



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

2022 - 2023



South African Cities Network

Quarter One Newsletter | 2022 - 2023





CONTENTS

Table of

Editor's Note	1
Chairperson's note	3
Celebrating our 20th Anniversary	5
Inclusive Cities	8
Innovative Cities	10
Productive Cities	11
Sustainable & Resilient Cities	13
Well Governed Cities	19
Team News	22

EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Stakeholder

**Welcome to our quarterly
online stakeholder
newsletter.**

Urbanisation presents some of the world's most significant opportunities and challenges today. Cities are economic growth and development centres but also face demographic, environmental, economic and social challenges. By engaging all stakeholders, cities can harness transformational change and improve the lives of their inhabitants. However, in many contexts, cities lack the capacity to enact this change. Ensuring cities have the capacity, capability, and tools to address the challenges posed by urbanization has become a pressing global issue.

In October 2022, the South African Cities Network (SACN) celebrates its 20th anniversary. The 20th anniversary offers the opportunity to tell the story of best practices, challenges, and lessons of the SACN. We will reflect on the future and what needs to happen over the next 20 years to achieve “liveable, safe, resource-efficient cities and towns. The Urban Festival in 2022 is the latest urban conference and event hosted by the SACN. The SACN Urban Festival joins global movements led by UN-Habitat dating back to World Habitat Day, first convened

in 1986. The UN-Habitat theme for Urban October is 31 Days for Promoting a better urban future. Thus, situated within that global dialogue, the SACN Urban Festival will focus on local and contextual factors under the theme, “Transforming Cities Through Research & Practice. The festival will contribute significantly to the Global South and aims to provide a platform for learning, experimentation, and knowledge exchange to implement a transformative urban agenda to enable active dialogue between various urban actors.

Urban October is an opportunity for people around the world to join the conversation about the challenges and opportunities created by the fast pace of change in our cities and towns. Tackling complex urban challenges requires partnership, collaboration, and dialogue. National and local governments, universities, non-governmental organizations, communities, and other stakeholders in sustainable urbanization are encouraged to hold or participate in activities, events, and discussions.

The challenges facing cities offer an opportunity for improved collaboration and cooperation and for finding a different way of doing things. Such an opportunity requires everyone to unite around a common progressive agenda that prioritizes inclusive economic growth, a closer relationship between nature and humanity, and accountable governance, where no one is left behind. I hope that the activations during

the Urban Festival will influence the political agenda within the local government. I am privileged to have worked alongside a team of dedicated city practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and activists who believe in the importance of cities and municipalities for delivering change and development to citizens over the past 20 years. I believe that this Urban Festival will help raise the people's voice.

In this edition, we highlight some of the activities which took place during our first quarter. The Inclusive Cities highlights the release of the Spatial Determinants of Well-being paper series, Innovative Cities focuses on the three SoCR dashboards now available on SCODA. Productive Cities emphasises that the EPWP Programme can play a role in the current unemployment crisis, the Sustainable and Resilient Cities focuses on Nature-based solutions in cities: where people and nature thrive. Well Governed Cities shares the recent Urban Dialogue on the Just Urban Transition in which SACN partnered with the City of Joburg. We also look at the team news as well as our special feature on SACN's 20th anniversary.

Best Wishes,

Sithole Mbanga, SACN CEO

We hope you enjoy this latest edition of our quarterly online stakeholder newsletter.

Thank you for being our loyal reader





SACN Q1 Online Newsletter: Remarks by Chairperson of Council, Cllr Xola Pakati

Welcome to our first quarter edition of the 2022/23 SACN online newsletter. This edition comes on the heels of the SALGA Council of Mayors event, which took place in East London on the 8th of September, in which President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered a keynote address. In the opening remarks of his speech, the President belaboured the importance of local government and its critical role in the overall performance of the country's economic recovery efforts. He also shared that at his last Cabinet Lekgotla, which happened a week before the Council of Mayors, his executive was also seized with numerous discussions around how to make local government more stable. He explained that the need for local government stability is an essential requirement for any prospect of economic growth.

In this battle for global recovery and, more specifically, our national economic recovery, we can all acknowledge that local government is the frontline from which both short- and long-term economic growth prospects can be realised. This means that our municipalities, specifically our metros, since they play host to the most significant economic activity, are the critical stakeholders

in turning around the fortunes of the country's adverse economic growth climate. It can be argued that conversations about the role played by our cities in the national economic recovery efforts have mainly been dwarfed in public discourse recently by seemingly more fascinating discussions around the political significance of who gets to govern our cities.

Many public, media and scholarly debates in the past ten months since the last local government elections have been fixated on the significance of city political governance, with very little attention on the economic importance of cities in clawing South Africa back to a positive economic growth trajectory. At the same time, debates on our cities' political governance are essential since they continuously flex the democratic tenets upon which our government and constitutional values are built, especially in this era of coalition politics. We cannot, however,

neglect the equally important economic development task that rests on the shoulders of our cities' political economies. Political stability is a central prerequisite to positive economic growth since, by its nature, it permeates all areas of municipal business and is, therefore, very important. The President was pleading for local government actors not to allow the political governance conversation to be all-consuming at the expense of neglecting the role of local government in pulling us out of this dire economic quagmire we are in as a nation.

In concluding the latter points, I would like to quote from the President's keynote address at the Council of Mayors when he said the following words: "When local government fails, it is not just service delivery that fails. It isn't just that our people's expectations are not met. The failure of local government has a direct and material impact on economic growth and jobs".

For South African Cities to succeed and be true agents of economic recovery and prosperity, they need to work together. City leadership should be predicated on the understanding that we are operating in an interconnected and interdependent ecosystem. We should therefore try to maintain the relevant intergovernmental connection and sister city cooperations in order to guarantee economic growth and development.

I always find it strange that municipalities can have cooperation agreements and sister city relations with cities that are overseas and have non or minimal relations with their neighbouring towns. Starting this year, we must strive to do away with this because we can never develop if we do not pull together.

**South African Cities are too important to fail:
Lets make them prosper!**

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CELEBRATING OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY

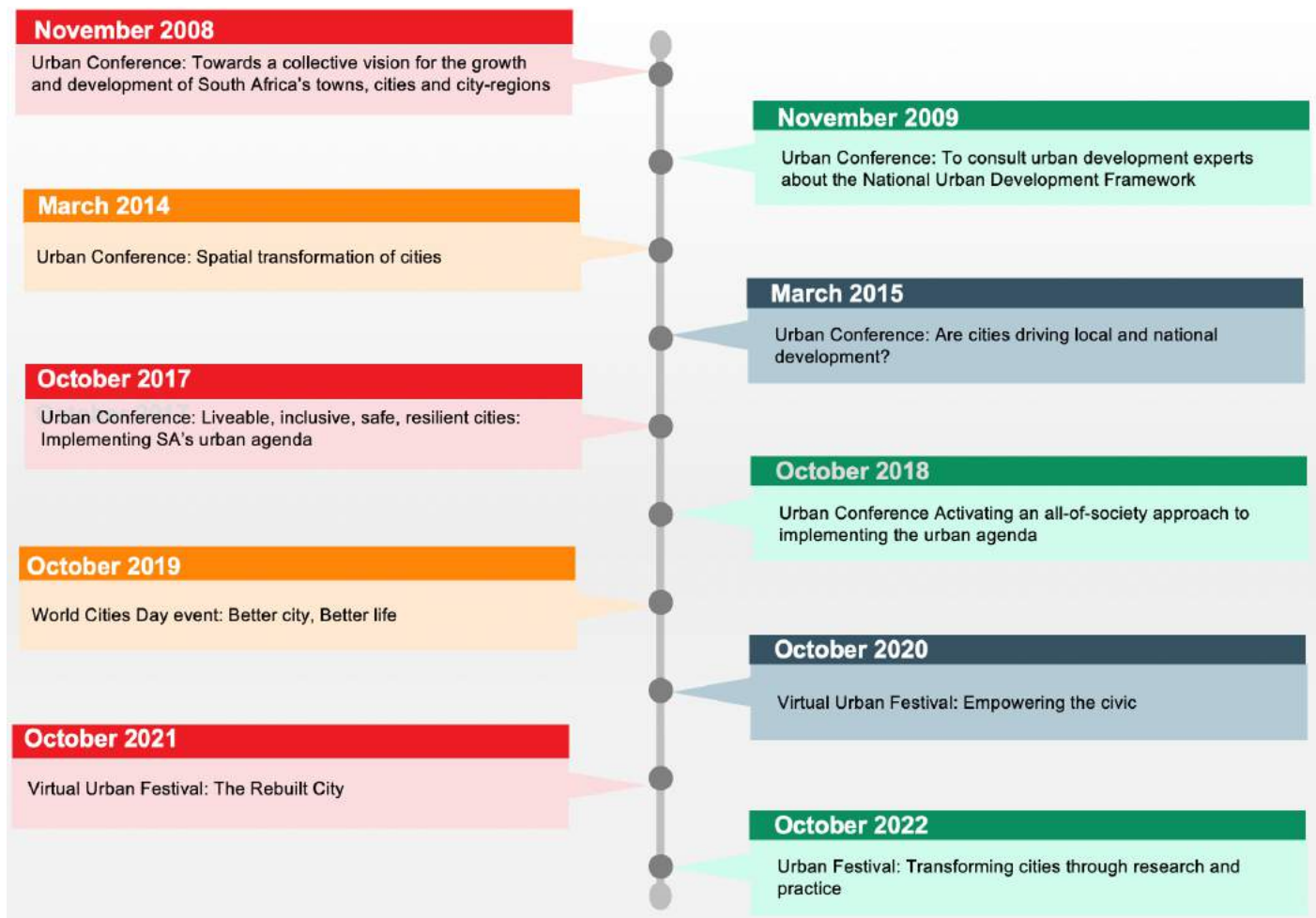
SA Cities Network Celebrates 20 Years

Today, more people than ever live in cities. Cities are spaces where people come together to share experiences and ideas and shape new systems. They are places of social, economic, and political opportunities and intense social interactions. In South Africa, where two-thirds of the population live in urban areas, cities are central to the development and at the forefront of the country's economic, social, environmental, and cultural life.

In 2022, the South African Cities Network (SACN) celebrates its 20th anniversary. Established in 2002, the SACN has been the custodian of South Africa's urban story and is at the heart of urban research and practice through its flagship publications and urban conferences and events.

The 20th anniversary offers the opportunity to tell the story of best practices, challenges, and lessons of the SACN. We will reflect on the future and what needs to happen over the next 20 years to achieve “liveable, safe, resource-efficient cities and towns. The Urban Festival in 2022 is the latest urban conference and event hosted by the SACN. Under the theme of “Transforming cities through research and practice”, the 2022 Urban Festival has the following objectives:

-  To ignite conversation and action around the desired future state of South Africa's cities
-  To showcase SACN's contribution to South Africa's urban development agenda
-  To acknowledge and celebrate partners and collaborators over the years



A range of diverse voices, from partners and all of society, will come together to discuss a spectrum of issues, from city governance, finance and economies to sustainability and resilience and inclusion and innovation. These conversations will take the form of keynote speakers (experts and practitioners from

government, private sector, and civil society), panel discussions (collaborative action-oriented sessions), masterclasses (speakers sharing real-world experiences of how to address the complex urban challenges) and visual exhibits.

The 2022 Urban Festival is structured around critical recommendations emerging from the SACN State of the Cities Report 2021; the report explores critical challenges in the South African Cities landscape to ensure more productive, well-governed, innovative, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Cities. The report also highlights best practices that actively include partnerships between local government, the whole of government, and society. The 2022 festival will run for three days, 26 – 28 October 2022, at The Empire Venue Parktown, Johannesburg.

WED 26 OCT 2022	THUR 27 OCT 2022	FRI 28 OCT 2022	MON 31 OCT 2022 WORLD CITIES DAY URBAN EXPERIENCE
Opening Address	Opening Address	Opening Address	
MASTER CLASS Creating Capability in Cities: how the administration and executive should work to achieve results	PANEL State of City Finances	PANEL Leveraging on Data for Decision Making - The key to city sustainability	
PANEL City Governance and Rethinking Urban Development	MASTER CLASS An all-of-society approach to Just-Transition		
MASTER CLASS 22-Years on: Why spatial transformation can not be achieved only by government	PANEL Financing the Just Transitions- gaps and opportunities for cities	MASTER CLASS City Branding and its Importance in the development of cities	
PARALLEL PANEL Building the Inclusive and Sustainable City with Informality at the Centre	PARALLEL PANEL The Incomplete City- unshackling the apartheid spatial form		
FESTIVAL PLEDGE FROM CITIES	PARALLEL PANEL Leveraging Regional Integration to Transform and Strengthen City Economies	FESTIVAL PLEDGE FROM CITIES	URBAN EXHIBITION
	PARALLEL PANEL Recovery and Resilience of South African City Economies		
	Stakeholder Dinner		

*Programme subject to change and confirmation

SACN and partners invite all civil society, organisations, designers, planners, storytellers, civil servants, and city-dwellers to join the conversation so that stories, research, and voices are preserved and used to foster greater understanding and better solutions.

Visit our website for more information at:

<https://www.sacities.net/urban-festival-2022/>



INCLUSIVE CITIES

On 19 August 2022, the South African Cities Network (SACN) launched its research into the Spatial Determinants of Wellbeing, examining how space impacts the health and wellbeing of individuals residing in South African Cities. The publication includes six papers which explore the impact of space on critical aspects of wellbeing, these include (i) Transport and access to decent work, (ii) Spatial inequality and Early Childhood Development, (iii) Gendered Space and Wellbeing, (iv) the Community Centre, (v) Testing Covid-19 Practices and (vi) Food Security.

The launch included presentations from the paper authors, primarily young urbanists working at the intersection of research, academia, city practice, international agencies and the private sector. The papers provided critical insights into how the daily lives of those living in South African Cities are impacted by the legacy of spatial segregation and what this means in terms of lack of access to very vital opportunities such as decent work, reliable bulk infrastructure, safe spaces, learning, nourishing food and community. “Well-being is not simply the absence of disease but is a state of physical, mental and social well-being — good health and well-being encourage personal and societal development”, Monyake Moteane and Bokang Marokole explain in their paper “Crisis to Opportunity: Testing best Covid-19 practices in South Africa”.

The papers are critical of current governance practices, in particular, the lack of coordination between different spheres to enable access to quality services for example in terms of the rail infrastructure and operations in South African Cities and alignment of provincial and municipal support for Early Childhood Development.

The papers also explore how vulnerable and marginalised communities continue to be excluded from critical planning and investment decisions as Zinzile Seepier and Nosipho Goba point out in their paper “A Geographical Perspective on Gendered Violence in Khayelitsha”:

The papers also point to critical opportunities for Cities to maximise to make immediate and long-term changes in the well-being of residents in South Africa.



The mapping of Food Systems in Hacking the Systems paper illustrate where and how Cities can intervene to improve food security. Partnerships with communities can enable the multiplier effects of “community centres” in particular for youth in informal settlements and Inner Cities and public space if designed and managed can be a key asset in supporting Early Childhood Development and its vital long-term benefits to children and society.



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Crime affects all members of society, but ‘othered’ bodies are the most affected, especially in townships and informal settlements. One such place is Khayelitsha, which is one of the most violent places in South Africa, especially for ‘othered’ bodies — women, the LGBTQI+ community, children, youth and differently-abled individuals. It reveals the spatial vulnerability of ‘othered’ bodies that is a consequence of socio-spatial injustice and inequalities. The chronic under-development has resulted in spaces of social and physical vulnerability of the ‘othered’ in Khayelitsha.”

The intent of the Spatial Determinants of Well-being paper series is to better understand how space affects the well-being of city residents and their ability to reap the benefit of living in cities. The papers emphasise the role that cities and local governments play in changing the odds, through the decisions they make, and their administrative, planning and budgeting choices. The papers are a call to action to reduce inequality in our Cities through access to the opportunities held in well-located nodes.

INNOVATIVE CITIES



SoCR dashboards on SCODA

The State of Cities Report (SoCR) 2021 provides a barometer on the performance of and conditions in South Africa's largest cities. Constituted by comparable data profiles covering nine municipalities in Section 1 of the Report, this barometer is coupled by a series of interactive and user-friendly SoCR data dashboards on the South African Cities Open Data Almanac (SCODA) platform.

SCODA is a city-centric data portal that provides evidence, analysis, and insight of current and comparable information about South African cities. This portal represents a city-driven approach to addressing urban data needs related to planning, management, monitoring, and reporting - endeavouring to realise more efficient and effective data systems and processes in cities.

The SoCR data dashboards complement existing SCODA tools and have begun to expand and deepen the functions of the platform. The available dashboards can be accessed [here](#). So far 3 dashboards focusing on Citizen Engagement, Service Delivery and Municipal Human Resources are available and live on the portal, while others such as Population, Dwellings, Employment, and Household income will be made available in due course.



PRODUCTIVE CITIES

In July 2022, the SACN has entered the second year of its five-year strategic business cycle. This reporting period is not only a preparatory moment for the Urban Month, but it also presents an important moment for the SACN to reflect on the research produced over the past 20 years of its existence.

More importantly for the productive cities programme, this reflection takes stock of the status quo of the South African economy, having compiled the latest state of EPWP report in SA cities amongst other research reports analysing economy in cities. It has been reported that real gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by 0,7% after

two consecutive years of growth, with manufacturing taking the biggest knock. Notwithstanding this, the economic shocks are pronounced in cities as the fragility of the national economy manifest at local level. The relative political instability, electricity cuts, and high unemployment amongst young people are chief amongst the realities faced.

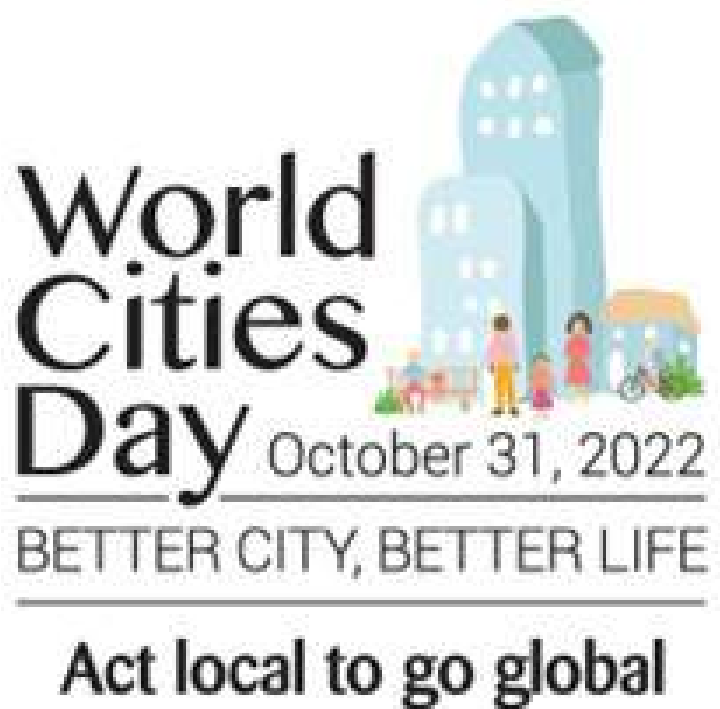
Cognizant of the high unemployment rate and the macro-economic environment within which we operate, Expanded Public Work Programmes should play their role in straddling the divide between endemic unemployment and opportunities rendered by the labour market, and not exist as standalone social protection interventions.

Through its productive cities programme the SACN is in the process of developing exit strategy implementation framework and implementation guide. This is meant to provide a structured approach for cities to effectively support EPWP participants (and participants of other PEPs) transition from the program into sustainable income generating activities or further their skills. By virtue of their geography,



South African cities are characterised by diversity in skills and sectors, often with a mismatch in available skills and jobs. It is for this reason that the said strategy and implementation guide aims to provide flexible set of actions that can be tailored to each city environment, to achieve graduation of program participants in their specific contexts. Supported by the EPWP Reference Group, the knowledge product is earmarked for publication in the next quarter.

As the urban October month looms near, the SACN and partners will be hosting the urban festival under the theme: Transforming Cities through Research and Practice. Panel discussions and masterclasses can be expected between 26-28th October 2022. For the productive cities programme, a master class on SMMEs is scheduled. Fitting to the versatile nature of these enterprises, and their role in the macro-economic environment of technological development and digitisation, the masterclass is titled Nothing Small about the Small/Medium and Micro Enterprises. Moreover, the following parallel discussions will be held leading to the World Cities Day.



- Leveraging Regional Integration to Transform and Strengthen City Economies
- Recovery and Resilience of South African City Economies.



SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT CITIES

Nature-based Solutions in cities: Where people and nature thrive.

The number of climate-related disasters has tripled in the last 30 years and more than 20 million people a year are forced from their homes by climate change (Oxfam International, 2020). Simultaneously, nature is declining at unprecedented rates and species extinctions continue to accelerate, thus threatening the functioning of ecosystems as the foundations of human livelihoods, economies, food security, and much more (IPBES, 2019).

Rapid urbanisation also significantly contributes to the ongoing degradation of natural resources which adversely affects both biodiversity and human well-being. Through the provision of urban infrastructure, energy production and consumption, transportation, waste disposal services and many other urban services, nature is systematically being engineered out of and removed from the urban fabric and what remains are hard, lifeless concrete jungles. This makes cities more vulnerable to climate risks such as floods, droughts and all the cascading effects that follow, including damage to urban infrastructure, air, water and soil pollution, and the resultant effects on people's health and well-being.

Nature-based Solutions have the potential to tackle both the causes and consequences of climate change and the multiplicity of challenges cities face at relatively low-cost while delivering numerous additional benefits for people and nature.



Johannesburg <https://www.timeout.com/johannesburg>



Durban flash floods www.gettyimages.com

Conventional engineering solutions to adapt to climate change are proving to be less cost-effective, insufficient and unsustainable, while Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are gradually being recognised as beneficial in addressing the multiplicity of socio-economic challenges from climate change to urbanisation in a sustainable way. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines NbS as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”. Nature-based Solutions incorporate green and natural infrastructure and are an essential climate change adaptation measure which not only addresses the effects of climate change, which poses threats to food security, water resources, infrastructure, biodiversity, human health and ecosystem services but also covers the economic and governance aspects of climate adaptation.

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The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines NbS as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.

There is increasing recognition of the need for and importance of protecting and reviving ecosystems around the world for the benefit of people and nature. The United Nations has declared 2021 – 2030 as the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and Cities around the world are slowly putting nature on the urban policy agenda. In South African Cities, the long-term growth

and development strategies that are in place envision cities that are liveable, inclusive, sustainable and resilient. However, the guaranteed outcomes of the current form of spatial planning, the current land-use patterns and infrastructure provision practices that are being perpetuated in Cities, starkly contrast and contradict the outcomes envisaged in the growth and development strategies.

Continuously ignoring these contradictions increases the vulnerabilities of South African Cities and puts them at greater climate change and disaster risk. In its 2016 publication **Planning for Green Infrastructure: Options for South African Cities**, the South African Cities Network started advocating for green infrastructure as the lens that can be used to bring into focus these contrasting visions and help Cities take steps to align green infrastructure into mainstream spatial planning and infrastructure provision approaches.

PLANNING FOR

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: OPTIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES



But, integrating green infrastructure into spatial planning in city contexts where land-use decision-making must address the demand for housing, water and sanitation, transport and other infrastructure services is a huge challenge, but so is the opportunity of restoring and regenerating urban ecosystems as an integral part of infrastructure investment, increasing resilience and adapting cities to the harmful effects of climate change.

It is against this backdrop that the SACN is developing Guidelines for Incorporating Nature-based Solutions in Cities Planning, Budgeting and Implementation Processes, as a companion to the 2016 publication.

The guidelines are intended to:

- Help cities mainstream climate adaptation measures at the operational, institutional and the inter-institutional level so that their integration becomes standard procedure, to foster urban resilience;
- Be used as a resource for selecting, designing, funding and implementing nature-based solution projects;
- Be used as a tool for education and outreach in communities that are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change;
- Help cities make the business case for the economic, socio-cultural, ecological and health value and benefits of nature-based solutions.



Examples of Nature-based Solutions

The guidelines will demonstrate the importance of taking a systemic approach to combining knowledge from different fields, such as urban planning, nature conservation, urban engineering, governance or social justice and public health to address complex urban issues in a sustainable way.

They will help guide cities on:

- How to enhance their resilience to climate-induced flooding and other water-related risks;
- How to improve water security and water quality; how to reduce urban heat islands; and
- How to promote mental and physical health and reduce morbidity and mortality in urban residents, among other benefits.

Through the incorporation of nature-based solutions, Cities will also contribute to halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems in support of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and the African Forest and Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), under which the South African government has made commitments.



A sustainable urban sanctuary in Cape Town
[Building & Decor \(buildinganddecor.co.za\)](https://buildinganddecor.co.za)



A green roof in Durban Serious About Green Roofs:
[Are Cape Town and Durban Serious? | Smart Cities Dive](#)

Some cities like eThekweni, Cape Town, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg and Tshwane are already making some strides in incorporating nature-based solutions in various projects.



Victoria Yards, Johannesburg [Victory for Lorentzville's Victoria Yards who win coveted ULI Europe Award for Excellence \(wantedonline.co.za\)](https://www.wantedonline.co.za/victory-for-lorentzville-s-victoria-yards-who-win-coveted-uli-europe-award-for-excellence/)

However, there is still a long way to go as current approaches often remain characterised by individual actions and the creation of separate, bolted-on interventions. What is required is the mainstreaming and integration of nature-based solutions across all cities' governance, planning, budgeting and implementation processes to improve sustainability and enhance resilience.

WELL GOVERNED CITIES

This quarter work in the Well Governed Cities Programme has focused on finalising the State of City Finances 2022 publication and planning for its launch and subsequent dissemination. If there is a truism about project managing a research report from conception through to finalisation, it is that the process after the research is complete is always much more involved and takes much more time than one initially anticipates!

In the final week of June SACN partnered with the Knowledge Management Unit (JIKE) of City of Joburg on an urban dialogue on the just urban transition. The panel was ably facilitated by Professor Mark Swilling, Co - Director of the Centre for Sustainability Transitions, chair of Board of DBSA and Commissioner, National Planning Commission. The panel was composed of representatives of the key constituencies in the just transition.

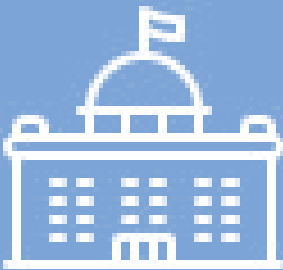
CITIES



THABO MAHLATSI

Environment and Infrastructure Services Department - Energy
City of Joburg

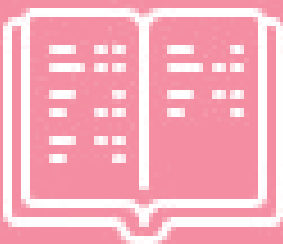
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT



DHESIGEN NAIDOO

Presidential Climate Commission

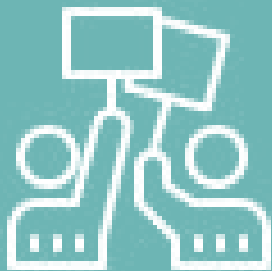
ACADEMIA



DR PAT NAIDOO

University of Johannesburg

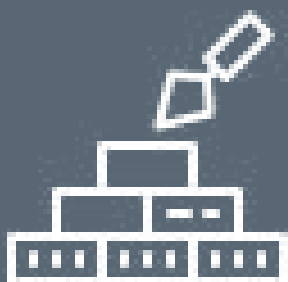
CIVIL SOCIETY



LEANNE GOVINDSAMMY

Centre for Environmental Rights

DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



AMANDA GCANGA

World Resources Institute

PRIVATE SECTOR



REITUMETSE MOLOTSOANE

National Business Initiative

There was agreement across the panel on cities as critical sites of the just transition, and SACN was pleased to be able to foster the on-going conversation. The perspectives of a critical city entity on energy, infrastructure and the environment provided a baseline against which engagement between the city, civil society and the private sector can take place. In July we were delighted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI) for the design and implementation of a Capability Development Problem-Led (CDPL) executive leadership programme in South African metropolitan municipalities.

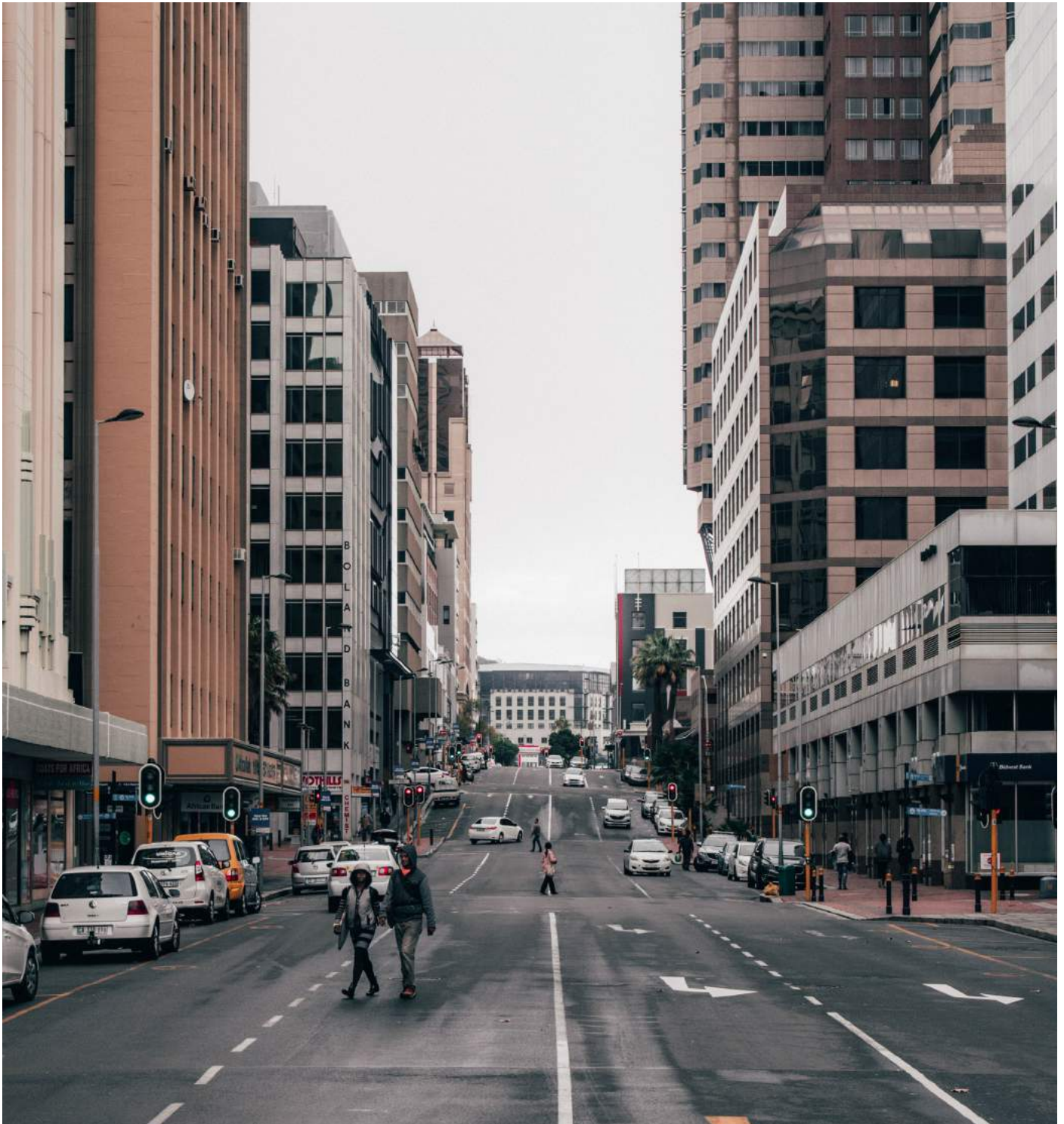
The genesis for the SACN CDPL executive leadership programme lies in the SACN strategic review which identified the lack of capability of the local state as an area of concern that should be addressed. The SACN CDPL executive leadership programme is one that will complement and supplement existing programmes that are only intended to build

the capacity of individuals in municipalities. It will focus on problem identification to build unique solutions to city problems from the bottom up, with all urban stakeholders.

Looking ahead we look forward to launching the State of City Finances 2022 report at the SACN Urban Festival in October.

The report (1) analyses city financial performance over the previous two local government administrative terms; (2) provides much greater context than before of the macroeconomic and global context within which cities operate; (3) makes linkages between city governance and city finances; and (4) provides an agenda for sustainable municipal financing into the future.

As such it is a significant departure from previous reports and complements the recently published SACN State of South African Cities 2021 report which focussed on urban governance.



TEAM NEWS

Welcoming a New Member to the SACN Team



Renuka Surajlall

Renuka has joined SACN as a Human Resources Specialist. Spanning a work career of 32 years, she has worked in various industries (retail, financial, petrochemicals and professional services) as an HR Practitioner, offering HR Generalist and Psychometric Services.

Our Team News

SACN's Siphelele Ngobese has been invited to chair the expert panel discussion on safe public space, at The Smart City Expo World Congress from the 15-17 November 2022 in Barcelona, Spain. With a broad focus on 'smart solutions for safer public spaces' the sub-themes to be covered in the facilitated discussion include Critical infrastructures, Surveillance, Urban Safety, Public Safety, Physical Security and City Sovereignty.

2022 the Congress (#SCEWC22) engages with the theme of the Smart City through 8 tracks, namely: Enabling Technologies, Energy & Environment, Mobility, Governance, Living & Inclusion, Economy, Infrastructure & Buildings, and Safety & Security.

Within this congress track, SACN is in a position to proffer a nuanced understanding of how smart cities (surveillance), urban safety, and public safety and inclusion intersect. There is the opportunity to share and disseminate SACN's work on both public space and closed-circuit television (CCTV) particularly the nuances and critical conversations we have unearthed in terms of the (non)correlation between surveillance and crime reduction.

The World Congress is an opportunity to widen the international dimensions of SACN's work. It further aligns to cementing SACN as a global actor and agenda setter in the area of inclusive public space; as well as the USRG as a template for learning and adaptation for the African region and beyond.



Held every three years, the UCLG World Summit and Congress is the largest gathering of mayors and local and regional practitioners worldwide. The World Summit and Congress builds the pledge of the local and regional governments from around the world to promote the aspirations of their communities.

This year, the UCLG World Summit and Congress was held in Daejeon, South Korea from 12 to 14 October. The Congress brought together over 3200 participants from more than 80 different countries. 350 speakers were included over the three-day programme, with high-level contributors such as the President of South Korea and the

former SG of the UN, Ban-ki Moon. Aware that failing future generations is not an option, this year's UCLG Congress focused on the theme "Local and Regional Governments Breaking Through as One", bringing the local leadership and international actors together to meet a scenario of breakthrough.

Team South Africa delegation was mostly comprised of local and regional leaders including mayors and municipal managers, coordinated by SALGA. The SACN delegation comprised a small team of three: the CEO Mr Sithole Mbanga, the Executive Manager: Governance, Strategy and Partnership Mr Luncedo Njezula, and the Project Manager Ms Kayla Brown. The delegation did not host any sessions but was able to attend sessions as participants and utilise the Congress for relationship-building and networking.





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