

Freetown, Sierra Leone:

# #Freetown TheTreetown

Model: Business-Focused  
International Partnerships

#FreetownTheTreetown is Freetown's ambitious tree planting programme, through which the city planted over **600,000 trees** between 2018 and 2023. The goal is to reach **1 million by the end of 2023**.



## THE CHALLENGE

In 2018, the Mayor launched **#FreetownTheTreetown** to address large-scale tree loss as well as flood and landslide disasters; a result of rapid urbanisation. The question was **how to leverage** World Bank grant funding to raise **longer term private investment**.



## HOW IT WORKS

In the programme, a mobile app tracks every tree planted by a community grower. A token gives trees a value and businesses **invest in these tokens as part of their net-zero strategies**.

The city used public awareness campaigns and targeted engagement with businesses to drive investment.

Growers are paid based on the continued growth of the trees. The digital tracking capability allows buyers to follow the trees. The project created over **1,000 green jobs** along the value chain.

The city also partnered with fashion brand, Finor X, to sell t-shirts with QR code prints corresponding to a token. The code attached the tree's value to the garment, which created a **market for environmentally-conscious customers** wanting to buy t-shirts and support the project.



## LESSONS

Grant funding and international partnerships can help get projects started. This funding however can be used creatively to **build private sector investment** beyond these grants, rather than relying solely on future grant funding. Impact tokens or "adopt a tree" schemes are simple ways for cities to generate private investment in urban nature.

Freetown also identified the **importance of trust and transparency** when leveraging private sector support. In this case, digital tracking provided both transparency and the basis for creating investment value