



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

# Sustainable Cities Program

Cities can offer effective entry points for major investments in global environmental benefits in the context of local, national and global level actions. This presents a timely opportunity for the GEF to support countries in harnessing the growing momentum by cities to advance the urban sustainability agenda, which is reinforced by the following:

- a. Cities control policies and vital systems related to global environmental conditions, such as system-level management of infrastructure development, natural resource management, and setting environmental standards. The majority of cities have direct control over the transit system, roads, markets, waste management, water supply, wastewater treatment, building codes, and others. City leaders play an essential role in the multiple levels of governance of urban management, necessitating their direct engagement. They can be quicker in decision making to respond to pressure and requests from the local constituency.
- b. The projected urban development needs in the coming decades present a window of opportunity for cities to manage their development sustainably, starting with the planning and design phase. There is an opportunity to facilitate upstream planning to demonstrate models that avoid locking in conventional urban forms, and to help demonstrate innovative options for retrofitting to make existing cities greener and more resilient, enhancing urban-rural linkages.
- c. The concentration of people and institutions enable economies of scale in providing green infrastructure and services. Urban productivity also tends to be higher, enabling more efficient output with fewer resources. Cities are incubators of innovation and present unique opportunities to generate and disseminate technological, social, and cultural ideas.
- d. Cities are a natural place for integrated solutions for ecosystem management. For instance, there are strong environmental, social, and economic cases to be made for the development and management of forests as well as urban and peri-urban agriculture as elements of green infrastructure in and around cities, with benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience, diminishing air and water pollution, and others.



## OUR APPROACH

The Sustainable Cities Program is an ambitious attempt to promote urban sustainability, recognizing the unique window of opportunity that comes with rapid urbanization. As mayors in developing countries seek to transform cities as inclusive and resilient hubs of growth, there is a growing demand for innovative tools and knowledge to help them make informed decisions. Initiatives such as the Compact of Mayors, C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group are already playing an important role in helping address this need; GEF is working with these initiatives to further strengthen the overall support for cities.

The value added by the GEF through the Sustainable Cities program is to enhance integrated urban planning and strengthen global support and coordination. There is a long-standing tendency for cities to attempt to build their way out of problems by constructing large new projects rather than making the most of existing assets. An integrated approach will lead to better demand-management measures and improved assets utilization. In addition, a World Bank-led Global Knowledge Platform\* is facilitating knowledge-sharing among cities on policy reform and innovation to inspire actions and build capacity of local governments so that municipal staff can effectively plan, design and execute low-carbon development plans and strategies. This approach will bring about opportunities for greater efficiency, synergy and increased returns of investment in developing cities.

The GEF believes an integrated approach can demonstrate how innovation and high impact investment can support the sustainable management of cities. Working with partners, this effort helps to facilitate integrated urban design, planning and management, which lead to sustainable and resilient development and sound management of ecosystems in the context of urbanization.

\* <http://www.thegpsc.org/>

## THE PROGRAM

As a result, the program is expected to create a strong network of cities that will act as global ambassadors for urban sustainability planning, with tangible benefits at both the local and global levels.

Starting in GEF-6, the Sustainable Cities Program is investing USD \$151.6 million in GEF grants and USD \$2.4 billion in cofinancing over 5 years, initially engaging 28 cities in 11 developing countries (Brazil, China, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, South Africa and Viet Nam). It is being implemented as a GEF partnership involving GEF Agencies, development entities, technical institutions, city municipalities, and civil society organizations are also contributing.

Through a holistic and integrated approach, the Sustainable Cities Program's goal is to (i) facilitate knowledge-sharing among city leaders on policy reform and innovation to inform and inspire climate action; (ii) develop and deploy common standards and tools, that will help enhance credibility, transparency and usability of cities' commitments for environmental sustainability and GHG reductions; (iii) enhance the capacity of city leaders to develop and execute city-wide low-carbon plans; and (iv) provide finance for selected urban low-carbon infrastructure across a range of sectors like for example transport, energy, buildings, waste and water.

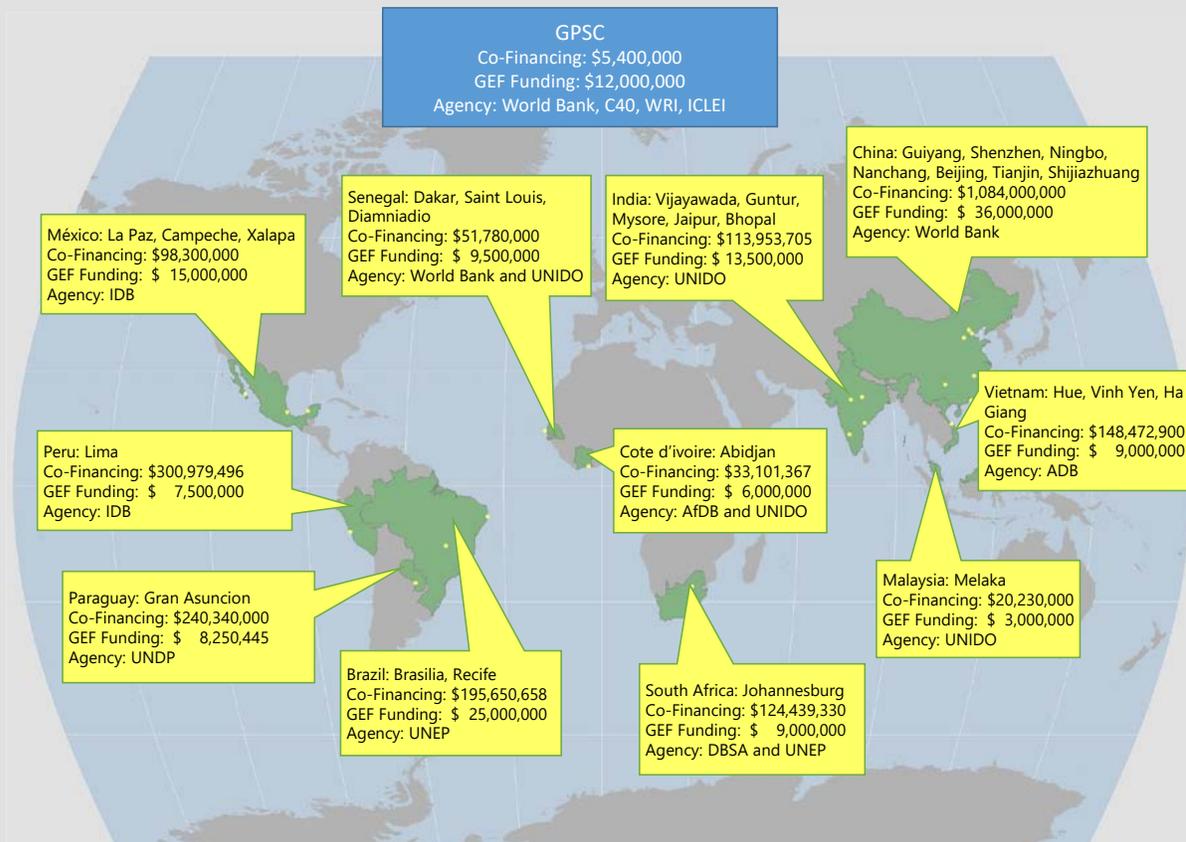
## EXPECTED RESULTS

By promoting sustainable urban development through better integrated models of urban design, planning and implementation, the program is contributing towards avoiding or reducing more than 100 million metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in greenhouse gas emissions.



## GEF Sustainable Cities Program

GEF financing to date: \$151.6 million; Total Co-financing: \$2.4 billion



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided \$17 billion in grants and mobilized an additional \$88 billion in financing for more than 4,000 projects. Today, the GEF is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues.

The GEF's 18 implementing partners are Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Conservation International (CI), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), European Bank for

Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Foreign Economic Cooperation Office—Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (FUNBIO), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), West African Development Bank (BOAD), World Bank Group (WBG) and World Wildlife Fund U.S. (WWF-US).

[www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org)

GEF implementing agencies participating in the Sustainable Cities program:

