

IUCN CEM / UBHub Africa Cities & Nature Newsletter

January 2025



UBHub and IUCN have begun hosting monthly 30-minute “briefings” that aim to connect practitioners, policy makers and academia by providing relevant information in nature conservation and regeneration from an urban perspective. Participants have an opportunity to share upcoming events and initiatives, funding opportunities and announce calls for collaborations. We hope you will be able to join us often for sharing and connection across organisations!

The fourth Africa Regional Briefing was held on 29 January 2025, where the city urban nature briefing was given by eThekweni Municipality (Durban) in South Africa. Mr. Sabelo with a special focus on a presentation from the eThekweni Municipality (Durban) in South Africa. **Durban** about their biodiversity management practice and mainstreaming across different city departments and functions. Planning in the Biodiversity Management Department at eThekweni Municipality (Durban) in South Africa. He provided an overview of planning in a global biodiversity hotspot in the context of Durban. Durban is located in the middle of the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany hotspot and faces the challenges of an expanding city with a population of 3.5 million people.

The region’s biodiversity offers a significant benefit to the people of the area, with the total asset value of natural and semi-natural capital in the municipal area estimated to be in the order of R47.8 billion. The eThekweni Municipality’s approach to biodiversity planning has been to mainstream biodiversity into the city’s land use scheme and planning, particularly

through the municipality's 2017 Biodiversity strategy and Action Plan. The municipality has mapped vegetation types, and the Systematic Conservation Assessment (SCA) Project aims to identify important areas for inclusion within the Durban Metropolitan Open Space System (D'MOSS) and provide data that is used in the proactive and reactive conservation workstream. The D'MOSS is a spatial layer representing a series of interconnecting open spaces in private, public and traditional authority ownership that seeks to highlight environmentally sensitive and conservation worthy areas for current and future generations (including municipal and regional nature reserves). The D'MOSS informs all levels of plans in the municipality from the broad-scale Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and its spatial representation, the Spatial Development Framework (SDF), to the regional, i.e. Spatial Development Plans (SDP), and local, i.e. Local Area Plans (LAP) and town planning schemes. The Development Assessment Guidelines in the municipality also provide the key environmental requirements for development in the region.

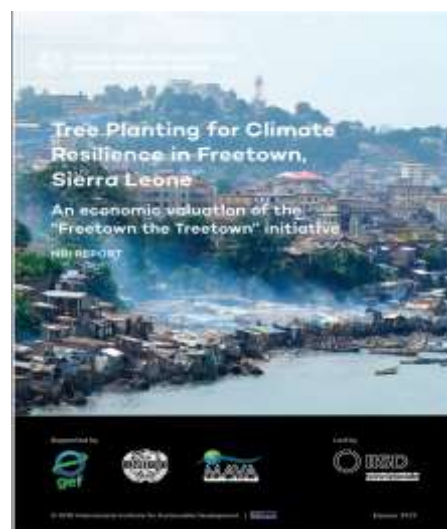
In addition to formal biodiversity planning mechanisms, Durban also prizes approaches to advocacy and communication to foster biodiversity protection, including through State of Biodiversity Reports, the eThekweni Biodiversity Forum, conservation partnerships, and the support of biodiversity champions.

Eric Hubbard and Julie Goodness, Co-Leads for the Africa Region, and Frantz Zebaze, Africa Young Professional, guided discussion and exchange on the Cape Town presentation, and invited announcements from participants.

We warmly invite you to take a look at the [Africa Regional Briefing folder](#), where you'll find the briefing presentation deck with more information about IUCN and UBHub global updates as well as relevant publications and links. We also invite you to share the briefing link with colleagues working in urban nature and biodiversity restoration and conservation.

February (2025) Briefing

Our next regional briefing will be held on Wednesday 26 February at 11:00 (GMT). This session will feature the city of Freetown, Sierra Leone and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). The Freetown team led by Manja Kargbo, Team Lead of the Mayor's Delivery Unit and Climate Action Technical Lead in the Office of the Mayor. Manja will present the #FreetownTheTreeTown journey to use nature-based infrastructure to transform climate vulnerable landscapes, addressing climate risk at city-scale, creating a circular green and blue economy effect as well as building an investment pipeline of natural assets to finance the city's adaptation priorities in the Climate Action Strategy. We will also be joined by Michail Kapetanakis, Research Analyst, Sustainable Infrastructure at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) to share with participants the SAVi tool for natural capital valuation



utilised in the Freetown case. IISD developed the Sustainable Asset Valuation (SAVi) to demonstrate to governments, investors and citizens why sustainable assets can deliver better value for money and more attractive internal rates of return. IISD's Sustainable Asset Valuation (SAVi) demonstrates why sustainable infrastructure can deliver better value-for-money for citizens and investors. You can find out more at iisd.org/savi.

Please register for the next briefing [here](#). Feel free to forward this newsletter to colleagues.

Announcements

African Urban Heat Summit

- **On 6 February 2025**— the first African Urban Heat summit was held in Sierra Leone, marking a significant step in urgently elevating and addressing extreme heat impacts. Cities, due to population density, informal housing and heat trapping building materials, are experiencing the effects of extreme heat, which is threatening lives, livelihoods, and economies, particularly for women and vulnerable communities. The one-day summit, officially opened by Sierra Leone's Vice President, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, was co-hosted by Climate Resilience for All and Freetown City Council. It brought together mayors from Kanifing, Monrovia, Conakry, Accra, Ouagadougou, and Abidjan, along with climate experts, local council leaders from across Sierra Leone, and multilateral organizations. This landmark gathering emphasized the urgent need for collaborative solutions to address extreme heat in Africa's rapidly urbanizing cities.
- Technical support heat action planning grants will be competitively awarded to select communities in West African cities and councils which attended the African Heat Summit, with technical support from CRA. These grants will support the initial development of science-based planning to develop urban heat action plans based on the experience and example of Freetown's heat action plan--Africa's first-ever plan--as a model for other heat action plans, prioritizing and engaging the most vulnerable communities.



Recent Publications

- City of Cape Town: DRAFT Cape Town Biodiversity Spatial Plan 2025 aims to ensure that the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998; NEMA) principles are applied within Cape Town in an effective and equitable manner, to minimise further loss and degradation of natural habitat in biodiversity priority areas. The Plan is still in draft form and is currently published for comment. It can be found here:
<https://www.capetown.gov.za/City-Connect/Have-your-say/Issues-open-for-public-comment/draft-cape-town-biodiversity-spatial-plan-2025>.
- City of Freetown: During the Africa Urban Heal Summit the Freetown Heat Action Plan (HAP) was launched. The HAP outlined targeted actions, policies



Cape Town Biodiversity Spatial Plan 2025

Replaces the Cape Town Bioregional Plan 2015 adopted as Council Policy¹ on 19 August 2015
 C43/08/15: RESOLUTIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR IN TERMS OF DELEGATED POWERS AND DECISIONS TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE MAYORAL COMMITTEE: JULY 2015

Prepared by the
City of Cape Town Municipality
 Spatial Planning and Environment Directorate
 Environmental Management Department
 Biodiversity Management Branch

August 2015 Edited by: Arnie Purves E: Arnie.Purves@capetown.gov.za Patricia Holmes E: Patricia.Holmes@capetown.gov.za	Revision 1: January 2025 Edited by: Charmaine Oxtoby E: Charmaine.Oxtoby@capetown.gov.za
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¹ This plan has not been published in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004), but adopted as Council Policy.

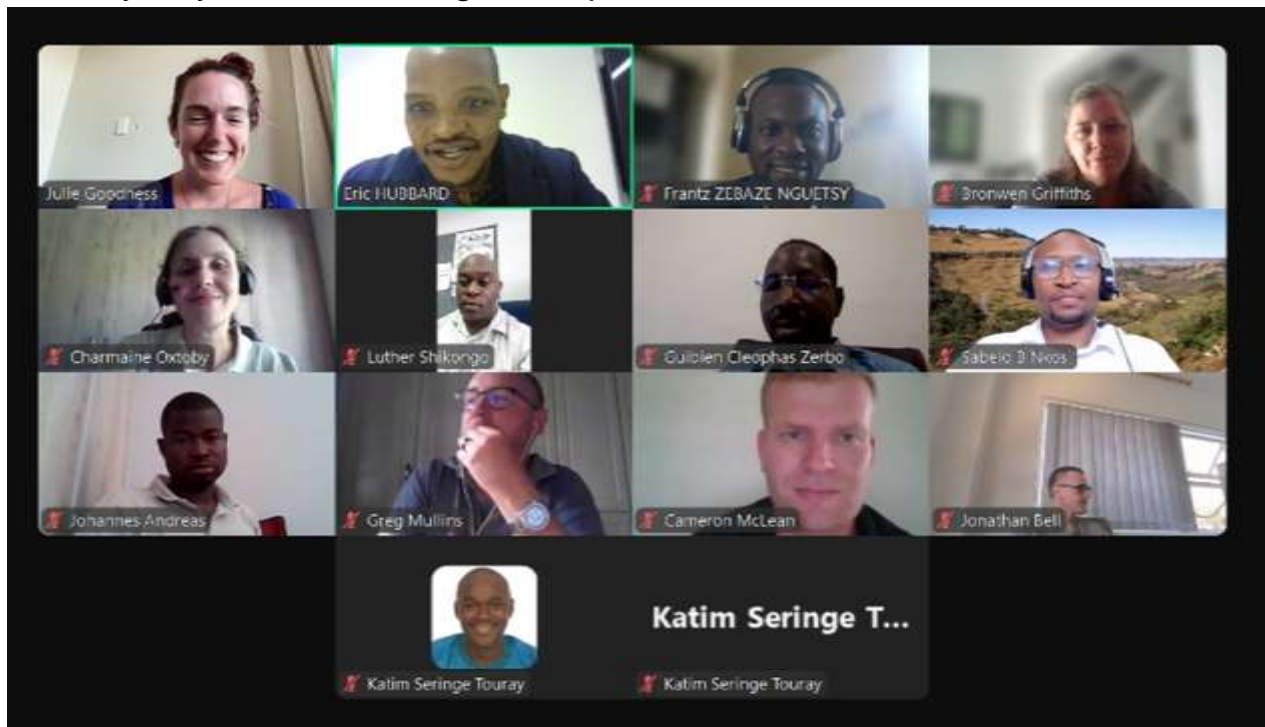
Making progress possible. Together.



and partnerships to enhance heat resilience. These included the creation of cooling corridors and green spaces to reduce heat exposure, infrastructure improvements to adapt urban areas to rising temperatures and protective measures for vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly. Additionally, it emphasised public awareness campaigns on heat-related risks and solutions.

Thank you all for your participation! Feel free to invite your colleagues to join us for the February monthly briefing on 26 February 2025 where the city of Freetown, Sierra Leone and the International Institute on Sustainable Development (IISD) will brief on the co-design of the #FreetownTheTreeTown Natural Capital Valuation / Integrated Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) to support implementation of the Freetown Natural Capital Investment Strategy.

January City Nature Briefing Participants



Kindly use this link to access the recording of the January Cities and Urban Nature Briefing:
https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/QMdx2D8vXnvCV36lqSTOcLRovf7k7e76uKB9FMjK_sriE5aFIFrXhPXRaXRbKo1l.cBF2gw65IBLbm5W

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Best,
Eric Hubbard and Julie Goodness
Africa Regional Co-Leads, IUCN CEM Urban Ecosystems SWG

