

Resilience Initiative Africa

Strengthening risk-informed urban development in the face of climate change

The challenge

African countries are disproportionately affected by climate change, which jeopardises water and food security, health, as well as biodiversity on the continent. Besides climate-related hazards such as droughts, floods, and epidemics, also conflicts and corruption further threaten economic and social development in many African regions and exacerbate existing inequalities. Cities are particularly vulnerable to these hazards and risks since people, goods, and infrastructure are concentrated in these urban areas. The United Nations expects the urban population on the African continent to increase by nearly one billion people over the next three decades. However, resulting urbanisation trends often take place in an unplanned manner without consideration of current and future risks to cities.

In many development efforts, risks are neither systematically addressed at the regional, national, or local level nor sufficiently integrated into state-led planning and implementation processes. This limits resilience in urban areas and constrains risk-informed urban development. Consequently, extreme events often have devastating effect that disproportionately affect vulnerable population groups, such as inhabitants of informal settlements. In African cities, around 60% of the population lives in informal settlements. Besides inadequate infrastructure and the lack of risk awareness and prevention measures, inequality and marginalization lead to a significant increase in their vulnerability to climate and disaster risks and affect their coping and adaptive capacities. Women, people with disabilities, members of social minorities and certain ethnic groups are particularly affected.

Given the significant investments needed in urban social and infrastructure development to match the urbanisation trend, it is critical to strengthen the resilience of cities.

Our approach

Current approaches in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) often consider only one threat, most often a natural hazard such as heavy rain or cyclones. Mechanisms to reduce and manage climate and other disaster risks are not sufficiently coordinated. To address today's complex risks, effective risk management requires more cross-sectoral and multi-level cooperation and coherence.

Project name	Resilience Initiative Africa (RIA)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	African Union (AU) and selected member states
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Budget	14.000.000 EUR
Duration	07/2022 – 06/2026

As a regional project, the Resilience Initiative Africa (RIA) aims to increase the capacities of regional, national, local state and non-state actors for risk-informed urban development in Africa. The project fosters technical exchange and coordination across countries by bringing together relevant actors with existing and proven approaches to reduce, mitigate and manage risks. The risk-informed development approach is essential since the lack of capacity to understand and address systemic risks jeopardises the achievements of sustainable development. Based on a comprehensive understanding of risks, the regional project supports the consideration of risks in planning and implementation processes.



L. to r.: urban scene in Monrovia, Liberia; Strategy Workshop at the African Union Commission.
Page 2 L. to r.: urban scene in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; view of informal settlements in Juba, South Sudan



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To ensure that urban development efforts are sustainable, and communities are prepared for future crises, RIA strives towards making development more risk-informed. This approach considers natural and human-made hazards that develop into interdependent and transnational risks exacerbated by climate change, rapid urbanisation, state fragility and conflict. RIA has defined four areas of work to strengthen urban disaster and climate risk management towards more risk-informed development:

- (1) Set-up of an agile Africa-wide learning and exchange platform on risk-informed urban development
- (2) Support of the African Union (AU) and member states in developing inclusive and gender-equitable guidelines for risk-informed urban development
- (3) Implement participatory measures to analyse and reduce risks and to prepare for disasters in informal settlements and
- (4) Collaborate with climate change adaptation and climate risk finance actors like the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to increase their institutional capacities.

RIA ensures close alignment with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and its respective action programme for the regional implementation adopted by the AU. All results will be shared on the learning and exchange platform to allow for scaling up or regional replication of measures in other sectors.

The project aims at strengthening the most vulnerable population in urban areas through liaisons and change agents. These include among others, decision-makers at regional, national and local level as well as specialists at multilateral organisations, regional economic communities, civil society, and self-advocacy groups. In this regard, the project pursues a gender-equitable and inclusive approach and involves people in urban areas affected by multiple discrimination and disadvantage.

The benefits

In face of future challenges and increasing risks, RIA aims at implementing participatory and context-specific disaster risk management and climate change adaptation measures in urban contexts of selected AU member states and within its regional economic communities.

This includes facilitating the exchange of experiences between different state and non-state actors in the region to enhance mutual learning on urban resilience. Therefore, the project fosters realising trainings for city administrations, e.g. on developing urban DRM strategies or multi-hazard early warning systems.

Furthermore, RIA supports the implementation of the newly established *African Urban Resilience Programme* (AURP) of the AU. The project compiles best practice examples and case studies and consolidates different voices of stakeholders in Africa to enhance AURP guidelines and produce action-oriented recommendations.

On the regional level, RIA works with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to foster the operationalization of its *Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan* and the *SADC Regional Resilience Framework 2020–2030*. This offers supporting activities to the roll-out of the AURP of the AU.

Together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the civil society network Slum Dwellers International (SDI) the project conducts trainings on risk assessments and mappings in selected partner cities of the Making Cities Resilient (MCR) 2030 Initiative and in informal settlements. This forms a basis to establish inclusive and gender equitable DRM strategies.

With the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI) activities on climate action and dealing with climate risks are spearheaded to enhance its work as a Pan-African platform for climate change adaption.

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