

IGNITE Stage proposal for 15 minutes presentation

Inclusive blue-green flood risk infrastructure in cities

Short description of the proposed presentation *

Wetlands International will present flagship examples of inclusive processes that involve flood-prone communities and blue-green infrastructure measures to build flood resilience in cities. By making communities key players in a participatory design process, their concerns are not overlooked as in business as usual cases but rather are incorporated in the definition of solutions and proposals ensuring disaster risk reduction for all. Furthermore, incorporating climate projections and blue-green infrastructure, the measures are climate-proof on the long-term. Both aspects are critical in building the solid foundation required for investment.

The to be presented cases are all 100 Resilient Cities members where Wetlands International and partners work. Panama City's Juan Diaz sub-district recurring floods makes the country top the Local Disaster Index (IDB). Their flood risk is caused by wetland landfilling, badly designed drainage capacity and unplanned urban expansion. It is the key example of how Water Dialogues can build bridges across sectors and have flood-prone communities heard in the decision-making process, leading to large blue-green infrastructure that will not only reduce flood risk, but also increase recreation space and even property value.

Semarang in Indonesia and Chennai in India are part of the Dutch government initiated and funded Water as Leverage program. WaL has developed inclusive and innovative multi-stakeholder dialogues in 3 Asian coastal cities, matching long-term comprehensive urban planning with short term innovative transformations. As Knowledge Partner of the program and based on strong local presence and understanding, the Partners for Resilience alliance which includes Wetlands International, Netherlands Red Cross and its Climate Centre, CARE and Cordaid, mobilizes local communities and other crucial stakeholders, shares knowledge on local ecosystems, applicable policies, as well as risk profiles and community vulnerabilities which have been defined based on community participatory risk assessments, to make sure that the transformative water infrastructure designs are inclusive and locally supported, incorporate blue-green measures and are connected to funding and financing

Describe why this presentation would be relevant for participants at the Global Platform *

The presented examples will show how (planning for) disaster risk reduction measures in complex urban areas can be achieved through approaches that assure the inclusion of the most vulnerable, overcome traditional 'grey' infrastructure planning processes and as well generate multiple co-benefits for health and property value, thereby increasing the justification for the large investments. The examples of

such inclusive processes will inspire local authorities, donors, investment banks and other platform partners to initiate such approaches in their own risk prone but valuable city environments. The presentation can generate replication and spin-off in cities across the globe where water-related hazards affect vulnerable communities and persons and offer cities that do not have the capacity or experience to lead an inclusive multi-stakeholder process can forge new partnerships during the Global Platform and deliver upon the commitments.

What is innovative about this presentation? *

In many cities, urban planning of water infrastructure is a top-down process that largely focuses on conventional “grey” measures of concrete, channelization of rivers and drainage canals and pipes. Vulnerable communities are often heavily affected by these infrastructural works but not involved in planning, design and decision making, potentially even worsening their living conditions and increasing vulnerability to risks. Our examples show how an inclusive approach that brings the affected communities on board and incorporates nature-based solutions for Green-Blue Infrastructure reduce flood risk in cities from different continents. This approach allows for locally supported disaster risk reduction solutions that provide important co-benefits for people and nature.

The process involves flood-prone and vulnerable communities in the research on the disaster risk, so that they can share their knowledge and absorb that of the specialists. Their participation in the design phase can steer the solutions in such a manner that they are locally supported, do not generate mal-adaptation issues but rather contribute to local economic development and public spaces for the benefit of the entire community which runs a reduced disaster risk. Finally, with this local support, government entities are catalyzed to implementation of the water infrastructure and have local champions to promote the projects.



Water as Leverage for Resilient Cities: Asia – Semarang concept proposal (Image: ONE)

PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE

