

# ALTERNATIVE PLANNING APPROACHES

*for cities in Sub-Saharan Africa*



URBAN NATURAL  
ASSETS FOR  
AFRICA







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# SwedBio

A programme at Stockholm Resilience Centre

**Stockholm Resilience Centre**  
Sustainability Science for Biosphere Stewardship



**Stockholm  
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# INTRODUCTION

In Sub-Saharan Africa, cities, towns and villages are growing at unprecedented rates, leading to large parts of most cities being unplanned, in some cases up to 80%. African cities face unique challenges and require context specific planning to deliver services, support local economic development and improve quality of life.

Current methods of city planning in Africa relies on two key assumptions:

- Planners have control over growth and development, and
- The land being planned has no existing development.

**These planning approaches therefore do not provide the tools needed for fast growing cities, where planners have little control, and for unplanned areas already developed by communities and the private sector. The realities that city planners face in Sub-Saharan Africa mean that new ways of planning are needed.**

The characteristics of an African city planner are now to:

- Do more with less.
- Be adaptive and flexible.
- Be responsive to local context, global trends, and the needs of communities.
- Keep up with or plan for growth appropriately.
- Work with others, including communities, civil society, private sector, to plan and implement interventions and projects for service delivery.
- Think across different sectors and look for multiple benefits.
- Learn and improve processes and interventions over time.

This is not an easy task and often requires city planners to adopt approaches that are different to those they might have been learnt at university and been practicing for years. This booklet introduces a selection of alternative planning approaches that may be helpful to employ in your city, town or village.





# SCENARIO PLANNING

**Scenario planning is a structured way for cities to think about and visualise how different plausible futures of the city might unfold and how the city will change overtime in light of those futures. The various future scenarios depicted can help cities evaluate how well existing plans are in meeting city needs and the likely result from implementing these plans.**

## Value of this approach

- To uncover better information about future conditions (through the development of various possible scenarios) in order to help cities and regions make better decisions.
- Assists in identifying needs or issues and exploring options for refining plans.

## How is it implemented - Key steps

If undertaking scenario planning for the first time, it may be valuable to consider working with an experienced facilitator. The following key steps broadly outline the process of scenario planning:

- **A group of relevant stakeholders is identified and brought together in a workshop or series of workshops. Questions to think about include:**
  - ⇒ What is the relationship between stakeholders involved - all in the same organisation, one primary lead organisation, no clear leading organisation - impacts on how decisions are made and conflicts are resolved?
  - ⇒ How will stakeholders be engaged?
  - ⇒ To what extent will stakeholders be engaged?
- **Define the scope of the scenario planning:**
  - ⇒ What is the geographic boundary?: it refers to the area in which the planning is taking place, this can be a part of a town, the local government area, or larger.
  - ⇒ Is there a single issue you want to explore, like biodiversity; or a problem you want to solve, like flooding; or are you looking for a comprehensive view, where flooding is considered alongside food security, housing, biodiversity and land use changes?
  - ⇒ What do you want from the scenario planning: setting of aspirational targets, such as % of green spaces; predicting the most likely future based on data and trends; determining what could happen based on different uncertainties, 'if [only] this happens, then it may result it'.
- **Data Collection - the information (baseline and trends) that will be used to develop the scenarios:**
  - ⇒ Type of data: Qualitative and/or Quantitative; spatial, statistical, written, visual.
  - ⇒ Is the data available or will you need to collect it before starting the scenario planning process.

- **Host scenario-planning workshop/s:**

- ⇒ Invite relevant stakeholders.
- ⇒ Define the scope to all participants.
- ⇒ Facilitate discussion on data, current trends, emerging trends, and likelihood of impacts.
- ⇒ Using techniques such as storytelling, group discussions, drawing exercises, etc. to consider a future where the current trends continue = Scenario 1. Then consider a future where emerging trends, uncertainties, or desired targets impact on the city. This may result in one scenario or multiple scenarios.

## Outcomes of planning method

Scenario planning can result in a range of outcomes. It is important to identify which outcome is preferred, as it will influence the process of scenario planning:

- **Awareness:** to develop and exchange knowledge about an issue or set of issues
- **A vision:** identify shared goals or a future state
- **Policy recommendation:** when scenarios are based on the future outcome of present day decisions or the scenario developed has policy implications

## Planning outputs

A number of visions of different plausible futures, preferably acknowledging positive, neutral and negative views of urban development trajectories.

The outputs can be visual, including a map, a diagram, a drawing, a graph, a collage of images, and/or a written narrative.

## Watch out for

- Not enough thought given to the range and types of uncertainties faced.
- Being overly concerned with selecting a single scenario as the preferred future.
- Limited or ineffective public engagement throughout the process.
- Focusing too much on the future and not the emerging conditions this approach supports.

## When should it be used

- Best used after analysis phase and before developing a strategy and implementation plan.
- When planners want to understand what the future implications may be of current and emerging trends or present-day decision-making.
- When there are a range of uncertainties about the future and the associated impacts that affect your current decision-making.

## Key principles

- Future-orientated
- Inclusionary
- Creative
- Open-minded

## For more information

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# URBAN TINKERING

**Urban Tinkering – adjusting and moulding of existing landscapes through small scale “urban experiments” that can result in dramatic shifts in the way the landscape works as a system – provides innovative solutions to the problems of sustainable development, particularly in the context of rapidly changing conditions.**

**Urban Tinkering can be more formally defined as “A mode of operation, encompassing policy, planning and management processes, that seeks to transform the use of existing and design of new urban systems in ways that diversify their functions, anticipate new uses and enhance adaptability, to better meet the social, economic and ecological needs of cities under conditions of deep uncertainty about the future.”**

**This approach can both guide the design of new, and redesign of existing, urban structures, as well as promote innovative integration of grey, green and blue infrastructure.**

## Value of this approach

- **Innovation:** Prioritises small-scale implementation and experiments that can lead to large-scale innovative solutions.
- **Learning:** Allows for the incorporation of new information as the project develops.
- **Scalable:** Urban tinkering can be applied to large (transport network) and small (a dwelling) systems.
- **Multi-functional and inter-disciplinary:** Seeks out solutions that bring together the social, economic and ecological dimensions of urban life, through providing a range of benefits.

## How is it implemented - Key steps

- Urban tinkering is a flexible approach for city planning and management - a way of thinking, rather than a process to be followed - that can apply at any time to municipal decision-making. There are a few guiding questions, which can assist:
- Are there any existing elements in the system (features of ecosystems, such as rivers or wetlands, physical structures in a township, socio-economic processes in a market) that can be utilised in innovative ways or be strengthened through additional support?
- What already exists and can it be repurposed to support your desired outcomes?
- Before committing to a large-scale intervention or big change, can we experiment with a smaller scale implementation of the intervention to see if it works and whether it achieves our desired outcomes.

- Can a single intervention be leveraged to have more than one outcome or benefit - consider social, economic, ecological, and financial benefits?
- Do you know where change is occurring fast in your municipality? Can you identify opportunities to positively shape this rapid change by guiding it towards what you would like to see, rather than aiming to control it?
- Can you harness existing energy or momentum to further your outcomes or intervention?
- Can you capture the learnings from implementing small-scale interventions and reflect on these to improve the next intervention or larger scale interventions.

### Watch out for

- Learning-by-doing and continually adjusting implementation processes is not a replacement for planning and foresight.
- Experimenting and testing with urban interventions in a real world, complex context requires a greater rigour and monitoring process.
- The impact of an intervention may be evident quite quickly, or may take years.
- Acknowledge the presence of different agendas and the need for trade-offs when determining solutions.

### When should it be used

Making small changes over time when urban change is taking place at a fast rate, uncertain about the future and have budgetary constraints - sprawling unplanned settlements.

### Key principles

- Experimental
- Small-scale interventions
- Iterative
- Learn-by-doing
- Multi-functionality
- Flexibility
- Curiosity

- Playfulness
- Multi-disciplinary
- Diversity - playful experimentation
- Repurposing
- Sense of place - localization
- Adaptive
- Modularity
- Coordination

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### Good examples to look at

Langrug Informal Settlement Service Delivery, Stellenbosch Municipality, South Africa. [Online]. Available: <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/110green/files/documents/WASE-January-2015-p6-13.pdf>

Emthonjeni Outreach Programme, Sikhlua Sonke, Khayelitsha, Cape Town - Early childhood development held at communal taps in an unplanned settlement. [Online]. Available: <https://children.pan.org.za/node/9937>

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# MASSIVE SMALL

**The Massive Small approach focuses on getting right the enabling conditions for sustainable urban development. This requires both bottom-up and top-down processes, with the purpose of allowing communities and people to shape their environments according to their needs, with appropriate government support.**

## **Value of this approach**

This approach sees the value of both top-down structures and bottom-up initiatives and brings them together to get the best of both.

## **How is it implemented - Key steps**

Massive Small is a way of thinking, rather than a process methodology that can be applied to planning, implementation and operations at any stage.

With the understanding that the city is a complex system, it is necessary to put in place the simple structures or 'the rules of the game' that allow this complexity, and the creativity it uproots, to thrive.

The Massive Small approach aims to understand the key physical attributes and processes that support a city, the invisible chassis, which can also be considered as the skeleton of the city - and to support these. Massive Small holds that this is the enabling environment needed to allow other urban stakeholders to participate and make the city in to what they need it to be - to add the meat to the bones. This is similar to strategic urban planning.

## **Outcomes of planning method**

Doing more with less.

## **Watch out for**

- Context modifies interventions, rather than constrains them
- Unpredictability is an opportunity, not a threat.

## **When should it be used**

Design principles for green field sites or the support and improvement of existing settlements.

## Key principles

- Embrace complexity
- Open Standards – incrementalism
- Collaborative
- Responsive
- Have simple rules

## For more information

Massive Small Collection. 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://www.massivesmall.org/>

## References

Massive Small Collection. 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://www.massivesmall.org/>

## Good examples to look at

Arch daily. 2008. Quinta Monroy Housing Project, Argentina. [Online]. Available: <https://www.archdaily.com/10775/quinta-monroy-elemental>

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# RE-BLOCKING

**Re-blocking, also referred to as “blocking out” , is a community-led process of redesigning the current layout of very dense informal settlements by grouping shacks into clusters and reorganising the ground plan in such a manner as to optimally utilise space to promote the health, safety, well-being of households, with a particular focus on promoting accelerated service delivery to informal settlements. (City of Cape Town Policy, 2013). The aim is to make better use of the space in unplanned settlements to allow for better service provision.**

**Re-blocking is done in clusters identified by the community, and after implementation, various spaces are created to ensure a safer environment for woman and children via neighborhood watches (all shacks face the courtyard), productive places (such as washing lines, food gardens), and generally provides space for local government to install better services. The process of negotiating floor sizes, reconstruction informal dwellings and creating a community-based plan is essential in building a stronger social cohesion and solidarity. Re-blocking is a good alternative to relocation when aiming to improve living conditions in ‘well located’ informal settlements, such as providing road access for emergency vehicles and ensuring the effective delivery of essential services.**

## **How is it implemented - Key steps**

- Identify a settlement to be re-blocked
- Partner with community organisations to facilitate re-blocking
- Form a project steering committee with both community and government represented and formulate sub-committee groups ie. Data collection team in the community, design team etc.
- Undertake an study and profile all households in the area to be reblocked (this can be done by community): It is important to understand the context of the settlement i.e. Collect data that will inform the basis of your intervention, including details of household size and level of service, identity documents of all residents, existing spatial layout and activities.

## **Value of this approach**

- Works with the affected community as an integral part of the process.
- Helps to designate and maximize space in unplanned settlements for services, infrastructure (green or grey) and communal/shared open areas.
- Re-blocking also increases social cohesion whereby the scarce spaces in informal settlements are consolidated and productivity is maximized for communal purposes (safety and security, daily domestic chores) and delivering better services.

- Planning for relocking: Develop a community-based plan by hosting design workshops with the community (use models to demonstrate the plan)
- Implement the re-blocking plan: identify who does what
- Raise awareness and educate community on safety and environmental health
- Maintenance and operation: identify relevant community structures to be responsible to limit encroachment on new roads and open spaces
- Tenure: determine the appropriate tenure arrangements for the community, individual or community ownership or lease

### Outcomes of planning method

The aim of re-blocking is to make better use of the spaces in unplanned settlements, to permit an improved level of service provision. Due to the high level of community involvement in the re-blocking process, there are clusters of households identified that allow for a range of safe and serviced spaces to be created, such as for washing areas, water collection, sanitation, and play areas for children.

### Planning outputs

A community-based plan

### Watch out for

- The high level of community involvement in this process is key, which requires a longer period of engagement and possible implementation than business-as-usual approaches.
- Perhaps a central characteristic of this approach is that it stipulates that the responses may or may not form part of a long-term upgrade, the responses provided need to be informed by an understanding of the specific needs and conditions within each unplanned settlement, and would vary from one settlement to another.
- Due to the socio-cultural complexity of re-blocking, it can be valuable to make use of an intermediary organisation that is trusted by both the local government and the community. The intermediary organisation can help to mediate conflicts and keep the momentum going on what can be a long process. Intermediary organisations also often have the skills needed for participatory and interdisciplinary processes.
- It can be a challenge to engineers and architects because they cannot not apply standard design principles due to limited space therefore they have to take the settlements character into consideration and make it a better livable place for the residents.
- Furthermore, there needs to be an effective and transparent communication between local government and the residents of unplanned settlements so that the constraints and plans relating to their settlement, as well as the (realistic) timeframes for implementation, are understood.

### When should it be used

When there is an unplanned area in a city that requires services, such as water, sanitation, waste removal and electricity access, along with improved health conditions, reduced risk by relocating to areas outside of risk zones, and access to emergency services.

## Key principles

- Inclusive
- Work with existing
- Collaboration
- Community-based

## For more information

SDI South African Alliance. 2018. *Social and Physical Impact of Re-blocking: California Informal Settlement, Mfuleni (Cape Town)*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.sasdialliance.org.za/tag/re-blocking/>

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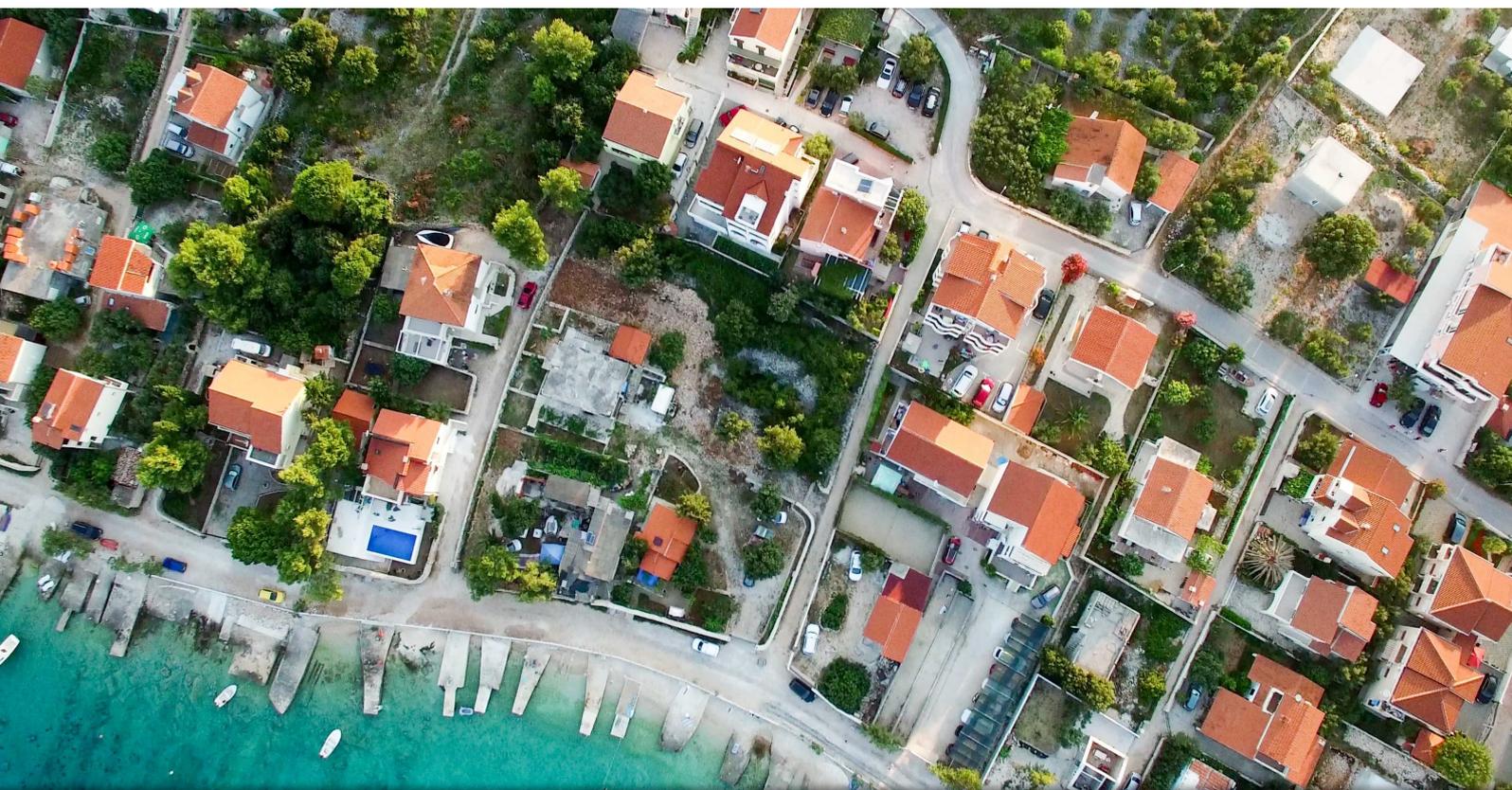
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# AREA-BASED UPGRADING

**Area-based planning is a process of community-based planning where an existing (mostly unplanned) settlement is redesigned and/or upgraded through a range of interventions. These interventions are identified and implemented in partnership with the community. Area-based planning is highly contextual and deals with issues specific to one area. This can also mean that many communities are involved, if the all share the same area and have similar issues to be addressed.**

## **Value of this approach**

- Often this planning approach is started by the community in response to an issue or need they have identified, leading to greater ownership of the planning process and associated implementation.
- This bottom-up process allows for local knowledge and innovations to be incorporated.

## **How is it implemented - Key steps**

- Community identifies a common challenge
- Stakeholder mapping and engagement across the community
- Establish a steering committee of community leaders and/or elected members
- Bring together stakeholders to share concerns and ideas, and come to an agreement about what is needed
- Co-develop a plan to address the challenge and any needs that have arisen
- Develop an implementation strategy that includes all stakeholders and outlines their roles and responsibilities
- Make use of resources in the community and/or beyond it (government, private sector) to implement the plan (use Memorandums of Understanding with implementing partners)

## **Outcomes of planning method**

- To reduce the risk of unplanned settlements, whether flooding or fire and improve emergency services access, improve safety and security of residents, and activate and mobilise community participation.
- Improve knowledge of roles and responsibilities of communities and municipality.
- Introduces and integrates the community with environmental features, which can be cleaned and turned into beneficial features, such as wetlands, that are previously used for dumping waste by residents can be turned into an urban park.
- It encourages inter departmental integration across different sectors .

## Planning outputs

A community developed plan of action for upgrading an area

### Watch out for

- Collaboration is key to success, especially between communities and municipalities. A partnership collaboration plan must be developed.
- A maintenance plan must be adopted well in advance
- Since this approach may include multiple communities, communication is very important among community leaders and residents is very important
- The plan must tackle multiple challenges in the settlement to take advantage of resources of the multiple stakeholders involved

### When should it be used

When there is a common challenge and /or opportunity, such as a wetland, crime, etc, to a specific settlement, especially where there are multiple stakeholders with a range of perspectives involved.

### Key principles

- Community-initiated and led
- Addresses local and specific needs
- Partnership
- Collaboration

### For more information

Western Cape Government. 2016. *Towards Incremental Informal Settlement upgrading: supporting municipalities in identifying contextually appropriate options*. [Online]. Available: [https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/human-settlements/docs/issp/western cape issp design and tenure options 2016.pdf](https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/human-settlements/docs/issp/western%20cape%20issp%20design%20and%20tenure%20options%202016.pdf)

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### Good examples to look at

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# GREENCLIMATECITIES

**“The GreenClimateCities (GCC) program provides a comprehensive process methodology and framework to guide and support local governments in defining, adopting and embedding a climate resilient development pathway - helping to bring together people, policy, finance and technology to shape the transition. The aim of the program is to guide the integration of this pathway into existing urban development policies, municipal strategies, plans and processes, and to develop new elements should these be necessary.” (ICLEI, 2016)**

## Value of this approach

- The GCC approach is a non-linear approach, meaning activities can run concurrently.
- Acknowledges the critical importance of stakeholder commitment, mobilisation and capacity building to the success of implementation - both within and outside the local government.
- Provides an integrated approach for climate resilience that builds on existing sub-national planning processes.

## How is it implemented - Key steps

The GCC process methodology is essentially a management system process. Concisely, it follows three logical Phases:

- “Analyze” (commit, explore where you are, assess what impacts on you);
- “Act” (plan, implement, monitor and report), and
- “Accelerate” (show your successes, optimize the approach and scale up).

ICLEI Africa is available to provide the technical support to work through this methodology with local governments throughout Africa.

## Outcomes of planning method

- Applying a “climate” or “low emission development” lens to all municipal activities and initiatives establishing broad stakeholder buy-in.
- Achieving early tangible benefits through pilot projects and collecting “low-hanging fruit”, as well as a focus on moving to implementation through identifying appropriate financial models developing a robust, politically-neutral approach that addresses a global challenge<sup>2</sup> (acting in partnership)
- Framing and connecting local efforts to the follow-up of the Paris Agreement and national commitments (Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (ICLEI, 2016).

## Planning outputs

- Track impacts and benefits of local climate action: on the economy, environment, society, etc, as affirmation that the pathway is correct or signaling a need for correction.
- Improved evidence-base for decision-making: developing local greenhouse gas emissions inventories and risk and vulnerability profiles
- Identify good practice: Determine where specific successes are achieved (pinpoint the value i.e. the “benefits”) and explore replication in other areas.
- Increase transparency and showcase climate action leadership globally: carbonn Climate Registry

## Watch out for

The success factors of such an approach: it should be locally driven, cross-sectoral, evidence-based and should follow an inclusive approach.

## When should it be used

When a local government wants to take action on the impact of climate change, for mitigation and adaptation, and embed this in existing municipal planning processes to strengthen them.

## Key principles

- Understand and build on the existing municipal planning processes
- Take integrated action
- Driven locally through multi-stakeholder processes.

## For more information

ICLEI Global. 2016. *GreenClimateCities(GCC) program*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDHfrbxXr5A>

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