UN-HABITAT

SDG Cities Certification

Date: March 2023

Background and Challenges

THE WORLD WILL BE URBAN

Today 55% of the world's population lives in cities, yet by 2050 this is expected to increase to 68%

CITIES ARE CENTRAL TO SDGs

Two-Thirds of SDGs have important local dimensions

Local and regional governments play an essential role in achieving the SDGs through transformative actions in cities and communities around the world.

UN-Habitat working with the UN System supports Localizing SDGs through:

LOCAL 2030
LOCALIZING THE SDGS

The Global Urban Monitoring Framework

VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS

SDG Cities
Global Initiative

Collaborative Action to unleash the potential of cities to accelerate sustainable development and improve quality of life for all

SDG Cities Flagship Initiative

- SDG Cities is a global initiative that encourages cities to catalyze their own potential and accelerate their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

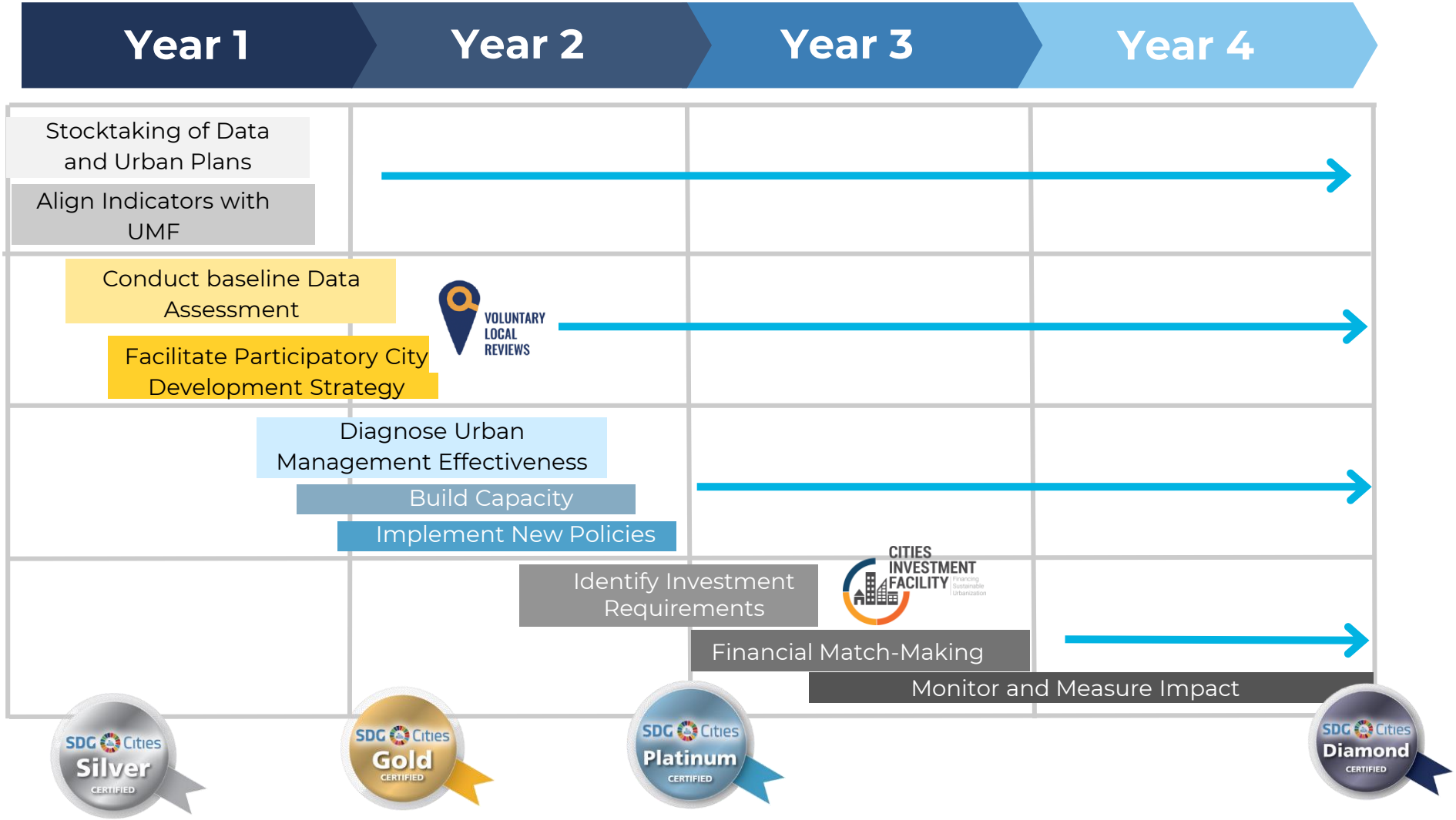
- Cities are given tools to assess their baseline data and identify and implement priority initiatives that actively localize the SDGs

Strengthened institutional capacity

- Inclusive governance
- Planning
- Municipal finance
- Service delivery
  - Solid waste management
  - Water/sanitation
  - Mobility

SDG Cities Process

SDG Cities is implemented in four tracks:



SDG Cities Certification

Need for cities to step up the realization of their *transformative potential* as a positive force for sustainable development

However

- Not all cities are aware of the SDGs
- Not all cities are incentivized to engage with global agendas
- Not all cities are aware of frameworks such as the NUA to guide them in the local implementation of the SDGs

Purpose of SDG Cities Certification

SDG Cities certification helps set cities on the course to accelerate achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by:

1. Guiding an effective urban development process, in line with the New Urban Agenda

2. Recognizing the achievement of key milestones and inclusive, effective processes via the completion of objectives

Other areas being explored:

- Improving multi-level policy coherence
- Improving UN coordinated action at the local level
- Alignment with SDG accreditation and support of other organisations
- Alignment with “credit-worthiness” metrics
- Alignment with ESG metrics of financers
- Aggregated investments

Data indicators

Strategic Planning

Plans, Regulations, and Institutions

Investment in Impact

Certification Stages

1. Cities have effective data for social, economic and environmental dimensions with analyzed gaps in urban areas and have evidence-based, inclusive, participatory and strategic development frameworks for 2030 that:

- Are aligned with the 2030 Agenda;
- Are aligned with local development priorities;
- Are coherent with relevant national, subnational, cross-border and sectoral policies and priorities.

2. Cities are effective “drivers of change”: They have taken stock of their governance, and revenue systems, plans and regulations and assessed the performance of key basic urban services and have demonstrated progress in strengthening them

3. Cities are generating measurable SDG impact

Responding to Members' Feedback

1. Alignment with UN Agendas and Frameworks
2. Synergies within UN-Habitat
3. Piloting Model
4. Estimated Funding Requirements
5. UN Certification
6. Benefits
7. Suggested Way Forward

Alignment with UN Agendas and Frameworks

SDG Cities Certification is strongly aligned with existing UN agendas to accelerate the achievement of SDGs and facilitate a positive urban transformation

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The New Urban Agenda

SDG Localization

Synergies within UN- Habitat

SDG Cities Certification connects existing UN-Habitat projects and tools, creating a powerful combination for SDG Localization.

UN-Habitat country programmes are well positioned to provide technical support to cities

Piloting Model - Global Mechanism

Global Mechanism for Implementation

Global Advisory Committee

Role

- Setting rules and criteria
- Guiding the establishment of national mechanisms

Pilot Stage

- UN-Habitat senior staff agree on certification criteria in consultation with UN Member States and Partners

Long Term

- Advisory board of UN partner entities and UN Member States
- Engagement with ECOSOC Accredited stakeholders agreed by UN MS

Technical Team

Role

- Review applications cities in countries that lack a national mechanism
- Identify areas for action
- Monitoring/ auditing certification

Pilot Stage

- Technical support provided through SDG Cities Global Flagship Initiative

Long Term

- Creation of national technical hubs for independent technical backstopping

Piloting Model - National Mechanism

National Mechanism for Implementation

National Advisory Committee

Role

- Adapt criteria to national context and develop priorities and to implement certification

Pilot Stage

- A collection of ministries provide in-kind services to support the certification of a cluster of cities

Long Term

- Establish a national hub to regularly review and report on the certification for cities
- Global engagement and peer-to-peer learnings

Technical Team

Role

- Establishing technical team to review applications and make recommendations on certification
- *Optional*- Establish a technical support hub for cities

Pilot Stage

- Technical support is provided jointly between national staff and SDG Cities Global Initiative staff

Long Term

- Establish technical team to assist with certification criteria (data collection, etc.) in cities

Piloting Model - Support Services

Digital Platform
Provided through an in-kind donation for technical support and data storage

SDG Cities Data Tools
City Scan Data Tool

Harnessing Existing Frameworks & Tools
NUA Illustrated, UMF Matrix, Our City Plans, Block by Block, Shanghai Manual

SDG Cities Capacity Assessments
Governance, revenue, planning & service delivery

Utilising partners' open source technical resources
IHS, GIZ CityWorks

Estimated Funding Requirement

Global Hub

Initially **US$1. 5 million per year,** that may gradually increase or replicated at regional levels as certification goes to scale

- Time and travel of Global Advisory Committee, meeting annually
- Secretariat team supporting the Global Advisory Committee,
- Global Technical Team working in UN Languages
- Digital platform maintenance

Cost recovery may be applicable for certification processes managed by the Global Hub in middle/upper income countries

National Mechanism

- National lead entity to designate National Advisory Committee and technical team
- Digital Platform, technical and monitoring tools and backstopping provided in-kind by global hub

Where SDG Cities National Programmes are implemented with donor support (eg Ghana), national certification mechanisms are incorporated into costs

UN Certification Model

SDG Cities Certification

- City level implementation
- National & Global level certification evaluation

Light → **Complex**

WHO & UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative

- Hospital level & country level (policies) implementation
- Country-level designation with social monitoring process

UNICEF Child Friendly City Initiative

- City-level implementation
- National-level recognition and evaluation

UNESCO World Heritage Site

- Local to national to global level application
- Global-level nomination evaluation

Possible Benefits

For Cities

- Incentivizing the acceleration of the SDGs
- Providing direction
- Enabling knowledge-sharing and capacity development at scale
- Attracting SDG aligned investment
- Coherence with other city-based initiatives that support global agendas

For Residents

- Certification promotes a greater responsiveness of cities to the needs of residents in cities

All of Society Coherence

- Multi- stakeholder coherence around implementing the SDGs in cities
- Aggregating SDG investment for greater efficiency

For the UN System

- Promotes local implementation of the UN Cooperation Framework and the integration of United Nations system support at the local level

For National and Subnational Governments

- Policy coherence

FAQs from Members

1. How can SDG Cities align with urban development agenda, policies and framework of each country and region?
2. How can SDG Cities align with other UN work, such as UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour, Voluntary Local Review, and Shanghai Manual?
3. What will be the benefits of developed cities to participate in SDG Cities?
4. Does UN-Habitat have enough capacity to deliver the programme?
5. What types of stakeholders will involve in the process of SDG Cities?
6. How can corruption be mitigated within the national mechanism?
7. How can developing cities avoid being excluded in the certification process?
8. What will be the budget for the certification?
9. How will security of data be protected during the process?
10. What has already been created for the certification?
11. Are there alternatives to the Term “Certification”
12. Role of Canada

Suggested Way Forward

- UN-Habitat to further explore and pilot the SDG Cities certification model in various countries through the SDG Cities Flagship Programme.

- UN-Habitat to report to the EB during its third session in 2023 on costs, business model, benefits, implementation mechanism, and coherence with UN and other relevant initiatives that support achieving SDGs in cities.

Thank you!

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IMPLEMENTING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES