



URBAN NATURAL ASSETS FOR AFRICA  
Resilience & restoration for life

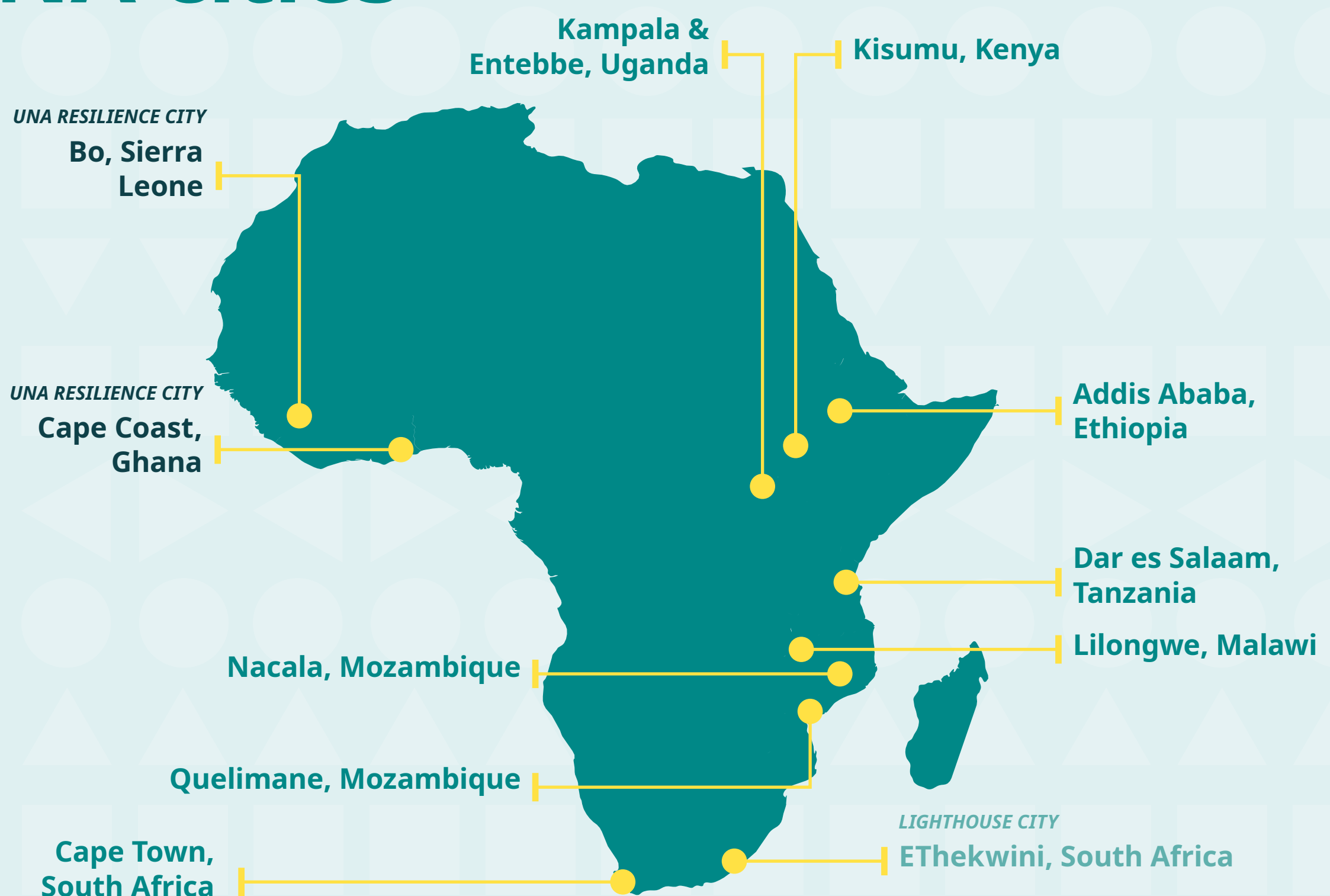
# UNA Resilience: Our Impact

## About UNA

Over the last decade, the [Urban Natural Assets for Africa](#) (UNA) programme has supported 10 cities in Africa who are facing challenges around protecting and revitalising their urban natural assets by mainstreaming nature based solutions into city planning activities and decision making. The UNA Resilience project (2021–2024) represents the culmination of this effort, focusing on empowering cities like Cape Coast, Ghana and Bo City, Sierra Leone, to institutionalise and progressively work towards a more sustainable development trajectory. By co-producing tools such as natural asset maps, climate risk assessments, roadmaps and socio-economic assessments with city stakeholders, UNA has equipped cities with tangible tools and resources to inform data driven and contextually relevant actions and investment. Reflection Labs in 2024 helped solidify legacy plans for each city, ensuring long-term impact beyond the project's timeframe.



## UNA cities



# Overview of UNA Resilience

## Key objectives



**Create enabling conditions for NbS**



**Improve mandates for ecosystem management**



**Strengthen nature-centric decision-making**



**Build agency of stakeholders and gather momentum**



**Progressively realise the rights of individuals and communities**



**Align socio-economic rights with biodiversity planning and governance**



**Showcase success of nature-considerate approaches**



**Integrate a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to promote transformational NbS**

# Activities and outputs

Urban natural asset maps in [Cape Coast](#) and [Bo City](#) ▶

The value of human rights in cities [poster](#) ▶

Socioeconomic reports

City-snapshot infographics in [Cape Coast](#) and [Bo City](#) ▶

City roadmaps

City-to-city learning exchange events and [exhibition](#) ▶

Biodiversity Finance [handbook](#) and [infographic](#) ▶

Planning for nature [infographic](#) and [publication](#) ▶

Learning lab events

Thinkpiece [series](#) ▶

[Online course](#) on people-centred decision making ▶

Animated explainer [video](#) on implementing a human rights based approach ▶

Project impact stories



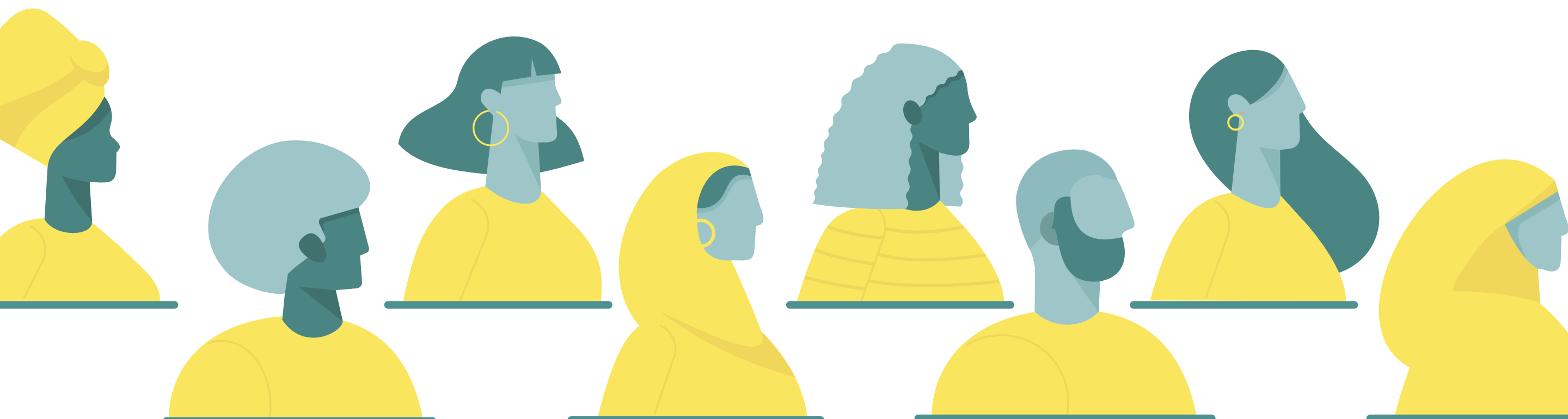
# Impact



## Integrating a human rights-based approach (HRBA) in advancing urban nature

Using unique entry points, the UNA project, with its [Human Rights-Based Approach](#) (HRBA), has significantly advanced the acceptance and progressive realisation of rights of people and communities in project cities. It particularly emphasises the connection between human rights and nature, notably in urban areas where these rights are often overlooked. It has recentred the role of women and girls and the need to protect and fulfil their rights in furtherance of the rights of all. UNA Resilience's HRBA has [deepened the understanding](#) of the interdependence between people and nature, contributing to [progressive rights realisation](#), especially for vulnerable communities, women, and youth, and further emphasising the significant role a healthy environment plays in the realisation of other human rights. Through the use of approaches such as vernacularisation, UNA Resilience has played a critical role in making a [HRBA more accessible for transforming Nature-based Solutions \(NbS\)](#). Online and in-person training and engagement on discourse around HRBA through inclusive approaches for NbS have been a core component of UNA Resilience, reinforcing the link between human rights and nature in urban contexts.

In its final year, the UNA programme facilitated Reflection Labs where city officials and communities co-designed roadmaps to institutionalise these practices. These roadmaps serve as living documents, guiding the integration of urban natural assets into long-term governance frameworks. Additionally, the project's final [video](#) - an animated explainer on implementing HRBA in African cities - aims to scale the project's learning to other cities hoping to mainstream this approach.





## Boosting local governance and policy for biodiversity

The UNA project has supported the realignment of mandates for effective nature and ecosystem management, ensuring resources go where they are most needed. By analysing institutions and fostering cross-sectoral cooperation, it integrates nature into urban governance and recommends a more effective distribution of resources. The project blends socio-economic rights with nature conservation, involving civil society in planning. This fosters a sustainable and equitable human-nature relationship.

Central to this, the project created platforms for cross-sectoral learning through City-to-City Exchanges and Learning Labs. These platforms prioritised co-learning and co-production by fostering collaboration, bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders to identify emerging priorities, identify gaps in current institutional and decision making systems and co-develop solutions for sustainable urban development in their cities.

These engagements resulted in innovative outputs, including comprehensive city roadmaps that integrate NbS and actionable steps to address urban vulnerabilities. These efforts highlight UNA's role in shaping sustainable urban governance across Africa.



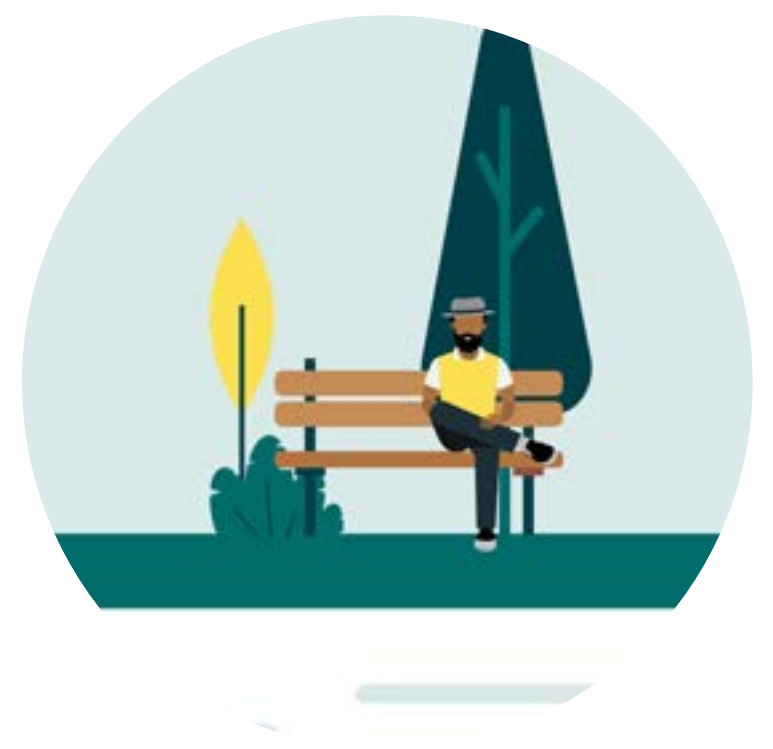


## Foregrounding nature-based considerations in urban planning

The UNA project has brought nature considerations to the forefront of decision-making and city planning. It achieved this by collecting data on urban natural assets, the socio-economic landscape and climate change projections, to promote data driven decision making and planning, ensuring that nature remains a top priority in urban governance. The project has built momentum and agency for a continuous transformative process, fostering care for nature through [inclusive approaches for a diverse range of stakeholders, including youth](#). Building on insights from socio-economic assessments and spatial maps, coupled with creative approaches like the “[Preserve, Conserve, Tinker](#)” photography and photovoice exhibition, and youth workshops, UNA Resilience enabled local governments and communities to envision sustainable futures, better integrating nature into urban landscapes.

Additionally, the UNA project conducted online and in-person training on inclusive planning processes for more resilient and inclusive cities. These included a facilitated course on [planning with nature for service delivery](#) as well as the self-guided course, “[Empowering urban communities for people-centred decision-making](#)” both available on the [Learn with ICLEI Africa](#) platform.

The final year’s Reflection Labs catalysed discussions on sustaining these efforts, ensuring that urban planning frameworks prioritise NbS and ecosystem restoration while addressing socio-economic inequalities.



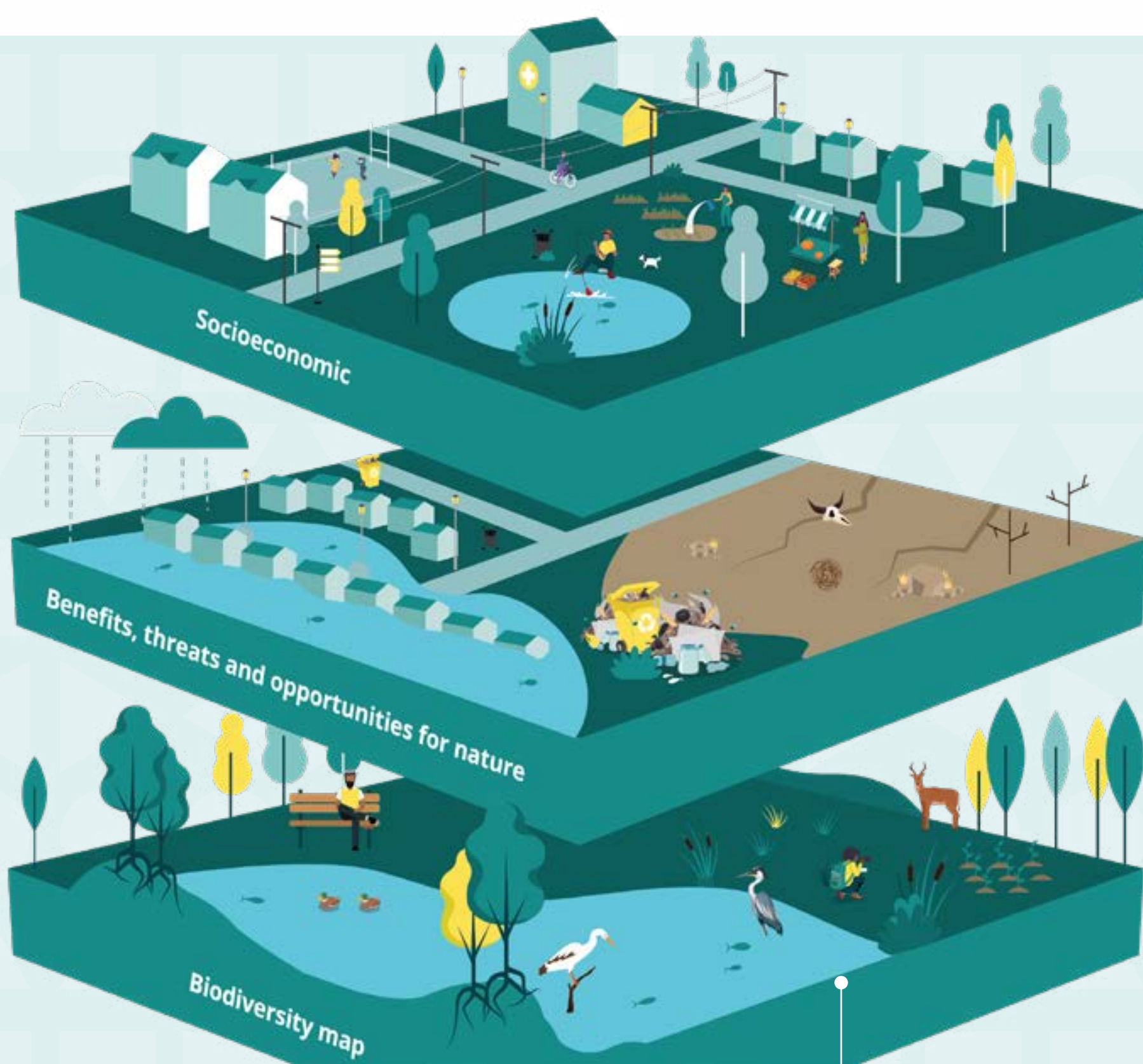


## Contributing to research and awareness on urban nature in Africa

The UNA project has provided valuable information for [transformative Nature-based Solutions \(NbS\)](#) in the global south, particularly through an African lens. It actively advocates for NbS and demonstrates the success of ecosystem restoration efforts in Africa. UNA Resilience leads the way in mainstreaming biodiversity and climate change into urban planning, finance, and decision-making. Through resources like socioeconomic studies and snapshots for [Bo City](#) and [Cape Coast](#), illustrated maps of [Bo City](#) and [Cape Coast](#), and other engaging materials, the project has bridged data gaps, supporting evidence-based decision-making and sustainable urban development.

The project strengthens the role of African voices in the global arena, showcasing the benefits and successes of NBS and making the case for promoting the integration of biodiversity and climate considerations into key decision-making areas. Furthermore, the UNA project continues to contribute to [academic research](#) that positions UNA's good [practice model](#), worthy of scaling, especially in the global south.

The project's learnings were featured in global platforms like COP16 and publications such as the "[From Agreement to Action](#)" report on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework





## Enhancing biodiversity finance capacity

The UNA project has established essential conditions for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and ecological restoration at the local level. UNA Resilience has laid a strong foundation for empowering cities to protect biodiversity and foster ecological restoration. Through a whole-of-society approach that includes educating city officials and traditional leaders and communities, the project has equipped stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to [secure funding for biodiversity projects](#). This approach has resulted in the co-development of project ideas and concept notes, offering practical plans that harmonise urban development with nature. To maximise opportunities, the UNA project has conducted online and in-person training on accessing biodiversity finance for urban nature, NbS, and restoration initiatives. This training further strengthens the financial opportunities available for initiatives focused on urban nature and ecological restoration.



To find out more about UNA, visit our website.

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