



# SDG Cities



## Executive summary

The SDG Cities Global Initiative aims to support over 1000 cities to accelerate their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improve quality of life for all. It empowers cities in four tracks: data collection and analysis tools, strategic planning, institutional capacity development, and

investment in impact. It incorporates state of the art digital tools that are customized to country contexts and provides training and backstopping through national technical support hubs. It reaches scale through partnerships with city networks, UN Agencies, development banks, the private sector and other stakeholders.



## Project Description

The world continues to urbanize rapidly. Today, 55% of the global population lives in urban areas, and this is set to increase to 68% by 2050 as a further 2.3 billion people are added to the urban population. Cities now generate 80% of the world's economy, and most countries that have urbanized have experienced economic growth. Yet cities often generate high levels of greenhouse gases and often experience high levels of inequality. The United Nations claims that "the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities".

The New Urban Agenda shows how well planned and managed cities have great potential to accelerate the achievement of the Global Sustainable Development Goals and improve quality of life. The SDG Cities Global Initiative supports cities with a practical, systematic approach to achieving sustainable development and improving quality of life with interlinked processes of data collection and analysis, strategic planning, strengthening local institutional capacity and the financing projects that have a measurable impact on the SDGs. It has thus developed four tracks: The Data Track ensures that cities can easily generate baseline data on SDGs that can inform local action and incorporates statistical data, spatial data, and perception data.

The Strategic Planning Track ensures that data merges with community and stakeholder participation to generate

inclusive, strategic plans that mainstream SDGs and leave no-one and no place behind.

The Local Systems and Capacities Track strengthens local institutions in key drivers of governance; planning; sustainable finance and basic service delivery.

The Investment in Impact Track helps finance high impact projects by providing SDG assessment and financial preparation support and by matching them with sources of public and private finance through the Cities Investment Facility <https://citiesinvestmentfacility.org>.

SDG Cities aims to reach 1000 cities with a total population of 1 billion. Scale is achieved by providing cities with a user-friendly bank of digital tools on data management, institutional capacity diagnostic and self-paced learning, and access to the Cities Investment Facility. These equip cities to implement the four tracks and are accompanied with national technical support hubs that provide training and technical backstopping to participating cities at each stage. Efficiencies and economies of scale are reached by training cities and local institutions in groups that share similar capacity development needs. Moreover, where possible, common investment needs of cities are packaged at national levels where they can attract more competitive finance. SDG Cities recognizes exceptional progress of participating cities in driving SDG impact through SDG Cities Certification.



## Key asks - support to move to scale

Now with tools developed and piloted and a few national programmes underway, UN-Habitat seeks support to move to scale and reach the target of 1000 cities.

SDG Cities national or sub-national hubs typically start with a cohort of around 10 cities, which are expanded annually often through partnership with national local government associations. In Portugal for example, the Mafra hub will eventually serve 77 municipalities that are members of the National Associations of Portuguese Municipalities.

Furthermore, implementation windows are being developed with diverse partners. Currently a Women-Led Cities Initiative is being developed with a network of women-led companies and high net worth individuals. This aims to increase the proportion of women in local leadership, improve safety and living standards in cities and empower the role of women in the local economy. A Sports and Fitness-Friendly Cities initiative is being developed with the International Olympic Committee that mainstreams sports and recreation for all as an SDG driver. SDG Cities is also ready to partner with global and regional networks of cities and is exploring how to work with faith communities.



## Preliminary proposed locations

SDG Cities is a global initiative that targets initial 900 cities around the world from 2020 to 2030 with the possibility to impact over 1 billion people, with a focus on Least Developing, Low- and Middle-Income countries, in line with the significant global demand for this initiative.

While the initiative will target national representative samples of major, intermediary and small cities, the initiative will periodically run thematic calls for participation, including on mega-cities, climate vulnerable cities, crisis affected cities, etc. These will inform the development of focused normative products.

*This flagship programme will work with cities, other levels of government, communities, business sector and development partners to connect the value chain of data; evidence-based policy; capacity in governance, planning and financing; and, impact investments, to accelerate the achievement of SDGs in cities.*



## Partnerships

This flagship Programme ensures the engagement of civil society, academia, private sector, capital funds and other stakeholders in the development of city strategic plans and project identification. It engages also the World Bank and other development banks.

Partnership with United Cities and Local Governments as well as regional associations of Local and Regional governments

will be key, as well as close collaboration with UNDP, UNOPS, Global Compact and other UN agencies engaged in the pilot phase of the Local 2030 initiative, and networks engaged in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (Mercociudades, Alliance Smart Cities, World Enable,



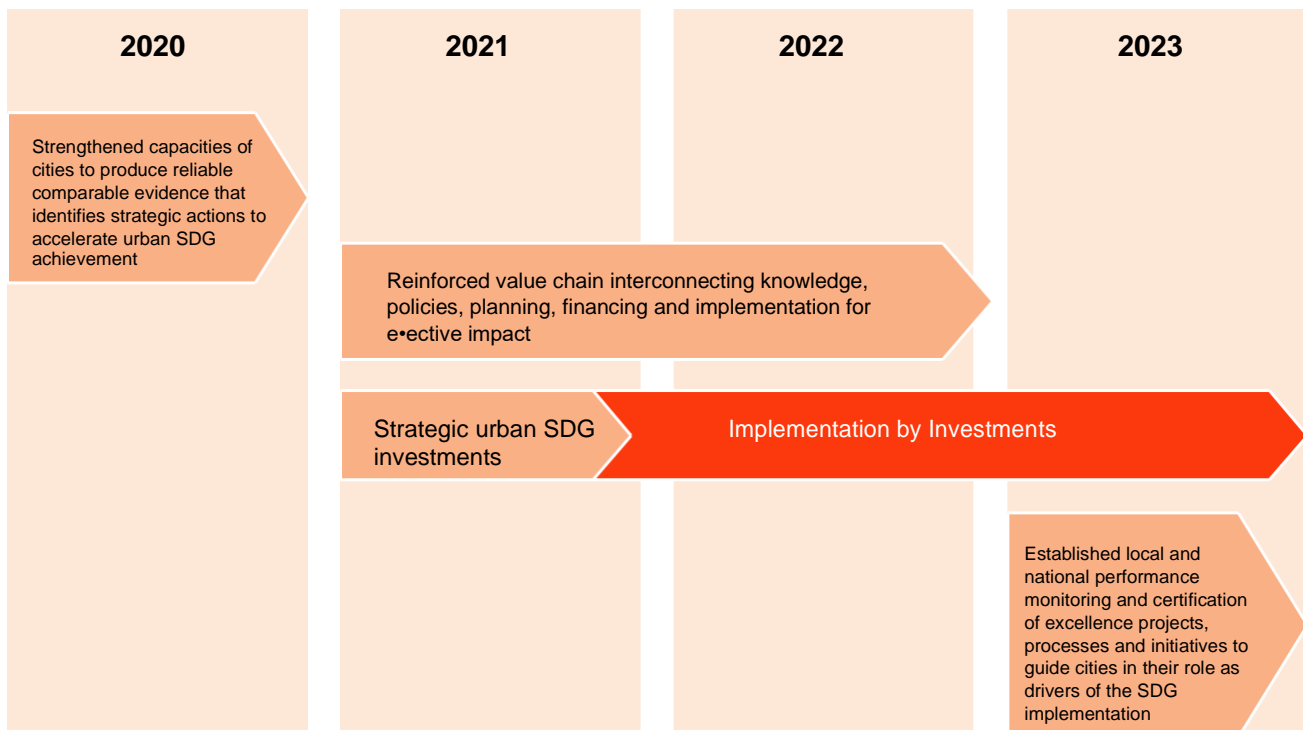
## Phasing and milestones

The 10-year flagship initiative will be launched during WUF 10 in February 2020. The first phase, from 2020-23 aims to directly engage 300 cities in 25 countries, across Africa, Latin America, Asia and Arab States, including least developed countries, low income and middle-income countries, major and secondary cities.

Through structured knowledge transfer which links directly participating cities to at least two others, 300 additional cities in 25 countries will be engaged by 2026. Between 2027-2030 an additional 100 cities will be onboarded per

year, so that by 2030, 900 cities in over 100 countries will have participated directly in the programme and through the knowledge transfer mechanism described.

Assuming an average city population of 1.5 million, by 2030 the programme anticipates having impacted a population of 1 billion people. Furthermore, since lessons learnt, methodologies, policies, project descriptions, Standard Operating Procedures etc. will be posted on the New Urban Agenda platform, a higher global impact can be expected.





Aerial view of Skolavordustigur street and Midborg district of Reykjavik city, Iceland @Shutterstock



## Budget

SDG Cities has different models to facilitate countries at different income and development levels to accelerate their SDG achievement.

Level of Country	Approach	Scale	Cost
Low/ lower-middle Income Country	National technical support hub staffed by UN nationally recruited experts and trained by UN-Habitat, which are later embedded into national institutions	Year 1: 10 cities Year 3: 15 cities Year 5: 25 cities	1 million/year
Middle income country	National technical support hub staffed by seconded experts from local governments and academia and trained by UN-Habitat	Year 1: 10 cities Year 3: 15 cities Year 5: 25 cities	0.25 million/year
Upper middle income/high income country	National technical support hub staffed by seconded experts from local governments and academia and trained by UN-Habitat	Year 1: 10 cities Year 3: 15 cities Year 5: 25 cities	UN-Habitat costs covered by host

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