdu, and Xuzhou**, as well as cities in other countries on their practices in the fields of data-informed urban planning, sustainable mobility, clean energy, urban governance, solid waste management, and urban climate resilience.
ICLEI East Asia continues to build new partnerships with relevant government agencies, organizations and institutes to promote global sustainability through knowledge and multilateral cooperation. In 2021, through constant cooperation on various activities, ICLEI has forged new, as well as strengthened collaboration with long-standing Partners in the region, include:

In addition, ICLEI has been exploring a new way – collaborating with the private sector to address the pain points that local governments face in the process of sustainable transition. In 2021, ICLEI East Asia developed a private sector engagement strategy, and is planning to launch a brand new platform in the second half of 2022, allowing local governments to identify and communicate their needs with suitable solution providers directly and effectively. The platform would also equip the private sector with knowledge on the global sustainable agenda, and provide them with channels to develop connection and trust with local governments.
To facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise on urban sustainability between Members, and to showcase their achievements globally, ICLEI East Asia prepares publications related to our programs and projects, with localized contents based on local and regional needs.

In 2021, ICLEI East Asia continued updating our bilingual website, and completed the Chinese translation of a number of publications and articles related to our project works from the ICLEI global network and our partner organizations. These resources have been shared with our Members and Partners via our website and social media channels in English and Chinese.

**Publications**

- **EcoLogistics in East Asia: the Frontier for Sustainable Urban Mobility**
  - 2021.4 / English by ICLEI World Secretariat
  - 2021.5 / Chinese Summary by ICLEI East Asia Secretariat

- **ILEI in the Urban Era: Our Vision for a Sustainable Urban World**
  - 2021.4 / English by ICLEI World Secretariat
  - 2021.10 / Chinese Summary by ICLEI East Asia Secretariat

- **Training Curriculum: Integrating Air Pollution and Climate Change Planning in Cities in Asia**
  - 2021.7 / English · Chinese

- **ALP Case Study: Building Energy Efficiency and Thermal Retrofitting, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**
  - 2022.2 / English

- **Leveraging Science, Technology and Innovation for Low Carbon and Resilient Cities**
  - 2022.4 / English

- **Best Practices of Circular Food Production and Consumption in Japan and Korea**
  - 2021.4 / English · Chinese
2022 PREVIEW

ICLEI World Congress 2021 - 2022: The Malmö Summit
11-13 MAY / Malmö, Sweden

Capacity Building for Local Governments on Climate and Clean Air Actions for Chinese Cities
30 MAY - 8 JUN / Seoul, South Korea / Online

CBD COP-15 Part II and the 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities & Subnational Governments
3rd Quarter / Kunming, China / Hybrid

Daring Cities 2022
3-7 OCT / Bonn, Germany / Online

World Cities Day
31 OCT / Shanghai, China

Resilient Cities and Urban Adaptation Training Series
TBC / China, TBC

6th High-Level International Forum on Sustainable Urban Development
TBC / Chengdu, China

Seoul International Forum on Air Quality Improvement
TBC / Seoul, South Korea

2022 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions
TBC / Beijing, China

Eco Forum Global Annual Conference 2022
TBC / Guiyang, China

UNFCCC COP27
7-18 NOV / Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

International Forum on Low Carbon Cities 2022
9-11 NOV / Incheon, South Korea

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands COP14
21-29 NOV / Wuhan, China

*Due to the on-going pandemic situation, the listed events may be subject to change or cancellation. For more information on specific events, please contact the ICLEI East Asia Secretariat.
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