

MADE IN COUNTDOWN 2010

20 WAYS OF SAVING BIODIVERSITY



Nearly 1,100 partners wo



They all committed to
action for biodiversity!

Worldwide in just six years...



470+ Civil society
390+ Local authorities
90+ Business
50+ Government Agencies
30+ Governments
30+ Academia

The biodiversity crisis

Nature with its diversity and complex interactions are the foundation of life on Earth. The continued loss of biodiversity will lead to a decline of our natural wealth and a dramatic reduction of ecosystem services. For instance if bacteria and fungi, which make the soil fertile and breakdown wastes, disappear, agricultural production will decrease. 42% of anti-cancer drugs are derived from natural sources, the loss of biodiversity will affect future advances in medicine. Without biodiversity the future for the next generations is jeopardized.

A solution

In 2004, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) launched Countdown 2010 – a unique time-bound initiative. Countdown 2010 aims to mobilize local action and encourage governments to take the necessary actions to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 in an effort to contribute to their pledge to reach the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

The claim of Countdown 2010 is broad and simple: providing the space for organisations to focus their work on the 2010 Biodiversity Target with the tools and issues that are closest to their own core aims and objectives, and linking these organizations in a global network. Partners have signed the Countdown 2010 Declaration and committed to:

- Support the implementation of the 2010 Biodiversity Target;
- Encourage decision makers to take action;
- Take specific, targeted actions to reduce their own impact on biodiversity.

The result

In just six years, Countdown 2010 has become one of the largest networks for biodiversity conservation worldwide. Nearly 1,100 organisations from all over the world have joined the network and committed to taking direct action to conserve the natural heritage of their country, region or community. Partners include governments and government agencies, civil society organisations, international institutions, businesses and local authorities from more than 60 countries.



Concrete action for biodiversity conservation

It's 2010 – a year of stock-taking for world governments and for the Countdown 2010 initiative. The 2010 Biodiversity Target was not reached but the thousands of biodiversity actions taken by Countdown 2010 partners are an important step towards the improvement of the status of biodiversity and the increase of public awareness.

Thousands of biodiversity actions all over the world have contributed to conserving biodiversity. These actions are a model for other communities, regions and countries. The initiative itself has served as a springboard for increased and concrete action beyond 2010. A renewed and enhanced phase of biodiversity conservation and awareness raising can now start.

48 success stories have been selected out of more than 1,000 partners. This publication is a collection of 20 of the best success stories by Countdown 2010 partners which have helped to make a difference for biodiversity. The stories come from partners from Europe to Asia to Africa, from North America to South America. Examples of successful actions include adoption of protection measures, implementation of action plans, raising awareness and reduction of biodiversity impact.

At the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, only one Countdown 2010 partner out of those included in this publication will receive the Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Award. The prize aims to reward the best action for biodiversity within the Countdown 2010 network. All success stories and information can be found at www.countdown2010.net/made-in-countdown.

“Countdown 2010 brings together hundreds of diverse actors united by a common goal: conserving biodiversity – our lifeline. More than 1,000 Countdown 2010 partners have made great strides towards realizing the global biodiversity target in every part of the world and at every level and I warmly congratulate them on their success. Their actions will bring about tangible benefits for biodiversity. Their achievements will inspire others. Their commitment will ensure that the Countdown 2010 spirit continues well beyond 2010.”

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, IUCN Director-General



Cascais Natura

Before

Some of the major threats to the evolution and conservation of the habitats and ecosystems of the Cascais county were farming abandonment, soil erosion, invasive species, and the destruction and fragmentation of natural habitats. A constraint was the lack of supervision and monitoring of the implementation of legal instruments that ensure the conservation of protected areas, as well as the lack of partnerships between local authorities that managed the Natural Park of Sintra-Cascais in Portugal.



Action

The environmental agency Cascais Natura, who joined Countdown in 2007, is very active in the preservation of Cascais' natural heritage. Alongside numerous conservation measures, the agency worked to reverse the agricultural abandonment process and reintroduce farming and forest management. Cascais Natura established a visit and interpretation network in the Natural Park of Sintra-Cascais to promote better management of a territory that is subject to great human pressure and to ensure accessibility to it.

The agency introduced Green Infrastructure – a land use planning tool whose fundamental purpose is to preserve essential natural areas that ensure ecological functions in the territory. A genetic bank was created to ensure diversity and the genetic integrity of native plants, and numerous environmental and conservation volunteering projects such as reforestation and invasive exotic species control were promoted. Cascais Natura also organised two forums on biodiversity and a workshop on vascular plants for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

Now

Between 2008 and 2010 Cascais Natura performed 300 conservation actions resulting in 51,320 planted trees. 7 urban parks in Cascais of more than 3 hectares have been created and natural and semi-natural habitats have been recovered. The agency has increased civic participation and environmental awareness through its numerous volunteer projects (4,200 Oigénio volunteers and 1,300 participants on Natura Observa) and consolidated partnerships among local actors.



www.cascaisnatura.org

Coop

A Swiss organic farmer Peter Zahner, whose animal and plant paradise can be preserved thanks to Coop enabling to sell the fruit from his standard trees © Marius Born, Winterthur

Before

In the last 50 years farmers have increasingly been using more intensive agricultural practices to boost yield. This has led to the degradation of agricultural and semi-natural ecosystems and caused the decline of biodiversity in large areas.



Action

Acknowledging that organic production assures better sustainable management of resources and can increase biodiversity, Coop – the first Swiss supermarket chain – felt the need to act. The company fosters organic agriculture at various levels: it has established a close partnership with Bio Suisse (Swiss organic farmers association, www.bio-suisse.ch) and launched the organic brand Naturaplan.

Coop also finances research and sourcing projects at the Research Institute for Organic Farming (FiBL) and cooperates with Remei AG (www.remei.ch) on organic cotton project involving more than 10,000 farmers in India and Tanzania. Coop also promotes biodiversity measures in 50 organic farms in Switzerland.

In 2010, Coop has launched a large-scale participatory campaign focused on the importance of biodiversity. The campaign includes hands-on action enabling customers to sow wildflower seeds of endangered species. Coop pays an amount equal to saving 1 m² of dry meadows for each participant to Pro Natura (www.pronatura.ch), the biggest Swiss environmental protection association. In collaboration with Swiss rapper Stress, Coop produced a special song for a TV-commercial which heralds a wake-up call for the biodiversity crisis (www.coop.ch/nachhaltigkeit).

Now

In just a few months since the launch of the biodiversity campaign, consumers' awareness of biodiversity has increased and 1,000,000 packages of wildflower seeds of endangered species have been distributed, contributing to save at least 240,000 m² of dry meadows in Switzerland.

By making organic products available to the broad population, organic agriculture stepped out of the niche. Today 8% of the food sold in Coop stores is organic, and more than 2,000 organic food-products in its assortment are labelled with the bud of Bio Suisse as a quality seal of Naturaplan. Annual sales of Coop organic cotton products have increased to 65 million Swiss francs in 2009.



www.coop.ch

Coralina

A bird (*Pheuthicus Leudovicianus*) in the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina © Coralina

Before

Since the 1950s, the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina has suffered from a gradual loss of biodiversity, including its coastal-marine resources. The biodiversity of the island has been affected by several threats, such as invasive species, over-exploitation of fisheries and deterioration of important habitats such as tropical dry-forests, sea-grass, mangroves and coral reefs – unique habitats in the Caribbean Region.



Action

Based on a participatory process and with an ecosystem approach, the Seaflower Marine Protected Area (MPA) was created in 2005 thanks to the leadership of Coralina – the Corporation for the Sustainable Development of the Archipelago of San Andrés, Old Providence and Santa Catalina, a department of Colombia in the Caribbean – and the support of the local and national governments. Seaflower is the largest MPA in the Great Caribbean and one of the largest on the planet. Important financial resources from the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank have been allocated to implement the MPA Management Plan, and ensure its sustainability. Seaflower has been nominated to become a World Heritage Site.

Coralina's action focuses on environmental planning, management and research, and conservation in the Archipelago. Coralina has implemented the first phase of the recovery plan for the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*), which faces the threat of commercialisation in the Caribbean, and protected a vast territory which includes deep waters at important sites for trophic chains, flows, genetic and ecological connectivity and larval dispersal. The agency also works to raise local awareness of the conservation and sustainable use of coastal-marine resources and to empower and engage local communities and institutions in their co-management.

Now

More than 200,000 hectares of significant corals, mangroves and sea-grasses in the Archipelago are now protected. Coralina has ensured protection, conservation and sustainable use of more than 407 fish species, 48 hard corals, 54 soft corals, 3 hydrocorals, 2 zoanthids, 2 anemones, 3 jellyfishes, 130 sponges, 37 mollusks, 37 crustaceans, 38 equinoderms, 4 reptiles, 5 cetaceans, 157 birds, 3 sea-grasses and 4 mangroves. In addition, 7 reproductive colonies of marine birds and the largest diversity of soft corals in the Western Caribbean are now preserved. 192 coastal-marine species listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ and aggregation sites for species are protected.



www.coralina.gov.co

Danish Ministry of the Environment

Red kite (*Milvus milvus*), one of the species of the postcard action © John Larsen, Birdlife Denmark

Before

There was no appropriate connection between the international goal of halting the loss of biodiversity and local action in Denmark. Municipalities were not aware that this was a common goal to be reached together. The country needed to unite all local partners in the field of nature conservation, create enthusiasm among people working on the ground and connect the practical implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity with local action.



Action

The Ministry joined Countdown 2010 to promote its own achievements for biodiversity and utilise the initiative's outreach potential to advance conservation in the country. In January 2007, the Minister sent special New Year post cards to all mayors in Denmark. Each card illustrated a threatened species and contained an important message urging local authorities to take care of that particular species and act to halt the loss of biodiversity in their municipality. The Minister's action attracted a lot of public attention to the species and biodiversity conservation in general. It inspired other countries like Norway, Sweden, Finland and the United Kingdom to launch similar initiatives.

The Ministry has actively promoted the objectives of Countdown 2010 and mobilised local communities to join the initiative. Each municipality has been asked to show three specific projects which are contributing to halting the loss of biodiversity. These projects were added to a special page on the Ministry's website dedicated to Countdown 2010 which includes a map of all municipalities which joined the initiative in Denmark.

Now

The Ministry has built a large and inspiring network of municipalities working together to halt the loss of biodiversity. 40% of all municipalities in Denmark have joined Countdown 2010 and have committed to specific biodiversity conservation actions. They have successfully cooperated with their peer local authorities in other Nordic countries to promote Countdown 2010. The greatest achievement is that these municipalities are now so enthusiastic that they will actively continue their work beyond 2010.

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DANISH MINISTRY
OF THE ENVIRONMENT

www.mim.dk/eng

Eiffage Group

Before

In the building and public works area, biodiversity was considered a constraint rather than a vital issue to seriously take into account. Awareness of biodiversity was not homogeneous within the Eiffage Group. Biodiversity experts were scarce and very scattered within the Group – they were hired in order to answer punctual needs, and often the competence was just externalised.



Action

Eiffage built the first highway in Europe fully considering biodiversity and respecting reinforced offsetting measures outlined in the new French laws - the A65 motorway in the region of Aquitaine in the South-West of France. To share its knowledge and experience on the building of the motorway, Eiffage – a leading figure in the European concessions and public works sector – has designed a special strategic programme.

The programme has had a set of concrete actions to halt the loss of biodiversity. Firstly, the company produced its Biodiversity Guidelines and distributed them to the 500 entities of the Group. Secondly, Eiffage created the Biodiversity Pack to guide staff in tender proposals and homogenise the approach of the Group and its best practices. The company has also launched the first Post-Master's Programme on interactions between biodiversity, the environment and linear infrastructure in collaboration with the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

To raise awareness among all employees, a biodiversity challenge and a picture competition have been organised within the Group. Eiffage participates in the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign to share its knowledge.

Now

Biodiversity is systematically taken into account in the company's operations at a global level. Eiffage and all its employees are fully aware of their impact on biodiversity. The company has promoted its best practices on biodiversity not only to its employees, but also to young students coming from universities or local authorities. Eiffage has become a biodiversity leader in its sector, enabling the Group to make a real difference. Instead of being considered as a constraint, biodiversity is now fully integrated in the company's offers, and it has become a competitive advantage.



www.eiffage.com



Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment – DG Environment

Before

The Belgian National Biodiversity Strategy was adopted one year before the Federal Public Service joined the Countdown 2010 initiative in 2007. The Strategy was to be implemented with the main challenge of mainstreaming biodiversity into relevant sectors of public policy, while at the same time engaging the general public in biodiversity conservation.



Action

The Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment – DG Environment has organised a debate with key stakeholders to identify priority actions for the integration of biodiversity into social and economic policies and all levels of decision making. It has also launched a campaign “I give life to my planet” at the end of 2009 which is targeted at the general public, in particular children and youngsters. It aims to stimulate people to engage in conservation by adopting simple actions and behaviours. A website allows people to choose their commitments for biodiversity. A book “366 actions for biodiversity”, children’s games, a complete educational package, electronic games and “Boomerang” cards in cafés and restaurants have also been produced. The campaign is implemented in cooperation with other Countdown 2010 partners in Belgium: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Natuurpunt and Natagora.

The Ministry has carried out a review and analysis of federal legislation to develop a new instrument against voluntary introduction of invasive alien species in Belgium and has supported TEMATEA – a joint project by IUCN and UNEP. Efforts have been made to promote sustainable forest management through public procurement policy and support forest governance, in particular in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Now

The Federal Action Plan for the integration of biodiversity into four key sectors – development cooperation, science, transport, and economy – has been adopted. By now, the national campaign has already engaged 10,970 enthusiastic people. Their commitments will serve as a strong signal to continue efforts for biodiversity beyond 2010.

A LIFE project on invasive plants aiming at setting up communication and preventive actions to reduce the introduction and dissemination of invasive alien plant species in gardens and public spaces in Belgium has been launched. 13 % of the Belgian territory at land and sea are Natura 2000 sites, and this percentage is on the increase. The Ministry has organised workshops on TEMATEA. Biodiversity criteria have been included in public procurement policies and prepare for a sectoral agreement with the private sector on timber and timber products from sustainably managed forests.



www.health.belgium.be



Fundació Caixa Catalunya

Before

At the end of the 1990s, there was no organisation that aimed to protect natural areas by the acquisition of land and/or land stewardship agreements in Spain. Only very few land purchases were done in the past decades by larger conservation organisations or foundations, but never as a part of a long-term programme. The land stewardship concept was almost not existent and poorly developed in the whole country.



Action

The Fundació Territori i Paisatge (now Fundació Caixa Catalunya) was created by the Caixa Catalunya Savings Bank at the end of 1997 with the main aim to preserve, natural areas, biodiversity and landscapes, as well as raise public awareness.

The foundation's long-term programme has three action lines. First, the acquisition of land to establish a network of private protected areas, where biodiversity plays an important role. These areas are then managed by the foundation in cooperation with other NGOs and public bodies. Second, the foundation supports and cooperates in numerous nature conservation projects implemented by institutions nationwide, especially concerning biodiversity. Finally, it raises public awareness and carries out various educational programmes to develop and enforce environmental values in society.

The foundation also supports more than 400 biodiversity conservation projects in the Catalonia Region and the rest of Spain, and a Nature Centre in the Pyrenees with 15,000 visitors a year.

Now

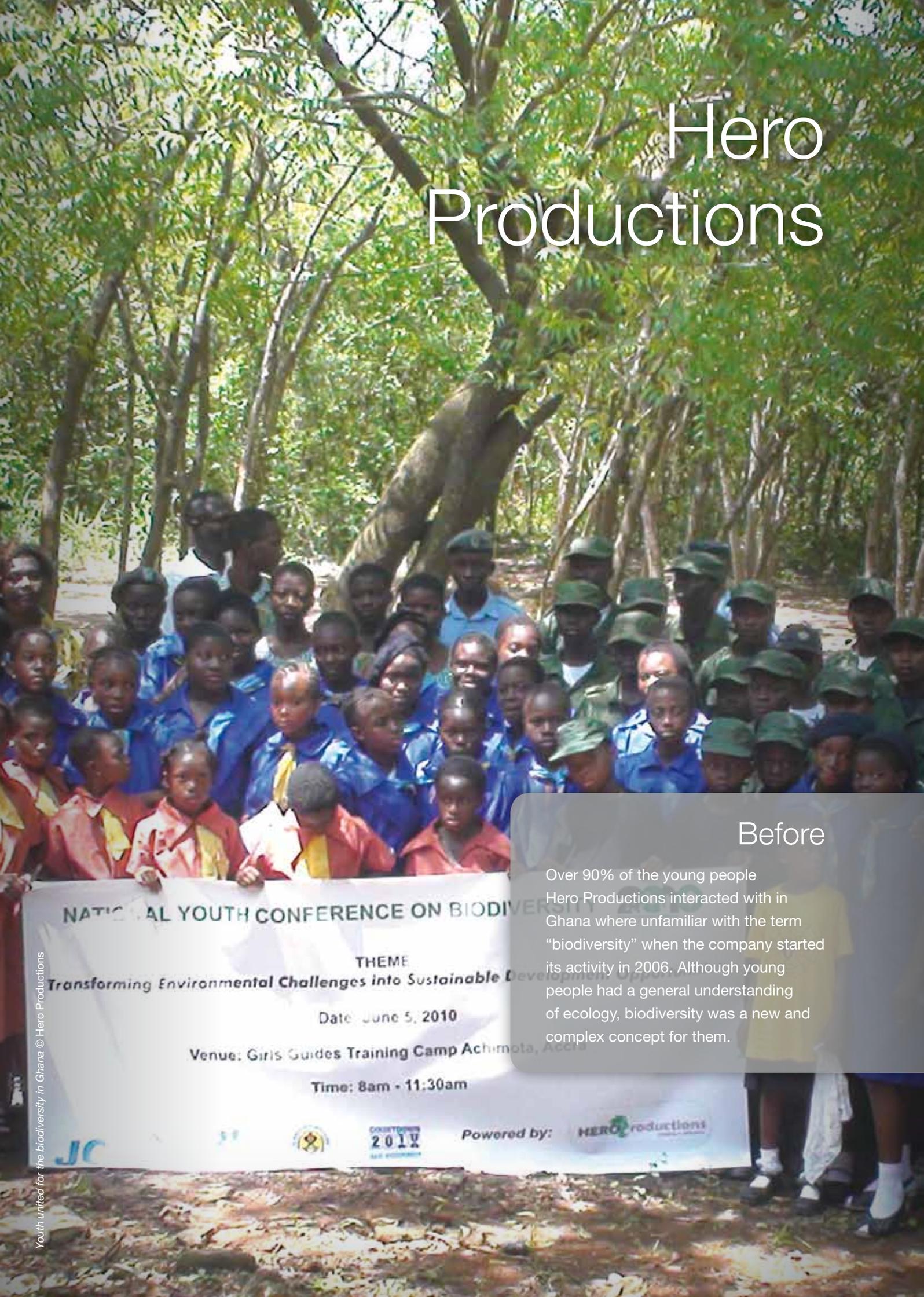
Currently the Fundació Caixa Catalunya is the largest private landowner in the Catalonia Region, Spain. It owns 24 areas totalling 7,834 hectares. 99% of the foundation's property is included in the Natura 2000 network. The foundation also helps to manage another 159,000 hectares through land stewardship agreements, which is 5.1% of the total land of the Catalonia Region.

A programme dedicated to flagship species has been established. It includes species such as the Lammergeyer, Iberian Lynx, Brown Bear, Monk Seal, Bonelli's Eagle. Thanks to this programme, the Black Vulture has been successfully reintroduced in the Pyrenees, as were the Otter in the rivers of North East Catalonia and the White Stork in six locations in the region.

CAIXA CATALUNYA
OBRA SOCIAL 

<http://obrasocial.caixacatalunya.com/osocial/main.html?idioma=3>

Hero Productions



Before

Over 90% of the young people Hero Productions interacted with in Ghana were unfamiliar with the term “biodiversity” when the company started its activity in 2006. Although young people had a general understanding of ecology, biodiversity was a new and complex concept for them.



Action

Acknowledging the social benefits and economic value of biodiversity, as well as the immediate future consequences of biodiversity loss in the country, Hero Productions felt the urgency and responsibility to act and developed an environmental multimedia agenda for its media company established in 2006.

Hero Productions has been active in designing, facilitating and implementing training and awareness programmes on biodiversity conservation in Ghana and establishing partnerships with relevant stakeholders both locally and internationally. In 2009 and 2010, the company held a National Youth Conference on Biodiversity which served as an annual gathering for youth organisations and other stakeholders, and as a forum to share experiences related to conservation.

The company also launched a challenging initiative: planting 50,000,000 trees across the country to help raise awareness. As part of the initiative, Hero Productions has organised the Tree Planting Competition for schools which was launched in 2009 by the Deputy Minister of Education (Pre Tertiary) Elizabeth Amoah Tetteh with the aim of raising awareness of biodiversity and increasing climate change education among school children.

Now

Knowledge and understanding of biodiversity among Ghanaian youth and children in many youth organisations and some local communities has increased. The company has facilitated the development of the National "Youth and Biodiversity" agenda in Ghana. The agenda is now being implemented by Hero Productions, National Cadet Corps Ghana, Ghana Girl Guides Association, the Head of State Award Scheme, and Junior Chamber International through a 5 years joint programme (2010-2015) to achieve the ambitious 50 million tree planting target. About 3,700 trees have already been planted. The company is now recognised for its efforts to promote environmental sustainability among the youth and children in Ghana and beyond.



www.hero-productions.com

Limburg Province

Before

Biodiversity was declining in Limburg at high rates. The Province realised that biodiversity conservation was a challenge that should be tackled by involving as many stakeholders as possible, not only the “green sector”. However, most people did not realise the impact of their behaviour on biodiversity, or the measures that need to be taken to preserve it. Local governments were unaware of how to take action to protect biodiversity in their territories.



Action

The Province of Limburg and three Regionale Landschappen (Regional Landscapes) – the NGOs whose mission is to improve the quality of the landscapes, including the nature in the region of Limburg – launched a project in 2008, encouraging every municipality in the Province to adopt an animal or a plant. The Province and the NGOs prepared an action plan for each of the adopted species explaining what should be done to protect them and what measures were needed.

In February 2008, every municipality received a protection plan for its species and was invited to sign the Countdown 2010 Declaration to become a Countdown 2010 partner. All 44 municipalities in the Province of Limburg joined the conservation project, so 44 species were protected.

Now

In May 2010, the Province of Limburg evaluated the project to determine if municipalities had increased their actions (field, communication and monitoring), if an increase could be attributed to the project and if the increased activity had an impact on the present status of the 44 adopted species.

The field performance was excellent in 11 municipalities, good in 18 and only 6 municipalities undertook minimal measures for the conservation of their species. One municipality fully exploited all the communication possibilities, while others used more traditional forms of communication. 18 municipalities monitored their species and another 18 had a baseline count compared to 13 and 11 respectively before the start of the project.

In only two years, the number of field actions increased almost threefold, the number of communication actions increased more than 20 times, and the quality of species monitoring also improved. The results of the monitoring revealed that the numbers of adopted species increased by 2009 in 5 municipalities and remained constant in 13. The 5 municipalities where numbers increased already protected the adopted animal before the start of the project.



www.limburg.be

NABU Münster Naturschutzstation and Stadtverband

Before

In the countryside of the Münsterland Region in North Rhine-Westphalia, traditional orchards were planted centuries ago. These were situated directly behind farmhouses and provided farmers' families and the inhabitants of the area with fresh fruit. They provided not only different fruit varieties (about 3,000 types of apples), but also served as habitats for nearly 5,000 wild species, including the Little Owl (*Athene noctua*).

75% of the orchards were lost between 1950 and 1990 due to changes in farming and the economic situation along with the expansion of urban areas.

At the same time, in the City of Münster and the surrounding countryside, plant species in particular were vanishing from the agricultural landscape due to the rising intensification of farming. This was causing not only the loss of species, but also the loss of German culture and beauty. For instance, poppies – the beautiful flowering field species which are the part of country's identity – were disappearing.



Action

Since 1996, Münster's volunteers of NABU – one of the oldest and largest environment associations in Germany, encompassing more than 450,000 members and sponsors – have helped trim the branches of fruit trees, plant 3,800 trees, and harvest the orchards' products in the region.

Fair prices are an incentive for farmers to conserve their orchards, and ensuring consumption of the orchards' fruit contributes both to the protection of existing orchards and the plantation of new ones. Every year NABU purchases 70 tons of apples, pears and plums from farmers to produce juice and 10 tons of fruit to be sold on the market. NABU also organises the "Apple Day" and "Blossom Party" and attracts tourists to walk on old fruit routes in the area.

To appeal to the hearts of the general public, not only to their brains, NABU organised a photograph competition entitled "Sag mir wo die Blumen sind" (Where have all the flowers gone). People were invited to send pictures that show the beauty of blossoming fields of different plant species or the threats to their status. The competition was supported by the famous German singer Katja Ebstein.

Now

Consumers recognise old fruit varieties which remind them of their childhood. They have become supporters of traditional orchards which are hotspots of German biodiversity. The amount of traditional orchards in Münsterland has increased and the population of the Little Owl has expanded. Traditional orchards are now not only the link between sustainable agriculture, production of healthy food and rich habitats for wildlife, but are also attractive spaces for the local community. NABU's "Apple Day" and "Blossom Party" have become popular events, showing growing interest in protecting and promoting traditional orchards in Germany.

The photo competition received nearly 4,000 pictures taken by more than 1,000 people. The campaign gained extensive publicity and pictures have been displayed in many places across Germany.



www.NABU-muenster.de

Nagoya

Before

At local government level, there were various activities related to biodiversity conservation and the departments concerned were interconnected. However, essential interdepartmental coordination and cooperation was hindered by insufficient understanding of biodiversity.



Action

Nagoya joined Countdown 2010 and engaged the city in initiatives to strengthen cooperation among departments and enhance public awareness of biodiversity.

In March 2010, the city launched the “2050 Nagoya Strategy for Biodiversity”, an important document whose drafting started in 2008. This strategy will serve as a long-term policy for transforming Nagoya into a sustainable city which coexists in harmony with nature. It presents a vision for the year 2050 and four sub-strategies based on the conservation and restoration of nature, and lifestyle change.

Some activities at citizen level which follow the new strategy have been carried out. The project “Nagoya Living Things in Ponds and Reservoirs” aims to improve biodiversity by eliminating alien species, and to enhance citizens’ awareness through public outreach activities. Citizens are encouraged to help survey water quality and living organisms in ponds and reservoirs around the city and review methods for protecting and restoring biodiversity.

Now

Collaboration between the government and citizens is further strengthened through the implementation of specific measures to conserve and restore biodiversity. The training of dedicated personnel, and community building activities have been enhanced which has paved the way for more biodiversity-conscious lifestyles and increased biodiversity-related activities, such as the “Citizen Run Rice-Paddy Fields,” “Growing Rice in Buckets,” “Survey of Living Things in Ponds and Reservoirs,” and “Nagoya Citizen Project.”

At government level, initiatives to integrate biodiversity in city planning have started, such as “Creating Greenery through a Local Forestation System,” “Conservation of Green Space using an Urban Planning System,” “Green and Water Networks through the Creation of Green Corridors and Water Corridors”.



www.city.nagoya.jp/global/en

Natural England

Before

England has a very high diversity of habitats and species of European, and even worldwide importance. The country therefore has a special responsibility to ensure the conservation of this diversity. The beauty of English landscapes and wildlife inspire and enrich peoples' lives, and are an important part of England's national identity.

However England's biodiversity is constantly under threat and preserving it is a major challenge. The needs of the natural environment have to be balanced with those of agriculture, the need for development such as for housing and people's quality of life. An analysis of the issues posing a threat to English habitats and species has revealed that the key pressures and risks are habitat loss and degradation, environmental pollution, along with invasive native and non-native species. Natural England had to act to ensure increased action for England's biodiversity conservation.



Action

Natural England aims to safeguard biodiversity by protecting the best wildlife sites, promoting the recovery of declining species and habitats, embedding biodiversity into all policy and decision-making, enthusing people, developing the evidence base, and working with others to deliver the agency's goals.

To support this approach, and to help halt the loss of biodiversity in England, Natural England has launched the Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund in 2005. The scheme supports projects managed by voluntary conservation bodies that deliver gains for priority habitats and species in England.

All of the projects funded use volunteers who have provided many thousands of hours of their time to conserve the natural environment. Natural England's projects have also engaged with schools via outreach work and on-site events including sea-shore safaris. The projects are supporting a landscape-scale approach to conservation and are exemplars of partnership working across the sector.

Now

Since 2005 the Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund has resulted in increases in both range and population for priority species such as the Black Grouse, the Brown Carder Bumblebee, the Natterjack Toads, the White-clawed Crayfish, the Cirl Bunting, the Nobel Chafer Beetle and the Juniper. The scheme has also resulted in the restoration of priority habitats including heathland, grassland, woodland, lowland raised bog, ponds and traditionally managed orchards. In total, the fund has supported 70 projects with £9 million from Natural England and at least an equal amount from other non-government funding sources.



www.naturalengland.org.uk

Natureparif



Before

The French Government signed the Countdown 2010 Declaration in Barcelona at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2008. Many people in France were not aware of the goals and commitments of the Government. Local authorities were not aware of the potential action they could do in the field or even of the biodiversity crisis. Action at the regional level was required.



Action

Natureparif was the first agency which exclusively dealt with biodiversity conservation at the regional level to join Countdown 2010. The agency is part of the Ecoregion project launched by the Regional Council of Ile-de-France. It gathers local governments, nature associations, enterprises, researchers, the State and the Regional Council, and fosters dialogue between them in order to integrate biodiversity into public and private sectors.

The agency has established a regional biodiversity observatory, compiled all the existing information and expertise on the topic, and created tools to preserve biodiversity in the region. To raise awareness of Countdown 2010, Natureparif has organised two conferences and worked actively disseminating information on the state of biodiversity in the region and the need to save it. It has also launched the “French Capital of Biodiversity” competition which is part of the “European Capitals of Biodiversity” developed in cooperation with IUCN. The competition rewards European cities for innovation and excellence in preserving the wealth of nature.

Now

Natureparif involves 100 members in the Region of Ile-de-France and has gathered 1,900 studies on biodiversity at the regional level. The agency has engaged about 50 French municipalities in joining the Countdown 2010 network and committing to help halt the loss of biodiversity. For its efforts, Natureparif won the 2010 Activity Award at the Countdown 2010 Partners' Assembly in 2009.



www.natureparif.fr

NatureGate



Scarce Swallowtail (*glaucides podalirius*), a butterfly in Finland © NatureGate, Per-Olof Wickman

Before

Before the NatureGate® Online Service, the only way to learn how to identify species was through experts or self-study of field guides. People could find photos of species on the internet for instance, but how could they identify them?



Action

The NatureGate® R&D Group of the University of Helsinki created the NatureGate® Online Service, which can be used to identify species easily and rapidly, just by making observations of the specimen and clicking provided options accordingly. NatureGate® is designed to facilitate lifelong learning of sustainable use of biodiversity.

NatureGate® has taken about half a million excellent photos of species in their environment, written extensive texts, analysed observable critical characteristics of species and created and patented this unique identification tool (system and method). Through this system, citizens can identify species and learn about nature, while researchers can use the data to update distribution maps of individual species. NatureGate® is free, and currently enables the identification of the following species: wild flowers, trees and bushes, butterflies, birds and fishes. The NatureGate® R&D Group is working on expanding the Service to grasses, sedges, mushrooms, and beetles.

Now

Sharing the values and objectives of Countdown 2010, the NatureGate® Online Service has helped increase awareness of the importance of species identification and the sustainable use of biodiversity. More than 6.8 million people from 155 countries have used NatureGate®. In Finland, the Service has helped citizens and also school children and teachers to learn about new species and sustainability. NatureGate® will continue the adaptation of its Service to schools and regions in Scandinavia and in Europe: each class learns differently, with a selection of species and eco-systems tailored to their needs depending on their curriculum, geographical area and age group. The best schools will be rewarded yearly. NatureGate® expects that positive attitudes towards biodiversity will increase among school children and other citizens in the coming years.



www.naturegate.net

Natuurpunt

Before

Renewable energy production and nature conservation seemed to be clashing. In many places, production of biomass crops such as rapeseed and maize increased the pressure on the land. In other places windmills conflicted with nature protection, mainly because of badly organised spatial planning.



Action

Natuurpunt – the main nature conservation organisation in the Flanders Region – believes that green energy is necessary, and must go hand in hand with nature development. The organisation has been actively looking to create a partnership with a sustainable energy company. Several potential partners were contacted and many opportunities evaluated. Finally, Natuurpunt decided to work together with a local solar power company.

Together they developed information sessions on the impact of climate change on biodiversity, the need for an energy revolution and the potential role of solar energy. The NGO gave its members the opportunity to buy solar installations at a pre-negotiated price while the solar power company donates a considerable part of its profits to a nature fund.

Now

In just 1 year, Natuurpunt has organised more than 30 information sessions and over 650 solar installations have been sold, with a total power of 2.1 MW. The donation by the solar company has been used to buy endangered nature areas in Flanders. The main achievement was the acquisition of a 350 hectare plot of highly valuable heathland next to the existing nature area “Kalmthoutse heide”. The area is home to species like the Smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and the Moor Frog (*Rana arvalis*). Natuurpunt’s ambition is to extend its “Energy for biodiversity” project to partnerships with the wind energy and biomass sector.

natuurpunt 
natuur voor iedereen

www.natuurpunt.be

Noord-Brabant Province

Wild flowers sown along the sides of a farmland in Noord-Brabant to attract predator insects which prey on plague insects © Paul van de Sande

Before

The Dutch feel very close to nature as shown by 25% of the population being a member of an environmental NGO of which 60% are predominantly oriented towards nature conservation. Yet biodiversity was not considered a comprehensive policy sector by the Provincial authorities. Nature conservation policies focused on establishing the Ecological Main Structure (EHS) and purchasing the necessary land areas. The main challenge for the Province was to trigger the support of the general public to contribute towards behavioural changes for sustainability and the protection of the natural capital.



Action

The Noord-Brabant Province was the first region to join Countdown 2010. In December 2006, the Province established the “Brabant Taskforce Biodiversiteit en Countdown 2010” – a working group of public and private sector representatives. The Taskforce has been a major driving force in the Netherlands for promoting Countdown 2010.

The strategy of the Taskforce focuses on local and regional collaboration and public awareness. Municipalities and organisations from all sectors have united their forces for biodiversity. Municipalities have been encouraged to adopt species to secure public support for biodiversity action plans, as well as to link local authorities and schools with the work and knowledge of conservation organisations. The Dutch National Coalition on Biodiversity was constituted in 2009 and currently involves about 170 members.

Early 2007 the Province, in close cooperation with European Centre for Nature Conservation, the European Union Committee of the Regions, and Countdown 2010 organised the international conference “Regions as Champions for Biodiversity 2010” to further both European and regional agendas on biodiversity and sustainable development and to exchange information and good practices between European regions.

Now

The Province approach has been very successful in mobilising public attention, support and coalition building. A recent survey shows that threatened species in Noord-Brabant are now starting to do well. For the first time, the Provincial Council is effectively addressing biodiversity as a comprehensive policy issue, safeguarding it from recent cuts in public budgets. More than 120 organisations from all sectors have joined Countdown 2010 in Noord-Brabant and are actively working together to build networks, share information and best practices and implement concrete actions. Ambassador species have been adopted by the majority of Brabant’s municipalities resulting in a large number of projects to enhance biodiversity, especially in urban areas.

Farmers in Noord-Brabant understand the benefits, also economic, of conserving biodiversity based on their practical knowledge. Other sectors like public health, architecture, recreation and education are also getting closer to biodiversity.

Provincie Noord-Brabant



www.biodiversiteitbrabant.nl

PAN Parks Foundation

Oulanka National Park in Finland, one of the PAN Parks representing the best of Europe's wilderness © PAN Parks

Before

European wilderness – supporting natural ecosystem dynamics and biodiversity – survives in forests, along rivers, in high mountains and under the sea. Compact, unfragmented and well-managed wilderness areas are very scarce in Europe.

Wilderness protection – an essential tool for biodiversity protection – was not considered a priority by the public, politicians and even some conservationists. Europe was constantly losing its wilderness heritage.



Action

PAN (Protected Area Network) Parks – an independent foundation aiming to create a European network of wilderness protected areas to improve nature protection through sustainable tourism development – organised a trip for decision makers to Majella National Park, Italy. The aim of the trip was to experience wilderness and to build support for wilderness areas that contribute to biodiversity protection. Inspired by the trip a Member of the European Parliament developed a special report on wilderness in Europe. The report was adopted by the European Parliament on 3 February 2009 with 538 members voting for and only 19 against.

As a member of the Wild Europe Initiative, the PAN Parks Foundation also took an active part in organising the “Conference on Wilderness and Large Natural Habitat Areas” which brought together 250 conservation professionals and policy makers from 40 countries to discuss challenges and opportunities, and to describe the way forward for European wilderness.

Now

For the first time the topic of wilderness is now a part of the European Union’s political agenda, also thanks to the adoption of a special report on European wilderness by the European Parliament. The document will play an important role in increasing the effective implementation of already existing EU nature conservation laws.

European wilderness has also been positioned on the global agenda. The progress made on wilderness in Europe was presented in November 2009 at the 9th World Wilderness Congress in Mexico, which featured a whole plenary session dedicated to European wilderness issues.



www.panparks.org

Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces

Before

Environmental policies across Spain were not coordinated. The few Spanish municipalities and provinces that acted for the protection and recovery of natural areas were not linked to each other.



Action

The Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) launched a unique initiative called “The Local Government + Biodiversity 2010 Network” to promote habitat protection and improvement among local authorities and facilitate the interaction between local people and institutions.

The network’s main goal has been the funding of biodiversity projects in coordination with the Spanish Ministry of the Environment. 19 local projects for the increase of biodiversity are being carried out in 2010 and 28 are scheduled for 2011. In addition, the network promotes citizen participation through actions such as schoolchildren contests, a Voluntary Groups Programme and public communication activities. The aim of the activities is to encourage the engagement of citizens through their local administrators and raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation.

The “Local Strategy and Indicator System for Conservation and Augmentation of Biodiversity” and “The Best Practices Catalogue” have been developed to share knowledge across the network and ensure coordination.

Now

“The Local Government + Biodiversity 2010 Network” currently involves more than 220 municipalities representing more than 21 million people in Spain. Together, these municipalities have developed actions with a great impact on the population, and above all, have reached a turning point in local policies for biodiversity. The Spanish network is not only a unique network of local authorities in Europe committed to biodiversity conservation, but also an excellent example of coordination of environmental policies across one country.



www.femp.es

University of California Natural Reserve System

Scientists from several U.S. government agencies reintroduce mountain yellow-legged frog at the University of California NRS's James Reserve in southern California. © Becca Fenwick

Before

Conservation International, a large conservation organisation based in the USA, has identified the California Floristic Province as a global biodiversity hotspot where endemic species are heavily threatened. Such biodiversity required reinforced conservation action in the Natural Reserve System of the University of California.



United States of America

Action

The University of California Natural Reserve System (NRS) is the largest university-managed reserve system in the world with 36 reserves protecting more than 135,000 acres across the state for research, teaching, and public service. As such, the University is perfectly positioned to play a leadership role in increasing awareness of, and galvanising responses to, the global and regional biodiversity crises.

In 2010, the NRS renewed its commitment to biodiversity issues by providing refuges for endangered and threatened species. It also supported research and stewardship projects that document and protect the state's biodiversity and hosted University courses and educational programmes focused on biodiversity. The NRS incorporated biodiversity themes into its publications and initiated a seed bank facility to protect endemic plants in collaboration with England's Royal Botanic Gardens.

Now

NRS reserves have provided protected habitats for the California Condor, American Peregrine Falcon, Stephens' Kangaroo Rat, Desert Tortoise, and other endangered endemic species. Scientists working at NRS reserves have identified new insect species, rediscovered a species (the Wolverine) formerly believed to be extinct within that range, and reintroduced endangered Mountain Yellow-Legged Frogs to their former habitat.

The educational programmes of "Exploring California Biodiversity" and "Adventure, Risk, Challenge" have introduced hundreds of youngsters to biodiversity issues. The University faculty has focused on biodiversity in courses for thousands of undergraduates. The NRS publications are reaching people across the nation with their biodiversity stories.



<http://nrs.ucop.edu>

WWF Italy

Before

At the end of the 90's, even though considerable efforts were already being made in Italy to fight biodiversity decline, including with the creation of public and private protected areas, the crisis persisted and was getting worse. A constant process of transformation in the use of land, pollution, unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, and diffusion of alien species was underway. It was necessary to adopt a new approach to conservation and to develop more synergic intervention strategies, focused on definite and priority targets. WWF Italy started then to look with growing interest at conservations plans based on wider spatial and temporal scales than in the past. But this new strategy called for a multi-level synergy never experienced before, since intervention planning at national and supranational level had to result in action at local level.



Action

Since economic resources and opportunities of intervention for biodiversity were limited, WWF Italy launched an ambitious project on strategic planning on an eco-regional scale in 2004. The main points of this strategy included the adoption of a proactive approach instead of one based only on the conservation of the last natural areas. This envisaged a brave vision for the future: the greatest possible participation of all conservation actors belonging to the two homogeneous areas of the Central Mediterranean Eco-region and the Alps Eco-region; and the development of ambitious yet realistic conservation goals on a eco-regional scale to achieve the cooperation of all actors at national and supranational level.

Now

Biodiversity visions for the Alpine arch (Alps Eco-region) and for peninsular Italy (Central Mediterranean Eco-region) have set the basis for a more general process of decision sharing on the subject of nature conservation where a considerable number of partners are involved. This has also led to the finalisation of a memorandum of understanding between WWF Italy and the Italian Ministry of Environment for effective cooperation in the urgent definition of a National Strategy for Biodiversity in 2010. The eco-regional approach, which works through action plans at different levels, allowed in 2008 to bring together the central government and the Tuscany Region. These two have set up – with the technical and organisational support of WWF Italy – a pilot project for the definition of a “Regional Plan for Biodiversity” according to the draft National Strategy.



www.wwf.it

What happens after 2010?

The experience of Countdown 2010 has shown that there is a need for such initiatives. The number of organizations, local authorities, businesses and others who joined the network from all over the world has steadily grown over the years. Countdown 2010 partners have joined not only to share and promote their experiences, but also to become part of an international movement for biodiversity.

Although the initiative comes to an end in 2010, the biodiversity clock does not stop. Building on the success of the initiative, IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature – which hosts the Countdown 2010 Secretariat – will launch a new initiative for 2011 and beyond.

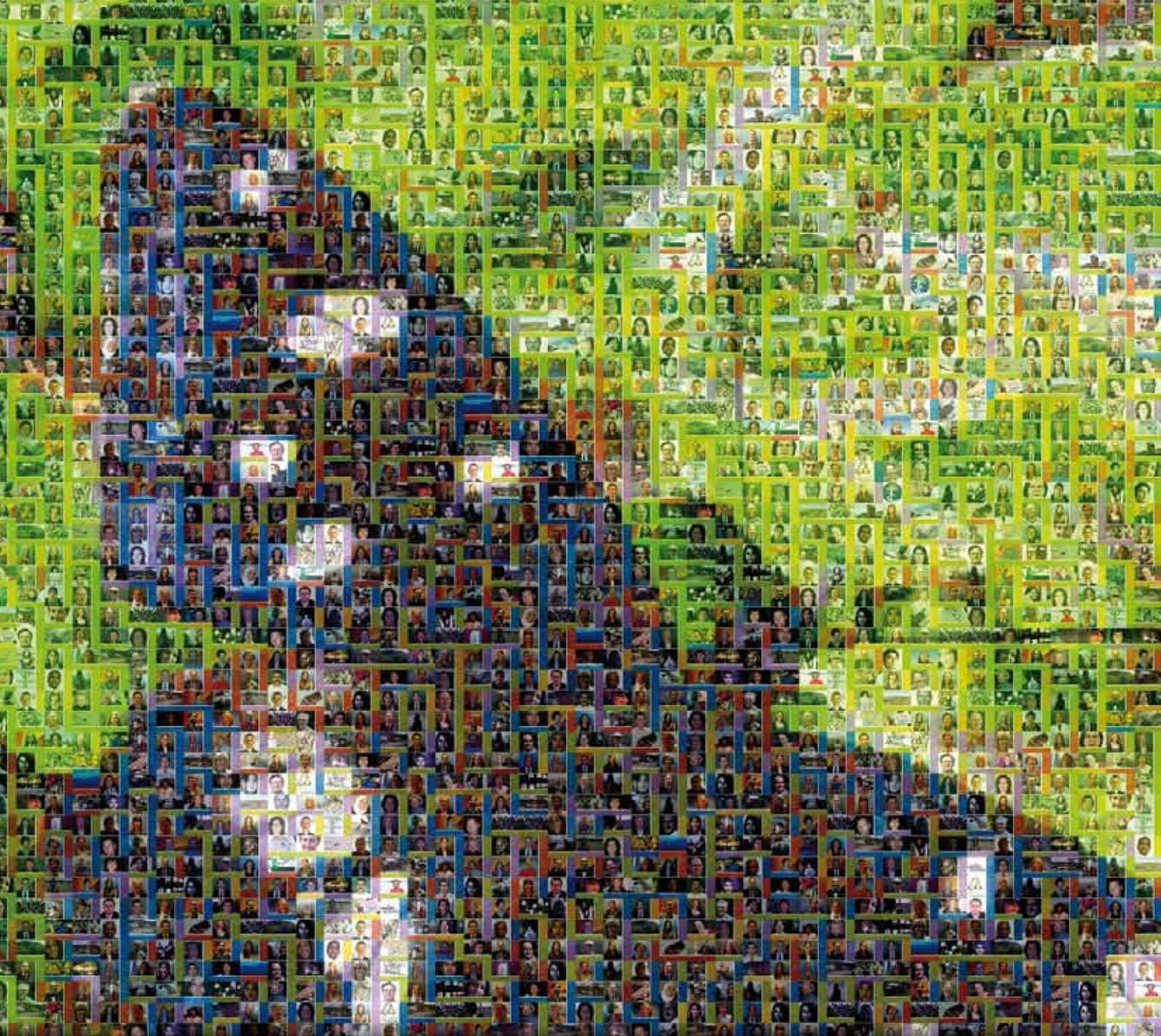
The new Countdown initiative will continue raising awareness of biodiversity among its partners and the wider world – in particular the sectors and areas of our societies that are traditionally not linked to biodiversity. The network will also reach out to the general public – the voters and consumers who ultimately drive change and hold governments and business accountable to their commitments and actions. The initiative will actively support its partners in the implementation of biodiversity targets and best practice to better protect and invest in biodiversity.

The new Countdown initiative will bring together thousands of partners from all parts of society, and from all over the world. In other words...

a bigger and stronger biodiversity movement!

20/10@20.10

Countdown 2010 will close, and the new initiative will be launched, in Nagoya, Japan, at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity summit. The official Countdown 2010 closing ceremony will take place on 20 October at 20:10 in the presence of partners and supporters, as well as senior representatives from IUCN, the CBD Secretariat and other biodiversity organizations.



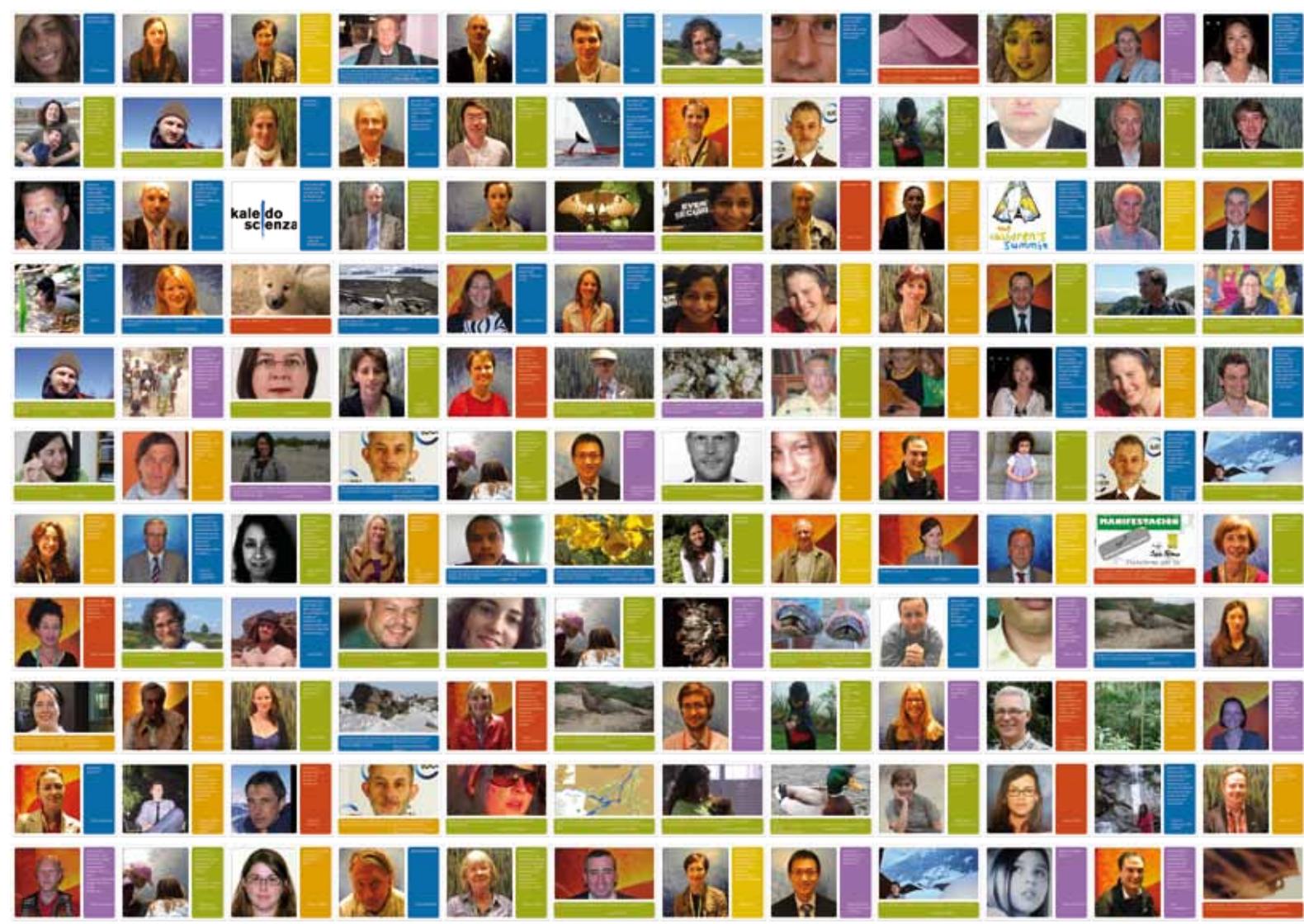
Biodiversity needs all of us

The Countdown 2010 Secretariat has gathered hundreds of biodiversity messages from people all over the world during 2010 – the International Year of Biodiversity. All the cards were put together in large photo mosaics which will be displayed at the 10th Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.

Biodiversity needs all of us and we all need biodiversity. People were asked to write their personal message on what biodiversity means to them and how to save it. Cards were collected from partners, participants at the European Commission's Green Week 2010, and the website.

Find your own message or read what other people, your friends and colleagues have said at www.countdown2010.net/mosaic.





Countdown 2010 Secretariat
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
European Union Representative Office

64, Boulevard Louis Schmidt
1040 Brussels
Belgium



Countdown 2010 is a unique time-bound initiative by IUCN. Nearly 1,100 partners including governments, NGOs, international institutions and agencies, companies and local authorities have committed to taking direct action to save biodiversity by 2010. www.countdown2010.net



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