UN-Habitat
SDG Cities
Programme
Brief Overview
55% of all people on earth live in cities, and there will be 2.5 billion more urban residents by 2050.

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

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

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

Time is short. Exceptional efforts are needed by cities to help meet the global Sustainable Development Goals.
What solution does SDG Cities provide?

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

Cities are awarded different levels of United Nations certification for their exceptional efforts to accelerate their progress toward meeting global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
**SDG City SILVER**
Awarded upon evidence of sufficiently ambitious goal setting and baseline SDG measurement

**SDG City GOLD**
Awarded upon evidence of a plan (or updates to existing plans) to meet SDG targets

**SDG City PLATINUM**
Awarded upon evidence of effort to increase SDG delivery capacity of local institutions, and a progress report on meeting SDG targets

**SDG City DIAMOND**
Awarded upon evidence of effort to ‘de-risk’ accelerated investment in SDG related infrastructure, and a second SDG progress report
What is ‘exceptional effort’ to meet the SDGs?

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

2. **Strategic plans** are drafted or updated to include these targets.

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

4. Key SDG related infrastructure initiatives are being implemented with **measurable impact**.
Are there different levels of certification?

**SDG City Silver** certification is awarded upon evidence of sufficiently ambitious goal setting and baseline SDG measurement.

**SDG City Gold** certification is awarded upon evidence of a plan (or updates to existing plans) to meet SDG targets.

**SDG City Platinum** certification is awarded upon evidence of effort to increase SDG delivery capacity, and a progress report on meeting SDG targets.

**SDG City Diamond** certification is awarded upon progress to develop, finance and implement SDG assessed impact initiatives in line with the city’s plan to meet SDG targets.
How is the city supported?

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

An **Urban Monitoring Framework** has been developed to guide the selection of ‘city relevant’ SDG indicators.

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

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

Technical backstopping support units are being established to provide remote technical support and training.
Are there minimum standards for certification?

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

SDG plans and initiatives must cover the domains of **society, economy, environment, culture** and **governance**.

Indicators and targets must also jointly meet **cross-cutting** goals of inclusivity, safety, resilience, and sustainability.

Plans, strategies and reports must be **publicized**.

A city must have made **exceptional** efforts toward the SDGs, leaving no-one behind.
SDG City program costs are mobilized from the city itself or higher levels of government in joint application with other cities.

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

When a city is onboarded, it will receive a letter outlining the resources it can expect from a national focal point or support hub, as well as from UN-Habitat.
High visibility citizen and stakeholder involvement opportunities

Steer local policy dialogue toward global sustainability goals

Provide structured process for city staff to begin or enhance engagement with SDGs

Learn from other cities’ experiences

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

Stimulate higher levels of government interest in, and incentivize private sector investment in SDG related infrastructure

Why should cities join?
National government, regional association of cities or an individual city should contact UN-Habitat with an expression of interest to join the program.

Cities discusses requirements and their desired approach to certification with UN-Habitat or a nationally established focus point.

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

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

SDG City

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