Seizing the Urban Opportunity

A 3-step guide for strengthening Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 3.0



Title: Seizing the Urban Opportunity: A 3-step framework for strengthening NDC 3.0

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Project Acknowledgements:

Coordinators: Lea Ranalder (UN-Habitat); Nicola Tolin (University of Southern Denmark)

Authors: Lea Ranalder (UN-Habitat); Nicola Tolin (University of Southern Denmark); Patrizia Gragnani (University of Southern Denmark); Patrick Geoghegan (UN-Habitat)

Reviewers: Yunus Arikan (ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability); Bernhard Barth (UN-Habitat); Emilie Becault (CDP); Jean-Baptiste Buffet (United Cities and Local Governments); Agathe Cavicchioli (Global Covenant of Mayors); Ariel Dekovic (ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability); Martine De Zoeten (UN-Habitat); Amanda (Mandy) Entrikin (Habitat for Humanity); Andrea Fernandez (C40 Cities); Rodrigo Führ (ABM); Clarissa Graf (UN-Habitat); Marie Hartmann (UNEP); Meremiya Hussein (UN-Habitat); Nanor Karageozian (UN-Habitat); Urszula Kasperek (C40 Cities); Kenichi Kitamura (UNFCCC); Alina Koschmieder (UN-Habitat); Elsa Lefevre (UNEP); Governments); Amanda McKee (NDC Partnership Support Unit); Martino Miraglia (UN-Habitat); Monique Nardi (UNFCCC); Rebecca Ochong (Habitat for Humanity Matthijs van Oostrum (UN-Habitat); Habin Park (UN-Habitat); Dora Petroula (Global Covenant of Mayors); Ian Ponce (UNFCCC); Gulnara Roll (UNEP); Puja Sawhney (Habitat for Humanity); Asif Shah (Global Covenant of Mayors); Nadia Shah Naidoo (World Resources Institute); Shipra Narang Suri (UN-Habitat); Cassie Sutherland (C40 Cities); Philip Turner (UITP); Rafael Tuts (UN-Habitat); Maryke van Staden (ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability); Carolina Urrutia (C40 Cities); Sebastien Vauzelle (Local2030 Coalition); James Vener (UNDP); Mirjam Wolfrum (CDP); Edlam Abera

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We thank the UNESCO Chair of Urban Resilience at the University of Southern Denmark for the access to the urban content of the NDCs database.







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SDU.Resilience is a research group involved in transdisciplinary research, education and knowledge transfer on urban resilience in Denmark and internationally. The activities of SDU. Resilience focus on resilient transitions, systemically integrating disaster risk reduction, development and climate change in urban areas. SDU.Resilience research informs policymaking at national and international levels and supports science-based urban planning and design for local action in both the global North and global South.

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Message from the **Executive Director**

Urban areas are where many of today's challenges converge, from inadequate housing and basic services to growing exposure to floods, heat, and sea level rise. But they are also where solutions are abundant. Cities are spaces of innovation and leadership, where governments, communities, and practitioners are implementing solutions and responses that connect climate action with daily realities. This potential remains underrepresented in many national climate plans, but countries have a clear chance to close that gap.

As countries prepare to update their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), this moment offers an opportunity to define how climate action is delivered - and for whom. This is a moment to define how climate action reaches people's lives through local action, not only reducing emissions, but building futures that are more inclusive, more resilient, and more responsive to local needs.

This report is a step-by-step guide to help countries assess, prepare, and co-design stronger national climate plans that place local realities at the core. It provides the necessary tools for national governments and partners working to better reflect urban realities and solutions in climate planning and action. This is essential to tackle interrelated challenges in urban contexts in particular the global housing crisis affecting 2.8 billion people worldwide. How we plan and manage our cities, including the delivery of housing, land and basic services, has a major impact on climate action and NDCs.

The COP30 Presidency has called on the entire United Nations system to join a global movement -Mutirão – a Brazilian term grounded in indigenous knowledge that describes collective action, where diverse people come together to work toward a common goal. The spirit of solidarity, innovation, and bold collective action can define this NDC cycle. If embraced, Mutirão can help turn COP30 into a true turning point, where all levels of governments act together to make people's lives more sustainable and resilient.

UN-Habitat stands ready to support national governments in increasing the participation of cities in climate action planning and implementation. By advancing multilevel partnerships and incorporating more urban components into their Nationally Determined Contributions, countries can significantly raise their climate ambitions and drive transformative change for the communities most affected by the climate crisis.



Anacláudia Rossbach Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Executive summary and purpose of this guide

The world remains off track to meet both the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the impacts of climate change intensify, the urgency to close the ambition and implementation gaps grows. It is now widely acknowledged that achieving climate and sustainable development outcomes requires integrated, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. This means aligning efforts across ministries and levels of government - national, regional, and local - while also engaging a broad range of non-state actors, including the private sector, civil society, academia, indigenous peoples, and youth. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) play a central role in this effort - not only as high-level political commitments under the Paris Agreement but also as strategic vehicles to translate ambition into concrete, actionable national policy frameworks. In the context of this guide, strengthened NDCs can accelerate local development goals including access to housing, land and urban basic services.

As countries prepare to submit their third-round **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** in 2025, attention is turning toward the national review processes that will determine how climate commitments are translated into effective action. These processes offer a critical opportunity to recalibrate ambition, align policy instruments, and ensure institutional readiness for implementation. Within this context, urban climate action - and the strategic inclusion of cities in NDC formulation and operationalization - emerges as a key lever for both raising ambition and strengthening implementation outcomes.

Cities and climate action - the case for increasing urban content (see Chapter 1): Given the central role of cities, urban climate action is critical to achieving national climate goals (see World Cities Report 2022, 2024; IPCC AR6 2023)1. Cities drive global emissions, accounting for over 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). At the same time, urban populations and urban assets are deeply impacted by the consequences of climate change. While this convergence presents highly specific challenges, it also means that cities hold the greatest potential for impactful solutions. However, without explicit recognition in the NDCs through well-developed urban content, their contribution to national climate action remains suboptimal.

Taking stock - urban content of the second generation NDCs 2.0 (see Chapter 2): Building on previous analyses (2017, 2020, 2022), the 2024 iteration of the Urban Content of NDCs report (UN-Habitat, UNDP, SDU, 2024) finds that 73 per cent of NDCs still contain no, low, or only moderate urban content. This hinders climate action and creates a bottleneck for resource allocation to projects addressing critical mitigation and adaptation challenges (CDP 2025). This gap highlights a significant opportunity for policymakers to create a more cohesive policy environment by strengthening the urban content of NDCs, which can, in turn, unlock urban opportunities and support effective multilevel climate action.

The intention of this guide is to provide both highlevel insights and a practical methodology for

¹ Throughout this guide, 'urban' refers not only to established cities but also to growing urban areas, secondary cities, and peri-urban municipalities - many of which are ntral to national development trajectories and vulnerable to climate impacts.

enhancing urban content in NDC 3.0. It translates global best practices and analytical insights into a structured, multilevel process that enables national and subnational actors to work together in designing robust, actionable NDCs.

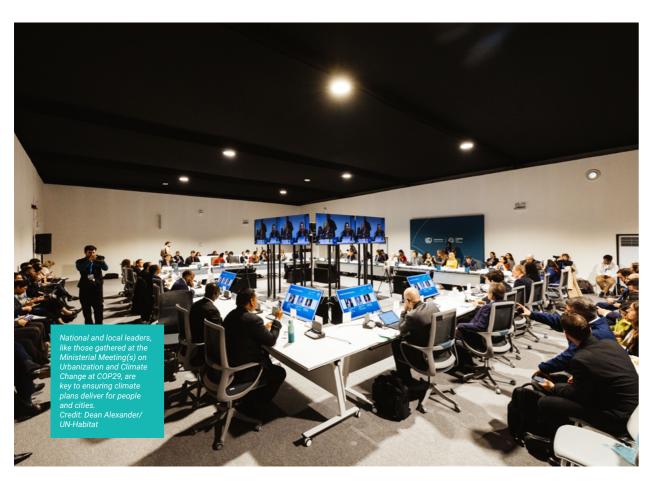
This guide outlines three actionable steps to support countries in developing high-scoring, implementation-ready urban content in their NDCs 3.0 (detailed guidance is provided in Chapter 3).

- (1) **ASSESS** take stock of urban content in the second-generation NDC and the wider policy environment, including mapping out national and subnational policies and the current state of multilevel partnerships.
- (2) **PREPARE** identify key relationships, strengthen multilevel governance structures and have structured consultations to align national and local climate priorities to help prepare for the design phase.

(3) **CO-DESIGN** - co-develop a robust and actionable NDC with strong urban content by

- Establishing a strong urban baseline: ensure that cities' contributions to both mitigation and adaptation are adequately reflected.
- · Identify challenges: ensure that the NDC identifies mitigation and adaptation challenges across key urban sectors.
- List the responses: list the actions that are being taken at the urban level that address these challenges, with actions to be identified in as many sectors as possible.
- Securing the means of implementation: include critical enables (finance, technology and capacity building) to ensure that commitments are actionable.

The figure on pages 10-11 provides an overview of the 3-step framework for strengthening urban content. It highlights key actions within each step and provides a scoring framework developed through the global assessment of NDCs (UN-



Habitat, UNDP, SDU, 2024). These are further explained in chapter 5. Together, these elements offer a practical roadmap for national and subnational actors to co-develop more coherent. inclusive, and implementation-ready NDCs.

Target audience: This guide is designed for national policymakers, subnational governments and city leaders, civil society organizations, and communities seeking to actively engage in the NDC process, as well as experts facilitating such processes. By outlining clear steps for integrating urban action into national climate strategies - in particular, the NDCs - the guide supports evidence-based policymaking, multilevel and multistakeholder governance, stronger urban resilience planning and net-zero pathways.

Building on momentum - the road to COP30 (see Chapter 4): Given the crucial role of cities in the fight against climate change, and the global

significance of COP30, it is more important than ever to carve out a central role for cities and urban actors. The time for addressing the urban content gap, therefore, is now. Global initiatives like CHAMP, the Baku Continuity Coalition, and the SURGe initiative² are driving global recognition of the critical role local governments and cities play in tackling climate change. National governments can build on this momentum by strengthening the urban content of their NDCs, engaging with urban stakeholders, and leveraging cities as key action areas to achieve their climate targets.

How to use this guide: this guide can be used by NDC preparation teams in national governments in the NDC revision process and to guide ongoing implementation (and future revisions). UN-Habitat, as well as many other partners, can support member states in this endeavour, providing virtual or in-person technical and facilitation support as well as further resources (see Chapter 4 and 5).

These initiatives are explained in greater detail in chapter 4.

TABLE 1 How to use this guide

Stage of NDC revision Activities to make use of this guide

Planning NDC 2025 revision process (e.g. submission to COP30)

- · Use guide to review previous/draft NDC and identify gaps and opportunities
- Use guide to review national planning processes (e.g. check alignment with NUPs, existing city plans, financing opportunities etc.)
- · Plan/implement sectoral workshops with lead Ministries focusing on the urban dimension of sectoral NDC responses
- · Secure support of an urban specialist to 'champion' issues as part of sectoral working groups
- · Reach out to international partners (e.g. NDCP members) to support in specific technical areas or facilitation support
- Share guide along with schedule of upcoming NDC process to urban stakeholders at national and local level

Submitted 2025 NDC revision, ongoing implementation (and future revisions)

- · Review the submitted NDC and consider opportunities in light of:
- NDC implementation plans: identifying relevant commitments and actors
- · Future NDC revisions: identifying gaps and opportunities
- · Extend communication of NDC to urban stakeholders at the national and local level

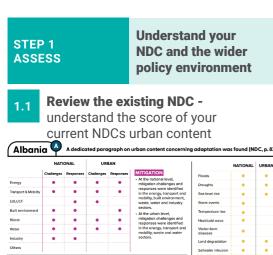
Adapted from "Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions through Urban Climate Action" (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Snapshot: A 3-step guide for strengthening urban content in NDCs 3.0

STEP 2

PREPARE

For a detailed overview of this process, please refer to pages 23-47.



Identify key relationships

- and existing multilevel governance structures and prepare for the design phase
- Identify key relationships reach out to subnational governments and key urban networks to establish potential partnerships
- **Develop a structured consultation** process to align national and local climate priorities
- Align data and reporting mechanisms to produce the information needed for the design phase
- Map related national
- and subnational policies - to understand the wider policy environment
- **Assess the current** state of multilevel partnerships
- Review and evaluate implementation capacity at the local level

How strong is your NDC's urban **content?** This scoring system rates each NDC from A to C based on how well it covers urban baselines, challenges, and responses. The map shows how countries perform — helping you see where yours stands.



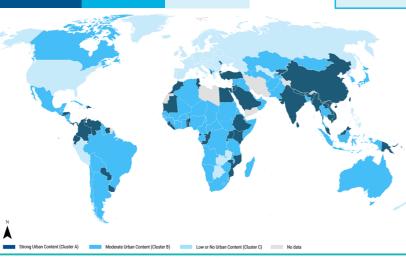
LOW urban content by the NDC

urban content is defined by the NDC including **no** including one parts: baseline challenges and challenges and

NO

If the means of in cities is included, a plus sign will be added to the rating (e.g. A+, B+, C+)

BONUS



Note: While the 2024 report scored from A to C, this report includes addition scoring categories

STEP 3 **CO-DESIGN**

Co-develop a robust and actionable NDC with strong urban content

Establish the baseline: A clear urban baseline ensures that cities' contributions to both MITIGATION and

ADAPTATION are accurately reflected in NDCs.

MITIGATION Urban GHG emission and planned emissions reduction

	Current GHG emissions	Planned GHG reduc- tions
Include the urban level in your current greenhouse gas emissions and planned emission reduc- tions across multiple sectors – see p. 38-41	•	•

ADAPTATION: Urban Climate risks

	Exposure	Vulnera- bility	Loss and damage
Include the impacts of climate change on your cities. List current and future risks at the urban level, including the hazard, who is exposed and vulnerabilities. See p. 42-45 for a full list.	•	•	•
		\	

Identify challenges: Ensure that your NDC identifies specific **MITIGATION** and **ADAPTATION** challenges faced at the city level and across the different sectors.

Sector Ensure that your NDC specifies mitigation challenges - and the actions that can be taken to respond to them. Challenges

and responses can be across a

variety of urban sectors. See p.

Sector

Ensure that your NDC specifies

and responses can be across a variety of urban sectors. See p.

adaptation challenges - and

the actions that can be taken to respond to them. Challenges

38-41 for all sectors

42-45 for all sectors

List the responses: List the actions that are being taken at the urban level that address these challenges - actions should be identified in as many sectors as possible.

Challenges | Responses

Challenges Responses

Urban MITIGATION challenges and responses

Urban ADAPTATION challenges and responses

Means of Implementation: Include critical enablers for your NDCs 3.0 to ensure that your urban commitments are actionable.

Means of implementation Fi- Tech- Ca-

	nance	nology	paci
Identify finance, technology and capacity building needs to implement mitigation and adaptation actions at the urban level. See p. 46	•	•	•
	١.		

Total urban content included out of Baseline, Challenges, Responses	Rat of N	ting IDC	Bonus if implementation is included
3/3 actions	Α	STRONG	A+
2/3 actions	В	MODERATE	B+
1/3 actions	С	LOW	C+
0/3 actions	-	No urban content	-

Cities and climate action in the NDCs

The world is entering a decisive decade for both climate action and sustainable development.

Current trajectories indicate that we remain alarmingly off course to meet global climate targets. The UNFCCC's 2023 Synthesis Report finds that existing national climate pledges, even if fully implemented, would lead to a 2.5-2.9°C rise in global temperatures by the end of the target. Meanwhile, the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report reveals that only 15 per cent of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are on track, with nearly half showing moderate to severe deviation and several experiencing outright regressions.

This dual shortfall signals a mounting polycrisis: an accelerating convergence of climate change, inequality, biodiversity loss, and geopolitical instability that is testing the resilience of global systems. Climate shocks are amplifying social vulnerabilities, undermining food security, displacing populations, and disrupting economic stability, with the most vulnerable hit the hardest. century - far exceeding the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C At the same time, unequal access to basic services and entrenched development gaps are weakening the capacity of countries and communities to respond effectively.

> Climate and development agendas cannot be pursued in isolation. The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

FIGURE 1 Cities are where global climate priorities and crisis converge and compound



Source: UN-Habitat Credit: Nelson Antoine/Adobe Stock



are fundamentally interlinked, and their success depends on integrated, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that mobilise action across sectors, levels, and communities. In this context, cities are emerging as critical arenas for translating ambition into tangible outcomes. The upcoming third-round NDC submissions, alongside the global momentum toward COP30, offer a critical opportunity to systematically integrate cities into national climate strategies and translate ambition into scalable, actionable outcomes.

1.1 The role of cities in climate action

"Cities are where the climate battle will be largely won or lost" -Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

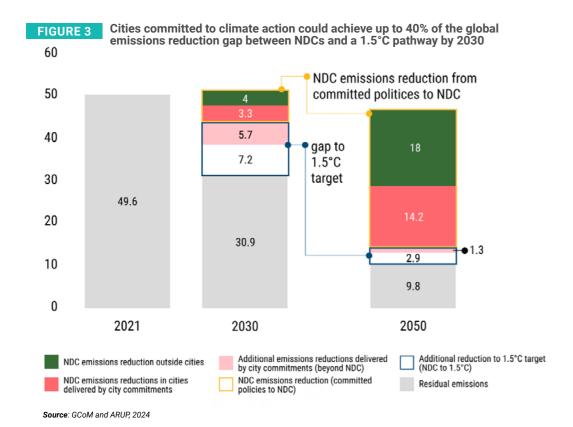
Cities are where global climate priorities and crisis
Greenhouse gas emissions from cities can be **converge and compound.** They consume up to 78 per cent of the world's energy and account for nearly 70 per cent of global CO₂ emissions (IPCC AR6, 2023). At the same time, cities are home to

more than half of the global population - a share projected to rise to nearly 70 per cent by 2050.

Among them, approximately 1 billion people live in slums or informal settlements, representing around 20 per cent of the global urban population. In many cases, inadequate housing, insecure tenure, and limited access to basic services directly exacerbate exposure and vulnerability to climate risks. These risks are already hitting cities hard: up to 70 per cent are experiencing climate impacts (The State of Cities Climate Finance, 2021), with rising heat, flooding, and water stress placing millions at risk - particularly those in low-income and informal settlements (see figure 1). Without urgent action, these challenges will only intensify.

Yet, while cities are a major driver of emissions and are vulnerable to climate risk, they also hold the greatest potential for solutions.

reduced by almost 90 per cent by 2050 using technically feasible, widely available mitigation measures such as retrofitting existing buildings, financing urban greening projects, switching to low-



carbon technologies or electrifying public transport (IPCC AR6, 2023).

Based on current near-term targets and current NDCs, cities committed to climate action could achieve up to 40 per cent of the global emissions reduction gap between NDCs and a 1.5°C pathway by 2030 (GCoM and ARUP, 2024). Figure 3 shows the overall emissions footprint and projected emissions reductions that could be accounted for, based on reported city targets and current NDCs. It reinforces the potential that collaboration between national and subnational governments in the NDC preparation process offers.

From an adaptation perspective, urban areas are increasingly utilising nature-based solutions, such as urban greening projects, to enhance resilience against climate impacts like flooding and heat waves (IPCC AR6, 2023). The concentration of people, infrastructure, and innovation within cities makes them uniquely positioned to scale transformative climate action and places them at the frontline of adaptation and mitigation.

Beyond their climate relevance, cities are also where the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) **converge.** It is estimated that two-thirds of the 169 SDG targets underlying the 17 SDGs cannot be achieved without meaningful engagement and coordination with local and regional governments (OECD, 2023). As hubs of population, innovation, and governance, cities are critical to advancing global priorities on poverty reduction, health, education, equality, and environmental protection. In particular, SDG 11 - to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable - provides a dedicated framework for urban transformation and serves as a linchpin for achieving the broader 2030 Agenda.

1.2: Urbanized NDCs - an instrument for climate action

NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement. Updated every 5 years, they describe the commitments and actions of each Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)¹, and stand as an overarching

policy document for climate change. They provide the framework on how a country coordinates efforts to lower emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, alongside implementation strategies and timeframes to achieve these goals. The aim is to increase ambition with each new NDC iteration, taking into consideration each country's specific circumstances, capabilities and priorities.

NDCs are more than just climate pathways.

They translate the international climate goals of the Paris Agreement into concrete targets and measures. They can help governments identify priority actions across all sectors, align policies and legislation accordingly, and invest in crucial areas. Critically, NDCs also offer a platform to create synergies between development needs and climate imperatives, making visible the ways in which action in one domain can accelerate progress in another. For example, addressing the global housing gap - a growing development priority - must go hand in hand with climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. Housing strategies that prioritize energy efficiency, resilient construction, and sustainable urban planning can simultaneously reduce emissions, strengthen climate resilience. and advance social development goals. Ambitious NDCs that recognize and integrate these interlinkages can unlock opportunities for reducing inequalities, generating economic development, creating jobs, tackling air pollution, and improving public health.

Countries can unlock opportunities if they emphasise the central role of cities in their NDCs.

An urban framing is particularly crucial because it enables a more integrated and effective approach to climate action. Currently, national climate plans, even when economy-wide, often fail to consider the interdependencies between sectors – treating energy, transport, waste, and buildings in isolation rather than as part of an interconnected system. Yet, these sectors converge most acutely in cities and the subnational level more generally, where emissions from transport, energy and buildings are highest but also where opportunities and needs for deep decarbonization and adaptation are most pronounced. Achieving resilience in cities requires a comprehensive approach that not only addresses both the causes and impacts of climate change but also bridges the traditional divide between mitigation and adaptation strategies. By overcoming siloed thinking and embracing cross-

¹ This report uses 'party' and 'country' interchangeably.

sectoral collaboration, cities can unlock a wide range of co-benefits, from improved public health and enhanced biodiversity to greater social welfare and economic stability. This integrated pathway is essential for fostering urban environments that are not only climate-resilient, but also inclusive, sustainable, and thriving.

NDCs, therefore, can serve as central policy architecture that integrates and anchors the broader policy environment. Many countries have developed mitigation, adaptation, and implementation strategies that include urban components, yet these may not be strongly reflected in national climate objectives. By explicitly referencing these complementary policies within NDCs, governments can create greater alignment between national and subnational action, improving 1.3 The benefits of urbanized NDCs: coherence, accountability, and access to climate finance.

By setting clear targets, defining pathways, and aligning sectoral priorities with urban content. NDCs can provide the policy coherence, priority

actions, and financing signals needed to create a multilevel. multisector and multistakeholder structure that facilitates change at the local level (see figure 4). Strengthening urban content in NDCs, therefore, is not only about improving the visibility of cities and regional governments in climate commitments. It is also about anchoring climate policy to local realities in ways that generate meaningful mitigation and adaptation outcomes, support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, and align with the principles of the New Urban Agenda, which calls for inclusive. integrated, and sustainable urban development. Together, these frameworks reinforce the imperative for transformative urban action as a cornerstone of global climate progress.

unlocking multilevel, multisectoral and multistakeholder governance

Strengthening the urban content of NDCs and recognizing cities as central actors can help

bridge the gap between high-level commitments and practical implementation, and help countries achieve their climate objectives (see figure 4). Strategic benefits include:

• Enhance stakeholder engagement – creating an urbanized NDC necessarily entails inclusive engagement with stakeholders across all levels of governance - national, subnational, regional, and local. It also requires horizontal coordination across sectors and ministries, ensuring alignment between different Ministerial portfolios. This multisectoral approach must involve not only government actors but also NGOs, CSOs, academia, the private sector, and civil society more broadly. By fostering institutional coordination and expanding participation in the NDC process, countries can more effectively localize climate actions, align national targets with on-theground realities, and generate more coherent and impactful mitigation and adaptation outcomes.

- Encourage sustainable urban development by integrating urban sustainability into national climate strategies, NDCs can promote the development of green, inclusive, and climateresilient cities. This includes investments in low emission and resilient housing, renewable energy, green infrastructure, sustainable mobility, and nature-based solutions. Such efforts directly support the achievement of SDG 11 and advance multiple other SDGs by improving air quality, reducing emissions, and enhancing access to essential services in urban
- Boost mitigation efforts strengthening urban content in NDCs can lead to more targeted policies for reducing emissions through energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation, sustainable building practices, including housing and infrastructures, and waste management.
- Strengthen adaptation as cities and urban communities are the most vulnerable to climate hazards, strengthening urban content in NDCs can enhance the adaptive capacity of urban actors, in particular informal settlements communities, to respond to climate disasters like extreme weather events and avoid major losses and damages.
- Build resilience integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation into local action plans generates co-benefits such as improved livelihoods and inclusive economic growth. This approach supports the development of climate-resilient urban economies that are better equipped to withstand future shocks and
- Unlock climate finance strengthening the urban content of NDCs is essential to improving access to climate finance. By clearly identifying urban climate needs, prioritizing locally grounded actions, and aligning them with national commitments, countries can improve the eligibility of cities and regional governments for domestic and international funding opportunities. Urbanized NDCs signal clear investment priorities, helping mobilize resources for mitigation and adaptation at the local level.

FIGURE 4 Multilevel and multisectoral and multistakeholder governance for climate change

MULTI-LEVEL

INTEGRATION

influence decision-making through advocacy

provide engagement, opportunity and technical guidance through global programmes and initiatives **Global level**

Define/input into climate policy

Report on national progress

National level

Support implementation of national policies

Share input, experiences, successes

Inform decision-making process via local and regional governments

Subnational level

Facilitate technology transfer

Channel climate resources / financing

Call for subnational engagement

Means of implementation: provides finance and technological support and builds capacity

Resource mobilization

Technical and political guidance via national climate policy frameworks

Climate Ministries

ASSESS: understand

your NDC and wider policy environment

CO-DESIGN and review **NDC** preparation process

PREPARE: identify key

partnerships and understand the multilevel governance structure

Develop climate compatible sectoral policies

Support sectoral NDC implementation

Engagement in global / regional / national city networks processes

City to city coordination

MULTISECTORAL INTEGRATION

Other Ministerial Portfolios

- Transport Housing Local development
- Finance Other

INTEGRATION Leverage international

STAKEHOLDER

MULTI-

processes and networks **Engagement with non-party** stakeholders including private sector, academia, financing institutions, civil society

Taking stock - the urban content of NDCs 2.0 and key blockers

2.1: The state of urban content in **NDCs**

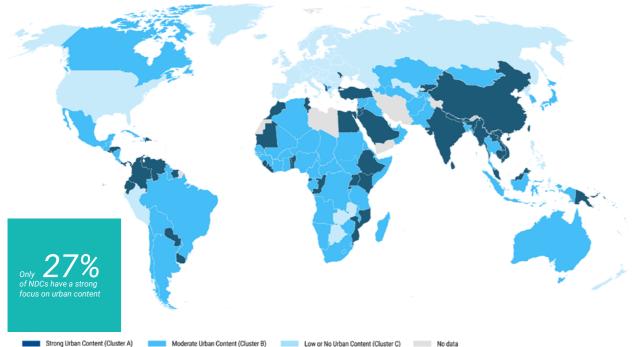
The results of the first Global Stocktake confirm that the world is not on track to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2023). As countries prepare to submit their NDC 3.0 in 2025, there is a critical opportunity to strengthen ambition or no urban content (UNDP, UN-Habitat, SDU; see and improve delivery, particularly by embedding urban perspectives into national climate planning. Urban areas are central to both climate risks and solutions, and integrating robust urban content in NDCs is a key step toward ensuring that high-level climate commitments translate into place-based, actionable, and equitable outcomes.

To support countries in this effort, a 2024 analysis by UN-Habitat, the UNESCO Chair on Urban Resilience at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU.Resilience), and UNDP assessed the state of urban content in second-generation NDCs. The study found that 141 out of 194 NDCs representing 73 per cent - contained moderate, low, Figure 5 and Box 1).

The findings can be summarized as follows:

 27 per cent (53 countries) included strong urban content: NDCs with specific urban sections and/or NDCs in which urban is identified as a priority sector, excluding NDCs





Source: Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses, 2024 Report (UNDP, UN-Habitat, SDU.Resilience) Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by The United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Country boundaries source: UN Geospatial Projection: Robins

Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses: 2024 Report

The key reference for tracking urban climate action in NDCs

This report - jointly prepared by UN-Habitat, SDU.Resilience and UNDP, with acknowledgement to partnerships with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Bloomberg Philanthropies and C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group – analyzes urban content and urban climate strategies in the 194 NDCs submitted as of 27 June 2023.

This report provides analysis and guidance to policymakers and practitioners working on climate, development and NDCs to: (i) facilitate better understanding of the urban focus in NDCs, (ii) highlight climate challenges and opportunities in cities, (iii) support countries to place cities at the center of their climate ambition, and (iv) provide a unique set of climate data to inform policymaking. The report helps countries to assess their current rating. The report includes:

- · A global analysis of the urban content of NDCs 2.0
- 194 country briefs of each of the NDCs, showing the urban content
- 16 country profiles with an in-depth analysis of their urban content as well as existing policies

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that are not backing the prioritization with a clear identification of specific urban challenges and/or responses. NDCs from city states.

- 39 per cent (76 countries) featured **moderate** urban content: NDCs with generic urban mentions within the body of the text.
- 34 per cent (65 countries) exhibited **low or no** urban content: NDCs with low or no explicit urban mention within the text.

While the specificities of urban content will depend on the local context, strengthening the urban focus of an NDC will enable countries to achieve positive climate outcomes. From large economies with rapidly expanding cities to small island states facing acute vulnerability in urban settlements, NDCs stands to benefit from more deliberate and coherent integration of urban issues,

whether in mitigation, adaptation, implementation, or finance. Urban content provides a vehicle to localize national commitments, align cross-sectoral strategies, and connect climate ambition with development priorities.

For example, there countries with high urbanization rates do not necessarily have strong content, An analysis of all CHAMP-endorsing countries showed that of the 24 countries assessed as having low urban content, many are highly urbanized countries, such as Belgium (98%), the Netherlands (93%), and the ne (82%).

In this spirit, this guide assessment offers a basis for countries to reflect on how urban content is currently addressed and how it could be further developed in light of national priorities and

capacities. It highlights a clear opportunity to better reflect national realities in national plans and ensure that urban assets, actors, and vulnerabilities are fully recognised in climate policy.

2.2 A missed opportunity for mitigation and adaptation

Urban mitigation and adaptation remain underrepresented in national climate policy frameworks and NDCs. This absence not only exacerbates exposure and vulnerability to climate risks but also creates a disconnect between national commitments and the realities of implementation, where urban stakeholders and local actors are often best positioned to achieve meaningful results.

The report highlights key trends in how urban climate action is (or is not) reflected in NDCs (see

- 44 per cent of NDCs (86 countries) include both urban mitigation and adaptation
- 11 per cent of NDCs (22 countries) focus only on urban **adaptation**
- 10 per cent of NDCs (19 countries) focus only on urban mitigation
- 34 per cent of NDCs (65 countries) contain low or **no** urban content, meaning neither urban mitigation nor urban adaptation is included
- 1 per cent of NDCs (2 countries) contain urban climate hazards but neither adaptation nor mitigation

In many cases, the lack of urban mitigation and adaptation measures directly reflects the limited engagement with local governments and urban actors during the formulation of the NDC. This exclusion - and the content gaps it generates can lower national ambition and weaken overall mitigation and adaptation outcomes, especially given the concentration of emissions, infrastructure and climate risks in cities. Cities, as has been argued, are central to both emissions reduction and climate resilience. However, their potential will remain untapped if urban mitigation and adaptation challenges - and responses to these challenges - are not clearly delineated in national climate strategies and NDCs.

2.3 Finance, technology, and capacity-building:

Effectively designed NDCs can establish clear resource allocation pathways, ensuring that urban actors have the necessary financial, technical, and institutional support to implement ambitious climate action. However, data from the 2024 analysis by UN-Habitat SDU. Resilience and UNDP highlights a critical gap: while requests for finance, technology, and capacity-building are widespread, they are overwhelmingly framed at the national level, with limited direct inclusion of urban needs (see figure 7).

The NDC report shows:

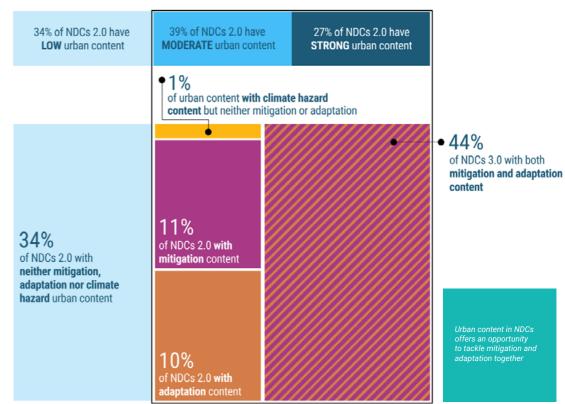
- Financial support is requested in 141 NDCs overall, but only 26 NDCs include urban-specific finance requests
- **Technological support** is prioritized in 160 NDCs overall, but only 7 NDCs include urbanspecific technology requests
- Capacity-building support is prioritized in 155 NDCs overall, but only 9 NDCs include urbanspecific capacity-building requests

This disconnect restricts the flow of resources to cities - the very places where climate action can have the greatest impact. Without targeted support, urban mitigation and adaptation efforts remain underfunded, slowing national implementation, undermining the effectiveness of NDCs, and further exacerbating exposure and vulnerability to climate risks.

A complementary resource is the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2022), which emphasizes that cities are both hotspots of climate risk and key enablers of solutions. Chapter 6 of Working Group II highlights the importance of integrated urban planning and local governance for effective climate action. Further resources are listed on page 52.

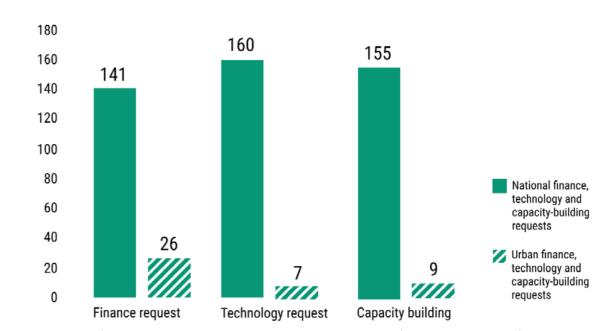


Distribution of the type of urban content in NDCs



Source: Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses, 2024 Report (UNDP, UN-Habitat, SDU.Resilience)

NDCs strongly prioritize national finance, technology and capacity-building requests



Source: Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses, 2024 Report (UNDP, UN-Habitat, SDU.Resilience)



A 3-step framework for creating urbanized **NDCs**

For a high-level overview of this section, please refer to pages 10-11.

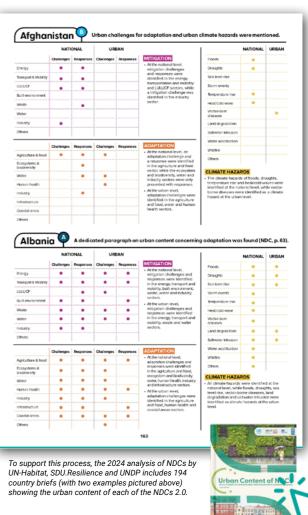
Strengthening the urban content of NDCs is essential to closing the implementation gap and ensuring that national climate commitments translate into action on the ground. While many countries have made progress in integrating urban considerations into their NDCs, significant gaps remain.

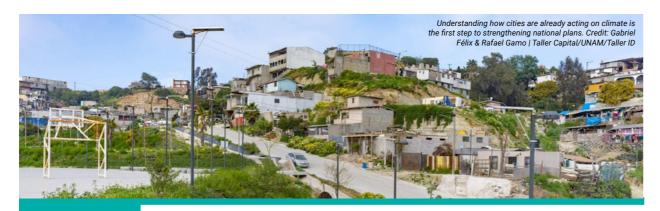
This methodology provides a structured **3-step** guide for national and subnational actors in codesigning an NDC with strong, actionable urban content. It builds on the 2024 analysis by UN-Habitat, SDU.Resilience and UNDP to identify practical steps for producing high-scoring urban content (see Steps 1 and 3) and incorporates recommendations from the World Resources Institute's guide for effective multilevel climate action multilevel climate action (Shah Naidoo et al., 2024) (see Step 1 and Step 2). These steps include:

- Step 1: ASSESS understand the NDC and the integration with other climate and urban related
- **Step 2: PREPARE** involve sub-national stakeholders and strengthen multilevel governance structures to prepare for the design
- Step 3: CO-DESIGN co-develop a robust and actionable NDC with strong urban content

This approach ensures that urban content is produced through a participatory, multilevel **process** aligned with local realities and through cross-sectoral policy integration. It also offers the opportunity to strengthen accountability and improve the long-term implementation of NDCs 3.0 (see Box 2 on the bonus step that outlines longterm accountability mechanisms).

The following sections outline each step in detail, providing a structured approach for integrating urban content into NDCs while fostering multilevel collaboration for effective climate action.





STEP 1 **ASSESS**

Understand the NDC and the integration with other climate and urban-related policies

Urban climate action does not exist in isolation. It is shaped by national policies, sectoral strategies, and multilevel governance structures that determine the extent to which cities can contribute to climate targets. A clear understanding of these interconnections is essential for ensuring that NDCs align with existing urban initiatives, avoid duplications, and establish a foundation for aligning challenges (see Tables 4 and 5 for further NDC development through multilevel collaboration.

This first step involves identifying how urban climate action is currently embedded across policy frameworks, mapping key stakeholders, and assessing governance and implementation capacity. By doing so, countries can pinpoint gaps, synergies, and opportunities for strengthening urban content in their NDCs, setting the stage for a more coherent, actionable, and locally grounded climate strategy.

Step 1: ASSESS - Key actions:

1.1: Review the existing NDC - identify how urban content is currently rated, evaluating strengths, weaknesses, and gaps using global assessment tools. Through an analysis based on over 200 indicators, The Urban Content of NDCs: Local Climate Action Explored Report (2024) provides a comprehensive typology to capture and describe the extent of the urban content in the NDCs, clustering them into three categories (Strong A, Moderate B, or Low/None C).

The report provides a country-specific rating for 194 NDCs, assessing how well cities are reflected

in national climate plans (see Box 1 on page 19 for reference), and highlights whether NDCs have included information on climate risks, hazards, and exposure at both the national and urban level (see Table 3 for further breakdown), and whether they have specifically identified and subsequently defined responses to mitigation and adaptation breakdown). This toolkit builds on the 2024 report.

1.2: Map related national and subnational policies

by identifying all policy documents that include an urban focus, such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Urban Policies (NUPs), Long-Term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDSs), and climate finance frameworks. This helps align the NDC with ongoing urban and climate action efforts and ensures coherence between national and local policies and international frameworks such as the New Urban Agenda.

1.3: Assess the current state of multilevel partnerships, the extent of subnational representation in the NDC or associated climate plans, and the role that subnational governments can play in advancing national climate mitigation and adaptation commitments in alignment with development objectives (WRI 2024).

1.4: Evaluate implementation capacity by determining the financial, technological, and institutional capacity for urban climate action at both national and local levels. This includes assessing funding mechanisms, technical expertise, data availability, and governance structures that support cities in delivering climate action.

CASE STUDY 1



Brazil: Enshrining climate federalism through policy assessment

In developing its third-round Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), Brazil placed multilevel governance at the heart of its climate strategy. Anchored in the principle of "climate federalism," the process began with a thorough assessment of jurisdictional mandates and implementation capacity across national, state. and municipal levels. This diagnostic phase, in which governments of all levels actively participated, allowed Brazil to identify existing legal and institutional arrangements, uncover gaps in coordination, and frame a formal policy charter to guide collaboration.

By grounding its NDC in a rights- and capacitybased understanding of subnational authority, Brazil formalized the role of states and municipalities in climate governance. The NDC

explicitly commits to coordination between all federal entities, integrating climate goals into long-, medium-, and short-term planning instruments. This approach enabled the alignment of Brazil's NDC with Resolution No. 3 of the Federation Council (2024), which mandates coordinated climate action across all levels of government.

The outcome is a pioneering model for multilevel governance, which runs throughout the entire NDC. Brazil's climate federalism illustrates how early assessment of policy coherence and institutional roles can drive inclusive, highimpact NDC design. As one of the first countries to implement CHAMP principles, Brazil sets a precedent for translating assessment into action through structured, cooperative frameworks.



Local priorities, including those from cities like Brasília in Brazil, are increasingly reflected in national climate plans. Credit: Marcos/Adobe Stock





STEP 2 PREPARE Involve sub-national stakeholders and strengthen multilevel governance structures to prepare for the design phase

This step focuses on strengthening existing multilevel governance structures to conduct consultation processes that ensure cities, municipal networks, and urban climate actors meaningfully contribute to the NDC development and implementation. The end goal is not merely to have stronger urban content enshrined in policy but to facilitate a collaborative process and to get direct input from local stakeholders to produce a relevant, representative, and actionable NDC that integrates cities, embeds accountability through multilevel partnerships, and sets the preconditions NDCs 3.0.

Countries with inclusive and transparent stakeholder engagement processes are more likely to enhance their GHG reduction targets, improve policy coherence, and ensure long-term implementation (Peterson et al., 2023). By building on multilevel partnerships, aligning data-sharing mechanisms, and strengthening institutional coordination, this step lays the groundwork for designing a robust, implementable, and urbanfocused NDC.

A helpful resource for operationalizing these actions is the Global Covenant of Mayors' guide on multilevel governance, which offers practical steps to engage local stakeholders and align priorities. Further resources are listed on page 52.



Step 2: PREPARE - Key actions:

2.1: Identify key relationships by laying the groundwork for structured engagement with subnational governments, municipal associations, urban networks, and climate-focused civil society organizations by refining the pool of potential contributors. This includes mapping out existing partnerships, assessing their level of involvement in climate planning, and establishing opportunities for strategic contribution to the design process. To maximize coherence and impact, this process for effective multilevel action implementation of the should also highlight multisectoral entry points and enable coordination across relevant ministries - such as environment, planning, housing, transport, and finance - to foster integrated urban climate action.

2.2: Develop a structured consultation process

by actively involving subnational governments and urban stakeholders (2.1) through formal dialogues and co-design workshops to align national and local priorities. By engaging city governments, municipal associations, and urban networks, countries can ensure that subnational perspectives inform the identification of and response to critical mitigation and adaptation challenges (see 3.2 and 3.3).

2.3: Align data and reporting mechanisms

by creating systems to facilitate data-sharing between national and subnational actors, ensuring urban climate risks, mitigation opportunities, and financing needs can be fully reflected in NDC design (see Step 3). This can include disclosing urban mitigation and adaptation projects to understand the broader landscape of climate action and how these initiatives can contribute to national and global priorities (CDP, 2025).

CASE STUDY 2



Colombia: Embedding subnational voices in NDC design

Colombia's 2025 NDC revision process presents a strong example of collaborative preparation, prioritizing inclusive engagement with subnational actors. Following the ambitious 2020 NDC update and the 2021 Long-Term Climate Strategy, which recognized the critical role of local governments in areas such as deforestation and transportation, the national government acknowledged key implementation challenges - including unaligned goals, non-measurable indicators, and limited feasibility.

To address these gaps, Colombia has launched a national consultation process designed to integrate subnational input into the 2025 NDC. This includes a series of structured discussion meetings, bilateral exchanges, and an open online locally grounded climate ambition in national platform through which regional actors - such as municipal governments and environmental

authorities – can submit proposals. To ensure quality and relevance, proposals must be accompanied by letters of institutional support and supporting documentation.

Workshops and practical exercises are being conducted to clarify the implications of proposed measures and enhance understanding of national targets. The Colombian Association of Capital Cities (Asocapitales), in partnership with WRI Colombia, is also facilitating training for local governments to strengthen their capacity to develop effective local climate actions. Colombia's evolving model illustrates how inclusive consultation processes can build coherence, enhance feasibility, and foster frameworks. (WRI 2024)



Local priorities, including those from cities like Cali in Colombia, are increasingly reflected in national climate plans. Credit: Diegomezr/Adobe Stock



STEP 3 **CO-DESIGN**

Co-develop a robust and actionable NDC with strong urban content

This step translates the understanding of the landscape (step 1) and the multilevel collaboration structures established (Step 2) into a structured process for co-designing an NDC with high-quality urban content. This step provides a structured process to ensure that urban content is not only referenced but is strategic, actionable, and implementable. The methodology follows four key actions which align with how urban content is assessed in global NDC evaluations:

NDCs that meaningfully cover all three key actions (3.1 baseline, 3.2 challenges and 3.3 responses) will receive a rating A, meaning strong urban content; NDCs that cover two out of three actions will receive a rating B, meaning moderate urban content; NDCs that include one out of three actions will receive a rating C, meaning low urban content. In addition, if the means of implementation are included, the rating will be complemented with a "+" (e.g. A+, B+, C+). (see figure 8).

By following these steps, countries can move beyond token references to cities and subnational governments and instead develop an NDC that is aligned with urban climate realities and primed for implementation. Importantly, this process not only improves the quality of urban content but also enhances long-term accountability by ensuring that 3.1: BASELINE: Establish a clear baseline commitments are tied to clearly defined actions and resources. The following subsections break down these four steps and guide policymakers with more precise instructions.

In brief: Key actions of Step 3

- 3.1 Establish a clear BASELINE ensure urbanspecific needs are systematically accounted for, including emissions baseline and emission reduction targets, and climate risk baseline, including hazard projection, vulnerability and exposure.
- 3.2 Identify adaptation and mitigation **CHALLENGES** – define priority urban climate challenges, aligned with the national ones, to be addressed in the NDC.
- 3.3 List concrete actions and RESPONSES develop urban climate interventions, responding to the identified challenges, that are specific, measurable, and aligned with national climate goals.
- 3.4 (Bonus!) Secure the means of implementation - embed financing, technology, and capacity-building mechanisms into the NDC to ensure feasibility and execution.

Step 3: CO-DESIGN - Key actions:

Integrating an urban baseline into the overall NDC baseline ensures that cities' contributions to both mitigation and adaptation are accurately reflected in NDCs. Without a well-defined baseline, urban climate action remains difficult to quantify, track, and integrate into national climate strategies. Establishing this foundation requires an FIGURE 8 Overview of urban content rating of NDCs 3.0

Total urban content included out of Baseline, Challenges, Responses	Rat of N	ting IDC	Bonus if implementation is included
3/3 actions	Α	STRONG	A+
2/3 actions	В	MODERATE	B+
1/3 actions	С	LOW	C+
0/3 actions	-	No urban content	-

assessment of existing urban emissions, planned reductions, and an assessment of current and future climate risk, including hazards, vulnerability exposure, and losses and damages. However, in many countries, significant data gaps and capacity constraints hinder the development of robust urban baselines. Despite these challenges, defining an urban baseline remains essential for improving urban representation in NDCs and aligning national commitments with the realities of climate action on See Table 2 for an overview of the different sectors the around.

On **MITIGATION**, ensure that the urban level is included in your current greenhouse gas emission inventories and planned reductions. This should clearly demonstrate:

· Greenhouse gas emissions across sectors: the categorization and quantification of humancaused GHG emissions based on the economic activities or sectors that produce them, such as energy, industry, and transportation.

 Planned emissions reductions across sectors: the targeted strategies and commitments outlined in climate policies to lower GHG emissions within key sectors.

that can be included in NDCs 3.0 to establish the baseline for mitigation. Table XX further outlines the sectors.

On **ADAPTATION**, ensure to include the climate risk for your cities. List current and future risks, including the types of hazards, exposure and vulnerability.

TABLE 2 Urban greenhouse gas emissions by sector

MITIGATION: Urban greenshouse gas emissions by sector

Background information: This table lines out the different sectors which are critical for a greenhouse gas emission inventory and planned greenhouse gas reductions. Ensure that the urban level is also included in your current emission inventory and line out how you are planning emission reductions at the urban level across sectors.

Sector	Current GHG emissions baseline identified	GHG emission reduction target developed
Energy	•	
Transport and mobility		•
LULUCF		•
Built environment	•	•
Waste		
Industry		
Other		•

Source: UN-Habitat

Note: the sectors are further explained in table 4

- **Hazard**: a climate hazard is a climate condition with the potential to harm natural systems or society. Examples include heatwaves, droughts, heavy snowfall events and sea level rise (IPCC AR6, 2023)
- Exposure: the presence of people, livelihoods, species or ecosystems, environmental functions, services, resources, infrastructure, or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected by climate hazards (IPCC AR6, 2023)
- **Vulnerability**: the propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected by climate, including susceptibility to harm and a lack of capacity to cope and adapt (IPCC AR6, 2023)

In addition, identify and quantify losses and damages by sector at the urban level, accounting for economic (e.g., infrastructure and livelihoods) and non-economic (e.g., human life, health, and biodiversity) factors, considering sudden-onset events (e.g., floods and storms) and slow-onset

events (e.g., sea-level rise and desertification).

· Losses and damages: climate-related loss and damage refers to the consequences of climaterelated hazards that people have not been able to cope with or adapt to (IPCC AR6, 2023)

See Table 3 for an overview of existing hazards, definitions, why these hazards have been impacting urban areas, who is exposed to them and who is vulnerable to them. Also find some examples of how some countries have included them in their

Remember to build on Step 2 of the methodology and consult key urban and subnational stakeholders with the relevant data, knowledge, and skills required to define different scenarios and solicit the input data and key assumptions needed to inform the process. This is crucial to defining representative baselines which meaningfully align with local realities.



Bike-sharing systems are one example of city-level climate solutions that contribute to national mitigation targets. Strengthening the urban content of NDCs helps reflect these

3.2: CHALLENGES: Identify mitigation and adaptation challenges

Identifying the specific mitigation and adaptation challenges that cities face is a critical foundation for designing effective, actionable urban climate **strategies.** These challenges will vary not only between countries but also between cities, shaped by geography, governance capacity, infrastructure quality, demographic pressure, and environmental context. While many cities may face common issues such as heat waves or flood risk, the nature. scale, and implications of those challenges will differ across urban contexts.

This means that challenge identification must move beyond generic assessments. It should be informed by an in-depth understanding of local realities, drawing on input from urban stakeholders and supported by data. For example, transport emissions in a rapidly expanding megacity may stem from sprawling, car-dependent growth. In contrast, in smaller cities, the same emissions may be linked to outdated public transport fleets. Similarly, vulnerability to drought may look different in a city with robust water storage systems than in one dependent on seasonal rivers.

To guide this process, this methodology identifies seven priority sectors where urban mitigation challenges most frequently arise, and seven urban categories where adaptation challenges are often concentrated. These categories are intended as prompts and should be adapted to fit the national and urban contexts in which they are applied. Tailoring this step ensures the relevance and effectiveness of urban climate strategies and enables alignment with broader development goals.

CASE STUDY 3



United Arab Emirates: Adaptation challenges in urban infrastructure

The United Arab Emirates' NDC identifies its urban infrastructure as highly vulnerable to climateinduced flooding and sea level rise. Increased rainfall intensity and diminished drainage capacity threaten transport systems, building reliability, and the safety of coastal populations.

These risks also pose economic challenges through potential disruptions to urban mobility and service provision. By spotlighting the vulnerability of dense urban infrastructure to changing climate parameters, the UAE reinforces the importance of integrating urban adaptation into national policy, including through improved drainage systems, resilient urban planning, and coastal protection measures.



Urban adaptation is a growing priority in the UAE's climate strategy, with Expo City offering a glimpse of what

3.3: RESPONSES: List actions that are being taken city may require investment in grid capacity and to respond to these challenges

Once urban climate challenges have been identified, the next step is to co-develop contextspecific responses. This requires matching identified risks with clear mitigation or adaptation actions that can be feasibly implemented at the local level. These actions should be specific, measurable, and linked to national climate goals but grounded in urban realities.

As with challenge identification, response formulation must be tailored to each city's unique conditions. While categories such as energy, water, and the built environment provide a useful framing, the actual interventions should reflect local needs, capabilities, and institutional arrangements. For example, promoting electric vehicles in one

charging infrastructure, while in another, it may be more effective to focus on expanding low-carbon public transit.

This process of tailoring responses must be collaborative. It should involve local governments, community stakeholders, civil society, and relevant ministries to ensure coherence across policy scales. The resulting actions not only strengthen the urban content of NDCs - they also provide a roadmap for multilevel implementation, helping to move national strategies from paper to practice.

See Tables 4 and 5 for mitigation challenges and exemplary responses from second-generation NDCs (4), as well as adaptation challenges and exemplary responses from second-generation NDCs (table 5).

CASE STUDY 4



Cabo Verde: Tackling urban sprawl through integrated mobility and planning reforms

Cabo Verde's updated NDC identifies unplanned urban sprawl as a key mitigation challenge, particularly in the context of internal migration driven by climate impacts on rural livelihoods. The NDC highlights how this rapid and uncoordinated urban growth has placed mounting pressure on essential infrastructure – systems – making them increasingly vulnerable to climate hazards.

In response, Cabo Verde outlines a suite of interventions that aim to reshape mobility and spatial planning in its urban areas. The country is advancing carbon-free, active mobility systems

alongside broader efforts to improve land use efficiency through urban planning and digitization. Measures include the creation of car-free zones, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, promotion of remote working, and the use of digital platforms for shared mobility. Together, these actions form a coherent urban response to the especially transport, energy, water, and sanitation dual challenges of emissions from transport and the need to manage growing urban populations in a more sustainable, climate-resilient manner. Cabo Verde's approach demonstrates how identifying a clear urban mitigation challenge can enable targeted and systemic responses that align urban development with climate goals.



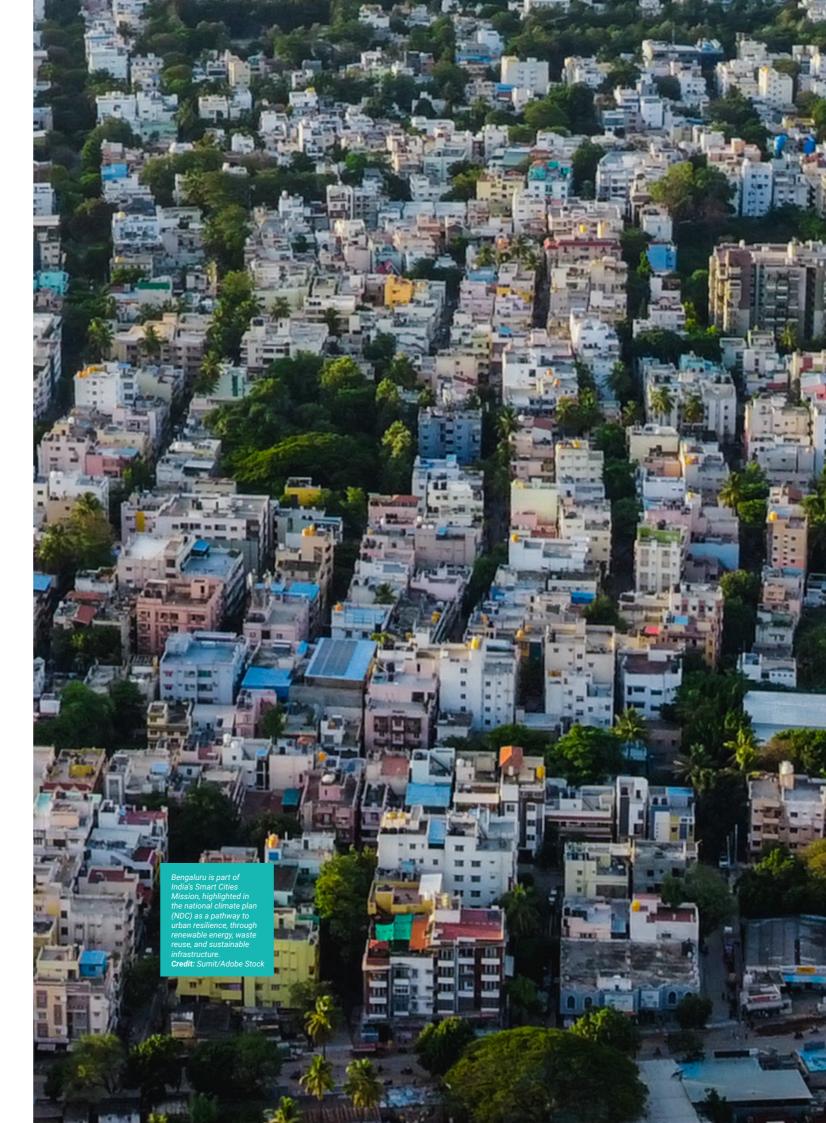


TABLE 3 ADAPTATION: Urban Climate risks baseline

Table 3 offers an overview of existing hazards, definitions, why these hazards have been impacting urban areas, who is exposed to them and who is vulnerable to them. Also find some examples of how some countries have included them in their NDCs.

ADAPTATION: Urban Climate risks baseline

Background information: overview of existing hazards, their definitions, why they matter and examples of how they have been integrated into NDCs. 2.0

Categories applicable to the rating: List current and future risks, including the types of hazards, who is exposed to these hazards and vulnerabilities.

Hazard type	Definition and background	Data	Example from NDC 2.0	Exposure	Vulnerability	Loss and damage
Floods	Overflow of water onto normally dry land, often due to heavy rainfall, storm surges, or river overflow, leading to property damage, infrastructure disruption, and displacement.	Between 2000 and 2015 up to 86 million additional people resided in areas identified as flooded globally, representing a 24% increase in the proportion of population exposed to floods.	Viet Nam NDC 2.0 (page 17): "Climate change will be one of the factors impeding Viet Nam's growth Under the high climate change scenario, the flood risk level of urban areas is expected to increase to 7 per cent. It is estimated that by 2050, the loss of houses due to climateinduced storms and floods in the Mekong River Delta will be at USD 2.1 billion, an increase of 11 per cent compared to current level."	•	•	•
Droughts	Prolonged periods of low or no rainfall leading to water shortages, agricultural losses, and ecosystem degradation.	Between 1970 and 2019 there were approximately 650,000 deaths due to droughts. Every year, water insecurity costs the global economy 500 billion dollars.	Sri Lanka NDC 2.0 (page 46): "Higher temperatures will create inhospitable conditions in both urban/suburban areas across the country. Urban heat islands will amplify the impact of heatwaves in cities. Day and night-time temperatures increase will have an impact on energy consumption for cooling. In the Dry Zone, higher temperatures, high evaporation rates and longer dry spells will cause water shortages. Drought related water shortages are already evident in cities located in the higher watersheds -such as Nuwara Eliya and Badulla. Large and expanding urban areas in the Wet Zone may also face similar challenges as demand grows with urban expansion."	•	•	
Sea level rise	Gradual increase in ocean levels caused by climate change, leading to coastal erosion, flooding, and displacement of populations.	Global average sea level has risen 8-9 inches since 1880. In 2023, global average sea level set a new record high - 101.4 mm (3.99 inches) above 1993.	Papua New Guinea NDC 2.0 (page 21): "Papua New Guinea is experiencing an increase in rural to urban migration. Climate change exacerbates existing urban development challenges and vulnerabilities, such as poor health, inadequate housing, and lack of access to infrastructure, basic services and social safety nets. Urban areas on the coast are under threat of storm surge and sea-level rise, and, in PNG, cities are often located in hazard prone areas in the coastal zone."	•	•	•
Storm events	Intense weather systems, including hurricanes, cyclones, and typhoons, characterized by high winds, heavy rainfall, and potential infrastructure damage.	Between 1979 and 2017, the proportion of Category 3 to 5 tropical cyclones globally has risen. Over the past decade, extreme weather events, including tropical cyclones, have resulted in approximately \$2 trillion in damages worldwide.	South Africa NDC 2.0 (page 7): "South African settlements are susceptible to the effects of climate variability, and since 1980 have recorded 86 noticeable weather-related disasters that have affected more than 22 million South Africans and have cost the economy in excess of R113 billion (US\$6.81 billion) in economic losses. It is anticipated that a growing number of South African cities and towns will be exposed to the impacts of weather-induced hazards such as flooding, heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, and storms."	•	•	•
Temperature rise	Long-term increase in global and regional temperatures due to greenhouse gas emissions, impacting ecosystems, agriculture, and human health.	Global temperatures have been on an upward trajectory, with 2024 recorded as the hottest year since records began in 1850.	Oman NDC 2.0 (page 5-9): "Oman has experienced a consistent increase in its average temperature. Between 1901 and 2020, Oman's temperature has increased with an average of 1.4°C (2.5°F), surpassing the global average temperature increase of 1°C (1.8°F) during the same period The heat island effect, more pronounced in rapidly expanding urban centers like Sohar, elevates local temperatures due to concrete structures and decreased vegetation, further intensifying the naturally occurring heatwaves in the region."	•	•	

ADAPTATION:	Urban Climate risks baseline					
Hazard type	Definition and background	Data	Example from NDC 2.0	Exposure	Vulnerability	Loss & Damage
Heat/cold waves	Extended periods of extreme heat or cold, leading to health risks, energy demand surges, and infrastructure stress.	From 2000 to 2019, approximately 489,000 heat- related deaths occurred annually worldwide.	Myanmar NDC 2.0 (page 40): "Cities and human settlements are now home to 29% of Myanmar's population. With increasing urbanization, more people are moving into unplanned settlements where they have poor quality housing, poor land tenure security, a lack of access to proper water and sanitation, lack of access to public transportation, and other depredations. Partly as a consequence of these limitation, they are significantly more vulnerable to sudden and catastrophic climate induced flooding and coastal storms as well as long onset climatic challenges such as heat stress."	•	•	
Vector-borne diseases	Spread of diseases such as malaria and dengue due to climate-induced changes in temperature and humidity, increasing the range and activity of disease-carrying organisms.	Climate-induced changes in temperature and humidity have expanded the habitats of vectors like mosquitoes, leading to a rise in diseases such as malaria and dengue.	Bolivia NDC 2.0 (page 7): "The climate crisis is causing an increase in the burden of climate-related diseases, showing how climate change has exacerbated the problems already faced by urban and rural populations. The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has once again demonstrated the importance of access to quality health services, the need for the use of scientific information for decision-making, and the relevance of coordinated action between sectors. Therefore, the response and recovery actions to the COVID-19 emergency are configured as an opportunity to rethink and build healthier, sustainable and resilient societies to these and other future problems"	•	•	
Land degradation	Loss of land productivity due to deforestation, desertification, and unsustainable land use practices, often worsened by climate change.	As of 2022, up to 40 per cent of the world's land is classified as degraded, directly affecting half of humanity and threatening approximately half of global GDP (US\$44 trillion).	Albania NDC 2.0 (page 39): "The population growth in coastal cities has increasing number of people "living in poor-quality, highly exposed housing in disaster-prone areas". In addition to this uncontrolled urbanization, other factors contribute to infrastructure vulnerability, including landscape degradation, uncontrolled modifications to river beds, water, air and land pollution"	•	•	•
Saltwater intrusion	Movement of saline water into freshwater coastal systems, contaminating drinking water supplies and harming agriculture.	Recent studies indicate that by 2100, approximately 77 per cent of global coastal areas below 60° north are expected to experience saltwater intrusion.	Viet Nam NDC 2.0 (page 13): "Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events leads to increased risks for regions, sectors and people. Due to the impact of climate change and sea level rise such as flooding leading to loss of agricultural land, water for agricultural irrigation, water for domestic and industrial purposes contaminated with saltwater, people's lives are seriously affected."	•	•	•
Ocean acidification	Chemical changes in ocean water caused by increased CO ₂ absorption, reducing marine biodiversity and affecting fisheries.	Since the industrial revolution, surface ocean pH has decreased by approximately 0.11 units, corresponding to a 30 per cent—40 per cent increase in hydrogen ion concentration.	Monaco NDC 2.0 (page 15): "Abnormal water temperature events have also resulted in a significant quantitative decline in Monaco's red coral. Laboratory studies conducted by the Monaco Scientific Center show that this heat-sensitive species is also impacted by ocean acidification. This thermal change results in other impacts that lead to changes in the physicochemical parameters of water bodies."	•	•	
Wildfire	Uncontrolled fires in forests, grasslands, or urban areas, exacerbated by rising temperatures and prolonged dry conditions.	Between 2001 and 2023, carbon emissions from forest fires surged by 60 per cent globally, with boreal forests in Eurasia and North America experiencing nearly a threefold increase.	Turkmenistan NDC 2.0 (page 43): "The effects of climate change include an increased risk of forest fires and pest infestations. Large-scale urban greening activities carried out in the country create the basis for the protection and sustainable use of forests. Forest plantations in the vicinity of Ashgabat - the capital of Turkmenistan, as well as in the Aral Sea region are especially impressive"	•	•	

TABLE 4 Urban mitigation challenges and responses

Table 4 offers an overview of existing hazards, definitions, why these hazards have been impacting urban areas, who is exposed to them and who is vulnerable to them. Also find some examples of how some countries have included them in their NDCs.

MITIGATION: Urban mitigation challenges and responses

Background information: this is a sectoral breakdown of key mitigation challenges and responses at the urban level, how these are driving global trends, and includes examples of how countries are addressing these challenges in their NDCs.

Categories applicable to the rating: List urban mitigation challenges and actions taken in response to these challenges, across different sectors.

Sector	Urban mitigation challenge			Urban mitigation response		Mitigation challenge	Mitigation
	Challenge description	Data on challenges	Example of urban challenges from NDC 2.0	Response description	Example of urban responses from NDC 2.0	cnallenge	response
Energy	High fossil fuel dependence, inefficient grids, and limited renewable energy integration	Cities account for 78% of global energy demand. approximately \$4.5 trillion in grid investments is required by 2030 to accommodate clean energy growth.	China NDC 2.0 (page 18): "In the 2018 heating season, the overall energy use intensity of urban heating in the northern region dropped to 14.6 kg of standard coal / m2 from 17 kg of standard coal / m2 in 2015. By 2019, the clean heating rate in the northern region reached around 55% as 140 million tons of bulk coal (including coal for low-efficiency small boilers) was replaced."	Expand decentralized renewable energy (solar, wind), modernize energy grids, and enforce net-zero building codes.	Tanzania NDC 2.0 (page 17-18): The United Republic of Tanzania has prioritized four mitigation sectors in this NDC. These sectors are energy, transport, forestry, and waste Energy:Reducing the consumption of charcoal in urban and rural areas by promoting affordable alternative energy sources through a regulation policy for charcoal production and use"	•	•
Transport & mobility	High private vehicle use, congestion, and lack of efficient public transport.	Transport contributes 24% of global CO ₂ emissions, with road vehicles making up 75%. Urban transport accounted for 40% of global transport emissions in 2020.	Cabo Verde NDC 2.0 (page 12): "Urban sprawl – often unplanned – has diminished habitats and essential ecosystem services. Recurrent droughts and worsening conditions in agriculture and fisheries have driven rural population into cities and the tourism employment or into exodus. It has also created massive challenges for the country's essential infrastructure (transportation, energy, water and sewage facilities, communications infrastructures in particular), which are further exposed by climate hazards."	Invest in electrified public transit, implement congestion pricing, and develop walking and cycling infrastructure.	Cabo Verde NDC 2.0 (page 26): "Cabo Verde will also undertake measures to advance carbon-free active mobility and sustainable maritime transport. To contribute to the target the following measures are plannedReduce the necessity of high-carbon mobility through urban planning and digitilisation (car-free areas, cycling and pedestrian lanes, functional mix and spatial density to bring living and working closer together, incentives for homeoffice, apps for car-sharing and taxi hailing)"	•	•
Land use, land change & forestry (LULUCF)	Deforestation, loss of urban green spaces, and weak land-use policies and practices that result in sprawl and the destruction of biodiversity and carbon sinks.	The world lost 11 million hectares of forest in 2023, contributing 12-20% of emissions.	Albania NDC 2.0 (page 43): "In addition to this uncontrolled urbanization, other factors contribute to infrastructure vulnerability, including landscape degradation, uncontrolled modifications to riverbeds, water, air and land pollution, etc."	Integrate urban forests, enforce sustainable land-use policies, and promote urban reforestation programs.	Albania NDC 2.0 (page 68): "Adopt integrated, ecosystem-based approaches (EbA) and/ or nature based solutions (NbS)[including] Green approaches to the built environment (green roofs, streets, corridors and open spaces/ water open spaces)"	•	•
Built environ- ment including housing	High emissions from inefficient buildings and lack of energy performance standards; housing policies and building codes do not support compact urban development and the efficient utilization of existing buildings.	Buildings account for 39% of global CO ₂ emissions, and 70% of buildings are energy-inefficient.	South Africa NDC 2.0 (page 10): "Ensure urban planning catalytic to facilitate climate science into the building standards will be new settlement and mainstreaming of climate concerns. Consideration of climate risk in the and design incorporates climate change-resilient human settlement. Coastal Settlement: urban and rural"	Implement mandatory energy efficiency codes, promote retrofitting programs, and encourage passive building design. Enact urban and housing policies to reduce sprawl, acknowledge the ecological function of land and prioritize the use of the existing building stock and planned infills over city extensions.	India NDC 2.0 (page 13): "Under the Smart Cities Mission, 100 smart cities are planned with the objective to develop new generation cities, which will provide core infrastructure and a decent quality of life to its citizens by building a clean and sustainable environment. Smart solutions like recycling and reuse of waste, use of renewables, protection of sensitive natural environment will be incorporated to make these cities climate resilient."	•	•

 TABLE 4
 Urban mitigation challenges and responses
 Continued from previous page

Sector	ON: Urban mitigation challenges and responses Urban mitigation challenge Urban mitigation response						Mitigation
	Challenge description	Data on challenges	Example of urban challenges from 2.0	Response description	Example of urban responses from NDCs from NDC 2.0	Mitigation challenge	response
Waste manage- ment	Methane emissions from landfills and limited recycling infrastructure.	World Bank estimates that waste generation will increase from 2.01 billion tonnes in 2016 to 3.40 billion tonnes in 2050. At least 33% of this waste is mismanaged globally today through open dumping or burning.	Angola NDC 2.0 (page 37): "When waste is not properly disposed of in landfills but in landfills or uncontrolled landfills, it becomes a problem for public health and contributes to the pollution of surface and groundwater, making it unfit for consumption. Industrial development, population growth and high growth rates in cities will continue leading to an increase of waste production in Angola."	Expand segregated and universal waste collection programs, improve recycling and composting, and capture landfill gas emissions	Angola NDC 2.0 (page 37): "The Strategic Plan for the Management of Urban Waste (PESGRU) [7], approved in 2012, forms the basis for the definition of a strategy to solve the problem of urban waste management. The development of the waste sector allows not only to minimize environmental and public health impacts, improving the well-being of the population, but also to create valuable jobs and byproducts, being a sector with a high economic potential if well managed. Additionally, waste management contributes effectively to mitigating GHG emissions."	•	•
Industry	High emissions from industrial activities and energy-intensive processes.	Heavy industry sectors – steel, cement and chemicals – account for around 6 Gt (or around 70% of industrial emissions).	Zimbabwe NDC 2.0 (page 12): "Reduced supplies of agricultural raw materials also reduce employment opportunities in industry and commerce, as was the case during the extreme drought of 1991/92 when a number of industries faced closure, particularly in the City of Bulawayo"	Enforce clean production standards, promote circular economy initiatives, and support industrial electrification.	Myanmar NDC 2.0 (page ii): "Highlighting the fact that the country is becoming increasingly urban and industrial, Myanmar has set 2030 targets for improvement of energy efficiency of the residential sector by 7.8%, the industrial sector by 6.63%, the commercial sector by 4%, and other sectors by 1.36%."	•	•
Water	Urban water supply and wastewater systems are highly energy-intensive, contributing to emissions.	Water and wastewater systems account for around 3–7% of global GHG emissions (IEA, 2021). Urban leakage can exceed 30% of supplied water.	Albania NDC 2.0 (page 33): ""According to the Integrated cross-sectoral plan for the coastal belt, coastal rivers are significantly polluted: water quality was poor or bad in 45% of the 22 water quality monitoring stations in the coast"	Improving energy efficiency, reducing water losses, upgrading infrastructure, and integrating renewable energy into water systems can significantly lower emissions.	Papua New Guinea (page 26): Establishment of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Policy 2015-2030Increased access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in rural areas leading to a decrease in malaria and other vector-borne diseases / Improvements in technological approaches / Improvements in water catchment / Desalination processes / Development of renewable energy initiatives to combat climate change-induced water insecurity"	•	•
Informal Settle- ments	Vulnerability of slums / informal settlements / urban poor communities including energy poverty. Unplanned upgrading can result in excessive emissions.	Approximately 1 billion people live in informal settlements globally, often relying on highemission energy sources like kerosene and diesel (UN-Habitat, 2022; World Bank, 2020).	Sierra Leone NDC 2.0 (page 16): "In Sierra Leone, urbanization has been accelerating since the civil war. The share of the population living in urban areas almost doubled from 21% in 1967 to almost 40% in 2015, with a high concentration in the capital Freetown, which has grown to a population of more than 1 million. This growth is now rapidly increasing. From 2004 to 2015 the population has increased 43% from approximately 5 million to approximately 7 million (Statistics Sierra Leone 2016). Urbanization has not been accompanied by sufficient resources to plan and manage this fast growth and cities have lacked the financing to make the necessary investments to cope with the accelerated demand for infrastructure and services. This has climate risk implications as this can increase vulnerability for an already vulnerable population especially those in informal settlements or working in the informal sector."	Upgrading informal settlements through access to clean energy, sustainable building materials, improved waste management, and urban infrastructure can significantly reduce emissions and promote low-carbon urban development.	Rwanda NDC 2.0 (page 53): "High density buildings and informal settlement upgrading [mitigation benefit includes] Reduced GHG emissions from efficient land use, electricity and transport plus increased surface area for carbon sink"	•	•



TABLE 5 Urban adaptation challenges and responses

Table 5 offers a sectoral breakdown of key adaptation challenges and responses at the urban level, how these are driving global trends, and includes examples of how countries are addressing these challenges in their NDCs.

ADAPTATION: Urban adaptation challenges and responses

Background information: this is a sectoral breakdown of key mitigation challenges and responses at the urban level, how these are driving global trends, and includes examples of how countries are addressing these challenges in their NDCs.

Categories applicable to the rating: List urban adaptation challenges and actions taken in response to these challenges, across different sectors.

Sector	Urban adaptatio	se	Adaptation Adaptation				
	Challenge description	Data on challenge	Example of urban challenges from NDC 2.0	Response description	Example of urban challenges from NDC 2.0	challenge	response
Agriculture & food security	Urban food systems vulnerable to extreme weather and supply chain disruptions.	Climate change is likely to cause an increase in food inflation by as much as 4% in some parts of the world by 2060.	Democratic Republic of the Congo NDC 2.0 (page 24): "The increasingly severe low water levels of the last 25 years (because the average value of the minimum heights has fallen by 157%), to which is added an aggravation of the silting phenomenon, have serious consequences on biodiversity, fishing and on navigation with a marked drop in traffic at the port of Brazzaville."	Develop climate-resilient urban agriculture, strengthen food storage, and invest in diversified supply chains.	Myanmar NDC 2.0 (page 42): "Explore opportunities to improve the balance of needs between land/agricultural sector actors and urban residents/water users, with potential to explore Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) to provide incentives for upstream watershed actors for watershed afforestation and climate smart agriculture"	•	•
Ecosystems & biodiversity	Urban expansion leading to habitat loss and weakened climate buffers.	Urban land will increase by 280 - 490 thousand km2 from 2016 to 2050, resulting in a loss of 110 - 190 thousand km2 of natural habitats globally. Such loss will affect the threatened species, resulting in nearly 40% of ecoregions (310/825) may fail to achieve the 2050 Biodiversity Conservation Goal in the future	Albania NDC 2.0 (page 33): "Coastal ecosystems are still facing significant risks and pressures, including: Deficiencies in waste management (waste from tourism facilities is reaching the coastal waters, and plastic litter accounts for more than 90% of the total solid waste found on beaches); Unplanned tourism development and urbanization, and unmanaged urban population increase; Not integrated coastal zone management by local authorities; and Climate change impacts, which are further described in section 4.3 below."	Implement nature- based solutions like urban forests, wetland restoration, and biodiversity corridors.	Myanmar NDC 2.0 (page 42): "Measures to promote and assess the impacts of conservation and expansion of peri-urban and urban green spaces and forests on diverse co-benefits, including: improvements in air quality, reduced noise pollution, health benefits from access to spaces for outdoor recreation, and aesthetic appeal of cities for residents, investors and tourists, impacts on land values and municipal revenue generation"	•	•
Water	Increased risk of flooding, water scarcity, and contamination	In 2023, floods accounted for over 40% of natural disasters worldwide	Viet Nam NDC 2.0 (page 21): "The implementation of flood control programs and projects in urban areas and big cities is slow; flooding still occurs frequently in urban areas."	Expand sponge city infrastructure, improve drainage systems, and promote rainwater harvesting.	Viet Nam 2.0 (page 23): "Building and upgrading water drainage systems, preventing floods caused by heavy rains, floods, spring tides and storm surges for large urban centres and coastal urban areas"	•	•
Human health	Heat stress, air pollution, and rising vectorborne diseases.	Studies show that the vast majority of the world's population faces unsafe air pollution levels. Exposure is especially high in major urban centers, where 86 percent of people live in areas that exceed the WHO's 2005 guideline threshold of 10 µg/m.	Afghanistan NDC 2.0 (page 4): "Climatic changes are also likely to impact upon the spread of water, food and vector-borne diseases, presenting considerable health risks to both urban and rural populations."	Establish early warning systems, increase cooling centres, and expand clean air initiatives.	Moldova NDC 2.0 (page 4): Human Health: Improving health services for vulnerable groups of the population; Improving the infrastructure of hospitals for operationalization to "green" standards; Prevention, early warning, management and overcoming the impact of extreme weather events (heat and cold waves, floods).	•	•

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TABLE 5 Urban adaptation challenges and responses Continued from previous page

Sector	Urban adaptation challenge			Urban adaptation response		Adaptation	Adaptation
	Challenge Description	Data on challenge	Example of urban challenges from NDC 2.0	Response description	Example of urban challenges from NDC 2.0	challenge	response
Industry	Disruptions from extreme weather events and rising temperatures.	Climate change-related disruptions are expected to pose economic risks to global trade, with losses estimated at \$81B, escalating to at least \$122B, considering related economic activities.	Albania NDC 2.0 (page 44): "In Tirana, transport, electricity, and water supply infrastructure as well as small scale industry are highly vulnerable to heavy precipitation and floods."	Promote climate- resilient industrial zoning, adaptive supply chains, and heat- resistant workspaces.	N/A	•	•
Infrastructure	Vulnerability of roads, bridges, and utilities to extreme weather.	Climate change is likely to increase peak wind intensity and duration of sustained winds. Strong gusts of winds can cause tower and conductor damage, as well as damage from falling trees. Hurricane Ida damaged more than 30,000 poles and spans of wire and close to 6,000 transformers.	United Arab Emirates NDC 2.0 (page 45): "Climate change impact on the UAE's infrastructure could also lead to economic repercussions due to transport disruption and reduced reliability of buildings. Lower-risk implications include displacement of the population residing along the coastline and increased flooding in urban areas resulting from decreased drainage holding capacity and the potential for rain fall volume and intensity exceeding normal design parameters in the region."	Upgrade infrastructure for climate resilience, enforce adaptive building codes, and integrate disaster risk reduction.	United Arab Emirates NDC 2.0 (page 46): "To expand climate-resilient infrastructure, the UAE is promoting the design and construction of green buildings and the refurbishment of existing ones. The country is working on a comprehensive roadmap that covers all aspects of the urban environment, including sustainability guidelines for buildings and roads. The UAE is also investing in R&D projects for climate resilient construction materials, such as pavement and concrete, and developing infrastructure proofed against sea-level rise."	•	•
Coastal areas	Rising sea levels and increasing storm surges.	Over 410 million people, their houses and other assets, could be at risk from rising sea levels by 2100 because of the climate crisis. Observed sea level rise data shows that global sea levels have already risen by more than 10cm over the last decade.	Dominican Republic NDC 2.0 (page 60): "It will also contribute to reducing the negative impact of cyclones and storms in the most vulnerable areas, mainly the coastal regions (south, southwest, northeast and the urban coastline of Greater Santo Domingo) and promote physical and fiscal resilience in the face of disaster risk and improve sectoral planning for the transformation of a resilient country."	Strengthen coastal defenses, develop buffer zones, and implement managed retreat strategies in high-risk zones.	Dominican Republic NDC 2.0 (page 83): "Construction of coastal and river defences; slope stabilisation; retrofitting houses, roads, bridges and critical infrastructure"	•	•
Informal Settlements	Vulnerability of slums / informal settlements / urban poor communities	Over 880 million urban residents live in informal settlements highly vulnerable to climate hazards (UN-Habitat, 2022). Residents are disproportionately impacted by climate-related disasters due to weak infrastructure and services (IPCC AR6, 2022).	South Africa NDC 2.0 (page 7): "It is anticipated that a growing number of South African cities and towns will be exposed to the impacts of weather-induced hazards such as flooding, heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, and storms. This is partly due to the projected increase in the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards, but also due to the high socioeconomic vulnerability inherent within communities, as well as poor land-use practices, growing informality, and a failure to rapidly deploy resilient infrastructure associated with accommodating a growing urbanising population."	Climate-resilient upgrading of informal settlements – through secure land tenure, improved drainage, resilient housing, access to basic services, and nature-based solutions – can significantly reduce exposure and strengthen community resilience to climate shocks. Climate change impacts on informal settlements need to be addressed through a loss and damage lens.	Uganda NDC 2.0 (page 23): "Promote sustainable urbanization and housing Proportion of urban dwellers living in informal settlementsBaseline: 58%, 2025 Target: 40%"	•	•

Note: the 2024 report included an additional adaptation criteria – 'Others' – which has been omitted here to help maintain clear insight into what constitutes 'urban content'.

Without these critical enablers flowing to local urban contexts to support mitigation and adaptation projects, even the most ambitious urban and skills) are awarded with a "+" in their rating.

3.4: (Bonus!) Secure the means of implementation commitments risk remaining aspirational rather than actionable. Embedding clear provisions for means of implementation in NDCs strengthens urban climate strategies, ensuring that cities are equipped with the necessary tools to deliver on their commitments.

> NDCs that explicitly include finance (funding pathways), technology (tech-based solutions kit and systems that support mitigation and adaptation), and capacity-building (strengthening institutional and technical expertise, knowledge,

TABLE 6 Exploring the means of implementation

Table 6 offers a a breakdown of finance, technology, and capacity-building measures that can be incorporated to strengthen urban content of NDCs and to receive the '+" distinction.

Background information:					Categories applicable for the rating:		
	Example of Finance options	Examples of Technology	Examples of Capacity building	Fin- ance	Tech- nology	Capacity Building	
Miti- gation	Green bonds for low-carbon transport projects	Smart grids and electrification of public transport	Training municipal staff in carbon accounting				
	Carbon pricing mechanisms to fund urban decarbonization	Al-driven energy efficiency monitoring	Technical assistance for implementing building energy codes Training programs on sustainable transport				
	Public-private partnerships for renewable energy infrastructure		planning				
Adapt- ation	Dedicated adaptation funds for flood resilience	Early warning systems for extreme weather	Community-based disaster preparedness programs				
	Insurance mechanisms for climate-vulnerable infrastructure	Nature-based solutions (e.g., sponge cities, urban wetlands)	Strengthening city climate governance frameworks				
	Resilience bonds for upgrading informal settlements	Smart water management and desalination technology	Capacity-building for climate-resilient urban planning				

Beyond design, beyond pledges



NDCs are not legally binding instruments, yet robust accountability mechanisms can and should be developed through strategic structures, networks, and procedural incentives. By embedding NDCs within international, national, and local frameworks, countries can create the conditions necessary for sustained implementation beyond publication.

4.1 Leverage international networks and processes

Build partnerships, find support and get inspired (see chapter 4 for an overview)

4.2 Enhance public accountability through local engagement

Building accountability in the public space: mechanisms such as ICLEI's Town Hall COPs or UN initiatives such as Integrity Matters generate local buy-in and sociopolitical pressure, ensuring that national commitments are informed by local voices - whether civil society, the business community, or other networks of urban stakeholders. Multilevel collaboration that includes cities and urban stakeholders in NDC design and implementation strengthens ownership and allows national governments to achieve their climate ambition with the support of local governments. This can incentivise the translation of national commitments into action at the community level and introduce generative tensions between national and subnational governments, urban networks, and civil society that strengthens implementation outcomes.

4.3 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Existing reporting frameworks - such as Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)1 and the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF)² - provide structured ways to track progress and encourage implementation through peer comparisons and public disclosure. In addition, continuing to disclose project information to public legers like the CDP-ICLEI Track can enhance the visibility of local needs and likewise produce a generative tension that strengthens implementation outcomes.

By strengthening these accountability levers, national governments can build the institutional conditions necessary to translate NDCs from policy documents into tangible climate action.

¹ A Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a mechanism through which local and regional governments assess and report their progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level: https://unhabitat.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews
2 The Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), established under the Paris Agreement, requires all Parties to track and report their progress toward nationally determined

contributions (NDCs) through standardized reporting formats. https://unfccc.int/FAQ-moving-towards-the-ETF

What is next? A roadmap for multilevel climate action in 2025

4.1 Building momentum

Over the past decade, political commitments, institutional frameworks, and city-led initiatives have reinforced the need for stronger urban content in national climate commitments and built momentum towards this goal.

Encouraged by the work and contributions of nonparty stakeholders, including cities, towns, states and regions to the Paris Agreement process since its adoption and the work of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency to the UNFCCC, the importance of cities for climate action is not only referenced in the COP21 decision to adopt the Paris Agreement, but also the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact, and the COP27 Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan.

At COP28, the negotiations and agreement texts, including the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake, explicitly mentioned the engagement of cities and subnational actors to collectively progress towards the Paris Agreement was explicitly mentioned (UNFCCC 2023). The Global Goal on Adaptation document acknowledged adaptation as a global challenge that required action at all levels, reinforcing the recognition of local efforts alongside national initiatives.

In addition, the momentum for multilevel climate action is increasing, supported by multiple initiatives and developments, including1:

• The COP29 Baku Continuity Coalition: Signed by representatives of Housing and Urban Development Ministries of the COP27 (Egypt), COP28 (UAE), COP 29 (Azerbaijan) and COP30 (Brazil), it ensures that urban priorities are

References to all initiatives can be found in the bibliography.

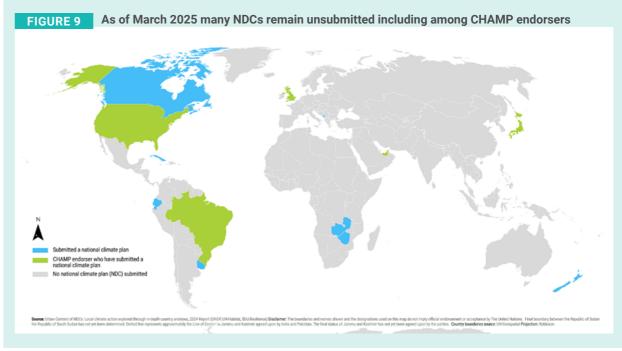
consistently included in the COP agenda. It is dedicated to strengthening continuity between past and future COPs and encouraging the permanent inclusion of urban issues in climate negotiations.

- Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and **Climate Change:** These meetings have shaped urban discussions at the highest level. The COP29 Ministerial Meeting included four High-Level Roundtables focused on Green Construction and Buildings, Urban Transport and Infrastructure, Nature, Health and Agriculture in Cities, and Urban Climate Finance. These meetings brought together over 50 ministers and high-level representatives, with approximately 100 national government delegations participating in the discussions. Building on this momentum, COP30 Ministerial Meeting will further advance urban climate action and showcase the reality and breadth of climate action in cities and regions and the opportunity for multilevel climate action.
- CHAMP (the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships) has emerged as a key driver of multilevel climate action, building momentum for greater urban inclusion in the NDCs. 75 member states have endorsed CHAMP as of March 2025, thus committing to working collaboratively with subnational governments (cities, towns, states, regions) on the development, financing, implementation, and monitoring of relevant national climate strategies. CHAMP was launched at the first Local Climate Action Summit, jointly hosted by the COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies.
- The SURGe Initiative, introduced at COP27, is an implementation vehicle to enable the

Overview of submitted NDCs 3.0

As of end of March 2025, 19 updated NDCs had been submitted to the UNFCCC, 8 of which are

CHAMP endorsing. Initial indications show that 7 out of these (UAE, Brazil, US, Panama, UK, Canada, Japan) had a robust multistakeholder engagement process in the production of the NDC.



translation of global developments and national commitments into localized cross-sectoral climate action. Specifically, it will support the implementation of NDCs 3.0, thereby supporting the political vision of CHAMP.

- Urban20 (U20) and the 2024 U20 Communiqué continue to amplify city voices in the G20. The 2025 Communiqué will push for stronger alignment between G20 climate strategies and urban investment pathways, reinforcing the role of cities in global economic and climate decision-making.
- The IPCC AR6 (2023) underscores cities as key to both mitigation and adaptation. calling for stronger alignment between urban strategies and national climate commitments. The upcoming IPCC Special Report on Climate Change Cities (expected 2027) will provide the first comprehensive scientific assessment of climate change impacts on urban areas and adaptation solutions.
- Local2030 Coalition is the UN System-wide platform supporting the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focusing

on those furthest behind. It connects local and regional governments, national governments, businesses, civil society, and the UN system to collaborate on SDG implementation. Through its platform, Local2030 shares tools, solutions, and resources to help stakeholders develop, implement, and monitor SDG actions, with ongoing updates to support SDG localization.

• The LGMA Constituency - since the first climate COP in 1995, the LGMA has served as the official voice for local and subnational governments within UN Climate Change, connecting them directly to global climate processes.

4.2 Opportunities for support

As Parties prepare for COP30 and the submission of NDCs 3.0, the window of opportunity to strengthen urban content is closing fast (see Box 3 and figure 9). Ensuring that the next generation of NDCs effectively incorporates urban climate action provides a crucial entry point for accelerating local action, reducing emissions, bolstering urban

resilience, and addressing the needs of the millions of urban poor who are most vulnerable to climate change. To seize this opportunity, it is essential to mobilize the full range of resources - particularly financing - to support implementation at the local level and ensure commitments translate into tangible outcomes on the ground.

Strengthening urban content in NDCs requires targeted support. Various initiatives provide technical assistance, funding, and capacity-building to help national and local governments advance urban climate action.

• The NDC Partnership – support for multilevel climate action can be accessed through the NDC Partnership. Requests for support to the Partnership can be made by the national level NDC Partnership Focal Points, located within

the Ministry of Environment and Ministries of Finance or Planning. Based on these requests, the Partnership offers a tailored package of expertise, technical assistance, and funding. This collaborative response provides developing countries with efficient access to a wide range of resources to adapt to and mitigate climate change and foster more equitable and sustainable development. City officials can work with their national-level Focal Point to submit a request for support.

• UNDP/ Climate Promise: Based on the SG's call to action to support member states in the preparation of NDCs 3.0, UNDP through the Climate Promise is leading this process, with a specific focus in 70+ countries. In response to this, UN-Habitat and UNDP jointly support member states to strengthen the urban content of the NDCs as part of the



As countries prepare their next climate plans ahead of COP30, all eyes turn to the city of Belém, Brazil. The coastal city in the Amazon will host the UN's largest climate event

NDC 3.0 revision process. This offer includes capacity building trainings based on this guide, workshops bringing together local and national stakeholders as well as UN-Habitat and UNDP personnel available to support.

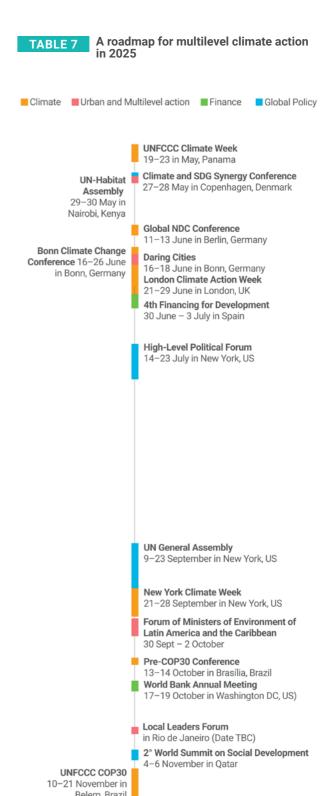
 Technical assistance and capacity-building – UN-Habitat, CHAMP, and leading city networks (ICLEI, C40, UCLG) offer direct support to national and subnational governments, including training, advisory services, and peer-learning exchanges. Leveraging these resources ensures that urban commitments are well-defined, measurable, and financeready, increasing their chances of successful implementation.

4.3 Roadmap to COP30:

Opportunities for stronger collaboration between local and national governments include:

- Key events on the road to COP30 multilevel stakeholders should use key international events as strategic touchpoints to push the urbanized NDC agenda. These moments will provide opportunities to align policy priorities and share best practices. In addition, they will be crucial to driving political commitments to strengthen the urban content of the NDCs (see Table 7).
- Tracking progress with a new Urban Content of the NDC Report at COP30 - to maintain visibility on success, a summary report will be published at COP30 to assess the integration of urban content in NDCs 3.0, identifying progress on key data points, gaps, and opportunities for further action. This report will benchmark progress and serve as a call to action, reinforcing the need for cities to be fully embedded in national climate commitments. Further analysis of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) is planned to supplement this with insight into how cities, urban actors, and urban climate actions are being included in key policy documents.

Table 7 offers a breakdown of important events throughout the 2025 calendar year, particularly those that provide an opportunity to advance multilevel climate action, identify opportunities for capacity building, and strengthen the urban content of NDCs.



G20 Johannesburg Summit

22 - 23 November in South Africa

8-12 December in Nairobi, Kenva

This was developed with information available as of May 2025 and does not

Overview of further resources

Urban Content of NDCs

Local Action for

Global Goals

Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses: 2024

This report provides analysis and guidance to policymakers and practitioners working on climate, development and NDCs to: (i) facilitate better understanding of the urban focus in NDCs, (ii) highlight climate challenges and countries to place cities at the



Local Action for Global Goals: An Opportunity for Enhancing Nationally Determined

As countries prepare to revise their NDCs ahead of COP30, the analysis summarized in this technical brief shows: which countries have the biggest potential to work towards stronger integration of urban content in their NDCs; how they can reap co-benefits of sustainable urban development, effective local

adaptation measures, and reducing emissions by stronger collaboration with local governments.

Housing and Informal Settlements Content in Nationally **Determined Contributions**

This report by Habitat for Humanity International presents findings from an analysis of how housing and informal settlements are integrated into NDCs submitted by various countries. It explores the extent to which nations address housing challenges and strategies in the context of climate adaptation and mitigation, covering 194 countries' most recent NDC updates.



NDC 3.0 Navigator

This interactive tool, developed by the NDC Partnership and the UNFCCC secretariat, helps countries identify opportunities to raise ambition in their NDCs 3.0. It sets out examples of impactful

opportunities to consider, anchored in national sustainable development priorities, Paris Agreement goals, and the first Global Stocktake outcome. The tool also outlines specific opportunities for local and regional governments.

Working with Nature-Based Solutions to Address Climate Change: Trends in NDC Partnership Support

This insight brief provides an analysis of requests related to nature-based solutions (NbS) by partner countries through the NDC Partnership and the support provided. It also offers recommendations to strengthen support for the effective uptake and implementation of NbS through NDCs.



Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through urban climate action

This C40 NDC Ambition Handbook can be utilised by countries during the NDC development phase, to identify the most impactful actions that should be implemented across sectors including energy, transport, buildings, waste, construction and urban planning. Countries can use this as inspiration when selecting, prioritising and defining actions to input into their NDC.



Public Transport National Determined

UITP has created this template for national governments to use to guide and take action in order to strengthen their commitments towards public transport and active mobility in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). Countries can use it to explore options, reflecting national priorities and addressing key implementation and financing needs to strengthen 2025 submissions.

Resources on CHAMP, multilevel climate action

COP28 UAE

Stronger NDCs with cities, states, and regions: Recommendations for national governments

The document demonstrates how the climate action potential presented by subnational governments can not only encourage greater confidence among national governments to meet climate targets but also enhance the credibility of the NDCs themselves. Following this section, "Research Approach" describes

the methodology informing this document. "Background" discusses the role of multilevel partnerships in achieving net zero GHG emissions and enhancing climate resilience. "Document Orientation" situates the reader with a legend and additional context to navigate this document.

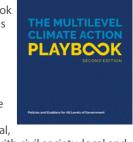
Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action

The Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action is an initiative launched during the 2023 **United Nations Climate Change** Conference (COP28) to enhance collaboration between national and subnational governments – such as cities, towns, states, and regions in developing and implementing

climate strategies. The CHAMP Pledge represents a commitment by national governments to work closely with these subnational entities to achieve more ambitious and inclusive climate action.

The Multilevel Climate Action Playbook: Policies and enablers for all levels of government

This second edition of the Playbook is a guide that lays out the options for national, regional and local authorities from policy levers to institution-building, drawing on examples from national, regional and local level of both mitigation and adaptation. It emphasizes the multi-actor, multilevel areas for action that bring together national,



regional and local governments with civil society, local and indigenous communities, researchers and businesses. It also highlights connections with ongoing policy and program development for climate, sustainable development, urban development and biodiversity.

How national governments can increase finance for subnationa climate action

This report provides national government members of the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) with implementation options, proven financial techniques, and coordination frameworks that can significantly increase finance for subnational climate action, in line with their CHAMP pledges.



The CHAMP Opportunity: A toolkit for cities, towns, states and regions to take action on climate change

This document highlights the opportunities for cities and local governments to leverage CHAMP to drive ambitious climate action. It outlines the ways that mayors, governors, and other subnational leaders can engage with their government to achieve CHAMP goals.



This guide has been developed to offer an understanding of how to improve horizontal and vertical coordination among different levels of government as well as leveraging the contributions of non-State actors such as the private sector, civil societies, community organizations and academia, among others.



This GlobalABC Subnationals Action Group report,, aims to inform and inspire decision-makers and officials at all levels of government and their key partners from private sector, civil society, NGOs, investors and donors. It presents opportunities for

action, showcases examples of how to respond to challenges through effective multilevel governance and multilevel partnerships, and concludes with recommendations for key stakeholder groups to scale up local action.

Climate Emergency, Urban Opportunity: How National Governments Can Secure Economic Prosperity and Avert Climate Catastrophe by

This report shows that a carefully managed transition to zero-carbon, climate-resilient cities could help secure national economic prosperity and improve quality of life while tackling the climate crisis.

Non-state and Subnational Action Guide: Integrating the impact of non-state and subnational mitigation actions into national greenhouse gas projections, targets and planning

The purpose of this guide is to help national policymakers and analysts assess the impact of nonstate and subnational actions. This knowledge can inform and improve the development of future national GHG trajectories and climate

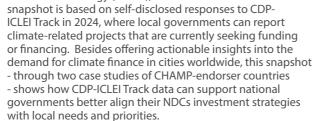
relevant policies and targets, such as those in the NDCs. The methodology contained in this guide provides steps for users to identify, quantify and aggregate the impact of non-state and subnational actions, and integrate them into mitigation



CDP Global Snapshot 2024: <u>nowcasing Cities' Investment</u> Needs for Aligned Multilevel

mate Action

Developed in partnership with the Global Covenant of Mayor for Climate & Energy (GCoM), this





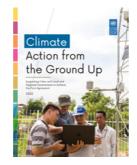
Since the first climate COP in 1995, the LGMA has served as the official voice for local and subnational governments within UN Climate

Change, connecting them directly to global climate processes. The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a turning point, recognizing the essential role of these governments in enhancing NDCs and driving transformative climate action. The LGMA has since advocated for a process that systematically recognizes, engages, and empowers local and subnational government as central actors to global climate

targets, projections and scenarios, which may support policy development, policy evaluation and target-setting.

Climate Action from the Ground Un

Presents 19 country case studies where national, regional, and local governments work together on unified climate strategies. Highlights a "wholeof-government" approach to achieving NDC targets through multilevel action



"CHAMP data set" of 18 indicators disclosed by subnational governments through CDP and CDP-ICLEI Track

Multilevel integration indicators provide evidence of existing collaboration, highlight best practices, and identify opportunities to enhance cooperation and integrate subnational climate components into NDCs and NAPs. Place-based action indicators offer an assessment of subnational climate action and ambition, providing valuable insights into local priorities. This facilitates better coordination and alignment within the broader climate agenda.

Enabling conditions indicators offer an assessment of the current state of subnational action, project finance and capacity needs, project implementation, and progress tracking. By leveraging this data, national governments can better target their support and policy efforts to drive effective climate action.



strategies. If successful at COP30 in Belém, this will become the new standard. LGMA provide a number of resources that contribute to multilevel climate action: **LGMA Towards COP30 LGMA COP29 Joint Positions**

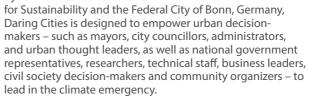
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CITES ICLEI SUSTANABUTY.

POWERING COLLECTIVE ACTION TO RESPOND TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Daring Cities 2024: Powering Collective Action to Respond to the Climate Emergency

Daring Cities 2024 marked the fifth iteration of the annual event, building on the legacy established since its inception in 2020. The heart of the event has always been celebrating and promoting local climate action and connecting that action to national and global climate goals and action. Co-convened by ICLEI - Local Governments

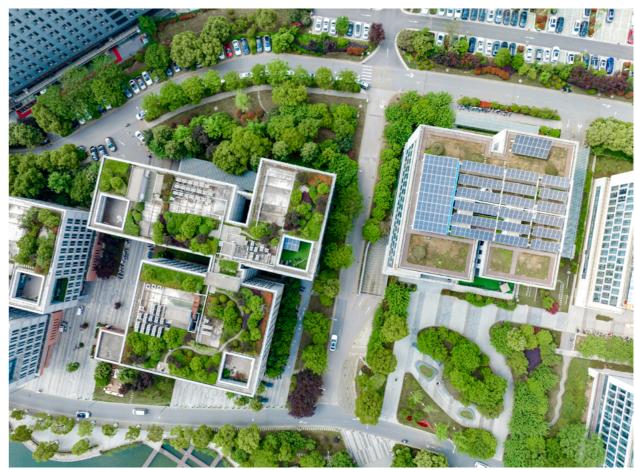


SDG Localization Marker

Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refers to tailoring global objectives into reality at the local level, in coherence with national, subnational, and local frameworks and people's priorities. This approach acknowledges the diversity of challenges and opportunities that different territories face, ensuring that strategies for sustainable



development are not one-size-fits-all but context-specific, inclusive and participatory. Localization also relies on collaboration among a multitude of stakeholders, including various levels of government and their associations. coalitions and networks, civil society, academia, multilateral and regional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, etc. whether governmental or non-governmental, each entity contributes distinct perspectives and methods in advancing the SDGs.



A growing body of tools and quidance is available to help cities and countries scale local climate solutions including urban greening projects. Adobe Stock/Wang

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Annex 1: Further sector-specific initiatives

Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (Global ABC). The GlobalABC Subnationals Action Group is designed to accelerate local solutions for a just and inclusive transition towards a decarbonized and resilient buildings and construction sector, by facilitating multilevel stakeholder dialogues around the globe, enabling sustainable socio-economic development and mobilizing access to finance.

Cool Coalition and the Cooling Pledge actively engage cities and subnational governments in climate action by committing to sustainable cooling solutions. Signatories, including numerous cities, pledge to develop Heat Action Plans by 2026 to mitigate urban heat through strategies like passive cooling and increased green spaces. Additionally, they commit to enhancing the area and quality of urban green and blue spaces by 2030, aligning with the Paris Agreement goals. This multilevel approach ensures that local actions contribute to global climate objectives, fostering collaboration between national and subnational entities.

The Food is Never Waste Coalition and Food Waste Breakthrough, led by UNEP and UN Climate Change High-Level Champions, aim to halve global food waste by 2030 and reduce methane emissions by 7 per cent, involving national and subnational governments, private sectors, and NGOs. As part of the 2030 Breakthroughs, it fosters global collaboration on circular food systems and food waste reduction.

Generation Restoration, funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, unites 24 cities under the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. Through nature-based solutions, cities like Paris tackle climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises, demonstrating the key role of subnational actors in achieving global restoration goals.

UrbanShift is a UNEP-led GEF7 programme, implemented in partnership with the World Resources Institute (WRI), C40 Cities, ICLEI, UNDP, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. With an allocation of roughly \$147 million in GEF resources and bringing in \$2.1 billion in co-financing, it supports 9 countries (Argentina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone) with the implementation of sustainable and integrated

urban planning projects in 23 selected cities. This programme provides support for effective multi-level governance on environmental issues, including through the delivery of funding from the national level to cities and the organization of multi-level dialogues.

Town Hall COPs are aimed at fostering dialogue in local communities with their local, subnational and national governments and partners. It enables local and regional governments with 1) a community-centred process to showcase local climate action in an event that educates, motivates and drives action forward, designed to reflect the specific priorities and needs of the community; 2) strategies to make Town Hall COP events nationally relevant, connecting what is happening locally to what is being done at a country level; and 3) an opportunity to show how climate action is fundamentally interconnected with community health, nature, justice, consumption, affordability, jobs and culture.

The Call to Deliver an efficient Local and Subnational Loss and Damage Response is an initiative led by UCLG, on behalf of the Global Taskforce and the LGMA Constituency. This call was launched on November 18, 2024, during a session at COP29 in Baku at the LGMA Pavilion. This call builds on the insights from the UCLG Positioning Paper on Loss and Damage, which emphasizes that adaptation alone is no longer sufficient. It recognizes the urgent need for a coordinated whole-of-governance response to protect the most vulnerable, restore ecosystems, and uphold climate justice. The Positioning Paper was built upon the consultation of Local and Subnational Governments, experts and Organised Civil Society.

A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world









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





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