

# PENANG PLATFORM FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION

## A Dynamic Partnership to Accelerate City Actions for Sustainable Development in Asia-Pacific

*The sustainability challenge in Asia-Pacific will be won or lost in cities.*

Massive shifts—demographic, geopolitical—are already challenges for the environment, well-being. At the same time, urbanization to lift countries out development trajectories are Asia-Pacific societies is to a way cities are planned, financed the region continues to be how processes can be leveraged for outcomes at all levels and



economic, social, and underway and pose serious livelihoods and social the opportunities presented by of poverty and on to sustainable tremendous. The future of large extent dependent on the and managed. The challenge for these transformative urban sustainable development peoples.

The urban challenges facing Asia Pacific cities range from building resilience to climate change and disasters; to include reducing unsustainable resource use and overcoming high levels of gender-, age- based, socio-economic and spatial inequalities. These inter-related challenges require holistic sustainable development pathways that leverage the opportunities provided by smart technologies, nature-based solutions, new renewable energy systems, and innovations in land-based financing, affordable housing and sustainable infrastructure planning. All of this requires a deep paradigm shift, adopted by member States in the New Urban Agenda, on multi-level urban governance, integrated urban planning, and fiscal empowerment of local authorities.

Within this context, the *Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization (PPSU)* brings together an alliance of partners to pursue the following 'CITI' objectives in Phase 1 (2019-2023):

**Collaborate**  
to accelerate the implementation of integrated and sustainable city solutions in at least 10 cities

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**Integrate**  
the use of innovative tools and models, research and evidence, and good practices on sustainable urban development by urban actors across the region

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**Transform**  
access to existing resources and forge new partnerships to mobilize catalytic funds for enhanced local-level solutions

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**Increase**  
political will for sustainable urbanization across the region level via adoption of enabling policies and budgets

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The 'CITI' objectives will be revisited at the first Leadership Forum meeting to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and align with the emerging priorities of the region's cities, countries and Platform members.

In order to achieve CITI objectives above, the PPSU will work as a “coalition of the willing” across four focus areas. These areas may be revised to take into account the priority recommendations emerging from the Seventh Asian Pacific Urban Forum to be held in October 2019 in Penang, Malaysia. In addition, further revisions are envisaged as new partners join the platform and opportunities emerge to further enhance the platform's impact:

**Elaborate and implement joint frameworks for action on sustainable urban development in selected cities.** The complexity of the sustainable urban development challenge has led to a plethora of urban governance, planning, resilience, sustainability, and other initiatives, each with its own strengths. While this diversity is welcome, it can prove daunting for city-level actors who face a fragmented technical and financial support landscape. Platform members agree to work together in selected cities to harmonize, align, simplify, and coordinate their support into a tailored unified city support program. This will both address fragmentation and create opportunities for synergistic support.

**Facilitate access to catalytic funding, through conventional and innovative local finance mechanisms.** PPSU will connect cities and communities to public and private financiers with shared commitments to boosting resilience and sustainability. New and innovative financing mechanisms and instruments will be explored including bonds, venture philanthropy networks, and other sources of pooled and blended finance. In addition, an Asia-Pacific city 'challenge fund' could be established to support catalytic investments to implement the individual and joint commitments made in APUF-7. This will offer flexibility to accelerate action on the ground without the challenges of traditional multilateral institutional funds.

**Provide tailored technical assistance and capacity development to adapt global best practices and models for Asia-Pacific cities.** While many models and practices have been validated around the world, countries, regions and cities across Asia-Pacific have struggled to identify which are most pertinent and then effectively adapt and replicate them in the local context. PPSU will align on priority models, practices and pathways for sustainable urban development that respond to the challenges facing Asia-Pacific cities and develop a coordinated menu of technical and capacity support packages provided by one or more members to empower cities to translate and implement global best practices and models. As appropriate, members will also advocate for national and regional-level adoption of successful models and practices.

**Generate action-oriented research & evidence to foster exchange and learning on emerging sustainable urban development solutions.** The urban development context across the region is constantly evolving, as are the potential solutions across a range of urban development functions and themes. Big data, smart technologies, rapidly shifting energy and transport solutions, and innovative civic engagement mechanisms and coalitions are just a few examples. PPSU will work with cities to identify priority areas where gaps in the evidence and practice exist, and promote pilots, research, exchanges, and other methods to address those gaps and inform urban practice and policy at all levels.

**KEY FOCUS AREAS OF THE PENANG PLATFORM FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION, 2019-2023**

# MEMBERS

The PPSU is a ***“an inclusive platform for collaboration towards sustainable urbanization in the Asia-Pacific. The platform leverages the comparative strengths of the leading urban development organizations to support local, regional and national governments in implementing sustainable urbanization to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.”*** Founding members of the PPSU include:

- 100 Resilient Cities
- City Council of Penang Island
- CityNet
- Asian Development Bank
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum
- European Union, International Urban Cooperation Programme
- Huairou Commission
- ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability
- Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan
- The Rockefeller Foundation
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Urbanice Malaysia
- United Nations Development Programme

If your organization is interested in learning more, contributing to or joining the PPSU, please contact us at [escap-edd-suds@un.org](mailto:escap-edd-suds@un.org).