South African CitiesNetwork

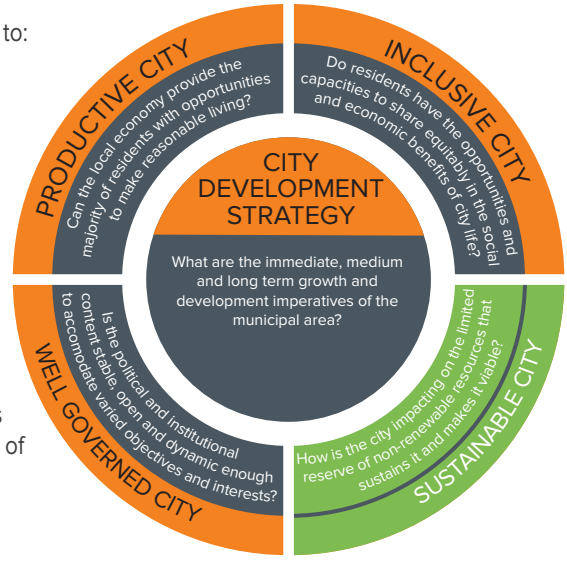
SUSTAINABLE CITIES
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE **SACN**

Established in 2002 as a learning network of South Africa's largest cities and their key partners, the South African Cities Network (SACN) encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practices on urban development and city management. The SACN's objectives are to:

- Promote good governance and management in South African cities
- Analyse strategic challenges facing South African cities
- Collect, collate, analyse, assess, disseminate and apply the experience of large city government in a South African context
- Encourage shared-learning partnerships among the various actors in order to enhance good governance of South African cities.

The SACN thematic logic is that high-performing cities are productive, inclusive and sustainable cities which are well-governed, and guided by long-term city development strategies.



ABOUT THE **SUSTAINABLE CITIES** PROGRAMME

The world is rapidly urbanising: between 1950 and 2014, the percentage of the world's population living in cities grew from 30% to 54%, and is projected to rise to 66% by 2050. South Africa is not immune to this global phenomenon: by 2030, projections show that 71.3% of the country's population will be living in urban areas, reaching nearly 80% by 2050. Johannesburg is the most populous city in the country – between 2001 and 2011, the city's population doubled, reaching 4.4 million people.

The SACN's Sustainable Cities programme argues that sustainability and growth are interdependent, and that environmental sustainability is the foundation for the economic and social well-being of citizens. Although environmental sustainability is mainstreamed in policy and across government spheres, the transition to sustainable cities remains slow.

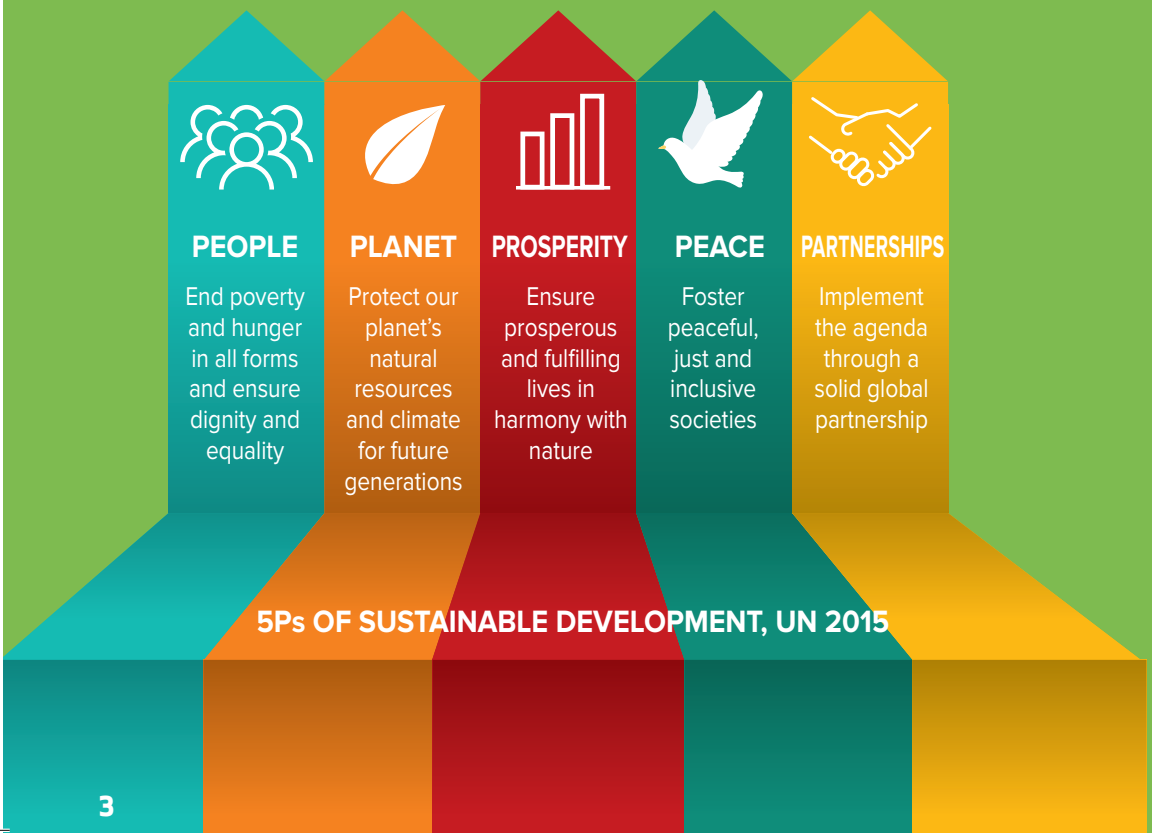
A typical city in South Africa is growing in a resource-intensive and inefficient manner, in part because of the current silo approach to planning.

Faster transition requires sustainability to be embedded in the city's development paradigm, i.e. seen as central to service delivery, not as the "green agenda". If cities are to transition to sustainable cities, they must pursue spatial transformation that encourages compact cities, sustainable neighbourhoods, and natural and open spaces.

This booklet explains the importance of sustainable cities, presents an overview of the SACN's Sustainable Cities programme, within the broader global and national context, describes the programme's strategic framework 2017–2021 highlights past and planned work.

WHAT IS A **SUSTAINABLE CITY?**

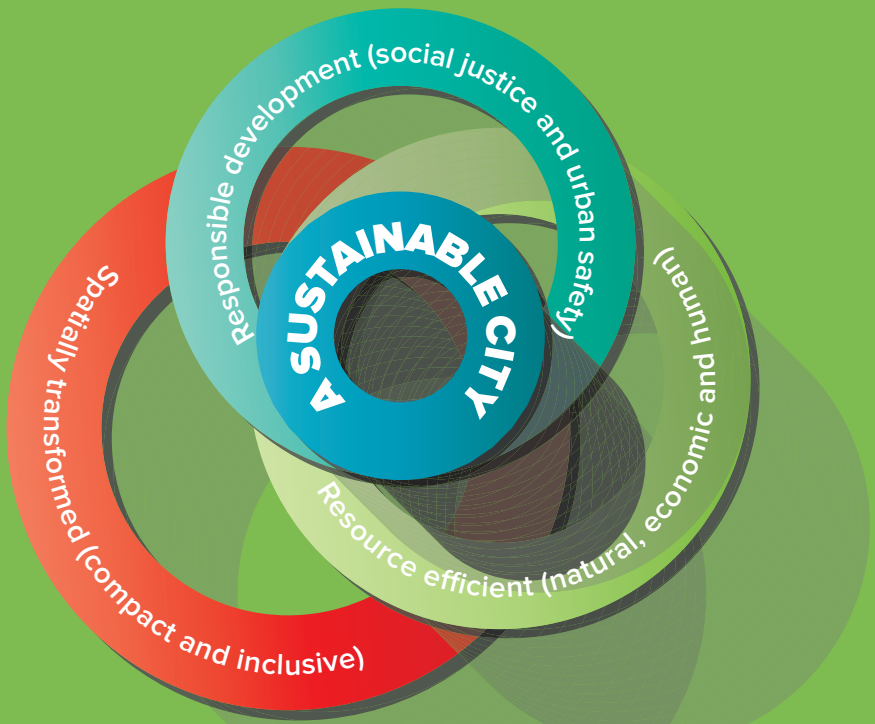
A **sustainable city** must conform to all the five, equally important and interlinked pillars of sustainable development, as advanced by the United Nations. These pillars are: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.



5Ps OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, UN 2015

A **sustainable city** is one that meets its developmental responsibility in a sustainable, spatially transformed and resource-efficient way, taking into account environmental thresholds.

Key features of a sustainable city are **social justice** and **urban safety**, **compact** and **inclusive spaces**, and **efficient use** of natural, economic and human resources.



GLOBAL **CONNECTION**

The importance of cities, and hence the need to change the trajectory of unsustainable development, is recognised in global, national and local policies, plans and frameworks, as illustrated below.

GLOBAL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

TOGETHER BEYOND HABITAT III

Cleaner, resilient cities'
Reduced greenhouse gases
Innovative, green initiatives

PARIS2015
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP21·CMP11

NATIONAL

IUDF Integrated Urban Development Framework

2030 NDP

National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan (NSSD 1)
2011-2014

LOCAL

SUSTAINABLE CITIES PROGRAMME

ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABILITY

Buffalo City, Ekurhuleni, Ethekwini, Johannesburg, Mangaung, Msunduzi, Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane

CITIES SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA

HOW TO ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION?

A city as a 'system' must exist for many years to come because generations will continue to live in the system. The slow transition to sustainable cities is not because of a lack of policy or commitment. It is because of an inadequately integrated and holistic approach to sustainability, coupled with limited financial and human resources. To accelerate this transition, some key shifts are needed:

- A **systemic approach**, at strategic and senior management level, is critical for improving the city's response to becoming sustainable.
- **Collaboration** is imperative, both within city structures and externally – the three government spheres, private sector, knowledge institutions, civil society and all citizens – in order to ensure buy-in and the leveraging of sustainable partnerships and efficient resource use.
- A **robust framework** for implementation, linked to practical key performance indicators and with a monitoring and evaluation component.

Ten principles are proposed as a framework for transition towards 2030, aligned with the overall vision of cities in the future, i.e. inclusive, productive, sustainable and well-governed cities that benefit all who inhabit them. This framework could be used as a tool to implement and test the efficacy of city development strategies.

As the principles are inter-linked in the system, the implication is that neglecting any of the principles could negatively affect the system's overall sustainability. Therefore, cities should define tailor-made programmes and projects in all the principles.

Ten principles for transitioning to sustainable cities

1. Collaboration: transition from silos to systems
2. Internal and external strategic alignment
3. Resource efficiency and closing the loops
4. Increased renewable energy and energy efficiency
5. Diversity embraced and leveraged
6. Capacity building as a critical enabler for change
7. Resilient and effective service delivery integrated and redefined
8. Localisation within the city construct
9. Thriving livelihoods
10. Data intelligence

SUSTAINABLE CITIES
ROADMAP 2011–2021

2011 — 2016 — 2021

SOCR III

Cities are resilient but face key pressures & vulnerabilities requiring intervention and support

DEAL DECISIVELY WITH CITIES VULNERABILITIES

Stakeholders address key challenges affecting cities' perfomance.

Cross-cutting issues: climate change & rural-urban interdepencies.

SOCR IV

Cities have been effective drivers of local & national development, but all actors have to pull together.

Looking forward to 2021 the focus is on sustainable infrastructure & resource efficiency.

RESILIENT BUILT FORM & RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Spatial transformation & built environment integration

Sustainable infrastructure & resource efficiency

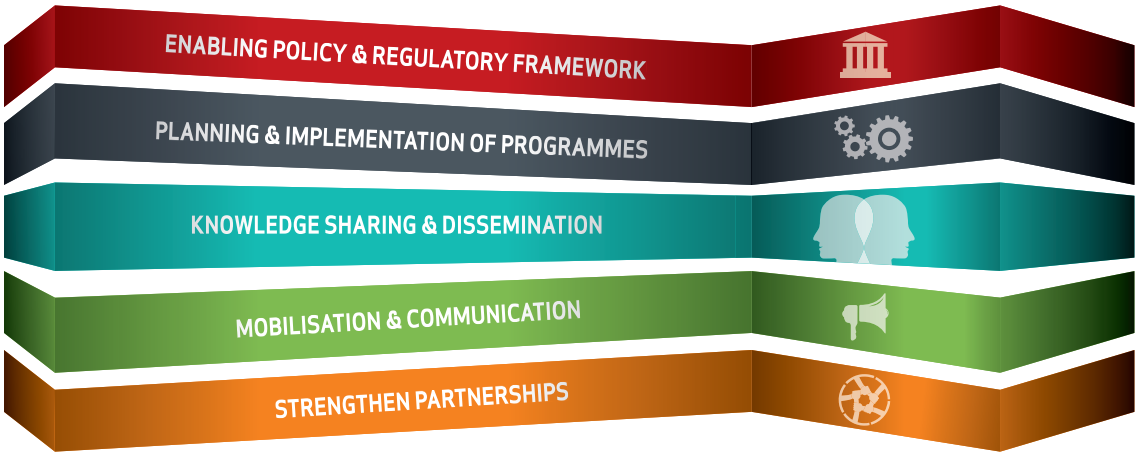
SOCR V

Cities are at the centre through collective intelligence & action and leveraging global & national urban agenda

SUSTAINABLE CITIES
BUSINESS PLAN 2017–2021

Recognising that local government does not have the capacity to deal with some challenges that contribute to the slow transition to sustainable cities, the SACN's plan aims to strengthen strategic collaboration and partnerships for knowledge generation, application, dissemination and communication. In particular, the Sustainable Cities programme will continue to collaborate with key partners, such as the Department of Environmental Affairs, Department of Cooperative Governance, National Treasury and other relevant national and provincial departments and agencies, the donor/funding community, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society.

For the period 2017–2021 under the theme sustainable infrastructure and resource efficiency, the programme is anchored on five pillars that are considered critical points of intervention for any local government support.



Sustainable development is fundamental to city existence and liveability of its citizens.

KEY **PROJECTS**

SUSTAINABLE **ENERGY**

Municipalities have a role to play in sustainable energy including being a renewable energy generator. Such projects would meet other national objectives, such as GHG emission reductions, local economic development and jobs. However, the policy and legislative/regulatory regime does not currently support municipal electricity generation to the extent needed to entice investment and unlock the available and financially feasible opportunities. Municipalities can also deploy more energy efficiency measures, which can result in huge financial and carbon emissions savings. Energy performance contracting in buildings remains under-utilised in municipal facilities and operations. Energy efficiency across the industrial, commercial and residential sectors should be rolled out through partnerships with private sector, other spheres of government and civil society.

Key publications:

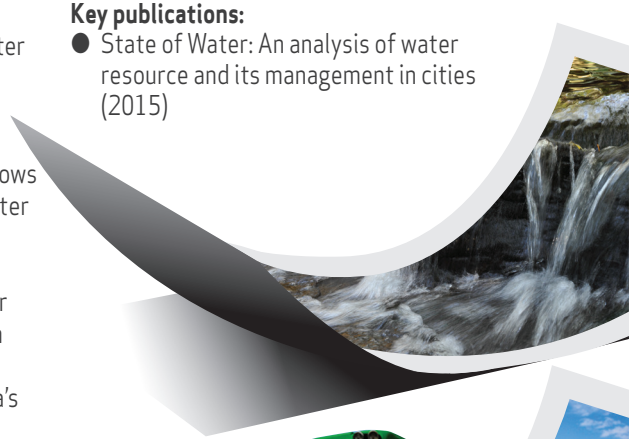
- Use of Energy Performance Contracting by Municipalities (2016)
- Tshwane City Energy Futures: Modelling Sustainable Energy Scenarios for Tshwane (2016)
- Modelling Energy Efficiency Potential in Cities (2014)
- A Case for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (2014)

WATER MANAGEMENT

South Africa is a water-scarce country. Therefore, cities need to manage freshwater ecosystems and catchments effectively in order to provide residents with access to reliable, safe and quality water and sanitation services. The recent drought shows the need for greater innovation around water supply and demand management. Despite progress on access to services and the blue/green drop status, non-revenue water losses and inefficient consumption remain a challenge for all municipalities. These water losses are indicative of South Africa's ageing water infrastructure, inadequate maintenance and old leaking pipes.

Key publications:

- State of Water: An analysis of water resource and its management in cities (2015)



FOOD SECURITY

In South African cities, food insecurity is high and needs to be looked at within the broader food system. Municipalities can improve local sustainability by addressing food waste, as the food system is a major generator of waste within urban areas. South African cities also need to learn from each other and from cities elsewhere on the continent and in the world.

Key publications:

- Urban Food Economies in Africa (2016)
- A Study on Current and Future Realities for Urban Food Security in South Africa (2015)

WASTE MANAGEMENT

South Africa has not yet developed a re-use and recycle culture. Landfill remains the most common method for disposing solid waste, despite the negative environmental impacts and the depleted airspace capacity in most cities that leads to the need to open new ones. Given the limited resources, sustainable waste management practices should be pursued, taking into consideration the role played by the informal sector i.e. waste pickers.

Key publications:

- Framework for the Development of Guidelines on Waste Picker Integration (2016)
- State of Waste Management in Cities: Modelling the effects of landfilling as a disposal method (2014)
- A Case for Municipal Solid Waste (2014)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change does not distinguish between developed and developing countries – the only difference is that, unlike the developed countries, developing countries have not built resilience and capacity to cope, and so are hit harder by climate change. Cities need to start doing things differently using existing resources. Central to this shift is the importance of knowing the baseline, measuring, reporting and evaluation. Also important is the need to communicate simply and to the point about climate change and how it affects service delivery both within government and the broader society.

Key publications:

- Accelerating the Transition into Green Transport in South African Cities (2015)
- City of Tshwane Vulnerability Assessment to Climate Change (2015)
- City of Joburg Climate Change Strategic Framework (2015)
- Cities Resilience to Climate Change (2014)
- A Guideline on How to Conduct GHG Baseline Reporting (2014)

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Cities are growing in a resource-intensive, inefficient manner. It is not sustainable to continue planning within silos and rolling out services and infrastructure in a fragmented manner. What is needed is to embed sustainability and higher resource efficiency in development, and to elevate the benefits of green infrastructure and ecosystem services for communities – along with green procurement practices.

Key publications:

- Planning for Green Infrastructure: Options for South African Cities (2016)

RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES

The current approaches to providing and extending urban and rural services in South Africa are resource- and energy-intensive, and are not sustainable. How resources are supplied and used needs to change drastically, so that more can be achieved with what is available, in the interests of greater equity and lower environmental impact. An improved understanding of the linkages between rural and urban areas is critically important in formulating national and provincial development strategies, as cities and regions often depend on resources and ecological services from distant ecosystems. Urban centres depend on rural areas (and the rural sector) for a range of goods and services, notably food, clean water, environmental services, and raw materials, among others. Rural areas in turn, typically depend on urban areas for access to services, employment opportunities, and markets.

When viewed as inter-related, these spaces offer opportunities that can be leveraged to stimulate rural economic activities and strengthen local systems of innovation. Rural-urban linkages have a catalytic role to play in local and regional development, and are an important part of the broader discourse on sustainable development.

Key publications:

- Rural-Urban Interdependencies in Africa: A Resource for Policy Makers and Practitioners (preliminary title, publication pending)

OTHER THEMATIC AREAS

In the current Strategic Framework 2017-2021 some focus areas have been moved to other thematic areas e.g. financial performance and management, and human capacity fall under well-governed cities, while socio-political stability (which includes the youth programme) is part of inclusive cities.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Cities are doing the basics right but should continue to improve, in particular by addressing inefficiencies in the current system. Cities also operate in a shifting and dynamic economic and fiscal environment, and so need to adapt and innovate in order to maximise their revenues and fulfil their developmental mandate. This may require rethinking how cities are financed and funded, to allow them to drive the economy while developing inclusive, accessible and sustainable cities that are affordable for all citizens.

Key publications:

- State of City Finances reports (2011; 2013; 2015)
- A Citizen's Guide to the State of City Finances (2015)

HUMAN CAPACITY

To effectively drive sustainable spatial transformation, cities need to address the human and institutional capacity constraints, which are made worse by critical staff vacancies and the technical ability of existing staff.

Key publications:

- Assessing Capacity for Spatial Transformation in South African Cities Network (SACN) Member Cities

SOCIO-POLITICAL STABILITY

Urban growth and associated migration patterns present a range of developmental challenges that contribute to urban vulnerabilities, such as the urban (health) penalty experienced by poor urban groups, including youth and migrants. Twenty years after its first democratic elections, South Africa is still deeply affected by the many inequalities inherited from the past. Despite positive developments, young people continue to be the group most affected by these imbalances, especially in relation to education, unemployment, health and poverty. Young people (aged between 14 and 35 years) are estimated to make up 36.2% of the country's population.

Key publications:

- Youth Policy Field and Institutional Analyses at Municipal Level in South Africa (2015)
- Migration, Mobility and Urban Vulnerability: Implications for Urban Governance in South Africa (2014)

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