Green Infrastructure Citylab 4 (Thursday 8 May 2014): REPORT

On 8 May 2014, the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) held its fourth Green Infrastructure Citylab. The Citylab builds on the foundations laid by the 'State of Green Infrastructure in the GCR' report (SGIR), launched in July 2013. The Citylab provides a platform for the co-production of policy relevant knowledge between government practitioners and researchers. The aim of this Citylab is to collectively develop, over the course of two years, a Green Infrastructure Plan for the Gauteng City-Region (GCR). This will feed into the Gauteng Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (GIIMP) being developed by the Gauteng Planning Commission (GPC).

The fourth session focused on the valuing of green infrastructure using a broader perspective than simply financial values and on a proposed process towards putting together a Green Infrastructure Plan. In this session a guest expert, Myles Mander (Futureworks), presented on the role of social learning in valuing green assets and the outline of a scoping paper that Futureworks has been commissioned by the Citylab to produce.

Attendance

Stephan Du Toit	Mogale City Local Municipality
Myles Mander	Futureworks
Graeme Gotz	GCRO
Kerry Bobbins	GCRO
Christina Culwick	GCRO

Meeting proceedings

The fourth Citylab meeting began with a brief update on the status of commissioned work to be included in the Green Infrastrcuture Plan Framework / GCRO Occasional Paper being produced as the first output of the Green Infrastructure project. The following experts have been commissioned: Gregg Oelofse (City of Cape Town) & Anton Cartwright (ACC); Myles Mander (Futureworks); and Stuart Dunsmore (Fourth Element). Drafts of the first two commissioned pieces have been circulated to the Citylab participants for comment, due on Friday 9 May. Final comments were consolidated and forwarded to experts on 14 May 2014. Stuart Dunsmore will be presenting at the next Citylab to be held on 19 June 2014.

Myles Mander presented the outline and approach of the scoping paper that Futureworks has compiled. The presentation included perspectives on ecosystem services, lessons learned from implementation of ecosystem services at a municipal level, and a recommended approach to building a case for ecosystem services in the GCR. Mander emphasised the need to focus on the role that ecosystem services play in service delivery and to understand who benefits from these services.

The discussion was followed by a presentation made by Stephan Du Toit (Mogale City) on possible Green Infrastructure case studies in Mogale City and the broader West Rand District. These projects were suggested as possible case studies to be taken forwards as part of the Green Assets and Infrastructure 2014/15 work plan. Some of the other potential case studies from around the GCR were also discussed.

Key points that emerged from the session include:

- A consensus building *process* of valuing and mainstreaming ecosystem services should play a more prominent role than the actual valuing of ecosystem services. Evidence from other South African towns and cities has shown that financial valuation has found limited purchase with politicians. In contrast, focusing on the benefits of the services provided by ecosystems (or the negative impacts when these are poorly maintained), is likely to taken more seriously. An example is clarifying how many poor households are likely to be affected by flooding or poor water quality in a particular area when the nearby wetland does not function properly.
- It is important to understand that changing traditional municipal planning and engineering approaches, towards a new agenda that incorporates green infrastructure, challenges the status quo, and so this is not likely to be an easy or quick process.
- Experience shows that it is valuable to conduct a system-wide mapping exercise of ecosystem services for a specific study area, as well as to understand the demand and supply of ecosystem services for end users.
- Engaging key stakeholders through the process of identifying where and how ecosystem services can deliver services at acceptable levels is likely to strengthen the effectiveness of the valuing process. This can be done through mind mapping and modelling how different decisions affect future potential of ecosystem services compared to the status quo.
- Within municipalities, planners are likely to be the fastest to incorporate green infrastructure. However, the different services departments (e.g. water supply, waste water & stormwater) are the most important and they need to be an integral part of the process towards adopting GI approaches (less so the environmental departments).
- The social learning process can be taken from two perspectives:
  - o System-wide indicative values of ecosystem services (including upstream and downstream).
  - o Case study examples of green-grey approach at a particular site.
- The suggested process towards developing a green infrastructure plan includes the following steps:
  1. Identify the roles that green infrastructure plays in Gauteng service delivery;
  2. Identify indicative monetary values (based on available research findings) in different scenarios;
  3. Identify management actions (by various departments) necessary to deliver the desired futures; and
  4. Undertake a benefit cost analysis of different options to direct GAI strategy.

Action items

Note: Bold text indicates who is responsible for each item.

1. Participant list – ensure the right people are included **(ALL PARTICIPANTS WITH GCRO)**
2. Participants to send comments on commissioned pieces by 9 May 2014 (**ALL PARTICIPANTS**).

Upcoming Citylabs

	Proposed Dates	Topic
1	19 Jun 2014	Expert input (Stuart Dunsmore) & Framework / Occasional Paper finalisation
2.	14 Aug 2014	Agreement on work for 2014/15
3.	16 Oct 2014	Preliminary presentations on Case Study work
4.	22 Jan 2015	Presentation of Case Studies
5.	5 Mar 2015	Agreement on work in 2015/16 (budget discussion)