

# CLIMATE ACTION IN INDIAN CITIES: FROM READINESS ASSESSMENT TO MEASURABLE OUTCOMES



**Dr Ravikant Joshi**

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## Abbreviation

|                  |                                                                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ADB              | Asian Development Bank                                                                  |
| C – Cube         | Climate Centre for Cities                                                               |
| CapaCITIES       | Capacity Building Project on Low Carbon and Climate Resilient City Development in India |
| CITIIS           | City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain                                     |
| CPPF             | Climate Project Preparation Facility                                                    |
| CPHEEO           | Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation                        |
| CSCAF            | Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework                                               |
| GCoM             | Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy                                        |
| GIZ              | The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit                             |
| ICLEI South Asia | International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives                               |
| NDMA             | National Disaster Management Authority                                                  |
| NIUA             | National Institute of Urban Affairs                                                     |
| NMSH             | National Mission on Sustainable Habitat                                                 |
| MoHUA            | Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs                                                   |

# Climate Action in Indian Cities: From Readiness Assessment to Measurable Outcomes

## Abstract

Indian cities are increasingly exposed to climate risks while also offering significant opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience. With India's urban population expected to grow substantially and the country committed to achieving Net Zero by 2070, mainstreaming climate action in cities is critical to national climate and development objectives. This paper reviews the evolution and current status of climate action in Indian cities, with particular attention to national policy initiatives, climate-readiness assessment, city-level programmes, technical assistance and investment-supported interventions. It examines initiatives including the National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF), CapaCITIES, Global Covenant of Mayors, CITIIS and the Climate Projects Preparation Facility, along with support provided by development partners and other organisations.

The analysis indicates that city climate readiness remains low, while climate action continues to be concentrated in a limited number of cities. Information on the number, status, implementation and outcomes of city-level climate initiatives is fragmented and is not available through a consolidated public information system. The discontinuity in periodic climate-readiness assessment further limits the ability to track progress over time. The paper distinguishes between climate readiness, planning, implementation, outputs and outcomes, and argues that readiness assessment alone cannot establish whether cities are undertaking effective climate action or moving towards Net Zero and climate-resilience pathways.

The paper recommends annual and progressively expanded city climate assessment; transparent public disclosure of city climate actions; adoption of action- and outcome-oriented sustainability and resilience indicators; improved climate project preparation and finance; and integration of climate-resilience requirements into urban infrastructure investment. Such an approach can help transform isolated city initiatives into a scalable, measurable and outcome-based national urban climate-action programme.

## Context

Cities are not only the source of more than 70% of the world's GHG emissions<sup>1</sup> but home to more than half of humanity. As a focal point of human activity cities are both major contributors (cause) to climate change and crucial actors (solution) in the fight against the climate change. *Climate change impacts cities with more frequent extreme weather, heatwaves, sea level rise, and food and water insecurity which worsens social and economic disparities especially in developing countries*<sup>2</sup>. Climate change is causing profound impact on cities worldwide and its intensity will continue to increase till world succeed to address climate change.

Cities are key to combating climate change for a multitude of reasons. Cities can address climate change by adaptation and mitigation strategies like reducing GHG emissions, improving energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation, sustainable waste management, enhancing urban green spaces

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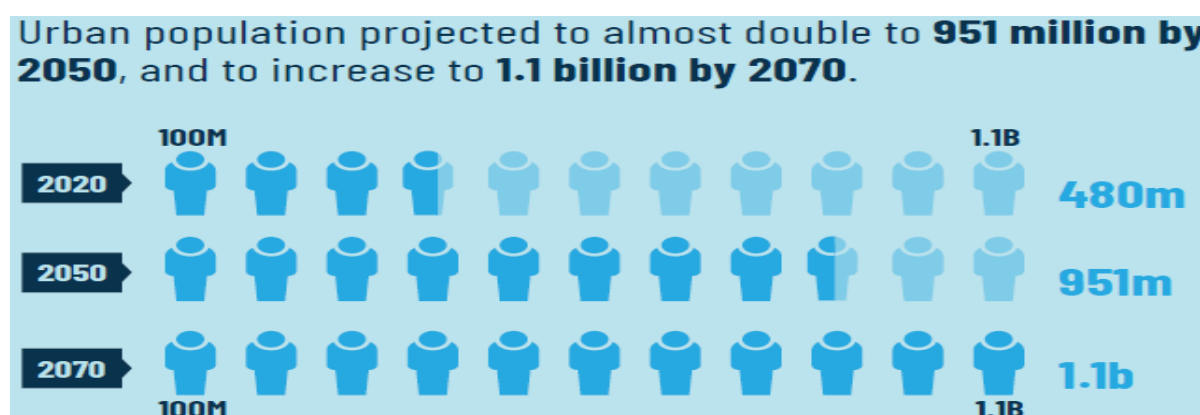
<sup>1</sup> IPCC 2022

<sup>2</sup> [Cities have a key role to play in tackling climate change – here's why | UNDP Climate Promise](#)

etc. By prioritizing increased climate investments, ambitious urban planning and robust policies, cities can play a pivotal role in translating global climate targets into locally achievable solutions.

Only with a coordinated approach and action at the global, regional, national and local levels, can success be achieved. It is essential, therefore, to make cities an integral part of the solution in fighting climate change. India will have to make its cities integral part of climate action to achieve its Net Zero by 2070 commitment.

With a doubling of the urban population expected by 2050, from 480 million in 2020 to 951 million, more than half of urban growth, in terms of new infrastructure, buildings and urban services, is still to come. This gives Indian cities a huge opportunity to plan for resilient urban development and avoid large future damages and losses from climate and disaster impacts. Given that the building and infrastructure retrofitting is very costly, there must be an immediate focus not only on better preparing cities for climate impacts, but also on shaping urban growth in a climate-resilient manner, necessary for improving quality of life and achieving vibrant economic growth.<sup>3</sup>



This article takes a first stock of the climate change consequences faced by Indian cities and the positive impact that appropriate and timely climate action by cities can produce. It reviews the steps taken to mainstream and measure city climate action, enlists city-level climate initiatives and technical assistance, identifies the associated issues, and suggests a way forward.

## Objectives and Scope of the Paper

The paper has three objectives: first, to review the evolution of climate-action mainstreaming and assessment mechanisms for Indian cities; second, to take stock of city-level climate initiatives and technical assistance; and third, to identify gaps in coverage, measurement, implementation, information availability and outcome assessment, and suggest a framework for scaling city climate action.

## Approach and Sources of Information

The paper is based on publicly available government documents, programme websites, assessment reports, annual reports, parliamentary questions and other secondary sources. It does not claim to provide an exhaustive inventory of all city climate actions; programme status and figures need to be read with the source and verification notes in the relevant sections and annexures.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank (2025) – Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India

## 1. Climate Change and Indian Cities

Indian Cities have started facing diverse climate change impacts like flooding, heatwaves, water scarcity, air pollution etc. For example –

- 21 Major Cities in India including Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad heading towards zero groundwater levels, affecting access for 100 million people<sup>4</sup>.
- At least 100 Indian cities face serious flood risks, with Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Surat, Patna, Guwahati, and Pune among the most vulnerable<sup>5</sup>.
- According to the [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#), 77 cities in the coastal regions of the country including some of the largest and most dense urban agglomerations are prone to frequent cyclones.
- Pluvial flood losses due to high paving and reduced water permeability have more than doubled in the past two decades. 14 out of 24 cities assessed for this report found less than 0.5 square meter of green open space per capita. If nothing changes, it is projected that heat-related deaths in Indian cities will double by 2050<sup>6</sup>.

Studies have indicated that poor planning and urban management are expected to cost Indian cities somewhere between \$2.6 and \$13 billion (2.8% of GDP) annually.<sup>7</sup>

On other end the Coalition for Urban Transitions (2021) report projected substantial emission reduction potential in India's cities. It estimates that a set of proven low-carbon measures could reduce urban emissions from buildings, transport, waste and materials for infrastructure by 89% in 2050, saving 1,784 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e relative to a baseline scenario<sup>8</sup>.

Close to \$5 billion in pluvial flood-related losses can be averted by 2030 and \$14 billion to \$30 billion by 2070. Implementing heat mitigation actions across Indian cities would increase GDP by up to 0.4 percent and save up to 130,000 lives a year by 2050. Opportunity to improve resilience and energy efficiency in 144 million dwelling units yet to come by 2070.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Evolution of City Climate Action in India

Realising the gravity of climate change faced by the Indian Cities, at same time Cities' potential to reduce urban emissions from a set of proven low-carbon measures and for attainment of India's ambitious Net Zero target by 2070, India has initiated several steps to mainstream climate actions in Indian Cities.

1. Recognising crucial role of Cities in adapting and mitigating climate change India in 2008 under [National the National Action Plan on Climate Change \(NAPCC\)](#) identified eight core missions for India, of which one addresses urban resilience and sustainability [National Mission on Sustainable Habitat \(NMSH\)](#).

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4 NITI Aayog Report (2018) - Composite Water Management Index Report

5 India Flood Atlas, developed by the Water & Climate Lab at IIT Gandhinagar.

6 World Bank (2025) – Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India

7 Mani, M. et al., 2018. South Asia's Hotspots: The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards, Washington D.C.: World Bank Group.

8 Coalition of Urban Transitions, 2021. Seizing the Urban Opportunity. [Online] Available at: [https://urbantransitions.global/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Seizing\\_the\\_Urban\\_Opportunity\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://urbantransitions.global/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Seizing_the_Urban_Opportunity_WEB-1.pdf) [Accessed March 2021].

9 World Bank (2025) – Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India



The first version of NMSH released in 2010 has been revised in the context of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and New Urban Agenda (NUA) in 2020. The implementation period of NMSH 2020 is 2021 to 2030. The revised NMSH has identified five thematic areas, namely (i) Energy and Green Building, (ii) Urban Planning, Green Cover and Biodiversity, (iii) Mobility and Air Quality, (iv) Water Management, and (v) Waste Management. Key mitigation and adaptation strategies to facilitate the development of sustainable habitat have also been recommended under each thematic area. NMSH has selected 80 cities for action.

2. India's [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#), formulated in response to the Paris Climate Agreement, identify cities as one of the key sub-national actors and include commitments towards increasing energy efficiency of the buildings sector, developing climate resilient cities, emission reduction from the waste sector and developing sustainable transportation systems.
3. Under its funding schemes for cities like Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT, Swachh Bharat Mission GOI has provided funds for climate adaptation and mitigation actions like – sustainable mobility (using e-vehicles and improving efficiency of non-electric vehicles), energy (using renewable mainly solar energy source to power urban infrastructure and use of energy efficient lights for streetlights and offices) and WASH (improving water management, treating waste water, recycling of water and scientific treatment of solid waste), air pollution control-air quality improvement etc.
4. [Climate Centre for Cities \(C-Cube\)](#) - With an intent to mainstream climate actions in Indian cities and establish a one stop shop for climate informed urban development, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) established the Climate Centre for Cities (C-Cube) in June 2020. More than 40 multilateral, bilateral, research agencies, academic institutions and civil society organisations have joined as alliance partner with Climate Centre for Cities and are providing various types of supports to the Cities for climate action.
5. [Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework](#) 26 organisation supported development of the framework for MoHUA to measure climate action by Indian Cities. It is made of 28 indicators across 5 thematic areas – Urban planning, green cover and biodiversity; Energy and green buildings' Mobility and Air Quality; Water Management and Waste Management<sup>10</sup>.
6. **Climate Actions by Indian Cities** – With the help of various multilateral, bilateral, national and professional agencies (C-Cube Alliance Partners) Indian Cities have started taking climate actions.

## Climate Readiness Assessment and Measurement

**'What gets measured gets managed'** this famous maxim indicates that when something gets measured, it becomes visible and people naturally focus on improving it. Without measurement decisions take place on assumption, but with measurement, decisions become fact, evidence, analysis based that is informed one. For example, if a city reports its carbon footprint annually, leaders/decision makers are more likely to act on reducing it, because the numbers make inaction obvious and create accountability.

Measurement is the starting point of climate action by cities. It is necessary to measure a city's carbon footprint and readiness for undertaking required climate action towards Net Zero; it also helps in understanding how the city is impacted by climate change. Measurement needs to be an ongoing activity to know the actions taken by a city, their implementation and effectiveness, and to enable course correction.

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<sup>10</sup> NIUA, [CSCAF Technical Document](#)

For clarity, this paper distinguishes between: (i) readiness—institutions, data, policies and systems required for climate action; (ii) planning—preparation of climate, Net Zero, resilience or sectoral plans; (iii) implementation—projects and interventions actually being carried out; (iv) outputs—what has been delivered; and (v) outcomes—measurable changes such as reduced emissions, energy use, heat exposure, flood losses or improved resilience. Readiness assessment is important, but it is not by itself evidence of implementation or outcomes.

Globally, city climate readiness and actions are measured through several major indices and reporting frameworks, such as the [CDP Cities A-List](#), the [Global Cities Resilience Index](#), and [UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2024](#). These tools benchmark how cities mitigate emissions, adapt to climate risks, and build resilience, allowing comparisons across regions and guiding investment decisions.

Recognising the importance of measuring cities' climate readiness and climate action, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, developed the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) with the help of 26 organisations and launched it in February 2019. In Phase 1, a baseline of 96 cities was established using the framework. On the basis of this survey and feedback from cities and experts, CSCAF was revised in 2020.

In phase 2 a survey of 126 large cities including smart cities of India was carried out in 2020-21 and a Cities Readiness Report was prepared and published in June 2021. The assessment showed that national average of 126 cities in terms of climate readiness was just 30 %. (see Table)

**Table 1- The aggregate/average score of all 126 cities for the five thematic areas**

| Thematic Area                              | Average Score | Total Marks | % performance |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Energy and Green Buildings                 | 240           | 600         | 40%           |
| Urban Planning, Green Cover & Biodiversity | 140           | 500         | 28%           |
| Mobility & Air Quality                     | 120           | 500         | 24%           |
| Water Management                           | 110           | 600         | 18.3%         |
| Waste Management                           | 270           | 600         | 45%           |
| <b>Total for 5 Thematic Areas</b>          | <b>880</b>    | <b>2800</b> | <b>30.14%</b> |

In phase 3 a survey of 226 cities was carried out in 2022 and [Cities Readiness Report 2023](#) was published.<sup>11</sup> CSCAF used five readiness levels (1 star = 0 to 20%, 2 stars = 20 to 40%, 3 stars 40 to 60%, 4 stars 60 to 80% and 5 star = 80 to 100% readiness) to illustrate cities' performance in addressing climate change (see BOX 1). Only Surat moved from four-stars to five-stars in overall assessment while four cities moved from three-stars to five-stars category in 2023. The assessment showed national average of 226 cities in terms of climate readiness was just 34% and there was slight improvement in climate readiness. The main positive aspect of both these surveys and reports was that activity was sustained over the period, it was transparent-disclosed to public at large. Also, it incentivised Cities to improve their readiness for climate actions (See BOX 1) as it created one sort of ranking system and competition among cities.

Though overall Climate readiness of Cities is low between 30 to 34%, Phase 3 assessment indicated –

- 95 Cities have prepared disaster management plans
- 85 Cities are meeting the prescribed URDPFI norm of more than 12% green cover within their municipal boundaries
- 64 Cities have developed Clean Air Action Plans
- 32 Cities are scientifically managing landfill sites, meeting Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO), Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016

<sup>11</sup> NIUA [Cities Readiness Report 2023](#)

- 80 Cities have initiated a detailed flood/ water stagnation risk assessment
- 57 Cities have conducted energy audits of their water supply system
- 18 Cities have more than 15% of their electricity needs met through renewable energy
- 118 Cities have converted all streetlights to energy efficient or renewable energy operated

### BOX 1 – Performance Progress of Cities in terms of Climate Readiness



## 3. City Climate Action Programmes and Technical Assistance

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is spearheading City Climate Action initiatives through National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) complemented by C-Cube alliance partners. Following are some of the City Climate Action initiatives, programs, projects –

### CapaCITIES Project

Launched in 2016 which concluded recently in 2024 and funded by the Embassy of Switzerland to India and Bhutan, [the Capacity Building Project on Low Carbon and Climate Resilient City Development in India \(CapaCITIES\) programme](#) has driven low-carbon, climate-resilient urban development. By directly strengthening local capabilities, the programme has supported India's 2070 net-zero emissions objective by aligning local action with national missions and state-level goals.

The initiative was implemented through a collaborative partnership involving ICLEI South Asia, South Pole and econcept, with the National Institute of Urban Affairs as the knowledge partner. Cities (total eight) of Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Vadodara, Udaipur and Siliguri and the state governments of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu received support from this project.

### Impact of the programme over the past decade

- **Net-Zero Planning:** Pioneered Net-Zero Climate Resilient City Action Plans (CRCAPs) across eight cities in four states: Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Vadodara, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, Siliguri, and Udaipur. The CRCAPs methodology is being used by 35 cities. Also 12 Climate Action Plans helping cities chart their climate future
- **Institutional Governance:** Established permanent Net-Zero and Climate Action Cells in six project cities to enable long-term implementation, monitoring, and climate budgeting.

- **On-Ground Solutions:** Deployed high-impact pilot projects, including Ahmedabad's solar e-bus charging station, Coimbatore's 154 kWp floating solar plant, Rajkot's Green Mobility Zone with 100 subsidized e-autos, Tiruchirappalli's lake restoration, Tirunelveli's early flood warning system, and Vadodara's Miyawaki urban forestry. Cities and corresponding state governments have already started scaling up climate actions.
- **Unlocking Climate Investment for People**
  - INR 7142 billion in climate investments identified through Net-Zero CRCAPs
  - INR 120.52 million invested through CapaCITIES pilot projects
  - INR 40.52 million mobilised through government co-financing
  - INR 3.84 billion committed for scale-up investments
- **Knowledge Products**—Published three books 1. the Net-Zero Climate Resilient Cities Methodology Toolkit, 2. Energy Transition for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India: A Practitioner's Guidebook, and 3. Facilitating the Transition of Cities in India Along a Low-Carbon Pathway: Enabling the Flow of Finance, a white paper. In addition, a Video Training Series on Preparation and Implementation of Net-Zero Climate Resilient City Action Plans was launched, which is now available on the National Urban Learning Platform.

## GCoM Project

The City Climate Action Plans (CCAP) for four Indian Cities - Jamnagar, Junagadh, Leh, and Pune - were developed in collaboration with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) and funded by the European Union (EU). These plans offer tailored climate solutions—mitigation and adaptation—providing a comprehensive roadmap to a Net-Zero and Climate-Resilient future for each city.

## The City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS) Initiative

CITIIS was announced by the Government of India in 2018 under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the European Union. It was designed as a challenge-based funding model aimed at promoting sustainable and integrated urban development.

### The CITIIS 1.0

The [CITIIS 1.0](#) project involved 12 cities (Agartala, Amaravati, Amritsar, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Dehradun, Hubli-Dharwad, Kochi, Puducherry, Surat, Ujjain, Visakhapatnam) and focused mainly on themes of sustainable mobility, public open spaces, urban e-governance, and social innovation for low-income settlements. CITIIS 1.0 was initiated with a total budget of ₹933 crore (EUR 100 million loan and 6 million grant) and included 12 city-level projects selected through a competitive program, capacity-building activities and other activities at the national level undertaken by the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).<sup>12</sup>

Current status of CITIIS 1.0 projects is as follows<sup>13</sup> – Total allocation Rs. 799.99 crore, Fund Released Rs. 727.99 crores, utilisation of funds Rs. 686.56 crores. Most of the cities have completed their

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<sup>12</sup> Lok Sabha USQ 5462 annexure

<sup>13</sup> Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 228 (answered on 2 February 2026)

projects, few are still under implementation: Agartala, Chennai, Dehradun, Hubballi-Dharwad, Puducherry.

## The CITIIS 2.0

Following the success of the first phase, the Government of India approved and launched CITIIS 2.0 on 31 May 2023 for the period 2023-27 with total outlay of Rs. 1920 crores. CITIIS 2.0 has been conceived by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the European Union (EU), and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). The focus of the new phase revolves around circular economy, climate resilience and integrated waste management systems, thereby aligning with the SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) priorities for India and the national climate action plans. CITIIS 2.0 has 3 major components:

**Component-1:** Financial and technical support for up to 18 Smart Cities for projects promoting circular economy with focus on Integrated Waste Management. Financial assistance of €170 mn to be provided; up to Rs. 135 crores for each project. 84 smart cities submitted proposals and 18 cities were selected under CITIIS 2.0 with total outlay of Rs. 1550 crore. The selected cities are Agartala, Agra, Bareilly, Belagavi, Bilsapur, Guwahati, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Madurai, Muzaffarpur, New Town Kolkata, Panaji, Rajkot, Srinagar, Thanjavur, Thiruvananthapuram, Udaipur, Ujjain.

**Component-2:** Support to States/Union Territories (UTs) for Climate action – State climate centers/climate cells/data observatories to be set up or strengthened and Data-driven planning and implementation of climate action plans to be facilitated. € 30 mn (Rs. 264 crore) earmarked for State/UT-level actions. one project in 21 States has been approved.

**Component-3:** Interventions at National level to support scale-up across all cities and towns. It includes Scaling up through capacity building, knowledge dissemination and other interventions; 2. Interventions will be focused on furthering climate action in urban India. Funding through €12-million (Rs. 106 crore) technical support grant from EU.

Current status of 18 City Projects approved under CITIIS 2.0 is as follows<sup>14</sup> –

- All 18 Smart Cities are in the maturation phase — finalizing project components and DPRs in line with CITIIS 2.0 guidelines.
- DPRs are being finalized, and only initial funds have been released — ₹85 crore to 10 cities via the old SNA mechanism and ₹13.92 crore under SPARSH.
- Thiruvananthapuram is the only city reported to have begun early implementation with ₹9 crore mobilized.

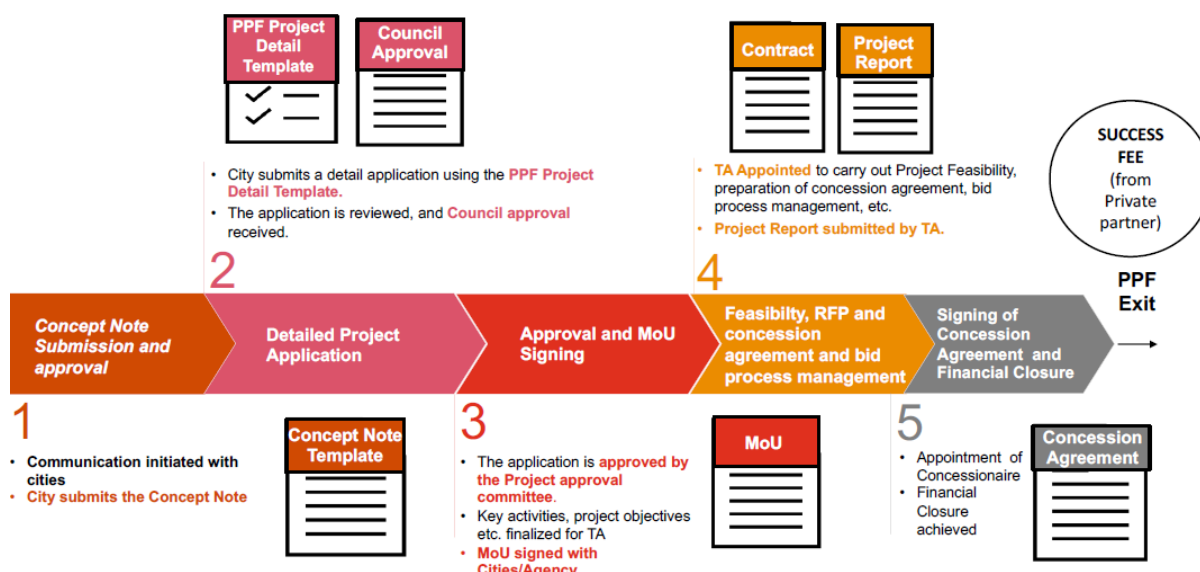
## The Climate Projects Preparation Facility (CPPF) by NIUA

CPPF is India's first dedicated facility recently created by NIUA that supports cities to prepare bankable climate-focused projects that can be taken up as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The Facility offers technical and transaction advisory services to cities and states across the entire project development spectrum, covering conceptualisation, project design, financial structuring, contract development and successful bid-out through appropriate PPP and hybrid models. The CPPF will closely work with cities throughout the project preparation stage and provide high-quality project preparation at no cost to the cities. At present two cities Greater Warangal and Vadodara are being helped under CPPF.

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<sup>14</sup> [Rajya Sabha USQ 228, Feb 2026](#)

## Box 2 – CPPF Process Flow



## Technical Assistance for City Climate Action by Other Agencies

At present, Indian cities are supported by a diverse set of donors and technical agencies (see Annexures 3 and 4).

- C40 Cities (finance & clean investments),
- GIZ (resilience & cooling),
- AFD/KfW (green infrastructure),
- World Bank & UNDP (adaptation & climate budgeting),
- ADB (transport & energy),

### Key Themes of Assistance

- **Climate Finance:** C40 Cities, AFD/KfW, World Bank — supporting municipal bonds, PPPs, and green infrastructure financing.
- **Resilience & Cooling:** GIZ, UNDP — embedding resilience into planning, heat action plans, biodiversity strategies.
- **Transport & Energy Transition:** ADB, NIUA — electric buses, renewable energy pilots, low-carbon corridors.
- **Waste & Circular Economy:** NIUA (CITIIS 2.0) — integrated waste management, recycling hubs, circular economy pilots.

This multi-donor ecosystem ensures that climate action in Indian cities is not only funded but also backed by technical expertise in finance, resilience, energy, and circular economy.

## ICLEI-India

After the end of the CapaCITIES programme, ICLEI South Asia continues to work with a wider set of Indian cities on biodiversity, resilience, energy transition and climate budgeting. Cities such as Hyderabad, Dehradun, Gangtok, Noida, Indore, Bhopal, Kochi, Jammu, Srinagar, Siliguri, Itanagar, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Udaipur are receiving technical assistance under frameworks such as Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (LBSAPs), City Biodiversity Index (CBI), climate budgets and the Net-Zero Climate Resilient Cities methodology (see Annexure 3).



## 4. Key Gaps and Challenges in Mainstreaming City Climate Action

### Low Climate Readiness of Indian Cities

Both Climate Readiness Reports (2021 and 2023) brought out the fact that there is low readiness (30 to 34%) in Indian Cities to undertake Climate Actions and there is urgent need to improve their readiness to undertake actual climate actions. Only 14 cities out of 226 have scored between 60 to 90% marks while rest of the cities have scored less than 50% marks in the assessment.

### Limited Coverage and Slow Scale-up of City Climate Action

Starting from 2018 when CAPACities and CITIIS 1.0 programs were commenced, followed by development of CSCAF in 2019, C- Cube and CITIIS 2.0 program in 2023 till date city climate actions in physical or implementation form funded with grant has been initiated in 42 Cities and approximate aggregate amount Rs. 3000 crores. In this if one adds cities which are receiving technical assistance to formulate City Climate Action Plans and other related Plans then also number of cities engaged in City Climate Action does not go beyond 100. Even projects under CITIIS 1.0 had time over run in implementation and most of CITIIS 2.0 projects are yet to start. This clearly indicates that mainstreaming of city climate actions has not happened.

### Discontinuity in Climate Readiness Assessment

A crucial and fundamental requirement in city climate action is the measurement of cities' climate readiness. This was taken up in a structured manner, but the next round of CSCAF has not been carried out. As a result, there is no comparable information on whether the climate readiness of Indian cities has improved, what climate actions cities have undertaken, or what outcomes their efforts are achieving.

Taking into account the more than 4800 statutory municipal towns and cities in India, including more than 500 municipal towns with population above one hundred thousand, CSCAF should be undertaken every year with progressively increasing coverage. The indicators used under CSCAF also need to be revised and expanded to cover missed aspects.

### Absence of a Consolidated National City Climate Action Database

Besides the non-availability of information about progress in Indian cities' climate readiness and climate action due to the absence of CSCAF 4.0, there is in general no consolidated information about climate action by Indian cities. For example, how many cities are preparing city climate action plans? How many have completed and started implementing them? How many cities have adopted climate budgeting or climate-smart capital infrastructure plans? What kind of climate actions are being implemented and what outcomes or impacts have been achieved? C-Cube is said to have 75 partners (40 organisational alliance partners and other individual partners) working with MoHUA and NIUA for city climate action, but its website does not provide consolidated information on the action being taken by Indian cities, the support being provided by each partner, the cities covered, or progress and outcomes achieved. The information in Annexures 3 and 4 has been sourced from secondary sources.

### Weak Monitoring of Implementation and Outcomes

The websites dedicated to city climate action initiatives, except CapaCITIES, such as CITIIS 1.0, CITIIS 2.0, NIUA, MoHUA and NMSH, do not provide updated progress data in a consolidated form. The information presented in this paper (Annexures 1 and 2) on progress of the CITIIS programme was sourced through details provided under unstarred questions in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha rather than from dedicated web pages. There is also no data on outcomes achieved.

## 5. A Framework for Scaling and Measuring City Climate Action

Setting Cities Right that is making them sustainable and Net Zero is fundamental requirement for India to achieve Net Zero Target by 2070. Recent World Bank Report has pointed out that Timely actions can avert billions of annual damages and losses in flooding and urban heat-related impacts and improve the quality of urban life, economic growth, and clean air. The benefits would be resilient, green, more-liveable, and more-prosperous cities.

Post 2018 various well thought out, innovative initiatives like Centre for Climate Change, CSCAF, CITIIS to mainstream City Climate Actions were started but with the passage of the time City Climate Actions have remained confined to limited number of cities and have not become a large-scale movement which is must taking in to account massive size and heterogeneity of Indian Urban System. Following course of actions at minimum need to be pursued.

### Establish a Transparent City Climate Action Information Platform

This is the most fundamental requirement. Information only about plans, schemes or readiness is not sufficient; comprehensive information about city climate action, including planning, implementation, outputs and outcomes, must be shared publicly in a timely and transparent manner.

### Institutionalise Annual Climate Readiness and Action Assessment

There is an urgent need to undertake CSCAF assessment every year with increasing coverage. CSCAF measures readiness, but there is also a need to measure actual climate action, implementation, outputs and outcomes. A complementary framework, or an improved CSCAF framework, should include these aspects.

Beside undertaking improved CSCAF every year covering more and more Cities in transparent manner, there is need to have one stop public disclosure of all the climate actions happening in all Indian Cities.

### Move from Readiness Indicators to Action and Outcome Indicators

Measuring readiness of cities is important but more important is assessing a **city's progress toward Net Zero**, in terms of emissions inventories, climate-action implementation and actual progress against a Net Zero pathway. For this purpose, several international organisations (Global Covenant of Mayors, C 40, ISO 37120 / ISO 37123, UNFCCC etc.) have developed assessment frameworks. Based on these frameworks India should develop and adopt appropriate framework to assess city's progress towards Net Zero. It should be carried out annually independently every year to ensure quality and reliability of data and results should be put in public domain transparently.

### Integrate Climate Resilience into Urban Infrastructure Investment

National level dedicated Urban Climate Resilience Mission /Fund on the lines of AMRUT or Smart Cities Mission and similar kind of missions/grant funding by the State Governments will be ideal and necessary too for mainstreaming City Climate Actions, but that will require additional budgetary allocations.



Till the time such mission is created with additional budgetary allocations, it is necessary to make climate resilience infrastructure development norms mandatory for all CAPEX and Major OPEX expenditure carried out by the municipal bodies and parastatals dealing with urban infrastructure and service delivery, under all the missions and grants provided by the Central and State Governments and CAPEX and OPEX carried out from their own funds and borrowed funds. For example, climate resilience should be made mandatory in design, implementation and outcome of projects approved under recently launched Urban Challenge Fund (UCF).

## Conclusion

Indian cities are central to India's response to climate change because they are major centres of population, economic activity, infrastructure investment and greenhouse gas emissions, while also being increasingly exposed to heat, flooding, water stress and other climate-related risks. India has established a range of policy frameworks, assessment mechanisms, financing programmes and technical assistance initiatives. The experience of CSCAF, CapaCITIES, CITIIS, GCoM, CPPF and partner-supported programmes shows that useful knowledge, institutional capacity and implementation experience already exist in a number of cities.

However, the evidence reviewed in this paper suggests that these initiatives have not yet resulted in climate action at the scale required by India's rapidly expanding urban system and fulfilling its Net Zero Target by 2070. Climate readiness remains low, coverage is limited, implementation of several programmes is slow, and information on city-level climate action, its implementation status and its outcomes is fragmented. The absence of continuous, comparable readiness assessment further makes it difficult to determine whether Indian cities as a whole are becoming more climate-ready and whether interventions are producing measurable improvements.

The next phase of urban climate policy needs to move from measuring readiness and documenting plans and projects towards continuous measurement of implementation, outputs, outcomes and progress towards Net Zero and climate-resilience pathways. Annual assessment with progressively wider coverage, a transparent national platform consolidating city climate action, and robust outcome indicators can create the accountability required for sustained progress. India does not need to start city climate action from scratch; the priority is to consolidate existing efforts, expand their coverage, improve implementation and establish a credible system for measuring and publicly reporting results.

Annexure 1 – Detailed Status of CITIIS 1.0 Projects <sup>15</sup>

| S. N. | City             | State          | Projects                                                                                                                | Project Cost Rs. crore | Fund Allocated Rs. crore | Fund Released Rs. crore | Fund Utilised Rs. |
|-------|------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1     | Agartala         | Tripura        | Hoara River Front Development (Phase II)                                                                                | 99.0                   | 51.0                     | 51.0                    | 51.0 Ongoing      |
| 2     | Amaravati        | Andhra Pradesh | Basic Infrastructure Development in Low Income Settlements in Amaravati City - Land                                     | 138.62                 | 80.0                     | 80.0                    | 72.0              |
| 3     | Amritsar         | Punjab         | Rejuvenation of Auto - Rickshaws in Amritsar through Holistic Interventions (RAAHI)                                     | 108.33                 | 80.0                     | 8.0                     | 8.0 Completed     |
| 4     | Bhubaneswar      | Odisha         | B-Active revitalization of open spaces and creation of green/blue corridors in the city                                 | 30.45                  | 7.93                     | 7.93                    | 7.93 Completed    |
| 5     | Chennai          | Tamil Nadu     | Model & SMART Corporation Schools in Chennai                                                                            | 156.58                 | 111.88                   | 111.88                  | 85.0 Ongoing      |
| 6     | Dehradun         | Uttarakhand    | Child Friendly City Project                                                                                             | 58.0                   | 46.40                    | 46.40                   | 45.0 Ongoing      |
| 7     | Hubballi Dharwad | Karnataka      | Green Mobility Corridor                                                                                                 | 165.68                 | 115.68                   | 115.68                  | 115.68 Ongoing    |
| 8     | Kochi            | Kerala         | E-Health Solution / Electric bus fleet procurement ongoing.                                                             | 19.13                  | 15.10                    | 15.10                   | 15.1 Completed    |
| 9     | Puducherry       | Puducherry     | Our Neighbourhood is Your Neighbourhood too: A Participatory Planning Approach - Telemedicine & health kiosks partially | 99.71                  | 80.0                     | 80.0                    | 76.35 Ongoing     |
| 10    | Surat            | Gujarat        | Integrated mobility & e-governance / Wild Valley Biodiversity Park                                                      | 139.15                 | 80.0                     | 80.0                    | 80.0 Completed    |
| 11    | Ujjain           | Madhya Pradesh | Mahakal Rudrasagar Integrated development approach – Phase II (MRIDA-II)                                                | 150.37                 | 80.0                     | 80.0                    | 78.5 Completed    |
| 12    | Visakhapatnam    | Andhra Pradesh | Social Inclusion Through Modernizing Public Schools as Smart Campus                                                     | 65.0                   | 52.0                     | 52.0                    | 52.0 Completed    |
|       |                  |                | Total                                                                                                                   | 1230.02                | 799.99                   | 727.99                  | 686.56            |

<sup>15</sup> Rajhya Sabha [USQ 228.docx](#) status as of February 2026.

Annexure 2 – City-Level Projects Approved under CITIIS 2.0<sup>16</sup>

| S. N. | City /State               | Project Details                                                                                                 | Project cost Rs. Cr | Fund Allocation Rs. Cr. | Status    |
|-------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1.    | Agartala (Tripura)        | Integrated solid waste management with reuse of riverfront waste.                                               | 116.55              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 2.    | Agra (U. P.)              | Circular economy in plastic and construction waste. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                | 139.58              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 3.    | Bareilly (U.P.)           | Waste segregation and recycling hubs. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                              | 86.89               | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 4.    | Belagavi (Karnataka)      | Decentralized composting and bio-CNG from organic waste. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>           | 165.35              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 5.    | Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh)   | Smart landfill remediation and recycling clusters. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                 | 138.98              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 6.    | Guwahati (Assam)          | Waste-to-resource innovation for flood-resilient urban systems. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>    | 145                 | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 7.    | Jabalpur (MP)             | Strengthening Solid Waste Management through Circular Economy and Smart Infrastructure                          | 158.49              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 8.    | Jaipur Rajasthan          | Smart waste collection and recycling marketplaces. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                 | 169.14              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 9.    | Madurai (Tamil Nadu)      | Decentralized solid waste management with community participation. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b> | 314.69              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 10    | Muzaffarpur (Bihar)       | Integrated waste-to-energy pilot. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                                  | 168.67              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 11    | New Town Kolkata (W B)    | Smart segregation and recycling infrastructure. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                    | 173.36              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 12    | Panaji (Goa)              | Circular tourism waste management. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                                 | 89.28               | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 13    | Rajkot Gujarat            | Plastic recycling and reuse in construction. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                       | 135                 | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 14    | Srinagar (J&K)            | Waste management climate-sensitive urban areas. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                    | 121.99              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 15    | Thiruvananthapuram Kerala | Decentralized composting and zero-waste neighbourhoods. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>            | 154.58              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 16    | Thanjavur (T N)           | Waste-to-resource innovation in heritage zones. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                    | 139.65              | 75                      | DPR Stage |
| 17    | Udaipur Rajasthan         | Circular economy in lakefront waste management. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>                    | 167.66              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
| 18    | Ujjain (M P)              | Integrated waste management linked to Mahakal precinct. <b>No information on CITIIS 2.0 web page</b>            | 158.23              | 100                     | DPR Stage |
|       |                           | <b>Total</b>                                                                                                    | <b>2743.09</b>      | <b>1550</b>             |           |

<sup>16</sup> Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 228 (answered on 2 February 2026)

## Annexure 3 – City Climate Action Support Provided by ICLEI South Asia

Status convention: “Current / continuing” means that the underlying support or implementation is ongoing as of the verification cut-off. “Recently completed / outputs remain relevant” means that the funded programme has ended, even where its plans, pilots or knowledge products remain in use. The annexures are a selected compilation based on publicly available programme documents, institutional websites, annual reports and other secondary sources; they are not an exhaustive inventory of all city climate actions or technical assistance programmes in India.

| Status                                       | City / coverage                                                                                            | Programme / initiative                                                                       | Organisation / funding                                                                                 | Theme                                                      | Verified technical assistance / note                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Current / continuing                         | Coimbatore                                                                                                 | Climate Budget 2026–27                                                                       | ICLEI South Asia with Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation                                            | Climate governance and finance                             | Institutionalisation of a municipal climate budget.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Current / continuing                         | Visakhapatnam                                                                                              | Net-Zero Climate Resilient City Action Plan (CRCAP)                                          | ICLEI South Asia (continued technical work after the Andhra Pradesh project)                           | Net-zero planning and resilience                           | CRCAP preparation; ICLEI’s 2024–25 annual report records the plan as ongoing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Recently completed / outputs remain relevant | Ahmedabad, Coimbatore, Rajkot, Siliguri, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, Udaipur and Vadodara                | CapaCITIES Phase II: Capacity Building for Low Carbon and Climate Resilient City Development | SDC (funder); ICLEI South Asia, South Pole and econcept AG (implementers); NIUA (knowledge partner)    | Low-carbon, climate-resilient planning, finance and pilots | Net-zero CRCAPs and city-specific mitigation/adaptation pilots, including mobility, energy, water and nature-based measures. Programme period: 2019–2023; outputs continued to be published in 2025.                                                                                                                 |
| Recently completed / outputs remain relevant | Kakinada and Vijayawada; Visakhapatnam                                                                     | Mainstreaming Climate Action in Three Cities of Andhra Pradesh                               | C40 (support/funder) and ICLEI South Asia                                                              | Net-zero planning and mainstreaming                        | GHG inventories, climate-risk and vulnerability assessments, Net-zero CRCAPs, data reporting and a low-carbon technical study. Kakinada and Vijayawada plans launched 10 April 2025; Visakhapatnam plan continued by ICLEI. Project: June 2023–June 2025 (ICLEI annual report records activity through August 2025). |
| Recently completed / outputs remain relevant | Bhavnagar, Surat, Gangtok, Gandhinagar, Vadodara and Panaji                                                | GCoM South Asia SECAP compatibility review                                                   | Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy; ICLEI South Asia as South Asia Technical Coordinator   | Climate and energy action planning                         | Review of SECAPs against the GCoM Common Reporting Framework, including baseline-emissions inventories, climate-risk and vulnerability assessment, and recommendations for plan updates / GCoM badges. Review: July 2022–December 2023.                                                                              |
| Recently completed / outputs remain relevant | Kochi, Gangtok, Jammu and Srinagar                                                                         | INTERACT-Bio: Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (LBSAPs)                          | INTERACT-Bio; German Federal environment ministry support (then BMU/BMUV) and MoEFCC; ICLEI South Asia | Urban biodiversity and resilience                          | Participatory biodiversity profiles, local strategy/action plans, natural-asset mapping and mainstreaming biodiversity into municipal decision-making. Kochi LBSAP released 2021; Jammu and Srinagar plans released 2023.                                                                                            |
| Recently completed / outputs remain relevant | Hyderabad, Dehradun, Gangtok, Noida, Indore, Bhopal, Kochi, Rajkot, Jammu, Srinagar, Siliguri and Itanagar | City Biodiversity Index / associated natural-asset mapping and LBSAP work                    | ICLEI South Asia; city- or project-specific support varies                                             | Urban biodiversity                                         | Assessment and communication of biodiversity / ecosystem assets. This consolidation does not infer a single common funder or the same status for every city; the entries are verified as ICLEI publications or project outputs.                                                                                      |

## Annexure 4 – Selected Key Programmes and Partners Supporting Climate Action in Indian Cities

| Status                                                      | Organisation / funding agency                                     | Programme                                                                                           | Cities / coverage                                                                                                                                                                             | Thematic area                                                                               | Verified technical assistance / note                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Current (2023–27/28)                                        | MoHUA, AFD, KfW, European Union and NIUA                          | CITIIS 2.0                                                                                          | Agartala, Agra, Bareilly, Belagavi, Bilaspur, Guwahati, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Madurai, Muzaffarpur, New Town Kolkata, Panaji, Rajkot, Srinagar, Thanjavur, Thiruvananthapuram, Udaipur and Ujjain | Circular economy / integrated waste management; state climate action and climate governance | Financial and technical assistance to 18 selected Smart Cities; project maturation and implementation; state climate centres / cells and data observatories; climate-action planning and capacity building. Official NIUA annual-report period: Nov. 2023–Mar. 2028 (Cabinet approval describes 2023–27).                                        |
| Current / status of original project not explicitly updated | GIZ, MoHUA and NIUA                                               | Climate Smart Cities / Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF)                            | Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore and Kochi; CSCAF coverage: 100 Smart Cities                                                                                                                           | Climate-friendly urban development, measurement and monitoring                              | Planning and implementation support in partner cities; GHG monitoring; interventions on green buildings, urban green spaces, stormwater drainage, C&D waste and solid waste; CSCAF helpdesk/portal and assessment across 100 Smart Cities. The GIZ page does not state a current end date, so this is not presented as a new 2025–26 city award. |
| Current (launched Nov. 2025)                                | NIUA, MoHUA, HUDCO; ICLEI South Asia as technical partner         | Climate Projects Preparation Facility (CPPF)                                                        | National / Indian urban local bodies; Warangal, Indore and Bhubaneswar participated in the launch                                                                                             | Climate finance and project preparation                                                     | Preparation of bankable, climate-resilient urban-infrastructure projects under PPP models. The three launch participants are not represented as the only beneficiary cities.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Current analytical / advisory work (2025 publication)       | World Bank, with MoHUA; supported by GFDRR multi-donor trust fund | Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India / India Green, Resilient and Inclusive Cities PASA | 24 cities studied; special focus: Chennai, Indore, New Delhi, Lucknow, Surat and Thiruvananthapuram                                                                                           | Urban resilience, adaptation and municipal finance                                          | Diagnostic and policy advice on heat, flooding, resilient infrastructure, housing, municipal services and finance. This replaces the unverified formulation “Urban Climate Resilience & Adaptation Pilots – Chennai, Mumbai, Patna.”                                                                                                             |
| Recently completed (2023–25)                                | C40 Cities and ICLEI South Asia                                   | Mainstreaming Climate Action in Three Cities of Andhra Pradesh                                      | Kakinada, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam                                                                                                                                                        | Net-zero and climate-resilient city action                                                  | Included here as a C40-partner intervention, not as generic C40 green-finance support: GHG inventories, climate-risk assessment, CRCAPs, municipal low-carbon/energy studies and reporting support.                                                                                                                                              |



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