

## SDGs Cities Challenge

# INFORMATION SHEET

### WHAT IS IT?

THE SDGs CITIES CHALLENGE IS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT THAT SEEKS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) TARGETS AND INDICATORS, IN PARTICULAR SDG 11, “MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE.”

Connected Cities Lab is working with the Business Council for Sustainable Development Australia and Banksia Foundation to identify the best approach for cities to deliver on the SDGs, through a new participatory action research project.

Despite there being a wealth of resources available for cities and business to support the implementation of the SDGs it is not always easy to find a methodology that best fits a city’s local context and identifies appropriate local solutions. The SDGs Cities Challenge will create new collaborations and partnerships between cities and their urban partners in academia, business and community sectors in a structured process of co-design. This will generate innovative approaches for cities to accelerate action towards the Sustainable Development Goals, focused through the targets and indicators within SDG 11.

The SDGs Cities Challenge is a comprehensive, long-term program aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda. Ten cities from the Oceania and Asia Pacific region will be selected to participate in the first year of the project.

The initial 10-month cycle will include monthly webinars (May to November and February 2021) and an in-person 5-day workshop (**Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October 2020**), which will give participating cities the opportunity to share their experiences and urban challenges with expert support from a diverse group of urban stakeholders.

This workshop will be a key component of the annual symposium of the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne – Thursday 1 and Friday 2 October 2020. **Expressions of Interest can be submitted until midnight (AEST) Tuesday 7 April 2020.**

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Interested cities from Oceania and the Asia Pacific (via a local government entity) will need to identify and describe a challenge that they’re facing related to one or more SDG 11 ‘theme’. Cities need to show commitment to finding a solution, with evidence of progress towards the challenge to date. Shortlisted city applicants will be required to confirm political and operational support to participate in the first 10-month phase of this participatory action research project, and also to investigate or implement their identified challenge. Application is via the Expression of Interest application form located on the [Connected Cities Lab website](#).

Over the course of this pilot year, 10 city representatives will explore solutions, layout plans for implementation through a participatory action research project and determine draft actions for voluntarily reporting on the SDGs. Cities will be guided through a multidisciplinary, co-designed approach, using theme specific expertise from the University of Melbourne, the Business Council for Sustainable Development Australia members, and the Banksia Foundation network. Other urban partners will be invited to participate as the challenge progresses, and cities are encouraged to deploy their own networks and local stakeholders through the project.

## MORE DETAILS ON THE SDGs CITIES CHALLENGE:

Expressions of Interest are due on the midnight (AEST) Tuesday 7 April 2020, with Expression of Interest forms available on the [project website](#).

City representatives will be asked to travel to Melbourne, Australia for 5 days - Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October - or participate online that week; and commit staff time to the monthly webinars (May to November 2020, and February 2021) and preparation of some materials in advance of these meetings. Subsidised travel costs will be made available on a needs basis to less resourced cities to ensure a diversity of participation. We encourage rural, regional, metropolitan, big and small cities to participate.

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## KEY ACTIVITIES DURING THE 10 MONTHS INCLUDE:

- Monthly (May -November 2020 & February 2021) online meetings with other cities and the project management team to discuss progress, strategies and upcoming activities.
- Meetings between participating cities and the SDG Cities Challenge team will be focused on bridging the gap between the scope of individual implementation plans and the innovation process co-created by participating cities and experts.
- One in-person gathering at the University of Melbourne in Melbourne, Australia in September / October, as part of the 2020 Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning Symposium.
- This symposium will assemble key urban stakeholders around the theme of SDG11 and will offer the city participants further solutions to the identified city challenge. Practical information, tools, training and other resources about the SDGs will be provided by local and international experts.
- Cities will be assisted in the development of a partial voluntary local review (VLR).

## WHAT IS ALREADY IN PLACE FOR THIS PROJECT TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

- Partnerships with key experts in the field of urban planning, sustainability, resilience and business will ensure participating cities are able to co-produce evidence-based solutions and report through a tailored SDG-focused framework.

## WHAT IS THE VALUE FOR PARTICIPATING CITIES?

By participating in the SDGs Cities Challenge you will:

- Gain new collaborative partnerships with experts in local government, academia, business and community relevant to the SDGs;
- Lead the development of innovative solutions, an implementation plan and reporting framework for your city's most pressing SDG challenges;
- Create international visibility for your city as a forerunner in achieving the SDGs;
- Generate ongoing networking opportunities across a variety of SDG relevant groups;
- Establish valuable locally tailored SDG knowledge and practical partnerships; and
- Be recognised through a prestigious sustainability awards program.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://research.unimelb.edu.au/connected-cities/projects/sdgs-cities-challenge>

[t.jacobs@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:t.jacobs@unimelb.edu.au)

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