Her Worship the Mayor **Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr** OBE,
Councillors and Staff of Freetown City Council present

TRANSFORM FREETOWN - TRANSFORMING LIVES

Mid-term Report

JULY 2024 - JULY 2026

Table of Content

FOREWARD FROM THE MAYOR 03

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 04

FREETOWN CITY COUNCIL 05

SPOTLIGHT ON REVENUE 07

STATISTICS SUMMARY 08

CLIMATE ACTION 10

- Invest in reforestation, green energy and heat adaptation 11
- Expand Investments in Solid and Liquid Waste Management Value Chains 20
- Undertake City Regeneration, Informal Settlement Upgrades & Green Mobility 25

HERITAGE TOURISM 36

- Promote Freetown as a Destination City with a Focus on Heritage Sites, Cultural Festivals and the Creative Arts 37

DIGITAL ECONOMY 44

- Improve Access to Digital Skills and Invest in the Enabling Environment for Digital Transformation 45

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT 48

- Strengthen Early Childhood Development, Basic Education and Skills Development 49
- Improve Access to Water 55
- Improve Health Outcomes At Primary Care Level 60

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT 62

- Human Resources 63
- Capacity Building 63
- Infrastructural Development Initiatives 64
- Policy and Regulatory Reforms 64

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS 66

- 2024 67
- 2025 70
- 2026 73
- Partners that Visited FCC 75

Foreword from the Mayor

Two years is a short time in the life of a city, but a long time in the life of a family waiting for water, for a classroom, for employment after graduating, or for a community that does not want to flood. I have learned in this office to hold both of these truths at once. The work of a council can be slow, technical and is often invisible. The needs it answers are immediate and personal. Everything set out in this report sits somewhere between these two facts.

The period covered here has not been an easy one for cities anywhere, and Freetown is no exception. Our population continues to grow faster than the infrastructure built to serve it. Settlements on our hillsides and along our coast remain exposed to flooding. Extreme heat, which we once discussed as a future risk, is now a daily condition for the woman trading under an open sky and the child sitting in a crowded classroom. Public health pressures have not eased. The resources available to us have never matched the demands placed upon them.

What has changed is the way we respond. We have stopped guessing. We map our waterpoints, we track the trees we plant, we survey the people we train, and we return to them months later to ask whether anything in their lives actually improved. Where the evidence is strong, we say so plainly. Where it is not, we adjust. This discipline is not glamorous, and it rarely makes headlines, but it is the foundation of everything else in these pages, and it is the reason partners have been willing to place their confidence and their capital in this city.

I want to be clear about how the work was done, because it was not done by the Council alone. Residents paid their property rates and their business licences, and those payments built a market complex at Wilberforce, secured the resting places of our loved ones, and cleared the drains before the rains came. Councillors carried the concerns of their wards into every decision we took. Freetown City Council (FCC) staff delivered day after day, often with modest tools and heavy workloads. Our national and international partners brought finance, technical expertise and a willingness to back a city that has not always been given the benefit of the doubt. To all of them, I offer my sincere thanks.

I want to be equally honest about the distance still to travel. Trees planted are not yet a restored forest. Water kiosks installed are not yet accessible to all. Platforms built are not yet fully adopted. Pilots must become systems, and systems must outlive the people who designed them, including me. That is the standard I hold this Council to, and it is the standard by which this report should be read.

Even so, I am hopeful, and the hope is grounded. Freetown has come through war, epidemics, mudslides and floods, and every recovery has left behind people who refuse to accept that things must stay as they are. That refusal is our greatest asset. We will keep serving this city with evidence, with care and with urgency, because Freetonians deserve nothing less.

I'd like to use this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Central Government, to all our stakeholders and partners, to the Deputy Mayor, the Councillors, the Chief Administrator, the FCC Staff, and the Mayor's Delivery Unit, for their dedication, commitment, and support in our journey to Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives.

Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE
Mayor of Freetown

Executive Summary

Transform Freetown, Transforming Lives is the Council's development roadmap, and this report accounts for the first two years of its delivery, from July 2024 to July 2026. It is not a catalogue of projects. It is a record of what happens when a municipal institution decides to govern a fast-growing coastal city on the basis of evidence, to raise and spend its own revenue with discipline, and to treat partnership as a way of extending its capability rather than substituting for it.

The clearest expression of that approach is in climate action, where environmental restoration and employment are pursued as a single objective rather than two competing ones. By the first quarter of 2026, the #FreetownTheTreetown initiative had planted more than 1.2 million trees, including 270,000 mangroves, restored 1,202 hectares of forest and created over 5,000 jobs since 2019, while training 1,145 women and 2,057 young people as climate action ambassadors. The same logic runs through the city's waste reforms. New Byelaws, the #DortiMusGo campaign and a restructured system of eight service blocks have been paired with a public space sweeping programme that has generated 3,561 long term jobs, the great majority held by young people and women. Investments in biodigesters, briquette production and waste to energy are turning a sanitation liability into fuel, fertiliser and income.

Heat has moved from the margins of municipal concern to the centre of it. Freetown is building an early warning system anchored in ward level focal persons, has established a Heat Health Task Force and is delivering training for 500 health workers across 72 peripheral health units. The Council is installing purpose designed shade cover in one of its busiest markets and has enrolled 10,400 traders, 80 percent of them women, in a parametric heat insurance and cash assistance scheme across 12 markets. Awareness, protection and financial cushioning are being assembled as one system rather than three separate ventures.

In human capital development, the emphasis has been on measurable learning rather than attendance alone. The School Leaders Support Programme has now reached more than 56,000 learners. The Rising Faster initiative expanding from 117 to 226 schools and supported 2,471 teachers, with tablet-based learning extended to 78 schools, resulting in a 12-percentage point improvement in teacher subject and pedagogical knowledge. New school buildings at Kroo Bay and Tower Hill have replaced flood prone and overcrowded facilities. Water security has advanced through a digital mapping exercise covering 897 facilities, solar powered kiosks operated largely by young women, and treatment kits serving 60 schools and 77 health units. A new Care Block addressing unpaid care work is being constructed in Susan's Bay community and services are already being provided.

Heritage tourism and digital economy have been treated as governance assets. Restoration work at the East-End Clock Tower and Old Fourah Bay College have preserved landmarks while training young people in specialist conservation trades. The Wilberforce Village Market Complex and the perimeter walls at Ascension Town and Kissy Road cemeteries were financed largely or entirely from own source revenue, a direct demonstration of local taxation translated into visible public value. Digital transformation supports the same fiscal foundation, with an integrated payment platform already being used by more than 26,000 registered residents, and with 441 market traders now saving on a regulated financial platform.

This progress has been made whilst the Council still has a limited mandate for land use planning and building permits. Nonetheless, these interventions describe a council that has become more data driven, more fiscally responsible, more climate resilient and more closely connected to international institutions without losing its grounding in the concerns of residents. The evidence in this report is real and it is measurable. It is also incomplete. Freetown's transformation is not a project with a completion date, and the Council presents this account not as a conclusion but as a position along a longer road.

Freetown City Council

Mayor of Freetown
Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE

Deputy Mayor
Kweku Melvin Lisk Esq

ABDULAI KABBA

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IBRAHIM CONTEH

IBRAHIM GBLA

IBRAHIM JALLOH

IBRAHIM SORIE CONTEH

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ISSA FATOMA

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Freetown City Council

MARY ANN KAMARA

MAYA BANGURA

MOHAMED DARBOH

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SHEKU DEEN

SHEKU EMILE N'BOMPA TURAY

T.K. MAMOUD

TUTU H. BAILOR

UMARU BANGURA

UNISA KAMARA

WINSTONA CAMPBELL

ZAINAB CONTEH

ZAINAB SESAY

Spotlight on Revenue

In 2024, FCC collected Le 50.49 million against a budget of Le 54.96 million, achieving a collection efficiency of 92 percent. However, in 2025, revenue stood at Le 57.39 million against a budget of Le 77.15 million, representing a 74 percent collection rate. By July 2026, FCC had collected Le 31.78 million against a budget of Le 80.42 million, equivalent to 40 percent of the annual budget. This data trend demonstrates the need for increased tax compliance by our residents.

The Council continues to emphasise that sustained taxpayer compliance is essential for maintaining and expanding service delivery. Revenues collected support critical services such as waste management, drainage maintenance, market upgrades, cemetery maintenance and environmental protection. FCC therefore encourages all taxpayers to continue fulfilling their civic obligations, as their contributions remain central to improving the quality of life for all residents and advancing the transformation of Freetown.

It is important to note that a major driver of the increase in our revenue potential has been the Mayor's introduction of the Moptax System, a digital revenue platform that has significantly reduced leakages, enhanced transparency, and enabled real-time monitoring of payments. Moptax has proven to be a game-changer in FCC's revenue collection system and is now being rolled out to other Local Councils across Sierra Leone as a national model for municipal digital reform.

"As Chief Administrator,
I commend the hard-working staff who deliver the services our residents need in Freetown. To achieve much more, we invite all residents to fulfill their tax obligations to strengthen service delivery."

Raman Tom Farmar
CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

ALHASSAN YILLAH
Deputy Chief Administrator

AMADU SAHR FAYIA
Valuator Officer

AMINATA DAUDA
Internal Auditor

DUNSTAN SACKEY
City Engineer

GIBRIL KALOKOH
Human Resource Officer

HAWA DANIELLA ESTHER KAMULAY
Gender and Social Officer

KOMA ZENOBIA HASSAN-KAMARA
Information, Education and Communication Officer

KOMBA TOMMY MANSA MUSA
Development and Planning Officer

MARIAMA SERAY MARRAH
Accountant

MARIAN J. TUCKER
Environmental and Sanitation Officer

SULAIMAN KAIN
Chief Finance Officer

TOMMY STEVEN SANDI
Procurement Officer

Statistics Summary

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

Clusters	Numbers
Climate Action	24,882
Heritage Tourism	39
Digital Economy	195
Human Capital Development	136,449
Total	161,565

INTERVENTIONS/PROJECTS

Clusters	No.
Climate Action	29
Heritage Tourism	8
Digital Economy	4
Human Capital Development	9
Total	50

Completed: 44 **In Progress: 6**

JOBS CREATED

Clusters	Direct	Indirect
Climate Action	9,375	5,342
Human Capital Development	936	491
Digital Economy	107	43
Heritage Tourism	172	69
Total	10,590	5,945

*Indirect jobs are estimated based on sector-based multiplier methodology derived from ILO (Employment Impact Assessment (EmpIA) Framework) and World Bank benchmarks - Input-Output (I-O) approach).

TRAININGS CONDUCTED

Clusters	No.
Climate Action	37
Heritage Tourism	11
Digital Economy	3
Human Capital Development	19
Total	70

EXTERNAL FUNDING SECURED

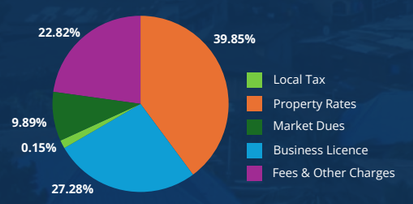
Clusters	Amount - USD	Amount - Le
Climate Action	9,049,083	208,128,900
Heritage Tourism	244,200	5,616,600
Digital Economy	6,500	149,500
Human Capital Development	3,206,000	73,738,000
Total	12,505,783	287,633,000

*90% of external funding secured are managed by external implementing partners

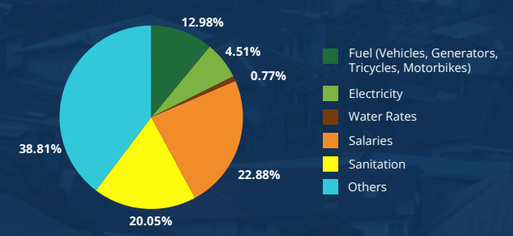
NUMBER OF STAFF

Year	Total	Male	Female
2025	524	387	137
2026	530	403	127

OWN SOURCE REVENUE COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS [%] - 2025



EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS [%] - 2025



REVENUE GENERATION (BUDGETED VS ACTUAL) - Le

Year	Budget	Actual Collected	% of Budget Collected
2024	54,961,346	50,486,203	92%
2025	77,147,441	57,391,119	74%
2026	80,422,174	31,780,200	40% (Jan-July)

GOVERNANCE Council Meetings

Ordinary	24
Extra Ordinary	3
Total	27

GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS - Le

Year	Budgeted Allocation	Amount Received
2024	16,516,433	10,660,653
2025	20,984,116	5,063,907
2026	20,984,116	4,637,050

Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives

To create **120,000 Decent Jobs** for Women & Youth by 2028

CRITICAL PATHWAYS

Climate Action

- Invest In Reforestation, Green Energy And Heat Adaptation
- Expand Investments In Solid And Liquid Waste Management Value Chains
- Undertake City Regeneration, Informal Settlement Upgrades & Green Mobility

Digital Economy

- Improve Access To Digital Skills And Invest In The Enabling Environment For Digital Transformation

Heritage Tourism

- Promote Freetown As A Destination City With A Focus On Heritage Sites, Cultural Festivals And The Creative Arts

Human Capital Development

- Strengthen Early Childhood Development, Basic Education And Skills Development
- Improve Access To Water
- Improve Health Outcomes At Primary Care Level
- Improve Access To Food Via Urban Farming

Climate Action

TRANSFORM FREETOWN – TRANSFORMING LIVES

- Invest in reforestation, green energy and heat adaptation
- Expand investments in solid and liquid waste management value chains
- Undertake city regeneration, informal settlement upgrades & green mobility

Grow additional 4 million trees by 2028 as part of #FreetownTheTreetown Initiative:

FREETOWN THE TREETOWN

Rapid urbanisation, land encroachment, quarrying, charcoal production, and illegal settlements continue to drive significant deforestation across Freetown's Western Area Peninsula and within the city's precincts. Recent satellite-based assessments show that the Western Area Peninsula National Park has lost approximately 5,600 hectares of forest cover since 2016, nearly one-third of its total forest area, with 715 hectares lost or severely degraded in 2024 alone. In response, the FCC committed to expand the #FreetownTheTreetown initiative, an ambitious nature-based solution launched in 2019, initially aimed at planting, growing, and digitally checking 1 million trees by 2023, and that target has been increased to 4 million trees by 2028.

The initiative integrates environmental restoration with socio-economic development by creating green jobs, especially for women and youth, while strengthening climate resilience. The intervention focuses on terrestrial reforestation, mangrove restoration, urban greening, and community-based stewardship within Freetown and the Peninsula, supported by a digital tree-tracking system. Beneficiaries include urban and peri-urban communities, particularly vulnerable populations living in informal settlements and coastal zones.

Sinneh Turay
TREE PLANTER, DWAZARK COMMUNITY

These trees are not just for the environment; they are for my family's future. Because of this work, I can send my daughter to school and give her a better start in life."

By the 1st quarter of 2026, the initiative had already restored 1,202 hectares of forest, planted over 1,210,000 trees, and created more than 5,000 jobs, demonstrating strong alignment with the Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives agenda, particularly in environmental sustainability, job creation, and climate resilience. During the reporting period, 270,000 mangroves were planted; 2,315 direct and 2,685 indirect jobs were created; and 2,057 women and youth have been trained as climate action ambassadors across the Western Area. The initiative stands as a powerful example of how environmental restoration can simultaneously tackle climate vulnerability, create jobs, and build a more sustainable and resilient city.

1.2M+
TREES PLANTED

1K+
HECTARES OF FOREST RESTORED

5K
JOBS CREATED

Carbon Market Progress

As part of the sustainability for the #FreetownTheTreetown initiative, FCC advanced registration of its trees and mangroves under the Verra Verified Carbon Standard, a key step towards future carbon credit issuance. To progress the Verra registration, FCC has initiated formal engagements with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning (MoLHCP). These engagements are working towards securing a protected status for the tree-planting sites under #FreetownTheTreetown. To safeguard the long-term maintenance and protection of these trees, FCC has also proposed concession agreements, ensuring continuity of site stewardship in line with the project's timeline.

This effort also encompassed:

- Mapping trees and mangroves data to establish accurate baseline records
- Strengthening Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems to ensure data integrity and compliance
- Preparing eligibility documentation required for standard registration
- Engaging prospective carbon finance partners to build long-term investment relationships
- Progression of the Project Design Document (PDD)

IMPACT STORY

FROM TRACKER TO CLIMATE LEADER: SABIATU NABIE SANDY'S MANGROVE RESTORATION JOURNEY

Sabiatu began her journey in Kolleh Town as a community tracker under the #FreetownTheTreeTown project with the FCC. Her initial role was to digitally track mangrove seedlings. However, this experience quickly ignited a deeper passion for climate adaptation and environmental stewardship. As she reflects, "what started as tracking trees became a mission to protect my community. Today, I am not just tracking mangroves; I am leading change, restoring livelihoods, and securing our future."

Through continuous learning and hands-on engagement, Sabiatu developed strong knowledge of mangrove ecosystems and their role in protecting coastal communities. She saw how restored mangroves reduce flooding, strengthen shorelines, and support marine life. Motivated by these changes, she went beyond her role, mobilizing residents, raising awareness, and promoting sustainable environmental practices.

Today, Sabiatu serves as the area manager in her community, leading climate adaptation efforts and protecting mangrove forests. Her leadership has strengthened community ownership and participation in restoration activities.

BUDGET FOR 2024 & 2025 $1.76 Million

FUNDING PARTNERS World Bank, Bloomberg Philanthropies, CRS and Delivery Associates

Scale up production and use of low-tech multi-use waste to energy products

KINGTOM FAECAL SLUDGE TREATMENT PLANT AND NEW BRIQUETTE PRODUCTION

The Kingtom Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant was commissioned in 2021 and is being operated with support from GOAL Sierra Leone (GOAL SL). The plant has a capacity to treat 80m3 of faecal sludge per day using geotextile dewatering technology that separates solids from liquids. The trapped solids are a key input for the briquetting process, which are combined with organic biomass for enhanced calorific capacity. The process produces an alternative to charcoal which is environmentally friendly and produces no harmful gases when burning, currently supporting clean cooking initiatives on a small scale.

A new briquetting machine which has the capacity to carbonise 1 ton of biomass per day has been procured and will be commissioned by the end of September 2026. The machine can process 25 tons of faecal sludge solids per month, turning it into briquettes.

The Kingtom facility produces about 30 tons of solids per month balancing the supply and demand required for the new machine, producing 20 tons of briquettes per month and serving 20,000 households daily. The briquettes will enable commercial scale market substitution of charcoal, thus providing a cleaner cooking alternative for residents of Freetown. As charcoal is a significant contributor to deforestation, reducing its demand will reduce deforestation drivers as well as the negative health impacts of cooking with it.

BUDGET $50,000

FUNDING PARTNERS GOAL and Irish Aid

CLEAN COOKING PILOT

FCC is scaling up its waste-to-energy initiative with a 3-month pilot of clean cooking alternatives in 2 informal settlements, ahead of the new briquetting machine at Kingtom Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant. Under a city-to-city collaboration with Mannheim and funded by Global Engagement with funds from BMZ, FCC is promoting uptake of briquettes and biogas as an alternative source of fuel for over 90 households across Kolleh Town and Congo Town.

A targeting strategy was developed to identify suitable recipients for the briquettes, and then workshops were held to inform participants of how to use the clean cooking alternatives. Eighty households received briquettes free of charge as part of the pilot, and biodigesters which convert organic waste into gas for cooking have also been installed for the remaining beneficiaries. This will reduce the consumption of firewood and charcoal for cooking, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation, and improving air quality for the beneficiaries.

The pilot has also led to the employment of 9 youths by Sierra Ecoheat who are producing the briquettes, and 10 members of the community for monitoring and evaluation.

This project demonstrates the viability of clean cooking alternatives in Freetown, encouraging an increase in the future and feeding into sustainable production substitution at scale with increasing benefits to residents.

BUDGET	$50,000	FUNDING PARTNER	Global Engagement, BMZ, and City of Mannheim

Briquette

Briquette Workshop Participants

Briquette Demonstration

Saio Sesay
CONGO TOWN

Us women are happy for this project because when we cook normally it's dirty and it creates lots of smoke that gets in our lungs. Thank God for Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr"

IMPACT STORY

I am Kadiatu Conteh, and I live in the Congo Town community. I am one of the beneficiaries who has benefited greatly from the clean cooking project, which has helped most women in Congo town community accessing clean cooking fuel which is briquettes.

Now, since we have started receiving supply or benefiting from the briquette as I am receiving 2kg briquette supply every other day which has been helpful.

The money I would normally use to buy charcoal is no longer spent in the same way. With the briquette supply, I can cook regularly while spending less money on cooking fuel in extreme cases. Briquette has also improved the atmosphere in my room. When I was lighting charcoal inside my room, it produced smoke that sometimes irritated and disturbed me. Neighbours were also complaining about the smoke and the bad smell. However, when I light briquette, it produces less smoke. People no longer complain, and I am able to leave the stove in my room without smoke, smell, or the need for constant blowing of fire. I thank God for this improvement.

KINGTOM DUMPSITE MANAGEMENT, RECYCLING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Kingtom Dumpsite, located near the centre of Freetown, is one of two sites in the city that was zoned out for waste disposal in 1946. Over the decades it has grown to occupy the areas bordered by Ascension Town Road, the Kingtom community, and the Atlantic Ocean. FCC is partnering with Sierra Forever Green (SFG) to recycle plastics at Kingtom. The plant machinery being installed has the capacity to recycle up to 55 tons of plastic per day, producing bottles, staple fibre and resin.

The site itself is to be re-engineered using a phased approach over a ten-year period. The scope of agreed works include; studies, data collection and defining site boundaries at the preliminary stage. SFG will secure and constructs boundary walls with defined entry gates, restructure waste disposal, regularise the informal waste pickers and maintain the existing weighbridge in a functional state. Fencing of the dumpsite has started and around 150 jobs have been created by this intervention so far.

SUSAN'S BAY COMMUNITY TOILET UPGRADE

Susan's Bay community toilets, which were initially funded by the Government of Japan, have been upgraded to functional biodigester toilet systems through collaboration with the Tzu Chi Foundation and Caritas. The design of the biodigester system incorporates co-treatment of the faecal matter and the organic green market waste in the community.

The process is anaerobic without chemical additives, with the key conditions of temperature and PH controlled for optimal results. A greenhouse was installed around the biodigester and gas storage systems for additional protection as well as controlling the temperature to optimal conditions above 35°C. The project is ongoing and has created green jobs, with 15 in construction and 10 in operations and maintenance.

BUDGET	$12,500	FUNDING PARTNERS	Tzu Chi Foundation and Caritas

HEAT ADAPTATION

Increasing awareness of heat stress and related losses through community engagement

HEAT SUMMIT

The First African Urban Heat Summit, hosted by FCC in February 2025 in partnership with HERA, was a landmark initiative aimed at addressing the growing threat of extreme heat across African cities. Its core objectives were to strengthen regional collaboration, elevate heat as a systemic risk, particularly for vulnerable populations and women, and facilitate practical knowledge exchange on governance, adaptation, and early warning systems. It also significantly raised the profile of extreme heat as a continental priority, shifting it from a localised issue to a shared challenge requiring coordinated regional action.

A key achievement was the successful convening of eight African Mayors from cities including Accra, Monrovia, Dakar, and Abidjan, all Mayors and District Council Chairpersons of Sierra Leone, and a broad coalition of stakeholders such as international organisations, civil society groups, experts, and market women. This diverse participation ensured that both policy leaders and those most affected by extreme heat were represented.

BUDGET	$100,000
FUNDING PARTNER	HERA (formerly called Climate Resilience for All)

ESTABLISHMENT OF FREETOWN'S HEAT EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The establishment of Freetown's Heat Early Warning System is a city-wide intervention designed to provide timely, actionable, and locally relevant warnings of incoming heat events to residents, with a particular focus on the city's most heat-vulnerable communities. As Freetown experiences rising average temperatures and an increasing frequency of heatwaves, the absence of a functional early warning system means that residents, especially the vulnerable, receive no advance notice of high-risk heat days, and have no structured mechanism to trigger protective action.

The objective of the intervention is to design, build, test, and deploy a heat early warning system tailored to the city. The system will combine meteorological data from the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency, locally validated heat-health thresholds, structured risk communication, and a community-level dissemination network anchored in market-based focal persons across all 42 markets in the city. By the end of the project, residents should be able to receive heat alerts in advance of high-risk days, understand what level of risk each alert represents, and take specific protective actions appropriate to that risk level.

The project is being delivered in partnership with HERA, the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (data and forecasting), the Ministry of Health (health-system integration and threshold validation), CODOHSAPA (community structures, market-level engagement, and dissemination), and Timeless Magazine (communications, messaging, and content production).

BUDGET	$250,000	**FUNDER**	HERA

FREETOWN HEAT HEALTH RESILIENCE PROJECT

The Freetown Heat Health Resilience Project is a city-wide intervention designed to address the growing public health risks posed by rising temperatures and increasingly frequent heat events in Freetown. The project's objectives are threefold; (1) to increase public awareness of heat-related health risks, (2) to build the capacity of frontline health care workers to identify and respond to heat illness, and (3) to strengthen the city's heat governance system to inform evidence-based policy development and implementation.

The intervention targets 500 health care workers across Freetown's 72 Peripheral Health Units (PHUs), in addition to the city's most heat-vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, children, the elderly, persons with chronic conditions, and outdoor workers in informal settlements and markets.

The establishment of the Heat Health Task Force is a critical first deliverable under the Freetown Heat Action Plan and represents a major step forward in city-level heat governance. The Task Force includes FCC, Ministry of Health, District Health Management Team, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector. By bringing together key partners under a single coordinating body, the project has created a sustainable institutional foundation for ongoing heat policy development, advocacy, and implementation.

The project has also developed training materials for 500 health care workers, completed train the trainer sessions of 72 PHU staff, and contracted a consultancy firm to develop a communication toolkit and response protocol, community engagement, and vulnerability mapping.

BUDGET	100,000	**FUNDER**	C40 Cities

Developing heat-resilient infrastructure, focusing on markets, and enhancing heat coping mechanisms by providing cold chains and improving access to drinking water and cooling systems

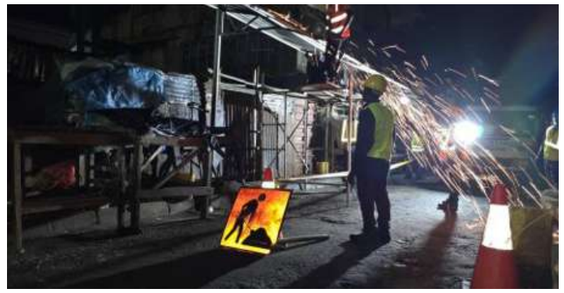
FREETOWN MARKET SHADE COVER PROJECT

The Freetown Market Shade Cover Project is a climate adaptation initiative designed to protect market traders, the majority of whom are women, from the growing impacts of extreme heat. Across Freetown, traders spend long hours working in open-air markets with limited or no protection from direct sunlight. As temperatures rise and periods of extreme heat become more frequent and intense, this exposure presents an increasing public health risk and negatively affects the productivity, income, comfort and wellbeing of thousands of women who depend on market trading for their livelihoods.

The project began in 2023 with a pilot in three open-air markets: Calaba Town Market, Bombay Market and Congo Market. The pilot introduced purpose-designed shade structures to replace inadequate and informal coverings, with the aim of reducing direct heat and UV exposure for traders and customers, testing a scalable model of climate-resilient market infrastructure for Freetown, and ensuring that market women were actively involved in shaping the design and implementation of the intervention.

The initial shade structures were subsequently damaged by severe windstorms. While this was a setback, it also provided important lessons about the level of resilience required for infrastructure operating in Freetown's increasingly variable climate conditions. The experience highlighted the need for stronger structural design, greater consideration of wind loading and site conditions, and more adaptable approaches for different market environments.

BUDGET	$88,000	FUNDING PARTNER	HERA



Rather than bringing the initiative to an end, these lessons have informed the next phase of the project. The need for heat protection has continued to grow, and the case for supporting women working in the informal economy has become even more urgent.

Working with HERA, FCC secured additional funding and technical support to redesign and test a more durable and context-appropriate approach. The next phase will focus on Dove-Cot/Hagan Street Market and surrounding market areas, with the design informed by direct engagement with traders and a closer assessment of how the market spaces are used daily.

This approach reflects an important principle of the project; climate adaptation infrastructure must respond not only to technical requirements, but

also to the lived realities of the people it is intended to serve.

Ultimately, the project aims to demonstrate how practical, locally informed and resilient market infrastructure can help reduce heat exposure while supporting safer, healthier and more productive working conditions for women across Freetown.

FREETOWN GREEN SPACES AND COOLING CORRIDORS INITIATIVE

The Freetown Green Spaces and Cooling Corridors Initiative aims to reduce extreme urban heat by developing shaded, green public spaces in high-temperature areas, while also improving public awareness of heat-related health risks.

A key achievement has been the design and delivery of Freetown's first pilot cooling corridor at Hannah-Benka Coker Street, a busy and heat-exposed area in central Freetown. The project successfully completed site selection, design, and construction of the Heat Pavilion, which combines structural elements such as pergolas for shade, with ecological measures including tree and ground-cover planting, to reduce surface and ambient temperatures.

The intervention also delivered heat awareness educational panels, integrating public health messaging directly into the built environment. This ensures that users not only benefit from cooler conditions but also gain knowledge on how to respond to heat risks.

The initiative has created a functioning, replicable model for urban cooling infrastructure. It demonstrates how combining green space, shade structures, and public education can reduce heat exposure and improve urban resilience, with plans to scale this approach across additional locations in Freetown.

BUDGET	$130,000	FUNDER	World Bank

Establishing a heat resilience insurance scheme to cover economic and non-economic losses due to heat stress, particularly for female market workers

PARAMETRIC HEAT INSURANCE AND CASH ASSISTANCE PROJECT FOR MARKET WOMEN

The Parametric Heat Insurance & Cash Assistance Project is a first-of-its-kind climate-risk financing intervention in Freetown, designed to protect market women, among the city's most heat-exposed informal workers, from the economic and health consequences of extreme heat. The intervention is being implemented in partnership with HERA, which is leading the technical design, feasibility analysis, and product structuring. The project is being implemented across 12 markets and is reaching over 10,000 market women who currently face daily exposure to rising temperatures with no safety net to absorb the resulting health costs, lost trading hours, or product spoilage.

The project combines two layered, complementary instruments; (1) a parametric weather insurance product focused on heat, and (2) a cash assistance overlay. The parametric insurance is structured to trigger automatic pay-outs when temperatures cross a higher, severe heat threshold, providing a modest financial cushion at the point of greatest economic disruption. The cash assistance overlay is designed to be triggered at medium and lower heat thresholds, providing earlier and more frequent support that helps beneficiaries take preventive and adaptive action before heat exposure becomes severe. Together, the two instruments deliver a tiered safety net to help women modify behaviour, hydrate, take breaks, or reduce exposure.

The project has completed consultations, a feasibility study, trained 42 data collectors, and registered 10,400 beneficiaries. Community engagement is still ongoing before roll-out of the product.

BUDGET $220,000 **FUNDING PARTNER** HERA

EXPAND INVESTMENTS IN SOLID AND LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT VALUE CHAINS

Implement a New Waste Management Strategy

#DortiMusGo

The #DortiMusGo Campaign is a citywide sanitation and waste management initiative launched by FCC in 2025 to support the implementation and enforcement of the new Solid and Liquid Waste Collection Byelaws 2024. The campaign aims to promote a cleaner, healthier, and more environmentally sustainable Freetown through improved waste management practices and public compliance with the new sanitation Byelaws, achieving the city's long-term sanitation and environmental goals.

The campaign was introduced as part of FCC's efforts to modernise waste collection and disposal systems across the city. Under the new Byelaws, all households, businesses, and institutions are required to register with FCC-approved waste service providers and pay approved collection fees. Freetown has been divided into eight waste management blocks to improve service delivery, accountability, and efficiency.

The #DortiMusGo Campaign focuses on public education, community engagement, behavioural change, and law enforcement. Through sensitisation programmes, media outreach, community mobilisation, and the deployment of trained sanitation workers, the campaign seeks to increase awareness of the new sanitation Byelaws and encourage responsible waste disposal practices.

The campaign also supports the enforcement of key provisions of the Byelaws, including prohibitions against indiscriminate dumping of waste in streets, gutters, waterways, and public spaces, burning of waste, and the use of unauthorised waste collectors. Violators may face penalties of up to Le 5,000, imprisonment for up to six months, or both.

The Council plays a central role in strengthening the waste management system through targeted capacity building and community engagement. It has designed and delivered comprehensive training to its approved waste service providers, focusing on marketing, operations, fleet management, communication, branding, and route optimisation. Through this intervention, FCC improved providers' ability to attract and retain customers, plan and deliver services more efficiently, and manage fleets sustainably. The training also strengthened compliance with regulatory standards, enhanced health and safety practices, and promoted data driven decision-making. Service providers are now better equipped to deliver reliable, customer-focused waste collection services. In parallel, FCC led an extensive house-to-house engagement campaign under the #DortiMusGo initiative to increase public awareness and compliance with the new Byelaws. By directly engaging households and businesses, FCC improved understanding of sanitation responsibilities, addressed misconceptions, and began registering residents with approved service providers.

The Byelaw encourages all households, businesses, and institutions to register for approved waste collection services and make timely payments through official digital platforms. Residents are required to register with the FCC- approved waste collection service providers assigned to their block. Registration can be completed through two applications; the Smart City Services platform for residents and businesses in Blocks 1,2,3,4, 5,7 & 8 and for residents and businesses in Block 6, registration is completed using the DortiBox App, which is operated by Freetown Waste Transformers. The apps allow users to create an account, provide their address, select a waste collection plan, schedule regular waste pickups and pay for their collection. To date, a combined total of 27,000 households, institutions and businesses have been registered using the two systems.

FCC will continue to strengthen the technical and managerial capacity of service providers, increase public awareness, and build stronger relationships with communities. Notably, 90% of targeted households, businesses and institutions expressed interest in subscribing to approved waste collection services, demonstrating FCC's success in driving behaviour change and expanding demand for formal waste management services.

FUNDING PARTNERS Africell, Ecobank, and World Bank

Institute waste segregation at source in five markets and scale up the recycling of organic waste to compost to reduce methane emissions

CITY-WIDE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND METHANE EMISSION REDUCTION

The City-Wide Waste Management and Methane Emission Reduction Project addresses one of Freetown's most pressing challenges, the large volume of unsorted waste generated in the city's markets, much of which is dumped without treatment.

To address this challenge, the project follows an integrated circular-economy approach, capturing organic waste at source, converting it into energy and productive assets, and reducing methane emissions while delivering services to Hagan Street Market and Macauley Street Transfer Station.

The project is delivered through five interlinked components:

1. Systematic collection and recycling of organic (food) waste from Hagan Street Market and surrounding markets, diverting it from open dumping into productive use. The process significantly reduces methane emissions, making it one of the most effective and cost-efficient measures for reducing impacts on the environment. The intervention contributes to cleaner and healthier markets by reducing the accumulation of decomposing waste, thereby lowering air pollution, unpleasant odours, and disease vectors.
2. Installation of a biodigester and generator, which converts the collected organic waste into energy for use at the project site, generating renewable energy that powers market facilities and demonstrating a practical model for the city.
3. Construction of five biodigester toilet units, which provides market women with access to safe and dignified sanitation while feeding the waste-to-energy system.
4. Installation of a cold room protects traders' incomes by cutting the spoilage of perishable goods and reducing post-harvest losses.
5. Transformation of the Macauley Street transfer station into a community managed urban vegetable food hub, using hydroponic and aquaponic systems alongside locally made planting beds for growing vegetables and rearing fish, shortening supply chains and improving access to nutritious food.

Alongside the physical infrastructure, young graduates have been trained in the installation and operation of waste collection and segregation, and biodigester systems. This approach builds a local workforce with the skills to operate, maintain and replicate the project's systems, anchoring the investment within the community.

The project positions the Hagan Street - Macauley Street corridor as an integrated demonstration of climate-resilient market development, a model that can be scaled to other markets in Freetown. It shows how a single integrated intervention can cut methane emissions, clean up markets, generate energy, improve sanitation, protect food and create jobs.

BUDGET $400,000 **FUNDING PARTNER** Global Methane Hub

Continue citywide Public Space Cleaning Programme

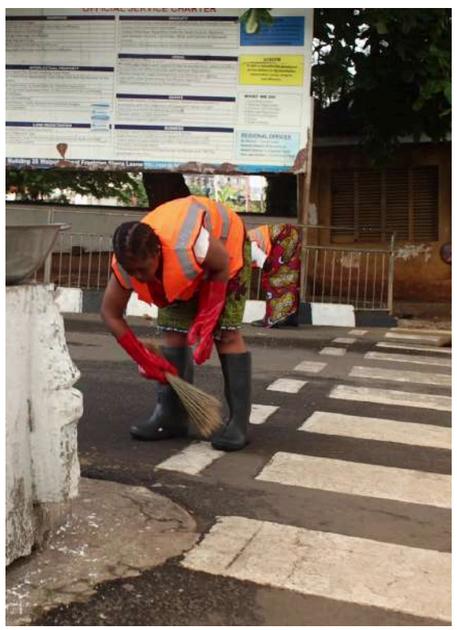
PUBLIC SPACE SWEEPING PROGRAMME

The Public Space Sweeping Programme led by FCC focuses on keeping the city clean while creating jobs for residents. It includes daily street sweeping predominantly targeting 200 main streets, clearing illegal dumpsites, cleaning and fumigating markets to improve sanitation and public health across Freetown. This programme has also strengthened FCC's infrastructure capacity to collect and manage waste effectively in the city by procuring two waste collection dump trucks, installing 100 street litter bins, and procuring 33 waste collection tricycles, focused mostly in the Central Business District (CBD).

The litter bins were originally installed to provide residents with a place to dispose of small items of litter, such as food wrappers, plastic bottles, and paper. Over time, many of these bins were misused and instead became dumping points for household wastes. This misuse led to frequent overflowing of bins, unpleasant odours, environmental pollution, and increased public health risks. As a result, most of the litter bins within the CBD were removed.

A major achievement of the programme has been large-scale job creation, generating over 3,561 long term jobs, alongside 600 temporary roles, with 95 percent going to young people and over 80 percent of employees being women. These jobs provide a steady source of income for thousands of households and help to improve livelihoods.

Beyond employment, regular cleaning and waste removal has reduced litter and improved the appearance of public spaces. Additionally, the clearing of 96 illegal dumpsites in partnership with CODOHSAPA has restored degraded areas and helped prevent flooding by keeping drainage systems unblocked.



BUDGET $1.8 Million

FUNDING PARTNERS FCC own source, World Bank, and Infinitum

FLOOD MITIGATION

FCC implemented targeted flood mitigation interventions across the municipality as part of the city's annual flood prevention efforts which started in 2018, focusing on reducing the impact of increasingly severe rainfall and climate-related flooding.

The intervention primarily targets residents in flood-prone communities across the city, particularly those living in low-lying and densely populated areas. It also directly engages local youth, who are mobilised as part of paid labour teams to carry out clearing activities, creating short-term employment opportunities while strengthening community ownership. Flood mitigation has created 1,250 temporary jobs across the city.

These interventions were financed through a combination of partner resources and own-source revenue. FCC also provided support, including equipment, personnel, and operational coordination.

Key activities include community engagement and planning meetings, flood risk assessments and identification of priority sites, drainage cleaning, and illegal dumpsite clearing. At the community level, clearing blocked drains and illegal dumpsites has improved water flow and reduced flooding in high-risk areas, helping to protect homes, livelihoods, and public health. Residents in targeted communities have experienced fewer disruptions during heavy rains and reduced exposure to sanitation-related risks.

BUDGET	Le 2.8 Million
FUNDING PARTNERS	FCC own source, GOAL, World Bank, and Irish Aid

RESEARCH ADDRESSING URBAN GROWTH IN RISKY AREAS

As a result of a rapidly growing population with no land use planning and building permit permits, Freetown continues to see informal settlements expand on flood-prone hillsides and coastal areas, creating significant costs for households and government when weather shocks cause damage. To address this challenge, FCC in collaboration with the International Growth Centre (IGC) undertook a study to assess the effectiveness of policy options for managing urban growth in high-risk areas, particularly in informal coastal settlements. The study is examining the economic and social costs of these settlements and exploring housing solutions that support voluntary relocation.

A key intervention is a housing lottery, through which 59 participants were selected to receive rental support to move to safer housing. These beneficiaries were mostly youths and women, with the average age of recipients 33 and 66 percent being women. Participants relocated from high-risk areas such as Kingtom and Kissy Brook to 29 different locations across Freetown, demonstrating the feasibility of voluntary movement

During the study, 1,232 participants were surveyed, with women representing 60 percent of respondents. The field research also generated short-term employment for over 62 people, with more than 40 percent being women, alongside two full-time positions. The outcomes of the study are expected to benefit around 3,000 residents in coastal communities.

BUDGET	£200,000
FUNDING PARTNERS	IGC, Structural Transformation and Economic Growth, and London School of Economics.

UNDERTAKE CITY REGENERATION, INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADES & GREEN MOBILITY

Revitalise urban space to enhance functionality and appeal to Freetonians

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT URBAN REGENERATION PROGRAMME

In 2019, the Mayors of Freetown and Zurich jointly agreed to enter into a City-to-City cooperation (C2CC) with the aim of tackling urban development challenges in Freetown.

The cooperation is an initiative contributing to the achievement of the Freetown CBD Urban Regeneration Programme (CBDURP), in collaboration with UN-Habitat and GOAL SL. The aim of the initiative is to rehabilitate and improve the CBD to be more inclusive, safe, and green.

The scope of this initiative consists of two key deliverables:

1. The promotion of technical exchange between the cities, including knowledge creation and capacity building, with UN-Habitat providing support in the delivery of an area action plan through a planning lab.
2. The development and implementation of interventions contributing to sustainable solutions for urban regeneration of the CBD with the physical works being undertaken by GOAL SL, including:

   a. Allowing pedestrians to walk safely by improving the footways and drainages.

   b. Introducing 190 solar panelled street lighting poles on 11 streets to promote safe walking, reduce street violence, accidents, and improve the night-time economy.

   c. Enhancing the city's aesthetics by creating green public spaces and making the CBD a more attractive place for leisure and tourism.

   d. Establishing a Controlled Parking Zone to improve pedestrian movement, optimise use of parking spaces and raise revenue for infrastructure works.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE:

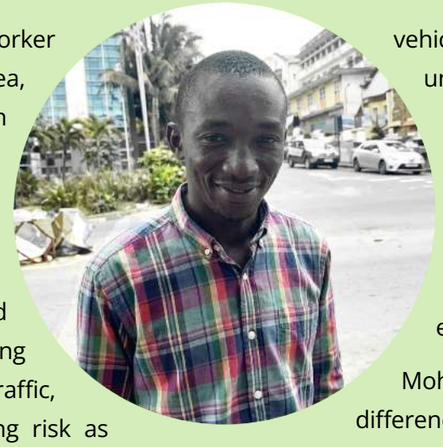
1. In November 2025, a delegation from the City of Zurich, led by Mayor Corine Mauch, visited Freetown to witness the turning of the sod for the CBDURP. Also present were the UN-Habitat Regional Director for Africa, Oumar Sylla, and his delegation.
2. Knowledge exchange started with an initial peer-to-peer webinar session, which served as an introduction to the urban context of Freetown, with regular webinars following.
3. The progression of the CBD Area Action Plan, which will create a series of policies and a development framework that ensures existing trends of development in the CBD are delivered with more sustainable guiding principles. The Area Action Plan is being informed by a wide range of stakeholders, including traders, transport operators, businesses, communities, property owners, women, youth, government institutions and development partners, through a participatory and integrated approach.
4. In May 2026, the first Area Action Plan preparatory workshop was held by FCC to support the analysis and strategic planning phases by validating key spatial findings, strengthening collective understanding of urban dynamics, and informing future planning directions and interventions.
5. Work on footway improvement activities commenced on five targeted streets, and despite challenges with the removal of infringements on the streets, significant progress includes:
   a. 850 m^2 of site clearance, opening critical work fronts.
   b. Demolition of 850 m^2 of deteriorated footpath to prepare the corridor for reconstruction.
   c. Installation of 800 m^2 of new footway surface, delivering visible progress along completed sections.
   d. Off-site pedestrian slab production, setting up the project for accelerated installation.
6. In January 2026, the Mayor launched the Urban Greening Competition to generate ideas for the greening of the CBD, open to youth, students, and community groups to propose innovative urban greening concepts. Eight full designs were reviewed and three winners selected.

BUDGET CHF 2.5 Million **FUNDING PARTNER** City of Zurich

> **"Safety for us market women is now guaranteed"**
>
> **Aminata A. Bangura**
> GLOUCESTER STREET

IMPACT STORY

RESTORING SAFETY AND DIGNITY IN FREETOWN'S CBD MOHAMED S. KEMOKAI



For Mohamed S. Kemokai, a worker in the CBD, walking in the area, especially Wallace Johnson Street and Gloucester Street, required caution. Every step required attention because there were no clear pedestrian paths, uneven pavements and walkway infringement. Walking meant weaving through traffic, navigating noise, and accepting risk as part of daily life. "You didn't really walk freely," he recalls. "You were always watching out for vehicles. Even standing still felt unsafe."

Like many others in the CBD, Mohamed had learned to adapt by moving quickly, avoiding crowded corners, and treating the street as a space to endure rather than use.

Mohamed stated that, "the difference is clear, you can now see where to walk, there's more space, and it feels safer."

Continue ongoing implementation of upgrades in Seven Informal Settlements (Moyiba, Rokupr, Coconut Farm, Kolleh Town, Cockle Bay, Kroo Bay and Susan's Bay)

INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADES IN MOYIBA, PORTEE ROKUPR AND COCONUT FARM

FCC, through the World Bank-funded RUSLP, is working to improve infrastructure and living conditions in three informal settlements: Moyiba, Portee Rokupr and Coconut Farm. The project will improve mobility, access to essential services, public safety, drainage, and climate resilience in some of Freetown's most underserved communities.

Preliminary designs and extensive community consultations were completed in 2024, ensuring that the proposed interventions respond to local priorities and needs. The project is currently at the procurement stage, with works expected to be completed in 2027. The table below lists the infrastructure improvements to be delivered under this project:

RUSLP INFORMATIONAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADE INTERVENTIONS

Interventions	Moyiba	Portee Rokupr	Coconut Farm
Paved Road	3km	0.78km	1.5km
Street Lighting	200 units	150 units	100 units
Bridges	1 bridge	1 culvert	
Slope Protection	2300m³	715m³	
Improving Drainage	730m	970m	1200m
Water Points	23	9	12
Toilets	29	15	20

FUNDING PARTNER World Bank

DEVELOPING AREA ACTION PLANS FOR KROO BAY AND MOYIBA

In anticipation of the enactment of the National Country Planning Act, which was passed into law in December 2025, FCC has been producing Area Actions Plans to improve the living conditions and to protect the environment in the city's largest and most deprived informal settlement. Within these plans, FCC is proposing to designate Special Planning Areas (SPA) in three informal settlements in collaboration with the MoLHCP and CRS. The proposed areas for SPAs are:

1. **Cockle Bay** - from Murray Town on the west side of Aberdeen Bridge, to the south side of the bridge abutment wall.
2. **Cockle Bay** - a coastal community located to the west of Aberdeen Bridge, located along the Aberdeen Creek, which are wetlands that have been declared as a UNESCO Ramsar Site.
3. **Kroo Bay** – the area north of Kroo Town Road, bordered by the Connaught Hospital to the east of the seafront.
4. **Moyiba** - a hillside community to the east of Freetown, along Mamba Ridge, between Kissy and the area bordering the water catchment and forest reserve.

The plan for the Cockle Bay Area has been re-phased due to budget constraints in order to undertake a wider assessment of the informal settlements around the Aberdeen Creek area. However, the Council continues to seek funding to undertake this work to protect the Aberdeen Creek environment and improve the living conditions for its residents.

In Kroo Bay, the plan was informed by community consultations and a household survey, alongside technical assessments of road access, site suitability, and soil conditions for housing. With support from C40 Cities and Gensler, appropriate affordable housing typologies were developed and incorporated into the revised Area Action Plan.

For Moyiba, the plan was developed through structured community engagement, including

interviews and focus group discussions, and strengthened through collaboration with RUSLP consultants to align feasibility work with planning proposals and technical support by CODOHSAPA. Additional stakeholder input informed further refinement, resulting in an updated draft which integrates priority interventions.

BUDGET $100,000 **FUNDING PARTNERS** C40 Cities, World Bank, and CRS

DEVELOPING HIGH RESOLUTION DRONE IMAGERY

High-resolution drone mapping has expanded the availability of detailed spatial data to support planning, service delivery, and climate action in Freetown. Using low-cost drone technology, surveys were completed across the city, generating high-resolution imagery, with a specific focus on six informal settlements and the CBD.

A key achievement was securing funding to carry out targeted accessibility assessments in selected informal settlements, using the imagery to analyse barriers affecting access to services for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children. The data has been uploaded to open platforms, improving access for planning and analysis for all stakeholders. It is already being used in the city for waste management planning, updating the property tax database, infrastructure assessments, and climate risk analysis, including mapping exposure to extreme heat. This has generated improved data for decision-making, stronger local capacity, and practical applications across multiple city services, with replication already underway in other districts and cities.

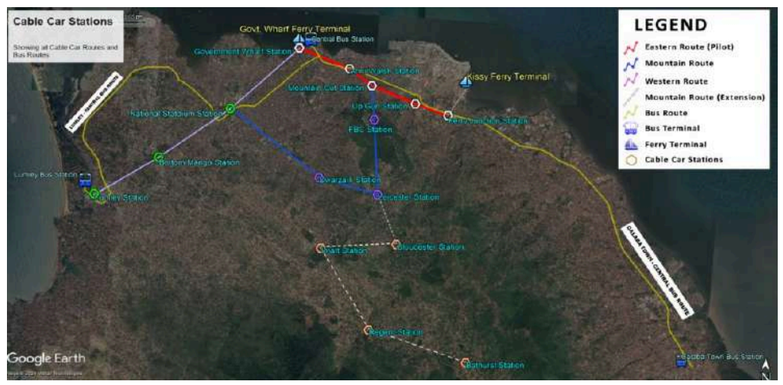
The programme also built local technical capacity by training council staff and community members to operate drones and use open-source mapping tools, reducing reliance on costly external providers and enabling ongoing data collection at a lower cost. This work has created 15 jobs, including young people and members of local communities.

BUDGET €30,000

FUNDING PARTNERS BMZ and Humanitarian Open Street Map

Implement Green Urban Mobility Alternative

FREETOWN CABLE CAR (PILOT ROUTE)



The Cable Car Project is a proposed new transport system designed to improve how people move across the city, particularly in the eastern part of Freetown. During this reporting period, the project focused on preparation, including a full feasibility study completed in October 2024. This confirmed that the cable car would be both technically viable and financially feasible as a clean, low emission, affordable transport solution.

The feasibility study concluded with a presentation of the report findings to the Vice President and members of the steering committee, which comprises of relevant government departments and agencies.

Since the feasibility study, the following activities have progressed:

1. Completion of the Environmental and Social Assessments in July 2025, with a public disclosure event and confirmed recommendation for an EPA licence for the project.
2. Support for the project from the Ministry of Finance after review of the feasibility study and financial assessment report of the project in December 2025.
3. Recommendation from the Ministry of Finance for an Inter-Ministerial Committee to be set-up with the approval of Cabinet.

In the long-term the project is expected to transform transportation opportunities for the residents of the city through the construction of 3 route corridors across the Freetown Urban District. These include a western, eastern, and mountain route as shown in diagram below. The cable car is designed to make it easier and faster for residents to travel between communities and the city centre, improving access to jobs, markets, and services. It is also expected to reduce traffic congestion and support economic growth by creating jobs during construction and operation, as well as in related sectors such as tourism and small businesses. The project has already created over 20 temporary jobs, linked to technical studies, planning, and project preparation.

FREETOWN AIR QUALITY IMPACT STUDY AND MONITORING

Freetown continues to make steady progress towards achieving its commitments under the C40 Climate and Clean Air Declaration. The city launched its first Climate Action Plan in 2023 which outlined the scope of the planned interventions being implemented to tackle the problems associated with air quality and the health impact on citizens. Freetown joined the African Cities for Clean Air (AC4CA) programme and has received support to continue its impactful participation in initiatives to address air quality.

One of these initiatives is the Breath for Life Programme, targeted at providing technical assistance to cities in Africa to address air quality related issues. The programme created the first ever comprehensive city-wide air pollution baseline of emission levels, assessed the vulnerability and health impact of air pollutants and related economic costs, and developed an inclusive multi-stakeholder communications strategy. Additionally, 15 air-quality sensors were installed across the 12 planning areas in the city. This includes 12 Node S sensors, 2 multi-gas sensors and 1 dust module installed.

BUDGET	$250,000	FUNDING PARTNER	C40 Cities

Other Climate Action Interventions

BLOOMBERG YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION FUND

The Bloomberg Climate Action Fund was inspired by the Mayor and is currently being rolled out in 300 cities across 100 countries globally. It gives cities the opportunity to give grants of $1,000 to $5,000. The Fund focuses on empowering young people to actively participate in sustainable urban development and environmental stewardship. The initiative aims to raise awareness, build capacity, and mobilise youth to implement pilot projects that provide practical climate solutions to improve resilience and reduce carbon footprints across the city.

Over the last 2 years it has given youth groups in Freetown a total of $128,000, starting with $41,000 in round 1 and increasing to $87,000 in round 2. The primary target group is Freetown's youth aged 15 to 24, particularly those from vulnerable communities most affected by climate change impacts such as flooding and waste management challenges.

The project has created 114 permanent jobs as well as 3,220 temporary jobs, also increasing participants employability for future roles. Freetown now has a pioneering role in empowering youth for climate resilience.

The funded projects include:

Energy & Waste	Urban Resilience & Green Space	Safety & Livelihoods	Education & Innovation
• **Sierra Eco Heat:** A waste-to-energy pilot. • **Greentech Bioenergy:** Biodigester at Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary converts food/chimp waste to cooking gas. • **Youth in Action for Sustainable Climate:** Pilot biogas in private residences. • **Sierra Electric Technology:** Pilot irritation system and climate training retrofitting tricycles to battery-powered electric.	• **Nature for Mangroves:** 25,000 mangrove seedlings restored at Mafemgbeya–Cockle Bay. • **Sierra Eco Shades:** Solar-powered shade cover with lights/fans at Kroo Town Road Market.	• **Girls in Renewable Energy:** Installed solar lighting at Low-Cost Market Kissy, enabling night trading. • **Freetown Media Center:** App development designed to provide real-time climate alerts and sustainable living tools.	• **Youth Climate Council Freetown:** Climate Advocacy to empower young people to become active leaders in climate action. • **Student Eco-Tourism Hub Sierra Leone:** Waste to energy pilot at two university campuses.

BUDGET	$128,000
FUNDING PARTNERS	C40 Cities, and Bloomberg Philanthropies

Andrew Sahr Norma
TACUGAMA COMMUNITY

The Fund's support has empowered us, young leaders, to drive real environmental change, transform communities with innovative climate solutions, and inspire a sustainable future for all."

IMPACT STORY

BIODIGESTER AT TACUGAMA: CLOSING THE WASTE LOOP WITH CLEAN ENERGY TO SAVE FORESTS

At Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, the installation of a biodigester funded by the Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund has sparked a profound transformation for both the sanctuary, and the surrounding communities. Before the biodigester, the sanctuary relied heavily on firewood and charcoal for cooking, contributing to local deforestation as trees were cut down to meet fuel needs. This not only threatened

the forest habitat critical to the chimpanzees but also accelerated climate change impacts in the city.

The biodigester, engineered to convert food scraps and chimpanzee waste into clean, renewable biogas, has revolutionized daily operations at Tacugama. A young sanctuary staff member describes how the new system has changed their work and the environment, stating "we used to spend hours collecting firewood, and the smoke made cooking difficult and unhealthy. Now, with biogas, cooking is faster, cleaner, and no longer harms the forest we protect."

This technology reduces the sanctuary's dependence on traditional methods of cooking, directly decreasing deforestation rates. By turning organic waste into cooking fuel, the sanctuary closes a waste loop, improving sanitation and reducing methane emissions from decomposing waste. The cleaner cooking gas also improves air quality for the chimpanzees, staff, and visitors, enhancing health outcomes.

Beyond environmental benefits, the project has empowered youth who were trained to operate and maintain the biodigester. These young people now serve as ambassadors for sustainable energy, spreading awareness about climate-friendly alternatives to firewood and charcoal. The initiative has also inspired local households, restaurants, and hotels to consider adopting similar biodigesters, fostering a wider cultural shift towards renewable energy.

The biodigester exemplifies how the fund drives practical, sustainable solutions that protect ecosystems, empower youth, and combat climate change, all while improving livelihoods and preserving vital forest habitats.

YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION ACCELERATOR

In 2025, FCC signed an MoU with Plan International to support the Youth Climate Action Accelerator in Freetown, which empowers young people to actively participate in sustainable urban development and environmental stewardship. The initiative aims to raise awareness, build capacity, and mobilise youth to implement practical climate solutions that improve resilience and reduce carbon footprints across Congo Town.

The primary target group is youths, particularly those from vulnerable communities which are most affected by climate change impacts such as flooding and waste management challenges. These projects emphasise inclusive participation, skills development, and leadership opportunities.

The funding, which allocates between $1,000 to $5,000 to selected youth groups, supports community workshops, training programmes, youth-led green initiatives, and partnerships with local organisations to maximize impact and scalability. Twelve youth groups in the community implemented their proposals, including projects on waste-to-energy, mangrove restoration, solar powered fish drying, and school therapy gardens. A joint monitoring team from FCC, CODOHSAPA, Plan International and Ministry of Youth Affairs provided technical support to the implemented projects.

BUDGET	$60,000	FUNDING PARTNERS	Plan International, and C40 Cities

CITIZEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION PROJECT (DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE CLIMATE ACTION)

Disability-inclusive climate action in Freetown was strengthened through targeted training, community engagement, and improved data on vulnerable groups. Key activities included community mobilisation, media outreach, disaster mapping, and capacity-building. A major achievement was the delivery of training for 40 participants on how climate impacts affect different groups. Participants included pupils, community members, and members of disability organisations.

To identify the locations where persons with disabilities live and the risks they face, a detailed community mapping exercise was conducted in Susan's Bay and Cockle Bay. This generated data to support inclusive evacuation planning and disaster preparedness systems.

Additionally, practical actions were also introduced at Government Model School and Ansarul Islamic Secondary School, including school gardens and climate education programmes. This enabled climate awareness integration into schools and communities, better positioning them as local hubs for climate resilience, with improved preparedness and community engagement.

The project created stronger inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate discussions, improved community preparedness, and ensured their perspectives are reflected in local decision-making.

BUDGET	Le 276,048	FUNDING PARTNERS	Irish Aid, and Sightsavers

As National Coordinator, I believe climate action that excludes persons with disabilities is not climate justice at all. Inclusion cannot remain a side conversation; it must become the foundation of how we design policies, fund solutions, and build resilient communities right now"

Hassan Hindolo Senesie
YOUTH CLIMATE COUNCIL-NATIONAL COORDINATOR

THE FREETOWN RESILIENCE MARKET HUB PROJECT

The Freetown Resilience Market Hub Project led by FCC and the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) works with migrant women traders and internally displaced persons (IDPs) operating at Congo Town and Kroo Town Road Markets, directly benefitting 2,000 individuals. The project comprises of four integrated infrastructure interventions including waste collection, bio-digester installation, a cool chain, and an urban food hub. These address the exclusion of migrant women traders caused by extreme heat, missing cooling infrastructure, inadequate sanitation, and lack of representation in market governance.

Some of the key activities include:

Participatory Co-Design: Conducting pre-construction co-design workshops with migrant women traders to validate bin placement, food hub design, cool room access, and WEC governance.

Governance & Representation: Establishing a Project Steering Committee and constituting a Waste-to-Energy Corporation (WEC) chaired by the Congo Town Market Chairlady, alongside a Women's Market Advisory Group to provide continuous input on operations and pricing.

Capacity Building: Training 500 migrant women in waste-to-energy operations, cool chain management, hydroponic farming, financial literacy, and cooperative leadership using the hub facilities as hands-on sites.

Institutional Partnerships: Collaborating with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to register 2,000 beneficiaries and establish grievance/protection mechanisms, while engaging a Community-Based Organization (CBO) to support 6 migrant women farming cooperatives.

Inclusive Communication: Delivering transparent updates via community meetings, Krio-language materials at market entrances, WhatsApp broadcasts, and market executive networks.

TRANSFORMING FREETOWN – TRANSFORMING LIVES

Heritage Tourism

- Promote Freetown as a Destination City with a Focus on Heritage Sites, Cultural Festivals and the Creative Arts

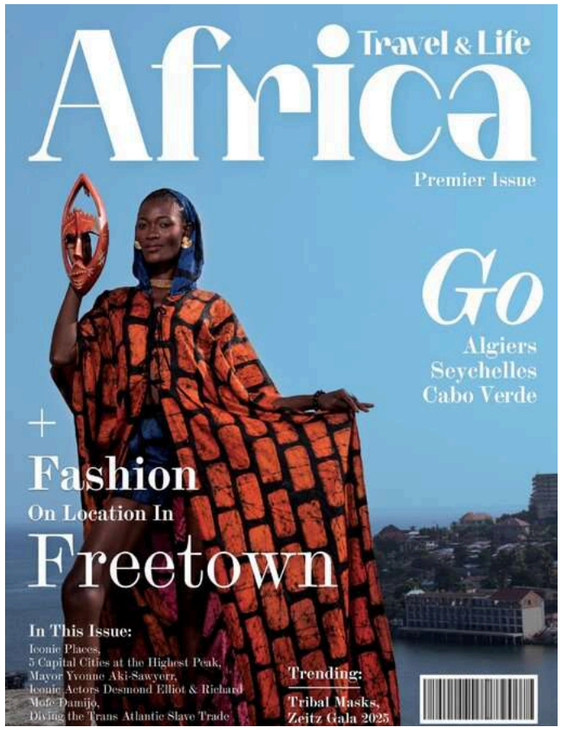
Development of Marketing Campaign for "Discover Freetown"

AFRICA TRAVEL AND LIFE MAGAZINE

The launch of Africa Travel & Life magazine in Freetown represented a landmark achievement in positioning the city as a cultural and tourism hub on the global stage. As Africa's first high-end travel and lifestyle magazine with international distribution, its debut in May 2025 was both symbolic and strategic. By featuring Freetown on the cover of its inaugural issue and highlighting an exclusive interview with the Mayor, the magazine signals the city's readiness to participate in Africa's tourism renaissance.

The publication's vibrant portrayal of Sierra Leonean culture, fashion, history, and coastal beauty captures the essence of Freetown's identity and reinforces Freetown's growing role as a cultural and tourism hub.

At the community level, the magazine instilled pride among residents by showcasing their city and highlighting its rich heritage, fashion, and coastal beauty. Local creatives; including artists, designers, and models, benefited directly from exposure in the magazine and at the launch event, gaining opportunities to connect with international audiences and markets. Traders, tourism operators, and service providers stand to benefit from increased demand, while international recognition has the potential to attract investment that supports local livelihoods.



In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, identify and prioritise the restoration and preservation of 10 heritage sites in Freetown

CLOCK TOWER RESTORATION

The East-End Police Clock Tower Project is a heritage restoration initiative dedicated to the preservative restoration of one of Freetown's most recognisable and historic landmarks. The Clock Tower, located in the heart of the East-End community, has long served as a cultural and civic symbol. However, a non-conservative aesthetic intervention carried out around 2010 posed potential risks to the tower's original stone structure. This project seeks to address those risks by carefully restoring the Clock Tower to its original stone state, safeguarding it as a heritage asset and ensuring its preservation for generations to come.

Following stakeholder engagement and the launch of the project, an adhesive damage assessment and an assessment of the clock mechanism were completed. The project is returning the Clock Tower to its original stone structure and restoring the clock mechanism so that it will chime on the hour and be loud enough for residents to hear from miles away.

For beneficiaries, including traders, transport operators, and school children, whose daily activities intersect with the Clock Tower's surroundings, the intervention will improve the safety and usability of the area.

PHASE 1 BUDGET £34,000 **FUNDING PARTNER** Commonwealth Heritage Forum

OLD FOURAH BAY COLLEGE (FBC)

The heritage restoration project for the Old FBC Building is a multi-partner initiative including FCC, Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and the Monuments and Relics Commission, in partnership with the World Monuments Fund, West Africa Heritage Consultancy and Commonwealth Heritage Forum. It focuses on conserving and rehabilitating one of West Africa's most historically significant academic structures, regarded as a symbol of Sierra Leone's intellectual legacy. The project combines structural restoration, heritage conservation, and skills training, while positioning the site for future educational, cultural, and tourism use.

The project aims to preserve and stabilise a nationally protected monument of high historical and cultural value, restore the architectural integrity of the building including specialised elements such as cast-iron features, build local capacity in heritage conservation through hands-on technical training programmes, promote cultural tourism and economic opportunities linked to heritage assets and develop a long-term adaptive reuse plan for the site.

The project has already provided cast iron restoration training, benefitting 15 youths, constructed 2 roof gables and restored another, restored the buildings laterite super structure and hoisted 8 out of 30 roof trusts, with work still ongoing. It has also created 58 temporary jobs for people work on the restoration, 48 of whom are youths.

IMPACT STORY

FROM THEORY TO CRAFT: ROSE'S JOURNEY WITH CAST IRON

My name is Rose Imah-Paul and I am an Architecture graduate. During my time on this project I discovered a new dimension of my professional journey when I enrolled in the certified Cast Iron Skills Training programme. While my academic background had given me a strong grasp of design principles and structural integrity, the hands-on training introduced me to the practical realities of working with materials. The experience bridged the gap between theory and practice in a transformative way.

Before, my knowledge of material properties was largely theoretical; now I've worked directly with cast iron. I've been able to gain confidence from applying my skills in real-world scenarios and I am now immersed at work at FCC.

"Before, my knowledge of material properties was largely theoretical; now I've worked directly with cast iron."

Rose Imah-Paul
CAST IRON RESTORATION TRAINING PARTICIPANT

Provide physical spaces for curating cultural events and showcasing local art and products

HAUS OF SALONE

FCC partnered with Haus of Salone to support the screening of “Where My Memory Began” on 27 November 2024 at the FCC Auditorium. FCC provided venue space, convening power, and institutional backing. The event combined performing arts and film to celebrate Sierra Leone’s shared heritage, particularly the symbolic significance of the Cotton Tree, while creating an inclusive platform for civic and cultural dialogue.

By activating a key civic space, the FCC auditorium, and supporting locally-driven cultural content free for attendees, the initiative contributes to embedding culture within urban development and strengthening Freetown’s identity as a cultural city.

The collaboration between FCC and Haus of Salone resulted in a well-attended cultural event that engaged over 300 participants, including Freetonians, creatives, students, and children. The combination of live performance and film created a dynamic and accessible platform for storytelling, fostering a strong sense of shared identity and cultural pride.

Rehabilitate and preserve Freetown’s cemeteries and historic markets as heritage sites

WILBERFORCE MARKET INTERVENTION

In the historic Wilberforce Village, the site of one of Freetown's oldest markets, the Mayor fulfilled a longstanding commitment through the commissioning of the Wilberforce Village Market Complex, transforming an incomplete structure into a modern, multi-purpose commercial and community facility.

The project originated from a community needs assessment undertaken during the administration of former Mayor Franklyn Bode Gibson and was further shaped by engagements held by Mayor Aki-Sawyerr with market women and community stakeholders in 2018, during which residents appealed for the completion of the market. Developing on the strong foundation laid through the acquisition and protection of the market site, the FCC leveraged innovation, strategic planning, and prudent financial management to expand the original concept into a vibrant economic and social hub. The project was delivered at a cost of Le 5.5 million, supported by a USD 200,000 donation, with the remaining funds generated through the Council’s own-source revenue, demonstrating the City's growing capacity to mobilize and invest local resources for sustainable development.

The completed structure provides significantly improved trading opportunities and economic prospects for residents. The facility comprises a traditional wet goods market on the ground floor, eleven purpose-built units for textiles and other dry goods on the second floor, a well-appointed entertainment and events space with a built-in

stage on the third floor, and dedicated storage facilities located in the basement and rear sections of the building. Further to the improvement of the working conditions of traders and small business owners, the complex serves as a community gathering space that blends commerce, culture, and recreation. A facilities management company has been contracted to ensure the long-term sustainability, maintenance, and efficient operation of the facility. The project stands as a visible demonstration of the Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives Agenda in action, converting community aspirations into reality, stimulating local economic growth, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs, and improving the quality of life for residents of Wilberforce and surrounding communities.

BUDGET	Le 5.5 Million
FUNDING PARTNER	FCC own source, and Anonymous Donor

Mariatu Sawaneh
WILBERFORCE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

"For the first time in years, I feel confident to bring my children to the market because it is safe and clean."

ASCENSION TOWN AND KISSY ROAD CEMETERY INTERVENTION

To strengthen the protection, security, and dignity of Freetown's public burial grounds, the FCC undertook major perimeter wall construction projects at the Ascension Town and Kissy Road Cemeteries. Following the handover of project sites to contractors in July 2024, the Council successfully completed and commissioned a 126-metre perimeter wall and gate at Ascension Town Cemetery and a 304-metre perimeter wall and gate at Kissy Road Cemetery in May 2025. The interventions were designed to address longstanding concerns around encroachment, vandalism, unauthorized access, and overall protection of the final resting places of Freetonians. Securing these important public spaces has helped the Council improve cemetery management, enhance public safety, and preserve sites of cultural, historical, and community significance for future generations.

The projects were delivered at a combined cost of approximately Le 1.5 million and were financed entirely through the FCC's own-source revenue, demonstrating the direct impact of property rate and business license payments made by residents and businesses across the city. The successful completion of these works highlights the Mayor and Council's commitment to translating local revenue into visible improvements in public infrastructure and service delivery. This intervention did not only safeguard burial grounds but also reinforces public confidence in local governance and underscores the importance of citizen participation in financing development through local taxation. Together with similar investments in other community facilities, the cemetery perimeter wall projects demonstrate how prudent financial management, accountability, and responsive leadership are transforming public spaces and improving the quality of life for Freetonians.

When I walk through the gates now, I feel peace knowing my parents' resting place is protected. The walls have restored dignity to our cemetery and comfort to our family."

Mr Alhassan Kamara
ASCENSION TOWN COMMUNITY

BUDGET	Le 1.5 Million
FUNDING PARTNER	FCC own source

STRENGTHENING CEMETERY MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

During the reporting period, FCC made significant progress in improving the management, condition, accessibility and dignity of the city's municipal cemeteries through coordinated infrastructure rehabilitation, environmental sanitation, routine maintenance and stakeholder engagement.

The Council responded to longstanding challenges including land encroachment, deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate records management, illegal dumping, and flooding. Key achievements included the construction and commissioning of perimeter fencing and entrance gates at Ascension Town and Kissy Road Cemeteries, the rehabilitation

and protection of the Kingtom Ebola Burial Site, and the beautification of Kissy Road Cemetery through educational murals delivered in partnership with The Carter Center.

Regular maintenance, including vegetation clearing, waste removal and drainage improvements, has significantly enhanced the cleanliness, accessibility, safety and dignity of these important public spaces. Looking ahead, FCC will build on this progress by introducing digital cemetery records, climate-resilient infrastructure, stronger governance and sustainable maintenance systems.

17 Public cemeteries managed

430m Perimeter fencing constructed (126 m at Ascension Town + 304 m at Kissy R

3x Annual maintenance cycles conducted across all cemeteries

12 Major improvement interventions implemented, including mapping, drainage, sanitation, access roads, security and digital inventory development

"These investments are helping to transform Freetown's cemeteries from neglected spaces into dignified, accessible and better-managed public places by protecting our past while ensuring these sites are respected and preserved for future generations."

Georgiana Johnson
DEPUTY ENVIRONMENTAL AND SANITATION HEAD, FCC.

TRANSFORM FREETOWN – TRANSFORMING LIVES

Digital Economy

- Improve access to digital skills and invest in the enabling environment for digital transformation

Introduce annual Mayor's Hackathon to support technical innovations in Freetown

MAYOR'S HACKATHON

The Mayor's Hackathon was launched in 2025, with the inaugural event designed to develop practical solutions to extreme urban heat, particularly in markets and informal settlements. These areas face high temperatures, limited shade, and unreliable electricity, which affect residents' health and ability to work.

The hackathon attracted over 20 innovative proposals from local entrepreneurs and young people. The process started with an open call, followed by evaluation, mentoring, and ending with a final pitch event. Additionally, a one-day business development bootcamp helped shortlisted applicants refine their solutions and improve their business models, increasing their readiness for implementation.

The hackathon resulted in the ideation, design and development of multiple proposed solutions by young innovators, including women, as part of efforts to mitigate climate risks, particularly extreme heat exposure and vulnerability within markets and informal settlements in Freetown.

One of the winners went on to receive funding from the Bloomberg Youth Climate fund to implement their design from the hackathon.

BUDGET Le 34,500

FUNDING PARTNER FCC own source

Partner with digital service providers to promote and amplify existing digital apps and solutions that facilitate financial inclusion, particularly on providing access to finance and improving financial health:

MIKASHBOKS

MiKashBoks

The FCC has partnered with MiKashBoks (MKB) to support financial inclusion within Freetown, specifically targeted at market traders. Freetown's market traders - the backbone of the city's informal economy and overwhelmingly women - are largely unbanked, save informally through osusu collectives that carry significant risk, and are unable to build the financial profile they need to access credit, scale their businesses, or secure their income against shocks.

MKB, a Sierra Leone-founded fintech licensed by the Bank of Sierra Leone, has built a mobile savings and lending platform purpose-designed for the unbanked. FCC has provided the Mayor's convening authority, trusted introductions to market chairs, and continued field presence through the Markets Department. This collaboration is designed to expand access and increase uptake of MKB's products, increasing financial inclusion.

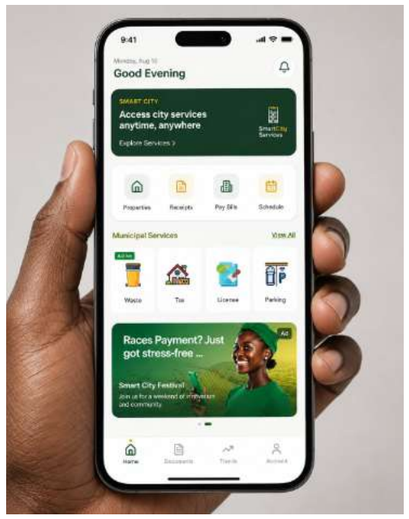
Within eighteen months of launch, the MKB partnership has done something Freetown's formal financial sector has not been able to do at scale: it has put a regulated, interest-earning savings instrument into the

hands of 441 market traders, the great majority of whom are women operating in the informal economy. Traders who previously saved cash in tins or through risky osusu rotations now save digitally on a Bank of Sierra Leone-licensed platform, earn interest on those savings, and are building a verifiable financial profile that will allow them to access credit when MKB's loan product rolls out. 106 MKB ambassadors are enrolled and earning an income through MKB.

Enhance efficiency, transparency, and residents' digital engagement with the FCC's operations and services

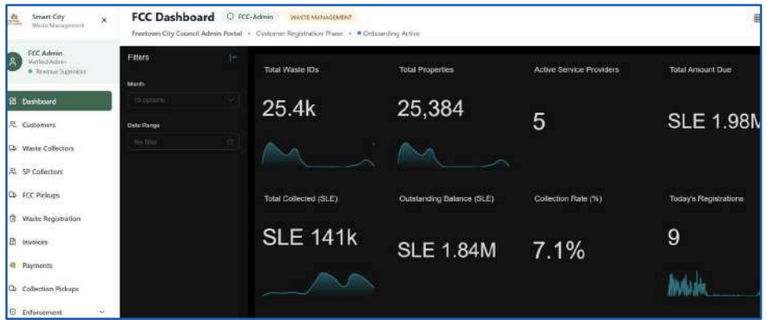
FCC INTEGRATED DIGITAL PAYMENT PLATFORM

The FCC Integrated Digital Payment Platform (IDPP) intervention is a digital technology platform ecosystem aimed at digitally streamlining and integrating multiple municipality revenue streams and operational processes, reducing financial risks and inefficiencies.

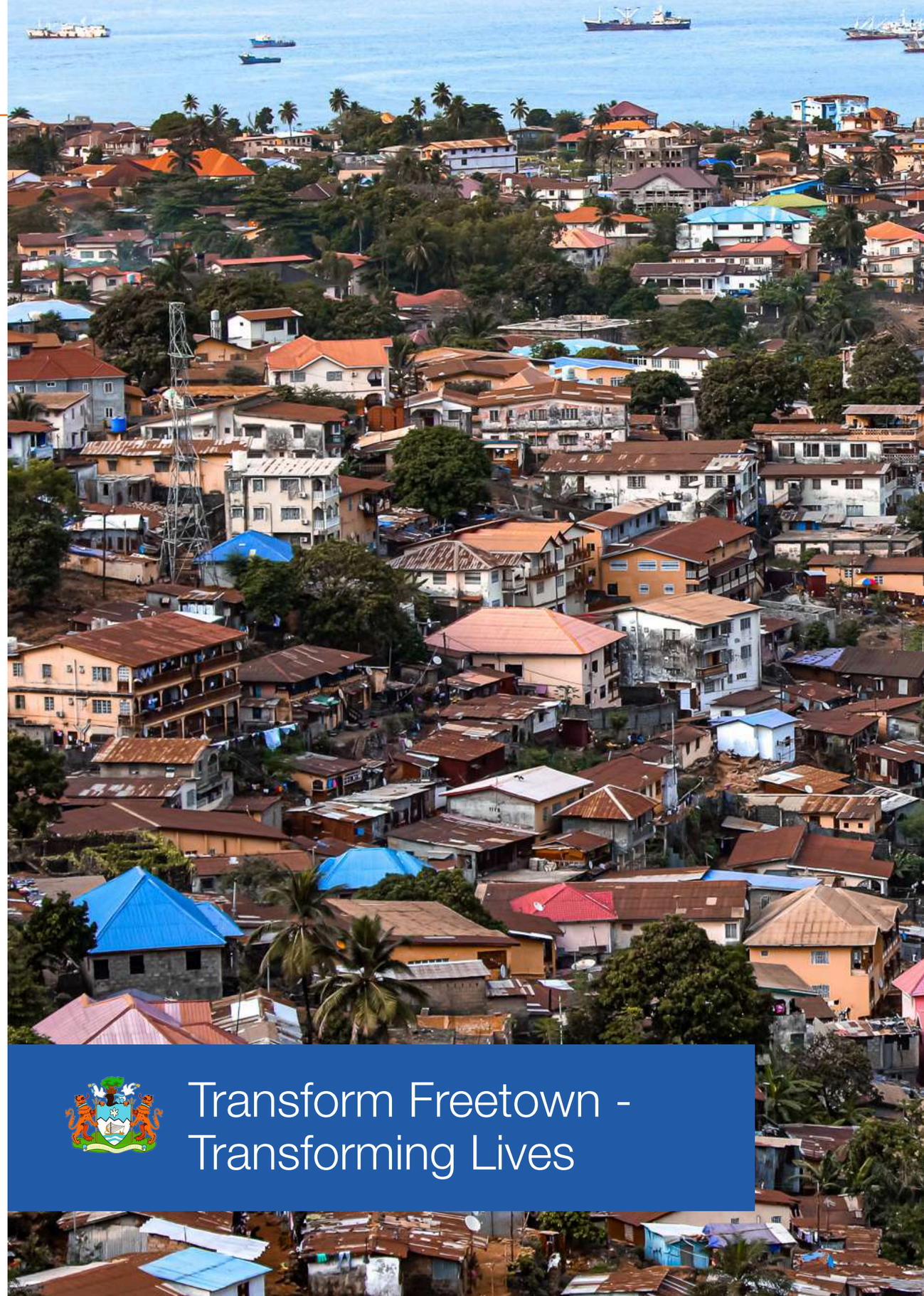


The core municipality revenue streams of the FCC that are scheduled to be fiscally digitalised and process-automated, via the implementation and deployment of the IDPP are as follows: Waste Management; Burial Fees; Car Parking; Markets' Dues; and City Hall Rentals. The next stage of development will include business licences and property tax.

The platform, developed by Smart City Services, has been developed and has been through its third major iteration testing ahead of rollout. Waste service providers and metropolitan enforcement officers have been trained on how to use the platform, as well as the FCC Executive Hierarchy and Senior Department Heads. The platform is currently being rolled out to residents of Freetown, with over 22,000 residents already registered on the platform.



Furthermore, as a sequel to one of the Mayor's first tenure flagship development achievements, through the implementation and deployment of the revolutionary Moptax platform for digital-driven Property Tax and Business License Revenue Mobilization, this new IDPP system has built on the Moptax accomplishment, representing a multi-dimensional model for municipal digital payments processing, which encompasses Property Tax, Business License, Waste Management and all the other principal revenue streams of the Freetown City Council.



Human Capital Development

TRANSFORM FREETOWN – TRANSFORMING LIVES

- Strengthen early childhood development, basic education and skills development
- Improve access to water
- Improve health outcomes at primary care level

Continue to implement and expand the existing School Leaders Support Programme in primary and junior secondary schools to achieve 15 Minimum Expectations, a set of minimum standards for school performance, and expand sub-projects:

SCHOOL LEADERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The School Leaders Support Programme aims to strengthen leadership, teaching quality, and learning outcomes in municipal primary and junior secondary schools in Freetown. Initially focused on school administration, it expanded to address low foundational learning levels, particularly in numeracy through targeted interventions led by Rising Academies and partners.

> **Mariama Kamara**
> TEACHER, TOWER HILL
>
> **The FasterMath lessons have made teaching easier for me. My pupils are more active, they understand faster, and they are no longer afraid to try. I have seen real improvement in their performance."**

Between June 2024 and July 2026, the programme scaled significantly. The Rising Faster initiative doubled its reach from 117 to 226 schools, increasing from 20,771 to 34,000 pupils, while the number of supported teachers increased from 1,414 to 2,471. The Imagine Worldwide tablet programme expanded from 65 to 78 schools, reaching 16,300 learners and supporting 370 teachers. Additionally, the Rori AI Chatbot pilot engaged 2,630 students across 20 junior secondary schools. As part of the collaboration, FCC provided training for teachers to help improve learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes improved amongst students and teacher capability also increased, with over 12 percent in subject and pedagogical knowledge. Overall, the programme has directly reached over 34,000 learners, improved classroom practice, increased student engagement and attendance, and strengthened system-level monitoring and accountability within Freetown's education system.

FREETOWN RISING

Freetown Rising is the Mayor's flagship financial literacy and leadership intervention, designed to address a critical gap between technical financial knowledge and the mindset, motivation, and agency needed to apply. While many residents have previously received financial education, few have experienced training that shifts long-term economic outcomes.

Delivered in partnership with Emerging Leaders, FCC trained 195 participants (161 youths) through an intensive programme. The cohort was intentionally diverse, including youth leaders, Councillors, market women, FCC staff, and community organisers. The programme combined personal leadership development with practical financial skills such as budgeting, saving, and income diversification.

The initiative is grounded in a clear strategy of sustainable economic transformation which requires both capability and conviction among local change-makers. To ensure impact, the programme incorporated rigorous monitoring, surveying participants before and nine-months after training to assess changes in income, savings, and borrowing behaviour over time.

The post survey results showed that average monthly income doubled for training participants 9 months

post-training, with seventy-nine percent of participants reporting increased income streams and thirty-three percent shifting from irregular to regular earning. Thirty-four percent of participants started saving for the first time following the training and thirty-eight percent reduced borrowing. This demonstrated that the training led to positive behavioural shifts for recipients.

Mohamed Sambu Koroma YOUTH LEADER

"The training did not just teach us about money. It taught us how to lead ourselves first. I came in thinking I would learn how to budget, I left with a different idea of what I could do for my community. Nine months later, I have a small business, I am saving regularly, and I am training other young people in my network. That is what one good training can do."

Support infrastructural and WASH Improvements in the most challenged primary and junior secondary schools in partnership with alumni organisations, private sector and other potential donors.

KROO BAY MUNICIPAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

Kroo Bay Municipal Primary School faced severe infrastructure constraints, with existing facilities unable to accommodate the growing number of pupils in a safe and effective manner. In response, FCC constructed a new two-storey school building fully furnished to provide a conducive and dignified learning environment for children in the community with support from Sustain for Life, and implemented by the Sierra Leone Autistic Society. The newly built structure is located at the site of a previously makeshift school that was prone to frequent flooding. The facility features 10 classrooms, a computer room, a staff room, modern sanitation facilities, and a canteen.

The new school building has significantly reduced overcrowding, improved student concentration, and increased daily attendance. Pupils now learn in a safer and more supportive environment, while teachers report improved classroom management and engagement. The project has restored a sense of dignity and hope within the Kroo Bay community, demonstrating how improved infrastructure can directly transform learning outcomes.

Additionally, public toilets were built next to the school for the community, as part of the project.

Mabinty Kamara
KROO BAY

Before this school, I had to send my children to Congo Town. Now, with the new school, I can use the money I used to spend on transportation for other needs."

BUDGET	$250,000	FUNDING PARTNER	Sustain for Life

TOWER HILL MUNICIPAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

In January 2025, FCC commissioned a new facility block at Tower Hill Municipal Primary School, an initiative made possible with support from Dr. Stenella Beckley.

The facility was built in memory of the late Renate Tanya Abosede Williams, daughter of Dr. Beckley and an alumna of the school. This project honors her legacy whilst also improving education outcomes in her alma mater.

The newly constructed block features two fully furnished classrooms, a staff room, and a resource center, all designed to enhance the learning environment and support the school's educational goals.

Ms Martin
TEACHER, TOWER HILL

"The addition of the new classrooms, resource centre, and staff room has completely changed how we work. We now have enough space to teach effectively, access learning materials, and prepare lessons properly. It has improved both our teaching and the students' understanding."

AMARAIA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL TOILET FACILITY REHABILITATION PROJECT

The project was implemented through the Government of Sierra Leone's devolved funds to support the maintenance and improvement of essential public infrastructure and services. Through this funding, FCC rehabilitated and upgraded the school's toilet facilities to provide students with access to a safe, clean, and functional sanitation environment.

Prior to the intervention, the poor state of the sanitation facilities posed health, safety, and hygiene challenges for pupils and negatively affected the school's learning environment. Students of Amaraia now have access to improved sanitation facilities that promote better hygiene practices, dignity, and a healthier school environment.

KROO TOWN ROAD MARKET CHILDREN HEAD-START PROJECT

The Market Children Head Start Project was conceived as a pilot intervention at the Congo Water and Kroo Town Road Markets to provide safe, nurturing, and stimulating early learning spaces for the children of market women. The Congo Water Head Start Centre continues to be fully operational, giving children a secure and welcoming environment to learn and grow. In the Kroo Town Road Head-Start Centre, significant progress has been made with finishing and furnishing of the upper floor of the market building now complete. The centre is expected to welcome its first cohort in September 2026.

The need for the project was identified through consultations with market women, who highlighted the challenges faced by children accompanying their parents to the market each day. Prior to the intervention, many children spent long hours in unsafe, overcrowded, and unhygienic conditions, exposed to avoidable health and safety risks and without access to structured early childhood learning. The establishment of the Head Start Centres directly addresses this gap, offering children a protected space where their wellbeing, development, and early education are prioritised.

As part of the Mayor's vision to revive sister-city partnerships for mutual benefit and cooperation, FCC successfully re-established its relationship with the City of New Haven, USA. This renewed partnership has already delivered tangible results through New Haven's financial support for the further renovation and operationalisation of the Kroo Town Road Head Start Centre. Once complete, the Centre will offer the same safe, stimulating, and child-friendly environment already enjoyed at Congo Water, a space where children can learn, play, and thrive while their mothers engage in trading activities nearby.

Fatmata Sawaneh
KROO TOWN ROAD MARKET COMMUNITY

"For the first time in years, I will feel happy to bring my child with me to the market because I know she will be in a safe and clean space while learning."

BUDGET $15,000 **PARTNER** New Haven Sister Cities Committee

Offer training under the Caring Freetown Cities Initiative to provide women caregivers with skills to improve their lives and better assist their families

FREETOWN CARING CITY PROJECT

The Care Block Project is an innovative urban intervention that seeks to transfer and adapt an award-winning model from Bogotá to Freetown, with the goal of addressing the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women and girls. Originally designed to reduce caregivers' time poverty, Care Blocks reorganise neighbourhoods

by clustering essential services, such as childcare, healthcare, and food markets, within a 20-minute walking radius. This spatial approach minimises the time and physical strain associated with accessing dispersed services, thereby freeing up time for caregivers to pursue personal, educational, and economic opportunities. In Freetown, the project is being piloted in Susan's Bay, with a strong

emphasis on adapting the model to the local socio-economic and cultural context.

Specifically, the project aims to; (1) assess existing knowledge, perceptions, and challenges related to gendered care work; (2) adapt and scale the proven Care Block model from Bogotá to Freetown; (3) localise the intervention to reflect the needs of the community, including infrastructure and service gaps; (4) test its effectiveness in reducing unpaid care burdens, mitigating gender-based violence, and shifting social norms around care; and (5) generate evidence to inform municipal policies and long-term urban planning decisions.

The primary target groups for the project are 'Caregivers', mostly women and girls living in Susan's Bay experiencing high levels of time poverty due to unpaid caregiving responsibilities. These include mothers, caregivers of young children, and those supporting elderly or disabled family members. Secondary beneficiaries include children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the wider community, who will benefit from improved access to integrated services and enhanced neighbourhood infrastructure. By focusing on these groups, the project seeks to address structural inequalities and promote inclusive urban development.

Over 800 caregivers have been registered as Care Block Users already, with over 223 unique active users engaged so far. A community panel has been established to guide implementation, with regular community events and engagement sessions initiated to ensure community inclusion. The project has refurbished two temporary care block sites which are now operational, with a permanent care block facility under construction, with completion expected in 2026.

Four Care Block staff have been recruited and onboarded, including training on safeguarding and programme delivery. Early services were launched in December 2025, including wellness and recreational activities. Key services including financial literacy, basic adult literacy, GBV training and Care Academy for Men have been rolled out since, whilst additional services are being prepared including daycare and skills training.

The project has also generated baseline evidence and insights, showing:

- Over 72% of men and 66% of women report low or very low quality of life
- 42% of women spend 4 or more hours daily on unpaid care work, compared to 12% of men
- 91% of employed women are self-employed or employed in informal trade, reinforcing economic vulnerability
- 76% of men and 77% of women say men are as capable of caregiving as women, but nearly half say men rarely or never do it
- 68% of women lose an hour or more to carework related travel, against 43% of men

The introduction of temporary Care Block spaces has improved access to essential services within

the community, reducing the need for long and time-consuming travel. Early service offerings such as wellness activities (e.g., yoga, movie nights) have also contributed to improved psychosocial well-being and social cohesion. Importantly, the project has increased awareness of care-related challenges, with growing visibility of women's unpaid labour and its impact on quality of life.

In May 2026, FCC welcomed a high-level international delegation to Susan's Bay as part of an ongoing collaboration to advance the implementation of the Susan's Bay Care Block Initiative. The visit brought together representatives from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC-CRDI), Metropolis, City Hub and Network for Gender Equality (CHANGE), Wow Mom, and the Nairobi County Council.

The week-long visit served as both a project engagement and a peer-learning opportunity. Representatives from Nairobi County Council joined the delegation to gain first-hand insights into the Care Block model, exploring how the approach can be adapted and implemented within their context. The visit reaffirmed the importance of international collaboration, knowledge exchange, and city-to-city partnerships in developing innovative, people-centred solutions that improve the lives of urban residents.

For direct beneficiaries, particularly women and caregivers, the intervention is beginning to address time poverty and expand access to opportunities. By centralising services and preparing to offer childcare, skills training, and respite care, the Care Block is creating conditions for women to reclaim time for personal development, income-generating activities, and rest. Early findings highlight strong demand for services such as adult literacy, yoga, up-skilling, and respite care, confirming that the intervention is aligned with real community needs.

At the systems level, the Care Block is driving a shift in how urban services are planned and delivered. It represents a major step change in municipal service delivery, moving from fragmented, sector-based approaches to a more integrated, people-centred model. The clustering of services in one location is improving efficiency and accessibility, while also laying the groundwork for more coordinated service provision across sectors.

The project has completed a needs assessment report, baseline report, community engagement and is rolling out caregiver services.

BUDGET $1 Million CAD and $100,000 USD

FUNDING PARTNERS

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Metropolis

Zainab J. Kanu
SUSAN'S BAY

"Every Saturday I come to the Care Block for yoga, and I always leave feeling lighter and more relaxed, something I didn't have before. Being able to bring my child with me is what makes it possible."

IMPACT STORY

CARE BLOCK IMPACT ON ZAINAB J. KANU

My name is Zainab J. Kanu, and I am a registered user of the Care Block in Susan's Bay. Since joining, I have participated in several activities offered through the Care Block, but the one that has become a regular and meaningful part of my routine are the weekly yoga sessions.

As a woman responsible for many household chores, my days are often physically demanding and exhausting. I am constantly on my feet, taking care of my home and my child, with very little time to rest or focus on my own well-being. This is why the Care Block has made such a difference in my life. Every Saturday, I make it a priority to attend the yoga sessions, and each time I leave, I feel lighter, calmer, and more refreshed. The sessions help me release stress from a hectic week and give me a moment to breathe and take care of myself.

What I appreciate most about the Care Block is that it truly understands the realities of women like me. One of the biggest challenges I face is childcare. I do not always have someone to look after my child, which often makes it difficult to attend programmes or activities. However, the Care Block has created an environment where women can bring their children along. This approach has made it possible for me and many others to participate. Honestly, if I were not allowed to bring my child, I would not have been able to attend these sessions at all.

The Care Block is not just a place for services, it is a space where women feel supported, understood, and valued. It has not only given me access to wellness activities but also a sense of belonging and care within my own community.

I would like to sincerely thank FCC and all the partners involved for bringing this initiative to Susan's Bay. I strongly encourage them to continue and expand this work so that more women like me can benefit from these life-changing opportunities.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO WATER

Compile and maintain comprehensive digital database of all installed community waterpoints

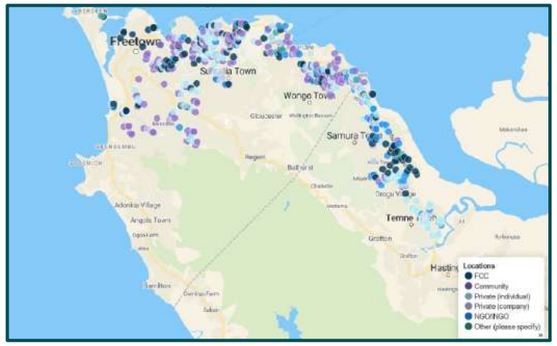
WASH FACILITIES MAPPING USING mWATER TOOL

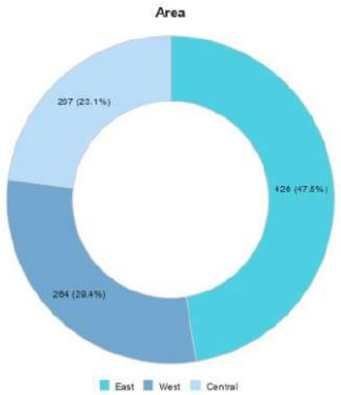
Effective planning and delivery of water services in Freetown has historically been constrained by the absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date database of water and sanitation facilities. This has limited the City's ability to monitor functionality, prioritise repairs, and ensure equitable access to water services.

To address this gap, FCC implemented a city-wide WASH facilities mapping exercise using the mWater platform, aimed at creating a centralised digital database of all waterpoints. The intervention focused on capturing key information, including location coordinates, functionality status, facility type, management structure, and photographic evidence.

The initiative strengthens data-driven decision-making, accountability, and service delivery in the water sector. It also supports broader goals of improving water access, enhancing system efficiency, and promoting sustainable management models.

The mapping exercise covered a wide range of 897 water supply facilities, including boreholes, water tanks, hand-dug wells, public taps, and kiosks, providing a comprehensive overview of the city's water infrastructure. A functional and spatial analysis was completed before a dashboard was created to inform policy and operational reforms, including improved maintenance systems, adoption of more effective management models, and prioritisation of investments in high-need areas.





> **This mapping has helped us understand the real problems. It is the first step to fixing them."**
>
> **Komba Mansa-Musa**
> DEVELOPMENT PLANNING OFFICER, FCC

Complete current installation of 65 solar powered boreholes with water treatment and kiosks operators and expand the installation of solar powered boreholes to additional communities, with a preference for women-led business management structures.

SOLAR POWERED COMMUNITY WATER KIOSKS

Access to safe, reliable, and affordable water remains a critical challenge in Freetown, particularly in informal settlements where rapid urbanisation, weak infrastructure, and environmental degradation have intensified water scarcity and related social tensions.

In response, FCC has prioritised the expansion of equitable water access through the installation of solar-powered water kiosks. These kiosks provide clean, treated water to underserved communities while introducing sustainable and locally managed service delivery models.

The intervention consists of two complementary programmes:

1. Women for Water and Peace (W4WP) – a community-driven initiative implemented in partnership with UNCDF and ILO, installing 25 water kiosks across five informal settlements, 23 of which have already been completed. The programme uniquely integrates water access with women's economic empowerment and conflict mitigation, positioning young women as kiosk operators and community leaders.

2. Blue Peace Initiative – supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation, installing 40 additional water kiosks, 36 of which are complete, and 15 public sanitation facilities across Freetown, to further scale access to clean water and improve sanitation outcomes.

By leveraging solar-powered purification systems, the intervention ensures environmentally sustainable water provision, reduces reliance on unreliable sources, and enhances resilience to climate variability. A public-private partnership will be used to manage the kiosks moving forwards, utilising a partnership with a private operator. The model promotes community ownership, inclusive governance, and financial sustainability, ensuring long-term functionality beyond initial installation. Once finished, it is estimated that the project will benefit 75,000 residents across all participating communities.

The combined programme has a total investment of approximately $2.3 million, with a significant amount spent on community engagement and sensitisation, and aligns strongly with FCC's broader goals of improving water security, reducing inequality, creating jobs, and strengthening social cohesion. The project has already created over 500 jobs.

BUDGET	$2.3 Million	FUNDING PARTNERS	UN Peacebuilding Fund and Swiss Development Cooperation

> **Mbalu Kamara**
> MAYENKINEH – CALABA TOWN
> (THE BABY WATER KIOSK)
>
> **"In the past, our girls had to go out late at night to fetch water. Today, because of this project, that risk is gone; our girls are safe.**

IMPACT STORY

WATER BRINGS PEACE AND SAFETY: MBALU KAMARA'S STORY FROM MAYENKINEH

Ms. Mbalu Kamara, Chairlady and a trained kiosk operator at the Baby Water well kiosk in Mayenkineh, East of Freetown, shared how the Women for Water and Peace project has brought lasting change to her community. Beyond improved access to clean water, she described the initiative's broader impact on health, safety, and community harmony. "Before this project, we faced many challenges. Our children, especially the girls, had to go out at night to fetch water, sometimes staying out for hours. Sadly, some became pregnant during those vulnerable times. But since the installation of the kiosks, that risk has been eliminated. Water is now close to home, and there's no need for late-night trips." Ms. Kamara also highlighted how the project's structured system with clear rules for water access has reduced conflict in the community. "People now understand the process and follow the rules. The confusion and quarrels we used to experience have stopped." She concluded with a deep sense of appreciation: "This intervention came just when we needed it most. Without the leadership of the Mayor of Freetown and the support of donors, things would not have changed. We are sincerely grateful."

Promote the uptake of household and community rainwater harvesting schemes, including facilitating access to finance and materials for installation

COMMUNITY BASED RAINWATER HARVESTING PROGRAMME

Freetown faces increasing water insecurity driven by rapid urbanisation, deforestation, and climate variability. Many communities experience water shortages during the dry season and flooding during the rainy season, highlighting the need for integrated, climate-resilient water solutions.

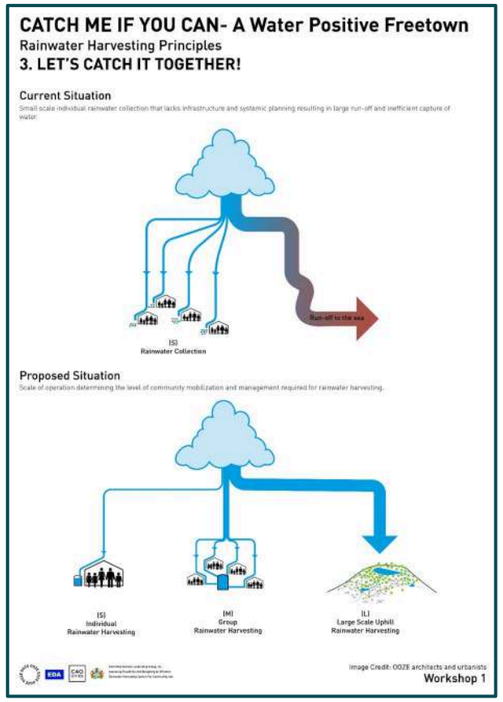
In response, FCC initiated a Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) feasibility and design programme with support from C40 Cities. The intervention aims to promote the uptake of household and community-based rainwater harvesting systems to improve water access, reduce flood risk, and enhance groundwater recharge.

The programme focused on three pilot communities, Looking Town, Low Cost, and Smart Farm, selected based on their vulnerability to water scarcity and flooding, with between 3,000 and 5,000 people within each community.

The project has completed baseline assessments at the three pilot locations, community engagement and consultations, validation and co-design workshops with 37 participants engaged, and data validation and analysis undertaken. The project developed an investment-ready framework for intervention that is fully costed, all of which have been included in the final assessment.

The solutions identified include:

- **"Catch me all year long",** where water is captured during the rains and stored both on the surface and underground.
- **"Catch me everywhere",** utilising a range of storage solutions including individual households drums, community level reservoirs and large-scale recharge systems adapted to the topography of the area.
- **"Let's catch it together"**, which is a 3-scale approach from individual RWH, group RWH and large scale uphill RWH.



BUDGET	$40,000	FUNDING PARTNER	C40 Cities

> **Salamatu Yeabu Sesay** SMART FARM
> **"We see how rainwater is wasted every year. If we can collect and store it, our lives will improve."**

WATER TREATMENT FILTER KITS

FCC expanded access to safe drinking water by distributing and installing 155 water treatment filter kits across 60 municipal schools and 77 Peripheral Health Units (PHUs). These filter kits provide on-site water purification, reducing exposure to contaminated water in high-traffic public institutions. The rollout reached large numbers of residents, including an estimated 545,000 people through schools, alongside patients and healthcare workers using PHUs.

The expected outcome will include improved water quality, contributing to better health results and a reduction in pupil absenteeism linked to waterborne illnesses.

FUNDING PARTNERS	Equipment Controls Company (ECCO) and International Mutual Aid

IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AT PRIMARY CARE LEVEL

Increase the adoption of healthy behaviours and environments to reduce the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with emphasis on hypertension, diabetes, malaria, chronic respiratory disease and mental illness

SODIUM POLICY REDUCTION FOR MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

Excessive sodium consumption is a major contributing factor to the rising prevalence of hypertension and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, stroke, and related mortality in Sierra Leone. These conditions pose a growing public health challenge, particularly in urban settings like Freetown.

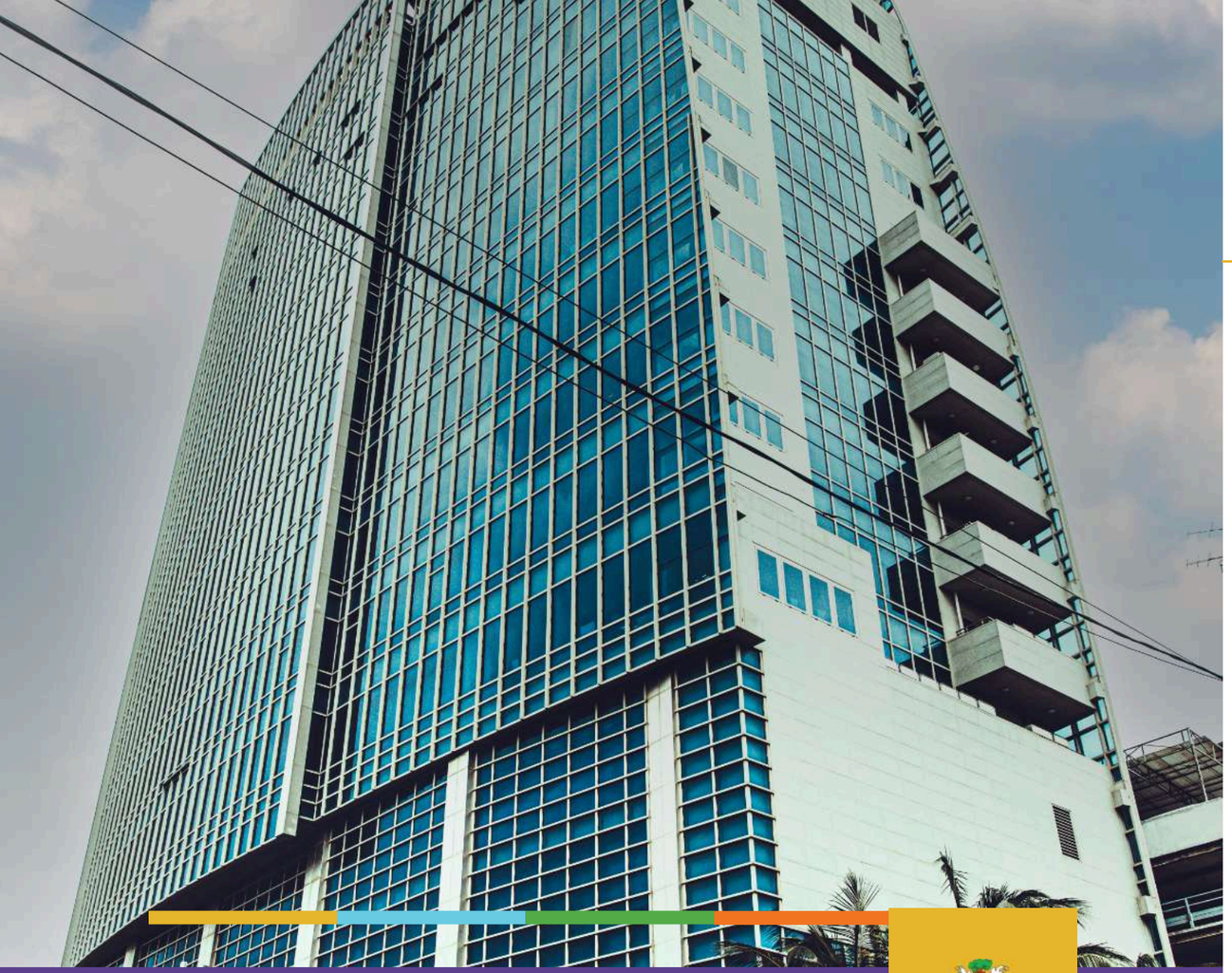
School environments play a critical role in shaping the dietary habits of children, as many pupils depend on food sold by vendors within and around school premises. However, unhealthy dietary practices among school-aged children remain a significant concern, contributing to increased health risks and poor long-term outcomes.

The sodium policy reduction project focuses on improving the school food environment in Freetown through the development and enforcement of nutrition standards for food sold in and around public institutions, particularly schools. Supported through the Partnership for Healthy Cities, the initiative aims to introduce a municipal policy intervention that emphasises sodium reduction as a key entry point to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Stakeholder engagement was used to guide the policy development, and a nutritionist developed a training manual for schools on healthy and prohibited foods. This was followed by three days of workshops in February 2026 to inform food vendors and school authorities of the project.

BUDGET $51,000 **FUNDING PARTNER** Vital Strategies

Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives



Operations Management

TRANSFORM FREETOWN – TRANSFORMING LIVES

- Human Resources
- Capacity Building
- Infrastructural Development Initiatives
- Policy and Regulatory Reforms

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Creation and recruitment of critical units and technical officers including Climate Change, Disaster & Risk Management, and Sanitation Engineering.
- Ongoing recruitment and training of 70 Met Police to strengthen enforcement of FCC Byelaws, augmenting the existing force of 110 officers.
- Welfare support including bereavement assistance, demonstrating FCC's commitment to staff wellbeing beyond statutory obligations.
- Staff salaries - strengthened human resource management, achieving on-time salary payments with no backlogs and a 30% salary increment.
- Sitting allowance increase for Councillors - Regular Council meetings ensured consistent legislative oversight, policy direction, and accountability. The mix of ordinary and extraordinary sessions reflects FCC's responsiveness to emerging issues.
- Establishment of Nurses' Room for Staff at City Hall.
- Procurement of two Staff Buses (in progress).

CAPACITY BUILDING

FCC prioritised staff development through digital literacy training for Councillors, international training placements, and knowledge-transfer from consultants. This blended approach ensures long-term institutional capacity and sustainability.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

FCC implemented its largest infrastructural development programme in over a decade, financed through Le 7.5 million in internally generated own source revenue.

FLAGSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- Completion of the Wilberforce Market
- Perimeter fencing of Kissy Road and Ascension Town Cemeteries
- Perimeter fencing of Tower Hill and Akibo-Betts Municipal Schools
- Renovation of FCC Stores and the Metro Police Office

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COUNCILLOR-DRIVEN INITIATIVES

Community development initiatives funded partially using own source revenue and utilising a competitive procurement process to ensure transparency and value for money, have been designed and contracted for 13 communities, with the rest to follow. These initiatives will deliver targeted improvements across wards. Over Le 1.4 million has been approved by the Council for the initiatives. These initiatives include:

- Rehabilitation of road pavements
- Installation water points
- Rehabilitation of footbridges
- Rehabilitation of public toilets
- Installation of solar streetlights
- Rehabilitation of markets

These community-level interventions demonstrate FCC's commitment to decentralised development, empowering Councillors to respond directly to the needs of their constituents.

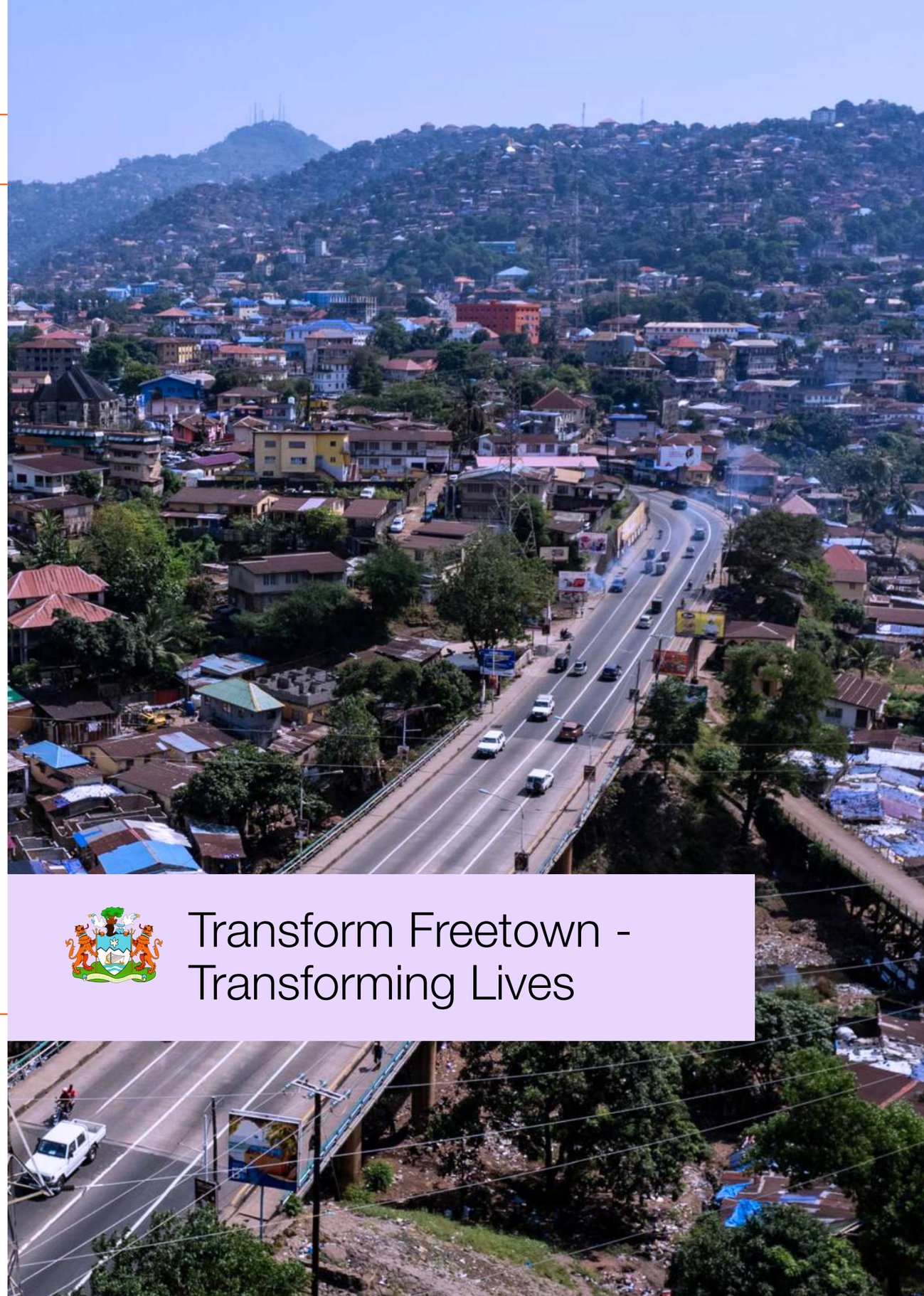
POLICY AND REGULATORY REFORMS

FCC enacted the 2024 Sanitation Byelaw, developed through consultations with:

- Ministry of Local Government
- Attorney General's Office
- Parliament of Sierra Leone

The byelaw strengthened enforcement of sanitation and environmental standards, supporting FCC's broader efforts to improve city cleanliness and public health.

FCC is also working on an environmental byelaw to reduce deforestation and a sodium reduction in school policy to improve health outcomes in children



Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives

International Engagement Highlights

TRANSFORM FREETOWN – TRANSFORMING LIVES

- 2024
- 2025
- 2026
- Partners that visited FCC

GLOBAL CLIMATE LEADERS AT U20 MAYORS' BRAZIL SUMMIT

Deputy Mayor, Kweku Lisk Esq., participated in the Urban 20 (U20) Mayors' Summit held in São Paulo, Brazil, joining representatives from over 30 global cities. The summit was hosted by the City of São Paulo and co-convened by C40 Cities and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). U20 serves to ensure that the priorities of major cities inform the deliberations of the G20, recognising that complex urban challenges require collaborative actions across all levels of government.

WORLD BANK CLIMATE DISASTER RISK FINANCE SUMMIT

At the Climate and Disaster Risk Finance Summit hosted by the World Bank Group in partnership with the Global Shield against Climate Risks, University of Oxford, the Mayor shared Freetown's experience in managing climate-related disasters without access to formal insurance. She highlighted the urgent need for accessible climate risk financing, especially through the Loss and Damage Fund announced at COP28. She also discussed the development of a new insurance product targeting women market traders vulnerable to extreme heat, which is now being rolled out to traders.

PROMOTING THE FREETOWN CABLE CAR PROJECT ON GLOBAL PLATFORMS

FCC actively promoted the Freetown Cable Car project during World Environment Day 2024 at the Cable Car World Congress in Essen, Germany. Held under the patronage of the German Federal Minister for Digital and Transport, Dr. Volker Wissing, the Congress brought together global stakeholders including national and city officials, cable car manufacturers, infrastructure companies, and transport experts, united in advancing cable cars as a sustainable urban mobility solution. At the event the Mayor delivered a welcome address and took part in a high-level panel on financing cable car systems. She presented the Freetown Cable Car Project to the international audience, emphasising its potential as a green and inclusive mobility option for the city. This engagement created the platform for finance.

ADVANCING CLIMATE ACTION AT UNGA79

As Co-Chair of C40 Cities, the Mayor participated in the 79th United Nations General Assembly Summit of the Future in September 2024, engaging in a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings. She held discussions with the Rockefeller Foundation and Goals House, where she emphasised the urgent need for action to protect public health amid the climate crisis. She delivered a high-level keynote address at the World Biodiversity Summit, hosted by the World Climate Foundation, where she spoke on the interlinked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, spotlighting FCC's biodiversity initiatives. The Mayor also featured on a UN-hosted panel on Growing Local Solutions, highlighting the critical role of local governments in delivering sustainable outcomes for people and the planet.

INCLUSIVE CLIMATE FINANCE AT 2024 SOUTHEAST ASIA CAI REGIONAL ACADEMY

The Mayor joined city leaders and policymakers from Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America at the September 2024 Southeast Asia CAI Regional Academy in Quezon City, Philippines. The gathering focused on celebrating C40 Cities' achievements and advancing ongoing climate action efforts across these regions.

She emphasised the importance of securing financial investments for climate action especially in the Global South to fulfil C40's global commitment to tackling the climate emergency.

Her participation included discussions on mainstreaming equitable, just, and inclusive climate action, a gender dialogue on transformative climate leadership by and for women, and a keynote address highlighting the challenges and opportunities surrounding urban climate finance.

WINNING THE PRESTIGIOUS GERMAN AFRICA PRIZE

On 16 October 2024, the Mayor was awarded the prestigious German Africa Prize during a ceremony in Berlin, presented by Bärbel Bas, President of the Bundestag (Germany's Parliament). Presented annually by the German Africa Foundation since 1993, the award honours outstanding African individuals for exceptional contributions to democracy, peace, human rights, sustainable development, research, arts, culture, and social progress. The Mayor was recognised for her leadership in sustainable urban development and selected by an independent jury of 20 experts from more than 24 nominees. The award highlighted key achievements under her tenure, including the digitisation of property rate systems, the job-creating initiative to plant and grow one million trees, the development of Freetown's first wastewater treatment plant with circular economy benefits, and her inclusive approach to community engagement.

PRESENTATION OF U20 COMMUNIQUE TO BRAZIL'S PRESIDENT

On 17 November 2024, as C40 Cities Co-Chair, the Mayor delivered the Urban20 (U20) Communique to Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, alongside mayors of Rio de Janeiro and Paris, witnessed by Chile's President Gabriel Boric. The U20 Summit, held ahead of the G20 Summit and attended by leaders from 82 cities, highlighted the vital role of cities in tackling climate change and sustainable development. A key milestone was the signing of an MOU between C40 Cities and the Inter-American Development Bank, ensuring Latin American and Caribbean cities can access climate finance. The Mayor also gave a keynote address at the Women's Leadership Panel and presented a C40 publication on food and nutrition to Brazil's First Lady.

WORLD URBAN FORUM 2024

In November 2024, the Mayor participated in the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, engaging in key panels on sustainable urban development, climate finance, and intergovernmental climate action. She joined youth climate leaders to discuss localised action and presented findings on the economics of water. The forum provided opportunities to promote Freetown's Caring Cities model and the Cable Car project to potential funders, laying the groundwork for future collaborations.

SOUTH-SOUTH VISIT TO THE GAMBIA

At the invitation of Mayor Talib Ahmed Bensouda and within the framework of South-South cooperation and outreach to cities beyond the C40 network, the Mayor went on an official visit to the Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC) in December 2024.

The engagement provided a valuable platform for exchanging ideas and strengthening cooperation, particularly around urban sustainability initiatives such as tree planting, waste management strategies, and digital tax reforms aimed at enhancing municipal revenue collection.

NORMAN FOSTER INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

The Freetown Student City Visit Project, implemented in partnership with the Norman Foster Institute (NFI), is a pilot initiative that brought an international cohort of students to Freetown to undertake interdisciplinary urban research and design. The project focused on exploring sustainable and inclusive urban mobility solutions, with particular emphasis on the feasibility and broader urban impact of the proposed cable car corridor network.

The project combined spatial analysis, stakeholder engagement, and field-based research to generate practical, evidence-based proposals aligned with the city's long-term development priorities. The initiative positioned Freetown as a pilot city for applied urban innovation and knowledge exchange.

The target groups were postgraduate students (NFI cohort), seven local students and recent graduates in urban planning, design, and related fields, and FCC technical staff. The project was implemented through a cost-shared model, with primary funding and technical resources provided by NFI and FCC contributing in-kind support.

As part of this initiative, the Mayor delivered a guest lecture at the NFI in Madrid to the masters programme cohort of 2025. The partnership generated valuable research and design proposals to support Freetown's urban planning once the mandate is devolved, with forthcoming materials set to inform city initiatives. Both parties have committed to advancing the collaboration, including exploring joint publication opportunities on data-driven urban planning to guide future development.

> **"Being part of the programme in Freetown helped me see my city differently, I realised that many of our challenges are shared globally, and that solutions can be adapted to fit our context."**
>
> **Fredericca Macarthy**
> STUDENT, LIMKOKWING UNIVERSITY

STRENGTHENING WEST AFRICAN URBAN PARTNERSHIP DURING MONROVIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

Within the framework of South-South cooperation, the Deputy Mayor visited Monrovia in February 2025 at the invitation of Monrovia's Mayor John-Charuk Siafa, to participate in the city's annual Monrovia Day celebrations. The visit highlighted the strengthening partnership between the two cities in advancing urban development and sustainability.

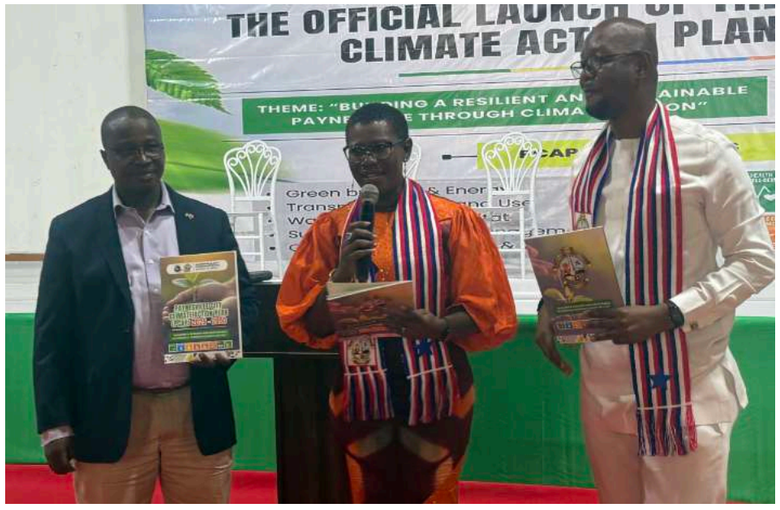
A key event was the Monrovia Roundtable, a strategic forum focused on addressing urgent urban challenges such as governance, environmental sustainability, and community development. The forum fostered practical solutions to improve the quality of life for residents in Monrovia and other participating cities.

C40 CITIES LEADERSHIP VISIT TO FREETOWN

In April 2025, Freetown hosted C40 Executive Director Mark Watts and Director Johnson Situ for a familiarisation visit. The visit highlighted Freetown's access to peer learning and climate finance through C40. Two new climate projects were announced - a partnership to monitor and reduce air pollution, and a $100,000 Rockefeller Foundation-funded initiative to boost heat-health resilience, both creating local jobs. C40 is also funding research on community rainwater harvesting to improve water access. The delegation engaged with the city's officials, UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, World Bank, and national leaders, reinforcing collaborative efforts for climate action.

LAUNCH OF PAYNESVILLE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In August 2025, the Mayor delivered the keynote address at the launch of the Paynesville Climate Action Plan, calling for expanded direct climate finance for Global South cities and applauding Paynesville's commitment to adaptation and mitigation. Her meetings with President Joseph Boakai and former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf reinforced the role of South-South cooperation in urban climate resilience.



UN CLIMATE WEEK ENGAGEMENT

In September 2025, the Mayor, as C40 Co-Chair attended the UN Climate Week on the sideline of the UN General Assembly and highlighted the critical role of cities in driving climate action. A key highlight of her engagement was participation in the Women Leaders Network with Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of Liberia, Her Excellency Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General of the UN, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. She also delivered a keynote address at Hub Live: From Volatile to Viable – The New Playbook for Energy Security.

C40 WORLD MAYORS SUMMIT, RIO DE JANEIRO

In November 2025, the Mayor co-hosted the C40 World Mayors Summit with London Mayor Sadiq Khan and Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes, convening leaders from nearly 100 cities. Key engagements included: C40 Steering Committee Meeting, which was focused on city-national partnerships and climate finance; speaking sessions on resilience, migration, just transitions, and climate finance; participation in the World Mayors Summit Closing Plenary and launch of the COP30 Local Leaders Forum.

LONDON CLIMATE ACTION WEEK

In June, in her capacities as Mayor of Freetown and C40 Cities Global Co-Chair, the Mayor participated in London Climate Action Week 2026, using the platform to advance Freetown's climate and development priorities, and advocate for increased access to sustainable climate finance for cities in the Global South.

Key engagements included a reception at St James's Palace, where she engaged His Majesty King Charles III on C40 Cities' work on climate action and clean air, as well as a closed-door roundtable with United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, focused on accelerating local climate action. She also delivered keynote addresses and held a bilateral meeting with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos, one of 14 C40 Cities in Africa.

The Mayor continued her support for youth climate advocacy and shared perspectives on urban climate action through the BBC Climate Question podcast. Across these engagements, she consistently highlighted the importance of climate finance that enables Global South cities to implement ambitious climate action while creating jobs and supporting inclusive economic development.

2026 WORLD CITIES SUMMIT, SINGAPORE

In June 2026, the Mayor participated in the World Cities Summit in Singapore, hosted by Mayor Low Yen Ling, Singapore's Minister of State for Trade and Industry. In her capacity as C40 Cities Co-Chair, she used the Summit to strengthen relationships with city leaders, international organisations, and development partners, while advancing opportunities that could unlock additional investment and resources for C40 member cities, including Freetown.

REVIEW OF C40 CORE PRIORITIES

In July 2026, the Mayor returned to London in her capacity as C40 Cities Co-Chair for a mid-term review of her core priorities and strategic discussions with C40 leadership and technical teams, including a meeting with C40's Executive Director.

The review provided an opportunity to assess progress, reflect on achievements, and align on priorities for the next 18 months. Her core priorities remain focused on expanding cities' access to climate finance, extending climate action beyond C40 member cities, strengthening youth engagement, and addressing the growing impacts of extreme heat.

SUMMARY OF DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS

- **Austria (July 2024):** Ambassador Ursula Fahringer paid a courtesy visit during which they discussed the Freetown Cable Car Project. Austria reaffirmed interest in collaboration, especially around job creation and mobility.

- **European Union (Aug 2024):** In a farewell meeting, outgoing EU Ambassador Manuel Muller was thanked for advancing EU–Freetown cooperation, especially in development programmes.

- **United Kingdom (Nov 2024):** The Mayor welcomed new British High Commissioner Josephine Gauld and discussed coastal and marine issues, including the impact of mangrove loss on fishing.

- **China (Nov 2024):** A delegation from Hunan Province, led by Vice Chairman Lai Mingyong, explored areas of cooperation such as urban transformation, healthcare, education, and sports. China extended an invitation to the Mayor to attend the 2025 China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo.

- **Ireland (Feb 2025):** Discussions with Ambassador Aidan Fitzpatrick and Irish officials focused on environmental sustainability, particularly through support for Freetown's Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant, which provides cleaner fuel alternatives to combat deforestation.

- **Anhui Provincial Committee of China (December 2025):** the Mayor met with Zheng Hong, Vice Chairperson of the Anhui Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and discussed the sister-city relationship between Freetown and Hefei, established in 1984.

- **Austrian Foreign Affairs Secretary General (February 2026):** the Mayor met with Dr. Nikolaus Marschik, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs at Austria's Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and shared her perspectives and priorities to influence Austria's strategy for engagement with Africa.

- **Strengthening China–Freetown Ties (May 2026):** The Mayor received His Excellency Zhao Yong, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China for a courtesy call. The productive engagement focused on strategic opportunities to deepen bilateral relations and strengthen cooperation at the sub-national level. Discussions explored pathways for greater collaboration that can support Freetown's development priorities and advance mutually beneficial partnerships.

- **Engagement with Canada (July 2026):** The Mayor received Her Excellency Myriam Montrat, Canadian High Commissioner accredited to Sierra Leone and based in Accra, Ghana. Their discussions focused on strengthening relations between Freetown and Canada, identifying opportunities for partnership and cooperation in areas aligned with the city's development priorities.

Fig: Diplomatic Engagements - European Union (Aug 2024)

Fig: Diplomatic Engagements - Ireland (Feb 2025)

Fig: Diplomatic Engagements- China (Nov 2024)

Fig: Austrian Foreign Affairs Secretary General (Feb 2026)

PARTNERS THAT VISITED FCC

- **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** (May 2025): ICLEI led a workshop to equip and inspire city officials on waste management and urban planning efforts for informal settlements.

- **6th Heritage** (June 2025): A team visited Freetown to undertake a structural survey of the old FCC building.

- **Commonwealth Heritage** (June 2025 and May 2026): A stonemason undertook a conditional assessment of the laterite bricks at Old Fourah Bay College Building and the East-End Police Clock Tower.

- **Mayors Migration Council** (October 25): A delegation came to evaluate a previous migrant resilient waste management project and visited Congo Market to launch a $200,000 grant for a Climate Resilient Market Hub.

- **Harvard University** (November 2025): Researchers came to study the Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund project in Freetown.

- **African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative** (February 2026): Dr Samuel Ofori visited Freetown on a monitoring mission, inspecting tree survival and growth rates.

- **Yale School of Environment** (February 2026): Professor Karen Seto visited FCC to provide data support on #FreetownTheTreetown.

FCC Partner Logos

Transform Freetown - Transforming Lives

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