

# Plain Language Statement

School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, Faculty of Science



## ***Project: Urban biodiversity and ecosystem indicators for local and global reporting***

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## **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project to decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you do not understand or want to know more about this study.

Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

## **What is this research about?**

This project is looking at which biodiversity and ecosystem indicators can be applied within urban areas around the world to inform city actions and enable reporting to global frameworks. In particular, we would like to understand some of the challenges, limitations, and positive aspects of indicators from the perspective of policymakers who have been working to apply them in practice. Once we have a better understanding of their experiences with different indicators, we will use this information to develop a shortlist of indicators that will be evaluated against criteria from practitioners and scientific evidence. The end objective is to identify a set of urban biodiversity and ecosystem indicators that account for existing limitations and current and future needs of policymakers whilst also providing robust information about the biodiversity and ecosystem services for cities around the world.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will be invited to share your experience working with biodiversity indicators in the urban context by completing an online survey. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. In the survey, you will be asked to share your experience and provide feedback on the challenges and limitations of urban biodiversity indicators and their potential to connect with national and global reporting frameworks.

The responses will help us identify a subset of indicators and criteria that we will use to quantitatively evaluate the applicability of indicators across cities of different sizes, geographic and climatic contexts, and resources availability related to national income levels. At the end of the project, you will be invited to a final workshop to learn about the outcomes of this analysis then provide your feedback.

### **What are the possible benefits?**

The study will contribute to researchers' and practitioners' skills and capacities for urban biodiversity monitoring and conservation by developing indicators that meet current and future biodiversity monitoring and multiscale reporting. Beyond the urban context, the study will help national and global biodiversity experts to reflect on how cities can address local and global biodiversity challenges, specifically urban areas when designing or proposing biodiversity indicators in different frameworks.

### **What are the possible risks?**

There are minimal risks to participating in this project other than the inconvenience of taking up some of your time. The project is focused on the challenges and limitations of urban biodiversity indicators and linkage to national and global reporting frameworks. Your responses will remain anonymous, and they will be de-identified in the research and referred to only with unique identifier codes. Your identity will not be included in any further synthesis. If you provide very specific details that are unique to your circumstances it may be possible for your identity to be guessed at by others who may be aware of the same details. However, we will endeavour to generalise any material of this nature to minimize the likelihood that it can be traced back to you.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. participation is completely voluntary. You are able to withdraw at any time. Any information you provided that has not yet been synthesised will be deleted.

### **Will I hear about the results of this project?**

Yes, the results from this study will be shared with all participants via an email list. You can sign up to the list at <https://girg.science.unimelb.edu.au/evariste-rutebuka/>. You will also be invited to attend the final workshop where we present the results of our analysis of potential indicators.

### **What will happen to information about me?**

Data collection for this research will solely be used for this study objectives. Digital data will be stored for five years after the last publication arising from this research. Responses will be held in password-protected locations within the Responsible Researcher's university-based computer system.

### **Is there any potential conflict of interest?**

No

### **Who is funding this project?**

Evariste Rutebuka is the recipient of a University of Melbourne Graduate Research Scholarship and Betty Elliot Horticulture Scholarship.

### **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers; directly to Evariste RUTEBUKA (PhD student) at email: [erutebuka@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:erutebuka@student.unimelb.edu.au) or to Dr. Amy Hahs (Responsible Researcher) at email: [amy.hahs@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:amy.hahs@unimelb.edu.au)

### **Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?**

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne Ethics Project 21745. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 8344 1376 or email: [research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au). All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence, please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.