ICLEI
Local Governments for Sustainability
SOUTH ASIA

TWO DECADES *of* ICLEI SOUTH ASIA

2005 2025


20
Years of Sustainability
ICLEI
Local Governments
for Sustainability
SOUTH ASIA

ICLEI South Asia

is the South Asian arm of ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. The ICLEI South Asia network comprises more than 100 local and regional governments across India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

In addition, we work with 10 other countries in the Asia Pacific. Our aim is to build and serve this regional network of local governments, enabling tangible improvements in regional and global sustainability through local initiatives.

ICLEI South Asia's work is driven by a multidisciplinary team, including climate change specialists, civil engineers, ecologists, energy managers, environmental engineers, environmental planners, power systems engineers, transportation engineers, and urban planners.

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FOREWORD

GINO VAN BEGIN

Secretary General
ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

Namaste and ***warm greetings*** to all.

It is with immense pride and heartfelt appreciation that I extend my congratulations to the ICLEI South Asia team for completing 20 years of impactful, action-driven, and tangible work.

Congratulations to my colleague Emani Kumar, ICLEI's Deputy Secretary General and Executive Director, ICLEI South Asia, for leading the team with his guidance and vision over all these years.

For two decades, this vibrant and committed team has been at the forefront of driving local sustainability across one of the most vulnerable, dynamic, and diverse regions in the world.

Your work has not only transformed cities and towns across South Asia, but has also enriched our global network with innovation, knowledge, and skills for shaping our future urban world.

You have spread ideas, fostered innovation, strengthened capacity, improved awareness, and developed a greater capacity to deliver basic services sustainably in the region.

I thank you for demonstrating visionary leadership, for leading by example, for sharing your knowledge actively and openly, and speaking with a united voice. As we mark this important milestone, let us also look forward to the next 20 years of impact, collaboration, and leadership in sustainability.

The journey continues, and together, we will go further.

Congratulations, and thank you for everything the ICLEI South Asia Secretariat does.

EMANI BV KUMAR

Deputy Secretary General,
ICLEI
& Executive Director,
ICLEI South Asia

20 Years Strong with Practice and Purpose

There is something humbling about reaching a milestone. It does not demand applause—it instead asks for pause and reflection.

Twenty years since the inception of our work, I pause to reflect—not only on the mighty tree that ICLEI South Asia has become, but also on the deep roots that have anchored us, the sturdy trunk that has held us strong, and the wide canopy with branches that now empower cities to grow, collaborate, and thrive.

Like a mature tree that blossoms anew, we envision our journey continuing—planting fresh seeds in newer cities, fostering systems change and innovation in existing ones, and reaching toward a future that meets the evolving challenges of the decades ahead.

Early Roots: Grounding Cities in Resilience

When we inaugurated our office in New Delhi in 2005, we were just two people in a rapidly evolving landscape. Indian and South Asian cities were brimming with potential. It was a time when sustainable urbanisation was gaining momentum, but conversations around resilience and climate change were still peripheral to policy agendas.

ICLEI's entry into the region was a novel move, bringing sustainability, climate action, and energy to city governments—domains that were traditionally reserved for national and global agendas.

Our journey has mirrored the evolution of the global sustainability agenda itself. We began during the Local Agenda 21 era, when sustainability conversations were still in their infancy. Over time, we aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and then expanded our efforts to meet the more ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through each phase, our commitment has remained steadfast: translating global aspirations into tangible, on-the-ground action that improves lives, strengthens cities, and builds resilience across the region.

The Trunk that Sustains: Embedding Systems, Scaling Change

What strikes me most, looking back, is how our cities have grown—not just in size, but in confidence and capacity. And how we, in turn, supported and enabled that growth. Today we are embedded in over 100 cities in the region.

This transformation didn't happen overnight. We met cities where they were, and walked with them step by step. We pioneered a model that embedded technical experts directly within city governments—supporting them in real-time,

With Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2013 as part of the Pilgrimage Network

In conversation with Honourable Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri at the Urban Shift Forum 2023

responding to needs as they arose. It wasn't about parachuting in solutions; it was about growing capacity from within. This approach worked—and today, many organisations follow the model we first implemented.

The changes we saw were not limited to pilot projects. They ran deeper. We witnessed shifts in mindset and planning. Take lighting, for example. I remember when, in 2005, it was just about shifting from incandescent to more efficient bulbs. A few years later, we were supporting ESCO based procurement. By 2014, cities began adopting sensor based street lighting. Through every phase, I was there with local authorities—supporting their journey from small improvements to integrated, smart solutions and climate finance.

At COP23, Bonn, Germany, 2017

Processes like embedding service delivery benchmarks, creating monitoring and evaluation systems, and strengthening tender and procurement processes are the result of what we consistently brought to the table.

This kind of systemic change is what I cherish most. It's a shift not just in technology but in mindset—how cities plan, how they measure success, and how they imagine their futures.

A Widening Canopy: Enabling Ecosystems to Thrive

For me, I never looked at systems change in isolation. It's about embedding resilience, efficiency, and climate action deep into the very fabric of national policies, flagship missions, and urban development programs. Only then can we ensure that the work we do with cities is supported, scaled, and sustained well into the future.

From the beginning, I saw the power of working closely with governments—demonstrating what's possible, championing best practices, and helping embed these approaches into broader schemes so they don't remain just pilot projects but become full-fledged infrastructure projects and part of everyday city governance. Our successes have also enabled us to expand beyond South Asia's borders.

I think back to 2008, when a benchmarking system was piloted across 24 cities. That effort was more than just a project—it laid the groundwork for how major national urban schemes would later be designed and evaluated. We also contributed to and supported several government linked schemes such as the JnNURM, Swachh Bharat Mission and the Smart Cities Mission subsequently, embedding the climate lense into the design and implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects. While our cities were already implementing approaches towards zero waste in South Asia, the Swachh Bharat Mission is addressing the India wide challenge. the GIZ-led climate smart city assessment framework for India's Smart City Mission was conceived at our

office in New Delhi with partners. This is now further adopted and adapted by other states and cities, strengthened by other country experiences enabled by us.

Leading India's first city-level climate vulnerability assessments and supporting cities across Asia-Pacific in adopting these approaches is something I take great pride in. South Asia's first city-level greenhouse gas emissions tool was created by us, helping more than fifty cities estimate their emissions—and subsequently even contributing to the recreation of Indian states' and national inventories—planting seeds for a cleaner, more climate-conscious future.

Our early local renewable and model community plans – that inspired India's Solar City Mission- set the stage for the expansion of our renewable energy work to many more urban centers. We broadened our focus to include advanced energy solutions such as district cooling systems, battery energy storage, and offshore wind, continuing to push the boundaries of sustainable energy at the urban scale.

Taking an all-systems approach to clean mobility, we supported states and cities in building resilient and sustainable transport corridors—through readiness assessments, roadmaps, and the integration of electric mobility alongside the necessary infrastructure in cities across India.

Our efforts in developing Local Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, building capacities to map and monitor biodiversity, and promoting citizen engagement in conservation efforts has been well appreciated. From wetlands to urban forests, our work has helped cities recognise their natural assets not as afterthoughts, but as vital infrastructure that supports climate resilience, public health, and long-term sustainability.

Our work spans beyond individual cities to entire regions—driving net-zero climate resilience plans and climate actions in Indian and international cities in Malaysia, promoting transit-oriented development around Bangkok's metro stations. We have also developed the first and only Voluntary Local Review (VLR) for SDG localisation in South Asia- in Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Maldives.

While this is by no means a comprehensive list of our work, these milestones reflect efforts I am truly proud of. You'll find many more stories and strands of impact in the sections ahead. What has

With Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Honourable Mayor of Kuala Lumpur and former Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Release of the City GHG Emission Inventories Compendium for Gujarat by Honourable Chief Minister Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel at the 'Building a Climate-Resilient Gujarat' event, Ahmedabad, 2022.

Handover of Green City Action Plans for Penang Island, Langkawi Island, Kota Bharu, and Kuching (Padawan) at the 30th IMT-GT Ministerial Meeting, Johor, Malaysia, 2024.

held ICLEI South Asia in good stead through it all is our commitment to grounded action, creating solid evidence for solutions, deep partnerships, and an unshakable belief in the potential of local leadership.

Branching out: Expanding by strength, reach, and influence

From a team of just two to a network of 80+experts today, our people have been at the heart of ICLEI South Asia's impact—working closely with cities, states, and countries to deliver meaningful change on the ground. As our reach has expanded, so has our role in building platforms and forums that enable shared learning, regional dialogue, and knowledge exchange.

We shaped the Resilient Cities Asia Pacific (RCAP) Forum—a regional offshoot of the *Resilient Cities Bonn* —held in cities like Bangkok, Melaka, Ho Chi Minh, and New Delhi. As the Secretariat of the **Asia LEDS Partnership (ALP)** since 2015, we have enabled cross-sector collaboration across Asia Pacific on low-emission development strategies. Through **CDKN** (Climate and Development Knowledge Network), we connect knowledge with policy—ensuring decisions are grounded in evidence and equity.

These spaces have helped synthesize and turn local insights into global influence, amplifying our collective learning across Asia Pacific and beyond.

From our headquarters in New Delhi to offices in Hyderabad, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and across the region, we remain rooted in local contexts and responsive to community needs. We've expanded into Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, each step extending our canopy further—offering space for more cities to grow and thrive under its cover.

The Bloom: A shared voice on the global stage

As I look ahead, I return to the image of the tree— not just as a symbol of what we've built, but of how we grow. A tree does not stand still; it stretches, sheds, reseeds, and regenerates. In the same way, ICLEI South Asia is poised for its next seasons of growth.

The roots remain grounded in local action, the trunk strengthened by two decades of learning, and the canopy ever-expanding—making space for new voices, new partnerships, and new ideas. If the past has been about planting and nurturing, the future is about flourishing at scale.

Perhaps the most fulfilling outcome of our journey is the confidence we now see in our

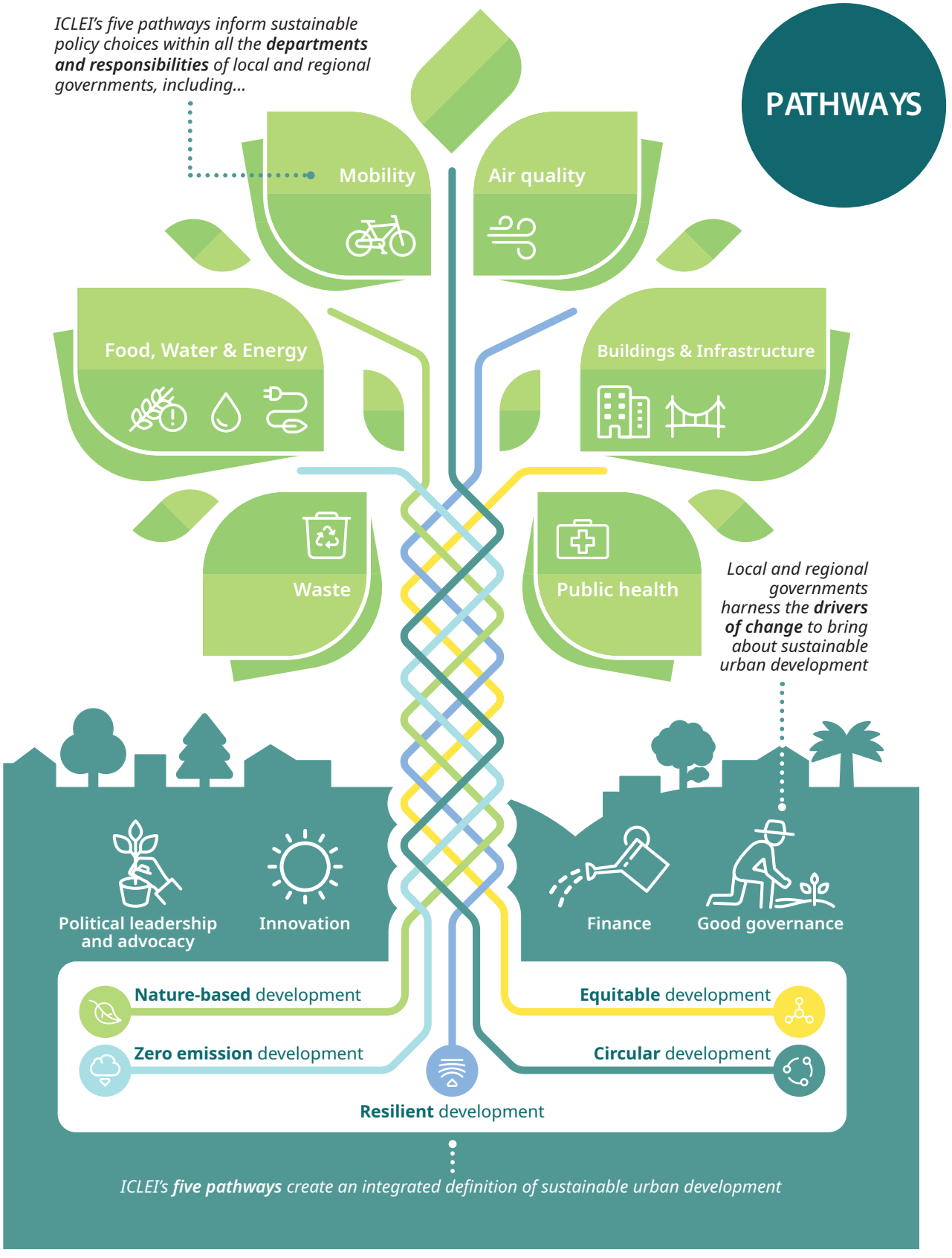
Addressing the Asia LEDS Partnership Forum at Bangkok in 2024

local leaders. Today, mayors from the region speak on global platforms with pride, not as passive recipients of external agendas, but as contributors to global solutions.

That, to me, is the true measure of success—not just in the systems we have transformed, but in the voices we have helped elevate, the agency we have fostered, and the future we continue to co-create.

I envision a tomorrow where our region doesn't just follow global trends—it sets them. A future driven by conviction, courage, and a collective will for a more sustainable, equitable world.

The **ICLEI SOUTH ASIA** Way



PILLARS OF OUR WORK

Zero-emission Development

- Climate Action - Assessments, Plans, Financing and Implementation
- Energy Efficiency
- Urban Cooling and Heat Resilience
- Sustainable and Integrated Urban Mobility (SIUM)
- Urban and Regional Air Quality
- Sustainable Energy Solutions
- Net-Zero buildings

Equitable Development

- Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)
- Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development

Nature-based Development

- Nature-based Solutions (NbS)
- Biodiversity Communication
- Ecosystem Service Assessment and Ecological Restoration
- Food Security and Well Being
- Biodiversity Assessments, Plans, Investments & Actions

Resilient Development

- Integrated Urban Planning and Development
- Loss and Damage
- Climate Adaptation

Circular Development

- Towards Zero Waste
- Integrated Urban Water Management
- Food Security, Nutrition and Well-being

PROCESSES WE FOLLOW

Policy strategy, Research & Advocacy

Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Support for national, regional and global reporting

Technical Services & Implementation Support

Knowledge Management and Peer Learning

Secretariat services and PMUs

Tools, Trainings & Capacity Building

Enabling access to finance

FROM **THEN** TO **NOW**

Project office of ICLEI USA set up in India

2002

Cities for Climate Protection Campaign: First project; supported 17 cities to address economic, environmental and quality of life concerns

2002-2005

April 25: **ICLEI South Asia, headquartered in Delhi**, India, registered under Indian Trust Act 1882

EcoBudget, an urban environmental budgeting tool that helps manage natural resources like financial assets, introduced in India

2005

2006

At **COP13 in Bali**, ICLEI South Asia advocated for cities' roles in climate action and access to technology and finance

2007

ICLEI South Asia journey begins with 2 people

ecoBUDGET project field visit in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

Local Renewables and Model Communities Project initiated in Bhubaneswar and Nagpur, laying the foundation for GoI's Solar Cities programme

Panellists at the National Workshop on Creating Low Carbon & Sustainable Indian Cities, 2009, Rajkot

Peer-to-Peer Exchange on Resource Efficiency in Bohol, Philippines

2008

Launched **Urban Climate Project**: first to integrate climate change into large-scale urban infrastructure

Supported South Asian cities in assessing carbon emissions, developing consensus on climate action plans, and building a network for post-2012 climate talks

2009

Prepared energy status reports and carbon emission inventories for 54 South Asian cities to guide climate action plans and build network to support post-2012 international climate negotiations.

Roadmap of South Asian Cities and Local Governments for the Post 2012 Global Climate Agreement and Actions report released at Local Government Climate Roadmap regional meet, Delhi

2010

Supported GoI in organising **"Sustainable Cities and Green Neighbourhoods"** event alongside Delhi International Renewable Energy Conference

Developed city sanitation plans under ACCESSanitation Project, supporting National Urban Sanitation Policy

From **THEN** to **NOW** *contd.*

2011

Assessed urban services in 17 cities under GoI's Service Level Benchmarking initiative, and **promoted South-South learning on RE via REEEP**

SUNYA project pioneered zero-waste concept in 7 South Asian cities; promoted sustainable urban waste management

Cities for Life Summit event at COP11 to Convention on Biological Diversity, Hyderabad

2012

Co-organised **Cities for Life Summit at Convention on Biological Diversity COP11** in Hyderabad

2013

Developed **ACCCRN Process**, South Asia's first urban climate resilience toolkit, s**upported climate adaptation planning in 40+ cities**

Supported Nashik in developing its **first Integrated Urban Habitat Action Plan**

Urban LEDS study visit on sustainable energy.

Implemented **India's first Urban Nexus project**, linking water, energy, and food for integrated urban planning

Supported Tamil Nadu in developing **Framework for State Urban Transport Policy**

Introducing the 3R concept under SUNYA project, Matale, Sri Lanka

2014

Campaign promoting waste management strategies and action plan in Kota city, Rajasthan

2015

Led **India's first city-level assessment of District Energy Systems** under project on RE & EE in urban buildings and cities

Co-organised **first Resilient Cities Asia-Pacific (RCAP)** conference in Thailand to advance local resilience strategies

From **THEN** to **NOW** *contd.*

Handover of Asia LEDS Partnership management to ICLEI South Asia at ALP Forum, Hanoi, 2016

2016

Pioneered CRCAP methodology for integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation under CapaCITIES I

Asia LEDS Partnership (ALP) launched three Communities of Practice on energy, transport, and finance to foster regional learning and collaboration.

Started hosting ALP Secretariat with ICLEI East and Southeast Asia offices

Launched PROMISE project to strengthen local capacity in 4 Indian cities for inclusive and sustainable urban growth

2017

Launched INTERACT-Bio project to integrate biodiversity objectives into urban planning

Initiated Urban-LEDS Phase II to strengthen multi-level climate governance and low-emission development strategies in India & Bangladesh

Won third prize in South Korea's World Water Challenge for innovative solutions in Integrated Urban Water Management project

Community awareness programme on waste segregation in Rajkot under CapaCITIES project

2018

Developed waste sector GHG emission inventories (2005–15) under GHGPI, supporting India's revised GHG inventory; recognised by MoEFCC in 2018 UNFCCC report

Joined CDKN programme as Asia coordinator, initiating knowledge-brokering for climate-compatible development in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh

Trained 500 Indian urban local bodies on solid waste management, with NIUA

Started Development of People's Biodiversity Registers project, funded by Goa State Biodiversity Board

ICLEISA's Bangladesh office opened

Kochi Illustrated Natural Asset Map, 2020

Helped shape India's Climate-Smart City Assessment Framework (CSCAF) through CapaCITIES-II experience

Developed **IAdapt toolkit** for collaborative, climate-adaptive catchment water resource management by local governments

2019

2020

Launched **Urban95 programme in Udaipur**, promoting child-friendly urban development

Initiated work on heat resilience, climate-smart agriculture, and gender-inclusive approaches under CDKN

Prepared guidelines for Energy-Efficient and Climate-Responsive Homes for Nagpur under Building Energy Accelerator project

Started **Alliance+ICLEI Developing Plastic Waste-Free Cities** project to support five cities in India and Southeast Asia

Prepared a **Framework for Electric Mobility Policy in Sri Lanka** under ALP

RCAP conference in Delhi, inaugurated by then Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu

From **THEN** to **NOW** *contd.*

2021

Developed **City Biodiversity Index and Local Biodiversity Action Plans** for Gangtok and Kochi under INTERACT-Bio

Built pandemic resilience and enhanced urban preparedness in **Bangladesh through ReCAP 21**

Prepared strategies to advance utility-scale energy storage in Rajkot and Surat under **Battery Energy Storage Systems project**

Developed a city-level engagement approach for **EV transition in 10 Indian cities**

2022

EcoLogistics project concluded, enabling stakeholders to develop low-carbon, sustainable urban freight strategies

Launched **Low Carbon Action Plans for Kochi, Panjim, Shimla**

Provided **technical assistance to 4 Delhi-NCR municipal corporations** to help meet GoI's National Clean Air Programme air-quality targets

Srinagar Illustrated Natural Asset Map, 2022

Convened **first UrbanShift Asia Forum** in Delhi

Initiated work on **roadmap for developing offshore wind energy** in Tamil Nadu

Developed **training modules for Bangladesh's LGED** to support climate-resilient urban planning under CRISC project

Supporting Himachal Pradesh in **developing capacity for effective Electric Mobility** to achieve national E-mobility targets

2023

Ahmedabad's Net-Zero CRCAP released during U20 Mayoral Summit in Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation

Prepared **South Asia's first Voluntary Local Reviews for Dhulikhel (Nepal) and Singra (Bangladesh)**

Launched **India's first Child Priority Zone in Udaipur** and developed Child Safety Guidelines

TUMI E-Bus Mission guided 20 cities and scaled **e-bus deployment to 100 cities** by 2022

Piloted **integration of e-rickshaws** into urban mobility systems in Delhi and Kochi

Hosted ALP Forum with the theme "Towards Decarbonization in the Asia Pacific through 2025 NDCs"

Net Zero Climate Planning methodology developed; 8 NetZero CRCAPS developed

Partnered with Amazon to grow urban food gardens, boost school nutrition, and foster biodiversity in Indian megacities

2024

Established **Leadership Group on Clean Transport in Asia** with 10 countries

Started **supporting Himachal Pradesh** to accelerate e-mobility adoption

ICLEISA's **Nepal and Bhutan offices opened**

Conducted independent **study across 18 Indian cities on the use of public spaces** by young children, caregivers, and pregnant women

Penang State Government of Malaysia approved the **Penang Island GCAP**

With ICLEI South Asia's support, **Ahmedabad became the first Indian city to introduce a dedicated climate chapter** in its municipal budget

ICLEI South Asia celebrated its **20th anniversary** on 25 April 2025

2025

Community engagement to understand water security in Rohini Kothidara Village, Kurseong, West Bengal

Municipal garden, Delhi

ICLEI South Asia journey continues with 84 people

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: **THE FIRST DECADE**

Where Our Journey Began

On a warm summer day, 25 April 2005, ICLEI South Asia formally opened its office in Delhi. But our journey had started much earlier. As early as 2001, we were already on the ground, operating as the project office of ICLEI USA. We didn't have formal recognition then, yet our presence was felt in city halls, communities, and conversations with mayors.

The early 2000s were a different world altogether. The Millennium Development Goals guided the global agenda. In India, discussions around renewable energy (RE) were just beginning. Solar panels had to be imported. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol had not yet been enforced, and the term 'climate action' itself was unfamiliar to most people. After decades of slow urban growth, unplanned townships were emerging in India, driven by economic liberalisation and real estate investment. It was in this context that we began our work, firmly believing that while cities needed to develop sustainably, they could also serve as engines of change.

Our first project was the **Cities for Climate Protection** (CCP) programme (2001-2005), supported by USAID, and implemented across metros like Kolkata and Hyderabad, as well as fast-growing towns like Guntur and Udaipur. We developed carbon emission inventories for nine cities, laying the foundation for our future work. Under the project's first phase, we launched a 30-month pilot, and in the second phase, nine more cities -- Agra, Gwalior, Guwahati, Coimbatore, Shimla, Dehradun, Bhubaneswar, Madurai, Udaipur – came on board and developed their GHG emission reduction action plans. Through the CCP, ICLEI South Asia established itself as a climate frontrunner in India's urban space.

The ***eco*BUDGET** project began in 2005 as a modest project in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, and quickly became a landmark initiative. It was the first urban environmental budgeting initiative that introduced municipalities to a pathbreaking

tool, *eco*BUDGET, for measuring resource use, budgeting environmental performance, and integrating sustainability into local governance. We received an initial grant of just €12,000 from the European Union (EU) for the project, but that small sum helped us take a giant leap to becoming an institution in 2005.

The next important chapter for us was the **Local Renewable Model Communities Network** Project (2005-2010), funded by GTZ (later GIZ). We supported Bhubaneswar, Nagpur, and Coimbatore in opening Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Resource Centres, preparing emission inventories, and adopting energy policies and piloting innovative interventions.

At the national level, India was only just beginning to lay the groundwork for climate action through initiatives such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which enabled cities and industries to access global investment for emission reduction projects.

Building on this momentum, we piloted carbon financing for cities for the first time under the **Energy Efficiency-CDM Project** in 14 cities of Madhya Pradesh, targeting efficiency in water pumping and street lighting systems to reduce GHG emissions.

By June 2008, our work broadened to a more systemic perspective, with the first review of the **Urban Environmental Accords** (UEAs) in Indian Cities. The **UEAs,** which are international agreements between cities to achieve sustainable development**,** introduced a whole-of-economy approach, emphasising resource management across all sectors rather than in isolation. We began with energy and climate, using emissions inventories as entry points for action. From there, we moved on to showing cities that sustainable development involves integrated, city-wide action that connects every sector to the broader goal of a resilient, low-carbon future.

Presentation on ecoBUDGET project, 2005

Field visit, Realising DReAMS project, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 2010

This was aligned with the Government of India's (GoI) launch of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) the same year, which sought to integrate adaptation and mitigation at both national and local levels.

From there, we extended our focus to the links between environment and equity through the **Realising DReAMS** (Realising Development of Resources and Access to Municipal Services) project (2010-13), supported by the EU. In Guntur,

Solar PV lighting in Bhubaneswar municipal hospital, Application of RE and EE in the Urban Health Sector project, 2009

Rajshahi (Bangladesh), and Thimphu (Bhutan), we introduced tools such as ecoBUDGET and the Poverty Database Monitoring System, demonstrating that managing natural, environmental, and cultural resources could directly reduce poverty, and strengthen livelihoods. The project expanded our scope of work in South Asia, starting with Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Through all these projects, we catapulted Indian cities to the global arena, where they worked alongside cities across the world in designing, piloting and implementing initiatives through multi-regional projects.

Charting Emissions

The British High Commission (BHC) had begun funding us by 2007, across three phases of programmes under its Strategic Programme Fund. Using that funding, we supported Thane, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam to create their first emissions inventories, adopt RE and energy efficiency (EE) measures, and start developing integrated climate protection policies under the **City Level Carbon Emissions Reduction Project** (2007-09). This was one of our first large-scale projects where we tried to mainstream climate considerations from a mitigation standpoint into

> ***Did you know? We installed energy-efficient light fixtures at the Lord Lingaraja Temple in Bhubaneswar as part of a pilot project under the Local Renewables initiative.***

city-level policy and identified specific RE and EE measures.

We continued the whole-of-economy approach adopted for the UEAs, along with a low-emission development perspective, under the **Urban Climate Project** (2008-11), implemented in Rajkot and Coimbatore. This was our first attempt to mainstream climate change considerations in multi-sectoral, large-scale infrastructure, funded through the national Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), one of the largest city modernisation missions taken up by GoI in 2007 to create efficient, equitable and responsive cities.

In January 2009, Delhi became the first Indian state to adopt its **State Action Plan for Climate Change**, a climate mitigation and adaptation plan aligned with NAPCC. ICLEI South Asia was among the key stakeholders involved in its formulation. Since then, we have contributed to more than 30 climate action plans for cities in South and South-east Asia.

Our work scaled rapidly. From 2008 to 2010, we developed carbon emission inventories for 54 cities across India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan under the **Roadmap of South Asian Cities and Local Governments for the Post 2012 Global Climate Agreement and Actions**. It was a first for the four countries, beyond India. The report was sought after globally for years.

Did you know? *ICLEI South Asia was the first organisation to develop a region-specific GHG emissions inventory tool for the Global South. This tool, first launched in 2006, continues to be used through ICLEI's HEAT+ software.*

Cities in the Sun

As lead consultant to the GoI's **Solar Cities** programme, we prepared 16 Solar Cities Master Plans across India, including for Agra, Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore, Rajkot and others, and supported the establishment of Solar Cells between 2008 and 2016, in convergence with the National Solar Mission. Soon, we launched a pilot in Nagpur, installing solar panels on municipal buildings and streetlights across the city.

This local experiment inspired a national vision; the Local Renewables project also informed the large-scale design of the Solar Cities programme, which was announced at one of our events. GoI expanded the programme to 60 cities, making it India's first large-scale municipal renewable energy roll-out. From 2008 to 2010, we focused on identifying and implementing RE technologies and EE measures within hospitals, under the **Application of RE and EE in the Urban Health**

Solar Cities programme, Thane, 2014

Sector project, funded by Wisions. We piloted the deployment of solar PV, water heating, a solar-powered vaccine refrigerator, and energy-efficient lighting and fans. Benefits included reliable vaccine refrigeration, energy savings, reduced emissions, and lower costs.

Where Policy Meets People

India made its first concerted effort to track urban service delivery by introducing the Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs) to check the impact of programmes like JNNURM. We were right there, piloting the SLBs in 17 cities. Under the **Service Level Benchmarking of Indian Cities** project (2009-2011), we identified gaps in water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, and solid waste management, and helped cities make smarter investments.

Even today, the SLB framework continues to guide urban planning and defines the monitoring framework for several national programmes.

Community engagement on waste segregation, SUNYA project, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, 2014

However, our work in sanitation had begun much earlier. In 2008, with EU support, we worked alongside GoI on the **National Urban Sanitation Policy**, helping create city sanitation plans and demonstration projects that later informed a nationwide rollout. ICLEI South Asia also influenced global investments from national banks for wastewater and solid waste management facilities by conducting environment compliance audits, supported by GIZ.

Through the Accelerating City-to-City Exchange for Sustainable Sanitation (**ACCESSanitation)** project, implemented across five cities in India and the Philippines, we helped to incorporate sustainability into essential services, linking resource management with poverty reduction and shaping city sanitation plans. Like Realising DReAMS, this initiative showed how improved resource management could reduce poverty and improve service delivery.

The **SUNYA—Towards Zero Waste in South Asia** project (2011- 2015) introduced the concepts of zero waste and waste reduction in seven municipalities in 5 countries: Hetauda and Tansen (Nepal); Matale (Sri Lanka); Shimla and Coimbatore (India); Phuentsholing (Bhutan); and North Dhaka (Bangladesh). We developed action plans based on the 3R principle. It enabled efficient door-to-door collection, minimised litter, and promoted decentralised waste processing. The SUNYA approach later became a national model in India.

Another milestone that year came when we served as technical lead and drafted the **Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) Manual**, a key policy document of GoI guiding standard practices of municipal solid waste management. Supported by GIZ, this manual introduced new technologies and strengthened institutional frameworks, enabling cities to adopt sustainable waste practices. This nationally recognised resource continues to inform solid waste management practices across India.

We also crafted the first Delhi Climate Action Plan, 2012-2014, focusing on climate-resilient development and urban green growth strategies.

Our role in shaping these benchmarks has been instrumental in redefining the way urban services are delivered in India today.

“

Did you know? Our association with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) began with the SLB project. Following the release of the CPHEEO Manual, NIUA contracted ICLEI SA to provide training to approximately 500 urban local bodies across three states in India.

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From Risk to Resilience

ICLEI South Asia's journey into climate resilience and adaptation began with the **ACCCRN– the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network** project (2010-2017), funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Previously, climate action primarily focused on reducing emissions, with limited attention to how cities could prepare for climate-related risks. ACCCRN changed that.

The **ICLEI-ACCCRN Process (IAP)** connected climate action with sustainable development and basic service provision. For the first time, resilience, not just mitigation, became the guiding concept. The project coincided with the establishment of the National Adaptation Plan process under the Cancun Adaptation Framework at the 2010 COP16.

The IAP was based on Shared Learning Dialogues in which city stakeholders identified climate change risks and vulnerabilities through group discussions and assessments, and fostered a participatory and practical approach to urban climate resilience, which became the cornerstone to our climate planning and action approach.

Initially piloted in three cities – Bhubaneswar, Mysore, and Shimla – we scaled up IAP to 40 cities across India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines in the second phase, helping them understand their vulnerabilities and plan for the future. Rockefeller later launched it globally in a 100-city programme.

Growth and Emerging Leadership

By 2012, we had expanded into new areas, including urban resilience and biodiversity. While early biodiversity efforts were modest, co-hosting the Cities for Life Summit at COP11 in Hyderabad marked the start of a more structured approach. Similarly, our engagement with EE, transport solutions, and climate-smart planning deepened.

ICLEI South Asia began representing South Asian cities on the global climate negotiations stage

Field demonstration, Urban Nexus project, Nashik, Maharashtra, 2024

since its conception. In 2002, ICLEI joined the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency at Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), ensuring the voices of cities from the Global South were heard. At COP13 in Bali (2007), we actively advocated for urban climate action and demonstrated that cities are crucial players in adaptation and mitigation.

This decade of growth laid the groundwork for ICLEI South Asia to evolve from a small team into a multi-country, multi-disciplinary organisation capable of linking local action with global knowledge.

Our rising credibility did not go unnoticed. In 2013, under new global leadership, **Emani Kumar was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability,** marking how far we had come in a short time.

Foundations for Urban Action

By the early to mid-2010s, cities across India were calling for structured interventions to address growing congestion, pollution, and inadequate infrastructure, while urban national missions and heritage-linked initiatives were laying the groundwork for sustainable urban transformation.

In response, we launched our first major intervention in the urban development sector, the **Eco-Mobility Readiness Assessment** (2012-13), in collaboration with the Ministry of Urban Development and the Institute of Urban Transport. This pioneering study assessed capacities across 28 cities, reviewing policy gaps, financing mechanisms, and institutional awareness in implementing non-motorised transport projects. It established a foundational mobility portfolio and set ICLEI South Asia's course in urban action.

Building on this, we expanded partnerships with state governments, agencies like the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), and the Government of Tamil Nadu, providing expertise on junction improvements, capacity building, and integrated transport solutions. In 2013, we launched the **Nehru Place Revitalisation** project to rejuvenate Delhi's busiest commercial IT hub by improving public spaces, access, connectivity, and parking management. Initiated by the DDA's Unified Traffic and Transport Infrastructure Centre, the project's three phases covered strategy development, detailed design and implementation, and branding.

ICLEI South Asia broadened its scope with initiatives such as the **Urban Green Growth Strategies for Indian Cities** Project (2013-15), which evaluated the economic and environmental potential of 10 cities, incorporating analysis of transport, housing, and waste management services. It explored pathways to unlock synergies between urban growth, infrastructure systems, environmental protection, and economic growth.

Every Drop Counts

Extending the integrated approach to water, we launched the Adopting Integrated Urban Water Management in Indian Cities **(AdoptIUWM)** project (2013-17), which focused on capacity

> ***Did you know? We partnered with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to launch the Earth Hour City Challenge in 2015–2016, to encourage cities to adopt RE solutions and enhance resilience. The challenge has evolved into the One Planet City Challenge. Rajkot won the title of 'National Capital of India', bestowed by WWF, in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 for its consistent and ambitious climate actions.***

Interactive workshop in school, IUWM project, Kishangarh, Rajasthan, 2015

building and water sector reforms in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer and Kishangarh, as well as in Maharashtra's Solapur and Ichalkaranji. Funded by the European Commission, we developed the Integrated Urban Water Management (IUWM) toolkit, based on the SWITCH – Managing Water for the City of the Future training kit.
We focused more on vulnerability assessment to help cities consider water supply, wastewater, and stormwater as interconnected components of a single system that must be managed together. Several international projects came, smaller in scale, and involving interesting activities.

But all this experience helped to broaden our technical expertise, strengthen partnerships, and expand our understanding of integrated water management, which enabled us to take on larger, more complex projects and scale our impact in our next decade of work.

> ***Did you know? We won the third prize at the World Water Challenge 2017 for our outstanding and innovative approach in the IUWM project. The Challenge was organised by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of South Korea to identify and promote creative solutions addressing global water challenges.***

BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE: **THE SECOND DECADE**

A Landmark Year

In 2015, a historic moment united the world in its fight against climate change, with 196 Parties to the UNFCCC, adopting the Paris Agreement, bringing nearly every country together under a common framework to limit global warming. That same year, all 193 UN member states unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, setting out a 15-year plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet.

In India, the launch of the Smart Cities Mission marked a significant shift. The country began actively integrating sustainable principles into its development framework, with a particular emphasis on urban environments and infrastructure.

ICLEI South Asia had begun helping cities take action on energy and climate in the mid-2000s. Now, the Paris Agreement, and the Smart Cities Mission in India reinforced our approach to sustainable and climate-resilient cities.

Integrated Climate Action

The first phase of our **Urban LEDS** project (Promoting Low Emission Urban Development Strategies in Emerging Economy Countries), launched in 2012 with EU support, led to the development of Rajkot and Thane as 'model cities'. Together, we mapped emissions, ran feasibility tests, and implemented pilots. City officials experimented with decentralised wastewater management systems, large-scale adoption of LED streetlights through ESCO contracting and RE deployment for powering municipal and social infrastructure, building on the solar city masterplans, seeing firsthand how emissions could decrease while services improved.
Based on our pilots, both cities deployed LED streetlights on a significant scale, with Rajkot installing approximately 60,000 lights and Thane

installing 12000+ with procurement support from ICLEI South Asia. A climate action planning methodology, **GreenClimateCities,** was also formulated.

As the **waste sector lead in the Greenhouse Gas Platform India** consortium from 2015 to 2022, we played a central role in this collective civil society effort to provide independent estimates of India's GHG emissions. We developed waste sector inventories across four phases of the initiative, beginning with India's first independent national estimates for 2007–2012, later extended to cover the 2005-2018 period with state-level disaggregations. These estimates informed climate action planning at both national and sub-national levels, supported dialogue on India's NDCs and net-zero commitments, and strengthened the capacity of local governments to link emissions tracking with policy and project development.

The **CapaCITIES** project (2016-19), supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, changed the way we approached climate planning. It brought together the climate change mitigation and adaptation strands, leading to the creation of the **ClimateResilientCITIES** (CRC) methodology, the first planning tool to integrate climate mitigation, adaptation, sustainable development, and service delivery in a single framework. The first Climate Resilient City Action Plans (CRCAPs) were developed under the project, marking a milestone that has since shaped much of our climate planning work.

Taking lessons from CapaCITIES, we helped craft a national benchmark, **the Climate-Smart City Assessment Framework (CSCAF),** launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, GoI. We facilitated its pilot implementation in cities and the development of its indicators.

Over time, our work on energy has grown beyond solar panels and energy efficiency measures. ICLEI pioneered the first assessment on district cooling systems in India in 2016 under UNEP's **District Energy in Cities** Initiative across five Indian cities, and formulated a city-wide district cooling plan and a cooling map to help Thane city advance district cooling in the long term. These national efforts inspired cities to act. In 2021, we helped Rajkot become the first Indian city with an **Urban Cooling Plan**, introducing practical solutions such as expanding urban green spaces, installing reflective surfaces and heat-resistant tiles, and promoting energy-efficient buildings to reduce the heat island effect.

We also worked with Surat and Rajkot to identify specific opportunities for **Battery Energy Storage Systems** (2021-22) to promote the demand for energy storage at the city scale. In 2023, we stepped into new territory by leading the Development of an **Offshore Wind Roadmap** for Tamil Nadu, and charting a strategic pathway for the state's early-stage offshore wind sector.

Urban landscaping under Urban LEDS II, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 2018

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijaybhai Rupani (left) releasing Rajkot CRCAP, 2019

Urban LEDS II (2018–21) helped model cities Nagpur and Thane in India, and Narayanganj and Rajshahi in Bangladesh craft integrated climate action plans, alongside 20 other international cities, that addressed both adaptation and mitigation together, using South-South-North collaboration to pilot solutions in RE, clean air, and biodiversity, proving that cities can tackle climate challenges together. The global methodology, GCC, was also modified from a Low Emissions Development tool to an **Integrated Climate Planning tool**, building on the CRC methodology.

CapaCITIES II (2019–2024) led to the development of ICLEI's **Net-zero CRC methodology**. We worked in eight cities—Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu; Rajkot, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara in Gujarat; Siliguri in West Bengal; and Udaipur in Rajasthan. We helped these cities create Net-zero CRCAPs, among the first of their kind in the world, and build capacity to integrate climate planning. We also supported over 30 smart cities in defining and meeting their Climate Smart City goals through the CSCAF process.

In the third phase of CapaCITIES, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has prepared **India's first 'Climate and Sustainability Budget'**, allocating 72% of the total capital budget for FY 2025-26 to climate and sustainability actions, and incorporating it into the Municipal Budget Book 2025-26. Subsequently, all project cities and states established **Net-Zero, Environment, and Climate Resilient Cells**, based on the experience of Ahmedabad.

Our quick-win projects, such as improving waste management while reducing GHG emissions through biomethanation facilities and scientific dumpsite closures, showed tangible results: residents in Udaipur noticed cleaner streets, while city officials celebrated the leap in the Swachh Survekshan rankings, and Rajkot was named India's Earth Hour Capital for its outstanding climate efforts.

Siliguri introduced solar PV for municipal facilities for the first time. Lake rejuvenation in Tiruchirapalli and a flood early warning system on the Tamiraparani river in Tirunelveli showcased climate change adaptation measures needed to reduce vulnerabilities to the fast-changing climate scenario.

Green mobility was strengthened with e-autos in Rajkot, India's first solar-powered on-route opportunity charging station for public electric buses in Ahmedabad, and a low-emission zone in Udaipur's walled city, while Miyawaki urban forests took root in Vadodara, Udaipur, and Siliguri. The project truly supported the cities in demonstrating integrated climate mitigation and adaptation actions.
More importantly, **CapaCITIES III** has helped to improve city climate governance and helped cities connect planning, finance implementation, monitoring, and partnerships.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh also charted its own ambitious course. Kakinada and Vijayawada have prepared their Net-zero CRCAPs, backed by detailed energy audits and building sector

guidelines, under the **Mainstreaming Climate Action in Three Cities of Andhra Pradesh** project. These plans encompass a range of initiatives, including the conduction of investment grade energy audits at energy-intensive municipal facilities of water and wastewater in Kakinada and Visakhapatnam.

Backed by our technical expertise, Nagpur became India's first city to develop a **Zero Carbon Buildings Action Plan** in 2024, rethinking every stage of the building lifecycle to cut emissions city-wide. The plan was built upon earlier work under the **Building Efficiency Accelerator** project (2018–2020), during which Nagpur and Rajkot had tested energy-efficient affordable housing, conducted energy audits, and developed climate-responsive building guidelines.

Beyond India, in **Dhaka**, we partnered with the North and South City Corporations to reduce the intense climate risks they face annually, such as flooding, storms, heavy rainfall, and extreme heat. This collaboration produced **Climate Action Plans** offering roadmaps to lower GHG emissions and improve climate resilience.

Taken together, these initiatives reflect how our work has evolved, moving from early pilots to transformative solutions that guide South Asian cities toward deep decarbonisation and a sustainable energy transition.

> ***Did you know? Ahmedabad, Rajkot, and Vadodara, three CapaCITIES cities, were ranked among the top 9 performers under CSCAF, and awarded 4-star rating.***

Partnerships with States

We have also provided extensive technical and strategic support to state governments in Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, helping design and implement programmes, state-level policies, and municipal-level initiatives.

In 2019, we supported **Madhya Pradesh** through the GHG Platform India (GHGPI), a joint initiative of civil society partners, in the **revision of its State Action Plan on Climate Change** (SAPCC). ICLEI SA along with GHGPI partners delivered support on the climate mitigation component of the revised SAPCC, in coherence with India's NDC. Advancing these efforts, we provided technical assistance under the World Bank **supported Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Project (MPUDP) Phase II** project, in partnership with PwC from October 2024 to June 2025. The team conducted a state-level climate assessment, developed **Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) guidelines**, and contributed to the sustainable city financing mechanism to strengthen urban local bodies; capacity and unlock climate finance. Additionally, we contributed to the development of methodologies for climate-smart infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

Since 2021, we have been supporting the **Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company (TNGCC)** by setting up a Project Management Unit (PMU) and strengthening institutional and technical capacities. TNGCC, established under the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests in 2021, is the state's nodal agency for climate action and green development. Our work has included developing the state's **first City Biodiversity Index for Chennai**, conducting a **state-wide Urban Heat Island Assessment and Strategic Guidelines for Urban Cooling** in four cities, and carrying out an **investment-grade energy audit** of the state's largest public hospital.

The state also partnered with us to design the Tamil Nadu Climate Resilient Urban Development Programme (TNCRUDP), which strengthens resilience in urban local bodies. Under CapaCITIES III, the **Net-Zero CRC methodology** has been rolled out in 21 ULBs, which are now preparing cross-sectoral climate action plans. We also supported the **climate indexation of 21 corporations, 138 municipalities, and 490 town panchayats** through the Tamil Nadu Urban Liveability Framework.

We also provided technical **support to the Gujarat Urban Development Mission (GUDM)** for developing and submitting a proposal for establishing a State Climate Center for Cities as a part of MoHUA's CITIIS 2.0, which would coordinate, plan, implement and monitor various climate actions in cities and state level.

In 2022, we partnered with Bihar for developing a **Low Carbon Action Plan** for its waste and wastewater sectors, along with a detailed GMG emissions inventory to help the state achieve net zero by 2070. This plan provides a roadmap for Bihar to reduce emissions while protecting communities from climate-related risks.

Bringing Back Blue Skies

Our work on low-emission development soon led cities to start asking questions that went beyond carbon: how do we make the air we breathe cleaner? Early projects such as Urban LEDS and the first phase of CapaCITIES provided city leaders with the tools to assess air pollution in their own cities. Rajkot, Coimbatore, and Udaipur **installed air quality sensors, experimented with cleaner transport, energy, and waste practices,** and began to grasp the connections between urban planning and the air their citizens breathed.

In 2020, on the UN's first International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, we brought together **37 mayors and city leaders from six countries who**

Training of sanitation staff, Clean Air Action in Delhi- NCR project, Gurugram, 2022

pledged to act against air pollution, a milestone moment that made clean air a shared political priority.

From 2022, we collaborated with the municipal corporations of Delhi, Meerut, and Gurugram under the **Building City Leadership on Clean Air Action in Delhi National Capital Region** project, funded by the Clean Air Fund. We mapped pollution sources, prepared city action plans, and piloted neighbourhood solutions such as zero-waste colonies and dust control. The project strengthened city ownership and gave officials better tools to respond to recurring smog episodes.

In Ahmedabad, we have been actively engaged in the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), working closely with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation as a technical PMU. Our support has included **identifying air pollution hotspots, preparing action plans to mitigate air pollution,** project implementation planning, and guiding the effective utilisation of grants received under 15th Finance Commission NCAP.

> ***Did you know? Ahmedabad achieved a 40% reduction in PM10 concentration in 2024, compared to 2018–19 levels. The city has also received more than INR 1,200 million as an incentive grant for good performance.***

We have also assisted the city in applying to the Swachh Vayu Survekshan, and helped **formulate and implement India's first 'Policy for Good Construction Practices'** to reduce dust pollution from construction activities.

Closing the Loop

As the urban sprawl grew, its attendant problems, such as water and energy shortages, mountains of waste and strained infrastructure, were becoming difficult to ignore. It was also becoming clear

Handwashing training under IAdapt project, Haglur village, Maharashtra, 2018

Promoting eco-friendly bags, plastic waste management project, Hyderabad, 2019

that these issues could not be dealt with in silos, but needed an integrated approach. We realised that cities needed to see the bigger picture to understand how water, energy, waste and ecosystems were all connected.

We introduced this 'nexus' thinking to Rajkot and Nagpur as part of the **Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: the Urban Nexus** project. Backed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, we organised training with state-level institutions that linked the approach with national missions and global agreements.

At the same time, we launched the **Integrated Rural Urban Water Management for Climate-based Adaptations or IAdapt** project (2017–2020), supported by IDRC, Canada. In Solapur (Maharashtra) and Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), we integrated climate adaptation into water planning with strong community participation. Through the RURBAN platform and the **IAdapt Framework Toolkit**, drawing on lessons from ACCCRN and AdoptIUWM, we introduced a catchment-level perspective, linking rural and urban water management.

IAdapt strengthened our capacity and is helping us in initiatives such as the Community Led Action Plan **(CLAP)** for Climate Resilient Water Security in Four Tea Gardens of Darjeeling and Kurseong in North Bengal (2023–ongoing), where, along with preparing water security plans for small hamlets, we are training local women and youth to become 'barefoot hydrogeologists' to ensure that water management is both sustainable and community-led.

These initiatives show a convergence with GoI's Atal Bhujal Yojana, supporting sustainable water management through measures such as rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, catchment restoration, and community-based water governance, while strengthening local capacity and institutional frameworks for long-term water security.

Anchored in lessons from water and waste loops, we turned challenges into circular economy opportunities. Through the **Alliance + ICLEI Developing Plastic Waste-Free Cities** project (2020–2023), we supported Warangal and Surat (India), Iloilo City (Philippines), Iskandar Regional Development Authority (Malaysia), and Jambi City (Indonesia). Earlier, in Greater Hyderabad (2018–19), to develop a holistic strategy for **plastic waste management**. Our technical guidance also enabled Rajkot's circular-economy-based municipal solid waste project to be approved under CITIIS 2.0, demonstrating how cities can transform waste into value.

In 2024, we completed the first phase of the **Strengthening Local Fresh Food Markets for Healthier Food Environments within Planetary Boundaries** project, which promotes healthier diets, city-to-city learning, and local government action on food challenges. Rourkela's Cold Room Project in Odisha, using solar-powered cold storage to cut post-harvest losses, was featured as a case study in the CityFood Market Handbook for Healthy and Resilient Cities, launched at the Climate Chance Europe–Africa Summit in Marseille in March 2025.

> ***Did you know? We supported Coimbatore Municipal Corporation in organising the world's largest recycling lesson on August 5, 2015. The event, attended by 12,994 participants, set a Guinness World Record!***

Revitalisation of infrastructure near heritage site, HRIDAY project, Amravati, Maharashtra, 2018

Focus group discussion on waste management, PROMISE project, Ajmer, 2018

Kids' festival, Urban95 project, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 2023

A Space for All

After India's Smart Cities Mission was launched in 2015, cities started asking for help in planning better and building smarter. That's when our work in the built environment truly began to take shape.

Between 2015 and 2019, under the Smart Cities Mission and National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana or **HRIDAY**, we anchored projects in Amravati, Badami, and Ajmer. The focus was on improving infrastructure near heritage sites, including the development of water supply, sanitation, drainage, waste management, approach roads, footpaths, streetlights, tourist conveniences and other citizen-oriented services.

At the same time, the **PROMISE** project (2016-19) helped Ajmer, Jabalpur, Karnal and Warangal plan better for the long term which helped local government track and evaluate their projects.

More than that, we put people first, by training officials in participatory planning, ensuring that people had a say in how their cities grew.

In 2019, we launched a unique initiative to make urban spaces more child-friendly under the **Urban95 programme** in Udaipur, jointly with the Bernard van Leer Foundation and Udaipur Municipal Corporation. Our simple and low-cost interventions, such as traffic-calming measures, public space upgrades and fun festivals for children, made a huge impact. Children played freely in upgraded parks, and families returned to streets that felt safer and lively. The success of this effort earned Udaipur the title of "lighthouse city" under India's Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge.

In Phase II, as a part of the city level PMU, we introduced tools such as the Master Checklist to help design child-friendly, safer streets, parks,

Pedalathon to promote greener, smarter commuting choices in Kochi, 2018.

Handover of electric freight vehicles to beneficiaries, Kochi, Kerala, 2023

and social infrastructure, along with Child Safety Guidelines to encourage positive parenting.

To better understand the challenges children face, two studies were conducted in 2022-23: **'Young Children and Climate**' and **'Usage of Public Spaces by Young Children, their Caregivers and Pregnant Women'.** Their findings revealed how children under five and pregnant women are hit hardest by climate change, air pollution, and lack of safe public spaces.

Shift to Green Wheels

From simple traffic fixes to large-scale electric mobility projects, ICLEI South Asia's journey in urban transport has been transformative. Around 2013, cities started prioritising improving the quality of life, with mobility emerging as a key focus. The **Ecomobility Readiness Assessment (2012-2013)** project evaluated over 28 cities on financial, policy, and institutional capacity, marking the start of our structured mobility support.

Early engagements focused on junction improvements, non-motorised transport, and capacity building. With the launch of GoI's **Smart Cities Mission**, we provided technical handholding to Kakinada, Visakhapatnam, Gwalior, Udaipur and Ludhiana, assisting municipal corporations and Smart City SPVs in implementing transport and built environment projects aligned with climate goals. Between 2017 and 2019, five Indian Smart Cities were supported in expanding Area-Based Development projects to pan-city interventions, producing city reports, handbooks on ECBC compliance and e-rickshaw deployment, learning reports, and webinars to share practical insights.

The **EcoLogistics project** (2017–2021) brought urban freight to city-level discussions in Kochi, Panjim, and Shimla, while engaging the Ministry

Launch of e-rickshaws and e-ambulances, TUMI project, Singra, Bangladesh, 2019

of Commerce and Industry and NITI Aayog at the national level. Notably, the adoption of low carbon urban freight action plans by these three cities marked the first such instance in India. The initiative also advanced electric mobility through pilots electrifying light commercial vehicles, raising the share of electric three-wheeler freight vehicles in Kochi and Panjim to over 35%. Complementing this, assessments informed e-mobility interventions across 10 cities.

We supported the integration of e-rickshaws with public transport under CapaCITIES in Udaipur and Rajkot, and in Delhi and Kochi under the **Transforming adoption of E-rickshaws in Indian Cities** project. Practical transport solutions were provided to Tier-2 cities like Nasik, Surat, Rajkot, and Bhopal under **TUMI E-Bus Mission** (2022-2025). We have also extended our expertise in electric and public transport systems internationally, developing an electric mobility framework for Sri Lanka, conducting a pre-Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) assessment in Thimphu, Bhutan, and a study of public transport ridership in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Likewise, we are supporting Himachal Pradesh by installing EV charging stations, optimising routes, and planning for fleet economic viability under the **Support to Himachal Pradesh to Enable Accelerated Adoption of E-Mobility project** (2023–2025).

> ***Did you know? In the mid-2010s, when car ownership was increasingly viewed as a sign of progress, ICLEI South Asia saw a bright future for non-motorised transport and encouraged cities to learn from global best practices.***

Dealing with Hazards and Disasters

As temperatures rise across South Asia, countries are realising that protecting their citizens from heat is as urgent as reducing emissions. India took a bold step in 2019 with the launch of the India Cooling Action Plan, followed by Bangladesh's National Cooling Plan in 2022.

Working with Taru Leading Edge, we created a **Heat Resilience Toolkit** for Surat in 2022, and along with IFRC and RCCC developed heat thresholds for Nepalgunj in Nepal and Rajshahi

Community consultation, SECURE Himalaya project, Himachal Pradesh, 2019

Release of Hyderabad's Illustrated Natural Asset Map, Hyderabad, 2023

in Bangladesh. Eventually, these processes were utilised to prepare the **Heat Action Plan for Narayanganj city in Bangladesh, the first in the country**.

More recently, we conducted an Urban Heat Island Assessment and developed Strategic Guidelines for Urban Cooling for the cities of Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.

Our work has since expanded to strengthen disaster risk resilience more broadly. Following the launch of the **Loss and Damage** Fund at COP28 to support climate-vulnerable countries, we initiated a project in 2024 in Ahmedabad and Surat to assess both economic and non-economic losses from extreme events and to design a methodology for cities to assess loss and damage after disaster events.

Where Cities and Nature Meet

For ICLEI South Asia, sustainability has always been closely linked to biodiversity. Our first official foray into biodiversity was in 2012, when we collaborated with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Government of Andhra Pradesh to organise the **'Cities for Life'** side event at the CBD COP in Hyderabad. This event aligned with a growing focus on integrating nature-based solutions into urban planning.

We also collaborated with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which was holding masterclasses to help corporations understand and integrate biodiversity considerations across different cities. While these efforts were not funded, they provided us with significant strategic value.

The turning point came in 2016, when we secured the **INTERACT-Bio project,** our first official biodiversity project. Over four years, it provided us with financial stability, technical expertise, and the team structure needed to expand our biodiversity work. It also helped attract new partnerships and projects, positioning ICLEI South Asia as a credible partner for urban biodiversity initiatives.

Nature Interpretation Zone, INTERACT-Bio project, Subhash Park, Kochi, Kerala, 2022

Municipal food garden, Delhi, 2024

Our **Illustrated Natural Asset Maps for Kochi, Gangtok, Panaji, Jammu, Srinagar, Noida** and **Nagpur** brought nature to life for city officials and the people. When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our planned activities, we developed the City Biodiversity Index (CBI) of Kochi as a strategic response, even though it was not a deliverable under the project. Since then, we have developed the CBI for 18 of the 20 cities in India that have adopted it, including as part of other projects.

Additionally, Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans were developed for 11 cities under different projects.

In 2018, we partnered with the Goa State Biodiversity Board to prepare **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)** in the state. This ongoing collaboration has since resulted in **72 PBRs** that have documented traditional knowledge about local biological resources. It has also led us to PBRs for Thane, Nagpur, Delhi and Ichalkaranji.

Our proven project delivery led to our selection for the UNDP-funded **SECURE Himalaya project** in 2018. The three-year project focused on ecological restoration of high-altitude grasslands in Himachal Pradesh and later in Jammu and Kashmir.

Another initiative that took root during the pandemic was the development of an urban policy for **khazans** (2021-24), Goa's traditional farmlands**.** Under the first initiative of its kind, our analysis revealed a significant decline in the biodiverse and vulnerable khazans due to urbanisation and changes in land-use patterns. We developed a strategy and action plan for urban khazan management, along with a pictorial handbook illustrating its ecosystem services.

We have also ventured into nutrition security for children by supporting the development of **food gardens in municipal schools** in four major Indian cities (2024-27). The project will also have spinoffs, including educating children about natural processes, creating green spaces, and improving crop diversity.

Recently, our collaboration with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has resulted in India's first-of-its-kind Urban Greening Policy Measures, released by the Chief Minister of Gujarat. This

Nepal local government delegates in Kenya to learn about community-led adaptation, CDKN programme, 2024

> ***Did you know? Over time, our portfolio has grown to cover many dimensions of urban biodiversity, something few organisations can claim. What began as add-ons in projects like Urban-LEDS and CapaCITIES, where we integrated plantations, riverfront restoration, or urban forests, have evolved into a strength of their own.***

includes the adoption of scientific greening practices, increase in tree survival rate, and developing diverse green spaces such as urban forests, rooftop gardens, and oxygen parks. It also encourages public participation and corporate social responsibility/corporate environmental responsibility engagement.

All these biodiversity initiatives align with India's national biodiversity targets and the Kunming–Montreal Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Bridging Knowledge and Action

A core part of our work in sustainability and climate resilience has been **knowledge brokering,** serving as a bridge between global climate discourse, national policies, and local realities. We have ensured that, through research,

Stakeholder Consultation on Male City's Voluntary Local Review, Male City, the Maldives, 2025

capacity-building, and peer-to-peer exchanges, lessons and innovations from one city inform and inspire many others.

Knowledge brokering was at the core of the second phase of the **Climate and Development Knowledge Network** programme, which was funded by IDRC and which we joined in 2018. We supported local governments in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh in turning global climate science into local action, promoting climate-compatible development and integrating equity into decision-making processes.

In CDKN's third phase (2022–27), we are moving from knowledge to on-the-ground action. Our work prioritises gender and social equity, recognising that women, marginalised groups, and vulnerable communities face the greatest climate impacts. Peer exchanges have been a part of most of our work over the last two decades, but through CDKN, we could undertake structured training programmes and inter-country learning exchanges for cities to hone their knowledge on ecosystem-based adaptation, gender and social inclusion and climate resilience.

Leveraging seven years of work under CDKN, we are scoping out knowledge brokering opportunities in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal under the **CLARE** research programme to advance socially inclusive and sustainable action for building climate and hazard resilience.

ICLEI South Asia has also been instrumental in promoting **Voluntary Local Reviews,** enabling cities to measure and showcase their progress towards the SDGs. We have developed all three VLRs that have been developed in South Asia, as of September 2025, for Singra in Bangladesh, Dhulikhel in Nepal and Male City in the Maldives.

Our work continues to evolve with the UrbanShift programme in India, where we are guiding cities such as Chennai, Pune, and Surat, as well as secondary cities like Agra and Pondicherry. We help them integrate nature-based solutions to mitigate urban floods and enhance ecosystem services, design climate-resilient coastal development, promote low-emission and gender-inclusive mobility, and advance green corridors and electric vehicle infrastructure.

Our work in **sustainability and local adaptation planning** has supported municipalities in developing practical, forward-looking strategies, such as Local Adaptation Plans of Action, which help embed sustainability principles into everyday governance and are community-driven. These efforts reflect our unique role as a connector, facilitator, and innovator in the region.

When Local Meets Global

For two decades, ICLEI South Asia has been shaping the global climate dialogue, ensuring that **the voices of the Global South are heard. From the bustling corridors of COPs** to the ICLEI World Congresses held every three years, we have championed the perspectives of cities and local governments.

At the same time, we have been instrumental in **bringing global best practices into South Asia**. Over the past 25 years, we have organised more than 30 international peer learning exchange visits for our members, giving them a chance to build collaborations, partnerships, and capacity.

Many of our **members are globally recognised** for implementing best practices in urban sustainability and inclusive planning, resulting in cities like Rajkot, Coimbatore, Nagpur, and Pimpri-Chinchwad receiving substantial international funding for their deep-dive work.

As the regional partner and **technical secretariat for the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM)** in South Asia since 2015, we organise training programmes, workshops, and peer-learning platforms for its members, and also assist them in reporting data to meet GCoM's reporting

Asia LEDS Partnership Forum, Bangkok, 2024

standards. Through mechanisms like the CDP-ICLEI Track, we help cities in reporting their climate actions, amplifying their impact.

Our regional engagement extends beyond South Asia. Between 2013 and 2016, under GIZ's PAKLIM II project, we trained Indonesian cities to develop and implement climate strategies. Through USAID's ASEAN Jakarta project, we helped Jakarta in building an emissions inventory using the HEAT+ tool, while sharing India's solar city experience with peers in Indonesia and South Africa through the REEEP programme.

As ICLEI South Asia began hosting the **Asia LEDS Partnership** (ALP) in 2016, our impact continued to grow as we worked with 14 national governments in the Asia Pacific. Through the ALP, we have facilitated peer-to-peer learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and supported the implementation of NDCs. We also organised the Resilient Cities Asia Pacific conferences in Bangkok, Thailand (2015); Melaka, Malaysia (2016); Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2017); and New Delhi, India (2019), providing a

Handover of Green City Action Plans for four cities, Malaysia GCAPs Subproject 1, Johor, Malaysia, 2024

platform for governments, NGOs, and cities to learn from one another.

In Malaysia, too, we initiated projects that set new benchmarks for urban development: we developed a resource management and tracking tool called PINTAR for Melaka state (2016), an Investment-Grade Audit for the Melaka Road Lighting Project (2017); the **Indonesia- Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) Sustainable Urban Development Framework (SUDF)** (2017–19); Kota Kinabalu's Green City Action Plan (GCAP) (2018), and later, the **GCAPs of 14 Malaysian cities**, which began in 2022.

Our engagement in Malaysia is also connected directly to wider subregional cooperation. As Deputy Secretary-General of ICLEI, Emani Kumar plays a **leadership role in the IMT-GT Chief Ministers' and Governors' Forum** (CMGF), serving as a key technical advisor for sustainable urban development across the 35-province subregion. His strategic involvement includes leading the development and implementation of the SUDF, which was endorsed by regional leaders in 2019 and targets over 40 GCAPs by 2036. Through ICLEI's knowledge partnership with the Centre for IMT-GT Subregional Cooperation, Kumar

> ***Did you know? Through its IAP, GCC, and CRC methodologies, ICLEI South Asia helps cities translate climate risks into actionable strategies, combining local knowledge with global expertise. What started in individual municipalities has now expanded across South and Southeast Asia, creating a bridge between community-level action and international climate goals.***

coordinates closely with national ministries in Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia, while collaborating extensively with the IMT-GT Joint Business Council) to leverage private sector expertise for urban sustainability initiatives.

Shaping Tomorrow's Cities

Looking ahead, ICLEI South Asia is committed to positioning the region as a global sustainability leader. We see mayors and local governments stepping confidently onto international platforms, not just as learners but as leaders—sharing innovations, experiences, and knowledge from South Asia with the world. As part of the Local Government and Municipal Administration (LGMA) constituency, we will continue to strengthen the collective voice of local and regional governments in global climate processes, ensuring that the perspectives of cities and communities shape future climate negotiations and outcomes.

Our focus will be on whole-of-systems and whole-of-society approaches as we take future strides. We will target the mainstreaming of Net-zero and Climate Resilient Pathways across all partner cities by 2030. These pathways will integrate RE, sustainable mobility, water management, and nature-based systems into a unified vision for urban resilience. At the same time, we will scale circular economy practices—embedding them in waste, water, construction, and urban systems—to ensure that pilots transform into mainstream solutions.

We will continue to expand RE deployment, support innovations such as district cooling and energy storage, and strengthen the enabling environment for electric vehicles and shared mobility systems. Alongside this, we will champion nature-based urban development, advancing ecosystem-based adaptation and regenerative planning so that cities are not only climate-smart but also biodiverse and liveable.

We will expand the practice of VLRs across South Asia, ensuring that city voices feed directly into national and global progress on the SDGs and climate targets. To support this, we will invest in digital and smart governance tools, harnessing the potential of AI, big data, and integrated platforms to enhance resilience, improve efficiency, and strengthen decision-making at the local level.

We will also broaden our regional footprint, extending partnerships across South and Southeast Asia, while strengthening South-South cooperation and knowledge exchange. By doing so, we aim to make South Asia a hub of innovation and practical solutions for the Global South. Multi-level governance will be central to this vision: our efforts will continue to align city actions with state and national policies, creating coherence, unlocking resources, and delivering impact at scale.

Finally, we will champion just and inclusive transitions by looking at loss and damage frameworks. We believe that climate solutions, resilient infrastructure, and green jobs must uplift the most vulnerable communities, ensuring that the benefits of sustainable development are equitably shared. By placing equity at the heart of our work—and amplifying these values through the LGMA constituency—we will help create cities that are not only resilient and low-carbon, but also inclusive, fair, and people-centred.

ICLEI SOUTH ASIA IN FIGURES

20%
of India's urban population is impacted by our projects

$114 billion
of climate investment identified

Working in
100+
cities in South Asia

60+
CRCAPs and Climate Action Plans developed
across 5 countries

80+
GHG inventories prepared

259
million tCO2e
of GHG emission reduction through climate initiatives

Provided support to

35

Indian cities for implementing **Smart Cities** initiatives

Supported water and wastewater management in

12+

cities across South Asia

Prepared

EcoMobility Readiness Assessments for

50+ cities

18

City Biodiversity Index developed

Operational support to deploy e-buses in

12

Indian cities under the **TUMI E-Bus Mission City Network**

7

Illustrated Natural Asset Maps created

80

People's Biodiversity Registers

developed to document the local biodiversity and traditional ecological knowledge

11

Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans prepared

Developed Climate Resilience Plans for

30+

across South Asia

Developed Holistic Waste Management Plans for

20+ cities

Developed

3

VLRs across three South Asian nations

100+

technical studies conducted under climate projects

THE TOOLBOX

Net-zero ClimateResilient CITIES Methodology

Step-by-step guide for cities to develop resilience action plans that tackle both adaptation and mitigation issues

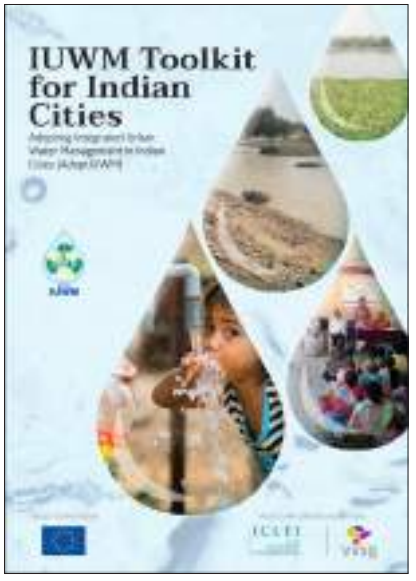
Climate Resilient Cities

HEAT+

Helps local governments reap the benefits of reducing GHG emissions and common air pollutants

Net-zero Tool

A key component of the 'Net-Zero ClimateResilientCITIES Methodology,' it has a set of calculators that assess the long-term emissions reduction impact of project and policy interventions across urban sectors and thematic areas



IUWM tool

Helps cities to address water sector issues in a sustainable and inclusive manner, and focuses on ensuring equitable allocation of water resources

Energy Efficiency Investment Decision Making Tool

Helps users select a variety of energy efficiency alternatives to lighting loads, HVAC systems and the installation of rooftop solar PV

ALP Emission Reduction Tool

Developed under ALP to assist banks in Mongolia assess emission/energy reduction potential of projects

ICLEI ACCCRN Process

Helps local governments develop resilience strategies and adapt to climate change impacts

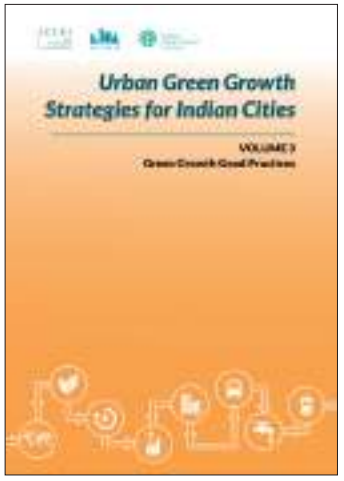
The IAdapt Framework

IAdapt Framework

Supports local governments to develop a Catchment Management Plan to manage water resources across both rural and urban areas within the catchment, accounting for diverse uses and climate risks

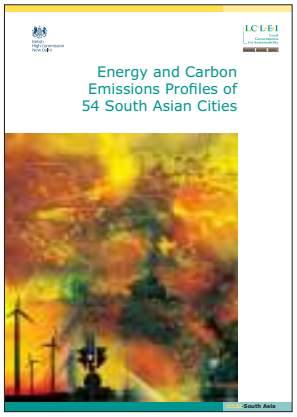
City Heat Resilience Toolkit

Provides a decision-making platform to help local governments overcome barriers to addressing heat risks and heat island effect; analyses issues based on their direct/ indirect impacts, and intensity; and offers a framework for prioritising issues, along with recommendations to mitigate effects



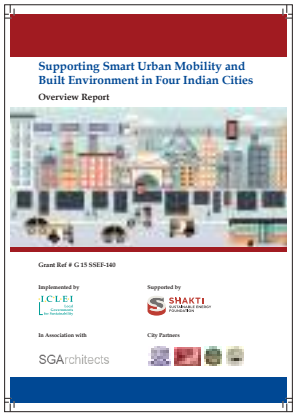
Urban Green Growth Strategies for Indian Cities: Green Growth Good Practices

SOME **KNOWLEDGE** PRODUCTS



Energy and Carbon emissions profile for 54 South Asian cities

Year
2009



Supporting Smart Urban Mobility and Built Environment in Indian Cities

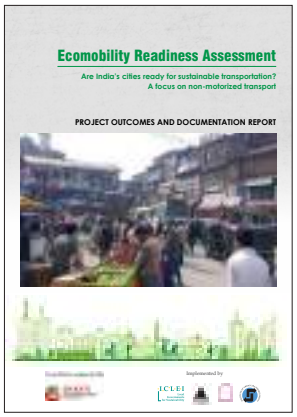
Year
2017

Urban Low Carbon Growth: Financing Opportunities for Indian Cities

Year
2013

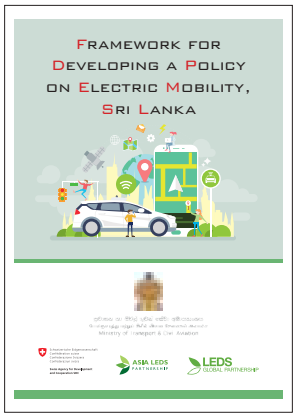
Trees of Subhash Chandra Bose Park Kochi, Kerala – A HANDBOOK

Year
2018



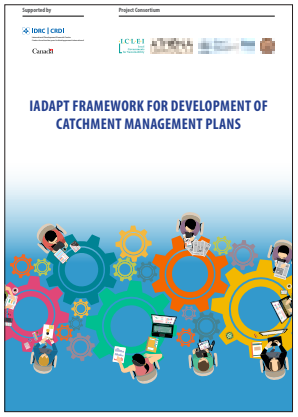
Ecomobility Readiness Assessment Project outcomes and Documentation Report

Year
2009



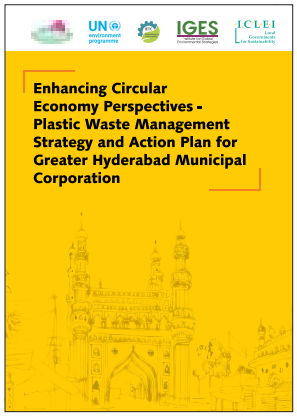
Framework for Developing a Policy on Electric Mobility, Sri Lanka

Year
2019



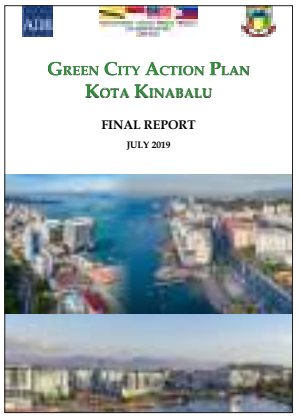
IAdapt Framework For Development of Catchment Management Plans

Year
2019



Enhancing Circular Economy Perspectives – Plastic Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan for Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

Year
2020

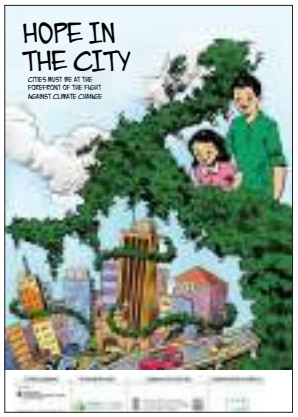


Green City Action Plan - Kota Kinabalu

Year
2019

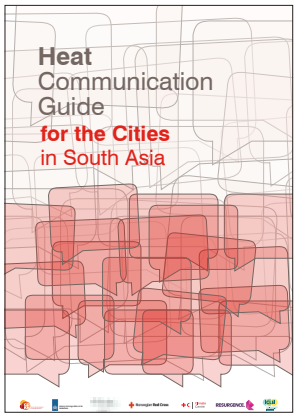
Peri-urban ecosystems: The potential for a planned approach in India - Policy Brief

Year
2021



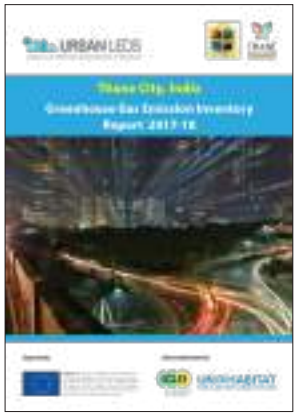
Hope in the City – a comic book

Year
2020



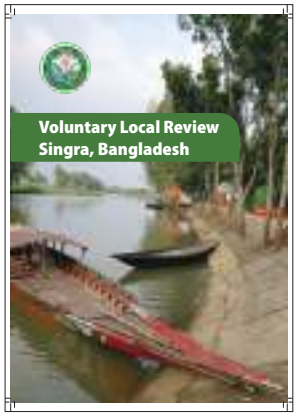
Heat Communication Guide for the Cities in South Asia

Year
2021



Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Report (2017-18), Thane City, India

Year
2021(V2)



Voluntary Local Review- Singra, Bangladesh

Year
2022

Nature Based Solutions for Urban Climate Resilience in South Asia: Cases from Bangladesh, Nepal and India

Year
2022

Climate finance in Bangladesh, India and Nepal: A compendium of finance sources and instruments to support climate action

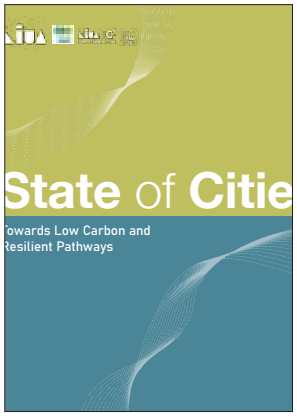
Year
2022

Guidelines for the Development of Miyawaki Forest

Year
2022

Kochi Smart Canal Project Report

Year
2023



State of Cities – Towards Low Carbon and Resilient Pathways

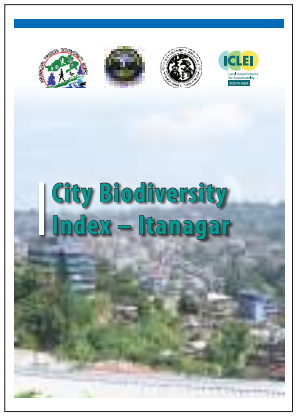
Year
2023

Recommendation for National EcoLogistics Framework

Year
2023

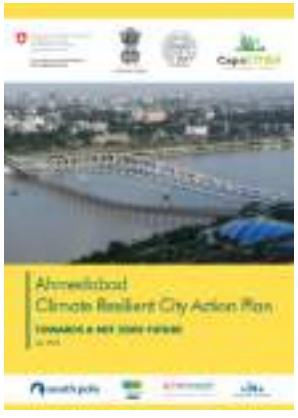
Child Safety Guidelines – Udaipur 2024

Year
2024



City Biodiversity Index – Itanagar

Year
2023

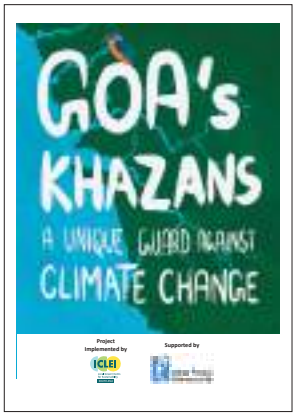


Ahmedabad Climate Resilient City Action Plan – Towards a Net Zero Future. Year: 2023

Year
2024

Zero Carbon Buildings Action Plan – Nagpur

Year
2023



Goa's Khazans – A Unique Guard Against Climate Change

Year
2024

PARTNERS | (INTERNATIONAL)

(NATIONAL)





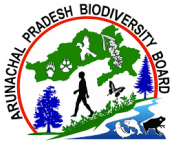




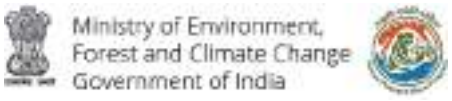




Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Government of India

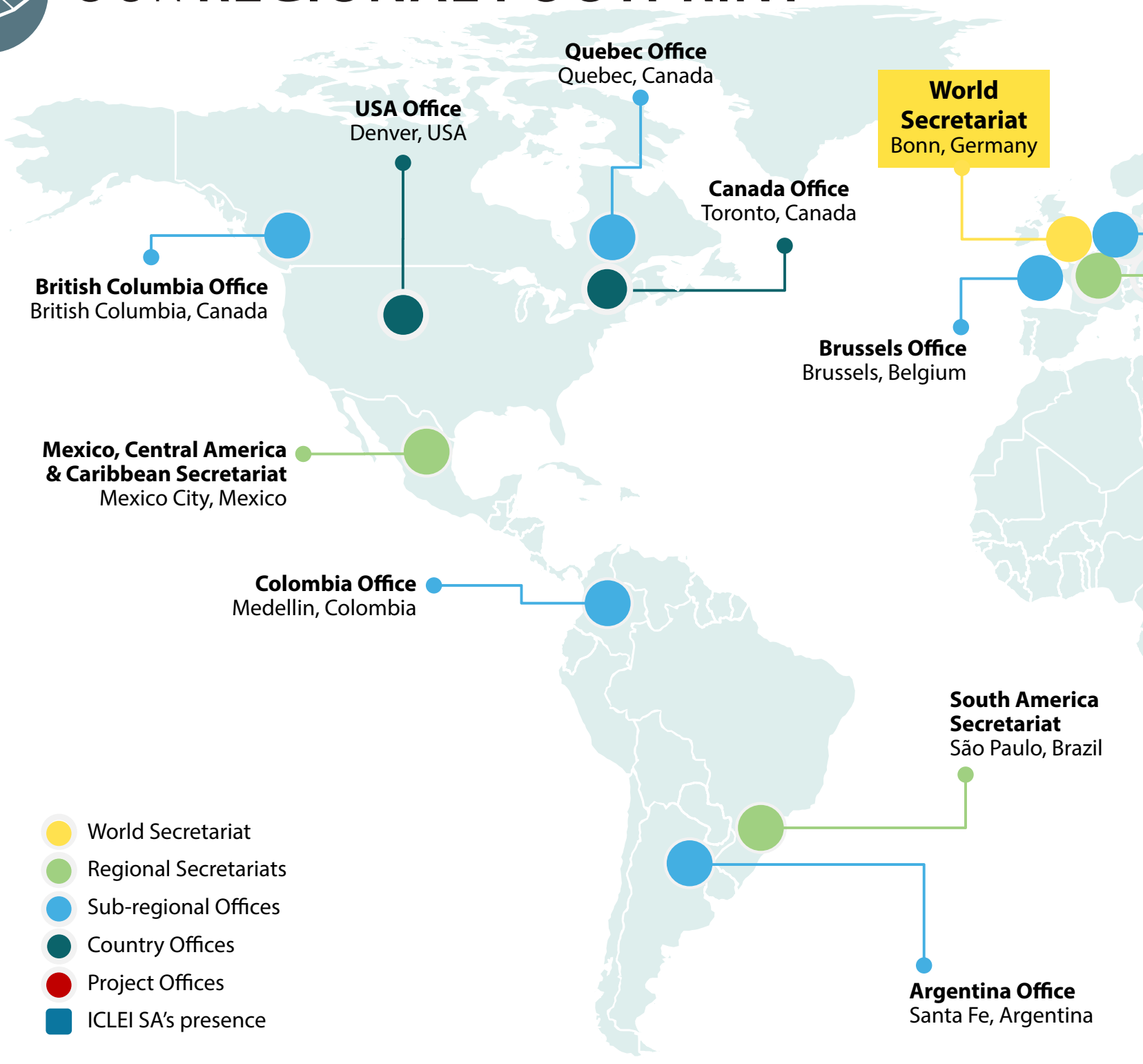


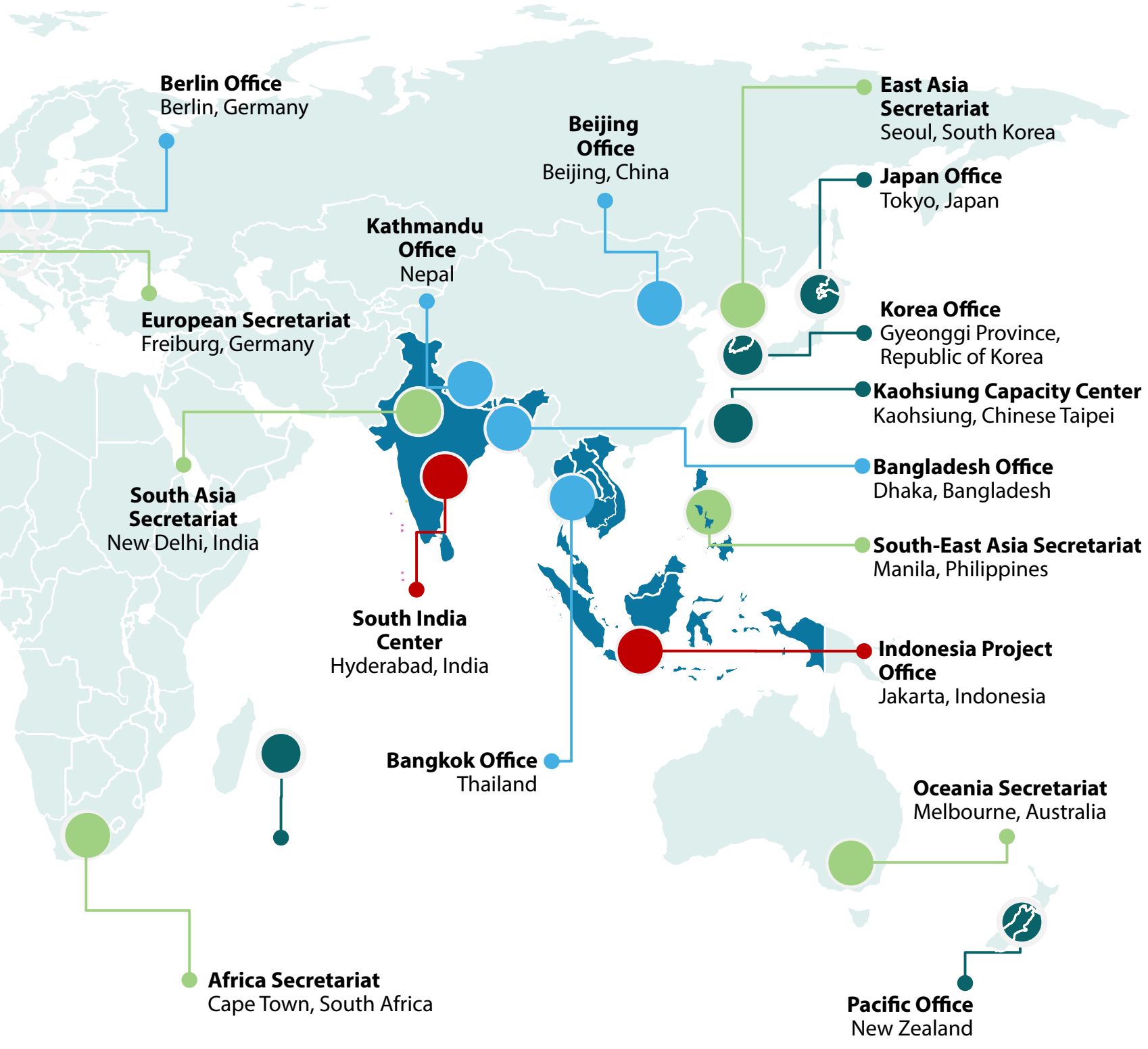





HCLFoundation

OUR **REGIONAL FOOTPRINT**




Berlin Office
Berlin, Germany
Beijing Office
Beijing, China
East Asia Secretariat
Seoul, South Korea
Japan Office
Tokyo, Japan
Kathmandu Office
Nepal
European Secretariat
Freiburg, Germany
Korea Office
Gyeonggi Province, Republic of Korea
Kaohsiung Capacity Center
Kaohsiung, Chinese Taipei
Bangladesh Office
Dhaka, Bangladesh
South Asia Secretariat
New Delhi, India
South-East Asia Secretariat
Manila, Philippines
South India Center
Hyderabad, India
Indonesia Project Office
Jakarta, Indonesia
Bangkok Office
Thailand
Oceania Secretariat
Melbourne, Australia
Africa Secretariat
Cape Town, South Africa
Pacific Office
New Zealand

WORDS THAT **INSPIRE**

Nitin Gadkari
Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India

"As India continues to prioritize sustainable development, the efforts of ICLEI South Asia resonate strongly with our national aspirations in building infrastructure holistically and sustainably across the country."

Tokhan Sahu
Minister of State for Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India

"ICLEI South Asia's impactful contributions to sustainability, urban transformation, and climate resilience are truly commendable"

B. V. R. Subrahmanyam
Chief Executive Officer, NITI Aayog, India

"NITI Aayog has benefited from working closely with ICLEI South Asia as a knowledge partner, and we value the insights and collaboration shared over the years."

Amitabh Kant
Former G20 Sherpa, India

"ICLEI South Asia's impactful contributions to sustainability, urban transformation, and climate resilience are commendable."

Supriya Sahu,
IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu, India

"ICLEI South Asia has done some path-breaking work, with innovations and pilots being incorporated into regular government programmes. It speaks volumes about the impact that ICLEI has made."

Banchhanidhi Pani,
IAS, Municipal Commissioner, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, India

"ICLEI South Asia has been very supportive and collaborative, and they have extended all their support for making Ahmedabad's journey as a climate friendly city."

Curt Garrigan,
Chief, Sustainable Urban Development, United Nations ESCAP

"ICLEI South Asia's work in supporting cities and communities across the Asia-Pacific region has put them on clear pathways to become more resilient and more sustainable."

Hemanthi Goonasekera,
Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities (FSLGA)

"ICLEI South Asia's focus on inclusive, people-centred development aligns closely with FSLGA's mission of enabling local governments to drive meaningful change."

R. Kesavan,
IAS, Secretary (Town and Country Planning), Government of Puducherry, India

"The knowledge and experience of ICLEI South Asia in building resilient cities really helped change the urban planning perspective of our city, Puducherry."

C. Achalender Reddy,
Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority, India

"I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the contribution that the organisation has been making in the field of urban biodiversity and mainstreaming the same into urban planning."

Debolina Kundu,
Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs

"Over the last 20 years, NIUA and ICLEI South Asia have had the privilege of collaborating on a range of transformative initiatives…our partnership has been grounded in a shared commitment to strengthening the capacities of Indian cities, to promoting integrated, inclusive and low-emission urban growth."

Kalanidhi Devkota,
Executive Director, Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN)

"Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN) and ICLEI South Asia are working together for climate adaptation planning and focusing on climate resilience and working for Nepalese cities and towns."

Md. Moinul Islam,
Urban Planner, Narayanganj City Corporation, Bangladesh

"ICLEI South Asia has consistently demonstrated how collaborative, inclusive, and science-driven approaches can help local governments tackle the complex challenges of climate change, resource management, and urban resilience."

A. Arunachalam,
Director, Central Agroforestry Research Institute, ICAR, India

"ICLEI South Asia continues to carry out commendable work and contribute to sustainable development."

OUR STORY **IN PICTURES**

2009

2015

2020

2025

South Asia

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Sankalita Dey, Rick Sarkar
Design: Chitrapat Ideas Foundry