UN-HABITAT

A Guide for Urban Managers

Effective Climate Governance in Intermediary Cities: A Focus on Climate Mitigation

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P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA
Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)
www.unhabitat.org

Acknowledgements

Coordinators: Remy Sietchiping, Melissa Permezel and Hazel Kuria

Author: Grace Githiri

Peer reviewers: Anne Amin, Bernhard Berth, Eric Njue, Samuel Njuguna, Mark Ojal, Raymond Otieno, Lea Ranalder, Ignatius Siko, James Verner and Isabel Wetzel

Editing support: Vicky Quinlan

Design and Layout: Mark Mungai and Jean Robert Gatsinzi

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to assist urban managers and practitioners in intermediary cities in effectively implementing climate governance, while also serving as a resource for stakeholders advocating for climate change mitigation through long-term and preventive actions. It was developed in response to a gap in climate governance support for intermediary cities, identified through the Cities-Connect project—a collaboration between UN-Habitat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development—and builds on insights from the 2022 joint publication on Climate Change and Intermediary Cities. Intermediary cities face distinct challenges, such as limited governance capacity, reliance on agriculture and informal sectors, and strong urban-rural linkages, all of which influence their emission profiles and mitigation strategies. However, these cities also have an opportunity to avoid high-carbon infrastructure patterns as they grow, positioning them as ideal candidates for low-carbon solutions in sectors such as waste management, energy efficiency and sustainable transportation. Climate mitigation in intermediary cities can drive social and economic co-benefits such as job creation and improved public health, further solidifying their essential role in achieving global climate goals.

Specifically focused on mitigation, this guide provides a set of approaches, resources and tools to help cities address governance barriers, align with global climate frameworks, and access international climate finance and partnerships. It emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive transformation of human and economic systems for effective climate action. The guide highlights how mitigation attracts private sector investment, offering city managers a range of funding opportunities and enabling lasting initiatives.

Additionally, it explores how cities can align sectoral budgets—across transportation, energy, food and health—with climate objectives. Building on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report (2018), the guide outlines pathways for intermediary cities to take the lead in transitioning urban infrastructure, energy systems, land use and industries to significantly reduce emissions. Overall, it equips stakeholders with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of climate governance in intermediary cities.

Minski rajon, Minskaja voblasć, Belarus © Olia Danilevich/ Pexels

Quang Ngai, Vietnam © Q. Hưng Phạm/Pexels

PATHWAYS TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN INTERMEDIARY CITIES

Intermediary cities, with their unique blend of urban and rural characteristics, face distinct challenges and opportunities in the realm of climate resilience. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, leveraging diverse strategies to effectively mitigate climate impacts and enhance sustainability. This section outlines 11 critical pathways to climate resilience tailored specifically for intermediary cities. Each pathway offers a strategic entry point, providing actionable insights and practical steps to foster climate mitigation efforts. By exploring these pathways, intermediary cities can build a robust framework for achieving long-term climate resilience, and integrating innovative solutions and collaborative approaches to address their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

A. Raise awareness and strengthen stakeholder participation

Effective community and stakeholder engagement is vital for climate mitigation in intermediary cities. The Action for Climate Empowerment, emphasized in both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, highlights awareness-raising as crucial for empowering society in climate action. Awareness helps to reduce resistance, gather support and encourage voluntary behaviour changes to limit greenhouse emissions. Intermediary cities have an advantage due to their small jurisdictions, which allows for targeted awareness campaigns; however, limited resources, such as staff and finances, may challenge the implementation of these strategies. Awareness mechanisms should be tailored to specific local contexts and scales.

To enhance awareness, the United Nations Environment Programme developed a handbook in 2006 outlining a five-step approach to developing an outreach programme by governments at all levels. These steps are relevant today and can be adopted and adapted by urban managers in intermediary cities as follows:

1 

Step 1: Commit to developing an awareness programme: Committing involves defining a clear vision and goals for stakeholder engagement and partnerships. This may entail establishing a climate action working group or committee capable of investing time and resources into the subject matter.

2 

Step 2: Conduct a needs assessment for the intermediary city: The views and insights of various stakeholders and partners may differ from those of the government. Therefore, awareness programmes should consider the needs of major stakeholders and individuals from all walks of life. This step is crucial in exploring climate change priorities and awareness levels, and it lays the foundation for defining target audiences and messages. It also helps to identify existing communication resources and barriers to action.

3

Step 3: Organize a workshop for stakeholders: Conducting a workshop that brings together interested entities and individuals who participated in the needs assessment is essential. The workshop is intended to review and validate the findings of the needs assessment, agree on a list of priority activities, recommend implementation methods and resource allocation, and produce a strategy paper and action plan for establishing a sustainable and long-term climate awareness programme.

4

Step 4: Implement priority activities: Identified as priorities by stakeholders and approved at the workshop, priority activities may include producing popular brochures, radio programmes, educational curricula for schools, and training manuals for technical staff, among others.

5

Step 5: Strengthen and sustain the programme: To ensure sustainability, the effectiveness of priority activities and the overall strategy need to be assessed, either formally or informally. These assessments may lead the working group or committee to revise its original strategies and plans. Maintaining funding and collaborative partnerships over the long term is crucial for programme sustainability.

Bonn, Germany, protest "Fridays for Future" © Mika Baumeister/Pexels

B. Enhance capacity for effective climate mitigation

Enhancing capacities for climate governance in intermediary cities requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the unique challenges and opportunities presented by these urban centres. Below is a step-by-step guide on how to effectively build capacities for climate governance:

1 

Assessment of existing capacities: Begin by conducting a thorough assessment of the current capacities within intermediary cities related to climate mitigation governance. Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and areas for improvement. This assessment should encompass technical expertise, institutional frameworks, financial resources and community engagement mechanisms. Some of the toolkits include UNDP Capacity Assessment Tool for Climate Change Mainstreaming, City Resilience Index and UN-Habitat Planning for climate change toolkit.

2 

Tailored training and capacity-building programmes: Develop targeted training and capacity-building programmes designed to address the specific needs identified in the assessment phase. These programmes should cover a wide range of topics, including climate science, policy development, stakeholder engagement, project management and monitoring and evaluation techniques. Ensure that training materials and methodologies are adapted to the local context and are accessible to diverse stakeholders. An example that could be adopted is the UNFCCC Paris Committee on Capacity-building toolkit. Morocco has also established a subnational Climate Finance Expertise Programme, which is designed to enhance local governance and capacity to address climate change through targeted financial mechanisms. This programme focuses on increasing the expertise of subnational governments in accessing and managing climate finance. It aligns with the country's broader climate objectives, such as its nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement and its commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience (Marrakech Partnership, 2018).

3 

Fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange: Facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange among intermediary cities, as well as with national and international partners. Establish platforms for sharing best practices, lessons learned and innovative approaches to climate mitigation governance. Encourage networking opportunities, study tours, workshops and peer-to-peer learning initiatives to foster a supportive community of practice. An example of a toolkit is the ICLEI Building urban climate change resilience: a toolkit for local governments (ICLEI ACCCRN Process) and collaborative multilevel governance for climate resilient development course.

4 

Engagement of local stakeholders: Involve a wide range of local stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, businesses, academia and community groups, in capacity-building efforts. Ensure that training programmes are inclusive, participatory and culturally sensitive, taking into account the diverse perspectives and needs of different stakeholders. Empower local leaders and champions to drive climate action initiatives within their respective communities. The Community Engagement Toolkit developed by the World Bank provides guidance on designing and implementing inclusive community engagement processes.

5 

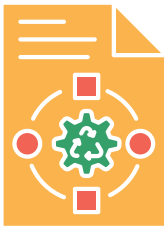
Integration into urban planning and policy processes: Embed capacity-development initiatives into urban planning and policy processes to ensure sustainability and long-term impact. Integrate climate considerations into municipal planning frameworks, development strategies and infrastructure investments. Foster interdisciplinary collaboration between different government departments and agencies to mainstream climate mitigation into all aspects of city governance. The UN-Habitat Planning for Climate Change toolkit offers practical guidance on mainstreaming climate considerations into urban planning processes.

6 

Access to financial resources: Provide intermediary cities with access to financial resources and technical assistance to support capacity-building efforts. Mobilize funding from various sources, including national governments, international donors, multilateral development banks and private sector partnerships. Support cities in developing grant proposals, securing loans and leveraging innovative financing mechanisms to fund climate projects and initiatives. Table 1 contains some diverse sources of funding for urban areas. Here is a guide[1] for intermediary cities to access climate finance.

7 

Continuous monitoring and evaluation: Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and effectiveness of capacity-building interventions over time. Collect data on key performance indicators, such as greenhouse gas emissions reductions, policy implementation rates, community engagement levels and knowledge uptake among stakeholders. Use feedback loops to adapt and refine capacity-building strategies based on lessons learned and emerging priorities. The City of Melbourne's Climate Change Mitigation Action strategy includes a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress towards emission reduction targets and assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures.



C. Develop and implement supportive policy and legal frameworks

Policies are key to addressing issues in intermediary cities and clarifying responsibilities in each government level. Urban legislation strengthens city resilience and reduces emissions by shaping land use, infrastructure and services, and guiding planning decisions. Regulations support long-term climate action and sustainability, but leadership in intermediary cities must be active in devolution and national urban policy discussions to foster cooperation. Establishing legal frameworks for climate budgets is crucial for implementing action plans. However, regulations alone may not suffice. Incentives such as subsidies, tax benefits and green standards can attract developers, businesses and residents to support climate goals in intermediary cities.

Proposed steps for cities without established policies for climate action:

1. **Assessment of conditions:** Conduct a detailed study to identify climate-related challenges, their causes, consequences, trends and inequities within the intermediary city.

2. **Definition of climate policy interventions:** Based on identified problems, define relevant climate policy interventions tailored to the city's context.

3. **Policy choices selection and formulation:** Evaluate various policy choices related to adaptation and mitigation using criteria such as cost-benefit analysis or multi-criteria analysis. Compare, contrast and document selected policy choices for official guidance.

4. **Implementation of climate policy and regulations:** Implement selected climate policies and regulations effectively.

5. **Policy evaluation:** Continuously evaluate the impact of policies to assess their effectiveness and achievement of climate goals.

Cities with established policies can enhance their climate action efforts by:

1 

Promoting sustainable land-use and urban planning: Policies and regulations that promote sustainable land-use and urban planning can be adopted in cities. This can include preserving green spaces, promoting mixed-use developments and encouraging compact and walkable neighborhoods. By prioritizing sustainable land use, city authorities can reduce urban sprawl, enhance biodiversity and create more livable communities.

2 

Expanding incentive programmes: Broaden existing programmes for renewable energy adoption, electric vehicles and green building standards. This can include increasing subsidies, extending tax benefits or introducing additional rewards for environmental practices.

3 

Streamlining permitting: Simplify and expedite permitting processes for climate-friendly projects. Implement expedited reviews or offer fee reductions for initiatives aligned with climate goals.

4 

Enhancing partnerships: Strengthen collaborations between public and private sectors. Establish dedicated platforms for ongoing dialogue and joint project development.

5 

Implementing performance-based regulations: Transition to performance-based standards to drive continuous improvement. Establish benchmarks for energy efficiency, emissions reduction and sustainable development.

6 

Promoting Community Engagement: Increase participation in climate initiatives through workshops, forums, and educational campaigns. Empower residents to take meaningful steps towards climate resilience.

D. Establish a climate governance framework

Establishing **clear institutional frameworks** that incorporate climate mitigation responsibilities is essential for effective climate action in intermediary cities. Intermediary cities could therefore:

1 **Develop a dedicated climate office or unit:** Create a climate change or sustainability office within the city government responsible for coordinating climate mitigation efforts across sectors such as energy, transportation, waste management and land-use planning. An example is the Vietnamese network Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (Tyler, 2017), formed by three cities to support climate change initiatives. In this case, an office equipped with necessary resources, technical expertise and administrative staff was established with the support of local government to develop a local climate change resilience plan for the cities. For optimal effectiveness, such agencies should be legally established and adequately equipped with human and financial resources.

2 **Integrate into existing institutions:** Ensure the climate office is integrated with other municipal departments (for example, urban planning, environmental protection, transportation) to streamline decision-making and implementation.

3 **Define clear roles and responsibilities:** Roles, mandates and reporting lines of different departments and agencies involved in climate mitigation, ensuring that all know their responsibilities.

4 **Establish a multi-stakeholder taskforce:** A climate action taskforce that includes representatives from government departments, civil society, the private sector, academia and local communities.

5 **Facilitate inter-departmental collaboration:** Collaboration across departments (urban planning, public works, transport) ensures comprehensive climate strategies and integration across policy areas. As demonstrated in Viet Nam, not only does this approach save resources by streamlining budgetary matters, but it also increases awareness, garnering support across the city government and potentially enhancing national-level support.

6 **Form an advisory board:** An advisory board of climate experts and professionals could provide guidance, technical expertise and strategic advice on implementing climate policies.

Rice Farmer Working in Bengkulu, Indonesia © Rahmad Himawan/Pexels

E. Strengthen coordination with higher level of government

Collaboration with the national or subnational government can also enhance climate action strategies within intermediary cities. This collaboration fosters increased knowledge-sharing, access to funding, capacity-building and joint initiatives and projects on climate action. Intermediary cities can employ various strategies to attract national or subnational government support for climate funding. Some of these include the following:

1 

Advocacy and lobbying: Engaging in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about climate needs and the benefits of investing in climate action, building relationships with policymakers and lobbying for dedicated funding streams. The Manchester Climate Change Agency[2] in the United Kingdom serves as a platform for advocacy and collaboration between the city government, businesses and civil society to secure funding and support for climate initiatives.

2 

Demonstrating local commitment: Implementing local initiatives to reduce emissions, enhance resilience and engage communities, showcasing commitment to climate action. Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan[3] demonstrated the city's commitment to sustainability, attracting support from both provincial and federal governments in Canada.

3 

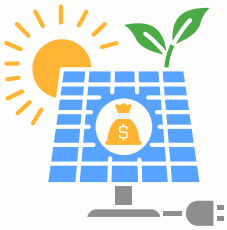
Partnership and collaboration: Leveraging partnerships with other cities, regional organizations and non-governmental entities to amplify impact and pool resources for climate funding.

4 

Aligning with national priorities: Aligning climate goals and initiatives with national priorities and policies to make a compelling case for government support. The City of Cape Town in South Africa aligned its climate action plans with national commitments under the Paris Agreement, securing funding for climate resilience projects.[4]

5 

Capacity-building and technical assistance: Seeking support from national or subnational governments for capacity-building and technical assistance to develop robust climate plans and proposals. In India, the Smart Cities Mission[5] provides technical and financial support to intermediary cities for climate resilience measures, enhancing their ability to attract additional funding.



F. Ensure financial sustainability for climate mitigation

Funding is a crucial factor in determining the planning and execution of climate actions in intermediary cities. It begins with fiscal decentralization to subnational levels, empowering intermediary cities to plan and allocate financial resources accordingly. However, actions that intermediary cities could take include:

1 

Climate mitigation budgeting: Allocate dedicated funds in the city's budget for climate mitigation projects. This could include investments in renewable energy, public transport infrastructure and green building retrofits. This could be in engagement with the public stakeholders. See box 1 for an example in Bristol, England.

Box 1: Climate response budgeting in Bristol, England

Climate response budgeting in intermediary cities can be exemplified by the case of Bristol, England, which implemented participatory budgeting to address climate action (see box 14). Bristol City Council engaged residents in allocating GBP 1 million of the budget towards green initiatives through a participatory process. Residents proposed and voted on projects across themes such as cleaner air, waste management, energy, nature conservation and transportation. This approach empowered residents, raised awareness and identified grassroots projects reflecting local priorities.

2 **Green bonds and climate financing:** Explore innovative financing options, such as issuing green bonds, applying for international climate finance (see table 1 for options) or participating in carbon markets, to secure long-term funding for mitigation actions.

3 **Create a climate fund:** Establish a local climate fund that aggregates financial resources from government ,including taxes, private sector and donor contributions to support climate mitigation projects in intermediary cities. See box 2 on tax collected used for Solar-powered Street lighting.

Box 2: Solar-powered street lighting from street lighting tax in Kupang, Indonesia

Kupang in Indonesia has installed solar-powered lighting and energy efficient lighting from street lighting tax collected from residents. The tax is collected by local government via the State electricity company. This has been further formalized in the national agenda, which empowers the local governments in Indonesia. Additionally, the national Government has mobilized financial resources to support the achievement of the emission reduction targets and the implementation of the National Action Plan on Climate Change through the Indonesia Climate Change Trust Fund. Local governments, including those of intermediary cities, have access to this fund if the climate action strategies contribute to achievement of local development plans and targets (see annex 2).

Sources: (UNDP, 2021)

© Bayu Nugroho/Unsplash

4

Grants and partnerships: Apply for grants from national government supporting sustainability and work with private sector partners.In addition to accessing funds from existing local and national budgets, intermediary cities have the opportunity to access a variety of global or regional urban climate funds, as detailed in table 1. Similarly, the Climate Policy Initiative offers a comprehensive guide on accessing climate finance tailored specifically for intermediary cities, providing valuable insights that can inform decision-making by local authorities.

Table 1: Some sources of climate funding for intermediary cities

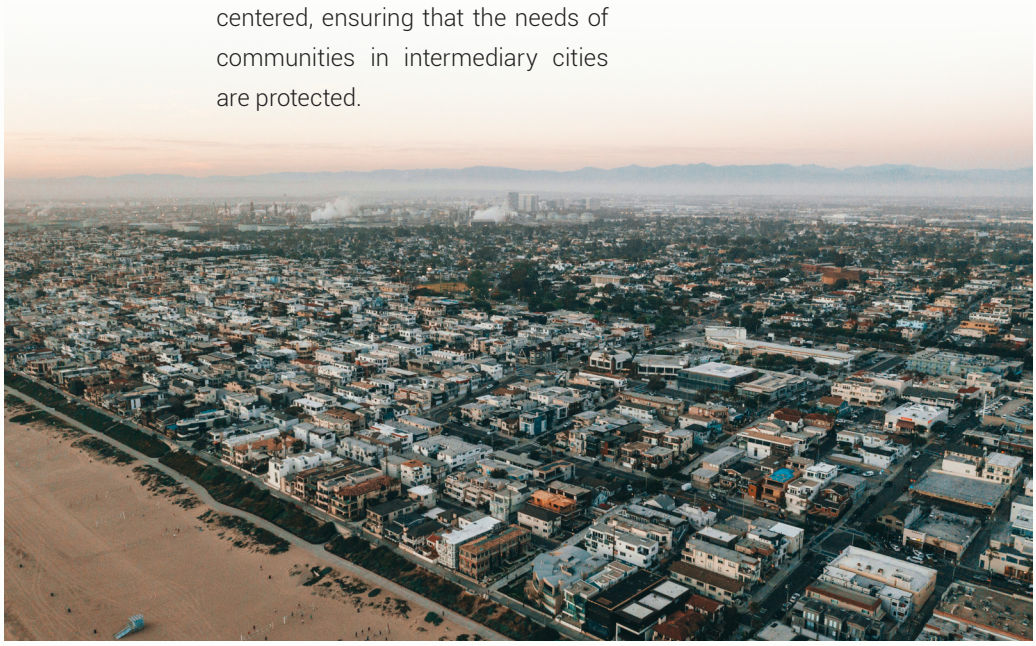
Donor	About	Funding modalities
Green Climate Fund	A major international climate finance institution that provides financial support to developing countries for climate mitigation and adaptation projects.	Grants, concessional loans, and equity investments. Local authorities can access green climate funding through accredited entities such as national governments, multilateral development banks and international organizations.
Global Environment Facility	It offers funding for climate mitigation activities in sectors such as energy, transportation, forestry, and waste management.	Grants and concessional funding to support projects that address global environmental issues, including climate change. GEF projects often involve partnerships between governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.
European Union Funds	Funding support for climate mitigation projects, such as renewable energy installations, energy efficiency upgrades, and sustainable transportation initiatives, in European Union member States and neighbouring countries.	Financial support to cities and regions through various funding programmes, including the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Horizon Europe programme.

International climate initiatives	Initiatives such as the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy and the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) support climate mitigation efforts at the local level	They provide technical assistance, capacity building, and networking opportunities, thus facilitating access to climate finance for cities and local authorities.
Bilateral aid agencies	Bilateral aid agencies, such as the United States Agency for International Development, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the former Department for International Development, and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development provide financial support to local authorities in developing countries for climate mitigation projects	They often prioritize funding for projects that align with their respective countries' climate and development priorities.
Multilateral development banks	Including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank. They finance projects in sectors such as renewable energy, public transport, green infrastructure and urban planning.	They offer loans, grants and technical assistance to support climate mitigation initiatives in intermediary cities and other urban areas.
Private foundations and philanthropic organizations	They include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation. They often focus on innovative solutions, capacity-building and leveraging additional resources for maximum impact.	They offer grants and funding support for climate mitigation projects led by local authorities and community-based organizations.

G. Advocate for climate sensitive urban plans

Effective governance could ensure that urban planning processes and products are climate sensitive. By integrating climate considerations into urban planning, policymakers can mitigate climate risks and enhance resilience in cities. Town plans, for example, aim to balance the development demands while protecting the natural and cultural environments and achieving social and economic objectives. Urban transport plans improve infrastructure and connections related to transport, while energy plans focus on enhancing energy generation, distribution and conversion. However, it is essential that these plans are also people-centered, ensuring that the needs of communities in intermediary cities are protected. This approach fosters inclusivity and sustainability in urban development.[6]

UN-Habitat has developed tools that could be adopted by intermediary cities for planning climate change adaptation and mitigation. These tools include the Law and Climate Change Toolkit, Planning for Climate Change,[7] and the Guiding Principles for City Climate Action Planning.[8] Integrating climate change considerations into the urban planning of intermediary cities can be approached through three options: ad hoc approaches, stand-alone plans and mainstreaming.



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1 **Ad hoc approaches:** These approaches target specific climate change issues without encompassing the entire planning process. They are relevant for both climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. For instance, an ad hoc approach for mitigation could involve replacing public transport buses with more energy-efficient models.

2 **Stand-alone plans:** These plans are specifically designed to address climate adaptation, mitigation or both. They typically include a detailed implementation strategy and undergo the complete planning process. Local climate action plans are examples of stand-alone plans aimed at addressing climate-related challenges.

3 **Mainstreaming climate change:** This approach involves integrating climate change considerations into existing plans, such as energy plans, transportation plans and master plans. For example, mainstreaming climate change into town plans might entail demarcating zones affected by climate change. Similarly, energy plans could identify risks associated with electricity distribution and generation facilities and support climate mitigation through energy-efficient measures.

PARKROYAL, Singapore © Lesterr/Unsplash

H. Use data and effective communication channels

Using data and effective communication channels is crucial for developing evidence-based climate action plans and policies. Climate data spans various departments and government levels, necessitating horizontal and vertical collaboration to collect, analyse and synthesize reliable information. Cross-departmental, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration facilitates information-sharing, enabling intermediary cities to partner with actors such as local media houses and civil society groups through campaigns and community awareness events. Feedback reports enable timely adjustments to plans and budgets. Box 3 outlines how to effectively use data in enhancing governance of climate mitigation in intermediary cities.

Box 3: Step by step process of how to use data

A. Assess data needs and sources

- Identify key climate risks: Assess the specific climate vulnerabilities and risks faced by intermediary cities, such as flooding, drought, heatwaves, and so on.
- Data collection sources: Identify local, national and international data sources, including satellite data, climate models and Internet of Things sensors. Data can come from urban planning departments, environmental monitoring agencies, community-based sources and open data platforms.
- Sector-specific data: Focus on sectors heavily impacted by climate change (for example, energy, water, transportation) and collect sector-specific data such as emissions, energy use and resource consumption.

B. Strengthen data infrastructure

- Develop data collection systems: Implement or enhance digital infrastructure for real-time data collection, such as smart grids, environmental sensors and GIS-based systems.
- Data integration platforms: Create platforms that integrate and consolidate data from multiple sources for centralized access by city planners and decision-makers.
- Open data and partnerships: Facilitate open data initiatives and partnerships with universities, private sector firms and research institutions to ensure continuous data flow and innovation.

C. Analyse Data for Climate Mitigation

- Data analytics tools: Use big data analytics, machine learning models and climate simulation software to predict climate-related impacts on infrastructure, land use and energy demand.
- Risk mapping and modelling: Use data to create heat maps, flood models and pollution exposure maps to identify high-risk zones in intermediary cities.
- Scenario planning: Conduct scenario analysis using historical data and climate projections to guide mitigation strategies.

D. Engage stakeholders with data-driven Insights

- Community participation: Involve local communities by making climate data accessible through dashboards or mobile apps, allowing for localized input and knowledge-sharing.
- Government collaboration: Coordinate with national and regional governments to align data-driven policies and ensure intermediary cities are integrated into broader climate action plans.
- Capacity-building: Train municipal staff and stakeholders on the use of data for decision-making and climate resilience planning.

E. Develop climate mitigation policies

- Evidence-based policy design: Use data insights to formulate climate mitigation strategies, focusing on sustainable urban planning, green infrastructure, renewable energy adoption and waste management.
- Data-backed targets: Set measurable goals for emissions reduction, energy efficiency and resilience-building based on the analysed data.
- Monitor and evaluate policies: Use real-time data to track the progress of climate mitigation efforts, assess policy effectiveness and adjust strategies accordingly.

F. Leverage funding and partnerships

- Attract funding with data insights: Leverage the data to build robust, evidence-backed proposals for climate funding from international organizations, development banks and private sector investors.
- Public-private partnerships: Collaborate with computer technology companies, data analysts and environmental organizations to deploy smart technologies and climate adaptation measures in intermediary cities.

G. Create a data governance framework

- Establish data governance protocols: Define clear rules for data ownership, sharing, security and privacy to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Cross-sector collaboration: Facilitate partnerships between urban planners, climate scientists and data experts to ensure the interdisciplinary use of data in policymaking.
- Data-driven monitoring tools: Develop monitoring systems that allow continuous tracking of climate indicators, making it easier to evaluate the success of mitigation efforts.

H. Scale successful models

- Replicate successful interventions: Use the data from pilot projects or specific sectors (for example, energy-efficient buildings, electric public transport) to replicate successful models across other intermediary cities.
- Network of cities: Share best practices and data-driven success stories through networks of intermediary cities, encouraging collaboration on climate mitigation.

Additionally, adopting a reporting method aligned with national-level reporting ensures intermediary cities contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change effectively. Several international reporting methodologies are relevant for intermediary cities to enhance transparency, accountability and comparability in their climate-related data. These include:

I. **Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM):**[9] A global alliance committed to addressing climate change, GCoM provides standardized reporting frameworks such as the Common Reporting Framework and the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories.

II. **Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP):**[10] This offers a platform for cities and companies to disclose environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation strategies, through programmes such as CDP Cities.

III. **ICLEI** – Local Governments for Sustainability: ICLEI, a network of local and regional governments, offers tools such as the **carbon Climate Registry (cCR)**[11] for tracking greenhouse gas emissions and climate actions.

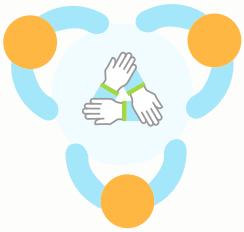
IV. **ISO 14064:**[12] This standard provides guidelines for quantifying, monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and removals, ensuring consistent and transparent accounting practices.

V. **City Resilience Profiling Tool:**[13] Developed by UN-Habitat, this tool helps cities assess resilience to climate-related hazards and identify priority areas for action.

VI. **Sustainable Development Goals Reporting:**[14] Intermediary cities can align climate reporting with Goal 13 (Climate Action), tracking progress towards targets related to mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

VII. **Urban Climate Adaptation Tool (Urban CAT):**[15] Developed by the World Bank, this tool assists cities in assessing vulnerability to climate change impacts and evaluating adaptation options, facilitating integration of climate considerations into urban planning and decision-making processes.

Electric Towers during Golden Hour © Pixabay



I. Leverage partnerships with the private sector

Leveraging partnerships with private sector organizations presents a valuable opportunity for intermediary cities to enhance their capacity through collaboration, especially considering their limited resources and capabilities compared to larger cities. Public-private partnerships enable cities to tap into the expertise and experience of private companies to implement innovative solutions and access finance and technology resources offered by private companies. See box 4 for some examples.

Possible steps for intermediary cities to leverage partnerships with the private sector:

1 **Identify potential private sector partners:** Find companies with expertise in sustainability and relevant technologies through industry reports and networking. Ensure their goals align with your city's climate objectives and assess their interest in partnerships.

2 **Identify shared goals:** Clearly define common objectives with potential private sector partners to ensure alignment on climate action and sustainability.

3 **Engage in mutual benefit planning:** Develop partnerships where both parties gain value, such as through funding, technology transfer or market opportunities.

4 **Establish oversight and accountability:** Implement governance structures to monitor progress, ensure transparency and hold partners accountable.

5 **Unlock funding and resources:** Use private sector investment to access financial resources and innovative technologies needed for climate initiatives.

6 **Pilot new solutions:** Collaborate with private companies, including tech start-ups, to test and refine new technologies and approaches in real-world settings.

7 **Adapt external expertise:** Leverage private sector experience and insights to adapt successful sustainability programmes and technologies to local contexts.

8 **Build a supportive infrastructure:** Ensure that fundamental elements such as political will, basic infrastructure and a skilled workforce are in place to attract and sustain partnerships.

9 **Foster long-term relationships:** Cultivate trust and shared values with private sector partners to develop lasting collaborations with ongoing benefits.

Box 4. Case studies on successful climate partnerships in cities

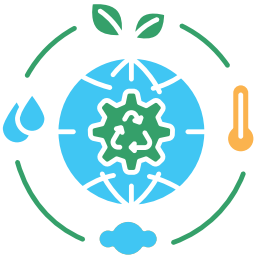
1. Partnerships in action: Medellín, Colombia

The city of Medellín partnered with Empresas Públicas de Medellín, the publicly owned utility company, to upgrade infrastructure and expand access to clean energy. This collaboration facilitated the installation of a citywide metro system, cable cars, bike lanes and the conversion of vehicles to natural gas, enhancing mobility while reducing carbon emissions. Additionally, solar panels were added to municipal buildings through a partnership with the private sector. By leveraging partnerships, Medellín accelerated its transition to sustainability (Restrepo-Mieth and others, 2020).

2. Co-benefits in Durban, South Africa

The eThekwini Municipality in Durban partnered with private companies to launch green economy initiatives, creating jobs and mitigating climate change. These initiatives included waste-to-energy and food-to-fuel programmes, biogas plant construction and support for green entrepreneurship. Collaboration with the Durban Business Chamber facilitated training in green skills and access to funding for eco-friendly start-ups. The municipality and chamber also collaborated on public awareness campaigns, fostering a shift in behaviour towards sustainability and contributing to economic growth, poverty reduction and carbon emissions reduction.[16]

J. Foster regional and global partnerships



Building strong regional and global partnerships is crucial for intermediary cities to enhance their climate action efforts. By engaging with international networks and organizations, these cities can gain valuable resources, expertise and funding opportunities. These partnerships not only boost visibility but also facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices, leading to more effective climate solutions. Key actions for intermediary cities include:

1 

Join city networks: Encourage participation in global city networks such as C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group,[17] the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy to share knowledge, gain technical assistance and access funding opportunities.

2 

Partner with international organizations: Collaborate with international institutions, for example UN-Habitat, the World Bank, and regional development banks, to access climate expertise and financial support for mitigation projects.

3 

Establish regional cooperation: Promote regional collaboration between intermediary cities to share resources, jointly address climate challenges and leverage collective bargaining power in accessing funds and technical assistance.

K. Strengthen monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems

Effective climate governance in intermediary cities requires robust monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems. These systems ensure transparency, track progress and enhance accountability in climate action plans. Strengthening these systems can significantly improve the effectiveness of climate initiatives by enabling better data management, reporting and evaluation. Key actions for intermediary cities include:

1 **Develop climate data systems:** Establish robust data collection and management systems to monitor emissions, energy consumption, and the progress of climate mitigation projects. Use GIS, the Internet of Things and real-time data to inform decision-making.

2 **Regular reporting mechanisms:** Introduce mechanisms for regular reporting and evaluation of climate actions. Ensure transparency and accountability through public disclosure of climate targets, progress reports and emission reductions.

3 **Third-party audits and evaluations:** Consider engaging third-party evaluators to independently assess the effectiveness of climate governance structures and policies, providing recommendations for improvement.

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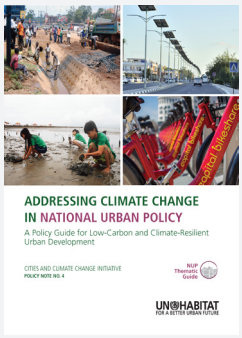
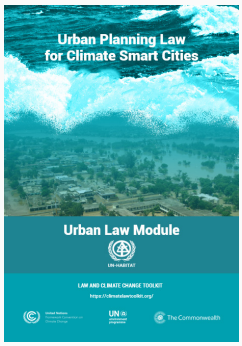
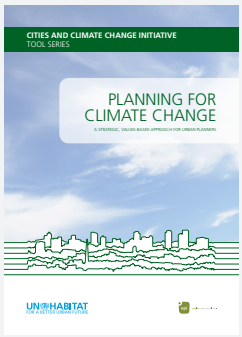
SOURCES ON CLIMATE CHANGE



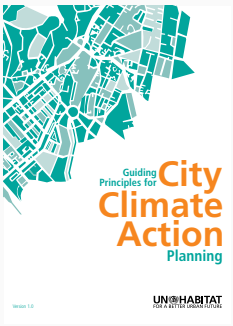
The guide on addressing climate change in NUP is aimed primarily to decision-makers and stakeholders engaged in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national urban policy. This guide offers advice on how these national policies for urbanization should address climate change and empower local authorities as key actors in that effort.



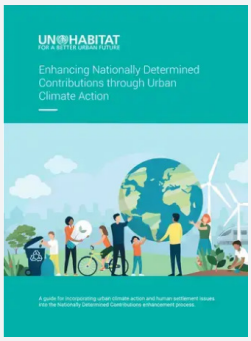
The Law and Climate Change Toolkit developed by UNEP, UNFCCC and the Commonwealth Secretariat, helps countries build legal frameworks to implement the Paris Agreement. UN-Habitat's Urban Law Module, a key component, aids cities in promoting climate-friendly urbanization and resilience. It covers governance frameworks, urban planning, adaptation and mitigation design and economic tools for sustainable urban planning.



This toolkit is a companion document for Planning for Climate Change: A strategic values-based approach for urban planners, a resource and planning guide developed for city planners and other professionals to better understand, assess and take action on climate change at the local level.

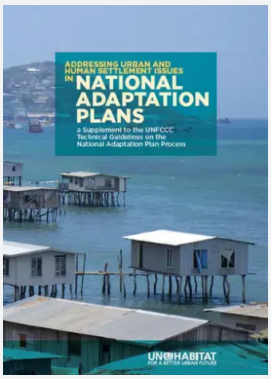


The Guiding Principles for City Climate Action Planning reviews typical steps in the city-level climate action planning process in light of a proposed set of globally applicable principles. These principles, developed through a robust and open multi-stakeholder process, support local officials, planners and stakeholders in climate action planning.

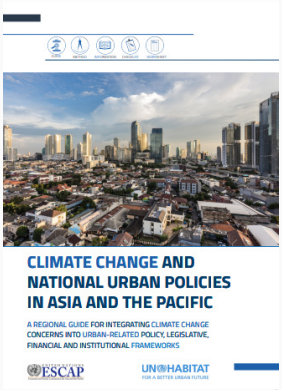


This guide for Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions Through Urban Climate Action provides practical opportunities for incorporating urban climate action and human settlement issues into the current nationally determined contributions revision and enhancement process, drawing on existing knowledge and networks.

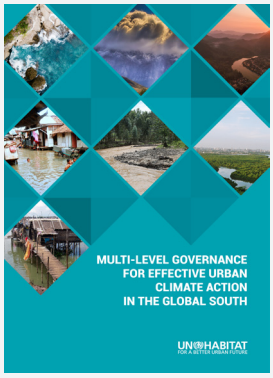
The Urban Content of the NDCs: Global review 2022 report produced by UN-Habitat, the University of Southern Denmark (SDU.Resilience) and the Global Covenant of Mayors, features an analysis of the urban aspects of nationally determined contributions. It highlights challenges and opportunities for urban climate action. Findings, including country-specific examples of multilevel governance, were presented at COP27, showcasing efforts to integrate national and urban climate policies to achieve the 1.5°C target.



The guide targets national decision-makers and broader stakeholders involved in national adaptation plans. It aims to enhance the integration of human settlement and urban issues into such plans and provides advice on scaling up and integrating urban adaptation efforts into national strategies.



Climate Change and National Urban Policies in Asia and the Pacific offers a flexible, non-prescriptive approach for integrating climate change into urban policies. It provides methods and steps for mainstreaming climate considerations throughout the policy cycle, with guidance on selecting tools and actions based on specific needs. The guide aligns with UN-Habitat's national urban policy process and covers key areas such as planning, capacity development, policy alignment and stakeholder engagement.



The Paris Agreement underscores cities' key role in climate action. Effective climate strategies require strong multilevel governance, integrating efforts from various government levels and non-state actors such as the private sector and civil society. This guide focuses on improving coordination and leveraging contributions from diverse stakeholders to enhance resilience and promote climate-friendly growth in urban areas of the global South.

ENDNOTES

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A Guide for Urban Managers

Effective Climate Governance in Intermediary Cities: A Focus on Climate Mitigation

As the world races toward a sustainable future, intermediary cities emerge as crucial players in effective climate mitigation. This guide offers practical insights into balancing economic development, environmental stewardship and social equity within these pivotal urban hubs. It delves into strategies such as climate-sensitive budgeting, urban planning and policy incentives that foster green transitions.

Designed for urban managers, climate champions and national or regional governments, this guide provides a roadmap for crafting resilient climate actions and navigating climate-smart urbanization. It also serves as a valuable resource for the private sector, academics, civil society and other United Nations agencies aiming to collaborate on or support climate initiatives. Equip yourself with the tools to drive meaningful climate action and lead your city toward a resilient, sustainable future.

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