



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

# Sustainable Cities

Impact Program

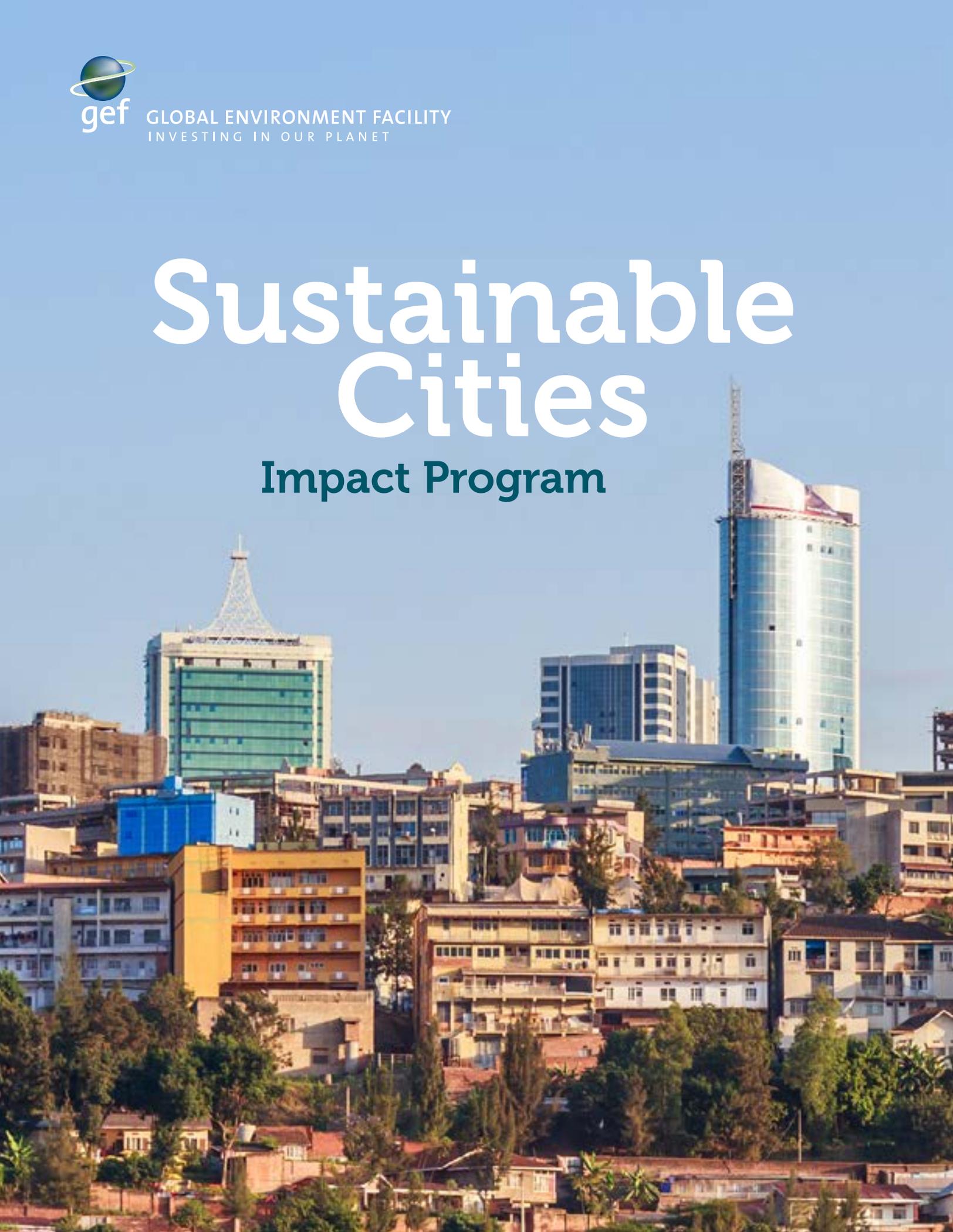




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## Program Rationale

Cities consume two-thirds of the world's energy and account for 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. It is estimated that by 2030, cities will be expanding into key global biodiversity hotspots, severely affecting natural ecosystems and their critical services for cities. Rapid and unplanned urbanization is leading to urban sprawl that has made cities highly vulnerable to climate change induced flooding, droughts, and heatwaves. Urban sprawl is further resulting in inadequate transportation infrastructure, which leads to air pollution that affects the health and well-being of millions. Short-term and uncoordinated responses to the problem—additional infrastructure, excessive land use, and ground water extraction, energy-intensive cooling and other resource-intensive measures—cause further environmental degradation and vulnerability. Urban areas are expected to triple in size between 2000 and 2030, which will likely exacerbate these trends in absence of transformational shifts towards compact, low-carbon, resilient, and inclusive cities.

There are significant obstacles to such shifts. Cities face institutional, political, and financial constraints, have ineffective and uncoordinated national policies, frameworks, and processes, lack integrated planning, do not properly engage stakeholders, and in general lack capacity to break from 'business as usual' practices.

Yet, momentum is growing for climate action, and cities are at the center of that movement. Forward-looking mayors and national governments are setting climate and sustainability targets for cities, and urban programs and city networks are emerging to support these efforts. Nevertheless, many cities, especially in the developing world, have limited opportunities to apply integrated approaches, mobilize finance, and learn from successes and failures to implement innovative sustainability solutions at scale for the desired transformational shift.

## Program Overview

Recognizing the centrality of cities as key climate actors, the GEF launched the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot in 2017. The program is now in the implementation phase, helping 28 cities in 11 countries (Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Vietnam, and Malaysia) design and implement integrated urban solutions for urban mobility, clean energy, climate adaptation, and solid waste management.

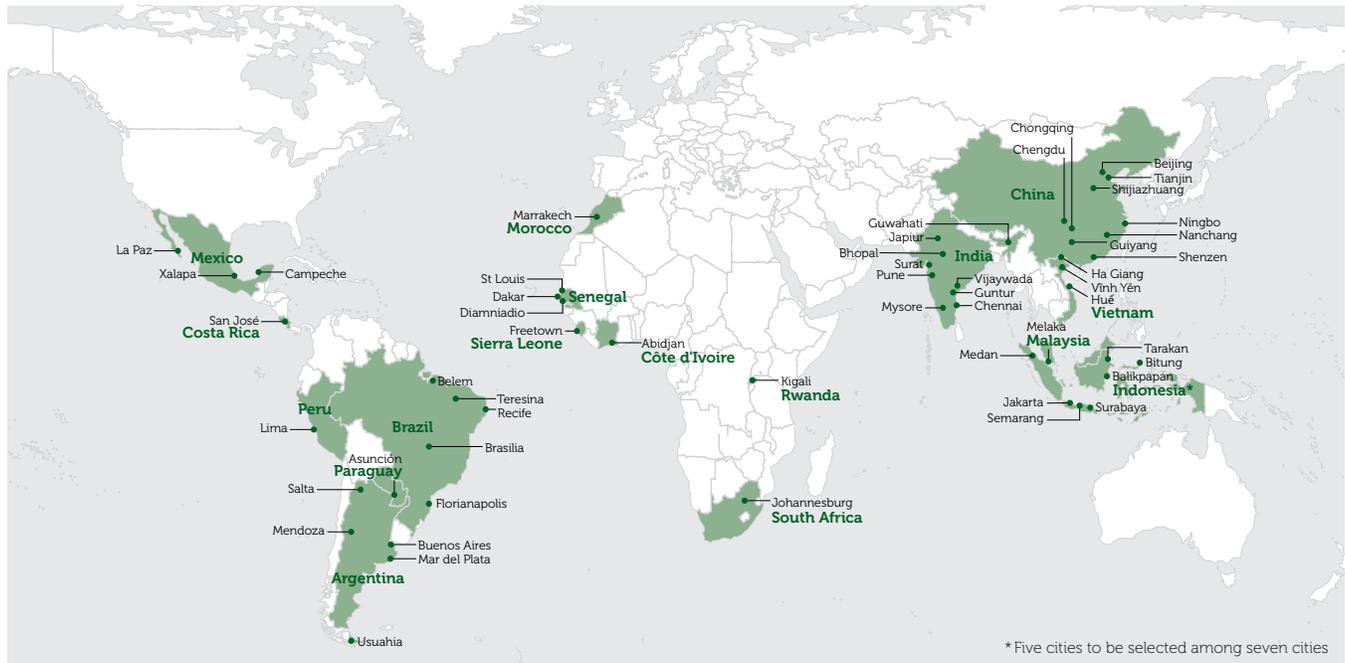
The GEF-7 **Sustainable Cities Impact Program (SCIP)** harnesses the power of networks and experience from the pilot phase and will support 24 new cities in 9 countries (**Argentina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone**). The program will advance the integrated approach of urban planning and bring together global, national, and local stakeholders to work together towards a common vision of sustainable, inclusive, gender sensitive, and resilient development.

The SCIP will engage mayors, the private sector, city networks, UN agencies, multi-lateral development banks, and many other partners to support national and city governments in their sustainability ambitions and to design innovative solutions and implementation models. The program will focus on both infrastructure and nature-based solutions for urban sustainability. It will engage the private sector in urban planning and implementing sustainable solutions and mainstream gender in planning and investment decision making in cities.

## Program Delivery Framework

The program will be delivered through two interlinked components: 1) innovative implementation models for integrated sustainability solutions and investments in selected cities and countries; and 2) a Global Platform for sustainable cities for knowledge exchange, learning, and fostering partnerships for raising ambition and on-the-ground action. As the country and city-level investments lead to multiple global environmental benefits, the platform will enhance the potential for amplifying the benefits across many more cities in recipient countries.

## Geographical Coverage



## Country and City-level Engagement

SCIP country and city-level projects combine a series of features that provide the conditions to transform how cities undertake integrated planning, select strategic investments, and scale-up approaches to become more sustainable. The features that set the SCIP apart include: integrated planning; investments that deliver multi-environmental benefits, including climate change mitigation and resilience and biodiversity conservation; approaches that build capacity for sustainability governance and policies and that catalyze accelerated climate ambition at the local level.

## Global-level Engagement

The Global Platform will deliver the program's overall potential for urban transformation. Through the platform, the SCIP will identify emerging sustainability challenges, understand key drivers, map prototypes for sustainability action, and facilitate innovation through new knowledge and experiences. The Global Platform will function in three critical aspects to advance the global urban sustainability agenda; 1) promote integrated urban planning by creating and curating knowledge through an online library; 2) build capacity of city leaders, the private sector, and operational level staff to implement sustainability approaches through city academies, peer exchange workshops, and study tours; 3) build a global movement around integrated urban planning approaches by organizing global, regional, and national dialogues.

## Program Approach and Key Components

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities of urbanization, the SCIP's objective is to support cities in their pursuit of integrated urban planning and implementation that delivers impactful development outcomes with global environmental benefits. The four main components of the program are described below.

**Sustainable and integrated urban planning and policy reform:** Integrated urban planning approaches include project activities such as integrated urban planning using Geographic Information Systems, improved governance and integrated planning process, low-carbon and conservation development plans, and policies and national level policies/frameworks for multi-level coordination. SCIP countries Rwanda, Brazil, and Argentina will develop digital mapping of cities to integrate land use plans, disaster risk reduction, and natural capital assessments. Costa Rica, Morocco, and Sierra Leone will develop sustainable integrated city planning and development plans to support coordination between different level of governments.

**Sustainable, integrated, low-carbon, resilient, conservation, and land restoration investments:** The second component promotes local-level investment in a variety of different sectors prioritized by each country: land/spatial interventions, nature-based solutions, integrated transportation, integrated water planning and use, urban metabolism, and climate. All country projects have a component of nature-based solutions of biodiversity, conservation, or restoration. India, Indonesia, Costa Rica, and Argentina focus on integrated waste management, whereas Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Morocco, and Rwanda focus on transport investment.



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A number of cities will also adopt a circular economy approach for sustainable development. Urban resilience is a cross-cutting objective across all the cities.

**Innovative financing and scaling up:** The SCIP will enable cities and national governments to leverage resources and bridge massive infrastructure gaps. Country and global-level activities will complement each other to provide access to financing, and to create innovative financial mechanisms and business models. Country projects will develop new financial instruments (Morocco and Indonesia); forge Public Private Partnerships (Argentina, China, India, and Rwanda); build diversified green investment portfolios (Brazil and Rwanda); and test financial and technical feasibility of pilots and demonstration (most countries).

**Advocacy, knowledge exchange, capacity building, and partnerships:** Country projects will engage with the Global Platform activities on this program component. National platforms will be established in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Indonesia, and China. Indonesia will create an award for cities as champions of sustainable development. Other country-level engagements include creating sustainability baselines; participating in learning events; and designing outreach campaigns for urban practitioners and the general public. The Global Platform will convene a range of partners from government, private sector, academia, and civil society to design sustainability solutions. It will also engage with global urban, economic, climate, and environmental forums and conventions

to advocate urban sustainability agenda through dissemination of ideas, lessons, and best practices.

### Expected Results

The GEF-7 Sustainable Cities Impact Program will deliver multiple environmental benefits while supporting urban economic growth and livability. The program is expected to reduce an estimated 184 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e GHG emissions, improve management and restoration of approximately 1 million hectares of land and 38,000 hectares of marine habitat. The program is expected to benefit an estimated 58 million people.

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 close to **\$20 billion** in grants and mobilized an additional **\$107 billion** in co-financing for more than **4,700 projects in 170 countries**. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has provided support to nearly 24,000 civil society and community initiatives in 128 countries.

