

# GEF 7 Sustainable Cities

Lessons learned – June 2022

## UNEP

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## Lessons from GEF 6 brought to GEF 7 design

Direct communication channel  
with participating cities

More emphasis on peer  
exchanges with non-SCIP cities

Stronger financial and private  
sector engagement component

More coordination between child  
projects and global platform

# What the cities platform will deliver on knowledge and capacity building

- **Webinar series:** 20 webinars ([6 delivered](#)) – highlighting local content, and providing simultaneous translations
- **City Academies:** 9 CA with regional participants and multiple tracks, content localization, local speakers and case studies, partners invited to present ([1 delivered in Kigali](#))
- **Finance Academies:** 9 FA around thematic clusters ([1 delivered virtually for African participants](#))
- **Online Self-paced Courses:** (under production, to be launched in 2023)
  - 1. Nature-based Solutions
  - 2. Circular Development Journey
  - 3. Accessing Urban Climate Finance
  - 4. Integrated & Sustainable Neighborhood Design
  - 5. Integrated Climate Action Planning
  - 6. Managing Urban Growth in the Global South
  - 7. Urban Biodiversity
- **Peer Exchanges:** 6 Global Peer Exchanges, opportunity for cities to learn directly from other cities that are leaders on a particular transformation
- **Labs:** 9 labs focusing on strategic planning topics identified at the local level ([1 delivered in San Jose](#))
- **Website** with library of resources: [shiftcities.org](https://shiftcities.org)
- **Newsletter:** quarterly newsletter to subscribers ([started in January 2022, 2 delivered](#))

# 1) What are key features and lessons learned from knowledge hubs/ platforms to be effective knowledge exchange tools

## **Delivery and communication**

- Have a two-layer approach with thematic areas that are globally relevant and localization of content during delivery
  - Regional events for relevance and opportunities for cross learning
  - Translations; local case studies, speakers, identification of local case studies by reg. coordinators to be highlighted in learning events and documents
  - Tailor some activities to very specific local demands and needs (Labs; geospatial analysis). Have very specific presentations on city issues has proven to be very popular
- Effective Capacity building requires resources assigned to pedagogical aspects of implementation: examples: interactive activities in face to face and online trainings; adequate presentation of materials for online courses. This needs to be planned and budgeted for.
- Having an excellent website and a well resourced communication strategy allows for the materials to reach their audience (good investment)
- Interactive training proves to be much more successful than traditional lecture style. Trainees like to share their thoughts and have discussions on topics. Participants like opportunities to present and highlight their experiences and ideas.

## **Governance and partnerships**

- City training must be demand driven, and this involves face to face conversations with city officials. The Regional Coordinators are proving to be an effective way to communicate with cities and help bridge a communication gaps between the global and country projects.
- Working with cities organisation and engaging them in their areas of strength has been very effective. The cities organisation have extensive networks, and for global reach they have tapped into their existing networks and relevant working groups to amplify reach.
- Through the PEG (Partnership Engagement Group) we have been able to engage with partners. For example We have used IUCN, TNC, IISD to enrich the Kigali event (and the project funded their participation)
- Advocacy events led by UNEP proved to be another fora to engage PEG members, including CCFLA and to support cities role and ambition in contributing to the 2030 SD agenda and Paris Agreement

## 2) What are key **challenges** and opportunities knowledge Platforms face?

- Universe of stakeholders participating in learning is very diverse (levels and skills sets). Pitching training at the right level and in the right way becomes increasingly complicated.
- Timing: child projects starting over a year later than the global project
  - The cities needs assessments have proven to be difficult to undertake, when the cities teams have not been appointed, and the global projects have already developed their knowledge products.
  - The global project is ready to deliver capacity and training, but the country projects are not ready to receive support – the global project is having to adjust to this reality.
  - Having the GEF 8 project start early to help with country project design, then this will exacerbate the disconnect in timing.
- Projects are often developed at the national level because its is the national level that controls GEF funding – and this can cause a disconnect with the city needs and ownership.
- Communications: we have developed communications protocols between the global and country project teams and but it has been difficult for the global project team to have direct contact with cities yet. This might improve as the child projects start, staff are hired, and trust is built.

### 3) How GEF can initiate further to capture, exchange, disseminate and apply programs level of knowledge and learning to GEF Partnerships and beyond

- We suggest the global project and country project start at the same time so there is 2 way communication in the country project design and global project design.
- Good communications requires a dedicated communications expert
- It is becoming a more standard approach to train remotely, and we should take advantage of this. MOOCS, interactive websites, etc.
- It is important to clarify who the beneficiaries are. Are the main beneficiaries the country projects (child projects) that join the programme. Should they include previous programme countries and non GEF Cities?