DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

URBAN GREENING STRATEGY

A GUIDELINE FOR COMMUNITY FORESTRY STAFF AND DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

CONTENTS

1   Introduction to Urban Greening

Urban greening is an integrated approach to the planting, care and management of all vegetation in cities, towns, townships and informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas. Urban greening in South Africa includes townships and informal settlements specifically because in the past these areas were disadvantaged in terms of planning for parks as well as tree planting in streets and open spaces.

Urban greening includes the components of urban forestry, urban agriculture or permaculture and agroforestry, shown in Figure 1.
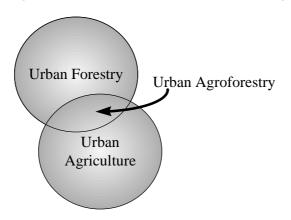
Figure 1: Components of Urban Greening

Urban forestry can be defined as an integrated approach to the planting, care and management of trees in urban and peri-urban areas to secure economic, environmental and social benefits for urban dwellers.

Urban agriculture produces and markets foods and fuel largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a town, city or metropolis, on land and water dispensed throughout the urban and peri-urban area. ***Permaculture*** is a sustainable form of agriculture highly appropriate to urban areas, and comprises a system of farming and gardening that combines plants, animals, buildings, water, the landscape and people in a way that produces more energy than it uses.

Urban agroforestry is the combination of agriculture and forestry on the same land with livestock or cropping enterprises running underneath a regime of widely spaced trees, either simultaneously or in sequence.

All these components of can be applied to improve the quality of the urban environment, generally in open spaces. Urban open space management is not only confined to parks and roadsides but includes household gardens, factories, business areas, mine dumps, transmission lines, flood plains, taxi ranks, rooftops, schools, clinics and churches.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry Directorate of Community Forestry can provide support relating to the urban forestry and urban agroforestry components of urban greening.

## 2	Characteristics of Urban Dwellers

Urban greening aims to improve the quality of life of urban residents, so it is important to understand the characteristics of the wide variety of urban dwellers in South Africa.

The variety of groups include recently arrived poor migrants, well established urban dwellers, single workers, families, people from various economic strata, groups with varied educational levels, those with and without rural links, and those with and without tenure to their residence.

The poor make up the majority of populations of the cities, and the quality of the urban economy and environment are shaped by people with middle to low incomes, peddlers, those making clothes, foods and crafts in their homes, government clerks and professionals, miners and factory workers. Given the numbers and needs of the lower income population, it is imperative that they play a central role in planning and implementing urban greening.

Many of the people migrating to urban centres in South Africa are economic refugees. In general, the poor arriving from rural areas or small cities gravitate to high density, low cost housing in an urban centre or to squatter settlements on this outskirts. Squatter settlements (also known as illegal settlements, illegal occupations, or invasions) are found in most cities.

These settlements vary greatly in how they originated and then evolved e.g. Mshenguville in Soweto, Alexandra north of Johannesburg and Khayelitsha in Cape Town.

The term *informal settlement* is used for migrant communities where the residents settle without title to their land. Inadequate potable water, sewage disposal, electricity and other public services typify these lands. In general, such informal settlements are created illegally and, once established, are not acknowledged by planning authorities and thereafter suffer from inadequate infrastructure. Nevertheless, after several years of existence as viable communities, many of the region's informal settlements become integrated into their cities' overall planning and eventually may receive some public services. Many of these squatter communities are established on the worst possible sites for building.

The South African population is increasingly becoming urbanised. The result is congestion due to high population densities in cities, towns, townships as well as informal settlements. The result of high population densities is environmental degradation, especially in areas where no planning for parks and tree planting in streets and open spaces. It is a fact that rapid urban development is characterised by a lack of environmental planning.

Effective environmental planning, including urban greening, can assist greatly in improving the quality of the urban environment and the livelihoods of the people who live in urban areas.

3   Benefits of Urban Greening and Urban Forestry

Trees have considerable applications in the development of better urban livelihoods and environments. Briefly, these are:

1   Provision of food and fruit

2   Amenity purposes, including shade, windbreaks, climate amelioration and beautification

3   Provision of medicine

4   Agroforestry purposes, such as fodder, soil reclamation and live fences

5   Waste water treatment

6   Flood control

7   Air pollution reduction

8   Noise reduction

9   Reclamation of waste land

10   Fuel production

11   Wood products

12   Conservation of bio-diversity

13   Recreation, including parks and sports grounds

14   Income generation for local economic development

15   Environmental education

Community Forestry is in the process of developing a list of appropriate tree species for each of these categories of application.

4   Policy and Legislative Context

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry Directorate of Community Forestry operates within a prescribed policy, legislative and institutional framework. The most important elements of this framework are spelt out in Table 1.

Table 1: Policy, Legislative and Institutional Framework

Policy / Legislation	Key Features
Constitution, 1996	• Everyone has a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being • Local government is responsible for creating a safe and healthy environment
Urban Development Strategy, 1995	• Need to improve the quality of the urban environment through various Departments and Local Government. • Immediate steps should be taken to build local government capacity
White Paper on Local Government	• Metropolitan Councils are responsible for ensuring that integrated planning leads to an urban environment where citizens wish to live • District Councils are responsible for developing Integrated Development Plans, with the consent of constituent municipalities
Local Government Transition Act, Second Amendment, 1996	• District Councils are responsible for preparing Integrated Development Plans with the approval of local and rural councils
Development Facilitation Act, 1995	• Establishes National and Provincial Development and Planning Commission, and Provincial Tribunals which have the final say over development plans • Establishes general principles for development planning (e.g. integration of social, economic, environmental aspects of local development) • The local government body with jurisdiction over a specified area responsible for developing Land Development Objectives
National Forestry Action Programme, 1997	• Support the provincially based integrated planning framework • Local government driving force for development planning and implementation • Effectively support self-sustaining urban forestry/greening initiatives that secure economic, environmental and social benefits for urban dwellers
White Paper on Agriculture	• Urban agriculture is an important aspect of the urban economy and the quality of life in urban areas
White Paper on Forestry, 1996	• Integrate community forestry into Local Development Plans • Community Forestry to be a provider of services to provincial government agencies, local authorities, District Councils, and service providers such as agriculture • Pilot / model projects to demonstrate feasibility of community forestry interventions
National Environmental Management Act, 1998	• Everyone has a right to an environment not harmful to health or well-being • Environmental management must be integrated • Municipalities and provincial government must ensure that environmental management and implementation is part of the Integrated Development Plan / Land Development Objectives

The linking theme running through the policy, legislative and institutional framework is that local government is responsible for integrated development planning in rural and urban areas.

The process of preparing Integrated Development Plans and Land Development Objectives therefore includes urban greening, and any urban greening developments must be planned and implemented through this process. This has important implications for the role of the Directorate: Community Forestry, which is covered in the next section. However, it is necessary to understand the constraints to the local government planning and implementation process in order to define the role of Community Forestry.

There are five main constraints:

1   Many local governments lack the capacity to fulfil their mandate under the Development Facilitation Act (1995) both in terms of human and financial resources. The recommendation to strengthen local government capacity in the Urban Development Strategy (1995) was never implemented.

2   Some local government authorities have contracted consultants to prepare their Integrated Development Plans and Land Development Objectives, and it is uncertain to what extent this has resulted in genuine community participation.

3   Some of the legislation has not been adopted in some provinces - for example the Development Facilitation Act (1995) in Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal. However, there are similar processes using different institutional mechanisms operating in these provinces, for example, the Regional Councils and Service Centres in KwaZulu Natal.

4   Urban greening, and urban forestry in particular, is a very low priority for local government in urban areas, where the concentration appears to be on housing, potable water, sanitation and other services. Given this, there are extremely limited financial resources available to support urban greening within local government.

5   There are a wide variety of service providers involved in urban greening who are not being drawn into the local government planning process, but could provide significant added value to development planning and implementation. These include national and provincial government departments, non-government organisations, and community based organisations.

These constraints have important implications for the roles of the Directorate: Community Forestry, which is covered in the next section.

5 Roles of the Directorate: Community Forestry

The goal of Community Forestry support to urban greening is:

To support the development and implementation of urban greening initiatives with local government and other stakeholders, in order to improve environmental conditions and the quality of life in urban areas, with a focus on urban forestry.

Community Forestry have identified five specific roles to play in order to achieve this goal, recognising the policy, legislative and institutional framework for development planning in South Africa, and the constraints to the incorporation of urban greening in this process:

1   Lobby for and provide **urban greening funds** and funding mechanisms, and make this available to local government, other service providers and urban communities.

2   Support the establishment of a **network of advice and information** on urban forestry issues, including legislation and opportunities for local economic development, and make this available to local government and other service providers.

3   Support a more **effective local government planning process**, with particular attention to opportunities for genuine community participation; the inclusion of all stakeholders; and the incorporation of urban forestry in local development plans.

4   Provide support to the **implementation of urban forestry components of urban greening** initiatives, in the context of local development plans. Support can be provided in terms of information, and planting materials.

5   Develop a limited number of **urban greening models** to demonstrate effective community participation and the potential of trees to contribute to urban livelihoods.

Clearly, these roles are not going to be implemented in isolation from the institutional framework for development planning in the country. Figure 2 shows how the roles relate to local government and other service providers. Note that:

1   The emphasis of support through each role is directed towards local government, though support can be provided through other service providers if necessary.

2   In developing and providing a network of advice and information, the aim is to bring all role players with an influence on urban greening into the planning process.

3   Direct involvement in micro-level interventions will be extremely limited, but remain necessary as a means of demonstrating practical approaches and the value of urban greening to local government. Given the work of the Municipal Demarcation Board, which has resulted in six Category A Metropolitan Councils; 232 Category B Municipalities and 46 Category C District Councils, the level at which Community Forestry intervenes would best be at Municipality and District level.

The issue of other service providers is critical, and is covered in more detail in the next section of this strategy.

6   Partners

There are numerous service providers with a role to play in urban greening, who need to be encouraged to fulfil their urban greening mandates and provide support to the local government planning process. Some of these service providers are identified in Table 2.

Table 2: Urban Greening Role Players

Role Player	Roles / Potential Roles
Department of Education	• Link urban greening issues in to curriculum 2005, or it's successor • Support EduPlant, the Trees for Africa school greening project • Support Arbor Week • Provide a link to educational institutions throughout provinces • Provide a means of distributing materials to educational institutions, teachers and pupils within a province
Department of Agriculture	• Support the urban agriculture aspects of urban greening • Provide a means of including a tree component in urban agriculture • Support EduPlant, the Trees for Africa school greening project
Local Government (municipalities and councils)	• Act as the hub through which all local development interventions are planned, implemented and managed, often through the LDO/IDP process • Collect rates and taxes which could be channelled to urban greening • Manage municipal nurseries • Provide support to the watering and aftercare of trees in urban areas • Develop and support the management of urban parks and open spaces, including a tree component
Department of Environmental Affairs	• Support the planting of indigenous trees in urban areas • Support integrated environmental planning • Manage a Departmental Nursery in Bloemfontein • Provide specialist knowledge in horticulture / landscaping
Non-Governmental Organisations and Community Based Organisations	• Support community mobilisation and empowerment, and act as a conduit for their participation in local development planning • Initiate and manage community nurseries where viable (for example, in Orange Farm in Gauteng, or Botshabello in Free State) • Initiate national awareness campaigns and specific interventions (for example, the work of Trees For Africa, or Abalemi Bezekhaya and the Gugulethu Community Development Corporation in the Cape Flats, or Community Environmental Network in Grahamstown)
Department of Health	• Implementing a national food gardening programme to improve nutrition, including a tree component • Supporting a fruit tree programme, to which Community Forestry can link for fruit tree support

Table 2: Urban Greening Role Players (Continued)

Department of Local Government and Housing (and Developers)	• Supporting the establishment of new housing projects, which could include a tree component that can link with the Trees For Africa Trees for Homes Project
Private Nurseries	• Providing free trees or subsidised trees where possible (for example, if they have over-produced a certain species)
Civic and Service Organisations	• Providing sponsorship or contributions in kind to specific urban greening projects (for example, Round Table and Rotary)
South African Nursery Association	• Providing information on location and type of nurseries • Supporting efforts to encourage private nurseries to provide free or subsidised trees for urban greening in disadvantaged areas
Private Companies	• Providing sponsorship support to specific areas of urban greening, for example, Total support to Arbor Week, and BMW support to school greening and environmental education

In terms of other service providers, Community Forestry has a strategic partnership with Trees for Africa. This revolves around three partnership projects:

1   Urban Greening Fund

With limited staff and resources across South Africa, Community Forestry recognises that it is important to make strategic interventions that maximise a return to investment in urban greening. For this reason, financial support is being provided to an Urban Greening Fund run in partnership with Trees For Africa. This will act as a draw down fund, publicised to organisations involved in urban greening. Organisations can submit proposals to an evaluation committee, which will be evaluated according to strict criteria.

2   Trees for Homes

Community Forestry provides support to the Trees For Africa Trees For Homes Project. This seeks to strategically influence local government and developers to include greening in any new housing development.

3   EduPlant

Community Forestry is committed to the environmental education and awareness aspects of urban greening. Working with the Department of Education and schools is particularly important. For this reason, financial support is being provided to support the Trees For Africa EduPlant programme over the next five years. This programme aims to stimulate schools to plan and implement environmental projects on their grounds, in the form of a competition. Where there are tree components, provincial Community Forestry staff will provide direct support to finalist schools.

Community Forestry also engages in strategic partnerships with the corporate sector. These partnerships revolve around two projects:

1   **BMW**

     Community Forestry is supporting the BMW SEED Project

2   **Sappi**

     Community Forestry is supporting Sappi

7   Resource Commitment to Urban Greening

Community Forestry is making three budgetary commitments to urban greening:

1   Financial support for the national Urban Greening Fund run in partnership with Trees For Africa - this is a strategic national intervention designed to minimise direct field involvement.

2   Financial support for the EduPlant Programme run in partnership with Trees For Africa - this is a strategic national intervention designed to minimise direct field involvement.

3   Allocating a core budget to provincial Community Forestry in each of the nine provinces. Provincial support to urban greening is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Provincial Support for Urban Greening

Province	Staff Allocation / Framework
Eastern Cape	Urban greening support is provided through a Forest Advisor Service based in four resource centres in Kokstad, Umtata, Zwelitsha and Port Elizabeth. In the first three, urban greening is an integrated part of the job of the two foresters allocated to each centre. In Port Elizabeth, the concentration is in urban greening, and one forester is based at the centre.
Northern Cape	Urban greening is an integrated aspect of the job of the three foresters located in Upington, Kimberly and Kuruman. There is a DWAF operated nursery in Upington to provide some support with plant supply.
Western Cape	Urban greening is an integrated aspect of the job of the two foresters based in Vredendal and Knysna. A specific forester is allocated to support urban greening in the Cape Flats. There is a DWAF operated nursery in Wolseley to provide some support to urban greening.
Gauteng	The provincial community forestry strategy recognises that urban greening is the priority function in Gauteng. Four foresters are assigned to directly support the four metropolitan councils in Greater Pretoria, Greater Johannesburg, Khyalami and Lekoa Vaal.
Mpumalanga	Urban greening is an integral part of the job of nine foresters strategically located in Ermelo (serving the East Vaal), Groblersdaal (serving the Highveld), Nelspruit (serving the Lowveld Escarpment) and Bushbuckridge (serving the Lowveld). There is also a provincial specialist allocated to urban greening, located in Nelspruit.
KwaZulu Natal	Urban greening is an integral part of the job of the seven foresters strategically allocated to support the seven regional councils of Uthungulu, Zululand, Uthukela, Umzinyathi, Ilembe, Ugu, and Indlovu. Strong links with the network of Rural Service Centres being established by all service providers will be particularly important.
Northern Province	The highly rural nature of population distribution in the province and extremes of rural poverty lead Community Forestry to concentrate on rural development forestry support within the province. However, where urban greening support is identified as a priority, support can be provided from one of the three resource centres being established in Louis Trichardt, Rusplaas and Potgietersrus. There is a DWAF operated nursery in Rusplaas, though this is not ideally located to support urban greening.

Table 3: Provincial Support for Urban Greening (Continued)

Free State	Urban greening support is an integral part of the job of foresters based in Bloemfontein, Phuthaditjaba and Kroonstad. Initially, support will concentrate on the Botshabello / Thaba Nchu and Qwa Qwa areas. There is a DWAF operated nursery in Qwa Qwa, which can support urban greening, and a large community managed nursery in Botshabello.
North West	Urban greening support is an integral part of the job of foresters strategically located in the Western, Central and Eastern Regions. Particular concentration will be paid to the urban and peer-urban areas of Mafikeng, Rustenburg, Lichtenburg, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Odi and Brits. There are DWAF operated nurseries in Mafikeng and Bloemhof to provide some plant supply support to urban greening.

It is important to note that Community Forestry programmes, including support to urban greening, are planned on an annual cycle that begins in October, for implementation during the next financial year beginning each March.

8   Guidelines for Provincial Staff Supporting Urban Greening

Community Forestry staff in each of the nine provinces adhere to four policy principles in their efforts to support urban greening:

1   Community Forestry only supports the urban forestry component of urban greening

2   Communities must be active participants in the planning and implementation of urban greening, including women and the urban poor

3   Community Forestry encourages all service providers with a role in urban greening to plan and act together in the framework of local government planning

4   Community Forestry does not generally engage in direct micro-level interventions, but where they do, they ensure a small number of successful projects that can be used as models and demonstrations

Community Forestry staff can use some or all of the following series of steps or tasks in facilitating urban greening support:

1   Prepare a list of all cities, towns, townships and other urban or peri-urban areas in your working area, using the output of the Municipal Demarcation Board (which can be obtained from their web site www.demarcation.org.za, or by telephone to 0800-111-006)

2   Identify points of contact in local government or with other urban greening service providers in these areas

3   Contact local government at municipality or district level and explain the services Community Forestry can offer, and determine levels of interest

4   Prioritise the list of urban areas with interested local government or other service providers, to reflect areas with the greatest need for urban greening

5   Find out if there is a Land Development Objective / Integrated Development Planning process, or any form of local development plan with local government

6   Find out if there is a municipal nursery, or community nursery in the area

7   Find out if the local council has a budget to support urban environmental improvement

8   Locate or prepare a map of the area showing where other service providers are operating

9   Find out about any existing environmental forums in the area, and join them if appropriate

10   Offer information and advice on urban greening to appropriate forums

11   If there is an existing local development plan, assess the urban greening component and identify potential roles for trees

12   If there is no local development plan, but there is a planned process to prepare one, offer to join the process and offer advice - for example, by participating in planning forums

13   If there is no local development plan, and no planned process to prepare one, provide advice on how such a process could be managed with respect to urban greening

14   If there are local government plans to develop new housing areas, link this to the Trees For Africa Trees For Homes project

15   Offer the possibility of a pilot model in urban greening in one community to demonstrate participatory approaches to greening, and to demonstrate the value of trees

16   Identify other service providers who could be involved in a pilot or model, and identify the most appropriate location

17   Ensure roles for each service provider are clear and formally agreed

18   Ensure a process to meaningfully involve the community

19   Ensure availability of water and fencing if required

20   Identify potential sponsors, such as local companies, or local private nurseries. Should local financial support not be available, consider submitting a proposal to the National Urban Greening Fund or any other available funding mechanism.

21   Ensure any schools in the area are informed about the EduPlant competition, and build this into any pilot or model greening project.

22   Identify potential local specialists, in fields such as horticulture or landscaping and engage with them to ensure their skills are applied to urban greening support

23   Ensure final plans for the pilot or model are included in the local development plan should one be under preparation

24   Make final formal agreement on what Community Forestry will and will not provide

25   Where Community Forestry is requested to provide trees, and there is no alternative approach to plant supply, ensure that the "criteria for distribution of free trees" are met in full

26   Ensure Community Forestry commitments are reflected in the Annual Business Plan and Budget (prepared in October of each year and finalised in February of each year, implemented in the Financial Year running from March to April)

27   Provide support as agreed during the Financial Year

9   Plant Supply for Urban Greening

Community Forestry prefers not to provide free trees for urban greening programmes. There are three preferred alternatives:

1   Private nursery supply - where private nurseries are encouraged to sponsor or subsidise trees for urban greening in specific underprivileged areas.

2   Community nursery supply - where community nurseries are encouraged to provide trees to urban greening under contract to either the municipality or another service provider, or perhaps Community Forestry in relation to Arbor Week. Community Forestry can support community nurseries in market appraisals and the preparation of business plans to ensure long term sustainability and income generation.

3   Municipal nursery supply - where the municipality retains or takes on the role of plant production, with technical advice from Community Forestry, under their own budget.

Free trees will only be provided directly by Community Forestry for **Arbor Week**, or where **all** the following conditions are met:

✓   There is a promotional element that will result in a multiplier effect

✓   Preparations to plant the trees have been made (there are holes dug, water is available, and adequate arrangements for protection exist)

✓   There is no alternative source of plant supply, either from the private sector, community nurseries, or municipal nurseries

✓   There is no alternative budget from which to buy trees

✓   The programme is included in a clear local development plan supported by local government, or a clear strategy by another service provider (government or non-government) operating in a framework acknowledged by local government

✓   There are clear arrangements for the after care and maintenance of trees, including watering and pruning

✓   There is a clear timetable for the phasing out of free tree support, possibly leading to the recovery of transport costs, or full costs (there must be an exit strategy)

✓   The benefits of free tree support are clearly directed to the most needy urban dwellers

✓ There is full community participation in the planning and implementation of urban greening, including the planting and care of trees, through forums such as street tree committees

✓ The trees are not going to be resold

There are only six Community Forestry nurseries operating in South Africa, and the long term aim of government is to move out of direct plant supply. The nurseries are in Wolesley, Rusplaas, Upington, Qwa Qwa, Mafikeng and Bloemhof. Clearly, free trees can only be provided to urban and peri-urban areas within a reasonable distance of these locations. Community Forestry will not respond to ad-hoc requests for free trees.

10   Role of Community Forestry Head Office

1   Support provincial staff in developing high level links with local government, for example, through partnership with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

2   Provide high level lobbying for other organisations and local government to support urban greening, including lobbying for founds and funding mechanisms both nationally and internationally

3   Ensure financial resources are channelled to those provinces most in need of assistance

4   Produce national materials and media to support awareness and education campaigns

5   Produce practical guidelines for provincial staff - for example, on "How to support the preparation of an Urban Greening Strategy with local government"

6   Visit provinces to support the monitoring and evaluation of urban greening support, review the implementation of the urban greening strategy, and check on the roll-out of urban greening as specified in Provincial Annual Business Plans and budgets

7   Co-ordinate pilot projects and models, and ensure results are made widely available throughout the country

8   Assist provinces in organising and facilitating urban greening workshops at a national and provincial level

9   Act as a member of the evaluation committee for the Urban Greening Fund

10   Provide planning and implementation support to Trees For Africa on the Trees For Homes and EduPlant Projects

11 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can be conducted through the appraisal of implementation performance under the:

1   Urban Greening Strategy

2   Provincial Community Forestry Strategies

3   Provincial Annual Business Plans and Budgets

4   Provincial Quarterly Reporting System

In addition, there are specific performance indicators for urban greening:

1   Urban forestry is included in urban greening as part of local government development plans (Integrated Development Plans and Land Development Objectives)

2   Urban greening support is included in Provincial Annual Business Plans and Budgets

3   Funds are made available through the private sector to support urban greening

4   Formal linkages are established between local government and urban greening role players, including regular meetings

5   Trees are planted, cared for and survive in urban areas

6   Noticeable changes in the urban landscape (recorded by photographs, aerial photography and mapping)

7   Constraints to urban greening support are identified and resolved

8   Urban greening role players are aware of their specific role, and fulfil their mandates