

NOTICING CHANGE AND DOCUMENTING IMPACT

An Outcomes Harvesting Guide



Local Governments
for Sustainability

AFRICA



WHAT IS OUTCOMES HARVESTING?

- A Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning **methodology** that promotes reflection and storytelling
- Identifying **real-world changes** (capturing actual shifts in behaviours, policies, or practices)
- **Observations** of ‘actor-centred’ changes, at the institutional or individual level
- **Visualisation** of chains of influence

OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS?

Outcomes differ from outputs. Outcomes focus on **contribution (our influence on change)** rather than proving direct **attribution (causation)**, which is typically associated with outputs.

OUTPUTS

are elements we have direct control over: the activities we implement and the tangible products we deliver (things we do or things we produce).

These include processes, documents, tools, reports, and arguments produced in line with project objectives, workplans, and contractual deliverables.

Example:

The project conducted a workshop on dryland gardening with 35 participants.

OUTCOMES

track changes in behaviour, relationships, practices, or attitudes of others that occur as a *result of what we have done*. They reflect how external actors respond to, use, or act differently because of our interventions, rather than what we directly produce.

Example:

22 of the workshop participants reported using covercropping in follow-up conversations.

IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES

See below the outcome categories which can help you to identify the outcomes. Have you observed any of these in your project?

OUTCOME CATEGORIES



Change in behaviour by direct project beneficiaries

Example: 67% of programme participants have adopted a new agricultural practice in Dédougou since August



Invitation of project partner or beneficiaries to others' events, projects or programmes

Example: *Project* invited by Adaptation Futures conference leaders to speak in October 2025 in New Zealand



Change in behaviour by the public

Example: Improved valuation of Indigenous Knowledge among youth in Uganda recorded in September survey



Profiling of project, products or ideas by non-partner individuals or organisations

Example: *Project* brief on inclusive governance was shared by another NGO on LinkedIn in August 2024



Improved agency, leverage, positioning or opportunities for a project partner or beneficiary

Example: Participation of youth in a decision-making process at a food policy event in Lusaka in June 2024



Use of a project output by an outside actor to strengthen their work

Example: *Global NGO* made use of *Project* climate budgeting methodology in 4 of their member cities through 2025



Improved knowledge or understanding by a project partner or beneficiary

Example: 33% increase in locally led adaptation knowledge in pre-to-post-workshop survey among farmers trained in Kwara in May



New collaboration or partnership

Example: Local university joins partnership with *Project* to co-convene September workshop in Ouagadougou



Improved skills by project beneficiary

Example: Technical officials in Kampala adopt a new methodology for data reporting on adaptation after an August 2024 workshop



New funding or projects

Example: Knowledge broker trained in project preparation receives funding for flood prevention project in Kribi in 2024

WHAT MAKES UP AN OUTCOME STATEMENT?

While outcome statements allow narrative, they must also be rich in verifiable detail, and include reference to:

WHO

the external actor is

WHAT

the actor did differently

WHERE

the social change took place

WHEN

the external actor changed

Outcome statements have **3** parts:

1

Outcome description: Factual statement about what happened or what you observed; must be objective - verifiable statement. Here you include the **who** the **what**, the **where** and **when**. (1-2 sentences *maximum*)

Example of an outcome description: **On 31 July 2025, a journalist, Mr. Okello, reported and published a story highlighting the woman's simple irrigation system in Alebtong district.**

2

Significance of the outcome: Subjective statement about why this outcome is valuable. This is the 'so what' - why does what happened matter? (1-2 sentences *maximum*)

Example of a significance description:

The media is the main source to accessing knowledge related to agricultural adaptation to climate change. This story represents an expansion of their coverage into low-costs solutions which had previously not been featured in the newspaper and increased local awareness about low cost adaptation practices.

3

Contribution description: Factual statement about what actions by the Project caused this to happen. This explains how the Project contributed to this happening. This is where you state **what output** led to this outcome. (1-2 sentences *maximum*)

Example of a contribution description:

During the multistakeholder event the Project hosted in **Kampala** on **15 March 2024**, **stakeholders from Agriculture knowledge ecosystem value chain (producers, disseminators and users), including government, CSOs, media and farmers** were brought together and **introduced to agricultural adaptations including low-tech irrigation systems.**

HOW TO FORMULATE YOUR OUTCOME STATEMENT

KEY: OUTCOME STATEMENT (use the following colour breakdown to identify the key parts of what make an outcome statement)

WHO

WHAT

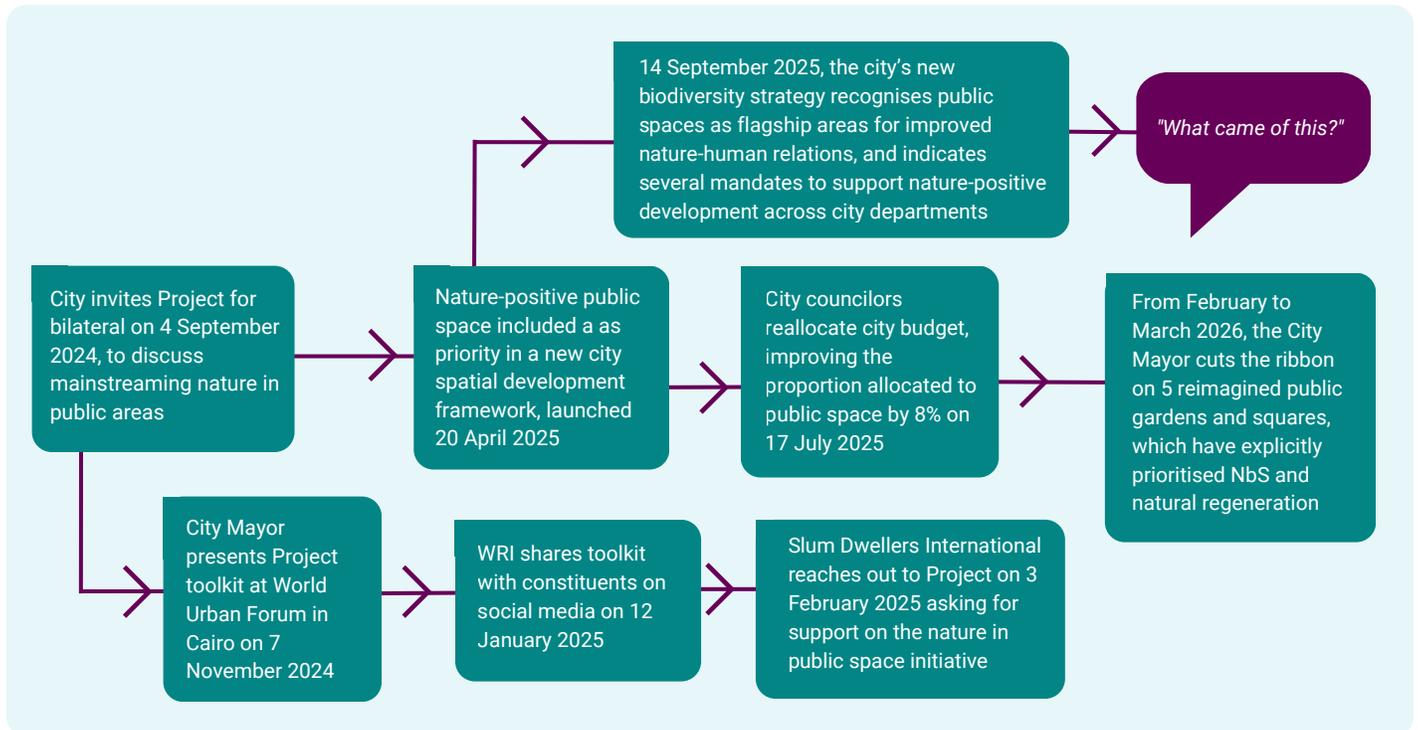
WHERE

WHEN

Outcome description	Significance description	Contribution description	Outcome category
<p>On 31 July 2025, a journalist, Mr. Okello, reported and published a story highlighting the woman's simple irrigation system in Alebtong district.</p>	<p>The media is the main source to accessing knowledge related to agricultural adaptation to climate change. This story represents an expansion of their coverage into low-costs solutions which had previously not been featured in the newspaper.</p>	<p>During the multistakeholder event the Project hosted in Kampala on 15 March 2024, stakeholders from Agriculture knowledge ecosystem value chain (producers, disseminators and users), including government, CSOs, media and farmers were brought together and introduced to agricultural adaptations including low-tech irrigation systems.</p>	<p>Profiling of project</p>
<p>Bêsêwo Somda, a young market gardener in Dissin, has adopted the use of biopesticides for his tomato crops, as observed during the monitoring mission in early December 2024. This adoption is evidenced by photographs taken on his plot of less than half a hectare.</p>	<p>This producer's adoption of biopesticides is significant because it is in line with the sustainable practices that PIEGIS-2AC aims to promote and demonstrates a concrete commitment to the project's objectives.</p>	<p>This change was prompted by the PIEGIS-2AC project radio programme broadcast during March 2025 on Radio Argoutar in Dissin, which raised awareness among producers about the benefits of biopesticides and provided practical advice. Thanks to this local broadcast, farmers – including Bêsêwo Somda – were informed and were able to adopt this new practice.</p>	<p>Change in behaviour by direct project beneficiaries</p>
<p>In July 2025, Gazawa municipality received a confirmation for over 265,000 USD grant funding for their locally-led adaptation project focused on reforestation in their district.</p>	<p>This is important because it means that the municipality can mobilise further adaptation funding for their adaptation priorities going forward.</p>	<p>BRIDGE provided technical assistance to the Gazawa municipality to develop their project proposal, via 4 knowledge brokering workshops in Yaounde from May to September 2025. The funding came from FEICOM's Climate Window which the BRIDGE team supported.</p>	<p>New funding or projects</p>

OUTCOME CHAINS

Outcome chains often occur as a result of multiple Project outputs. In this example, we are mapping change that began when the *Project* convened stakeholders to produce a toolkit for designing nature-positive, inclusive public spaces.



FURTHER READING

In ICLEI Africa's work on outcomes harvesting, we have been inspired by the methods and guidance of several practitioners. Please see the following references as valuable further reference points for undertaking outcomes harvesting more fully.

1. Klugman B., Wilson-Grau C., 2022. *WIEGO MLE Toolkit – Tool 1: How to Write an Outcome Statement*. WIEGO. https://www.wiego.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/09/WIEGO_MEL%20Tool%201How%20to%20Write%20an%20Outcome%20Statement.pdf
2. Klugman B., Wilson-Grau C., 2022. *Tool 2: How to Harvest Outcomes You Notice in Your Day-to-Day Work*. WIEGO. https://www.wiego.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/09/WIEGO_MEL%20Tool%202How%20to%20Harvest%20Outcomes.pdf
3. Wilson-Grau, R., 2018. *Outcome harvesting: Principles, steps, and evaluation applications*. IAP. IAP. https://www.academia.edu/85622308/Outcome_Harvesting_Principles_steps_and_evaluation_Applications_Ricardo_Wilson_Grau
4. Berríos Y., 2024 *Use of Outcome Harvesting for Monitoring in Dialogue and Peacebuilding Contexts*. Conciliation Resources <https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Embracing%20change%20-%20%20Outcome%20Harvesting%20in%20peacebuilding%20practice.pdf>
5. Herrington, R., Kuhn, C., 2022 *Outcome Harvesting Methods Memo*. Headlight Consulting <https://www.headlightconsulting-services.com/wpcontent/uploads/HeadlightConsulting-OutcomeHarvesting-Methods-Memo.pdf>

