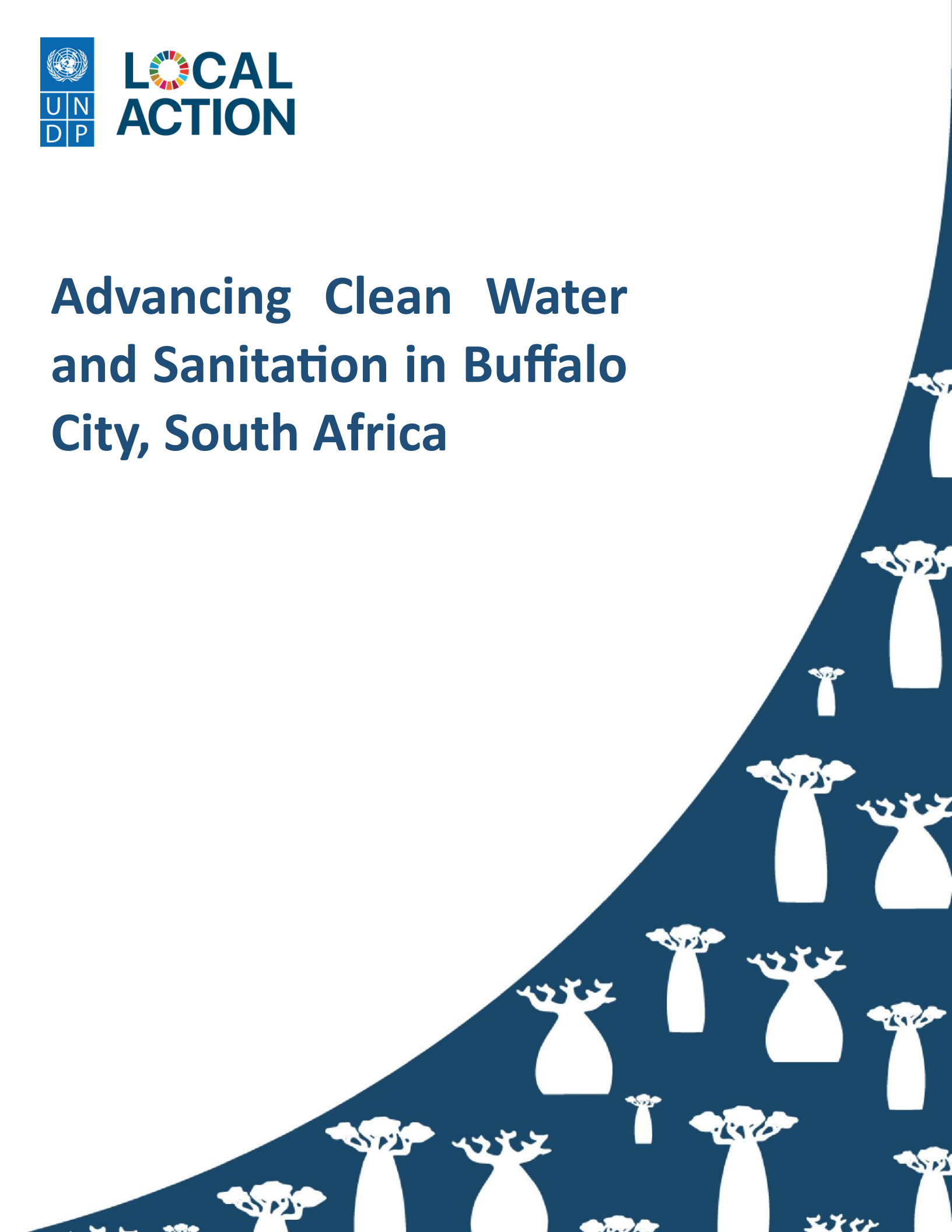
LOCAL ACTION

Advancing Clean Water and Sanitation in Buffalo City, South Africa



Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, situated in South Africa's Eastern Cape province, encompasses the towns of East London, Bhisho, and King William, as well as the Mdantsane and Zwelitsha townships. However, the region has long struggled with water access, exacerbated by severe droughts, inadequate rainfall, and poor maintenance of water infrastructure. These challenges are not unique to Buffalo City but are reflective of wider issues faced by South Africa, including aging infrastructure, diminishing water supplies, and high-water losses

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development **Goal 6 (SDG.6)**, the municipality has forged a partnership with the Department of Water and Sanitation, GIZ/Engagement Global, and the City of Oldenburg in Germany to ensure the availability of clean water and sanitation for its citizens.

Since 2022, the city has initiated an awareness-raising project aimed at protecting its clean water resources, reducing water loss, and preventing contamination. This endeavor aligns seamlessly with South Africa's National Water and Sanitation Master Plan.

Communal Washing and Sanitation Facilities in Duncan Village Informal Settlement in Buffalo City Metro

Councilor Princess Faku, the city's Executive Mayor, believes that improving water quality directly benefits local communities in terms of health, safety, and related costs. Residents are encouraged to actively participate in reducing water contamination and wastage by promptly reporting any incidents they encounter. Contaminated water necessitates additional processing, thereby increasing its cost, while losses incurred remain irretrievable.

The project primarily focuses on safeguarding drinking water and enhancing raw water quality through the implementation of a laboratory information and management system, as well as environmental education programs.

Scheduled to conclude in 2024, the partnership is dedicated to achieving **SDG 6.1.1** by increasing the proportion of residents with access to safely managed drinking water services, as well as **SDG 6.2.1** on ensuring the provision of safely managed sanitation services.

This commitment extends to all vulnerable groups, including the elderly and people with disabilities. Furthermore, the partnership takes into account the needs of business entities such as Mercedes Benz, which relies on a specific raw water quality for its paint plant.

Movable ablution system Handover in Duncan Village in Buffalo City Metro

As a member of the South Africa Local Government Association (SALGA), Buffalo City is one of the 13 municipalities selected to localize the Sustainable Development Goals through the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process. This initiative is led by a partnership comprising the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), SALGA, and South Africa's Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DPME).