



Sustainable Cities Integrated Program

The Issue

Cities are growing at an unprecedented scale and pace, accounting for nearly 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Rapid urban sprawl is driving degradation of land and loss of biodiversity. Meanwhile, unsustainable consumption is causing a rapid increase in solid and toxic waste and pollution in cities.

Unplanned urban growth affects both the environment and urban populations, leading to increased vulnerability to climate extremes of flooding, heat waves, and sea level rise. In addition, it increases inequality in cities. Vulnerable urban communities are the most affected by environmental degradation and other stressors such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Opportunity

By 2050, cities are expected to host two-thirds of the global population. Therefore, they will be key economic systems for transformative actions to address environmental degradation and achieve the global climate change, nature, and sustainability goals. As naturally integrated systems and strategic hubs for innovation in technology, policies, and business models, cities bring many effective entry points for sustainable investments that can deliver large-scale global environmental benefits. They are showing strong political leadership toward sustainability with city networks, multi-stakeholder

platforms and other urban actors playing a critical role in scaling up their ambitions. Further catalytic support to cities can drive green and equitable growth in cities, which is key for healthy people and a healthy planet.

The Integrated Solution

The Sustainable Cities Integrated Program aims to advance integrated and systems-based approaches toward building net-zero carbon, nature-positive, inclusive, and climate-resilient cities. It will also focus on urban priorities, including the reduction of chemicals and waste, plastics, and air pollution as key co-benefits.

The program will work with countries and cities on the following strategic entry points:

1. Advancing integrated land use planning and governance to support institutional coordination at multiple levels, and catalyze integrated spatial approaches to scale up innovative sustainability solutions with strengthened collaboration between sectors.
2. Integrating nature into urban development and regional planning, demonstrating urban Nature-based Solutions and supporting enabling policy and regulatory environment to bring nature into cities.
3. Decarbonizing the built environment by supporting development of plans, policies, and strategies to design and implement solutions to decarbonize urban infrastructure, including buildings, energy, waste management, water and transportation systems.
4. Adopting circular economy approaches through policies and physical infrastructure targeting strategic entry points such as building materials, water and waste management, urban food systems, plastics, and industries.

5. Promoting innovative financing to increase flow of finance to cities to meet the sustainability financing gap, in collaboration with financial institutions, the private sector, and other institutional investors.

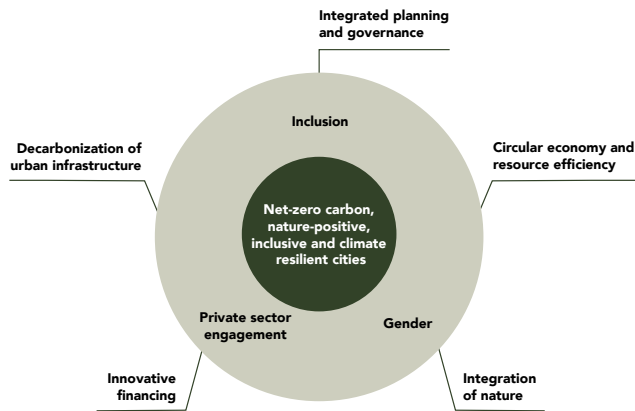


Figure 1: SC IP Key Entry Points

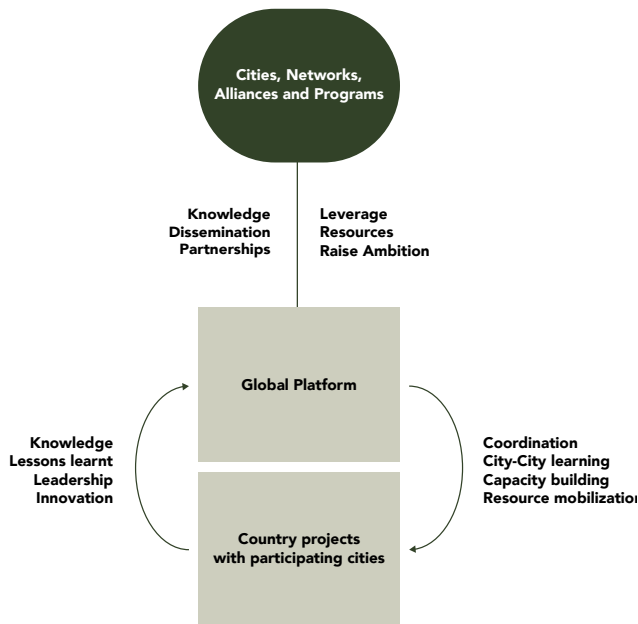


Figure 2: SC IP Implementation approach

These entry points will be supported by cross-cutting priorities of i) inclusion and environmental justice; ii) gender-inclusive approaches; and iii) private sector engagement at the global, national, and local levels.

The program will seek to deliver transformative results through its two interlinked components:

- A global platform—to catalyze knowledge creation and city-to-city learning, promote innovation and strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Country—and city—level interventions—to support cities and national governments in implementing integrated urban sustainability solutions in selected cities.

Expected Impacts

The program will enable cities in tackling key drivers of environmental degradation to deliver multiple global environmental benefits. This includes climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, reduced land degradation, and reduction of chemicals and waste. Its support to cities will result in improved land use planning, enabling policies, accelerated investments in nature and decarbonization, and capacity building of urban institutions. It will promote integration of gender, health, and inclusion to ensure equitable distribution of environmental benefits. The program will create a space for diverse stakeholders to collaborate and co-create innovative and impactful urban sustainability solutions. These could range from governments, city networks, and financial institutions to civil society and the private sector.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and strains on land and ocean health. Its grants, blended financing, and policy support helps developing countries address their biggest environmental priorities and adhere to international environmental conventions. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$22 billion and mobilized \$120 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 national and regional projects.

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