

# THE VALUE OF URBAN NATURAL ASSETS WHEN PLANNING FOR RESILIENT AFRICAN CITIES: CONSIDERATIONS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

*Profiling key lessons learnt through ICLEI's Urban Natural Assets for Africa (UNA) programme*



## URBAN NATURAL ASSETS FOR AFRICA HANDBOOK SERIES

### HANDBOOK 11

#### Multi-level engagement:

*Improving national and local working relationships through dialogues in Uganda*



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS HANDBOOK

- Coordinated action across all levels of government (local, regional and national) is essential to effectively promote sustainable development in African cities.
- ICLEI Africa makes use of multiple techniques to foster and improve multi-level governance, which enhances the up- and out-scaling potential of projects and boosts the sustainability of interventions. One way that we achieve this is by establishing platforms for discussion between national and local levels of government.
- National-local dialogues, which are currently underway in Uganda and all other UNA cities, give stakeholders at all levels the chance to discuss their progress, share their successes and identify challenges and opportunities. By creating a space for collaboration and coordination, such discussions allow for the mobilisation of resources and the synchronisation and acceleration of nature-related work.

## WHO SHOULD CONSULT THIS HANDBOOK?



City officials (planning, environment, engineers, developers and related disciplines)



City officials (economists, finance and procurement departments)



National government officials (planning, environment, engineers, developers, economists, and finance and procurement disciplines)

### The relevance and significance of this handbook series

The ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center (CBC), a global centre hosted by ICLEI Africa, developed this handbook series to showcase key considerations for integrating urban natural assets into city planning in sub-Saharan Africa. All lessons profiled were gathered through the implementation of the UNA programme.

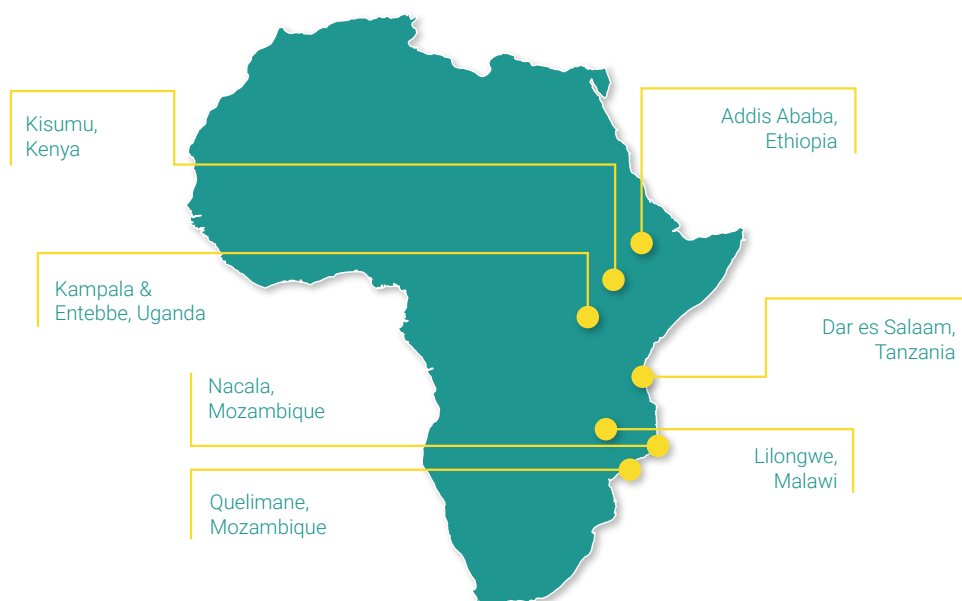
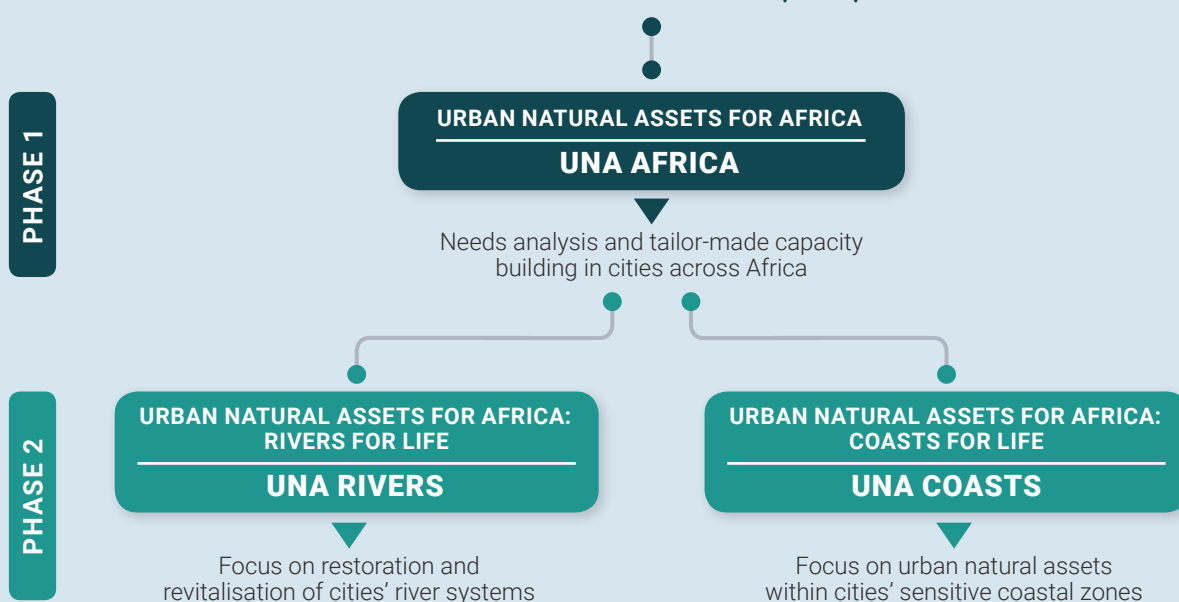
By sharing approaches that have been successfully tailored to African cities, these handbooks seek to support the development of future urban sustainability projects that are both more effective and better suited to the local context. Learnings also shed light on how ICLEI Africa is working with local authorities to ensure alignment with international policies and agendas (like the Paris Agreement). It's imperative that we share Africa's insights and lessons now so these can feed into discussions as the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) work on developing a new post-2020 global biodiversity strategy.

# THE UNA PROGRAMME AND FLAGSHIP PROJECTS



Initiated in 2014, the UNA programme is designed to assist local governments in Africa build climate resilience through addressing the daily challenges they experience around protecting and revitalising their urban natural assets. To date, three flagship projects have been developed under the UNA umbrella. All broadly aim to integrate nature-based solutions into land-use planning for increased climate resilience and enhanced human well-being.

## URBAN NATURAL ASSETS FOR AFRICA (UNA) PROGRAMME



**All projects are funded by** the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University.

# MULTI-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT:

## IMPROVING NATIONAL AND LOCAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH DIALOGUES IN UGANDA



City officials cannot act alone to effectively protect and revive urban natural assets and ecosystem services. Similarly, national officials cannot successfully implement countrywide policies or meet international commitments set out in global frameworks like the Paris Agreement and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets without support from cities. Hence, in order to tackle climate change, resilience and biodiversity conservation head-on, local, subnational and national governmental bodies should ideally work together and synchronise their strategies and activities. In essence, multi-level governance is key if we are to effectively promote sustainable development in Africa<sup>1</sup>.

More specifically, there's a need to improve both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of multi-level governance. The first refers to collaboration and integration of sustainability efforts across different tiers of government; the second pertains to interactions between actors at the same governance level (this includes cooperation agreements between cities and regions)<sup>2</sup>. Both are vital for coordinated action in the nature-biodiversity realm.

### THE BENEFITS OF ENHANCED MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Multi-level governance (both horizontal and vertical) helps to:

- Foster agreement on common priorities and ensure that activities and mandates are aligned.
- Give stakeholders clarity on their specific roles and responsibilities.
- Support actors in better fulfilling their mandates.
- Accelerate nature-related work taking place at different governance levels.
- Improve local and subnational governments' ability to access the financial and technical support they need to successfully implement projects (see Handbook 10).
- Enhance the up- and out-scaling potential of projects.
- Improve the sustainability of interventions.
- Ensure that local action is contributing towards the achievement of international goals and targets (and that linkages are made explicit).
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and city-to-city learning.
- Remove barriers to action and address challenges facing local officials.
- Unlock new opportunities at local, subnational and national levels.

## ICLEI AFRICA'S MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE WORK

Fostering and enhancing multi-level governance is a key area of work for ICLEI Africa. Our teams recognise that multi-tier collaboration is central to supporting local nature-related action and, therefore, work with national and subnational actors to a) establish and strengthen multi-level engagement platforms, b) improve multi-level climate finance, c) localise global sustainable development goals and national commitments, d) conduct research on multi-level governance on the African continent, and e) develop multi-level monitoring and reporting systems.

One of ICLEI Africa's fortes is establishing platforms for discussion between national and local levels of government. During 2018 alone, ICLEI Africa successfully organised eight multi-level engagement sessions (known as Talanoa Dialogues<sup>1</sup>) in African cities, with the aim of advancing coordinated action between national, subnational and local actors to improve progress towards the achievement of the Paris Agreement goals. The principles underpinning the Talanoa Dialogues (Talanoa refers to a style of dialogue that fosters openness and inclusiveness) have been drawn on to inform other cross-sphere engagements currently being run by the network, including those organised under the UNA programme (see Case Study).

**Kampala, Uganda.** In Africa on the urban-rural-continuum, there exists no sharp divide between urban and rural infrastructures in many African cities, which adds to the complexities experienced in these areas.



## CASE STUDY

# FROM UNA RIVERS:

## IMPROVING NATIONAL AND LOCAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH DIALOGUES IN UGANDA



When the UNA Rivers team engaged with local officials in Kampala and Entebbe and with key national government departments in Uganda, it became clear that there was a need to better align the sustainability efforts of the country's different tiers of governance. It was decided that a major aim of the project would be to strengthen multi-level governance in order to improve the integrated management of urban natural assets.

To achieve this objective, the team decided to facilitate dialogues between national and local government actors. Several meetings were held in 2018 and local government representatives worked with the Wetlands Management Department (WMD) and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to co-develop an action plan for the dialogues and identify key themes, opportunities and challenges that needed to be addressed.

The dialogues began in 2019 and, so far, have served as invaluable platforms for collaboration and coordination. The open and inclusive discussions, which draw on elements of the Talanoa Dialogues, give stakeholders at all levels the chance to explore cross-cutting areas of difficulty and identify potential opportunities for the improved integration of nature-based solutions into land-use planning. They create space for actors to discuss their progress, share their successes and profile interventions that are currently underway, so that local and national project activities can be integrated and synchronised. Finally, by bringing representatives from all tiers of government together in one room, these dialogues allow for the pooling of knowledge, the closing of gaps, the long-term improvement of working relationships (see Handbook 7), and the mobilisation of financial and technical resources needed for implementation and for the up-scaling of projects. As a result, nature-related work is supported and accelerated, stakeholders' sustainability ambitions are heightened and their commitment to change is strengthened.



**Kisumu, Kenya.** Local and national representatives engage in multi-level governance dialogues that are open and inclusive.

## REFERENCES

1. Eckerberg, K. and Joas, M., 2004. Multi-level Environmental Governance: a concept under stress? *Local environment*, 9 (5), pp.405-412; Improving flood risk governance through multi-stakeholder collaboration: a case study of Sweet Home informal settlement, Cape Town. *South African Geographical Journal*, 98 (1), pp61–83
2. Jänicke, M., 2015. Horizontal and vertical reinforcement in global climate governance. *Energies*, 8 (6), pp.5782-5799.

## ENDNOTE

- i Talanoa is a traditional word used in Fiji and across the Pacific to reflect a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue. The purpose of Talanoa is to share stories, build empathy and to make wise decisions for the collective good. The process of Talanoa involves the sharing of ideas, skills and experience through storytelling.

During the process, participants build trust and advance knowledge through empathy and understanding. Blaming others and making critical observations are inconsistent with building mutual trust and respect, and therefore inconsistent with the Talanoa concept. Talanoa fosters stability and inclusiveness in dialogue, by creating a safe space that embraces mutual respect for a platform for decision making for a greater good.

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## ABOUT ICLEI AND THE CITIES BIODIVERSITY CENTER

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### **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability**

ICLEI is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, ICLEI influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. ICLEI's members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systematic change for urban sustainability. ICLEI Africa serves the organisation's African members, working with cities and regions in more than 25 countries across the continent.

### **ICLEI's Cities Biodiversity Center (CBC)**

ICLEI's Cities Biodiversity Center (CBC), which is located in Cape Town, South Africa, recognises the crucial role that cities and subnational governments play in the pursuit of a sustainable future, through efficiently integrating urban development and biodiversity management at the local level.

Through its programmes, ICLEI CBC seeks local solutions to the complex issues surrounding natural capital and the degradation of ecosystem services in a rapidly urbanising world. ICLEI CBC offers cities across the globe a broad portfolio of supportive services through a dedicated team of passionate, skilled and dynamic biodiversity and urban development experts.

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