

### Introduction

The need for sustainable urban areas has never been as relevant as today. Set against growing global urbanisation trends, this outlook is set to increase in coming decades. The impacts and pressures on natural resources are tremendous – and if unchecked will be unsustainable, even catastrophic, due to increased disaster risk and reduced quality of life due to exacerbated climate change impacts. This case study demonstrates how mainstreaming biodiversity at city and landscape level ensures that socio-economic development priorities are not in conflict or competition with protecting the environment, but that development is supported by the sustainable use of natural resources, contributing to cities' resilience.

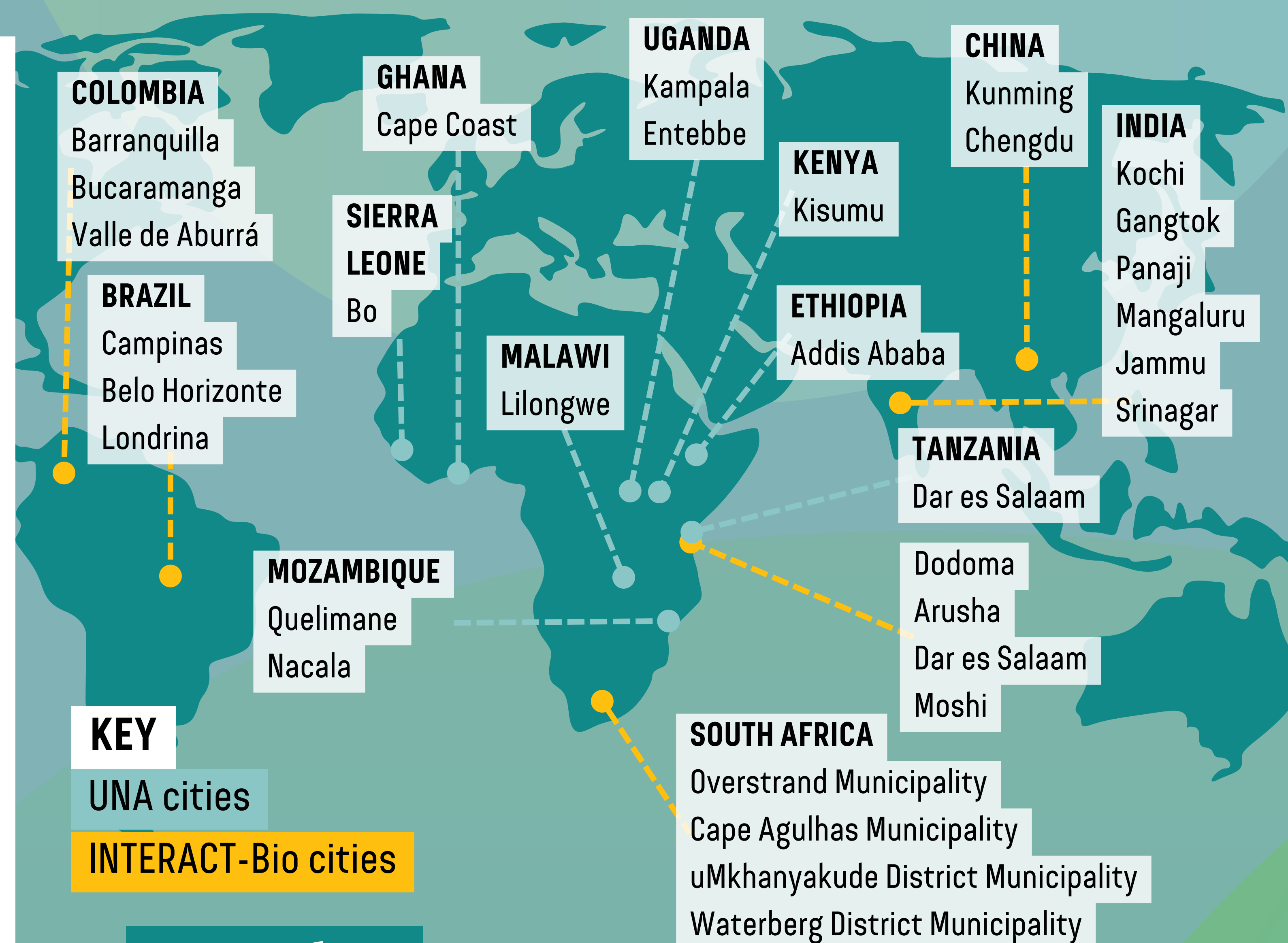
ICLEI Africa's projects, the **Urban Natural Assets (UNA) Programme** and **INTERACT-Bio** provide key opportunities to leverage partnerships and collaborating in supporting city and subnational government practitioners to mainstream biodiversity into policy and planning at city and landscape scale.

UNA aims to integrate nature-based solutions for increased resilience. INTERACT-Bio, a Global South project, aims to improve utilization and management of urban nature within rapidly expanding cities and surrounding regions.

These two projects' unique focus, including a **human rights-based approach**, present best practice methodologies on participatory processes, as well as practical tools for urban planners to build more sustainable cities, harnessing **nature-based solutions**.

### Materials & methods

- Nature provides diverse life-supporting and life-enhancing contributions to people in cities and towns. All cities critically depend on healthy interconnected ecosystems within and around them, so it is essential that nature is fully integrated into urban planning and development.
- There is a growing urgency for collective and large-scale action to protect the biodiversity in and around cities to prevent irreversible loss and damage to the natural systems we depend on. The **CitiesWithNature** platform provides useful tools and resources for these actions, but also an Action Platform to report on actions taken
- Placing people at the centre of development policies and programmes is key to effective sustainable development
- Harnessing **the five ICLEI pathways**, towards low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development and embedding a people-centered approach into these pathways at ICLEI Africa means that we:
  - Promote a human and gender rights-based approach to climate, nature and urban systems
  - Ensure that socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects are prioritised in urban development processes
  - Foster a bottom-up approach where minorities and vulnerable groups are involved in decision making processes to ensure better outcomes for all



### Results

#### Best practices for mainstreaming biodiversity for urban resilience

1. Apply a whole of society approach
2. Evaluate and understand the intersectionality and contextual realities
3. Use current technologies
4. Develop tools and resources to support evidence-based decision-making
5. Design contextually sound interventions
6. Create an enabling environment for mainstreaming gender in biodiversity
7. Promote collaborative efforts between city officials and informal communities
8. Foster peer learning
9. Support multi-level governance
10. Use the concept of human rights to frame the importance of safeguarding nature

### Conclusion



- 1. Mainstreaming biodiversity as a catalyst for revitalizing the ecosystem and urban areas can only be successful when including human vulnerability in the development agenda.
- 2. The transdisciplinary approach of both INTERACT-Bio and UNA has proven particularly important given increasing recognition of the interconnectedness between social and ecological systems, highlighting benefits that ecosystems and ecological infrastructure provide to society, specifically set against the global targets aimed at conserving and protecting our natural resources, adopted in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

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