City Climate Finance Gap Fund

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

GLOBAL COVENANT of MAYORS for CLIMATE & ENERGY

Preparing the Ground for Climate Finance

Early-Stage Project Preparation through the City Climate Finance Gap Fund

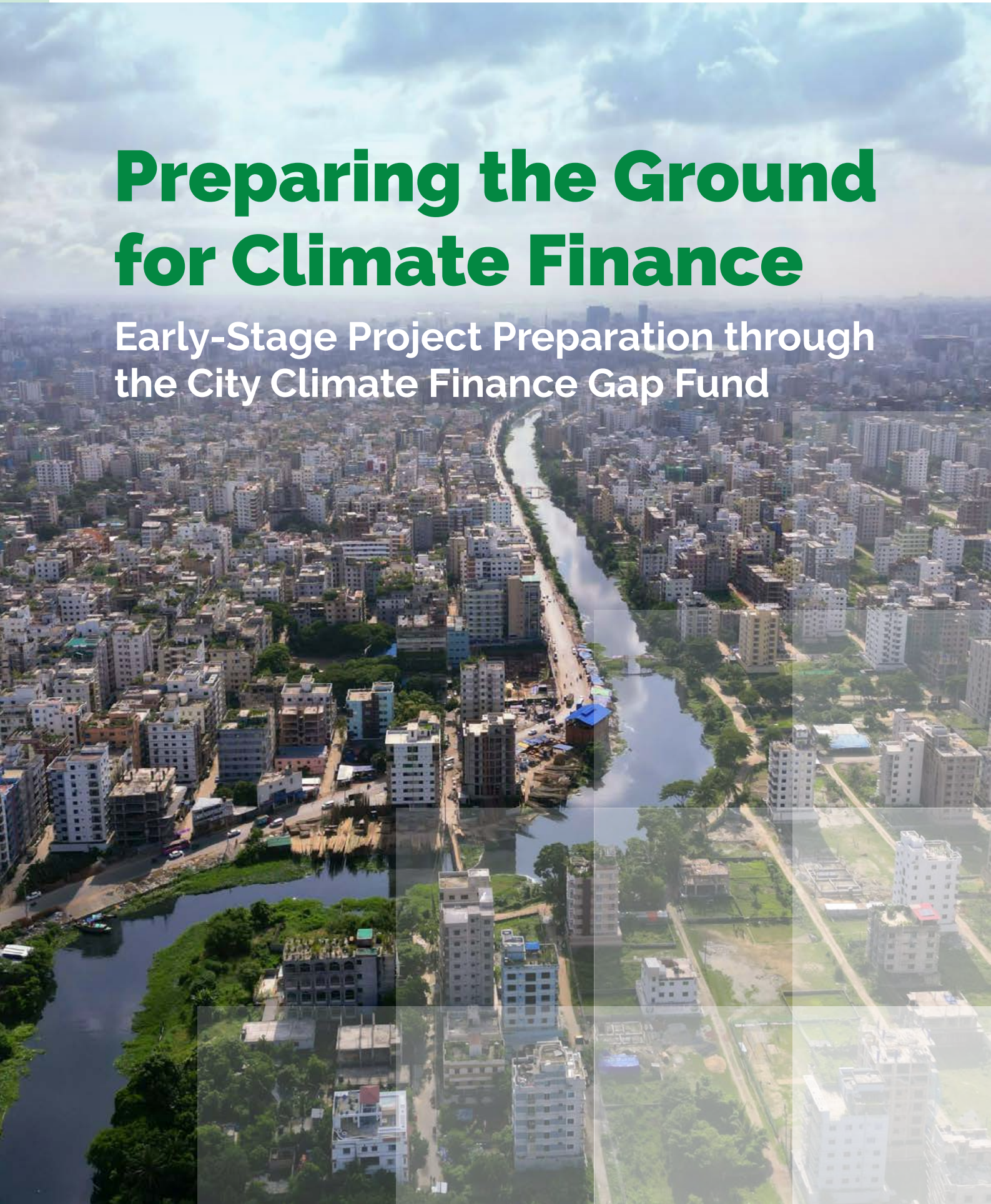


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About

The City Climate Finance Gap Fund, operational since September 2020, was established by the **World Bank** and the **European Investment Bank**. It started with a capitalization of **€55 million**, and in September 2023, the governments of Germany and Luxembourg contributed an additional **€50 million**, bringing the Fund's total capitalization to **€110 million**. The Gap Fund aims to unlock **€4 billion** in climate investments and supports cities in low- and middle-income countries with early-stage technical assistance.

It helps cities in developing countries to:

- Develop city level climate strategies and GHG analytics to assess the climate potential of plans, strategies, and investment programs
- Provide capacity-building for low-carbon, climate-resilient urban development
- Prioritize climate-smart investments
- Define project concepts and prepare pre-feasibility studies
- Strengthen approaches to project financing
- Match with additional sources of finance to support the later stages of project preparation and implementation
- Ensure projects are thorough and the supporting data is robust
- Deliver knowledge products and learning

The GCoM-Gap Fund Partnership

> In 2022, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) joined forces with the WB for the City Climate Finance Gap Fund to expedite cities' climate progress. The Partnership supports cities in emerging economies in translating climate goals into concrete, bankable projects by bridging the critical gap between early-stage concepts and financial readiness. The WB-Gap Fund partnership with GCoM leverages its expertise to support local governments in preparing strong and eligible applications for the fund through awareness-raising, outreach and capacity building to help cities articulate high-quality project ideas for the Gap Fund.

The City Climate Finance Gap Fund ("Gap Fund") is a partnership among several donors, including the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUKN-IKI) the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and Luxembourg's Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity. Established in 2020, the Gap Fund is implemented by the World Bank (WB) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Implementing agencies: THE WORLD BANK IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP; European Investment Bank | Advisory; giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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Foreword

Since its launch in 2020, the City Climate Finance Gap Fund has been helping cities in developing and emerging economies take the first and often most challenging step in turning their climate ambitions into action: preparing projects that are technically sound, locally owned, and with the potential to attract finance. Cities are responsible for more than 70% of global carbon emissions, yet they face persistent barriers in accessing the climate finance needed to meet their reduction targets. Closing this gap begins with strong project preparation.

For the past three years, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) has supported the Gap Fund in fulfilling this mission. Through its alliance, and working directly with cities, city networks, and partner organisations across the world, GCoM has helped align local ambitions and project proposals with the Gap Fund's criteria and application process. But its role goes further than that. Acting as a translator both from cities and to cities, GCoM has bridged the distance between what is needed at the early stage of project preparation and what the Gap Fund's technical assistance can provide.

The Gap Fund supports cities in building the foundations for investment, from data collection and capacity building to pre-feasibility studies that define a project's direction and unlock financial opportunities, and GCoM is helping cities understand they can also access this support. This early stage of preparation determines the quality, ambition, and viability of climate projects, and ultimately, whether they can move forward to implementation and financing.

The stories in this booklet illustrate how transformative this phase can be. From energy assessments to flood protection, nature-based solutions, and integrated climate action plans, each case shows how early support can strengthen local leadership and enable cities to move from intention to impact.

From dreaming of a different waterfront in Kingston, where flood protection and coastal renewal are being combined to create a safer, greener, and more vibrant public space, to building a linear park in Palmas that restores degraded land through community participation and nature-based design, these stories show how vision becomes tangible action. From supporting several cities at once in Thailand to strengthen project pipelines and climate planning capacities, to helping Podgorica test the potential of solar rooftops and green façades to cool its overheated urban core, they reveal how early-stage support can unlock the practical steps cities need to attract investment. Together, they demonstrate that when there is climate focus, local leadership, and strong political will, ambition can turn into fundable, transformative climate projects.

Each of these examples represents more than a technical exercise: they capture a process of learning, partnership, and empowerment that can be replicated in many other contexts. This publication is a resource for cities navigating their own climate journeys and for partners seeking to understand how strategic early-stage support opens the way to lasting climate action. The projects featured here prove what is possible, and invite others to take the first step.



Johanna Granados Alcala
Head of the GCoM-Gap Fund Partnership

Acknowledgements

This publication was developed through the collaboration and dedication of many colleagues and partners across the GCoM-Gap Fund Partnership community. Their contributions were essential in bringing these ten city stories to life.

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We thank all city contributors and interviewees who shared their insights for this publication. Their experience shaped the stories in this booklet and supported our understanding of local progress. This list is not restricted to only these contributors.

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Supported Cities



Palmas' peoples park by the people



WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CO-CREATION, PALMAS IS READY TO TURN 185 HECTARES OF DEGRADED LAND INTO A CLIMATE SOLUTION – RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS, COOLING THE CITY, AND PROVIDING A VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACE.



Palmas, Brazil

328,500 (estimated in 2025)

Category of climate action:

- Nature-based solutions & green infrastructure
- Water management & flood protection
- Buildings & urban infrastructure
- Urban resilience & social inclusion

Restoring the heart of Sussuapara

Palmas is unlike most Brazilian cities: it was planned and built almost from scratch in the early 1990s to serve as the capital of Tocantins state. Because it was a new city, its planners could decide where streets, housing, and public spaces would go. They were even able to set aside large green corridors and preservation areas within the city layout, which was an unusual step at the time. One of the largest of these was the corridor along the Sussuapara stream. A central stretch of land covering 185 hectares and 4 km in length, later named 'Parque Linear Urbano dos Povos Indígenas' (Urban Linear Park of Indigenous Peoples) in homage to the indigenous ethnic groups of Tocantins and the first edition of the World Indigenous Peoples Games, which took place in Palmas.

Yet despite this forward-thinking, the area still fell into decline. High population density, heavy foot traffic, universities, and government buildings nearby created pressure without adequate protection. The result was erosion, streams clogged with sediment, illegal dumping, wildfires, vegetation loss, and a lack of safe public infrastructure. For most residents, the space was no longer seen as a valuable public asset.

City leaders had long wanted to restore Sussuapara as a multifunctional park that felt tied to the community:



We want this to be a project of the people, not just the municipality. Our goal is to give the community ownership, so they see it as their park.

— Marcelo da Gama Grison
Biologist, Municipal Government of Palmas

Many voices, one park

Historically, the Municipal Environmental Foundation (FMA) had tried to bring partners together to create a vision for the park, but conversations were fragmented. Neighbourhood associations, universities, NGOs, and socio-environmental groups all had different expectations: some wanted sports and leisure facilities, others demanded reforestation, fire control, or safer public access. Without any technical evidence or a unifying design, the municipality could not respond clearly or build consensus for a direction.

The challenge, then, was not only ecological restoration but also creating a shared vision that could reconcile these competing expectations and turn Sussuapara into a park that truly belonged to the community.

> **Today, it is just a big green space with some degraded areas. There's no structure, no owner. We knew we had to restore it, but we didn't know how.**
>
> — Marcelo da Gama Grison
> *Biologist, Municipal Government of Palmas*



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Turning a shared dream into a viable design

The EIB-Gap Fund began by supporting Palmas with diagnostic and topographic studies, which provided the first clear picture of the area and its potential. The studies estimated an investment need of around €5 million, phased over several years, which, if implemented, could help the park deliver:


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Safer green space, cooler microclimates, protection from flooding and fire, and new opportunities for recreation and community for around 60,000 people living in dense central neighbourhoods

Indirect benefits that could reach the wider city population of 328,500

Restored ecosystems and permeable soil, cutting flood risk and reducing heat

Microclimate improvements of up to 2°C cooler surface temperatures in surrounding areas

1,500 tonnes of CO_2 avoided annually – a contribution to Brazil's national climate targets and to Palmas' own resilience goals

The greatest benefit from the Gap Fund was making the idea come from our heads to the paper – and then showing the mayor, the council, and the people that this park could be viable. With studies and data, we gained confidence.

— Marcelo da Gama
Grison, Biologist, Municipal Government of Palmas

Co-creating a park shaped by its people

With that foundation in place, Gap Fund consultants then developed sustainable drainage proposals and nature-based solutions, feeding into a conceptual design for the 4 km-long park. Crucially, this design was shaped through participatory workshops with residents, universities, NGOs, and neighbourhood groups, where people marked maps with their 'spaces of affection' and priorities. These sessions helped align the previously fragmented expectations of the community. Almost all of their suggestions were incorporated into the conceptual design, giving residents a genuine sense of ownership over the park from the start.

Taking community vision to construction and beyond

Palmas has moved quickly to take the project forward. The city created the Clima360° Programme, a package of climate projects with Sussuapara park as its flagship, and secured federal approval through Brazil's COFIEX process for international financing. Negotiations are now underway with the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) to sign a loan agreement that will help fund the park's construction.

To make sure the project belongs to the people as much as the municipality, a Participatory Committee is being established. This body will guide decisions during implementation and ensure accountability, giving residents, community organisations, and civil society a permanent role in shaping and managing the park. Meanwhile, the Municipal Environmental Foundation (FMA) will commission the detailed basic and executive designs, and is studying Public–Private Partnership models to guarantee the park's long-term sustainability. The city also plans to replicate the Sussuapara park methodology in other parks and watersheds, creating a broader network of integrated green infrastructure across Palmas.

Ultimately, the Gap Fund empowered the city to identify the technical and financial resources needed to further develop the park project and move into implementation. With financing in sight, designs advancing, and the community at the table, Palmas is turning the Sussuapara park from a vision into reality. Laying the foundations for a city-wide network of green infrastructure that can inspire other Brazilian cities to follow.



A Resilient Future for Kingston's Waterfront

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JAMAICA'S CAPITAL IS SHAPING A WATERFRONT THAT PROTECTS AGAINST FLOOD RISK, CELEBRATES CULTURE, AND ANCHORS THE CITY'S RENEWAL.



Kingston, Jamaica

670,000

Category of Climate Action:

- Coastal resilience & climate adaptation
- Urban renewal & infrastructure
- Tourism & economic development
- Nature-based solutions

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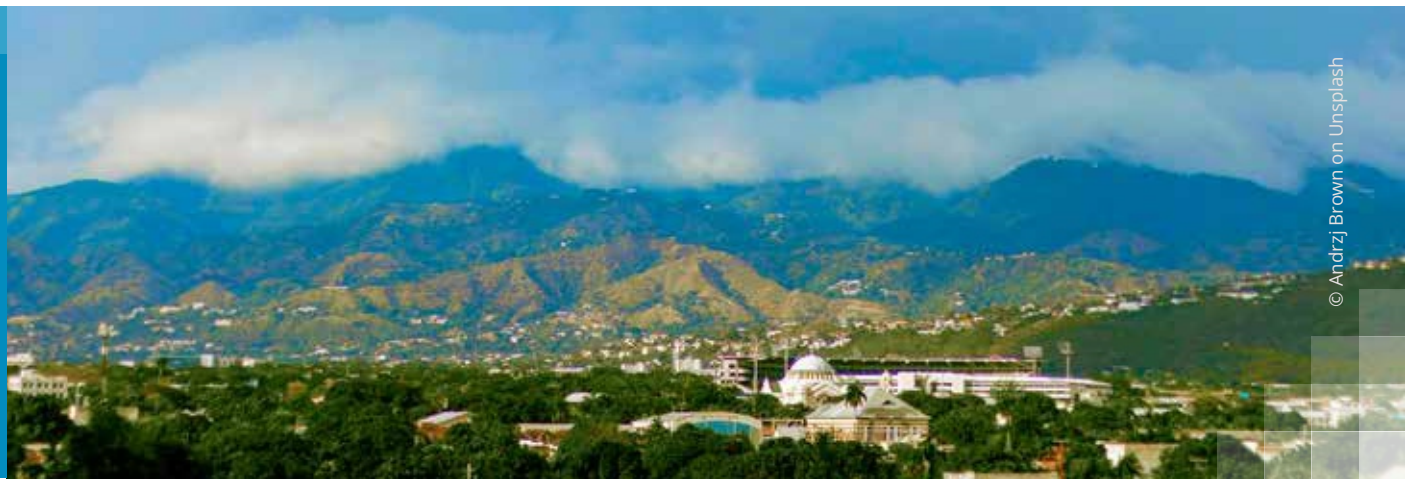
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Protecting a coastline that defines the capital

The 2.4 km waterfront in Downtown Kingston is one of the city's most valued public spaces – a cultural and civic landmark where residents gather, visitors stop to explore, and key institutions line the coast. Yet this stretch of shoreline faces growing pressure. Rising seas, stronger storms, and intense rainfall are placing people, infrastructure, and businesses at greater risk. Climate analysis for Kingston predicts up to 2.15 metres of sea-level rise by 2100, a decrease in average annual rainfall with more consecutive dry days, an increase in extreme rainfall days by 2050, and 1-1.4°C warming. Alongside climate change, everyday issues such as waste, water contamination and urban decay also call for action.

Beyond protection, the city leaders, communities, and partners of Kingston – including the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) – also see an opportunity for renewal. As the Downtown area is traditionally busy during working hours, but much quieter once offices close, leveraging a clear business case for investment could fast-track a safer, greener, and more vibrant waterfront. One that welcomes families, strengthens resilience, and sets a new tone for the capital.



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Kingston, Jamaica

Turning risk into a catalyst for renewal

Kingston's vision goes well beyond coastal defences. In partnership with residents, vendors and local businesses, city partners want to pair protection with renewal; integrating flood resilience, recreation, green space, waste management, and investment. To deliver this ambition, the city needed specialised studies and technical preparation to shape a clear investment plan. With a strong evidence base, a shared stakeholder framework and a clear financial case, the project could be a catalyst for change.



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Building the blueprint for a climate-ready waterfront

Through the City Climate Finance Gap Fund, Kingston gained the expertise required to build a foundation for action.



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Technical studies provided by WB-Gap Fund looked at solid waste and drainage flowing into the harbour and set out steps to improve water quality.

The team outlined options to run the site efficiently and all-electric, with LED lighting, efficient pumps, and better cooling. They also recommended on-site renewable power from rooftop solar and shade structures, backed by battery storage and a local microgrid for reliability.

Alongside these measures, the package set out nature-based solutions, such as trees and shade planting, rain gardens to slow and filter runoff, and permeable surfaces that let water soak in. Making sure flood management and public-realm upgrades work together.

Finally, the technical assistance proposed low-carbon design choices, including optimised concrete, reusing materials, and planting that increases shade and captures carbon. This support will strengthen not only the project design but also the capacity of the city and its partner, JSIF, to prepare complex urban resilience projects. City leaders now have the tools to demonstrate viability, attract investment, and present a shared vision that links climate adaptation with economic and social renewal.

The greatest thing for us was the ability to have the expertise we needed. That's really what it's about.

— Omar Sweeney
Jamaican Social Investment Fund

Where resilience meets culture and community

For residents, a renewed waterfront will mean safe, welcoming public space that belongs to everyone. A place to walk, exercise, and enjoy the shoreline. Shade, planting, and cooling strategies will make outdoor areas more comfortable. Better drainage and waste controls will keep the harbour and streets cleaner. Lighting and access improvements will support evening and weekend use. And vendors and small businesses will benefit from increased activity, while visitors will experience Kingston as a capital that reflects Jamaica's culture and ambition.

For the city, the transformation will safeguard critical infrastructure, reduce climate risks, and provide a nucleus for wider urban renewal. Energy-efficient systems paired with on-site solar and storage can reduce operating costs and keep key public spaces powered during grid outages. The project will also strengthen Kingston's role as an investment and tourism hub. Opening the door for cruise tourism and creating jobs, all while embedding sustainability into the city's development.

Bringing Kingston's new waterfront to life

Kingston is now agreeing the blueprint for the main stretch of the waterfront with city partners, local communities, vendors and municipal and national agencies. Deciding what goes where, how the coast will be protected, and how people will move through the space. Bringing everyone to the table in this way helps make sure the plan reflects how people will actually use the area.

The city is also setting out how the space will be run day-to-day: a dedicated approach to maintenance, events, safety, and cleaning, alongside a partnership where local businesses will pool small contributions to keep the district clean, safe, and lively.

Together, these steps are helping Kingston turn a shared vision into real work on the ground. With this foundation, what comes next is clear: a well-managed, climate-ready waterfront that belongs to everyone.



Kenya's Biggest Cities Move Towards Climate Action

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EARLY STAGE PROJECT SUPPORT FROM THE GAP FUND EMPOWERS NAIROBI AND MOMBASA CITIES TO LEAD THE WAY IN DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING, POLICY REFORM, AND GREEN INVESTMENT FOR KENYAN CITIES.



Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya

Nairobi (4.4 million)
Mombasa (1.2 million)

Category of Climate Action:

- Multi-sector climate action planning
- Area-based investment programs

Confronting the climate crisis in Kenya

In Nairobi and Mombasa, climate change is not a future threat. It is a daily reality. Flash floods, rising temperatures, and mounting pressure on urban systems are disrupting people's livelihoods, threatening health, and exposing long-standing inequalities.

But amidst these challenges, both cities are charting a new course rooted in resilience, sustainability, and inclusive development. Their vision is to have climate action plans backed by reliable data to reflect people's needs and align with national and global best practices. Plans that span energy, transport, waste, and water, and guide both cities toward low-carbon, climate-resilient futures.

When strong will meets systemic barriers

Despite strong political will, both cities face systemic barriers: outdated or missing greenhouse gas data, fragmented institutional capacity, limited technical expertise, and budget constraints. Historically, Nairobi has lacked a legal framework to anchor its climate ambitions, while Mombasa had no unified strategy to guide investment. Without these foundations, both cities struggled to access climate finance or build momentum around climate action.



We felt we could not tackle these challenges without having a climate action plan. Without updating the GHG inventory, you are not in a position to prioritise projects and climate action.

— Morris Kavai
Deputy Director for Climate Change, Nairobi City County

Data, law, and planning: laying the foundations for change

Between 2022 and 2023, the WB-Gap Fund worked with both cities to provide catalytic, early-stage technical assistance.

The Gap Fund helped Nairobi update its greenhouse gas inventory and draft its first Climate Change Bill and Policy – which is now advancing through approval. Like many cities in the region, the inventory revealed transport as Nairobi's largest emitter, followed by waste and industry. It also identified more than $1 billion in potential climate investments.

In Mombasa, the support helped to co-create a 25-year climate action plan, launched in late 2023, and train local officials in emissions monitoring, planning, and project preparation. Across both cities, more than 50 officials were trained in these climate planning skills, laying the foundation for stronger, more coordinated governance.

> **Without that data, as a city, we would have no idea where we were when it came to building a response to climate change.**
>
> — Morris Kavai
> *Deputy Director for Climate Change, Nairobi City County*

> **The Gap Fund process helped the cities move from ambition to practical planning. With reliable data in hand, Nairobi and Mombasa can now prioritise projects that truly reflect residents' needs.**
>
> — Judy Waturi
> *World Bank team*



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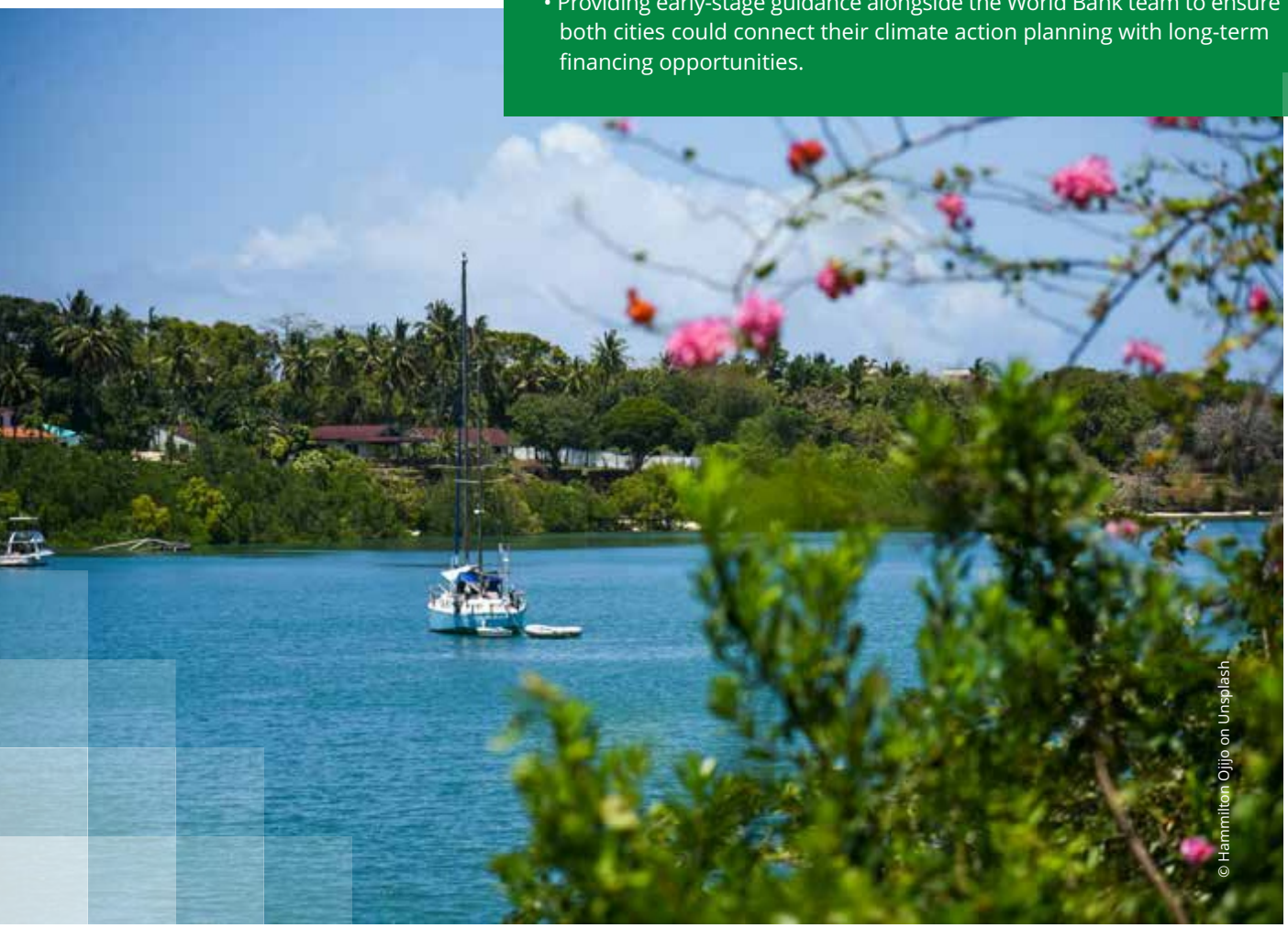
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The support from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and GIZ Gap Fund Technical Secretariat in Kenya

The Gap Fund is jointly implemented by the World Bank and the European Investment Bank (EIB) in collaboration with GIZ. In the Kenyan cities of Embu, Malindi and Eldoret, the EIB and GIZ contributed by:

- Supporting the development of bankable, investment-ready projects in the waste, mobility, and adaptation sectors that align with international standards.
- Providing early-stage guidance alongside the World Bank team to ensure both cities could connect their climate action planning with long-term financing opportunities.



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From fragmented ambition to shared momentum

In Nairobi, the support transformed a fragmented ambition into a citywide movement grounded in law, data, and investment logic. With a robust legal framework and clearer emissions data, leaders can now prioritise high-impact projects – from clean transport to sustainable waste management – and pitch for additional funding with confidence.

The list of actions we could take was long. Working with the Gap Fund was an eye-opener. It increased our knowledge so that now we can even teach our national leaders how to make change.

– Morris Kavai, *Deputy Director for Climate Change, Nairobi City County*

In Mombasa, the launch of the climate action plan marked a turning point. The plan is guiding county-level investment and attracting interest from national ministries and global funders. Flood mitigation and nature-based solutions – such as drainage upgrades in flood-prone areas, mangrove restoration along the coastline, and greener urban infrastructure – are being prioritised to address urgent risks. The groundwork laid by the Gap Fund is now shaping future benefits: Nairobi's actions could open hundreds of thousands of green jobs, while Mombasa is building partnerships to fund long-term resilience projects. In both cities, the Fund has bridged the gap between climate planning and delivery.

Turning plans into practice, and practice into leadership

Nairobi's Climate Change Act was passed in late 2024, creating a legal framework for climate governance and unlocking more than $1 billion in priority investment opportunities. Mombasa, meanwhile, is preparing an implementation strategy for its newly launched plan. Both cities are embedding climate investments into capital planning, moving from ambition to delivery.

Beyond the catalytic effect of the Gap Fund, they are embracing a new narrative – one that is green, innovative, and centred on the well-being of their residents. Nairobi, in particular, is positioning itself not only to attract major climate investments but also to become a future centre of excellence for climate action.

Three Tunisian Coastal Towns, One Shared Solution for Waste


© wikipedia

LA MARSA, SIDI BOU SAID AND CARTHAGE ARE JOINING TOGETHER FOR CLEANER STREETS, LESS EMISSIONS AND SAFER, BETTER JOBS.



La Marsa, Sidi Bou Said & Carthage, Tunisia

129,000

Category of Climate Action:

- Solid waste
- Circular economy
- Climate & Health
- Inter-municipal delivery

Turning waste into opportunity

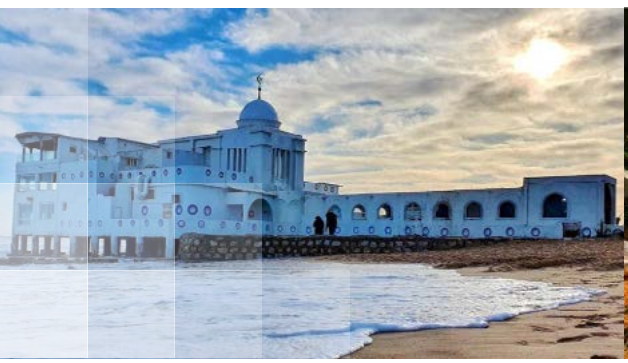
Along the Gulf of Tunis, almost 95% of household waste still goes to landfill. Food scraps and garden cuttings make up half of that waste, which could be turned into compost for local greenery or help generate clean electricity through biogas.

The three neighbouring towns of La Marsa, Sidi Bou Said, and Carthage saw a chance to work together with the Gap Fund to change this while modernising waste services for their residents, enabling clearer sorting at home, tidier streets and seafronts, and fewer overflowing bins. At the same time, diverting organics away from landfills to cut methane emissions and improve air and water quality.

Three towns, one challenge to solve together

Along the Gulf, the recovery rate – the proportion of household waste diverted from landfill through recycling or composting – is low for several reasons. Households are not separating their waste; each town uses different collection methods; and there is no shared facility to process organic or recyclable materials. Additionally, there is no agreed framework for financing, governance, or monitoring a joint service across the three towns. Much of the recycling effort relies on minor private initiatives and informal waste workers who lack formal contracts and adequate safety protections.

To move from intention to action, the municipalities needed a unified, phased plan that all three could commit to and co-finance.





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A new model for waste and work along the coast

The EIB-Gap Fund supported the three towns – La Marsa, Sidi Bou Said, and Carthage – with a pre-feasibility study that explored technical options, estimated costs, and clarified roles and responsibilities.

The proposed system begins with residents separating waste at the source using household bins, guided by clear instructions and supported by around 200 conveniently located drop-off points for recyclables, general waste, and organic materials. The next step involves constructing a central recovery facility to process the sorted waste.

To manage operations, a simple public-private partnership model was recommended, with a small inter-municipal team overseeing contracts and performance. The proposed model also includes a pathway to integrate informal waste collectors into structured, safer roles.

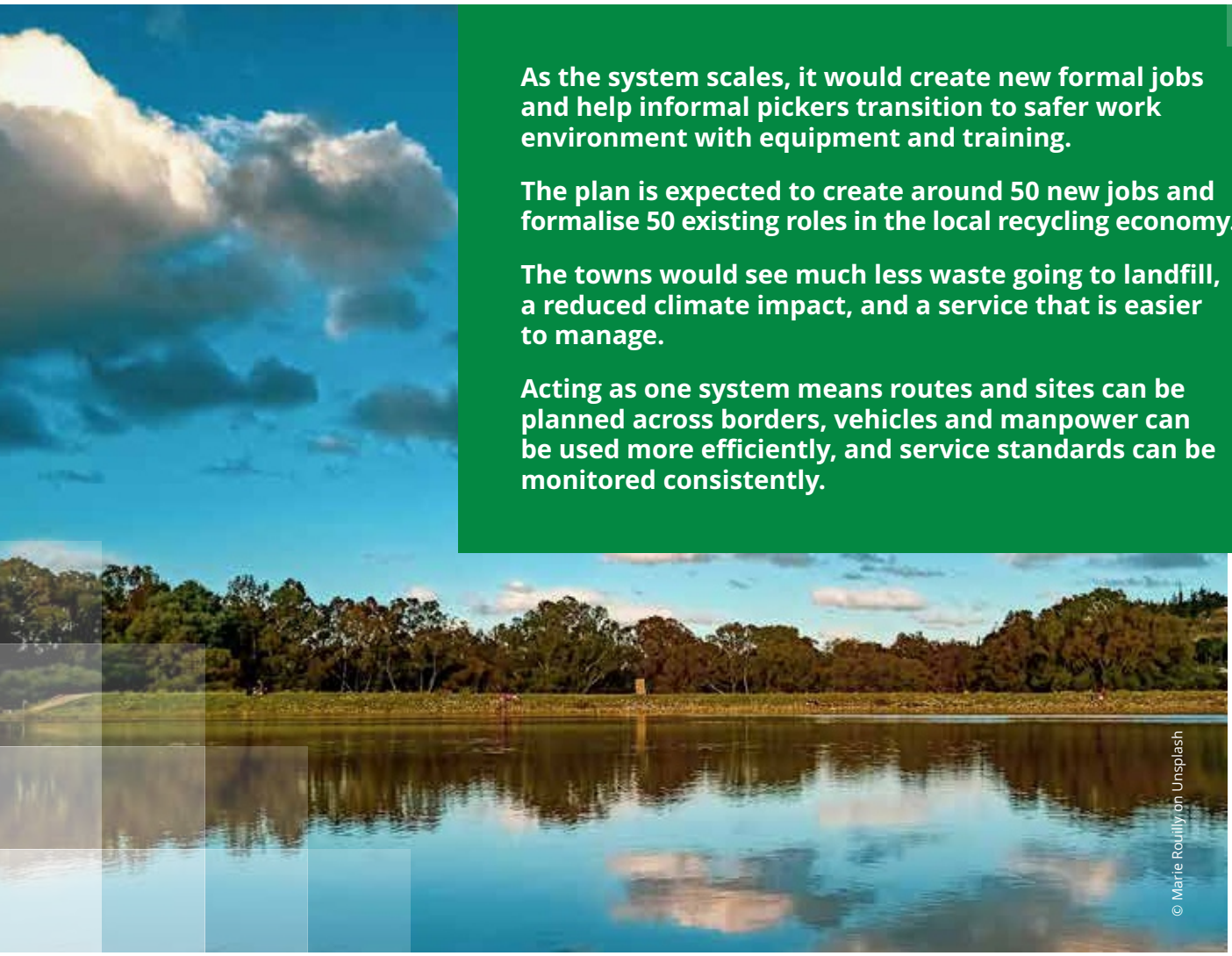
As an inter-municipal initiative, the Gap Fund's assistance was instrumental in defining responsibilities across national institutions, establishing contract oversight mechanisms, and setting up performance monitoring systems for when the project becomes operational.



© Hongbin on Unsplash

How communities and workers will feel the difference

Residents would see the benefits on the street: cleaner neighbourhoods, reliable drop-off points, and cleaner air. Food and garden waste that once sat in the heat would be collected separately and treated properly, improving local conditions. Recyclables would be recovered rather than dumped.



As the system scales, it would create new formal jobs and help informal pickers transition to safer work environment with equipment and training.

The plan is expected to create around 50 new jobs and formalise 50 existing roles in the local recycling economy.

The towns would see much less waste going to landfill, a reduced climate impact, and a service that is easier to manage.

Acting as one system means routes and sites can be planned across borders, vehicles and manpower can be used more efficiently, and service standards can be monitored consistently.

© Marie Rouilly on Unsplash

The coast would see much less litter and windblown plastic on the shoreline. Organic waste would no longer be left to rot, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and returning useful products to the local economy. Over time, the burden on landfill sites would steadily reduce.

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Formalizing the partnership for lasting change

The three towns are now formalising their partnership and engaging national partners to line up technical and financial support. With that backing, they will launch a competitive process to select a private operator and establish the small inter-municipal team they need to manage the contract.

From there, the programme will move into design, permitting and procurement, followed by a phased rollout. Residents will notice early wins like clearer sorting guidance, new drop-off points, and tidier collections while they wait for the central recovery facility to be built and tested.

As each phase goes live, the towns' recovery rates will improve, less waste will end up in landfill, and communities will have a cleaner, healthier place to call home.



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Fez and its neighbours unite for a climate-ready region

© Matt Dany on Unsplash

FEZ AND THE WIDER FEZ-MEKNES REGION ARE TURNING MOROCCO'S NATIONAL CLIMATE VISION INTO LOCAL ACTION AS THEY COLLABORATE ON PLANS FOR CLEANER AIR, COOLER STREETS, AND A CLIMATE-READY ECONOMY.



Fez, Meknes wider region, Morocco

4.2 million across the region

Category of Climate Action:

- Climate action planning
- Emissions reduction
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Climate finance strategy

Fez-Meknes, Morocco

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A climate action plan for the cultural heart of Morocco

In the valleys and plateaus that link Fez with Meknes, Morocco's cultural heart meets a region that is growing fast. The Fez-Meknes region, home to more than four million people, carries both the weight of heritage and the promise of transformation. Rising temperatures, shifting rainfall, and rapid urbanisation test how cities plan and grow.

Rather than view these pressures as setbacks, city and regional leaders saw an opening. With support from the City Climate Finance Gap Fund, Fez and its neighbouring municipalities began developing their first comprehensive Climate Action Plans – practical tools to localise Morocco's national climate strategy and lay the groundwork for resilient, low-carbon development.

Coordinating a national goal at the local level

Before this collaboration, Morocco's national climate goals were clear, but cities and regions often lacked the data, coordination, and financing strategies to act on them. In Fez-Meknes, planners wanted to bridge that gap: to measure emissions accurately, prioritise the most impactful actions, and align local policies with national ambitions.

The challenge was one of coordination as much as capacity. Multiple ministries, municipalities, and regional agencies each held pieces of the puzzle. What was missing was a shared roadmap that could guide investment decisions across energy, transport, waste, and land use – one plan for both the historic city of Fez and the wider region that depends on it.

A shared commitment

The WB-Gap Fund provided that foundation. Working with the municipal government of Fez, the regional council, and national ministries, the team prepared the first Climate Action Plans for both the city and the region of Fez-Meknes.

The process began with Morocco's most detailed regional greenhouse-gas inventory to date, identifying major emission sources and modelling future scenarios. Through a series of five workshops between 2022 and 2024, city officials, regional planners, academics, and private-sector representatives came together to assess priorities, test solutions, and agree on realistic timelines for delivery.

Each plan included clear action sheets with responsibilities, timeframes, and sub-activities, supported by a Climate Finance Roadmap that mapped funding opportunities from national programmes, international institutions, and private investment.

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework was also created to help regional and city teams track progress and adapt plans over time.

The participatory process strengthened local ownership, turning the Climate Action Plans into a shared commitment across institutions and communities.



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A region moving as one

The result is more than two linked plans – it's a coordinated model for climate governance. The new Climate Action Plans are already woven into regional and municipal development strategies for environment, energy, transport, and waste. This integration means that future projects, from lighting upgrades to sustainable mobility corridors, can directly support the region's emission-reduction and resilience goals.



Institutional support has been strong.

Regional directorates across ministries – including energy, industry, transport, forestry, tourism, and civil protection – have endorsed the plans and committed to joint implementation.

More than twenty officials from Fez, Meknes, and surrounding municipalities have been trained through the process, building capacity in emissions analysis, action planning, and climate finance.

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The collaboration has shifted how the region approaches planning. Fez, Meknes, and their neighbouring towns are now acting as one system – coordinating investments and policies so that each reinforces the other. Climate resilience is no longer a standalone agenda, but a shared framework for how the region grows.

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Momentum is building for Morocco

In mid-2024, the Climate Action Plans were formally validated by a high-level steering committee chaired by the Wali of Fez-Meknes – a strong signal of political commitment to turn plans into projects. The next phase focuses on implementation and public engagement.

Regional authorities are preparing events to share results with citizens, civil-society groups, and the private sector, ensuring that climate action is understood and embraced locally.

At the same time, discussions are underway to connect the plans to financing through the World Bank's upcoming **Morocco Disaster and Climate Resilience Project,** which could fund key actions such as energy-efficient infrastructure, resilient transport, and improved water systems.

The groundwork is in place, and momentum is building. Fez-Meknes now stands as a model for how Moroccan cities and regions can work together – translating technical plans into tangible progress for people, the economy, and the environment.



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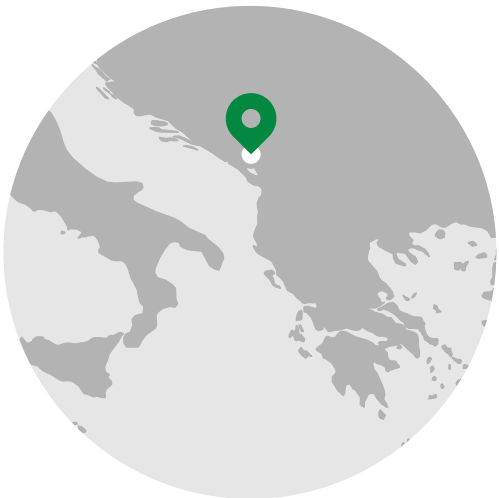
Fez-Meknes, Morocco



Greener and cooler home for the people of Podgorica

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PODGORICA PLANS TO PILOT NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS LIKE GREEN ROOFS TO TACKLE EXTREME HEAT, CUT EMISSIONS, AND IMPROVE RESIDENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE.



Podgorica, Montenegro

180,000

Category of climate action:

- Green buildings
- Greening of urban areas
- Sustainable cooling
- Energy efficiency & small renewables

Bringing nature back to the city's rooftops

Podgorica is increasingly exposed to heatwaves, droughts, heavy rainfall, and flooding, with rapid urbanisation intensifying the heat island effect. Summers can be unbearable for residents, especially older people, outdoor workers, and socially vulnerable groups. “Even at midnight, there can be 30°C heat, and winters are becoming shorter and milder,” Branka Knežević, Podgorica's Secretary for Sustainable Development, said.

Despite strong climate commitments, including a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2016) and Biodiversity Action Plan (2017), the city has yet to pilot green roofs or façades. Although these solutions have been discussed and proposed in policy, they have never been tested in practice. Yet they could help address Podgorica's most pressing climate challenges – cooling overheated concrete buildings, reducing energy costs, absorbing stormwater, and adding greenery in dense urban areas. By showcasing examples on the ground, pilots would provide valuable insights on the benefits and opportunities for refinement in future, narrowing the gap between strategic ambition, and convincing both citizens and decision-makers to support implementation.

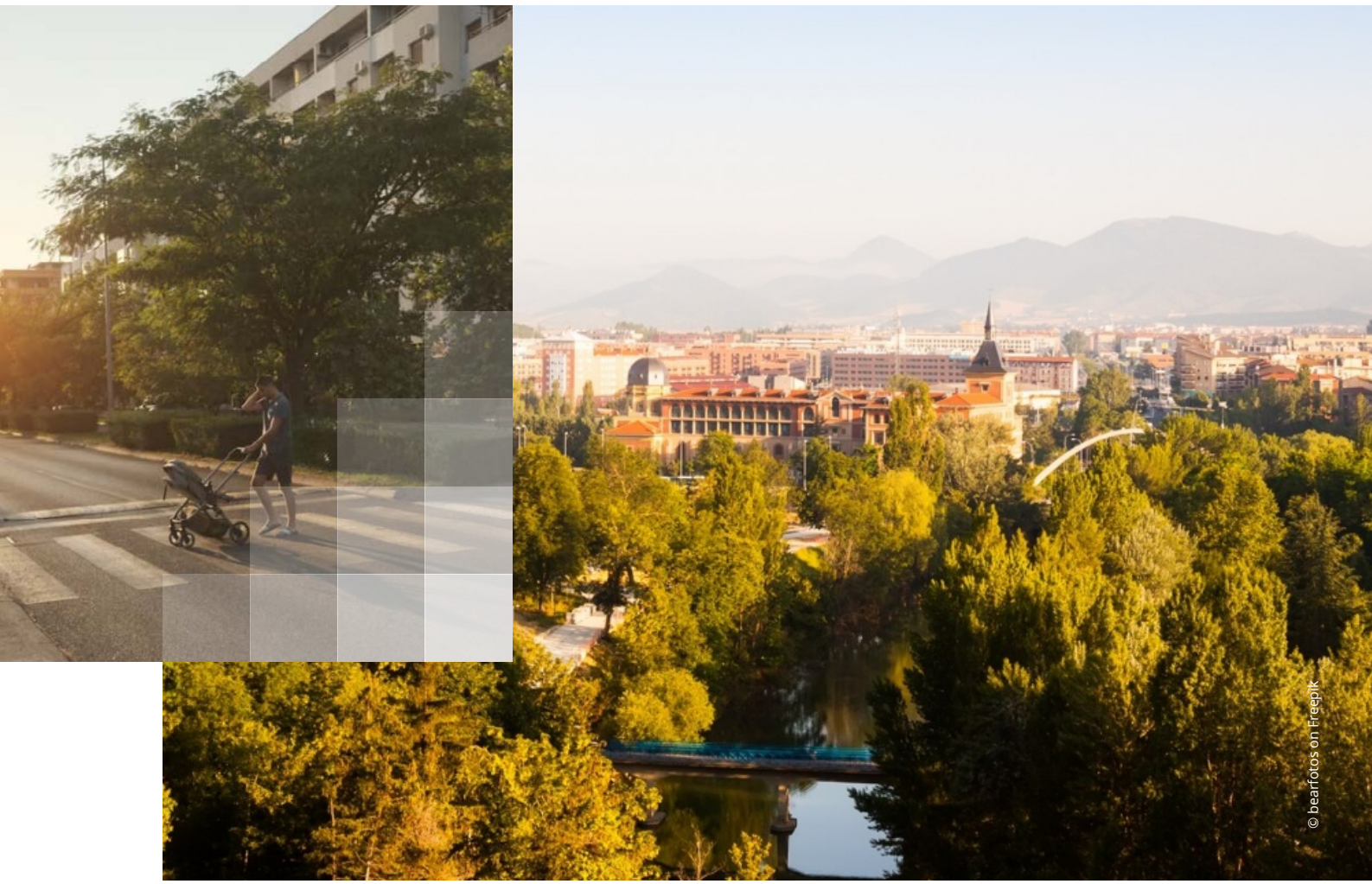


Today, our concrete buildings are simply hot, hard surfaces – we need to bring nature onto our rooftops and into our spaces.

— Branka Knežević
Deputy Secretary for Sustainable Development, City of Podgorica

From strong strategy to missing groundwork

Robust and detailed studies often help unlock investments and attract co-financing opportunities from both national programmes and international donors. Yet, despite having clear policy frameworks to guide its vision, the city still faced a gap between strategy and the practical steps to implementation. Key technical assessments were required to assess the feasibility of green roofs and façades, in addition to pilot sites being identified. A financial analysis was also needed to demonstrate the economic viability of the proposed nature-based solutions.



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Podgorica, Montenegro

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Uncovering the possibilities from policy to pilot sites

With Gap Fund support, Podgorica moved from broad ambition to a structured, technical plan. The journey began with a pre-feasibility study, which, for the first time, assessed the idea of green roofs and façades on public buildings to identify what was technically possible. Engineers and planners assessed at three public buildings covering around 1268 m² of rooftop area.



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The study mapped two open spaces, totalling about 160 square metres, where sealed asphalt surfaces could be broken up and replaced with greenery. This work provided not only the locations but also a clear vision of how residents might experience cooler, more comfortable neighbourhoods.

For each building and site, the team developed precise investment costs, alongside cost-benefit analysis that quantified the gains of having green roofs and façades to cut cooling demand.

Turning data and design into a citywide model

The EIB-Gap Fund helped Podgorica think beyond ideas. A financial model was prepared that tested scaling scenarios across the city's building stock. It showed how a city-wide programme could greatly cut annual CO_2 emissions, while giving decision-makers a practical roadmap for phasing and replication.

For Deputy Secretary Branka Knežević, this clarity was transformative:

> **It wasn't a bulky report full of generalities. It gave us concrete data, costs, and steps to move forward. And it strengthened communication across departments, which was an unexpected but important benefit.**

By taking Podgorica through each stage – feasibility, costs, models for scaling – the Gap Fund turned a long-standing idea into a portfolio of investment-ready options.

Inspiring the city's green roof revolution

Podgorica plans to include at least one pilot location from the study in its 2026 municipal budget, using its own resources to demonstrate commitment and kick-start implementation. This local allocation will also strengthen the city's eligibility to apply for national co-financing programmes, which often require municipalities to set aside their own funds as show of commitment. The city is also integrating the green roof concept into its EU Mission 100 Climate-Neutral Cities plan and its Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), making the approach part of official policy and more attractive to external funders.

By starting with visible public building pilots, the city hopes to inspire residents and private developers to follow suit, scaling the benefits across Podgorica.



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From Dry Taps to Safe Water in Prokuplje

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A SMALL SERBIAN CITY IS TURNING AGEING INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER LOSSES INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSFORMATION WITH ITS CLEAR PLAN FOR SAFE, RELIABLE DRINKING WATER.



Prokuplje, Serbia

38,000

Category of Climate Action:

- Water supply & sanitation
- Climate adaptation & resilience
- Urban infrastructure

An unreliable water system

Growing climate pressures are testing the limits of Prokuplje's ageing water system. Hot and dry summers are driving up demand just as the city's old asbestos pipelines reach the end of their life. Around 40% of water is lost before it reaches households — not only wasting a scarce resource, but also creating risks of contamination as leaks draw pollutants into the network. This combination of water loss and unsafe materials has raised serious public health concerns.

For residents, the impacts are personal and immediate. When a water main fails, whole neighbourhoods are cut off, sometimes for days. Schools and kindergartens have had to manage without running water, leaving families anxious and children vulnerable. “It's a big issue for families,” one city official explained. “You can't plan your day when you don't know if the taps will run.”

Years of leaks have allowed water to seep beneath the streets, softening the ground and causing sections of the road to collapse. This erosion has left potholes and uneven surfaces that push pedestrians closer to traffic.



Prokuplje, Serbia

Finding the tools to modernise an old system

City leaders in Prokuplje had long recognised the urgency of modernising the system, but they needed the technical studies, design, and financing pathway to unlock change. They had already tried to improve the water system, but early project proposals lacked the technical evidence needed to secure financing. Without hydraulic models, investment plans, or cost–benefit analysis, their applications were not successful.

Prokuplje needed a stronger evidence base and a more viable project, with tools that would allow it to build on its work and move forward with confidence.





Prokuplje, Serbia

Mapping every leak, modelling every fix

The EIB-Gap Fund worked with Prokuplje to provide exactly the foundation it needed. The process began with a digital model of the entire water supply network, mapping every pumping station and pinpointing where the losses were greatest. This gave the first clear picture of how the system worked. But also where it was failing.

Building on that, consultants prepared designs for urgent improvements: installing modern sensors to monitor water flow in real time, and replacing outdated pumps and about 11 km of damaged asbestos pipelines. For the first time, the city had concrete engineering solutions on the table.



A financial analysis then set out a phased €2.25 million investment plan aligned with Serbia's national priorities and EU drinking-water standards. It turned the technical studies into a clear financing pathway, showing not just what needed to be done, but how to pay for it.

At every step, the local water utility was deeply involved. Consultants from the Gap Fund team visited the city multiple times, mapping assets and holding biweekly meetings online. Staff who had spent years firefighting breakdowns gained new methods and insights. Even seasoned engineers learned how sections could be cut, reinforced, or modernised to make the system more efficient.

With a clear technical and financial package in hand, Prokuplje is now able to resubmit its project to the Ministry of Public Investment with confidence. Not as a vague aspiration, but as a robust, investment-ready project.

I would like to express my great gratitude to the Gap Fund for the support shown and the preparation of expert documentation for the replacement of outdated asbestos pipes in our water supply system. I want to encourage all local governments that have similar problems to turn to the Gap fund, because their knowledge and experience will be significant in overcoming such problems.

— Miroslav Antović, *Mayor of Prokuplje*

Turning a crumbling network into a plan for renewal

The studies confirmed the seriousness of the problems – 40% water losses, health risks from asbestos, and an overstretched system – but they also provided a clear roadmap to address them.

For residents, successful implementation will mean safe, reliable water, even in the summer peak. Families will no longer have to send children to school without running taps. Streets will be safer and more pleasant without constant roadworks and potholes. Health risks will be reduced as contaminated pipelines are replaced.

For the city, the benefits are just as important: lower operating costs, reduced emissions, and a system resilient to hotter summers and greater climate stress.

Ready to rebuild

Prokuplje's next step is to finalise the documentation and submit it to the Ministry of Public Investment for approval. The Ministry has been closely involved throughout, giving city leaders confidence in the process. Once approved, financing is expected through Serbia's national Municipal Infrastructure Programme, supported by the European Investment Bank.

Implementation of the €2.25 million project will be phased over 3-4 years, ensuring continuous service for residents while works are carried out.

We feel confident moving ahead. The Ministry knows the project well and recognises its strength, which puts us in a strong position for approval and financing.

— Milena Petrović,
City Project Coordinator

A New Future for Old Dhaka



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DHAKA'S CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (RAJUK) IS TRANSFORMING TWO OF THE HISTORIC OLD TOWN'S DISTRICTS INTO CLIMATE-RESILIENT, GREENER, SAFER, AND MORE LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS.



Dhaka, Bangladesh

36.6 million (estimated in 2025)

Category of Climate Action:

- Green spaces
- Climate-resilient urban infrastructure
- Brownfield regeneration

Heritage meets a new beginning

The Old Town of Dhaka is a place of movement and memory. Narrow lanes, tea stalls, traders, and families who have lived there for generations. Within this dense and historic core lie Hazaribagh and Lalbagh, two districts that once powered the city's trade and industry. For years, the untreated industrial waste from the local tanneries flowed directly into the Buriganga River, poisoning land and water and endangering nearby communities, while Lalbagh's neighbourhoods grew crowded and suffered frequent waterlogging due to poor drainage.

Today, city officials want these areas to become the testing ground for something new: a vision of the Old Town made green again. Where factories and warehouses once stood, planners now imagine shaded courtyards, open parks, and walkable streets that can mitigate the impact of intense heat and monsoon rains. What was once a challenge is now seen as a chance to show how a city can renew itself without losing its soul.



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Earning trust, block by block

Dhaka's planners, led by the Capital Development Authority (RAJUK), wanted to turn their new vision for the Old Town into reality. But to do so, they needed more than ideas. They needed evidence and design – something to bring the local people with them – as years of uncoordinated expansion had made residents wary of big projects. Many wondered if change would actually improve their lives or simply push them aside. Winning back that trust meant involving them from the start, and showing what regeneration could look like, street by street, block by block.



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Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Planning with people, not just for them

Together with RAJUK and GIZ, the EIB-Gap Fund helped create the Climate-Resilient and Green Action Plan (CRGAP) – a roadmap for integrating climate adaptation and mitigation into the regeneration of Hazaribagh and Lalbagh, helping them become more resilient, low-carbon, and healthier places to live.



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Teams of planners, engineers, and social researchers worked side-by-side with local residents. They mapped water flows, soil conditions, and climate risks, and analysed how different communities were affected by social and economic vulnerability. At the same time, they listened to people's stories about everyday challenges and asked what residents wanted from their neighbourhoods.

The plan for Hazaribagh proposed dividing the district into twelve smaller blocks, each with more light, open space, and green cover. In Lalbagh, the focus turned to smarter drainage, shaded public areas, and infrastructure that could withstand floods and rising heat.

The plan also identified ways to make local communities more resilient to climate change by integrating adaptation into urban regeneration and pinpointing opportunities for mitigation. It also looks at how people move through these crowded streets. It also looks at how people move through these crowded streets, promotes mixed land use, safer footpaths, and better cycling connections to reduce car dependency and ease congestion. This will give residents cleaner air, calmer roads, and easier access to schools, markets, and workplaces within walking distance.



The Gap Fund's technical expertise brought clarity and confidence to our planning, it helped us engage communities and build consensus.

— Sayeed Rezaul Haque
Deputy Town Planner at RAJUK

Dhaka, Bangladesh

From cautious hope to collective action

Slowly, attitudes began to shift. Public meetings filled with residents who once doubted the plans but now wanted to contribute their own ideas. Visual maps helped them picture what cooler, greener streets could feel like. The conversation changed from frustration about the past to excitement about what could be built next.

The new plan sets out clear steps: turning rooftops green, improving water systems, creating small parks and public spaces that manage both heat and flooding. It's not just a plan on paper, it's now part of Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan (2022–2035), meaning these ideas will shape how the city grows for years to come.

The Old Town's new chapter begins

With the groundwork in place, Dhaka is poised to move from vision to action. The Climate-Resilient and Green Action Plan has now been integrated into the city's Detailed Area Plan (2022–2035). This will build climate and sustainability priorities into Dhaka's long-term development, ensuring they can be funded through future national programmes. City leaders are also exploring potential support from multilateral development banks to help bring the plan's ideas to life. Over time, new green spaces, shaded streets, and cleaner, cooler neighbourhoods could redefine daily life across the Old Town.

The next step will be turning lessons from the plan into practice – applying its findings across departments and future development work. What began as a technical study will now connect heritage with innovation and give Old Dhaka a new rhythm of life.

A Low-Carbon Future for Urban Families and Communities Across Thailand



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HOW THE GAP FUND IS SUPPORTING STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLANNING TO CREATE CLEANER AIR, AFFORDABLE CLEAN ENERGY, AND RESILIENT NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR MILLIONS OF THAI CITY RESIDENTS.



Bangkok, Nakhon Ratchasima, Ubon Ratchathani, Khon Kaen, Chiang Mai, Buriram, Udon Thani, Chonburi, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Sisaket, Pattaya, Phuket, Songkhla

Approximately 18.7 million people across participating cities

Category of Climate Action:

- Energy efficiency & renewables
- Waste
- Green buildings
- Sustainable urban mobility
- Multi-sector area-based investment programs

Multiple cities, Thailand

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A shared urban vision takes shape

From Khon Kaen to Chiang Mai, Phuket to Rayong, Thailand's urban areas are growing fast. As more people make these places their home, cities are under increasing pressure to provide the infrastructure and public services their communities need, efficiently, equitably, and sustainably.

Across the country, city leaders share a clear and urgent ambition: to build greener, healthier, more livable urban environments that support their residents' wellbeing and protect them from growing climate risks. They want to reduce air pollution, lower energy costs, make streets safer, and ensure every community, especially the most vulnerable, can thrive in the face of a changing climate.

Thailand's national commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050 reinforces this ambition, creating both momentum and opportunity. But to make this vision a reality, cities must rapidly transition away from fossil fuels and toward smarter, low-carbon urban development.



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The missing link in Thailand's climate transition

Delivering this transition depends on many factors, like having strong policies, better public awareness, and coordinated efforts between government and industry. But Thai cities face an even more fundamental hurdle: they need new and innovative ways to access financing for climate-smart urban infrastructure.

Many local governments lack the technical capacity, investment planning tools, or financial partnerships to move from climate ambition to actionable, finance-ready projects. Without this crucial support, their vision of a low-carbon, climate-resilient future for their communities remains out of reach.



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Building a national pipeline for low-carbon investment

Recognizing this challenge, the Gap Fund provided the cities with the technical support needed to transform their climate ambitions into investment-ready opportunities. The WB-Gap Fund helped create an enabling environment for infrastructure investments from both public and private sources. The support provided included:



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• Development of a comprehensive green investment pipeline for Bangkok. The Gap Fund helped the city create a detailed list of high-impact, climate-friendly projects. This included making buildings more energy efficient, improving public transport, better waste management, and cleaner water systems. The assessment showed that these projects would represent $24.2 billion in investment opportunities and could reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions by 21%.

• Market sizing analysis for low-carbon interventions. The Gap Fund looked at specific improvements cities could make, like helping buildings use less energy, putting solar panels on rooftops, switching streetlights to LEDs, and encouraging electric motorbikes. Next, the team worked out how much each of these would cost and the amount of emissions they would prevent across Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Sawan, Phuket, and Rayong.

• Design of an innovative carbon finance mechanism. The Gap Fund designed a new way for cities to access capital for climate projects by working with Thailand's financial institutions and environmental agencies, creating new pathways for cities to access funding.

This comprehensive approach delivered concrete results that extended far beyond technical reports. The investment pipeline developed for Bangkok now forms part of the city's updated low-carbon strategy, which was officially launched in July 2024. Given that the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration faces difficulty in securing public investment funds, the strategy emphasises private building upgrades that demonstrate high financial returns while delivering environmental and health benefits for residents.

Beyond Bangkok, the work included extensive awareness-raising across public and private actors about the attractiveness of low-carbon city investment programs. This engaged key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Finance, Prime Minister's Office, and Bank of Thailand, along with the Federation of Thai Industries, Bangkok Chamber of Commerce, and Industrial Estates Authority of Thailand.

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From groundwork to a $200 million national programme

This foundation of technical support and stakeholder engagement has generated significant momentum for transformational change. Formal approval by Thailand's National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) was granted, endorsing the Low Carbon City project as a national climate initiative with a proposed $200 million investment program.

This comprises a carbon crediting mechanism and a large-scale investment pipeline of urban decarbonization projects such as energy efficiency retrofits, solar PV installations, and EV transitions. This shows how early-stage technical assistance can unlock much larger investments that benefit countless lives across multiple cities.



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Multiple cities, Thailand

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Learn more about the GCoM-Gap Fund Partnership