



SUMMARY

Many wetlands in Panama City's Juan Diaz sub-district have been landfilled and its river channelized due to urbanization for new luxury housing, golf course and industrial development, which has led to an increased frequency of flood events. Every year 236,000 people are at risk from flooding, making Panama ranks 1st on the IDB's Local Disaster Index of Latin America. With a changing climate, effectuated by more intense thunderstorms and river flows, this humanly created flood risk for communities in the lower part of the Juan Diaz watershed will only exacerbate in the future.

Frustrated with the ever more frequent floods, neighborhood groups set up roadblocks to demand a stop to the wetland landfills. The developers claimed to abide the official but inadequate building codes and blamed the communities for the garbage blocking the drainage system. Government agencies pointed the finger at each other. Environmental NGOs joined the debate to defend the threatened wetlands. This deadlock between the actors needed to be broken; this was done by bringing in external expertise, research into the root causes and dialogue process.

Wetlands International coordinated the Water Dialogues program with the Municipality of Panama City and Dutch water experts mobilized the community and stakeholders to work together on sustainable flood solutions. This led to the incorporation of wetland reservoirs, with biodiversity benefits, into planning and a bankable project for blue-grey flood infrastructure which financing will be done by the Inter-American Development Bank.

It is a unique partnership with a bilateral cooperation between Panama and the Netherlands, its facilitation by an NGO located in both countries, and the financing by a Multilateral Development Bank. Innovative is the multi-sectorial stakeholder participation in the process, including a strong voice for flooded communities who will have big say into the flood risk infrastructure measures' design. This multi-sectorial, multi-stakeholder process and connected funding can be an inspiration for other cities.



SESSION DESCRIPTION

A5 Building Inclusive Multi-stakeholder and Bankable Flood Resilience in Cities

Workshop

Date: Wednesday, 26 June 2019

Time: 14.00-15.30

Rooms: S25-26

Language: English

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Organized by: Wetlands International

OBJECTIVE

The session is to cover the triple helix of government, private sector and NGOs and connecting it to the IFIs. It is led by the CEO of Wetlands International, who opens the session giving a short insight on its role. A presentation by the (Vice) Mayor of Panama City to set the scene is followed by a technical presentation on the innovative and inclusive approach by the Dutch water experts; and this part is concluded by a reflection by the IFI on the innovative character of the financing.

The session is concluded with questions by the moderator to the panel e.g. on how this case study can inspire other IFI funding can help reduce vulnerability in cities, if IFIs can create funding line for local government disaster risk reduction. The room is then challenged to provide examples of other cities where such a participatory process and IFI funding for resilience can be beneficial.

OUTCOMES

The aim of the workshop is to stimulate thinking and cross-fertilization amongst the attending public and panellists:

- Participants will learn how urban flood risk can be tackled in a multi-sectorial, multi-stakeholder participatory approach.
- Through the presentations, participants will gain an understanding of building partnerships between the Municipality, NGOs, Dutch water experts, and a Multilateral Development Bank
- During the panel discussion, they will explore in their own cities and regions on how such an approach can tackle climate-resilience challenges and what partnerships could be set-up to catalyse these.



METHODOLOGY

Facilitator: *Mr. Sander Carpaj, Urban Resilience Coordinator, Wetlands International (Global Office), Wageningen, The Netherlands*

Welcome and overview of the session

16:30-16:45 *Jane Madgwick, CEO, Wetlands International (Global Office), Wageningen, The Netherlands*

An NGO as catalyst and broker in building urban flood resilience

A short presentation on the role that the NGO Wetlands International plays in building flood resilience in different cities in the world; from Panama City to Chennai (India), Semarang (Indonesia) and Manila and Tacloban (Philippines).

16:45-17:00 *Raisa Banfield, Incumbent Vice-Mayor, Municipality of Panama City, Panama City, Panama*

Panama Dutch Water Dialogues and IDB ICES: partnering to reduce flood risk in Juan Diaz watershed

A short presentation on the process of building flood-resilience in the Juan Diaz watershed in Panama City with the help of Dutch water experts and government, the NGO Wetlands International and the Emerging Sustainable Cities initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank.

17:00-17:15 *Matthijs Bouw, Director and Founder of ONE Architecture & Urban Planning, New York, United States*

A participatory approach to flood-risk infrastructure design to maximize urban benefits.

A short presentation on how participatory design approaches can build public support and maximize urban benefits of flood risk infrastructure measures with cases from The Big U (Manhattan, New York) and Panama City.

17:15-17:30 *Armando José León Rojas, Executive Director for Panama and Venezuela at the Inter-American Development Bank, Panama City, Panama*

Financing innovative, participatory and Blue-Green Infrastructure for Flood Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Latin America

A short presentation on the innovative type of financing of the Panama case and ambitions of the MDBs/IDB in Latin America

17:30-17:55 **Questions and Answers from the public to the panelists (presenters) on:**

- *How such an approach can build climate-resilience in their own cities and regions?*
- *Which kind of stakeholders and organizations would build a partnership for action?*
- *What kind of funding/financing would be required?*



17:55-18:00 **Conclusion by the moderator and open invitation for new collaborations**

Further Recommended Reading

100 Resilient Cities – Panama City Resilience Strategy (PDF)

<http://www.100resilientcities.org/strategies/panama-city/>

Panama Dutch Water Dialogues case study

[Spanish](#) | [English](#)

Emerging and Sustainable Cities Program (ESC) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

<https://www.iadb.org/en/urban-development-and-housing/emerging-and-sustainable-cities-program>

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