



Sustainable Cities Program

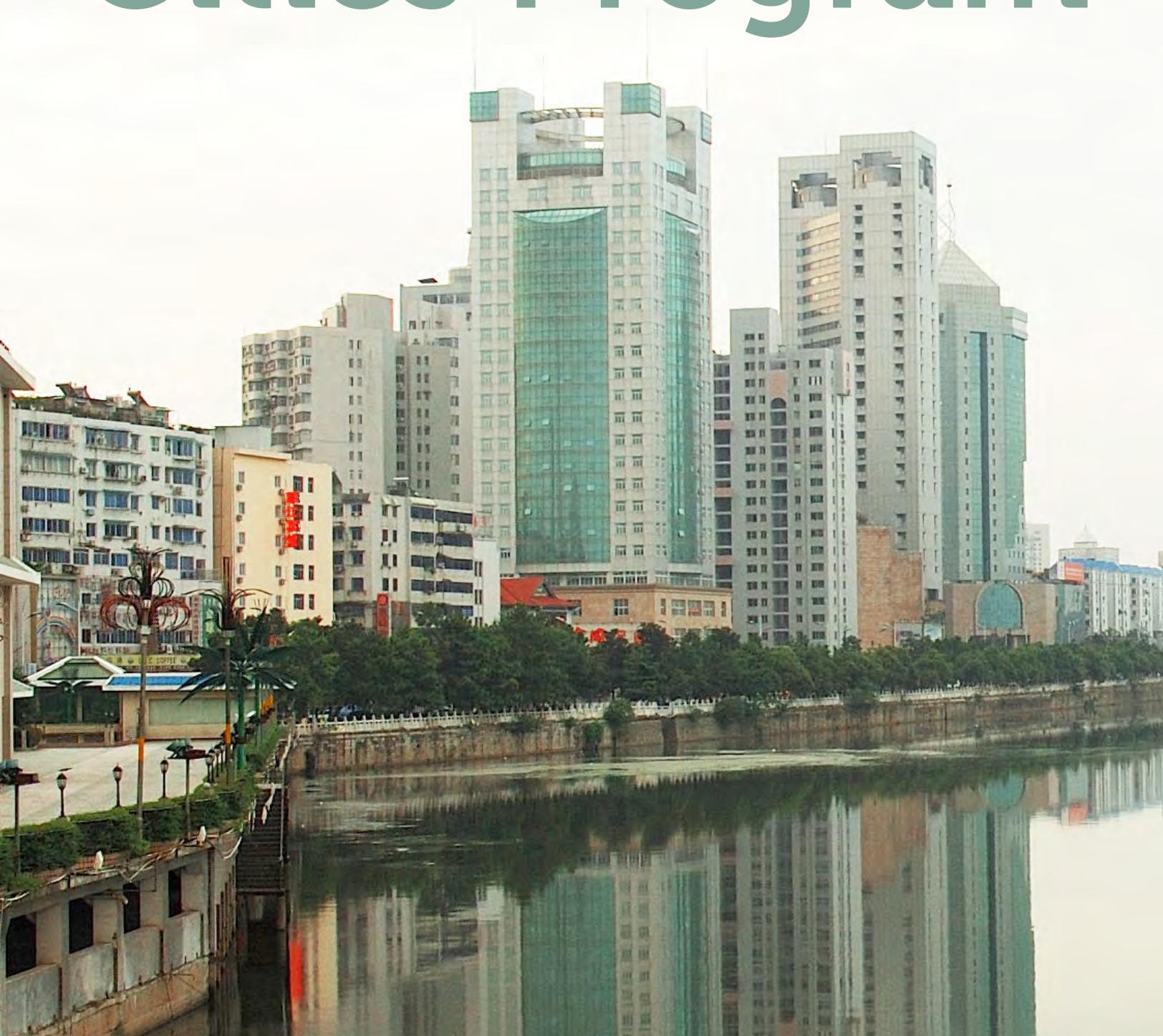




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Program Rationale

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 and processes, lack integrated planning, do not properly engage stakeholders, and struggle to mobilize finance and 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.

Program Overview

Recognizing the centrality of cities as key climate actors, the GEF launched the **Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot** in 2017 under the GEF-6 phase. 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**, under its brand name UrbanShift, harnesses the power of networks and experience from the pilot phase and will support 23

new cities in nine 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 Sustainable Cities Program is engaging with mayors, the private sector, city networks, UN agencies, multilateral 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 focuses on both infrastructure and nature-based solutions for urban sustainability.

Program Delivery Framework

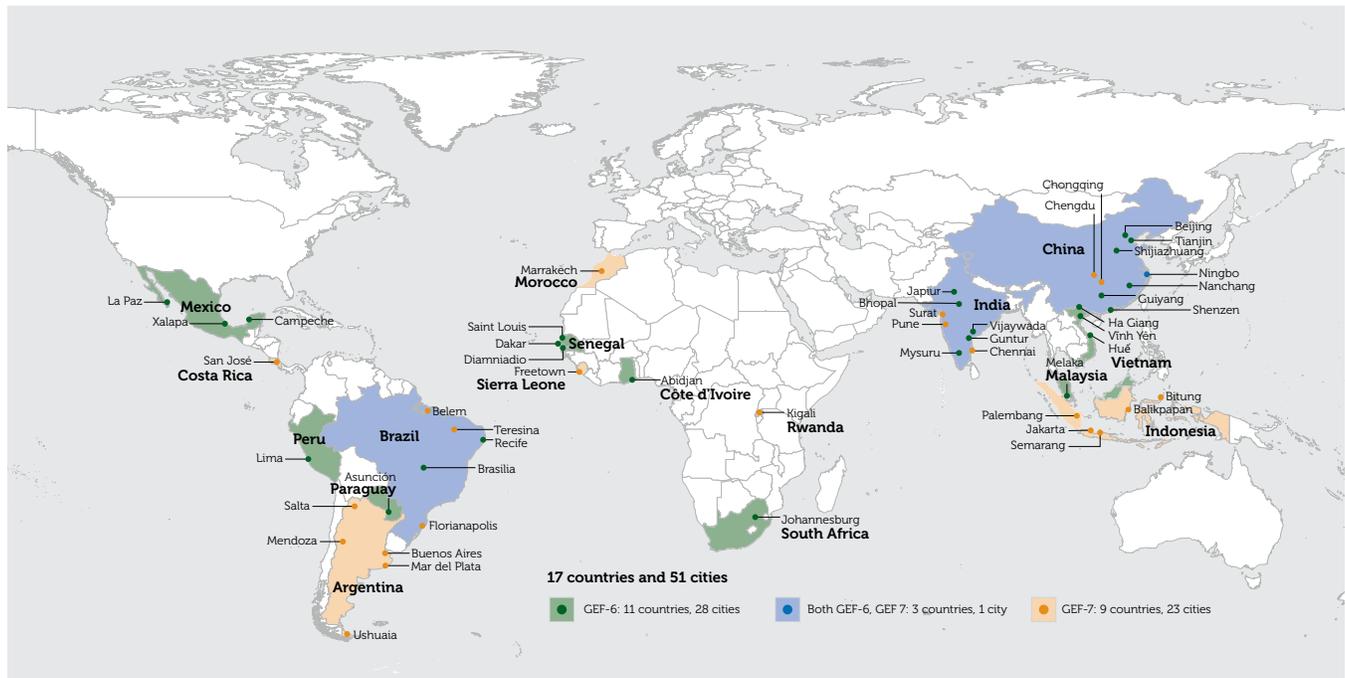
The program will be delivered through two interlinked components: 1) innovative implementation models for integrated sustainability solutions and investments in selected cities and countries; and 2) a global platform for knowledge exchange, learning, and fostering partnerships for raising ambition and on-the-ground action for sustainable cities, which for GEF-6 is facilitated through the **Global Platform for Sustainable Cities** and for GEF-7 as part of **UrbanShift**.

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.

Country and City-level Engagement

The program's 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 GEF's Sustainable Cities Program 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.

Geographical Coverage



Disclaimer: This map is for illustrative purposes and does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the Global Environment Facility, concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of frontiers or borders.

Global-level Engagement

The global platforms 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 platforms 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 program'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. Participating countries like Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, Rwanda, Brazil, and Argentina will develop digital mapping of cities to integrate land use plans, disaster risk reduction, and natural capital assessments. Several countries, including Senegal, Paraguay, China, 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, Argentina, Mexico, Senegal, South Africa and Vietnam focus on integrated waste management, whereas Argentina, Brazil, China, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Morocco, Rwanda and Paraguay focus on transport investment. 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 program 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 (Malaysia, Vietnam, India, Morocco and Indonesia); forge Public Private Partnerships (Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Malaysia and Rwanda); build diversified green investment portfolios (Brazil, Peru 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, Senegal, Peru, Paraguay, India 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 platforms 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

In total, the GEF's Sustainable Cities Program works with 51 cities across 17 countries, through 310 million USD in GEF grants, leveraging nearly 4 billion USD in co-financing. The program aims to reduce more than 250 million tons of GHG emissions and support sustainable management of nearly 1 million hectares in addition to climate resilience benefits and socio-economic benefits of vulnerable communities.

With the GEF-6 program in advanced stages implementation, cities are demonstrating innovative

pathways and achievements toward urban transformation. Highlights from the program portfolio include the following:

- A sustainable cities platform and a Sustainable City Innovation Observatory launched in Brazil to support integrated planning and replication of urban sustainability solutions with 214 municipalities as signatories.
- In Paraguay, participatory processes and co-design for promote sustainable mobility resulted in a 600 km bicycle network in Asunción, and clean-up of a 7.3 ha ecological reserve with 98,000 kg waste removed from informal dumpsites in the Banco San Miguel.
- South Africa is advancing the Eco-District approach with energy efficiency modeling now feeding into the Green Building Policy of Johannesburg, and over 600 emerging farmers and city officials trained in sustainable and organic farming to support sustainable food systems.
- In China, a national Transit-oriented Development platform is up and running, enabling knowledge sharing and boosting capacity development between participating cities and the wider industry.
- The Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) is now established as a global convening space for developing and sharing knowledge on integrated urban planning, and collaborates with experts and stakeholders on emerging urban sustainability issues such as impacts of COVID-19, green recovery, and bringing nature into cities.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established 30 years ago on the eve of the Rio Earth Summit to tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, it has provided more than **\$21.5 billion** in grants and mobilized an additional **\$117 billion** in co-financing for more than **5,000 projects** and programs. The GEF is the largest multilateral trust fund focused on enabling developing countries to invest in nature, and supports the implementation of major international environmental conventions including on biodiversity, climate change, chemicals, and desertification. It brings together 184 member governments in addition to civil society, international organizations, and private sector partners. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has provided support to more than 25,000 civil society and community initiatives in **135 countries**.

GEF implementing agencies and platforms participating in the Sustainable Cities Program:

