



UN-HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME  
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya  
unhabitat-info@un.org | www.unhabitat.org

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## PRESS RELEASE

# Cities worldwide invited to join Quality of Life Initiative

*Local governments called to join more than 50 cities in groundbreaking initiative to transform the quality of life for all and advance the Agenda 2030*

**Nairobi, 23 April 2025** – The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is inviting cities worldwide to express their interest in joining the Quality of Life Initiative, a global effort to enhance urban well-being through a new and ground-breaking approach to data-driven measurement and action. The Initiative, sponsored by the Quality of Life programme in Saudi Arabia and implemented by UN-Habitat, has piloted the development of a novel index in 10 cities around the world and has expanded to include more than 50 cities from 30 countries, with the aim of formally partnering with 100 local governments by the end of 2025.

The open call for cities worldwide runs from **23 April to 4 June 2025**. Selected cities will be notified on an ongoing basis throughout 2025. Local, provincial, and regional governments interested in joining the Quality of Life Initiative can submit an expression of interest via the online platform: [www.qolimpact.com/register](http://www.qolimpact.com/register).

By adopting the Quality of Life Index, local and regional governments can gain a powerful tool to measure and improve well-being in their communities through metrics that respond to global imperatives as well as local contextual needs, with a focus on what people value most. By leveraging cutting-edge data sources such as satellite imagery, mobile data, and social media surveys, cities gain dynamic, actionable insights to inform sustainable urban policies and decisions like never before. Joining the community of global cities offers further exchange and cooperation opportunities to scale impact.

“To build sustainable cities, we urgently need urban policies grounded in evidence. Measuring and monitoring through a quality-of-life lens builds on the work of the UN’s Local2030 Coalition and offers a powerful pathway to improve cities, where people live and where our shared future will unfold,” said UN-Habitat Executive Director Anacláudia Rossbach. “It is important to support cities and local governments to address compounded challenges faced by cities and improve the well-being of people and communities, including 2.8 billion people affected by the global housing crisis, especially 1.1 billion people currently living in informal settlements and slums.”

The Quality of Life Index provides a holistic framework to assess urban well-being across nine key domains: basic services and mobility, culture and recreation, economy, education, environment, governance, health and well-being, housing, and social cohesion. The Index integrates advanced data sources such as satellite imagery, social media surveys, and mobile data to deliver dynamic, actionable insights tailored to each city on a bespoke Platform. Uniquely, this is combined with people-focused assessments and engagement to determine and respond effectively to the well-being priorities of people.

Four key pillars are integral to the Initiative's unique approach:

- **Reflecting subjective experience in cities** – Capturing residents' perspectives to shape urban policies.
- **Creating a globally relevant, locally applicable Index** – Balancing universal indicators with locally chosen priorities.
- **Disaggregating data to foster inclusive policies** – Enabling targeted interventions that reduce inequalities.
- **Harnessing new and innovative data** – Leveraging AI, real-time analytics, and alternative data sources to support foresight and evidence-based decision-making.

For more information on the Quality of Life Initiative and how to participate, please visit [www.qolimpact.com/register](http://www.qolimpact.com/register).

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### **About the Quality of Life Initiative**

Implemented by UN-Habitat and sponsored by the Quality of Life programme, the Quality of Life Initiative is a global project transforming how cities understand and improve urban well-being by harnessing human-centred data to capture what people truly value. The Initiative invites cities to undertake an assessment of their residents' quality of life to identify key areas for monitoring and improvement. By going beyond numbers and using an inclusive approach, the Initiative empowers people to pioneer a better future by providing new insights and knowledge to create more resilient, compassionate, and thriving communities. This innovative approach paves the way for a more inclusive future, where multiple dimensions of quality of life are brought to light, driving improvements in urban governance, design, and investment.

### **About UN-Habitat**

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [unhabitat.org](http://unhabitat.org) or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

### **Media contacts for more information**

#### **Kathleen Sullivan**

Senior Communications Lead  
Quality of Life Initiative  
UN-Habitat  
[kathleen.sullivan@un.org](mailto:kathleen.sullivan@un.org)

### **NOTE TO EDITORS:**

### **Frequently Asked Questions about the Quality of Life Initiative**

**1. What is the Quality of Life Initiative?** The Quality of Life Initiative is a global program implemented by UN-Habitat and sponsored by the Quality of Life Program in Saudi Arabia. It provides cities with an innovative measurement tool, the Quality of Life Index, for cities to

assess and enhance urban well-being using data-driven insights.

**2. What is the Global Call for Cities?** The Global Call invites local, provincial, and regional governments to express their interest in joining the Initiative. The goal is to scale up participation to 100 cities across 40 countries by the end of 2025.

**3. What cities are part of the Quality of Life Initiative?** This year's expansion follows the successful onboarding of more than 50 new cities that have recently joined the Initiative, including but not limited to:

- **Agadir, Morocco**
- **Al Khobar, Dammam Metropolitan Region, Saudi Arabia**
- **Amman, Jordan**
- **Baguio City, Philippines**
- **Braga, Portugal**
- **Buenos Aires, Argentina**
- **Cali, Colombia**
- **Manchester, United Kingdom**
- **Nilüfer, Turkey**
- **Tbilisi, Georgia**

These cities join a growing global network committed to measuring and improving urban well-being, building on the experiences of 10 pilot cities that joined in 2024, including Logan, Australia; Madinah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Niš, Serbia; Querétaro, Mexico; and Vancouver, Canada, which have completed their local indicators selection and data collection; as well as Bhubaneshwar, India; Kampala, Uganda; Punuaaia, French Polynesia; Quito, Ecuador; and Udon Thani, Thailand.

**4. Why should cities participate?** Cities that join the Initiative gain:

- Access to a globally recognized Quality of Life Index tailored to their needs
- Data-driven insights to inform inclusive urban policies
- Technical support and capacity-building resources
- Opportunity to leverage innovative objective and subjective data on quality of life
- Opportunities for peer learning and international visibility
- Recognition on the Quality of Life Initiative Platform
- Opportunity to benefit from unique UN-Habitat sponsorship offer for quality of life data collection (see below)

**5. What does the Quality of Life Index measure?** The Index evaluates various objective and subjective dimensions of quality of life and urban well-being in cities, across nine key domains:

- Basic services & mobility
- Culture & recreation
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Governance
- Health & well-being
- Housing

- Social cohesion

**6. Who can apply?** Local, provincial, and regional governments in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas are eligible to apply.

**7. How can a city apply?** Interested governments must:

1. Complete the online sign-up form on the Quality of Life Platform:  
[www.qolimpact.com/register](http://www.qolimpact.com/register)
2. Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with UN-Habitat
3. Commit to developing the Quality of Life Index within their city

**8. What is the deadline for applications?** The application period runs from **23 April to 4 June 2025**.

**9. How can cities join?** Cities need to express their interest in joining through an online sign-up form and sign a Memorandum of Understanding to reflect their ability to implement the Index, which includes:

- Readiness to implement the Quality of Life Index
- Capacity to procure and collect data

**10. When will selected cities be notified?** Cities will be notified on the status of their application on an on-going basis.

**11. What happens after a city has joined?** Cities will:

- Receive onboarding support from UN-Habitat to sign MoU
- Follow the [Implementation Guidelines](#)
- Host the Local Layer workshop
- Begin data collection for global and local layer indicators
- Data verification, upload and analysis
- Key findings and insights from Quality of Life metrics are used to enhance urban policies and planning

**12. Is there financial or technical support available?** Yes. All cities will benefit from technical assistance throughout Index implementation. In addition, UN-Habitat will provide sponsorship for global layer data collection for selected local governments.

**13. How are sponsorship recipients selected?** Sponsorship will be granted to up to 30 selected cities on a first-come, first-served basis, with no more than five cities per country receiving support. The selection process will ensure diversity based on city size, location, and data capacity.

**14. How does the work of the Quality of Life Initiative connect to SDG Localization and the UN Local2030 Coalition?**

The Quality of Life Initiative builds on UN-Habitat's leadership in the Local2030 Coalition, advancing local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through evidence-based decision-making. By integrating SDG-aligned metrics with locally defined priorities, the Initiative offers cities a practical tool for SDG localization. The Quality of Life Index

serves as a bridge between global goals and local realities, supporting inclusive, data-driven urban transformation. This approach reinforces UN-Habitat's commitment to empowering local governments to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

UN-Habitat has been at the forefront of **SDG Localization** since the inception of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through the SDG Cities Global Initiative, we support cities with an integrated approach that strengthens data systems, enhances evidence-based decision-making, and builds implementation capacity to accelerate local progress on the SDGs.

In parallel, through the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs, we assist countries in developing National SDG Localization Frameworks, which are comprehensive sets of national policies, governance mechanisms, initiatives, and resources that enable coordinated action between national and local governments, as well as communities to accelerate the localization of the SDGs. The Partnership Platform works in close synergy with the SDG Cities Initiative and in collaboration with the Italian Environmental Bilateral Cooperation, aligning with and contributing to the mission, principles, and workplan of the Local2030 Coalition.