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Urban Food Environments



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SUMMARY

The purpose of this brief is to take stock of the variety of urban food environment initiatives underway across Africa and compile these into an actionable menu of investment opportunities. The brief outlines the rationale for increased investment focus into urban food environments to guide strategic operational discussions on how and where investment can have the greatest catalytic impact.

Given Africa's rapid urban growth trajectory, cities must act now to establish the policies, infrastructure and cultural frameworks necessary to create healthy food environments

Key messages

The messages highlighted in the brief are:

- Given Africa's rapid urban growth trajectory, cities must act now to establish the policies, infrastructure and cultural frameworks necessary to create healthy food environments and prevent long-term path dependencies in urban food systems;
- Clear pathways exist for investing in diverse actions for food environments;
- The impact of these diverse actions could be leveraged through support for overarching coordination; and
- There is a current funding gap of US\$100 million that could be deployed into existing initiatives over the next five years.



INTRODUCTION

What is at stake and key concepts

In many respects, the continent of Africa is undergoing multiple transitions of which the nutrition transition is the most prominent from a public health perspective (Laar et al. 2023). The 15 fastest-growing cities in the world are in Africa (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations et al. 2023). However, African urban growth is not confined to large 'mega-cities' alone. Secondary and intermediary cities are also experiencing rapid urban growth (Pieterse et al. 2018). In Africa, the urban population is projected to increase from 698 million (or 45.9% of the total population) in 2025 to 966 million (or 50.9% of the total population) in 2035 (United Nations 2019). Meeting the current and future food demands from Africa's rapidly growing, urbanising population poses complex challenges. Importantly, contrary to dominant perceptions, across Africa, the primary driver of urban growth is not migration but rather endogenous growth, followed by area re-classification, with migration being the third driver (Menashe-Oren & Bocquier 2021). Consequently, food environment-related investments require careful and close attention to the interactions between urban systems and food systems in this context. Given Africa's rapid and diverse urban transition, ensuring appropriate food environments is critical. Getting food environments right is not just an urban concern but also a concern for the continent.

This rapid urbanisation and growing population are impacting public health in many ways. These include driving the consumption of highly refined, ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and locally produced 'fast street foods' (often by informal traders) that are high in fat, salt and sugar. They are also driving a new wave of food safety concerns ranging from food hygiene to pesticide residues. This shift has implications for public health, particularly in rising rates of diet-related non-communicable diseases (DR-NCDs). There is some evidence that widespread consumer concerns about food safety push them towards consuming more processed packaged food (as this food is seen as less of a microbial risk to health) and avoiding fruits and vegetables, which are perceived as likely to be more contaminated (Liguori et al. 2022).

In many urban centres, infrastructural deficiencies make UPFs more attractive, with longer shelf lives, quicker cooking times and no need for refrigeration, especially when minimising potential waste is a critical aspect of budget management (Brown-Luthango et al. 2024). These dietary shifts are driven by highly processed imported food commodities that frequently displace local production systems — often managed by family farmers and processors — and are further exacerbated by weak public health policies and the absence of an urban food governance mandate. Addressing these issues requires targeted research and interventions to develop sustainable, healthy food environments that support local economies and enhance the well-being of African communities. Importantly, evidence from emerging research in urban areas of Africa points to this wider collection of drivers that are contributing to the rise in DR-NCDs, specifically the intersections between infrastructure (energy, fuel, water, housing, storage, transport), spatial design (or its absence) and splintered urban growth (driving inequitable urban investment) (African Centre for Cities nd; Zhang et al. 2023).

Meeting the current and future food demands from Africa's rapidly growing, urbanising population poses complex challenges

Although rapid urbanisation has been underway for over 30 years, Africa's urban transition is far from complete. Indeed, this transition remains in its infancy across many regions, with thousands of small towns and villages just beginning what will be a century of rapid urban expansion. As these small, currently rural, urban agglomerations grow into fully fledged towns and cities over the next 50–100 years, the norms, policies and infrastructures that get established during their foundation phases will become increasingly hard to change as they grow. The infrastructure investments made over the next 10–15 years will lock Africa

into path dependencies that will play a critical role in the nature and form of the urban transition and in its ability to leverage its urban dividend (Pieterse et al. 2018).

Applying a food environment framing to how we approach urban food policy, spatial planning and regulation, among other strategies, can support those involved in urban planning and development to mainstream sustainable, healthy food approaches across a wide range of urban disciplines.

The study of food environments sometimes takes a behavioural change approach, seeking to understand how consumers' urban environments shape dietary-related decision-making (buying, cooking, eating) and the resulting nutritional outcomes (weight, nutrient status, health). In addition to the cognitive environment provided by education, information and awareness, four other types of environment can be distinguished that determine behaviour (Osei-Kwasi et al. 2021):

- I **The physical environment:** This is what makes behaviours easier. Products that are available everywhere, easy to find or use, etc. To improve this environment, we can facilitate the multiplication of spaces selling products that are favourable to health and the natural environment, and we can arrange these spaces to make them more attractive, more accessible, cleaner, easier, more secure, etc.
- I **The economic environment:** This is what makes behaviours costly or less costly in terms of money, time, space and mental load than the current behaviour that needs to be improved. The desired

behaviour needs to be less costly and bring at least as much satisfaction as the unhealthy behaviour. To change this environment, we could tax what needs to be avoided and subsidise what we want to encourage. We could also introduce social support initiatives such as cash transfers or food vouchers.

- I **The social environment:** This is what allows you to be like everyone else or be like the people you want to imitate. It also includes the relationships, interactions and cultural ties among people. A very important determinant of our behaviour is social conformity: we do what everyone else does to be socially integrated. Role models such as media personalities, media stars and influencers can lead by example (think music, fashion). To change this environment, we can play on these influencers, via TV series and publicised examples of admired or influential people. There may also be leaders in local communities or community champions who can have a role in shifting social norms about food and eating.
- I **The infrastructural environment:** It is becoming increasingly evident that infrastructure deficits play a key role in driving dietary behaviours. Africa's urban transition has been referred to as the 'second urban transition' in that it takes place in the absence of industrial growth. For this reason, development is often informal and lacks strategic planning, other than in elite enclaves. Africa's current urban development, urban economy and infrastructure provision are largely informal. This means that the costs of energy, water, fuel, etc. are often at a premium or that access is scarce. The high costs of mobility due to inadequate



transportation infrastructure and distance to food markets also increase the costs of access to food. When these costs are added to food costs, storage challenges and other infrastructure-related deficits, this impacts the cost of the foods consumed. To change this environment, longer-term strategic planning is required, where urban policy-makers acknowledge their role in food governance, planning and policy.

Using a non-food-related example to illustrate the point: if we want to promote the use of bicycles or public transport in the city, it is not enough to launch an awareness campaign on the benefits of these modes of transport. Many people already know that bicycles pollute less and that cycling allows for a bit of physical activity, but just because you know it doesn't mean you ride a bike or take public transport. It is necessary to install safe cycle paths, sheltered bicycle garages, dedicated cycle lanes and increased frequencies and efficiencies of buses (physical environment). Bicycles and public transport tickets must be accessible to all, even if they are subsidised (economic environment). Opinion leaders, those we admire or want to emulate, need to set an example and use these modes of transport (social environment). However, promoting cycling or public transport is not enough if, at the same time, we do not discourage what is

problematic: the invasion of cities by private cars. We can make the parking of personal vehicles expensive and public transport or cycling the easy, inexpensive choice.

It's the same in the field of food. Changing the food environment isn't just about promoting desirable behaviours. It also aims to further constrain the behaviours that we want to avoid. Facilitating the consumption of water in the face of an overabundant, ubiquitous supply of soft drinks, sometimes cheaper than mineral water, will have little effect on sugar consumption. Changing the environment can therefore also mean preventing environments that are known to be harmful to health or the natural environment. Limiting, prohibiting, coercing and legislating are measures that are not fashionable in liberal policies where free enterprise is the model. But let's not forget that the governance of our cities' food systems is profoundly unequal: the most powerful actors are rarely those who promote health, the environment and social equity. And it can't just be small actions at local scales that change these power relations. This is where municipalities can play a role – to arbitrate policy decisions in favour of the greatest number of those who suffer from environments that are unfavourable to health and the broader environment.

Engaging Africa's infrastructural turn

Two scholars who are actively leading the debate in the infrastructural transitions taking place in Africa and Asia, Abdu Malik Simone and Edgar Pieterse have called for very different approaches to infrastructure. Specifically, 'a way of thinking that might come up with workable plans and practices that transpire through experimentation, pedagogy, failure, exchange, and persistence' (Simone & Pieterse 2017: 10).

Pieterse and other colleagues build on this by stressing the wider sustainability challenges faced in Africa, which include the demographic and urban transition and the poly-crisis (where multiple crises intertwine). The sustainable development vision provides a useful stimulus for Africa's urban poly-crisis, demanding fresh interdisciplinary and normatively explicit thinking, grounded in a practical and realistic understanding of Africa's infrastructure and governance challenges (Pieterse et al. 2018: 149).

The 'infrastructural turn' is a term that critiques earlier people-centric, bottom-up approaches. These approaches largely failed to effectively respond to the demand for services in African cities. Earlier infrastructural development interventions, led by global financial institutions, generally coupled with conditionalities, proved unsustainable and focused largely on areas and services where repayments could be collected — in effect privileging elite enclaves. Given the dramatically expanded urban service demand, new models of universal, affordable and sustainable urban infrastructure and service delivery are now imperative (Turok 2016). This is made all the more urgent when considered through a food and nutrition lens.

Different approaches and modes of infrastructure planning and development are required. Nutrition, and engaging the realistic drivers of nutrition transitions and specifically food environments, offers an essential and priority entry point from which to engage new and novel approaches to infrastructure. This new engagement in infrastructure is predicated on a robust and context-sensitive engagement in physical, economic and social environments. Health and nutrition are a key cross-cutting focus that can activate these different approaches to infrastructure.

How do urban food environments relate to the 13 principles of agroecology?

There are linkages to all three operational areas of agroecology (resilience, equity and efficiency) and connections to five of the principles of agroecology, namely: *social values and diets, input reduction, biodiversity, soil health, and economic diversification*. However, at a broader scale, we see clear transferability, albeit with slightly different foci and at times politics, that facilitates a more robust urban engagement in the principles of agroecology. These all intersect with the four environments detailed above (physical, social, economic and infrastructural).

Strengthen resilience

Enabling healthier, diversified diets rooted in local cultural practices links the agroecological principles of biodiversity, environmental health and economic diversification.

The climate, health, economic and political crises that are likely to multiply are leading to risks of greater instability in urban food supplies, particularly when their food is heavily dependent on international markets. Diversifying diets so as not to depend on too few products, diversifying and relocating supply sources, and managing stocks of staple foods to cope with price fluctuations are all actions that cities can take to strengthen their food resilience.

Reducing the intake of excessive sugars and other forms of highly processed foods and empty calories while increasing the intake of a diversified range of healthy whole foods within cities creates a positive demand-side influence

on rural and peri-urban production systems. Diversified, healthy urban diets create market conditions that favour smaller, diversified farms over large-scale commodity-based monocultures such as maize, sugarcane and wheat.

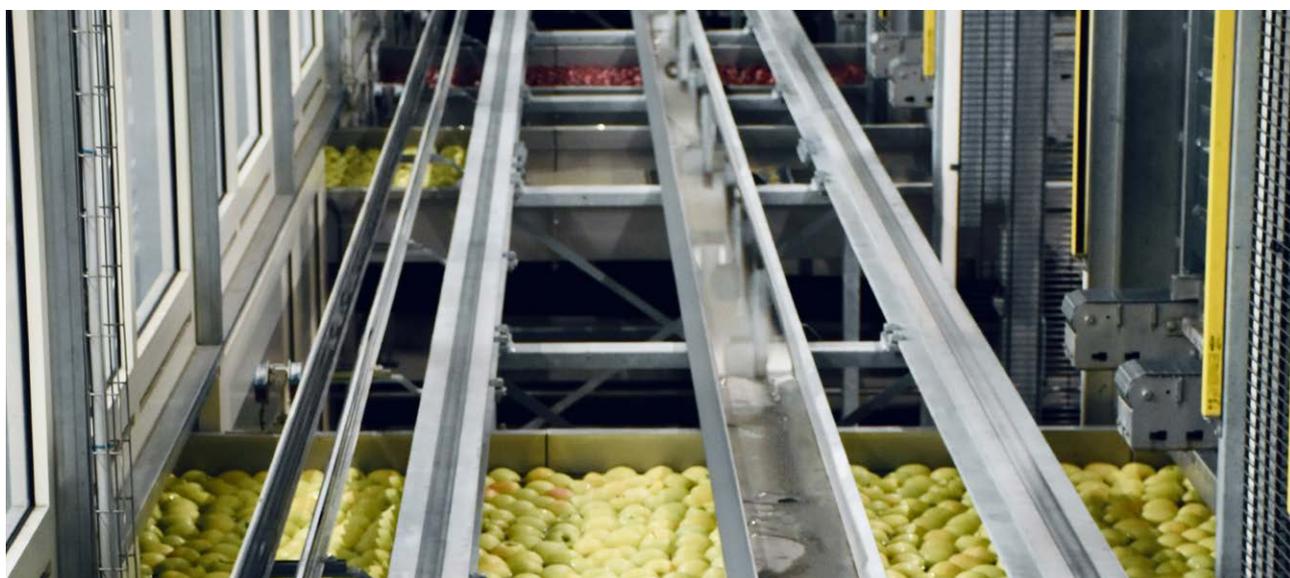
Secure social equity

Laying foundations of healthy cities speaks directly to the agroecological principle of social values and diets.

Apart from in wartime, African cities do not suffer from food shortages despite their very rapid population growth. However, a large proportion of their populations remains food insecure, particularly in terms of access to healthy food, due to poverty (both income and infrastructural poverty, i.e. multidimensional poverty). Improving the sanitary quality of food without increasing prices, by relying on the often-largely informal sector that processes and distributes this food, and encouraging the creation of gainful employment in the food sector, particularly for women and young people, are also actions that cities can take to ensure social equity in access to healthy and nutritious food.

Improve resource efficiency

Shifting urban food environments to prevent excessive consumption of empty calories and highly processed foods will improve the overall efficiency of the food system.



Because of their population concentration, cities accumulate organic waste that is often insufficiently recycled, even though it could be used as fertiliser instead of chemical fertiliser. They also accumulate toxic waste, such as pesticide residues and plastics, which are a threat to health. Reducing this waste and recycling as much as possible is another action that cities can take to optimise the use of resources.

Through the polluting effects that the increasing availability of highly processed, energy-dense, nutrient-poor food products (often rich in fat and sugar) have on human health, reducing the supply of such foods represents an important and unexplored opportunity for enhancing the resource efficiency of African food systems.

The table below offers an example of how the principles of agroecology may be revised to reflect the urban food system.

Agroecology principles (Wezel et al. 2020)	Revised urban agroecology principles
No change	No change
Recycling	Recycling
Synergy	Synergy
Economic diversification	Economic diversification
Co-creation of knowledge	Co-creation of knowledge
Social values and diets	Social values and diets
Fairness	Fairness
Connectivity	Connectivity
Participation	Participation
Adjusted	Adjusted
Input reduction	Reduction in all inputs and intermediary costs
Soil health	Environmental health
Animal health	Animal and human health and well-being
Biodiversity	Biodiversity and diversity of choice
Indigenous knowledge — traditional and new (contextual)	Indigenous knowledge — hack the system (contextual)
Land and natural resource governance	Land, spatial, natural resource and democratic governance of place

INVESTMENT ARENA AND CURRENT NETWORKS

Through this brief, we present the work of two key African-led networks championing work in food environments in Africa and beyond. These are AfriFOODlinks and the Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN). These are both multi-stakeholder coalitions led from within Africa by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and the University of Ghana, respectively. The Living Off-Grid Food & Infrastructure Collaboration (LOGIC), a third sub-project, focuses on food as a lens to understand infrastructure grids. The LOGIC project offers key insights to support the work done by FERN and AfriFOODlinks by highlighting the importance of physical as well as social infrastructures in the dietary behaviours of residents in African cities. Finally, we present the Resilient Municipal Market Fund (ReMark), an emerging financing facility that seeks to target urban food market infrastructure specifically within Africa.

AfriFOODlinks

AfriFOODlinks is a European Commission-funded consortium of 28 European and international partner organisations and over 20 local governments. AfriFOODlinks invests in direct food system change in 15 African cities and five European cities (see Figure 1).

Through a diverse set of AfriFOODlinks interventions, these African cities are working to become beacons of inspiration for urban food system transitions across the continent. Novel practices, methodological guides and public awareness toolkits are in development and will be shared with more than 45 network cities in Africa, Europe and other Global South regions that can adopt, adapt and replicate outcomes.

FIGURE 1: AfriFOODlinks CITY NETWORK



Source: AfriFOODlinks (2023)

AfriFOODlinks works under the framework of three systemic levers of change, namely urban infrastructure, social and

cultural preference, and business innovation (see Figure 2 below).

FIGURE 2: AfriFOODlinks, THREE SYSTEMIC LEVELS OF URBAN FOOD TRANSFORMATION



Source: AfriFOODlinks (2023)

Embedded city research and locally informed pilots

AfriFOODlinks has appointed 20 embedded city researchers and/or research organisations, one in each city, to undertake this work. These researchers have worked alongside local implementation partners and city officials to draw on the findings of these reports to develop a diverse portfolio of real-world socio-technical experiments in each of the 15 African cities. These experiments are explicitly co-designed in partnership with local governments, working to understand where appetite exists among local governments to undertake food-environment-related activities and how alignment with existing mandates can be achieved.

Examples of city-level pilots include:

- The National Institute of Nutrition in Tunis is leading a city-level pilot to test *bread reformulation to reduce excessive sodium intake* of the nationally subsidised bread loaf.
- Investing in city-owned infrastructure through *market upgrading in a range of food markets* in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia to improve access to healthy foods.
- Improvement of *health and sanitation at abattoir facilities* in Ghana and Uganda.
- Piloting adjustments to *school nutrition programmes* in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda.

AfriFOODlinks summary

Regional focus: Africa (Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunis, Uganda, Zambia)

- Focus areas:** Scaling tangible actions, entrepreneurship, governance, policy reform, knowledge and advocacy network
- Type of funding needed:** Grant and impact investing
- Estimated total funding pipeline or gap to 2030:** US\$50 million

Action	Description	Funding gap
Scaling tangible actions	US\$2 million to the top ten pilot initiatives in 20 cities.	US\$20 million
Entrepreneurship revolving fund	US\$250 000 repayable grants to the top 30 business innovations.	US\$7.5 million
City-level governance platforms	Investment into long-term support for city-level food coordination in all 15 cities. US\$150 000 per year over five years.	US\$11.25 million
Food policy reform processes	Support for one food policy reform process in up to 15 African cities. US\$250 000 per city.	US\$3.75 million
Knowledge and advocacy network	Continuation and expansion of existing advocacy network, research and city-city exchange programme. US\$1.5 million per year over five years.	US\$7.5 million
Total		US\$50 million

AfriFOODlinks' current funding support from the European Commission ends in November 2026. Beyond this, there is the opportunity to invest into the continued operation of AfriFOODlinks as an established and ambitious network

of cities and local governments working alongside other actors to influence the evolution of Africa's urban food environments.



FERN

The Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN) was established in November 2020, led by the University of Ghana, to enhance participation and build capacity for food environment research in Africa. Its goal is to create a community of practice that advances robust and innovative research.

FERN's mission focuses on three key objectives:

- Strengthening research capacity for food environment studies in Africa;
- Enhancing South–South and South–North collaborations to support research and monitoring; and
- Facilitating dialogue and priority-setting for current and future research needs.

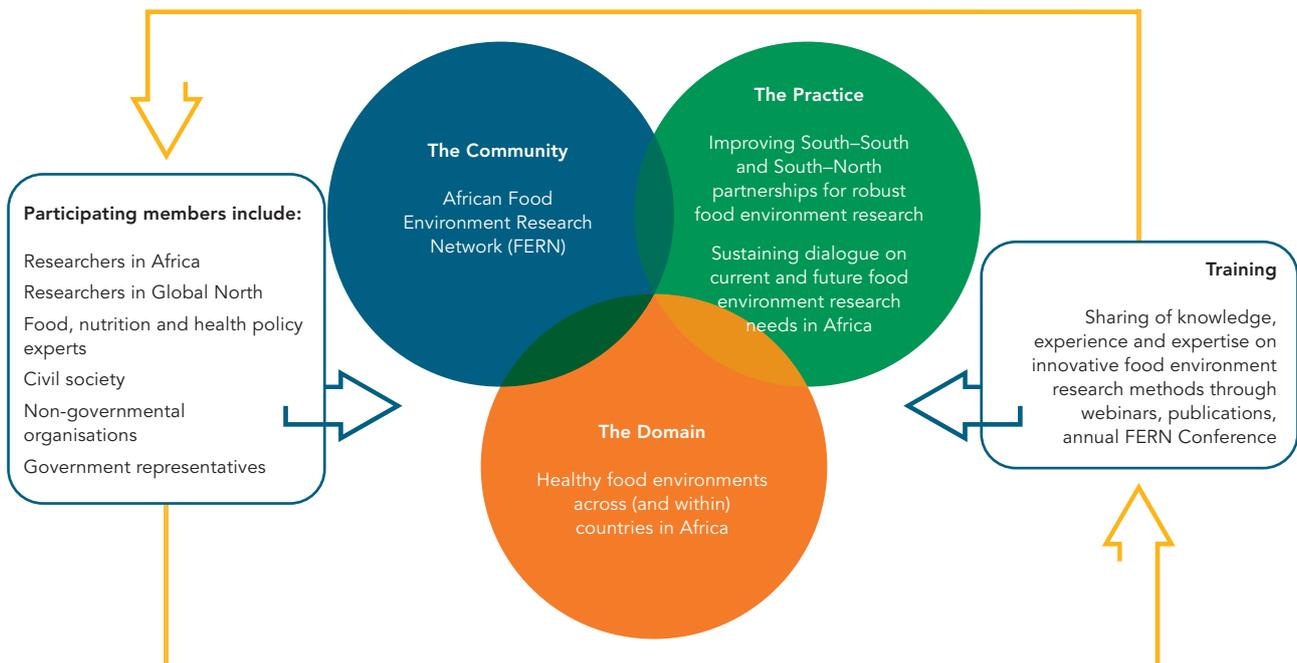
FERN's framework is based on Wenger's (1998) community of practice model, emphasising domain, community and practice as essential components (Tandoh et al. 2023)

Countries in West Africa, including Ghana and Nigeria, have benefited from the policy support work of FERN. FERN's approach to intervention in African food environments is based on a four-pronged approach: national coalition-building, action research, advocacy, and scholar activism.

FERN summary

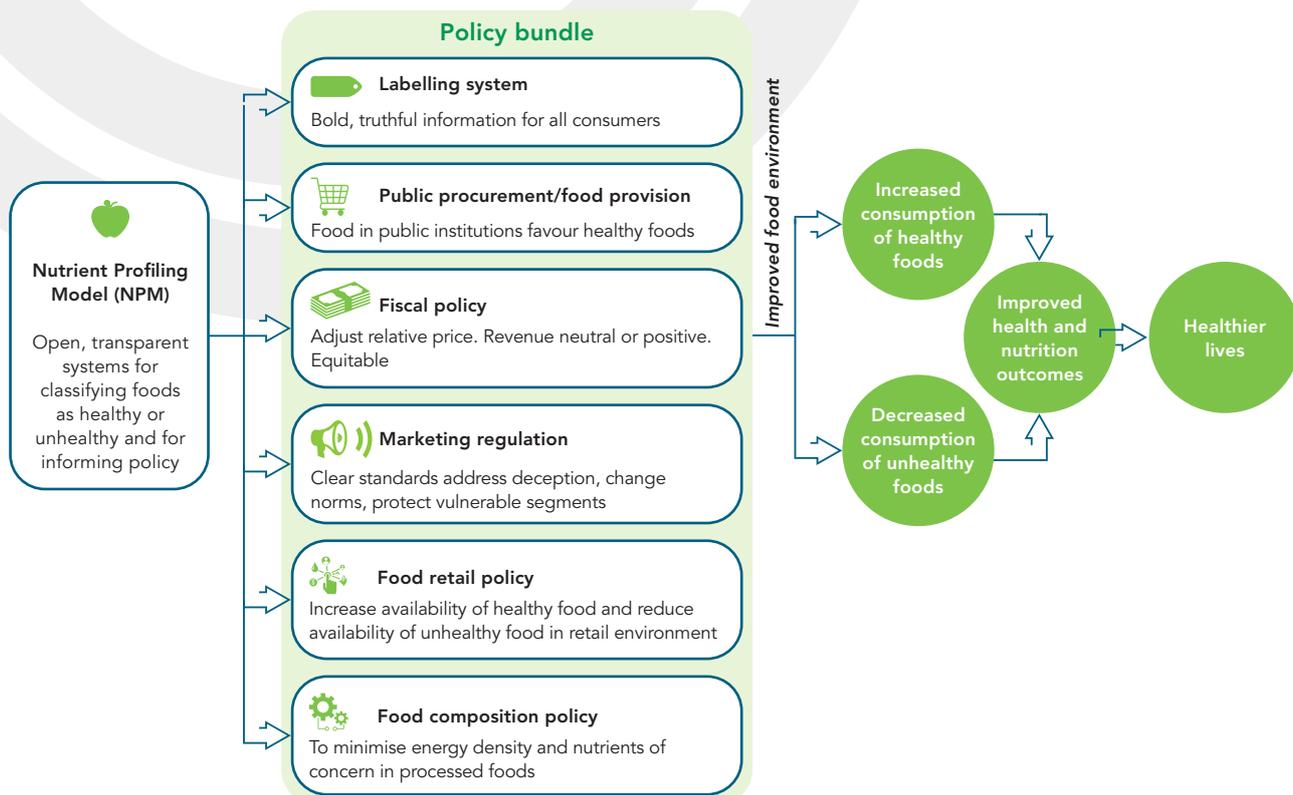
- **Regional focus:** Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, regional)
- **Focus areas:** Food policy, research, advocacy, coalition-building
- **Type of funding needed:** Grant

FIGURE 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE AFRICA FERN



Source: Laar et al. (2023)

FIGURE 4: FOOD ENVIRONMENT POLICY BUNDLE FOR HEALTHIER LIVES



Source: Laar et al. (2023)

LOGIC

The Living Off-Grid Food & Infrastructure Collaboration (LOGIC) focuses on five cities that represent different types of urban environment. Three of these cities are in Africa: Tamale (Ghana), Mossel Bay (South Africa) and Dzivarasekwa (Zimbabwe) and two are in Asia: Bangalore (India) and Colombo (Sri Lanka). The cities were chosen because while planning and infrastructure design and provision is improving for some parts of these cities, such provision is not expanding quickly enough to keep up with urban growth, and provision is not evenly distributed for all.

LOGIC focuses on five main types of infrastructure: water, sanitation, energy, transport and communications. In most poor neighbourhoods, people meet their needs in a variety of ways: informal access to formal grids such as illegal energy hook-ups, 'off-grid' forms such as latrines or bore-wells, hybrid forms such as reliance on water trucks when urban supplies run dry, or local vehicles providing 'last-mile' connections to public transport. A particular concern in these cities is whether such critical infrastructure is sufficiently robust and stable to weather the multitude of human, political and environmental shocks and stresses

facing cities, ranging from droughts and floods to political and financial crises that can literally 'turn off the lights'.

In order to gain a better understanding of these systemic urban issues and how they are affecting the poorest and most marginalised, we focused our research on one key way of measuring whether basic needs were being met: whether people had stable access and availability of a sufficient, diverse and nutritious diet – their 'food and nutrition security'. This provided us with a way of researching how these various infrastructures combine at multiple levels to achieve a more systemic understanding of infrastructure provision and the implications for people's lives. This has been insufficiently researched to date, but it is critically important to understand for urban planners and infrastructure providers (Battersby et al. 2024; Brown-Luthango et al. 2024). Equally, this is essential in understanding drivers of dietary behaviours of citizens. Elements beyond traditional food environment framings were found to play a key role in dietary behaviours being made. For example, the nature of household infrastructure was central to how and what food was purchased. Dietary behaviours extended beyond the retailer consumer interface of food purchase.

LOGIC summary

- I Regional focus:** Five cities in the Global South (three in Africa: Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe)
- I Focus areas:** Urban infrastructure, knowledge network

- I Type of funding needed:** Grant and impact investing
- I Estimated total funding pipeline or gap:** US\$6.5 million (for the next five years – urgency in avoiding path dependencies)

Action	Description	Funding Gap
Research	Deepening understanding and tracking hybrid infrastructure viability. US\$150 000 for three cities over a five-year period.	US\$2.25 million
Prototyping and testing	Prototyping hybrid, green and social infrastructure in different contexts. US\$200 000 for three cities over a five-year period.	US\$3 million
Advocacy: policy engagement and training	Active engagement with policy actors across tiers of government and at a continental scale. US\$50 000 for three cities over a five-year period plus US\$100,000 for five years.	US\$1.25 million
Total		US\$6.5 million



ReMark

Urban food markets are one of the primary nodes of infrastructure in the continent’s food system and they play an important role in shaping the urban food environment. Almost without exception, across Africa, these markets face significant challenges in accessing non-public capital.

The Resilient Municipal Market Fund (ReMark) aims to unlock private investment in local urban food markets through donor support for a grant-based technical assistance (TA) facility and a blended debt facility. The instrument’s TA arm will provide grant funding to municipalities to help with project preparation for their municipal markets. Municipal market investment will be co-designed with market owners who own the project and can access funding from a heavily subsidised loan facility (see Figure 5).

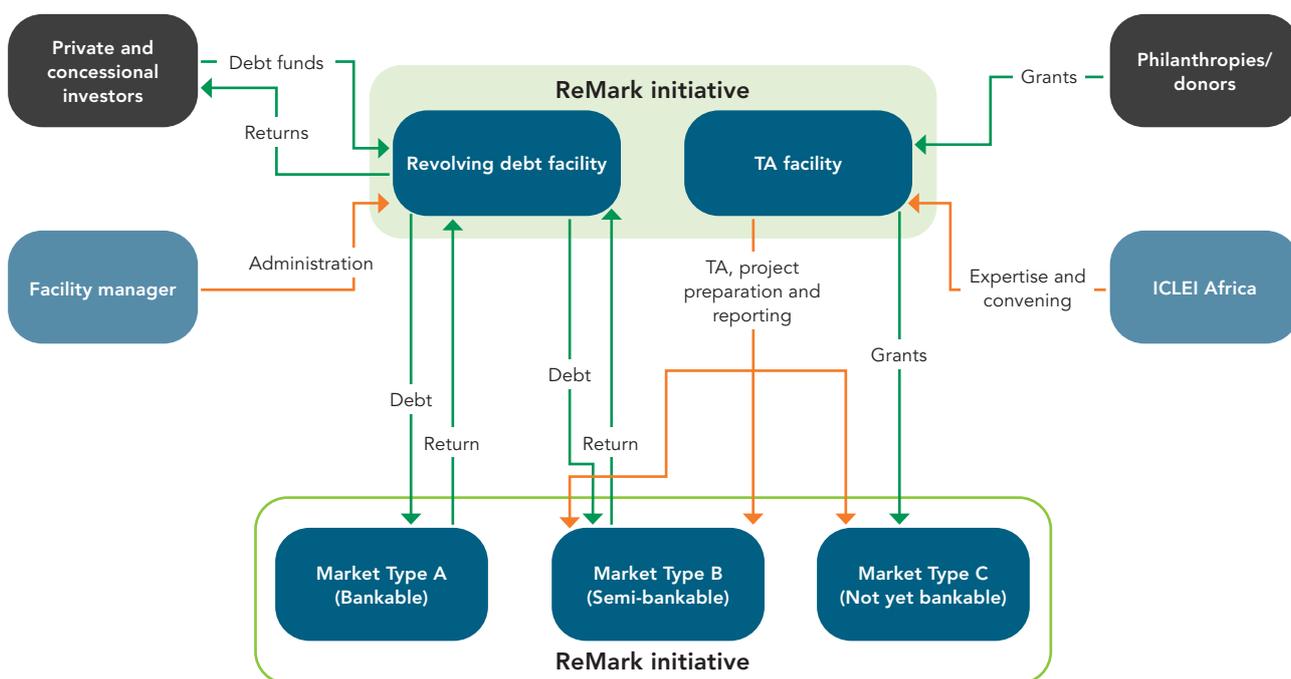
The revolving debt facility will issue capital expenditure loans with ticket sizes ranging from US\$500 000 to US\$10 million.

The TA facility will consist of a project preparation facility and capacity-building support for markets. The project preparation facility will prepare markets to take on loans, help market owners identify resiliency retrofits, and support necessary preparation work.

ReMark summary

- **Regional focus:** Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia)
- **Focus areas:** Financing mechanism, technical assistance, project preparation facility
- **Type of funding needed:** Grant, concessional loan and private loan
- **Estimated total funding pipeline or gap:** US\$35 million (phase 1 pilot), US\$350 million (phase 2), US\$700 million (phase 3)

FIGURE 5: ReMARK FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT MECHANICS DIAGRAM



Source: ICLEI (2024)

Action	Description	Funding gap
Private capital	Senior debt	US\$10 million
Concessional capital	First loss or subordinate debt	US\$12.5 million
Philanthropic or grant funding	Repayable grant, project preparation and technical assistance	US\$12.5 million
Total	Phase 1	US\$35 million

KEY MESSAGES

- 1. There is an urgent need to act now to avoid long-term path dependencies:** As Africa's small, largely rural, urban agglomerations grow into fully fledged towns and cities over the next 50–100 years, the norms, policies and infrastructures that get established during their foundation phases will become increasingly hard to change as they grow. The infrastructure investments made over the next 10–15 years will lock Africa into path dependencies that will play a critical role in the nature and form of the urban transition and in its ability to leverage its urban dividend (Pieterse et al. 2018). Applying a food environment framing to the way in which we approach urban food policy, spatial planning, and regulation can support those involved in urban planning and development to mainstream food-sensitive and food-specific approaches across a wide range of disciplines that shape the urban food environment.
- 2. Clear pathways for investing into diversified action on food environments exist:** The AfriFOODlinks, FERN, and LOGIC networks combined with the ReMark financing facility provide a clear opportunity for institutions to extend their reach. Collectively, these initiatives offer the opportunity for a clear and actionable pipeline of investment into urban food system transitions at local, national and regional levels. The diverse representation that these networks provide offer broad scope for alignment with funders' thematic and geographic priority areas.
- 3. The impact of these diverse activities could be leveraged through support for overarching coordination:** While the diversity of these networks offers strength and agility, overarching investment could be catalytic in aligning these networks into a formidable continental coalition. This would enable collective coalition-building, advocacy and secretarial support that would enable these and other existing and emerging networks to develop into a stronger continental force. The logic here is exemplified by proceedings that have unfolded recently: the inaugural Africa Urban Forum held in September 2024 ignored food but focused on cities and infrastructure. Conversely, the Africa Food Systems Forum summit focused on food systems but ignored cities. Small projects, while easier to fund, remain small and, as a result, are either bespoke or major. There is a need to engage this issue on a scale that is unprecedented. Sufficient mobilisation and coordination are needed to ensure that this coalition is seen as a serious player by the African Development Bank, the African Union Development Agency's New Partnership for Africa's Development, the World Bank, the French Development Agency and others that are currently setting the agenda. The suggestions outlined here can help inform funders about how they can do things better and differently. The need to act is urgent if infrastructural path dependencies are to be avoided.
- 4. Existing initiatives are ready to deploy investment of US\$100 million over the next five years:** The funding needs of these four specific initiatives were considered over a time horizon of the next five years. Considered collectively, with some provision for overarching coordination and support, this presents an actionable project funding pipeline of approximately US\$100 million between 2025 and 2030.

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Disclosure

All the authors of this brief are members of the various networks and activities listed here.

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**African
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This network of researchers and food systems development experts collaborates to inform philanthropies, governments and development finance organisations on funding strategies to promote transitions to sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems across Africa.

To ensure a high standard of evidence-informed recommendations, briefs in this series were rigorously reviewed by peers within the AFSTC, including fellow researchers and members of the advisory committee.

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