



Connective Cities program on municipal recovery from Covid-19 pandemic Kickoff Event of the Biodiversity and environmental protection working group

Date: 9th August 2021

Time: 11:00-13:00 CEST

Language: German, English and Arabic

Platform: <https://community.connective-cities.net/en/node/739>

(Please make sure to visit the link above, where you can enroll first and then you can join the meeting)

Thematic focus and objectives of the kickoff event

The kickoff event aims at introducing the participants to the thematic working group 'Biodiversity and Environmental Protection, as well as presenting two examples on best practices from Germany and Lebanon on the deployment of early warning systems for forest fires. There is an ever-growing need to strengthen decentralised cooperation between the MENA region and Germany on the dissemination of good practices peer advisory in this thematic field.

At a regional level, the land resources of the MENA region suffer from three main challenges: aridity, recurrent drought, and desertification. Major causes of land degradation are forest fire, deforestation, inappropriate agricultural techniques, etc. Land degradation in MENA is due to wildfire especially that forest management is weak, and that residential developments are spreading to mountainous and vegetated areas. Wildfires are often originated due to human carelessness, to the lack of their consideration to the environment and the climate change.

This event is an opportunity to showcase the progress achieved by local disaster management offices as well as promoting peer learning for additional improvement of the local and national capacities. Sharing practice-oriented experience facilitates transferring, sustaining and innovating effective applied solutions. The event's objectives are as follows:

- Initiate a practice-oriented knowledge exchange between urban practitioners in the field of biodiversity and environmental protection
- Facilitate peer learning on state-of-the-art technology to increase resilience and improve disaster preparedness related to forest fires

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- Foster development of concrete projects ideas related to forest fires prevention
- Raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the value of ecosystem protection, risk factors, and the protection and preparedness tools

The Agenda

Time (CEST)	Agenda	Details
10:50-11:00	Signing in	
11:00-11:05	Technical check-in	Connective Cities- Tech Host
11:05-11:20	Welcome remarks & introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words of welcome • Introduction of the biodiversity working group • Introduction of participants 	Ms. Hanane Haber Dr. Muna Shalan Connective Cities network coordinator for the MENA region
11:20-11:45	Good practice presentation 1: SBR experience in forest fires prevention in Shouf Biosphere Reserve (followed by Q & A session)	Mr. Nizar Hani Director of Shouf Biosphere Reserve – Lebanon
11:45-12:40	Good practice presentation 2: Early warning system of forest fires in Lower Saxony (followed by Q & A session)	Mr. Helmut Beuke Forest and Environment Division Lower Saxony State Forests - Germany
12:40-13:00	Way forward and support by Connective Cities Closing remarks	Hanane Haber Muna Shalan

Connective Cities at a glance

Connective Cities is a cooperation project between the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German Association of Cities and Engagement Global with its Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW).¹ The project promotes international knowledge-exchange among urban practitioners from city administrations, civil society, academia and the private sector since 2013. Connective Cities activities enables joint learning, peer-to-peer advisory and the development of joint projects on topics of sustainable urban development.²

¹ Connective Cities is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

² Since its launch in 2013, Connective Cities has already held over 30 workshops attended by more than 2000 participants from over 200 cities in 65 countries worldwide. Connective Cities organised a dialogue event on the topic of *public health protection in biological emergencies at the local level* in Frankfurt in November 2015.