UN-Habitat SDG Cities Programme

Overview

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SDG Cities
Global Initiative

Why do cities matter in reaching the SDGs?

55% of all people on earth live in cities, and there will be 2.5 billion more urban residents by 2050

Poorly planned and managed cities degrade their surrounding environment, deepen social inequality, and exacerbate climate change

Well-planned, built and governed cities "can be massive agents of positive change" and generate economic opportunities. (New Urban Agenda)

The United Nations believes that "the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities."

Time is short. Exceptional efforts are needed by cities to meet the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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What solution does SDG Cities provide?

UN-Habitat has developed the SDG Cities program as a tool to help cities redouble their efforts to meet the SDGs.

Cities are awarded different levels of United Nations certification for their **exceptional efforts** to accelerate progress toward meeting global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

What is "*exceptional effort*" to meet the SDGs?

1. **Ambitious** targets are set to accelerate SDG achievement, and progress is measured

2. **Strategic plans** to meet SDG targets are drafted or updated

3. **City capacity** to deliver SDGs has been diagnosed & strengthened

4. **City has invested** in SDG initiatives with **measurable impact** on chosen SDG indicators

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Are there different levels of certification?

SDG City SILVER certification is awarded upon commitment to meet SDGs and completion of a baseline assessment to inform further action

SDG City GOLD certification is awarded upon evidence of a public plan outlining how SDG targets will be achieved

SDG City PLATINUM certification based on completing SDG capacity diagnostic of local institutions, and implementing capacity building measures in identified areas

SDG City DIAMOND certification is awarded for demonstrated progress towards SDG targets, or significant investment in projects with high impacts on SDG indicators

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How is the city supported?

UN-Habitat has developed a **model process** to provide guidance on how to create a city-specific SDG City certification process

The **Urban Monitoring Framework** provides a list of suggested SDG indicators and outlines requirements to develop custom suite of SDG indicators

Digital tools to assist with **stakeholder consultation, perception based data collection, strategic planning, urban management diagnostic and capacity developmen**t are being made available

Technical support (backstopping) **units** are being established to assist with digital tools and other SDG Cities steps

Inter-city learning communities will be established based on common goals and similar capacity development priorities

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Are there minimum standards for certification?

A City's SDG targets should be **globally aligned** and **sufficiently ambitious**. Both desired outcomes and city inputs toward achieving them are to be considered

SDG plans and initiatives must cover the domains of **Society, Economy, Environment, Culture,** and **Governance**

Indicators and targets must also jointly meet cross-cutting goals of **Inclusivity, Safety, Resiliency, and Sustainability**

All SDG plans, strategies, and reports must be **publicized**

City must make **exceptional** efforts to meet SDGs, specifically targeting excluded and marginalized groups ("leave no-one behind" principle)

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Who covers costs to participate?

SDG Cities program costs are mobilized from the **city itself** or **higher levels of government** in joint application with other cities

UN-Habitat encourages **partnerships** with academic, private sector, and civil society institutions who may be able to **contribute resources** for the program

When a city is onboarded, it will receive a letter outlining the resources it can expect from the national support hub (if any), as well as from UN-Habitat

![SDG Cities Global Initiative logo]

Why should cities join?

High visibility citizen and stakeholder involvement opportunities

Steer local policy dialogue toward **global sustainability goals**

Provide structured process for city staff to engage with or accelerate **action** to meet SDGs

Learn from other cities' experiences

Gauge **public buy-in** and **build support** for specific SDG initiatives

Stimulate higher levels of government & private sector interest and incentivize **investment** in high-impact initiatives to meet SDG targets

How does a city get onboard?

National governments, regional associations of cities or an individual city should provide UN-Habitat with an **expression of interest** to join the program

Cities discusses requirements and their **desired approach to certification** with UN-Habitat or a nationally established support hub

Once the approach is agreed, a City receives official acknowledgment of joining the program, including what support it can expect to receive

The city makes a public announcement of its intention to prioritize SDG achievement, to **'leave no-one behind'**, and to engage the city population in this process

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SILVER

COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING SDGS

Commitment to meet SDGs and baseline data collected to inform action

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GOLD

SDG PLANS ARE DEFINED

Public plan outlines how SDG targets will be achieved

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PLATINUM

STRENGTHENED LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Strengthened capacity to deliver on SDG plans

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DIAMOND

MEASURABLE IMPACT ON SDGS

Investments made to achieve SDG plans and SDG indicators have improved