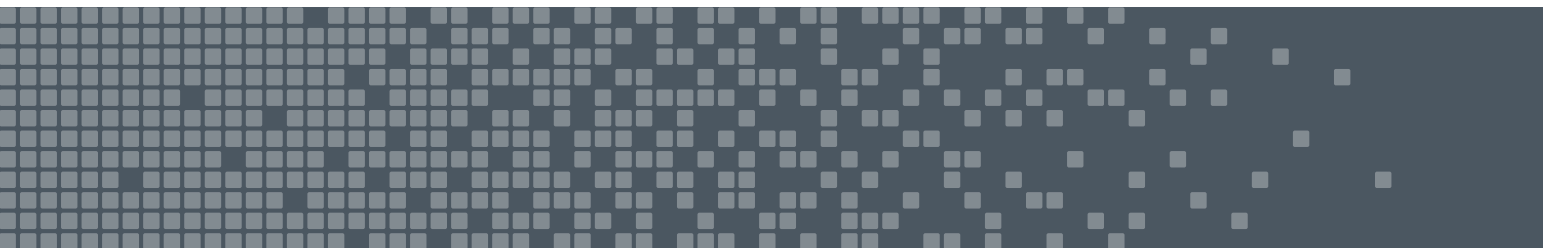


QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



JULY -
SEPTEMBER
2024-2025

Vol. 1

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Editor's Note

Dear Stakeholder, Welcome to our Quarterly Newsletter



Nosipho Hlatshwayo
CEO

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Welcome to an exciting edition packed with updates and achievements that reflect our ongoing journey toward building smarter, more inclusive cities! As we look back on the past quarter, we're thrilled to share some major highlights.

First, we dive into the 6th Dialogue for Urban Change, a groundbreaking learning alliance that took place in Germany, driving forward integrated urban development and fresh approaches to cooperation between national ministries. This event marks a critical moment in global urban collaboration.

Closer to home, we celebrate the SACN Innovation Programme team's participation in a prestigious panel at the Africa-US Smart Cities Lab hosted by Wits University, where they shared their expertise on smart, sustainable city solutions.

We also highlight the Productive Cities team's impactful work through a Stakeholder Engagement Workshop in Tshwane, focused on empowering women in the informal economy—a crucial conversation for the future of urban livelihoods.

In the spirit of collaboration, our Sustainable and Resilient Cities section reintroduces the ever-popular Cities' Lunchtime Chats, co-hosted by SACN and SALGA.

Meanwhile, in our Well Governed Cities section, we reflect on the knowledge exchange event around Off-grid Cities and the Governance of the Just Urban Transition, co-hosted with the University of the Western Cape's Politics and Urban Governance (PUG) Research Group and the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO). This event offered a deep dive into the challenges and opportunities for equitable urban governance.

We are excited to present two thought-provoking research papers: one exploring the governance of the Just Urban Transition and another from the City Communicator's Reference Group on Boosting Citizen Engagement in Urban Governance through Storytelling.

Lastly, as we mark Urban Month, we will be hosting the *Urban Film Festival: Launching the Good Hood Stories Season 3* in partnership with SACN and the Department of Human Settlements, celebrating World Cities Day on 31 October 2024. We encourage you to join us for this virtual event, as we will be screening the films and having a short panel discussion with the Season 3 Project Champions.

We hope this edition sparks inspiration and action. As always, we value your feedback and continued support!

Best Regards,

Nosipho Hlatshwayo





The 6th Dialogue for Urban Change



The 6th edition of the Dialogues for Urban Change (D4UC) was hosted by the City of Ludwigsburg, Germany, from 12th – 16th September 2024. Here, the participating cities and national institutions from Germany and South Africa updated on the progress of each city's Living Lab and had the privilege of visiting Living Labs and pop-up measures implemented by the City through collegial advice they received from participating in the D4UC. These included insightful walking tours to inner city transformation areas in Ludwigsburg.

By background, South Africa and Germany have championed a learning alliance on integrated urban development and new forms of cooperation based on bilateral agreements between counterpart national ministries. Both countries have national urban policies: the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) in South Africa and the National Urban Development Policy (NSP) in Germany. The collaboration between the two countries extends to the city level by developing a peer-to-peer (P2P) learning programme involving representatives from South Africa, such as the Department of Cooperative Governance, Department of Human Settlements, National Treasury, South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the South African Cities Network (SACN) and German representatives from the Association of German Cities (DST). The eight-city participants included KwaDukuza, Nelson Mandela Bay, Stellenbosch, and uMhlathuze in South Africa and the German cities of Bottrop, Karlsruhe, Ludwigsburg, and Nuremberg.

17th German Federal Congress on National Urban Policy

On the heels of the 6th D4UC, the Inclusive Cities programme had the privilege of representing SACN at the 17th German Federal Congress on National Urban Development Policy, hosted by the City of Heidelberg from 17-19 September. Organised by the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the congress was an opportunity for the German urban sector and its invited international partners and networks to come together and consider key issues. The international side events included a networking session among the South African, Ukrainian and American networks hosted by Germany. Key topics of consideration included Local to Global Cooperation in Urban Development in an International Context and The Power of Cities in the Transformative Reconstruction of Ukraine. A myriad of other side events and topics provided insight and learning for South African cities present.

The occasion also cemented cooperative relations between South Africa and Germany on the urban agenda, with the signing of a Statement of Intent between the South African COGTA Ministry, led by Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa, and their German principal and counterpart from the BMWSB.





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Africa - US Smart Cities Lab - 14 August 2024

The South African Cities Network's Innovation Programme Manager, Rebecca Gatang'i, represented SACN at the Inaugural Africa - US Smart Cities Lab at WITS University on 14 August 2024 by participating in a Panel Discussion in which she spoke about Smart Cities in South Africa from a Local Government Perspective.

The Smart Cities Lab aimed to unpack in detail what smart cities are, the infrastructure required for sustainable smart cities, and the financing and branding of smart cities. This lab was an unmissable opportunity for anyone passionate about the future of urban living. It brought together civil society organisations, government officials, and scholars to foster a comprehensive understanding and collaborative approach to developing smart cities.



Recommendations from SACN's Presentation:

- 1 Engage Early with Local Authorities:** Understand regulatory requirements and seek early engagement with Council or relevant authority body – PPP MFMA (Act 56 of 2003)
- 2 Focus on Capacity Building:** Invest in training and developing local technical expertise.
- 3 Promote Inclusivity:** Ensure that smart city solutions are accessible to all segments of the population.
- 4 Build Partnerships:** Collaborate with local businesses/Business Chambers, academic institutions, and community organisations.
- 5 Secure Sustainable Funding:** Explore innovative financing models and public-private partnerships.
- 6 Adapt to Local Context:** Customise solutions to fit the unique needs and conditions of South African municipalities.



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Stakeholder Engagement concerning the empowerment of informal traders within the City of Tshwane

The South African economy continues to grapple with various challenges, including sluggish growth, rising unemployment, and persistent inequality. Amid this landscape, the role of urban economies in driving inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development has become increasingly critical. The South African Cities Network's (SACN) Productive Cities Programme remains committed to supporting cities in creating environments conducive to entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic resilience by providing the necessary research and market intelligence.

During the past quarter, SACN participated in a Stakeholder Engagement on the ***Empowerment of Women in the Informal Economy Sector within the City of Tshwane***. This engagement was hosted by the Gauteng Provincial Office of the Commission for Gender Equality on 21 August 2024. The engagement centred on the empowerment of informal traders within the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, brought together critical stakeholders, and highlighted the crucial role of the policy and regulatory environment in facilitating conducive environments for small businesses to thrive and to protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable.



SACN Junior Researcher, Kopano Ntsoane.

During the engagement, the SACN presented research from its catalogue designed to address the barriers that hinder the development of informal and township economies. Specifically, these reports focus on national, provincial, and municipal regulatory frameworks and how they can be better aligned to create an enabling environment for informal traders and small-scale entrepreneurs. In this context, the SACN remains a crucial partner and facilitator for cities seeking to balance regulation with empowerment. Looking ahead, the Productive Cities Programme will continue providing the research and market intelligence that can guide cities toward more inclusive and sustainable economies. The SACN's commitment to building cities that are not only productive but also equitable and resilient will remain at the forefront of its efforts to contribute to South Africa's broader economic recovery.

Sustainable and Resilient Cities



Danga Mughogho
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Sustainable and
Resilient Cities

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Cities' Lunchtime Chats: The Nexus Edition is back!

The South African Cities Network (SACN) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) are excited to share that the popular Cities' Lunchtime Chats have resumed in the first quarter of our new financial year. We hosted Chat No.5 on 5 September 2024. This Chat focused on the Climate Change Act, which President Cyril Ramaphosa recently signed into law. The Chat looked at the implications this legislation will have on our municipalities. One of the main points from this session is that the Act recognises the need for specialised skills. Therefore, it encourages municipalities to partner with public and private sector entities to bolster technical expertise.

The guest speakers included:

- **Faith Nkohla**, Director: Climate Change Adaptation, National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE),
- **Oscar Mokotedi**, Senior Researcher, CSIR
- **Moses Khangale**, Manager, Stakeholder Programmes, Santam,
- **Mzukisi Gwata**, Principal Specialist, City of Johannesburg
- **Nomthandazo Hanise**, Senior Manager - Integrated Environmental Management Planning Unit, Buffalo City Metro Municipality.

If you missed this webinar, you can watch the recording on our YouTube Channel by clicking below:

CITIES' LUNCHTIME CHATS: THE URBAN NEXUS EDITION



UNPACKING THE CLIMATE CHANGE ACT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The Climate Change Act, recently signed into law by President Ramaphosa, recognises that municipalities may need assistance in enhancing technical expertise, so partnerships with both the public and private sectors are encouraged.

5 SEPT
12:30 - 2:00PM

Chat No. 5
[REGISTER HERE](#)



Faith Nkohla
Director: Climate Change Adaptation: Socio-Economic Sectors,
Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE)



Oscar Mokotedi
Senior Researcher,
CSIR



Musiwalo Moses Khangale
Manager, Stakeholder Programmes,
Santam



Mzukisi Gwata
Principal Specialist,
Climate Change Adaptation,
City of Johannesburg



Nomthandazo Hanise
Senior Manager - Integrated Environmental Management Planning Unit,
Buffalo City Metro Municipality





Sustainable and Resilient Cities

Chat No.6 took place on 30 September 2024. This chat focused on Biodiversity Management in Cities under the COP16 theme of Peace with Nature. The discussion aimed to pave the way for a sustainable future where cities and nature co-exist in perfect harmony

The guest speakers included:

- **Dr Charmaine Oxtoby**, Biophysical Specialist at the City of Cape Town
- **Tshilidzi Netshisaulu**, Control Biodiversity Officer, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

If you missed this webinar, you can watch the recording on our YouTube Channel by clicking below:

**CITIES' LUNCHTIME CHATS:
THE URBAN NEXUS EDITION**

**PEACE WITH NATURE: PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT IN CITIES**
Paving the way for a sustainable future where cities and nature co-exist in perfect harmony

30 SEPT
12:30 - 2:00PM

Chat No. 6
[REGISTER HERE](#)

Dr Charmaine Oxtoby
Biophysical Specialist
City of Cape Town

Tshilidzi Netshisaulu
Control Biodiversity Officer
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

South African CitiesNetwork

SALGA
SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
Inspiring service delivery

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Off-Grid Cities and the Governance of the Just Urban Transition

The South African Cities Network (SACN), in partnership with the University of the Western Cape's Politics and Urban Governance (PUG) Research Group and the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GRCO), hosted a thought-provoking online Knowledge Exchange event on Off-Grid Cities and the Governance of the Just Urban Transition on 22 July 2024.

The session looked at:

- **Off-Grid Cities:** Highlighting the outcomes of the NRF-funded research project examining how urban elites are seceding from state-provided infrastructure networks in favour of private hybrid and off-grid technologies and how this impacts social justice, climate change, and sustainable urban development and
- **Governance of the Just Urban Transition:** Gain insights from the South African Cities Network's research paper, which examines the process of shifting towards socially just and environmentally sustainable cities and how that requires realigning how cities are governed, how existing institutional systems function, and the actors instrumental in supporting this transition.

Professor Fiona Anciano (UWC's PUG Research Group) and Dr Christina Culwick-Fatti (UWC's PUG Research Group and GRCO) presented the research findings.

The session featured a panel consisting of:

- **Dhesigen Naidoo**, Head of Climate Adaptation: Presidential Climate Commission (PCC)
- **Dr Tracy Ledger**, Head of the Energy Transition Programme, Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI)
- **Anthea Stephens**, Climate and Sustainability Lead, National Treasury Cities Support Programme (CSP)

City Respondents included Nomvula Mofokeng and Ondela Tywakadi of the City of Johannesburg and Daniel Sullivan from the City of Cape Town.

The overall objectives of this session were:



Share compelling research findings on elite infrastructural transitions and just transition governance.



Spark discussions on creating cities that are environmentally sound and socially inclusive.



Explore pathways towards effective collaboration between stakeholders for a sustainable future.

You can watch the full recording on our YouTube channel; click the play button below

OFF-GRID CITIES AND GOVERNANCE OF THE JUST URBAN TRANSITION

22 JULY 2024 - 10AM-12PM

Join us for a thought-provoking online Knowledge Exchange Event co-hosted by the South African Cities Network (SACN), the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GRCO).

Panelists:

- Dhesigen Naidoo: Head of Climate Adaptation, South African Presidential Climate Commission (PCC)
- Dr Tracy Ledger: Head of the Energy Transition Programme, Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI)
- Anthea Stephens: Climate and Sustainability Lead, National Treasury Cities Support Programme (CSP)

City Respondents:

- Nomvula Mofokeng: Head, Water Services and Policy Regulation, City of Johannesburg
- Ondela Tywakadi: Principal Specialist Water Services and Policy Regulation, City of Johannesburg
- Daniel Sullivan: Director Risk and Resilience, Future Planning and Resilience, City of Cape Town

Presentations:

- Professor Fiona Anciano: Professor in Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape, head of the Politics and Urban Governance Research Group
- Dr Christina Culwick-Fatti: Programme Lead, Urban Governance Politics and Urban Governance Research Group

Logos at the bottom: South African CitiesNetwork, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE, PUG research, GRCO

Research Paper: Governance of the Just Urban Transition

The SACN developed this research paper, reflecting on the nature and dynamics of the institutional and governance shifts required for a just urban transition.

The objectives of this paper are:

- Enable municipal leaders to deal with the complexities of transitioning to inclusive, equitable, resilient, and spatially integrated cities that are de-carbonised, resource-efficient and biodiverse.
- Governance that recognises the competing interests and roles of people, power and politics.
- Identify and understand problems; iterative governance processes with stakeholders; collectively agreed objectives that meet social justice principles.



Governance of the Just Urban Transition

DOWNLOAD



Research Paper: Boosting Citizen Engagement in Urban Governance through Storytelling

BOOSTING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT in Urban Governance THROUGH STORYTELLING



DOWNLOAD



Storytelling and Urban Governance Paper was developed through engagements with our City Communicators' Reference Group, which highlights the effectiveness of storytelling in communicating complex issues to engage effectively with citizens:

Some of the stories featured include:

- City of Tshwane: Educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities through the Tshwane ya Tima revenue collection campaign.
- eThekweni Municipality communicated complex issues and information about the flood disaster in 2022 through stories.
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and the City of Cape Town by mobilising citizens and fostering participatory democracy through their "Save Water" campaigns.

SACN to mark World Cities Day 2024 with the launch of Good Hood Stories Season 3!

Join us on World Cities Day as we launch Season 3 of the Good Hood Stories films.

The Good Hood Stories celebrate creative and collaborative city-making practices taking place across South African neighbourhoods. The third season of the Good Hood Stories has been created in partnership with the Department of Human Settlements and with a thematic focus on *transforming informal settlements*.

Two exceptional projects are featured, which demonstrate two important aspects of informal settlement transformation: the delivery of sanitation services and solid waste management. Project Preparations Trust's partnership with eThekweni Municipality on solid waste management and Asivikeland's gender-responsive service delivery in Knysna, Western Cape, both feature highly collaborative community-led approaches to informal settlement upgrading, which are championed through partnerships between different urban sectors.

The event will include a film screening and two short panel discussions with the project champions.

- **Date:** Thursday, 31 October 2024 (World Cities Day)
- **Time:** 10:00 – 12:00
- **Venue:** Virtual via MS Teams - [REGISTER HERE](#)
- **Host Organisations:** South African Cities Network and the Department of Human Settlements

YOU ARE INVITED

31 OCT

10 AM - 12 PM
MS TEAMS - VIRTUAL SCREENING

Urban Film Festival
LAUNCH OF GOOD HOOD STORIES SEASON 3

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World Cities Day
October 31, 2024
BETTER CITY, BETTER LIFE

human settlements
Department: Human Settlements
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

South African CitiesNetwork

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES NETWORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, CELEBRATING WORLD CITIES DAY 2024.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT SADHNA BHANA AT SADHNA@SACITIES.NET



As our loyal readers of our
Quarterly Newsletter, we would
love your feedback!
Please [click here](#).



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Team News & Events



SACN Appoints Executive Manager: Programmes

The SACN is excited to announce that Mrs Yasmin Coovadia has been appointed the new Executive Manager: Programmes. Yasmin has experience in city governance and planning, human settlements, development finance and spatial transformation. Her focus is on programme integration and futures.

SACN Appoints Programme Manager: Inclusive Cities

The SACN is excited to announce that Ms Kayla Brown has been appointed the new Programme Manager: Inclusive Cities. Kayla has been the Acting Programme Manager and we are delighted in her permanent appointment. She has a passion for conducting research into the issues and dynamics affecting municipalities and their goals of achieving built environment integration.

