

# Global City Indicators Facility

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Cities are the cultural and economic centers of the world whose progress depends upon effective management and evidence-based policy making. As cities continue to grow and become more complex, urban based data becomes increasingly important for effective management. Data provides support for sound policies, allowing for more transparent and accountable decision making. The collection of city indicators has emerged as a core requirement for effective city management. While indicators to measure city performance are commonly used by many levels of government, academia and international agencies, they are not yet standardized, consistent, or comparable across cities and over time. This lack of standardization limits the ability of cities to observe trends, share best practices and learn from each other. The World Bank, in recognition of this need, established the Global City Indicators Program to provide cities with a standardized system for data collection.




# PROGRAM

## About The Global City Indicators Program

The Global City Indicators Program is designed to help cities monitor performance and quality of life by providing a framework to facilitate consistent and comparative collection of city indicators. The Program includes a set of indicators that are standardized, consistent, and comparable over time and across cities. This standardization enhances the ability of cities to observe trends and to facilitate comparisons with other cities. The Program recognizes the urgent need for a single comprehensive system for measuring and monitoring city performance and urban quality of life that would:

- Enable elected officials, city managers, and the public to monitor the performance of cities over time;
- Facilitate comparisons across cities and over time; and
- Provide enhanced government accountability demanded by policy makers and the public.

“Cities” are the units of government closest to the public and are directly accountable to their residents for providing a range of services. Through extensive consultation and collaboration with participating cities, a comprehensive system of indicators was developed. These indicators have been tested and refined by nine pilot cities – Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Sao Paulo, Bogota, Cali, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre and King County. A mechanism to accommodate and aggregate metropolitan urban agglomerations was developed and is being tested in selected pilot regions.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Porto Alegre, Brazil. The image shows a dense urban grid with numerous buildings, streets, and green spaces. A large river is visible on the left side, and a large park area with a baseball field is on the right. The text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

City performance and quality of life relative to each of these themes is measured by a set of indicators and indices, which collectively tell a “story”. The current set of core and supporting indicators allows for a comprehensive perspective and comparison amongst cities. In addition, several future indicators and indices that would be useful measures of city performance and quality of life were identified and for which global methodologies for collection are under development.

# THEMES

The Global City Indicators Program is structured around “themes” organized into two broad categories, city services and quality of life.

## City Services

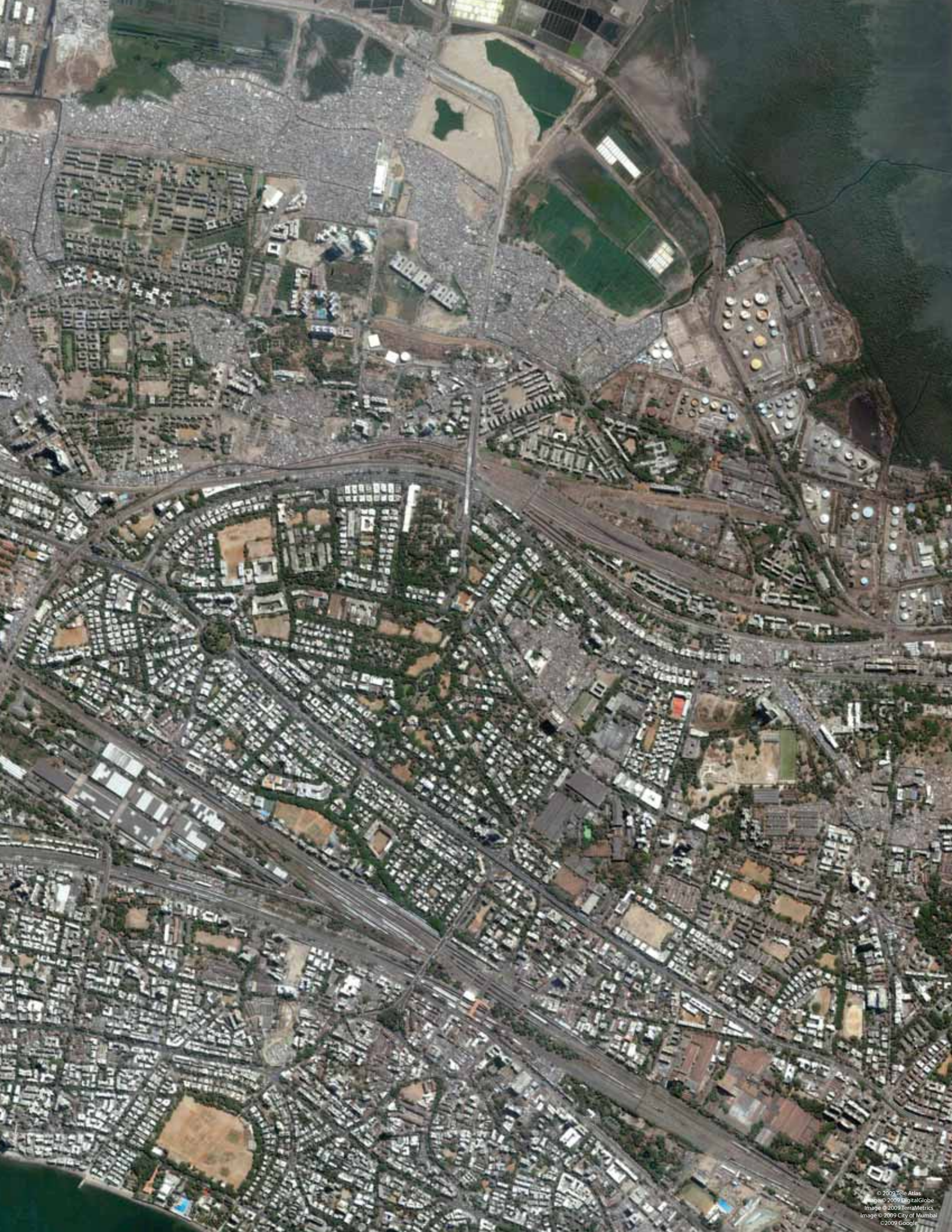
Includes services typically provided by city governments and other entities

- Education
- Finance
- Governance
- Recreation
- Social Services
- Transportation
- Wastewater
- Energy
- Fire & Emergency Response
- Health
- Safety
- Solid Waste
- Urban Planning
- Water

## Quality of Life

Includes critical contributors to overall quality of life, recognizing that the city government may or may not have direct control

- Civic Engagement
- Economy
- Shelter
- Subjective Well-Being
- Culture
- Environment
- Social Equity
- Technology & Innovation



# METHODOLOGY

The Global City Indicators Program adopts a globally relevant and applicable set of city indicators and provides a process for continuous updating. This Program is a city led initiative with the pilot cities guiding the initial selection and development of indicators. A rigorous selection process was carried out to ensure indicators were: objective, relevant, measurable and replicable, flexible, effective, interrelated and inclusive. The indicators reflect city information needs and interests. The Program provides a platform of indicators that are:

- Generally available, current, and able to be reported annually;
- Readily comparable across cities;
- Relevant for public policy decision making;
- Linked to established goals (eg. MDGs, master plans, infrastructure, investment planning);
- Cost effective to collect;
- Meaningful to cities across the globe, regardless of geography, culture, affluence, size, or political structure;
- Flexible for refinement and expansion over time;
- Understandable and not overly complex; and
- Clear as to what a change in the indicator implies.

A Global City Indicators Standard within the framework of the International Standards Organization (ISO) is in the process of being developed to ensure a consistent and standardized methodology.

A number of indices are being developed and will be made available through the Global City Indicators Program. These will include indices on: total energy use, urban accessibility, city governance, creative cities, competitiveness, social capital, and subjective well-being. In addition, a greenhouse gas index will be made available and will be a ground breaking tool and globally standardized for measuring greenhouse gas emissions in cities.

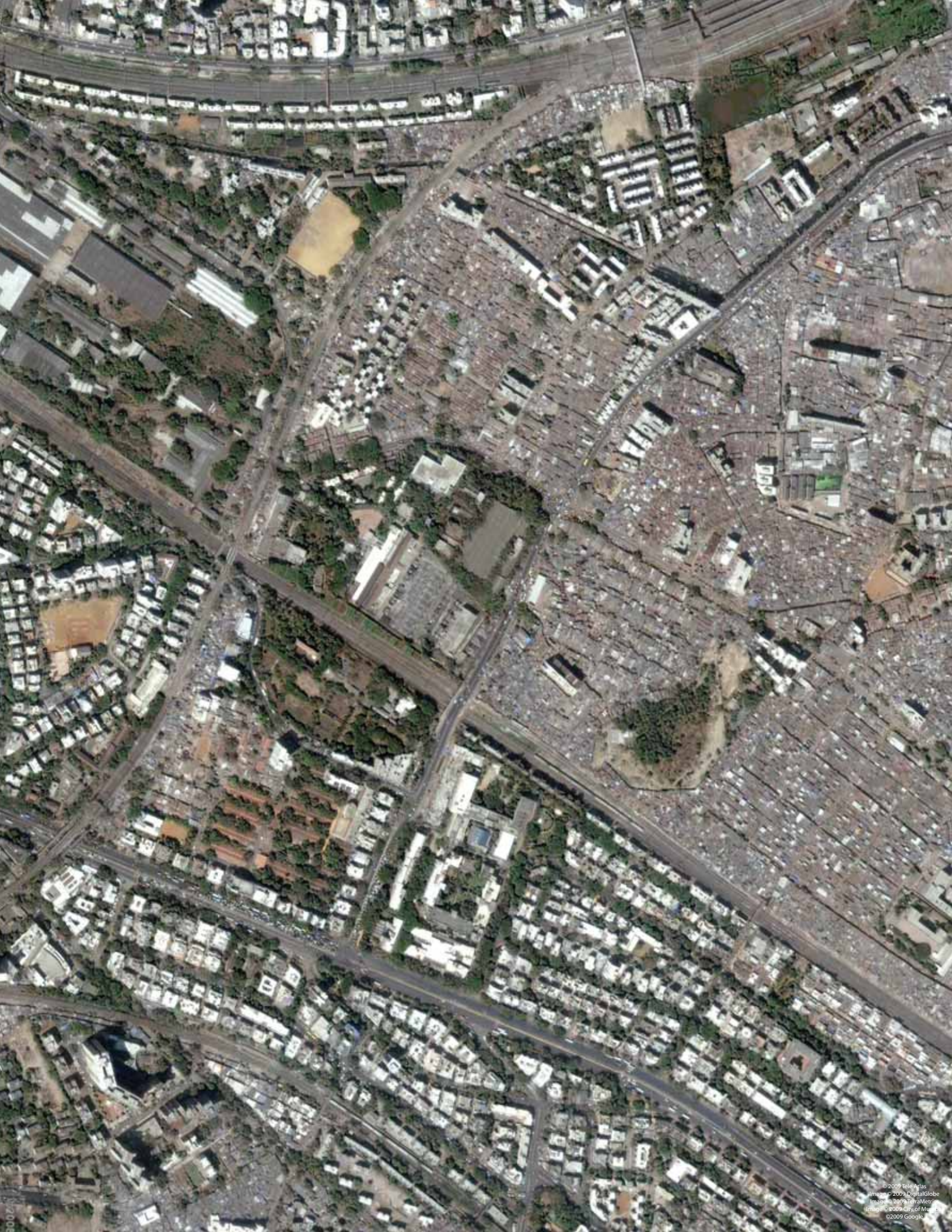
# Why Indicators

## Evidence-based Policy

Indicators are performance measures that aggregate information into a usable form. Indicators provide a useful tool in the prospective sense for policy making and also in the retrospective sense for assessing policy implementation. Indicators offer assistance to policy makers by aiding in comparison, evaluation and prediction. Data driven decision making in the government domain via quantitative performance metrics can serve to measure implementation success rates, steer investments and refine policy choices. Indicators allow policy makers to set targets and track trends in order to measure performance.

Indicators can promote empowerment and democracy by ensuring decision making is more visible and transparent. Indicators can also be an important instrument for fostering citizen participation. Information provided by city indicators can improve the effectiveness of active citizen involvement in decision making and policy development.





# FACILITY

## Program Management – About the Global City Indicators Facility (GCIF)

The Global City Indicators Facility (GCIF), located in Toronto, Canada, now hosts the Global City Indicators Program with support from the World Bank's Development Grant Facility, the University of Toronto, the Government of Canada and participating cities. The Global City Indicators Facility hosts a master system of global city indicators that provides a standardized web-based system to enter city data and assists cities to draw comparability globally. The Global City Indicators Facility, through a series of policy briefs, working papers and comparative analysis, facilitates capacity building and knowledge sharing amongst cities.

The Global City Indicators Facility provides a free, easy to understand database for cities to collect, input, report and monitor city indicators over time. The purpose of the Facility is not to rank cities on their performance but rather, to provide a database for cities to measure their own progress over time, compare themselves to other cities globally, and identify pressing issues for management effectiveness. The goal of the Facility is to provide a portal for cities to measure, compare and share information as well as expertise. The Facility encourages participating cities across the world to coordinate and share the results of their indicator programs and output in the areas of city services and quality of life. Each participating city is responsible for inputting, managing and updating the indicators for their city.



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# Why GCIF

- Free web-based information portal for globally comparative city data
- Allows cities to identify common issues and lessons
- Framework for information sharing
- Assist cities in identifying and sharing expertise on specific areas of performance
- Enhances accountability and transparency in governance through evidence-based policy making

The Global City Indicators Facility was launched at the United Nation's 4th World Urban Forum in Nanjing, China in November 2008. The importance of standardized indicators and the Program was conveyed over the four day conference.

The GCIF offices in Toronto opened in October 2008 and the Board of Directors and Advisory Council have been established. The expert group of Board Members consists of city leaders, representatives of international organizations and universities.

The Facility is supported by several key partners and encourages the design and collection of key performance indicators at the city level in collaboration with a wide group of cities and partners within national and international agencies. The Facility acts as a repository and facilitator for information on city performance and quality of life. The Facility is managed and operated on behalf of participating cities.

With the use of city indicators data, the Global City Indicators Facility produces an annual report and working papers to demonstrate the importance and effective use of standardized indicators. The Facility also produces a series of policy briefs for its member cities to report various city-related issues brought forth by the data compiled from the city indicators and trends. Data on the GCIF website also allows cities to generate city reports for a more in-depth cross city analysis.

# Activities and Role of the GCIF

Since there is an increasing demand for effective city management and evidence-based policy, data from GCIF can act as a decision support system for policy makers. The indicators can help inform better decision making and explain how decisions and decision outcomes are linked. Policy makers are able to use reports generated from the GCIF indicators to help identify important issues and areas for improvement. Cities can also use these GCIF reports to measure progress to report to other levels of government and external funding agencies, and to compare their progress with cities globally.



# Membership

One of the main activities and roles of the GCIF is to coordinate membership of cities in the Global City Indicators Program. Membership is a simple process. To become a member, cities need to provide GCIF with the contact information of the person who will be responsible for the city's indicator program. Once the city official or city representative has provided GCIF with their name and e-mail address, they will then receive an official email from GCIF with login information and a temporary password. With this information, they can log onto the GCIF website

[www.cityindicators.org](http://www.cityindicators.org) and start entering and comparing data. For more information regarding membership please email the Facility at [cityindicators@daniels.utoronto.ca](mailto:cityindicators@daniels.utoronto.ca).

## GCIF Support to Members

- Providing training to new members and on-going support for current members
- Assist cities in identifying common management issues and themes through a series of policy briefs
- Host global and regional workshops
- Assist with data entry and technical support
- Produce an annual report on activities and events
- Manage the GCIF website including news items and updates
- Convene meetings of the Board of Directors and Advisory Council Meetings and provide reports to City Members

## Responsibility of Members

- The Global City Indicators Program is a city-led initiative and cities are responsible for updating and entering data once a year
- Cities are responsible for entering core indicators and supporting indicators are optional
- Indicators are straightforward and easy to collect and reflect data that most cities already gather, but not always in this standardized format
- Information sharing



# Website

The Global City Indicators Program can be found at [www.cityindicators.org](http://www.cityindicators.org). This website hosts information on city indicators. In addition to providing information on city indicator research, annual reports, policy briefs and links to other organizations with interest in city indicators, the website includes a comprehensive indicators database. The database allows users to search for city performance, comparable city data and identification of best practices. The website and database provide a credible, tested and globally standardized source of information on cities globally.

# Partnerships

Establishing partnerships with various city-focused institutions is an important activity of the GCIF and these partnerships are crucial to the future of the Global City Indicators work.

Institutional Memoranda of Understanding are being established between GCIF and a number of international agencies and regional entities in order to facilitate working partnerships.

GCIF is also engaging in partnerships with several city-focused organizations that share an interest in city indicators. Working relationships with such organizations will assist GCIF with membership of cities and allow for complementarity of indicators across organizations to ensure standardization and sharing of measures and comparability.

## MetroMatch

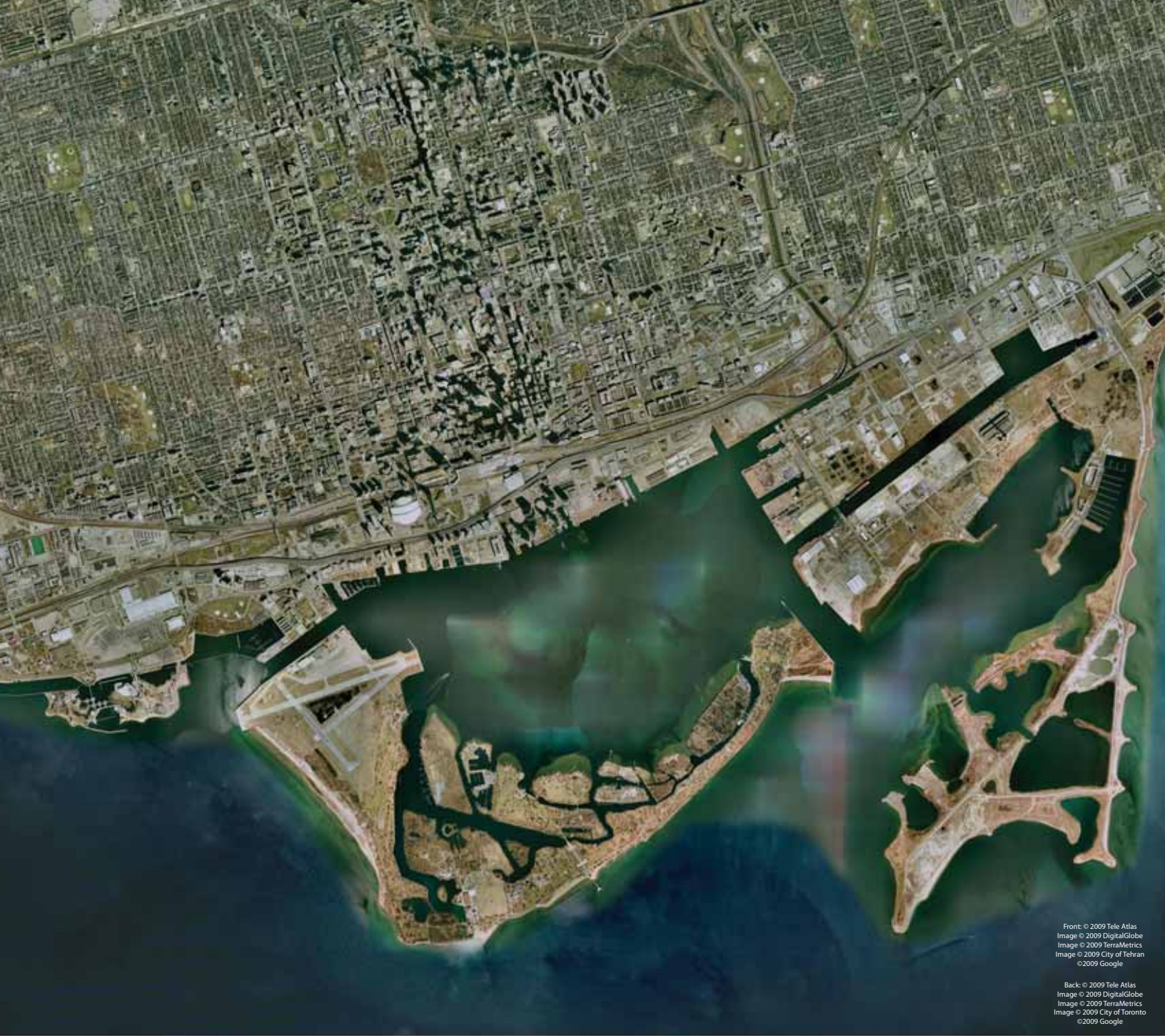
MetroMatch is a voluntary effort to identify staff of municipalities from around the world for the purpose of sharing technical information on an identified set of topics generated through the Global City Indicators Program results. The MetroMatch program will enable willing municipal participants to be listed in a web-based directory with information about their profile and the expertise that they possess. Staff listed in the directory may be contacted with requests for technical information and assistance to deal with operational or programmatic problems in the areas of the individual's expertise. Participation in MetroMatch, by both municipalities and individuals, is voluntary. MetroMatch would work hand-in-hand with the Global City Indicators Program and will be hosted on the GCIF website. Access to the MetroMatch Directory is limited to active Global City Indicators Program participants. MetroMatch will provide a mechanism for municipalities to share technical information on improving performance relative to identified benchmarks.

# Sustainability

There are several features of the Global City Indicators Program that differentiate it from other efforts and help to build sustainability:

- **Being city-led.** This is a bottom-up effort, managed by cities and coordinated by the Global City Indicators Facility.
- **Focusing on cities and city governance.** The analysis unit is the city itself, which is the level of government most accountable for providing infrastructure and basic services to the public.
- **Focusing on a globally standardized measure of city performance.** An international standard for the global city indicators through ISO is being established to ensure comparability of results among cities.
- **Providing a program rather than just a set of indicators.** The Program encourages interactions among cities to identify and share international best practices to collectively improve the performance of cities globally.
- **Cost effective.** Overhead costs are minimized by distributing responsibilities such as data collection among participating cities.
- **Using appropriate technology.** This effort is the first to use a web-based reporting template and a web-based relational database.
- **Assessing quality of life.** This program integrates a statistically sound approach for assessing qualitative measures such as subjective well-being and local quality of life.
- **Including key stakeholders.** In addition to cities (the most important constituent), other stakeholders including international organizations and multilateral financial institutions, as well as national and state/provincial governments, are integral in the development and operation of the Global City Indicators Program.





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