

**IPBES template for the submission of requests, inputs and suggestions on short-term priorities and longer term strategic needs that require attention and action by IPBES as part of its future work programme.**

Name and contact details of individual submitting requests/inputs/suggestions:

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Date of submission: 30 September 2018

Submission from: IPBES member: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer allowed enhanced participation in line with decision IPBES-5/4:  
\_\_\_\_\_

MEA(s): \_\_\_\_\_

United Nations body: \_\_\_\_\_

Expert on, and holder of, indigenous and local knowledge: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Stakeholder(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide the following information for any request and, where relevant, for any inputs and suggestions (additional attachments can also be submitted):

**Request 1:** *Urgent (short-term) need for emphasis on assessments of nature’s benefits in African cities to support decision-making in the near-term. Many African cities still contain unique and sometimes extensive nature areas, wild and man-made. Despite an intuitive awareness of the value of nature and often a direct dependence on it, nature in African cities is under pressure because the full value of nature is not known or expressed as benefits to people and therefore typically not expressed in terms of societal benefits in policy or practice. African cities do not have the tools to assess nature’s benefits in urban settings alongside other types of infrastructure. The result is that nature’s benefits and co-benefits typically are not incorporated and do not enter trade-off decisions in urban social and infrastructure development. Making the case for urban nature needs much support in the form of strong qualitative and quantitative assessments of the benefits of urban nature. For example, a city may allocate some resources annually to city greening, but City decision-makers need assessments of ecosystems services and evidence from data (qualitative and quantitative) to support knowledge of how greening supports the urban economy via for example improved air quality, city cooling and improved human health. ICLEI Africa is already working closely with African city officials but enhanced technical inputs around ecosystem services at various scales that can be brought into decision-making and development planning, would be of great value.*

**Request 2:** *Two longer-term needs are identified. (1) African cities are lacking in inventories and basic information about their urban biodiversity. This is because systems for inventorising and the research and knowledge systems underpinning these are weak. The knowledge gap refers to both the administration and management of official, government-driven inventory systems as well as the lack of local taxonomic, biodiversity and conservation expertise or where the expertise exists, the lack of co-ordination of local expertise (e.g. universities and consultants) to support effective knowledge development and application. Strategies are needed to identify the key elements required to generate and sustain vibrant local knowledge hubs (including inventories) to support biodiversity conservation and to identify mechanisms to fund these knowledge hubs into the future. This is applicable not only to urban biodiversity but to biodiversity knowledge systems in general. Improved species inventories would greatly support decision-making around conservation priorities and economic development opportunities such as eco-tourism. (2) Related to the short-term request, a major gap (and opportunity) in African cities is to showcase nature’s benefits through small-scale demonstration projects. Such projects are potentially powerful especially in rapidly growing African cities where conventional planning approaches (e.g. master planning) has been outstripped by informal development, calling for novel approaches such as ‘urban tinkering’ and experimentation. ICLEI is already engaged in the implementation of demonstration projects but in all likelihood they will be lacking in persuasiveness because they are typically set up without a strong monitoring and evaluation component to highlight the strengths and weaknesses from an ecosystem services component. ICLEI would like to propose that IPBES scholars and ICLEI collaborate jointly on funding proposals, and incorporating city officials, to co-design the research and implementation of demonstration projects in African cities.*

<b>Information to accompany requests submitted to the Platform (see also Decision IPBES-1/3 Procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform):</b>	
1.	Relevance to the objective, functions and work programme of IPBES: <i>Science-Policy links to support understanding of nature’s benefits. This input relates specifically to providing the tools/assessments to support decision-making but then also actual support in decision-making and trade-offs in development which explicitly incorporate nature’s benefits.</i>
2.	Urgency of action by IPBES in the light of the imminence of the risks caused by the issues to be addressed by such action: <i>Urgent action (in the form of science-based urban nature assessments) needed in order to create a ‘critical mass’ of understanding and appreciation of nature’s benefits to support the mainstreaming of nature’s benefits in African city policies and decision-making.</i>
3.	Relevance of the requested action in addressing specific policies or processes: <i>Urban nature support for human well-being in urban settings and promotion of the attainment of National/country NBSAP targets.</i>
4.	Geographic scope of the requested action, as well as issues to be covered by such action: <i>A selection of ‘pilot’ African Cities</i>
5.	Anticipated level of complexity of the issues to be addressed by the requested action: <i>The level of complexity is much reduced by the fact that ICLEI already works directly with many African city leaders and officials. But it must be noted that some cities and municipalities, data are available but typically municipalities are data poor in terms of ecosystem services assessments including localities of assets and services (maps), ecosystem services flows and links to human well-being. The Dar es Salaam Thematic Atlas is a good example of making a start with little data available.</i>

6.	Previous work and existing initiatives of a similar nature and evidence of remaining gaps, such as the absence or limited availability of information and tools to address the issues, and reasons why IPBES is best suited to take action: <i>See point above. ICLEI has been involved across Africa on a project-basis, but strategic and programmatic support from IPBES could create the critical mass of interest, science, policy and practice needed to create a more sustainable track for nature's benefits in African cities.</i>
7.	Availability of scientific literature and expertise for IPBES to undertake the requested action: ?
8.	Scale of the potential impacts, and potential beneficiaries of the requested action: <i>The main beneficiaries would be African city decision-makers within the cities identified as pilots.</i>
9.	Requirements for financial and human resources, and potential duration of the requested action: <i>Ideally, at least 3 to 5 years of support in term of urban ecosystem services assessments and working with city decision-makers (and partners such as the UFZ) to develop capacity around development trade-offs that incorporate nature's benefits.</i>
10.	An identification of priorities within multiple requests submitted:
11.	Any other relevant information (including a list of any attachments provided):