

Urban-LEDS II

Newsletter

April 2020

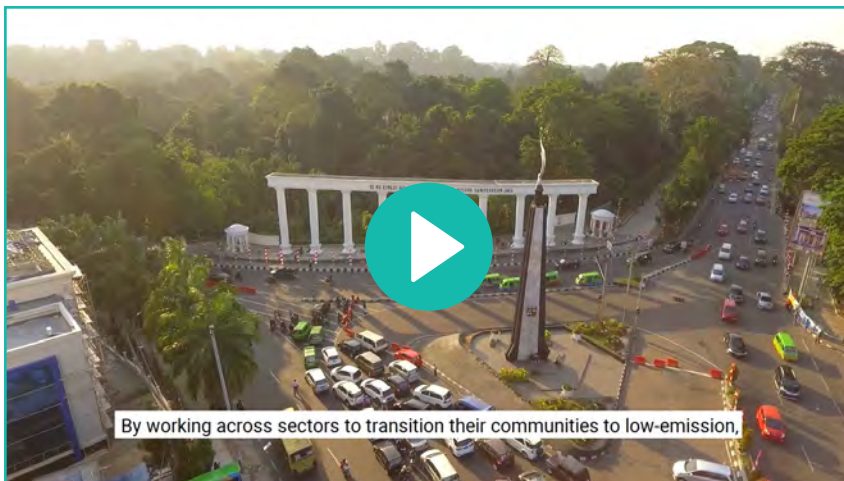


World Urban Forum participants involved in the Urban-LEDS project and/or speaking in the Urban-LEDS networking event ©UN-Habitat

During the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi in February 2020, representatives from Urban-LEDS cities, countries, the Adaptation Fund and the Coalition for Urban Transitions joined together to explore good practices in vertical and horizontal integration of climate change. [Read the full story here](#)

Urban-LEDS II project: What's it all about? Cities speak about their experience

A selection of videos have been released from city practitioners involved in the project.



Highlights from this issue...

UN Climate Conference – COP25 updates

Project synergies with the Under2Coalition's Climate Footprint project

City in focus: Vientiane, Lao PDR

Urban champion: Anni Sinnemäki, Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment, City of Helsinki, Finland

Name: Accelerating climate action through the promotion of Urban Low Emission Development Strategies (Urban-LEDS II)

Start Date: 01/04/2017

End date: 31/03/2021

Duration: 48 months

Total Budget: 8,000,000 €

Funding mechanism: European Union (DCI-ENV/2017/384-555)

Consortium: UN-Habitat HQ and regional offices in Lao PDR, Rwanda and Colombia, ICLEI World Secretariat and 5 ICLEI regional offices active in Europe, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, India, Lao PDR, Rwanda and South Africa

UN Climate Change Conference COP25 updates



COP25 (held 2-13 December 2019 in Madrid, Spain) ended up being one of the longest-lasting climate negotiations in history. Unfortunately, the mammoth talks failed to reach agreement on several key decisions, including on a global market for carbon emissions trading, known as Article 6. The official conference text did not include a requirement for enhanced ambition in the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Lastly, none of the decisions contained any reference to the role of local and regional governments or to multilevel collaboration (you can

read the final decisions [here](#), as well as analysis of the talks [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Nevertheless, there is reason to be hopeful. On 11 December, the COP25 Presidency launched the **Climate Ambition Alliance**, a renewed alliance of countries, non-state, sub-national and local actors who are determined to follow the Paris Agreement and the recommendations of climate change science.

As of 10 December 2019, [close to 400 local and regional climate pioneers within ICLEI's network](#) committed to

one or more forms of ambitious climate action, including declaring climate emergency, adopting carbon neutrality targets, divesting from fossil fuels and transforming to 100% renewable energy. This includes 160 cities and regions who adopted climate neutrality targets by 2050.

Lastly, UN-Habitat and ICLEI are both members of the NDC Partnership and are supporting national governments both in and outside of the scope of the Urban-LEDS II project to strengthen capacities and include subnational governments and urbanisation issues in NDC updates.

Urban-LEDS @ COP25

Urban-LEDS cities, national governments and partners contributed in a variety of ways to the COP25 program. An Expert Group Meeting was hosted by UN-Habitat and ICLEI, to gather insights from partners on the upcoming guide on Integrating human settlements into

NDCs, while UN-Habitat's Executive Director spoke during the GCoM Day, highlighting the important work of Urban-LEDS II in supporting cities to achieve their GCoM climate action planning badges. [Read more here.](#)

On the same day, Urban-LEDS II cities teamed up with partner cities from the [Connecting Nature](#) and [CLEVER City](#) projects for a joint working session organised by ICLEI Europe. Upon invitation by Madrid, host to this year's COP and Urban-LEDS city, the joint event spotlighted drivers and obstacles to accelerating transformative, local integrated climate action in line with the Paris Agreement. Invited project cities presented their lessons learned and the main challenges overcome by implementing key emission reduction and nature-based solution projects.

Lastly, on 13 December, Urban-LEDS cities and partners contributed to the ["Transition to a 1.5 world: accelerating climate action through international urban cooperation"](#) side event in the Italian Pavilion.



Yunus Arikon, ICLEI; Emani Kumar, ICLEI; Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat; Eve Crowley, UN FAO; Simone Raskob, Essen Municipality ©ICLEI WS

Bangladesh: GHG emissions baselines established in Narayanganj and Rajshahi

The leadership shown by the two cities to undertake evidence-based climate action planning paves the way for other cities in the country to replicate these efforts and contribute to Bangladesh's NDC goals.

[Read the full story here](#)



Bangladesh ferries used for commuting across Shitalakhya river in Narayanganj ©ICLEI South Asia



Participants in the first LEDS Lab workshop in Belo Horizonte. ©Vladimir Faria

Brazil: Two cities advance the implementation of energy efficiency projects through the LEDS Lab process

Recife and Belo Horizonte were selected to receive special technical assistance and training to develop financeable and climate-proof projects. Both cities were chosen for projects that will conduct energy consumption assessments followed by targeted improvement of energy efficiency in public buildings.

[Read the full story here](#)

Colombia: LEDS Lab process soon to start in two Colombian cities

The LEDS Lab process will soon be launched in two Colombian cities (to be selected in April 2020). The selected city projects will be approved by the newly-appointed local governments and take into consideration the TAP projects submitted to the 2018 TAP pipeline.



Engigado Antioquia (Colombia) landscape ©Mauricio Agudelo



Solar PV System at municipal school in Thane ©ICLEI South Asia

India: Nagpur and Thane update GHG inventories to scale up climate action

The updated GHG inventories will assist Nagpur and Thane to assess energy trends, monitor action and scale-up efforts, as well as to report to the national [Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework](#), and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM).

[Read the full story here](#)

Indonesia: The City of Balikpapan conducted its first climate risk and vulnerability assessment

Landslides, strong winds, floods, extreme weather, forest and land fires, and sea level rise were identified as major climate related hazards affecting the city of Balikpapan during a Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) consultation held on 27 November 2019.

[Read the full story here](#)



Participants at the climate risk and vulnerability assessment in Balikpapan City ©ICLEI Indonesia

Lao PDR: Mayors convene for the first climate change and urban development technical training

ICLEI's Southeast Asia Secretariat in synergy with the Global Green Growth Institute, co-organized a capacity building workshop targeting local government officials in Lao PDR on 1 November 2019. Among the highlights of the event was the sharing of best practices towards integrating and mainstreaming climate change into urban planning and development.

[Read the full story here](#)



Lao Mayors at the first training ©ICLEI Laos

Rwanda: 3rd Project Advisory Group (PAG) meeting with Rwanda National Stakeholders

The 3rd Rwanda Urban-LEDS II project national PAG meeting was held on 10 October 2019 in Kigali. The meeting updated the PAG on project implementation progress and alignment with other projects in Rwanda. [Read the full story here.](#)



PAG Rwanda ©ICLEI Africa

South Africa: Localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The City of uMhlatuze's pilot

Under the Urban-LEDS II objective on multilevel governance, ICLEI Africa organized a successful pilot workshop on 5-6 December 2019 in the City of uMhlatuze to discuss the localisation and institutionalisation of the SDGs. [Read the full story here.](#)



uMhlatuze SDG workshop participants locked in discussion. ©ICLEI Africa

Project synergies: Climate Footprint Project

Coordinated by the [Under2Coalition](#) and funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety through the International Climate Initiative, the Climate Footprint Project supports state and regional governments to improve their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) tracking and reduction efforts.

In overlapping countries (Brazil, India, and South Africa) [Country Profiles](#) and multilevel governance (MLG) studies, as well as GHG emission reduction successes achieved under Urban-LEDS,

serve as a catalyst for the Climate Footprint Project objectives. MLG dialogues conducted in the Climate Footprint Project strengthen Urban-LEDS cities' communication channels with key national and subnational stakeholders. Two dialogues have already taken place in Brazil (August and November 2019) and one in South Africa (November 2019) with the participation of Urban-LEDS cities alongside representatives from subnational and national governments, international organizations involved in GHG emission reduction efforts and the private sector.



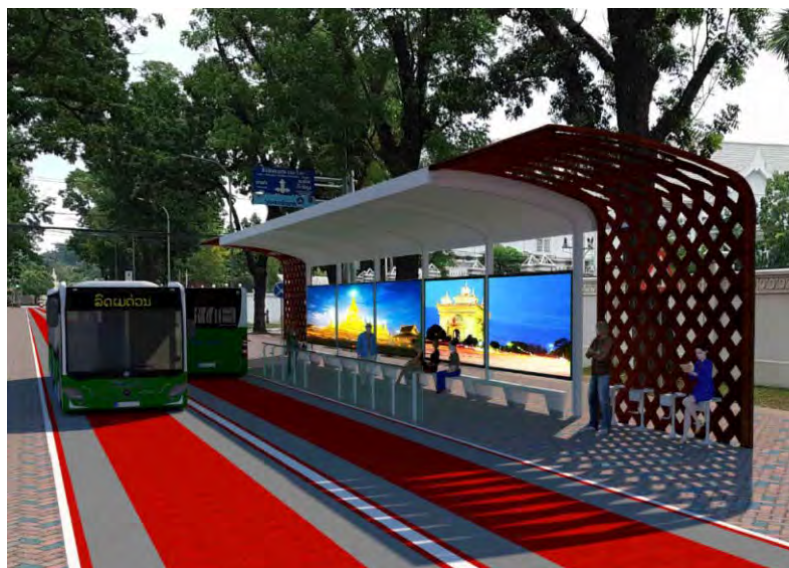
Maria Silva Oliveira, Environmental Policy Coordinator, Municipality of Fortaleza, Brazil ©ICLEI WS

City in focus: Vientiane Capital's relentless pursuit of sustainability

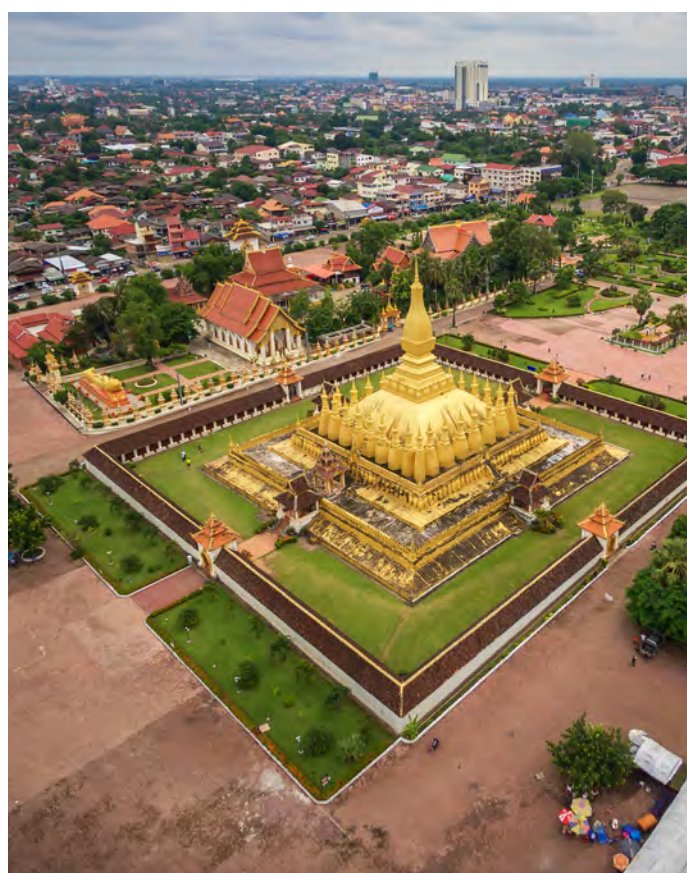
Vientiane is the capital and largest city of Lao PDR. It is located along the banks of the Mekong River, sharing a border with Thailand. With economic growth and rapid urbanization in recent times, Vientiane has become the economic center of Lao PDR.

Last year, dangerous levels of air pollution were experienced in many regions of the country, especially in Vientiane. Levels of particulate matter (PM2.5) exceeded the safety level in the city. Following the national government's request, Urban-LEDS II in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) is developing a proposal to set up air quality monitoring equipment in project cities.

In addition to that activity, the Vientiane Sustainable Urban Transport Project implemented by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) will help improve urban transport operations and capacity in Vientiane by establishing a transport management entity, high-quality bus services, and a bus rapid transit (BRT) system. The project promotes gender mainstreaming, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and public-private partnerships. The project implementation started in August 2018 and is envisioned to be complete before the end of 2020.



A model image of the Vientiane Sustainable Urban Transport Project by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) of Lao's People Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Image Source: MPWT website



Aerial view of Vientiane, Lao PDR ©Shutterstock

Recognizing the impact of climate change and the need to contribute to sustainable development, the Lao PDR Government recently endorsed a National Green Growth Strategy 2030. The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Somdy Douangdy, also serving as the Minister of Finance, said the government viewed the implementation of the National Green Growth Strategy as one of its priority tasks in line with its strategic priorities under the Eighth National Socio-Economic Development Plan. The strategy also aimed to help Lao PDR build its capacity to respond to climate change. The plan stresses the need to utilize the nation's natural resources more efficiently and taking a development path that is more resilient to risks brought about by climate change impacts, while also protecting public health.

Considering major activities and recent developments in climate action and sustainability taking place in major Lao urban centers, the Minister of MoNRE requested in 2019 to include Vientiane and Luangprabang to the Urban-LEDS II project. The two cities will greatly benefit from the project's capacity-building activities, technical assistance, peer-to-peer exchanges with the model cities (Kaysone Phomvihane and Pakse city), and receive support for the development and implementation of pilot/demonstration projects, which would ultimately contribute toward their local climate action planning processes. As the capital city, Vientiane will also collaborate with the project in promoting vertical integration and strengthening of the Monitoring, Reporting, and Verifying (MRV) process of climate action in Lao PDR.

Urban champion:

Anni Sinnemäki, Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment, City of Helsinki, Finland

Each newsletter, we hand over the mic to local government staff in Urban-LEDS cities, so they can tell you their story of promoting low emission development in their municipalities



©<https://annisinnemaki.net/tarina-cv>

Ms. Sinnemäki is Deputy Mayor of Helsinki, responsible for City Planning and Real Estate since 2015. Before that she was a Member of the Parliament of Finland (1999 – 2015) and served as Minister of Employment and Leader of The Greens of Finland from 2009 to 2011. Find out more about the Deputy Mayor [here](#).

The city of Helsinki aims to reduce its GHG by 80% (base 1990), in line with its goal to become carbon neutral by 2035. For this purpose, and in light of a nationwide legislation prohibiting the use of coal for energy production by 2029, the city has identified 147 key actions in the form of a [carbon neutrality action plan](#).

Ms. Sinnemäki explains why the City of Helsinki is committed to climate neutrality by 2035. To paraphrase her words: *“because the citizens ask for it!”* It is Helsinki’s strength to effectively combine ambitious climate action with social responsibility. This means that the City is driven by its ambitious local community, while citizens support the local government’s actions through individual or community efforts. Everyone pitches in for a climate proof future.

The video is part of a series of Urban-LEDS interviews with city leaders conducted during the EU study tour in June 2019:

Upcoming events and important announcements

NOTE: COVID-19 may affect event schedules



RISE Africa 2020. Inspiring action for sustainable cities. 24-26 May, Century City Conference Centre. Cape Town, South Africa. <https://riseafrica.iclei.org/>



Daring Cities 2020 -The Bonn Forum for Urban Leaders Taking on the Climate Emergency. 3-5 June 2020. Bonn, Germany. <https://daringcities.org/>





European Development Days 2020 9-10 June. Brussels, Belgium. <https://eudevdays.eu/>


Finance toolkit for Urban-LEDS cities now available on the new Solutions Gateway platform!

The *finance toolkit*, consisting of a climate finance decision-making tree, a glossary, a bibliography, and a thorough catalogue of climate finance opportunities for local and regional governments, aims to support pioneers such Urban-LEDS project cities, to overcome barriers of financing.

For more information on the Urban-LEDS project:

 www.urban-leds.org

 contact@urban-leds.org

 @ICLEI, @UN-HABITAT

 **URBAN LEDES**
URBAN LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

ICLEI
Local Governments
for Sustainability

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



The Urban-LEDS project is funded by the European Union.