

KEARNEY

GLOBAL CITIES RESILIENCE INDEX

Measuring the systemic readiness of
urban areas



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FOREWORD

From Bob Willen, Global Managing Partner and Chairman, Kearney

and

Richard Attias, Chairman of the Executive Committee & Acting CEO, FII Institute

In a world where more than half of the population lives in cities, urban resilience has become the defining challenge of our time. Climate extremes reshape coastlines and test infrastructure. Technological disruption transforms how we work, live, and connect. Social pressures—from inequality to access to housing, healthcare, and education—determine whether growth is inclusive and sustainable. Against this backdrop of accelerating change, the question facing leaders is not whether their cities will be challenged but whether they possess the foundations to turn disruption into opportunity.

This question drove the Future Investment Initiative (FII) and Kearney to collaborate to create the Global Cities Resilience Index (GCRI). The FII's mission to positively impact humanity through global convening and strategic investment aligns naturally with Kearney's decades of urban research and methodological expertise in index development and government support. Together, we have developed a forward-looking tool that measures not where cities stand today but their systemic readiness to thrive tomorrow, across five dimensions of resilience: institutional governance; sustainable finance and business; technology and innovation; social and human capital; and global integration.

Our analysis of 31 cities for the first edition of the GCRI—across Global North and Global South economies—provides insights into the foundations that enable urban resilience. By examining how different cities have approached the challenge of building adaptive capacity, this research offers a framework for understanding the complex interactions among governance, business ecosystems, citizen engagement, and global connectivity. The GCRI reveals patterns and approaches that can inform strategies for building more resilient urban communities, recognizing that such capabilities cannot be developed overnight but must be cultivated with intention and sustained commitment.

As we unveil these insights at FII's 9th Edition in October 2025, we invite leaders across governments, the private sector, and international organizations to engage with the findings of this analysis. The path forward requires all of us to work together to build cities that not only endure change but also harness it to create more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous communities for all.



Bob Willen
Global Managing Partner
and Chairman, Kearney



Richard Attias
Chairman of the Executive Committee
& Acting CEO, FII Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities across the globe are confronting an unprecedented convergence of pressures: climate extremes that test infrastructure, technological disruptions that reshape economies overnight, growing social inequalities, and geopolitical realignments that redirect capital and partnerships.

These challenges demand more than reactive responses; they require a systematic ability to adapt continuously. Yet, most existing indices measure past achievements rather than forward-looking readiness.

The Global Cities Resilience Index (GCRI) addresses this critical gap by assessing whether cities possess the systemic foundations needed to transform disruption into opportunity.

The inaugural edition of the GCRI evaluates 31 cities across advanced and emerging economies. The framework measures resilience readiness across five interconnected dimensions: institutional governance; sustainable finance and business; technology and innovation; social and human capital; and global integration. Together, these dimensions capture not only outcomes but also the enablers, systems, and capacities that allow cities to adapt in the face of accelerating change.

The results establish a clear baseline of resilience readiness and highlight the diverse pathways cities take to achieve systemic strength. London claims the top overall position, leveraging its global connectivity and strong technology and social capital foundations, even as economic collaboration remains a relative vulnerability. Amsterdam follows closely, distinguished by exceptional citizen engagement and strong human capital development, demonstrating how mid-sized cities can have a remarkable impact. New York ranks third, combining exceptional global integration with balanced governance, economic, and technological performance, with room to strengthen its social foundations. Dubai places fourth, showcasing how emerging city economies can lead globally through technological readiness and human capital development, despite relatively weaker economic collaboration. Finally, Toronto ranks fifth, standing out for its excellent governance and global engagement, reinforcing the importance of stable institutions in building long-term readiness.

Across these cases, three essential insights emerged.

Systemic readiness distinguishes cities likely to thrive amid future disruption from those vulnerable to it. Cities that embed resilience into governance structures, innovation ecosystems, and global networks build the foundational capabilities this framework identifies as essential for adaptive capacity. Future editions will validate whether this readiness translates into superior performance during actual crises, but the current analysis reveals which cities have made the institutional investments that position them to respond effectively.

There is no single pathway to resilience. Leading performers succeed through different combinations of strengths—Stockholm through governance excellence, Dubai through technological leadership, and Singapore through economic collaboration—underscoring the need for diverse yet complementary approaches.

Even top-ranking cities show vulnerabilities. London, despite its global connectivity, faces challenges in economic collaboration, while Singapore, a leader in economic performance, has weaker governance scores. Resilience emerges not from perfection in one dimension but from integrating complementary capabilities across the system.

The findings point to an urgent call for collective action.

For policymakers, the task is to move beyond crisis management and embed resilience into the core of institutional design, policy frameworks, and cross-sector coordination. This requires a fundamental shift in identity—from crisis managers who react to disruptions, to resilience builders who anticipate them.

For investors, systemic gaps should be viewed as opportunities for sustainable returns, mobilized through innovative financial instruments and blended capital.

For businesses, resilience must become a shared agenda, pursued through long-term partnerships with cities and the integration of resilience into supply chains and innovation strategies.

For citizens, active engagement is essential to ensure that resilience planning is inclusive, accountable, and reflects community needs.

The GCRI highlights that resilience is not a fixed destination but rather a continuous journey of systemic strengthening and adaptation that requires sustained commitment across all stakeholder groups. Resilience cannot be built overnight—it emerges from consistent action over time, making long-term coordination essential. Each year of delay increases both the cost and the difficulty of intervention. The cities that will define the future are those that recognize resilience as core infrastructure and build it deliberately through governance, collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity.

INTRODUCTION: WHY ESTABLISH A NEW INDEX FOR CITIES?

CURRENT URBAN RESILIENCE MEASUREMENTS

Cities worldwide face an unprecedented convergence of challenges that demand not just reactive responses but also proactive systemic readiness. Climate extremes disrupt infrastructure and supply chains. Technological disruptions reshape economies overnight. Social inequalities deepen as communities struggle to adapt to rapid change. Geopolitical shifts redirect capital flows and redefine partnerships. However, despite the critical importance of resilience, existing indices fall short of capturing cities' preparedness for these complex, interconnected challenges.

Most current resilient city indices assess where cities stand today rather than their capacity to navigate tomorrow's uncertainties. Most existing frameworks focus on measuring cumulative environmental, social, and economic performance or current sustainability achievements across traditional environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions.

These indices document the accomplishments of cities, but do not provide clear answers to more pressing questions, such as: *what foundations do cities need to transform disruption into opportunity, and which cities possess these capabilities?*

THE FORWARD-LOOKING IMPERATIVE

This measurement gap matters because resilience is not built reactively or through individual projects or policies; rather, it emerges from the systematic cultivation of cities' capabilities that enable continuous adaptation.

Proactive action and anticipation are necessary to mitigate future challenges and reduce the need for costly adaptive measures. This requires measuring readiness for continuous action that anticipates challenges before they become unavoidable crises requiring expensive reactive responses.

A city may demonstrate strong current environmental performance while possessing inadequate governance architectures to navigate rapid technological disruption. Conversely, a city with robust physical infrastructure may lack the innovation ecosystems necessary to develop adaptive solutions for emerging challenges.

The distinction between current performance and future readiness becomes critical when considering how disruption operates in the 21st century. Today's disruptions cascade through interconnected systems with unprecedented speed and scale. Cities face increasing exposure to external shocks that

originate far beyond their boundaries, making their vulnerability relative to their capacity to manage global relationships. The more globally integrated a city becomes, the more it must anticipate and prepare for disruptions that emerge from its comprehensive interconnected environment. This requires robust adaptive capacity and, in some cases, strategic protective measures to shield critical systems while maintaining the benefits of global connectivity.

Cities that thrive amid such complexities share systemic characteristics that go beyond their current performance metrics, reflecting deeper capacities for resilience and adaptation. They have governance systems capable of rapid learning and adaptation. They foster business ecosystems that can pivot quickly while maintaining long-term sustainability commitments. They invest in technologies and innovation capabilities that enhance rather than replace human capabilities. They engage citizens as active participants in resilience-building rather than passive recipients of services. They maintain global connections that facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative solutions.



FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING CITIES' RESILIENCE READINESS

The Global Cities Resilience Index (GCRI) addresses this gap by measuring systemic readiness for resilience across five interconnected dimensions to collectively determine a city's capacity to transform challenges into opportunities.

1. INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

- **Key questions:** Does the city have comprehensive institutional frameworks that embed resilience as a core governmental function? Can the city reliably deliver on its sustainability commitments through transparent reporting, credible climate plans, effective governance, and sustainable procurement?

2. SUSTAINABLE FINANCE AND BUSINESS

- **Key questions:** How effectively does the city create collaborative partnerships between public and private sectors? Does the city operate within a stable business environment with effective financial mechanisms that enable long-term sustainable investments?

3. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

- **Key questions:** How advanced is the city's digital technology adoption and smart city development? Does the city have strong entrepreneurial activity and educational foundations that support technological innovation and startup ecosystem growth?

4. SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL

- **Key questions:** Does the city provide accessible digital government services and maintain high livability standards? How effectively does the city enable civic participation while addressing social inequality and advocating for vulnerable populations?

5. GLOBAL INTEGRATION

- **Key questions:** How does the city strategically position itself within international networks to access knowledge, resources, and collaborative opportunities? Can the city attract and integrate global talent while contributing to international sustainability leadership?



BEYOND BENCHMARKING: A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR ACTION

Unlike traditional indices that are primarily used for benchmarking purposes, the GCRI is designed as an actionable tool for critical audiences.

For **cities' leaders and policymakers**, the index provides a diagnostic framework for identifying systemic gaps and prioritizing investments in adaptive capacity. Rather than simply ranking cities, it reveals the specific dimensions where targeted interventions could potentially build long-term resilience as validated through future performance outcomes.

For **citizens**, the index provides insights into their city's preparedness for future challenges and highlights areas where civic engagement can potentially strengthen resilience. By understanding how their city performs across systemic readiness dimensions, citizens can make more informed decisions about where to live, work, and engage in community involvement while holding local leaders accountable for building adaptive capacity.

For **investors**, the index provides a lens for identifying urban ecosystems positioned for sustainable growth. As capital increasingly flows toward climate-conscious and resilience-focused investments, understanding systemic readiness becomes essential for assessing risk and identifying opportunities. The index also highlights gaps in cities' resilience foundations, revealing specific investment opportunities to strengthen systemic capacity and raise resilience overall.

For **business leaders**, the index highlights the collaborative foundations that enable long-term value creation. Companies operating in multiple cities can use these insights to assess where their business activities and operational footprint will find supportive institutional environments and collaborative partnerships.

By measuring the factors that enable cities to build resilience rather than focusing only on past achievements, the GCRI extends Kearney's longstanding leadership in the urban space. It builds on decades of experience captured through the internationally recognized **Global Cities Report** and is enriched by insights from our extensive client engagements with city leaders worldwide. This index measures systemic readiness for resilience challenges, complementing the Global Cities Report's assessment of global connectivity and competitive potential by focusing specifically on the systemic foundations that enable cities to navigate climate, technological, and social transformation. This portfolio provides a forward-looking framework for the systemic transformation that 21st-century urban challenges demand.

METHODOLOGY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The GCRI was developed based on four fundamental principles to ensure its methodological rigor, practical applicability, and global comparability, as illustrated in [figure 1](#).

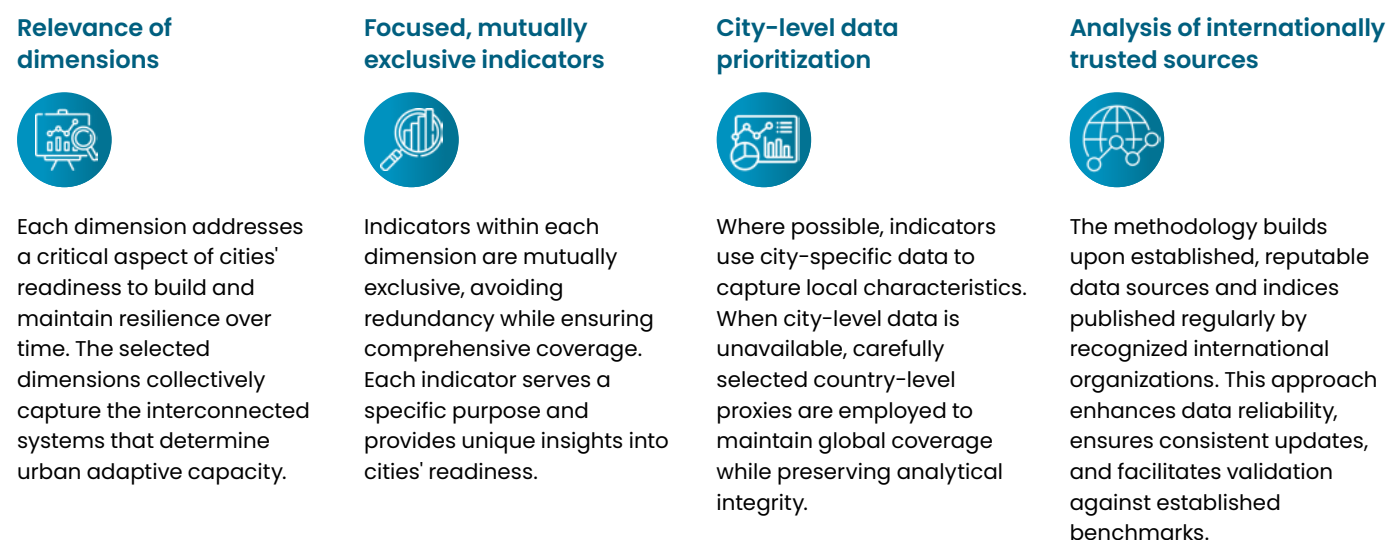


Figure 1: Guiding principles of the GCRI

DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

The index consists of five dimensions that together define cities' systemic readiness. This structured approach measures not just outcomes but also the underlying capacities, enablers, and systems that allow cities to remain resilient over time ([see figure 2](#)).

1. INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

This dimension assesses the institutional foundations that enable strategic sustainability planning and implementation. It encompasses cities' commitment to resilience through policy frameworks, transparency mechanisms, and governmental effectiveness.

2. SUSTAINABLE FINANCE AND BUSINESS

This dimension evaluates the development of collaborative ecosystems between public and private sectors that support sustainable practices. It captures how business environments, financial mechanisms, and public-private partnerships contribute to long-term urban resilience goals.

3. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

This dimension measures cities' technological readiness and innovation ecosystem strength. It recognizes that adaptive capacity depends on the ability to develop, adopt, and deploy technological solutions to emerging urban challenges.

4. SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL

This dimension examines the human capital and civic engagement capabilities that drive sustainable urban transformation. It captures how citizen participation, educational foundations, and social equity support resilience-building efforts.

5. GLOBAL INTEGRATION

This dimension evaluates cities' integration into international sustainability networks and collaborative partnerships. It reflects how global engagement enhances local resilience through knowledge exchange and collaborative initiatives.

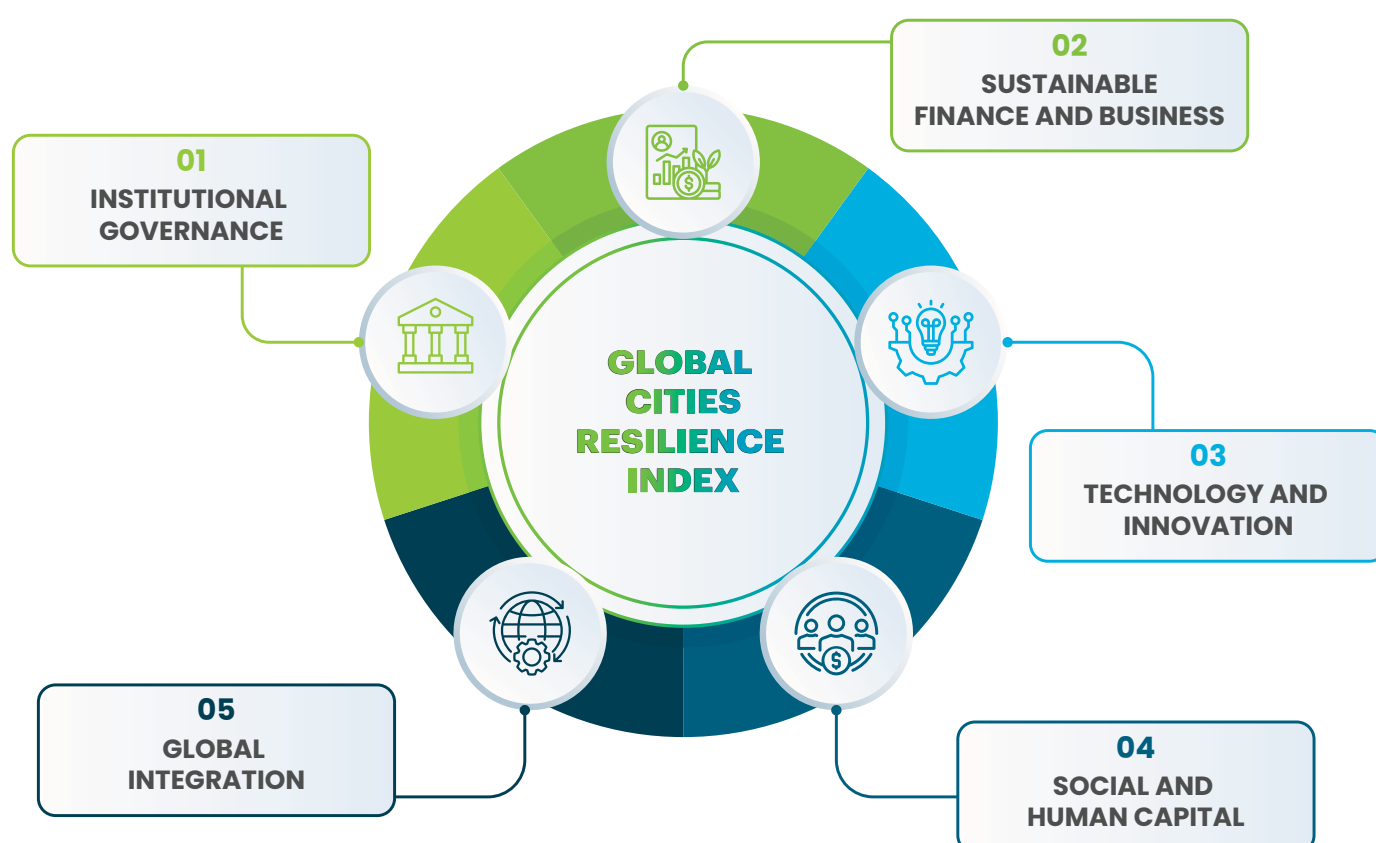


Figure 2: Five dimensions of resilience

Each dimension is evaluated through carefully selected indicators that comprise its measurement framework.

The indicators are designed to:

- **Signal cities' readiness:** They capture the presence and strength of policies, systems, governance structures, and collaborative frameworks that enable cities to respond effectively to future challenges. For example, the existence of adaptation and mitigation plans signals a city's preparedness for climate disruption, while startup ecosystem rankings indicate its innovation capacity for technological adaptation.
- **Highlight forward-looking preparedness measures:** Rather than measuring current performance, indicators assess whether cities have built the systemic foundations necessary for long-term resilience. E-government services indicate a city's digital governance readiness, while participation in international sustainability organizations reflects its capacity for global collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- **Enable comparisons across standardized data points:** All indicators use consistent measurement scales and rely on established data sources to enable reliable cross-city comparisons. This includes both quantitative metrics (e.g., rankings

and ratios) and binary assessments (e.g., policy existence) that can be consistently applied across diverse urban contexts.

The indicators are not designed to:

- **Capture every individual resilience element:** The index deliberately avoids measuring all dimensions of urban performance. It does not track detailed emissions levels across all sectors, comprehensive inequality metrics, or granular environmental scoring. Instead, it focuses on systemic readiness at scale, recognizing that comprehensive measurement would require hundreds of indicators and compromise analytical clarity.
- **Consider purely outcome-based measures:** Unlike indices that measure achieved results (e.g., the total capacity of renewable energy sources or the number of certified green buildings), these indicators assess preparedness and capacity. They focus on whether systemic foundations exist rather than measuring outcomes. For example, these indicators measure government effectiveness rather than specific policy outcomes, or innovation ecosystem strength rather than the number of patents produced.

- **Provide subjective or perception-based assessments:** All indicators rely exclusively on quantifiable, verifiable data from established sources rather than survey responses, expert opinions, stakeholder interviews, or subjective evaluations. This methodological choice ensures consistency across diverse cultural and institutional contexts while maintaining transparency and reproducibility.
- **Function as static or one-time snapshots:** The framework explicitly avoids creating fixed rankings that will become outdated. Instead, indicators are designed to be regularly updated to track development over time. This dynamic approach recognizes that systemic readiness evolves continuously, and that tracking change is as important as measuring absolute performance at any given moment.

Each dimension score is calculated by multiplying the sum of respective indicator scores by the dimension's predetermined weight, which reflects that dimension's relative contribution to overall urban readiness (see figure 3).

CITY SELECTION METHODOLOGY

The selection of cities for this first edition followed a structured process designed to ensure global representation while maintaining analytical comparability. Starting from an initial, long, comprehensive list informed by Kearney's **Global Cities Report** and other urban research, we applied four primary selection criteria:

- **Population threshold:** A minimum of 1 million inhabitants to capture sufficiently large cities with comparable systemic complexity and scale of governance challenges
- **Regional coverage:** Balanced global representation across major geographic regions to ensure the index reflects diverse approaches and development contexts between the Global North and Global South
- **Economic diversity:** Inclusion of both advanced and emerging economies to capture different stages of systemic development and varied approaches to resilience-building
- **Data availability:** Consistent measurability across indicators to ensure reliable cross-city comparisons and analytical validity

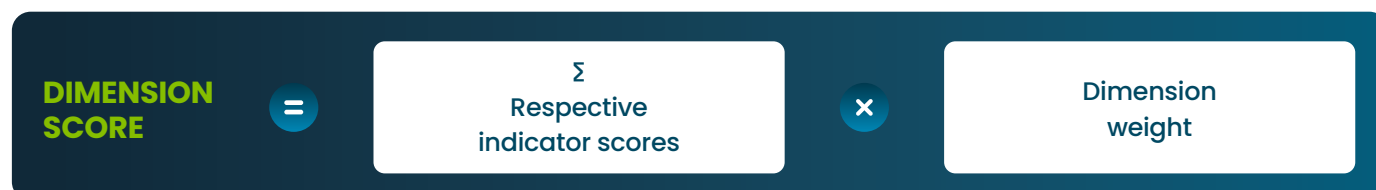


Figure 3: Dimension score methodology

Indicator scores are normalized to ensure comparability across different measurements and subsequently aggregated within each dimension using weighted calculations that reflect foundational importance and data richness. "Foundational importance" captures how critical each indicator is as an enabler or prerequisite for achieving systemic readiness, while "data richness" reflects the comprehensiveness and reliability of available measurement data (see figure 4).



Figure 4: Indicators score methodology

The application of these criteria resulted in a final selection of 31 cities for the first edition of the GCRI (see figure 5). This sample size provides sufficient diversity for meaningful analysis while maintaining data quality standards across all measured dimensions.

For future editions, additional selection criteria may be considered, including performance thresholds

or regional representation adjustments, to ensure the index continues to provide relevant insights for policy and investment decisions while maintaining its analytical rigor and global applicability. The list of cities will also be extended in the future to expand the reach of the index and enhance its accessibility for city leaders as a tool for action, enabling more urban areas to benchmark their resilience readiness and identify priority areas for development.

SELECTED CITIES



Figure 5: Cities included in the 2025 GCRI



RANKING RESULTS

OVERALL RANKING RESULTS

The inaugural GCRI provides a comprehensive assessment of systemic readiness across 31 major urban centers worldwide. This first edition establishes a baseline for understanding how cities have positioned themselves to navigate future challenges through deliberate investments in governance systems, business ecosystems, technological capabilities, citizen engagement, and global connectivity.

The results reveal significant variation in preparedness across different urban contexts, with leading cities demonstrating distinct patterns of dimensional strength that reflect their strategic priorities and contextual advantages (see figure 6). No single city dominated across all five dimensions; rather, each city showed specialized excellence that contributed to its overall systemic readiness.

TOP PERFORMING CITIES

Index score: overall resilience

Score 0–100, where 100 = most resilient

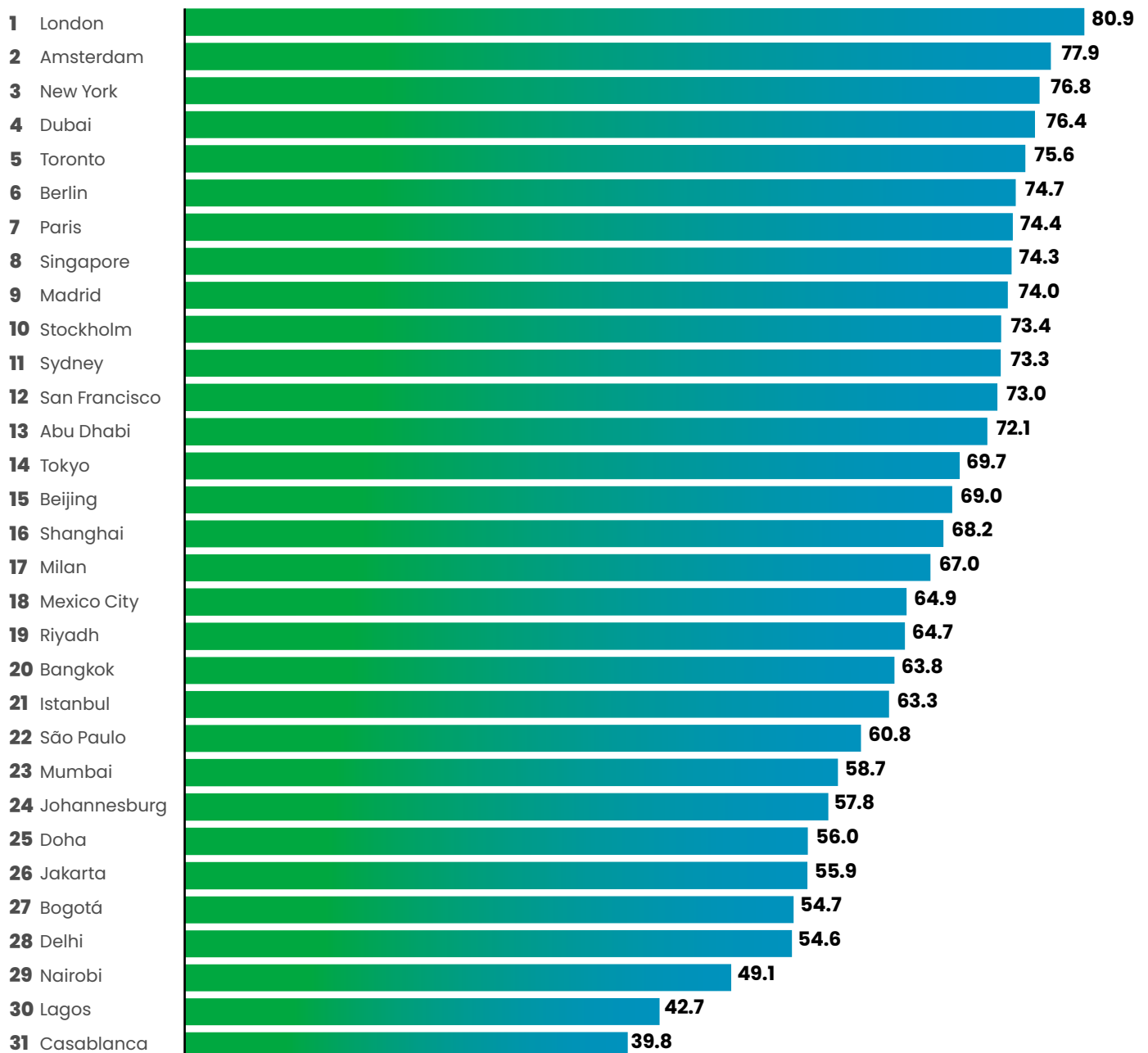


Figure 6: Top performing cities

OVERALL TAKEAWAYS

Three fundamental insights emerged from our analysis of 31 cities across the five dimensions of resilience.

Systemic readiness distinguishes cities likely to thrive amid future disruption from those vulnerable to it. The top cities demonstrate that building systematic governance frameworks, fostering innovation ecosystems, and strengthening global partnerships create foundational capabilities that position them to adapt effectively. Future editions of this index will validate whether high readiness scores correlate with superior performance during actual disruptions, but the current analysis reveals which cities have invested in the underlying systems that enable adaptive responses.

Systemic readiness varies significantly across cities and regions, with no single pathway to high performance. Our analysis revealed that cities achieve top rankings through different combinations of dimensional strengths—some excel through governance excellence (Stockholm), others through technological leadership (Dubai), and others through economic collaboration (Singapore). This variation suggests that successful urban resilience requires the integration of multiple complementary approaches rather than the pursuit of excellence in any single dimension.

No city achieved excellence across all dimensions, which creates both vulnerability and opportunity. Even top-ranking London could improve in terms of its economic collaboration, while Singapore led in terms of its economic performance but ranked lower in the governance dimension. This pattern reveals that resilience is not about perfection but about systematic investment in complementary capabilities that collectively enable adaptive capacity.



London claimed the top position in the inaugural index, anchored by its exceptional global integration and strong technology and social capital foundations (see figure 7). London demonstrates how established global cities can leverage international networks and technological infrastructure to build systemic resilience, though sustainable finance and business remains an area for development in the post-Brexit era.



Figure 7: London's resilience profile by dimension

Amsterdam excels through outstanding citizen engagement combined with solid sustainable finance and business, and technological foundations (see figure 8). The Netherlands' capital showcases how mid-sized European cities can excel in systemic readiness through systematic investments in human capital development and participatory governance, despite governance challenges.



Figure 8: Amsterdam's resilience profile by dimension

New York combines exceptional global integration and balanced performance across the governance, economic, and technology dimensions (see figure 9). The US's financial hub demonstrates how megacities can maintain systemic readiness through global network effects, and sustainable finance and business diversity, while social and human capital development presents opportunities for focused improvement.



Figure 9: New York's resilience profile by dimension

Dubai has outstanding technological readiness, and strong social and human capital (see figure 10). The UAE’s global hub demonstrates how emerging economy cities can achieve systemic readiness through strategic technology investments and human capital development, despite sustainable finance and business challenges.

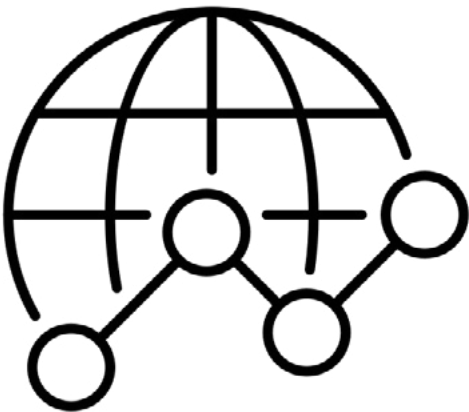


Figure 10: Dubai’s resilience profile by dimension

Toronto leads through governance and global integration, while maintaining solid sustainable finance and business performance (see figure 11). Canada’s largest city illustrates how well-governed urban systems can build systemic readiness through policy effectiveness and international engagement, though its technological capabilities can be enhanced.



Figure 11: Toronto’s resilience profile by dimension



PER-DIMENSION RANKING RESULTS

1. INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

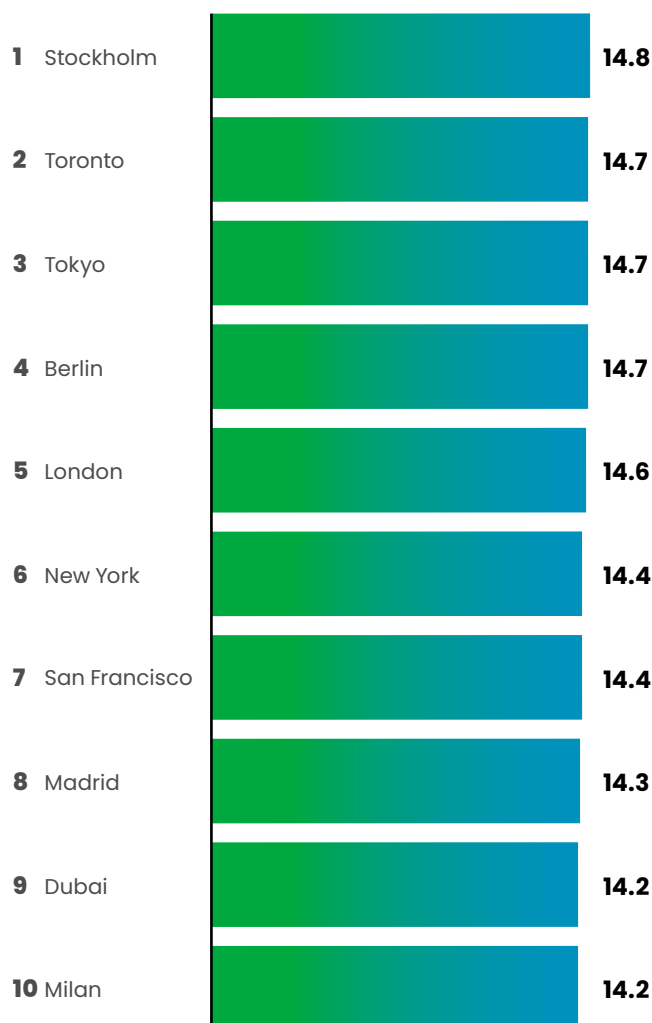


Figure 12: Institutional governance rankings

Key takeaway: Transforming municipal governance from reactive administration into proactive market shaping

Leading cities use their governance systems to actively reshape markets and behaviors rather than to merely respond to problems (see figure 12). They:

- Leverage municipal spending power to drive supply chain transformation
- Use climate reporting to create competitive pressure for private sector performance
- Build consensus-driven institutions to enable stability.

Cities that treat governance as infrastructure for continuous adaptation consistently outperform those that view it as an administrative overhead. This requires a shift from managing what exists to creating the conditions necessary for future development.

Coordinated SDG integration allows systematic municipal transformation across sectors

Cities with comprehensive Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) strategies create systematic frameworks to address the interconnected urban challenges that individual departments cannot solve independently. Cities host over half the world's population and are responsible for 60–80% of global energy consumption and 75% of carbon emissions,¹ making coordinated sustainability action essential for global progress.

The 17 SDGs recognize that action in one area affects outcomes in others, requiring integrated approaches that balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.² Cities that address multiple SDGs simultaneously create systemic mechanisms that break departmental silos, and ensure that sustainability considerations guide decisions related to housing, transport, energy, waste, and economic development. UN-Habitat's SDG Cities Program recognizes that two-thirds of the 234 SDG indicators have urban components³ demonstrating how urban policy decisions influence global sustainability progress.

The systematic approach prevents contradictory policies where progress in one area undermines another, enabling cities to tackle the complex interdependencies that define urban systems and leverage their significant economic influence to drive broader societal transformation toward the integrated vision that the SDGs represent.

Strategic accountability enables evidence-based climate governance and stakeholder engagement

Cities that participate in climate transparency reporting create systematic frameworks for tracking progress and building stakeholder trust that are essential for long-term climate action.

Climate reporting enables cities to identify risks, benchmark their performance against that of their

1. Joint SDG Fun
2. United Nations
3. UN Habitat

peers, and access climate finance opportunities, while transparency drives measurable action with organizations reducing direct emissions by 7–10% on average within two years of disclosure.⁴

Beyond tracking, disclosure also generates powerful market signals: public energy performance data empowers tenants, investors, and lenders to consider the efficiency of buildings, and motivates lagging owners to act, reinforcing accountability through reputational and competitive dynamics.⁵

Cities that engage in climate transparency build institutional capacity for evidence-based decision-making, create accountability mechanisms that maintain policy continuity across political cycles, and position themselves to access climate finance and international networks. The reporting process itself strengthens municipal climate governance by requiring systematic data collection, risk assessment, and progress tracking that enables cities to identify effective interventions and correct unsuccessful approaches, while simultaneously providing policymakers with scenario-based insights to refine standards, assess trade-offs, and forecast long-term economic and environmental impacts.

Together, these mechanisms ensure not only credible and effective action toward emissions reduction but also a resilient governance framework that sustains momentum across market cycles and political transitions.

Proactive resilience planning prevents crisis-driven responses and enables prevention through systemic urban transformation

Cities that develop comprehensive adaptation and mitigation plans create systemic readiness for climate impacts that are unavoidable due to past emissions while systematically addressing their ongoing contributions to the problem.

Globally, climate adaptation could cost US\$300 billion annually by 2030, with early action costing significantly less than crisis response,⁶ while over 90% of coastal areas⁷ and 800 million urban residents could be affected by rising sea levels by 2050.⁸ Cities require systematic planning because urban infrastructure networks are closely connected, meaning failure in one system could affect others, while adaptation measures can create trade-offs that increase vulnerability if not considered within integrated planning frameworks.

Cities with comprehensive climate plans develop institutional frameworks that incorporate climate considerations into all municipal decisions, create cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, and build an adaptive capacity that enables continuous adjustment as climate impacts evolve, preventing expensive crisis-driven responses while positioning cities to leverage climate action for broader development objectives.

Expert-informed consensus governance systems create administrative stability and predictable policy environments

Cities with institutional frameworks that prioritize consensus-building and systematic administrative continuity over majoritarian decision-making create predictable and stable governance environments.

Stockholm benefits from Sweden's consensus-oriented parliamentary system where institutional performance is systematically evaluated through municipal audit committees that scrutinize effectiveness, transparency, and governance quality, creating accountability mechanisms that maintain high institutional standards regardless of political changes.⁹

Amsterdam operates within the Netherlands' depoliticized consensus-based decision-making tradition, using advisory councils composed of academic specialists, while maintaining clear separation between appointed mayors (responsible for national government stability) and elected councils (responsible for local democratic input), creating an institutional balance that prevents policy volatility.¹⁰

Leading cities share common governance characteristics such as the systematic use of advisory mechanisms that inform decision-making processes, formal accountability structures that maintain performance standards across political cycles, and institutional designs that integrate specialized input with broad consensus rather than narrow majorities. These methods create stable and predictable governance environments enabling long-term planning and consistent service delivery.

Municipal market power creates demand-side transformation across supply chains

Cities that implement sustainable procurement policies leverage their significant spending power to drive market transformation beyond their direct operations.

Governments are increasingly leveraging public procurement to drive market transformation toward sustainable practices. In making procurement decisions, governments are now also considering the long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits rather than simply focusing on the lowest-cost option.

4. CDP

5. Institute for Market Transformation

6. London School of Economics

7. World Economic Forum

8. C40

9. University of Cambridge

10. City of Amsterdam

Government procurement averages 10–15% of gross domestic product globally,¹¹ while public procurement activities account for 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹² Public procurement is increasingly used as a lever for sustainable development, with governments integrating environmental and social criteria into purchasing in alignment with national priorities. By setting green standards and supporting markets for eco-friendly products, procurement is being reshaped to deliver long-term social, economic, and environmental value.^{13, 14}

Cities can create systematic demand for sustainable products and services across construction, energy, transportation, food, and professional services, driving innovation and market development while reducing costs through operational efficiency.¹⁵

Municipal sustainable procurement policies create ripple effects throughout regional supply chains, encouraging businesses to invest in sustainable practices to meet public sector requirements, while demonstrating municipal commitment to sustainability that influences private sector behavior and citizen expectations. Cities can use procurement as strategic infrastructure for sustainability transformation, embedding environmental and social criteria into spending decisions that collectively reshape local markets and create competitive advantages for sustainable businesses.

11. World Trade Organization

12. World Economic Forum

13. UNEP

14. World Economic Forum

15. Euro Cities



2. SUSTAINABLE FINANCE AND BUSINESS

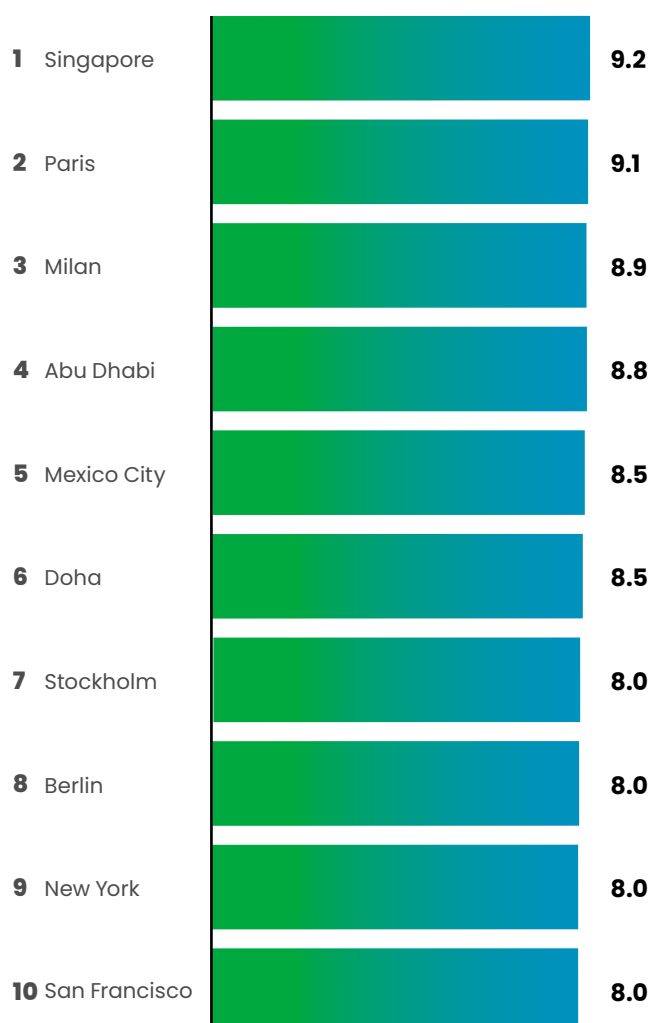


Figure 13: Sustainable finance and business rankings

Key takeaway: Becoming active financial partners, not just policymakers, to drive sustainable business transformation

The highest-performing cities discover that their most successful sustainable initiatives simultaneously strengthen their business ecosystems and global competitiveness (see figure 13). They:

- Leverage sustainability requirements to attract high-value enterprises
- Use green finance markets to establish themselves as financial centers
- Create public-private partnerships that generate positive environmental outcomes and help establish advantageous business networks.

Cities that integrate sustainability into their economic development infrastructure unlock competitive advantages that extend far beyond environmental benefits.

Strategic public-private sustainability partnerships

Leading cities consistently involve businesses in their sustainability plans and execution by using clear partnership mechanisms.

Milan exemplifies this through initiatives such as the Milan Food Policy, which takes a cross-sector approach to developing sustainable food systems involving public agencies, social organizations, and the private sector. The city has established approximately 40 ongoing collaborative initiatives that have delivered tangible impacts. For example, a waste tax reduction incentivizes businesses to donate surplus food to charities that redistribute it to people in need, and a pilot linking the city's school canteen procurement system with local rice farmers secured 180 tons of produce annually (valued at €300,000) and was later scaled to include 19 horticultural farms.¹⁶ The city's partnerships with private foundations like Fondazione Cariplo have demonstrated long-term co-design of food policy since 2014, while retail partnerships with companies like Lidl show how private companies contribute direct services and monetary donations to sustainability goals.¹⁷

These types of partnerships often emerge from cities' positions as economic centers hosting major corporations. For instance, Paris hosts most French Fortune Global 500 companies, providing the corporate scale necessary for meaningful collaboration between government and business. What distinguishes top performers is their ability to create "permanent and reliable access" to sustainability solutions through frameworks that align business interests with public environmental objectives.

16. Urban Sustainability Exchange

17. Milan urban food policy pact

World-class business environment foundations

Cities that rank highly for their business environment demonstrate exceptional performance across regulatory quality, government effectiveness, and institutional reliability, which reduces operational risks and transaction costs. Singapore exemplifies this pattern through its status as the world's leading business destination,¹⁸ anchored by political stability, efficient government services, and systematic support for technological upgrading.^{19,20} Leading cities maintain sophisticated regulatory frameworks, a strong rule of law, robust intellectual property protection, and streamlined government-to-business interactions.²¹ Such environments are characterized by minimal bureaucratic barriers, clear regulatory processes, and strong anti-corruption measures that empower both domestic and international business operations.

Comprehensive financial incentive architectures

High-performing cities develop municipal financial frameworks that directly support sustainable business practices through city-controlled funding mechanisms and strategic partnerships.

Amsterdam leads through its comprehensive dual-fund approach: the Amsterdam Climate & Energy Fund provides subordinated loans for large-scale commercial projects, while the Sustainability Fund offers smaller loans for local projects.²²

Paris demonstrates municipal financial leadership through strategic grant acquisition, securing €20 million+ in European grants for electric bus fleet conversion and infrastructure development.²³

Singapore's city-state structure enables direct municipal programs like the Enterprise Sustainability Program, allocating S\$180 million to benefit 6,000 enterprises through training, capability development, and financing support. These grants are complemented by streamlined frameworks that reduce administrative complexity for SME participation in Singapore.²⁴

These cities create integrated financial ecosystems that combine direct municipal funding, strategic partnership facilitation, and risk reduction mechanisms to make sustainable practices economically viable for businesses.

Leadership in green capital markets

Cities leading in corporate green bonds demonstrate sophisticated financial market ecosystems capable of supporting large-scale sustainable finance.

Stockholm demonstrates market leadership through more than 10 years of green bond experience, serving as a global training center for green finance and domestic markets where green bonds often offer better terms than conventional financing.²⁵

Berlin-based institutions like Berlin Hyp have pioneered green covered bonds (Green Pfandbriefe) and sustainability-linked bonds, aiming for 40% of capital market funding to consist of sustainable products by 2025.²⁶

Singapore has established comprehensive frameworks including a S\$35 billion sovereign green bond program that serves as a regional benchmark for corporate issuances.²⁷

These diverse approaches demonstrate that leadership in green capital markets can emerge through different models while maintaining high environmental and transparency standards.

18. Economist Intelligence Unit
19. Singapore Public Sector Outcome Review
20. CNBC
21. US Government

22. C40
23. Sustainable bus
24. Singapore Green Plan
25. Stockholm Exergi
26. Environmental Finance
27. Singapore Ministry of Finance

3. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

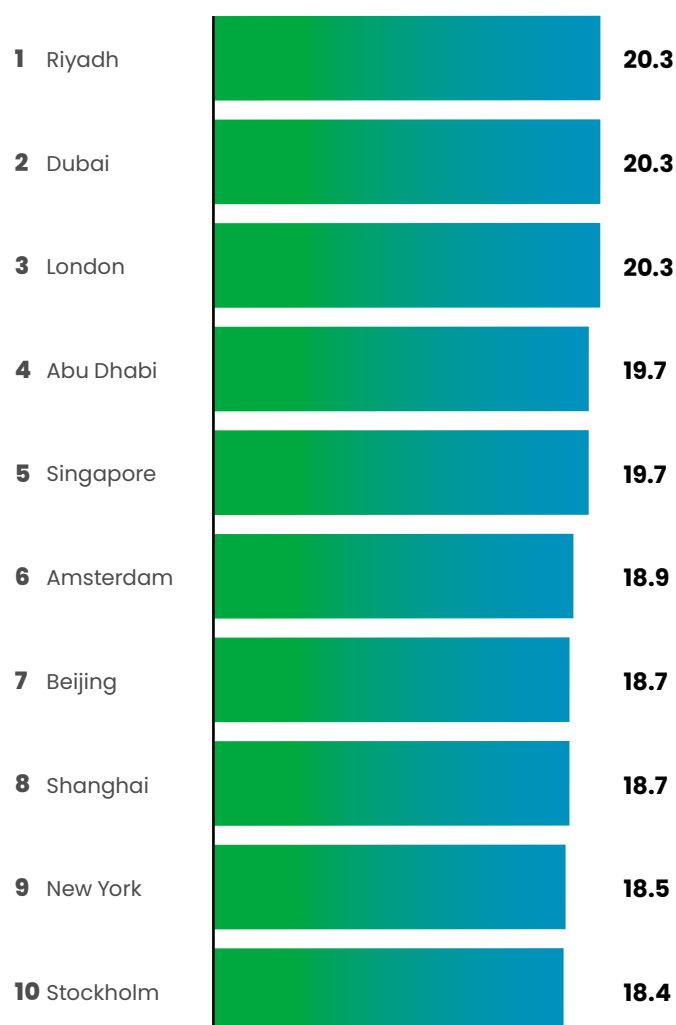


Figure 14: Technology and innovation rankings

Key takeaway: City leaders must operationalize an integrated innovation stack of service-first digital infrastructure, pro-startup institutions, and continuous skills to convert technology into measurable public value

The highest-performing cities demonstrate that technological readiness emerges from systematic integration across multiple dimensions rather than isolated excellence (see figure 14). This integrated approach requires:

- Embedding digital tools in priority public services with defined KPIs
- Consolidating pro-startup support through a unified SME authority that streamlines licensing and operates regulatory sandboxes
- Using public procurement to pilot local innovations
- Formalizing university–industry translation through incubators with commercialization targets
- Financing lifelong digital learning with employer partnerships.

Citizen-centric smart infrastructure delivery

Leading cities in smart city development prioritize measurable citizen satisfaction over pure technological deployment, creating happiness-focused digital ecosystems.

Dubai demonstrates this through its comprehensive smart city strategy, which is designed to transform the city into “the happiest city on Earth,” where digital transformation and emerging technologies directly enhance citizen satisfaction. The city’s systematic measurement shows that it has achieved a 90% happiness rating.²⁸

Abu Dhabi follows a similar citizen-centric approach. It focuses on quality-of-life improvements through digital transformation and smart governance initiatives that enhance citizens’ daily experiences.²⁹

London uses advanced technological capabilities to fulfill accessibility requirements, implementing inclusive smart city strategies through initiatives such as the Digital Access for All program, and the Smarter London Together Roadmap, which champions a people-first approach to technology. Its comprehensive digital inclusion efforts target basic digital skills and citizen engagement.³⁰

These cities share a common framework: embedding technology into critical infrastructure while maintaining transparency and genuine responsiveness to citizen needs, rather than pursuing technology for its own sake.

28. Digital Watch Observatory

29. Economy Middle East

30. Medium

Global startup ecosystem dominance through scale and connectivity

Cities achieving top startup ecosystem rankings demonstrate three interconnected strengths: massive entrepreneurial scale, specialized industry excellence, and robust global network effects.

San Francisco leverages Silicon Valley's unique intersection of skilled research institutions, abundant venture capital, a permissive regulatory environment, and an exceptionally talented workforce to create unmatched scale with over 15,000 startups.³¹ On the other side of the United States, New York enjoys its position as a global financial hub with diverse industries, talent, and global connections. It benefits from a strong network of angel investors, accelerator programs, and prestigious universities like Columbia and NYU, which produce graduates with entrepreneurial ambitions.³²

London leverages the strength of its financial services sector and a supportive regulatory environment to foster more than 8,900 startups and achieve top global positions in fintech. This also enables the city to attract significant international investment and maintain strong connectivity to American and European markets.³³

Top-ranked cities excel by combining industry specialization with ecosystem diversification, enabling deep expertise in key sectors while maintaining broad entrepreneurial foundations that provide resilience during economic shifts. Their exceptional access to capital serves as a critical enabler for startup ecosystem success and urban resilience capacity.

Opportunity-driven entrepreneurship supported by institutional frameworks

High-performing regions demonstrate predominantly opportunity-driven business creation backed by comprehensive institutional support systems that reduce barriers and enhance success rates.

Lagos demonstrates high early-stage entrepreneurial engagement through government support initiatives such as grants to young entrepreneurs. Its DigiGap Program, which trains young Lagos citizens in digital skills, reflects how the city's dynamic youth population is driving business creation.³⁴

Riyadh's strong performance reflects the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's systematic investment in entrepreneurship infrastructure through Vision 2030 initiatives aimed at diversifying the economy away from oil dependence. According to the Kingdom's Center for International Communication, 42 percent of adults in the Kingdom plan to launch businesses within the next three years and 25 percent of businesses are in the early stages. This is supported by investment initiatives that have made the Kingdom a more attractive market for setting up operations, supported by comprehensive frameworks such as those of the Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority (Monsha'at).³⁵

Toronto leverages Canada's strong educational foundations and multicultural talent base, combined with robust university-industry collaboration frameworks that translate knowledge into entrepreneurial capabilities. For example, the Creative Destruction Lab at the University of Toronto guides startups from concept to commercialization, and the Vector Institute for Artificial Intelligence bridges academic AI research with commercial application.³⁶

These cities share critical institutional characteristics: streamlined regulatory processes, diverse funding access, and strong integration between educational institutions and business communities, which translates knowledge into entrepreneurial capabilities.³⁶

Advanced educational foundations for technological adaptation

Excellence in educational readiness emerges from high post-secondary attainment combined with systematic digital capacity building and lifelong learning infrastructure.

Toronto leverages its position as a major educational hub through comprehensive digital learning initiatives and university-industry collaboration programs. Its systematic investments in technology-enhanced education prepare populations for technological adaptation and continuous upskilling.³⁷

Both Abu Dhabi and Dubai demonstrate strong educational attainment, with large proportions of their populations completing primary education and an increasing proportion holding post-secondary qualifications. This solid foundation is reinforced by robust university-industry linkages and public initiatives that ensure broad access to digital literacy and continuous skill development programs, aligned with the UAE's Digital Government Strategy 2025, which embeds digital capabilities into overall government strategies.³⁸

Leading cities create integrated educational ecosystems that combine traditional academic excellence with adaptive learning systems, ensuring populations can navigate rapid technological change while maintaining global competitiveness through both formal education and continuous upskilling opportunities.

31. Startup Blink
32. Startup Genome
33. Startup Blink
34. Startup Genome

35. ArabNews
36. Toronto Starts
37. University of Toronto
38. UAE Government Portal

4. SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL

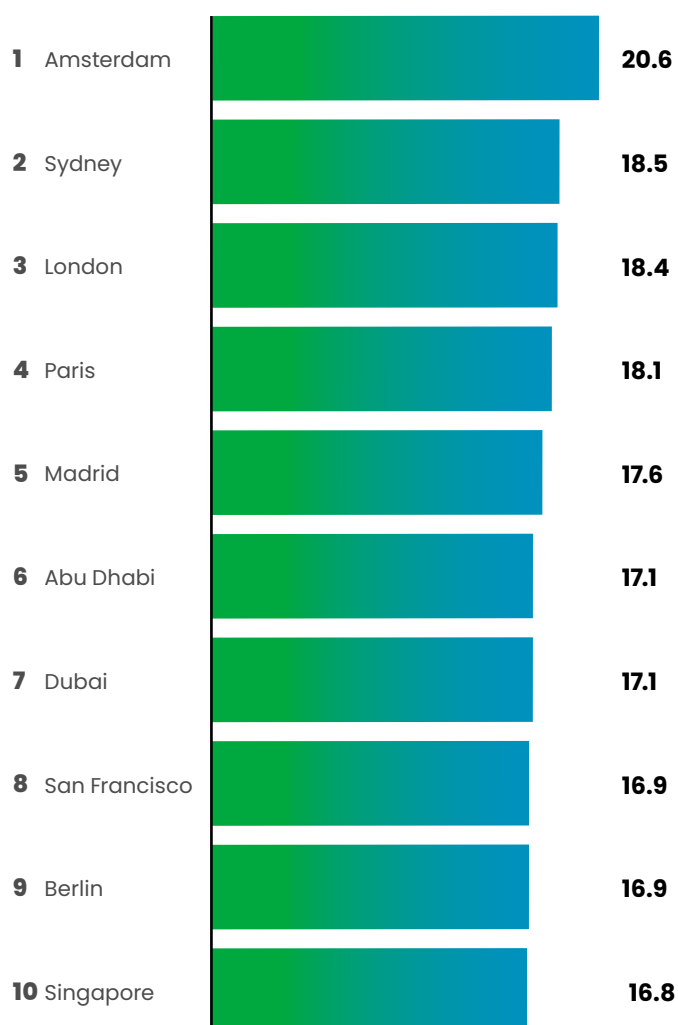


Figure 15: Social and human capital rankings

Key takeaway: Social equality requires integrating civic engagement, inclusive urban planning, digital service delivery, and vulnerable population protection with national redistribution frameworks

Leading cities create comprehensive frameworks that combine institutionalized citizen engagement mechanisms with complete community infrastructure, seamless digital service delivery, and targeted advocacy for vulnerable populations (see figure 15). This integrated approach recognizes that social resilience requires coordinated investment in both broad institutional capacity for citizen participation and specialized interventions for those facing the greatest barriers to inclusion. It creates mutually reinforcing systems where civic engagement, livability, digital access, and social justice initiatives strengthen overall urban social cohesion and adaptive capacity.

Comprehensive digital participation frameworks enabling citizen voice

Leading cities in civic participation demonstrate systematic approaches to digital engagement that create institutionalized channels for continuous citizen input to ensure resilient living conditions.

Dubai's Community Participation Policy supports the Dubai Social Agenda 33 by increasing community participation in shaping policy, legislation, and government services. Enhanced public engagement helps to align services more closely with community needs and expectations.³⁹

Abu Dhabi's Authority of Social Contribution (Ma'an) runs volunteering programs that design solutions addressing social priorities specific to Abu Dhabi. It collaborates with various stakeholders to launch ground-breaking programs with measurable social impact.⁴⁰

Shanghai demonstrates institutionalized citizen engagement through initiatives like the Shanghai 2035 Master Plan consultation process. This consultation process provided government-led opportunities for citizens to participate in policymaking, while online participation empowered wider stakeholders with open platforms.⁴¹

These cities share a common framework of creating permanent institutional mechanisms that capture citizen input while maintaining clear governance structures. This enables both traditional and digital channels for meaningful participation in urban development decisions.

39. UAE Government Portal

40. Department of Community Development Abu Dhabi

41. Science Direct

Complete community integration through systematic infrastructure planning

Top-performing cities in global livability create systematic frameworks for complete communities that integrate housing, transit, employment, and green space, using human-centered urban design principles.

Sydney excels through comprehensive planning that prioritizes walkable neighborhoods with high street connectivity, mixed land uses, and integrated access to public open space. This approach combines with high-quality public transport systems that reduce car dependency while creating vibrant mixed-use communities.⁴²

Tokyo achieves livability through the systematic integration of high-density, mixed-use development with pedestrian-friendly design. This is exemplified by Rail Integrated Communities, which are safe, mixed-use communities near transit stations. Public-private partnerships are encouraged to integrate commercial facilities into urban parks, creating highly connected street networks that support excellent public transport and pedestrian mobility.⁴³

Toronto's TOcore Downtown Plan requires that all developments undergo a Complete Community Assessment that prioritizes transit-supportive mixed-use development within walking distance of rapid transit stations, protecting sunlight access to downtown parks, and creating connected networks of cycling and walking infrastructure.⁴⁴

These cities excel by systematically integrating multiple urban systems rather than treating infrastructure, housing, transportation, and green space as separate domains.

Citizen-centric digital government platforms with comprehensive service integration

Excellence in e-government services emerges from comprehensive digital transformation strategies that prioritize user experience while maintaining accessibility and security across all government functions.

The "Madrid, Digital Capital" strategy accelerates the digitalization of municipal services in Madrid through user-friendly platforms. The Madrid Móvil platform serves as a one-stop shop for all administrative procedures, implementing a €1 billion five-year digital transformation budget.⁴⁵

Riyadh Municipality implements a "Digital-First" principle aligned with Saudi Arabia's Digital Government Strategy and Vision 2030. This provides citizen-centered digital services through integrated cross-agency delivery. Citizens can get involved in service design through interactive digital channels, consultations, surveys, and feedback mechanisms.⁴⁶

New York implements integrated service delivery through the MyCity portal, which consolidates multiple agency services into single applications. For example, it streamlines childcare assistance applications across multiple government agencies while providing eligibility checking, application tracking, and multilingual support in the city's 10 most common languages, with secure document storage for future applications.⁴⁷

These cities create integrated digital ecosystems that combine mobile-first design, comprehensive service coverage, and systematic user feedback mechanisms to ensure government services meet citizen expectations for efficiency and accessibility.

Innovative vulnerability protection through specific models

Leading cities in social justice advocacy develop distinctive institutional innovations that address vulnerability through novel approaches.

Amsterdam demonstrates this through its Shelter City Program, which provides temporary housing, training, and protection to international human rights defenders, sending a clear message of international solidarity beyond local advocacy.⁴⁸ The city also pioneered innovative housing justice through projects such as a cooperative housing model designed to shelter Amsterdam's most vulnerable people, including undocumented migrants and those on low incomes or from ethnic minorities or non-nuclear family households.⁴⁹

London exemplifies systematic community investment through its Shared Endeavour Fund, supporting grassroots projects fighting hate crime and extremism across every borough. Independent evaluation shows this builds resilience to radicalization.⁵⁰

Leading cities share common characteristics: developing replicable models that become national best practices, creating specialized responses to specific vulnerable populations rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach, and building international solidarity networks that extend local advocacy boundaries.

Coordinated national redistribution frameworks enabling structural equality

Cities achieving superior socioeconomic equality operate within comprehensive national policy systems that systematically coordinate multiple redistributive mechanisms. They demonstrate how municipal-level equality depends on broader institutional arrangements rather than isolated local interventions.

42. Australia Government Portal

43. World Bank

44. City of Toronto

45. European Institute of Public Administration

46. Riyadh Municipality

47. City of New York

48. City of Amsterdam

49. Progressive City

50. City of London

Amsterdam operates within the Netherlands' systematic framework, where systematic government intervention reduces inequality by 47 percent through the coordinated application of state pensions, supplementary pensions, social benefits, and progressive taxation. This has transformed primary income inequality in the city.⁵¹

Paris leverages France's dual income tax architecture, which enables flexible redistribution mechanisms. The system allows taxpayers to choose between a flat tax on capital gains and investment income or progressive taxation rates if more beneficial. This dual approach systematically targets capital income while optimizing taxpayer options.⁵² It demonstrates how institutional design can enable systematic capital income targeting rather than relying solely on post-income redistribution.

These cases reveal that sustained equality outcomes emerge from national institutional frameworks that coordinate multiple intervention mechanisms across different income sources. They require long-term government commitment to systematic redistribution rather than relying on municipal policies alone or on cyclical political initiatives.

51. Statistics Netherlands
52. Cairn



5. GLOBAL INTEGRATION

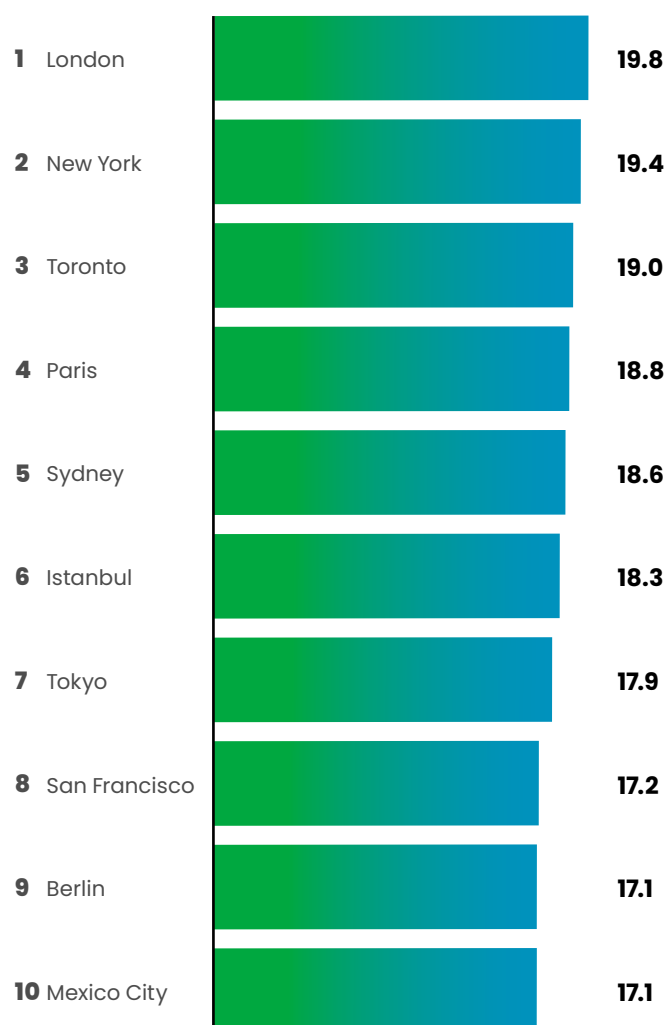


Figure 16: Global integration rankings

Key takeaway: Strategic global positioning that transforms cities into essential hubs for international collaboration encourages global integration

Leading cities demonstrate that global integration readiness emerges from treating international engagement as core governmental infrastructure rather than optional diplomatic activity (see figure 16). These top-performing cities:

- Create systematic frameworks that establish them as essential hubs in global networks through strategic positioning and active relationship building
- Use international sustainability networks as platforms for policy influence and accountability rather than symbolic participation
- Develop conference and meetings infrastructure as tools for long-term economic positioning and brand development
- Implement permanent institutional frameworks that treat immigrant integration as core municipal function.

These traits collectively transform cities from passive global participants into active shapers of international sustainability collaboration and talent mobility.

Global connectivity through strategic positioning

London demonstrated its active institutional relationship-building strategy when the City of London Corporation opened offices in New York and Washington, D.C., to build stronger financial ties. London & Partners, the city's promotional and economic development arm, offers the financial incentives (for example, the lowest corporate tax rate among G7 countries and extensive research and development tax credits) to attract professional services firms such as those in banking, law, and accounting.⁵³

Paris achieves connectivity through France's systematic national centralization. More major industrial companies are headquartered in Paris than in any other European city, positioning it as an ideal gateway to Africa and the Middle East⁵⁴ through geographic advantage.

The leading cities create institutional infrastructure, making themselves essential for specific global functions. Whether through active relationship building, centralized gateways, or hosting key service providers, they transform themselves from optional destinations into global hubs.

53. World's Best Cities

54. For Global

Multilateral sustainability leadership through strategic policy experimentation

Leading cities succeed by using international networks to amplify their local influence rather than simply participating for credibility.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan currently co-chairs the global mayoral network, C40,⁵⁴ while Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo previously served as first chairwoman, with plans to focus on securing green financing and encouraging inclusive and sustainable growth.⁵⁵ These networks create performance-based requirements that push cities beyond symbolic commitments, such that C40's members must "deliver their citywide GHG emissions targets by 2030" and establish "comprehensive governance structures that integrate climate targets across decision-making."⁵⁶

Leading cities strategically use these platforms for diplomatic initiatives, including engaging in global processes, signing on to accelerators, and attending high-level meetings to influence national, regional, and global discussions.⁵⁷ They treat network leadership as strategic infrastructure for global influence. They also cycle through chairmanships across organizations to create sustained platforms for advocacy and policy influence, while using membership requirements as accountability mechanisms that drive local action beyond what they would achieve independently.

International conference infrastructure as strategic economic positioning

Leading cities succeed by treating conference infrastructure as systematic tools for long-term economic positioning and brand development.

Singapore exemplifies this strategic approach by launching campaigns to position itself as the "World's Best MICE City"—"MICE" standing for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. They recognize that business events can create a positive and lasting impact, and that cities must redefine the conference experience and the support they provide to MICE planners, who are increasingly focused on driving meaningful change.⁵⁸

Bangkok demonstrates different strategic positioning with its Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau, with a focus on environmental sustainability. The city recognizes that international MICE travelers increasingly value sustainable conference facilities.⁵⁹

Strategic insights reveal that successful cities understand the extended planning and bidding cycles that govern international meetings, requiring sustained relationship building with international associations rather than transactional approaches. Successful cities understand that MICE events are bid on, invested in, and meticulously planned well in advance. They know that if they are to win this business, they need sustained competitive advantages through specialized positioning—whether impact-focused, sustainability-focused, or through other differentiation strategies—rather than competing solely on facilities or costs.

Permanent frameworks that treat integration as core governmental function rather than temporary policy response

Cities achieving leadership in attracting foreign-born citizens create an environment that treats immigrant integration as an essential government infrastructure enabler.

New York's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs became the first chartered office in the United States dedicated to protecting immigrant rights through a voter referendum in 2001.⁶⁰ This demonstrated institutional commitment beyond executive action.

Istanbul operates within Türkiye's systematic legal framework where the Directorate General of Migration Management has statutory authority to plan integration activities⁶¹ for migrants and local citizens.

London benefits from established labor market integration policies focused on job search assistance and qualification recognition.⁶²

What distinguishes these cities is their recognition that sustainable foreign-born population growth requires treating integration as a core municipal response rather than a temporary humanitarian response. They create institutional permanence that enables systematic service delivery regardless of political leadership changes and establish international reputations as reliable destinations for global talent mobility.

54. For Global

55. C40

56. C40

57. C40

58. C40

59. Singapore Tourism Board

60. Business Events Thailand

61. City of New York

62. Migration Policy Institute

63. University of Oxford

PATH FORWARD

The inaugural GCRI reveals a clear directive: cities cannot afford to remain passive observers of disruption. As urban systems house an increasing share of global population and economic activity, their systemic readiness for resilience challenges will determine not just their own futures but also the trajectory of development worldwide.

The index demonstrates that effective resilience transcends economic development levels. Cities with emerging economies outperform advanced counterparts in specific dimensions through strategic focus. For instance, Riyadh leads globally in technology, while Dubai ranks highly in institutional governance, both outperforming many cities with advanced economies. This suggests that targeted institutional commitment matters more than absolute resource levels—though adequate financing remains essential for scaling interventions.

This index will be updated regularly to track progress and identify emerging patterns as cities implement new resilience strategies. The dynamic nature of urban challenges requires continuous measurement and adaptation. Future editions will expand the city sample, refine indicators based on lessons learned, and incorporate new dimensions or indicators of resilience as they become relevant. This iterative approach ensures the index remains a useful tool for decision-makers navigating an evolving landscape of urban challenges.

Additionally, future editions will validate the index's forward-looking framework by correlating our systemic readiness measurements with cities' actual performance outcomes during real-world disruptions. They will demonstrate which foundational capabilities most effectively translate into urban resilience success.

CALL TO ACTION

Building urban resilience requires coordinated action across all stakeholder groups, each leveraging their unique capabilities while contributing to broader ecosystem strengthening.

Policy makers must move beyond reactive crisis management to proactive institutional development. This means creating regulatory environments that enable resilience innovations to be tested and scaled, establishing clear policy frameworks that provide investment certainty while maintaining adaptive flexibility, and investing in cross-sector coordination mechanisms that break down silos between municipal departments. National governments should support cities through dedicated resilience funding streams, technical assistance programs, and policy frameworks that enable rather than constrain local innovation. International organizations can facilitate knowledge exchange between cities—including between cities at different levels of resilience—and help integrate

resilience investments with urban development priorities. This transformation requires policymakers to fundamentally redefine their role—from crisis managers who respond to disruptions, to resilience builders who prepare for them.

Investors must recognize that the greatest opportunities for impact and returns lie in addressing the systemic gaps that constrain urban development. This requires developing new financial instruments designed for resilience investments, supporting longer investment timelines that match the extended payback periods of capacity building, and partnering with local institutions to build lasting financial market capacity. Blended finance mechanisms that combine public and private capital can help bridge the risk–return gap that currently keeps private investment out of many promising resilience projects. Infrastructure funds should integrate resilience criteria into investment decisions, while venture capital should support innovations that strengthen urban capacity.

Businesses should extend their commitments to include active resilience ecosystem participation. This means implementing principles that reduce supply chain vulnerabilities while creating local economic opportunities, establishing long-term procurement relationships with cities that provide revenue certainty for resilience investments, and sharing expertise through public–private partnerships that build municipal capacity. Companies can also support resilience through their location and investment decisions, considering resilience performance alongside traditional location factors when making investment decisions.

Citizens play an essential role that extends far beyond individual preparedness activities. Active civic engagement strengthens the social capital that underlies all other resilience dimensions, while informed public participation in municipal planning ensures that resilience investments address real community needs. Citizens should hold local leaders accountable for resilience investments, support policies that build long-term capacity even when they require short-term sacrifice, and participate in the civic institutions that strengthen social cohesion. Community organizations can serve as bridges between individual citizens and municipal institutions, helping to translate grassroots concerns into actionable policy recommendations.

Innovators and entrepreneurs should focus on solutions that build local capacity and organizational strength rather than creating new dependencies. This means designing technologies that enhance municipal capabilities and enable better decision-making, creating business models that strengthen rather than extract value from local ecosystems, and building partnerships that transfer knowledge and capabilities to local partners. Innovation programs should prioritize scaling solutions that strengthen resilience ecosystems rather than simply delivering one-time interventions.

The urgency of this agenda cannot be overstated. Every year of delay in building resilience infrastructure makes cities more vulnerable to the accelerating pace of global disruption. Every missed opportunity to strengthen institutional capacity increases the cost and difficulty of future interventions.

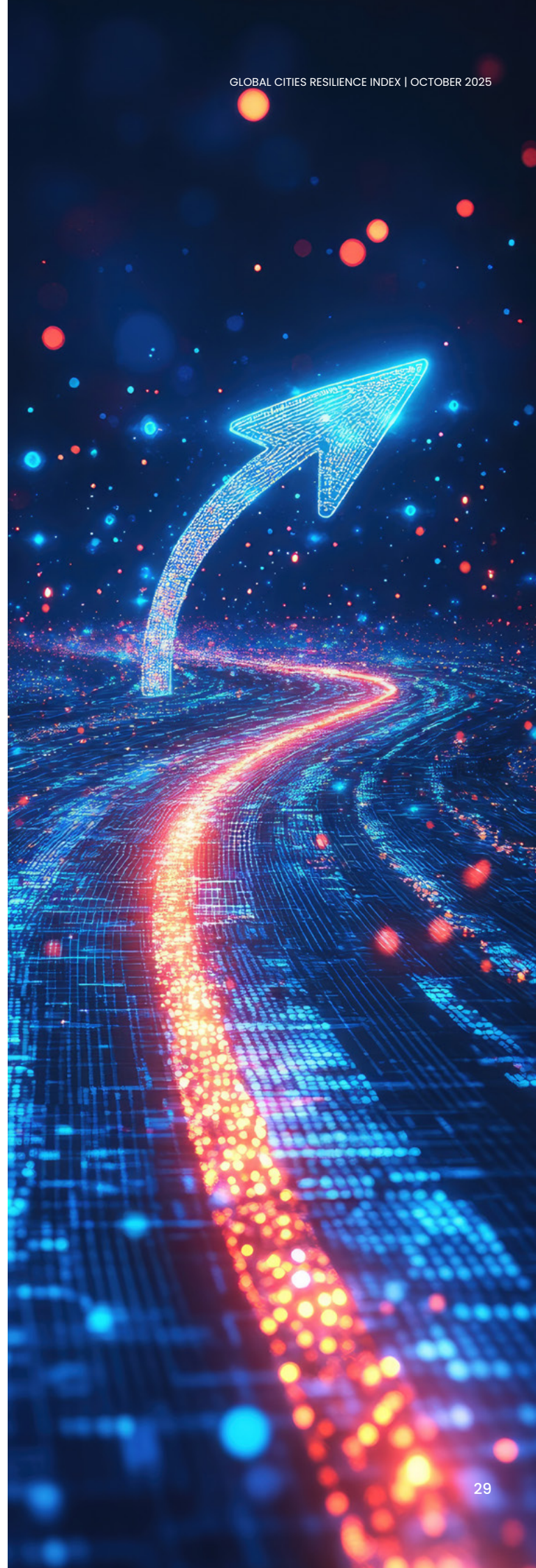
Yet resilience building is not a short-term endeavor—it requires sustained commitment across all stakeholder groups over extended timeframes. The systemic capabilities measured in this index cannot be constructed through isolated projects or single political cycles. They emerge from consistent action, coordinated investment, and long-term institutional development that transcends individual administrations and market cycles.

The critical question urban leaders worldwide are facing is not whether their cities will face unprecedented challenges, but whether they will build the organizational foundations to transform those challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth and shared prosperity.

This index reveals cities' preparedness for tomorrow's challenges, but strengthening that preparedness depends on the choices made today by every stakeholder committed to urban resilience.

The future belongs to cities that understand resilience not as a destination but as a continuous journey of systemic strengthening, collaborative innovation, and shared commitment to sustainable development.

THE TIME FOR THAT JOURNEY IS NOW.



APPENDIX

DETAILED METHODOLOGY

1. INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE INDICATORS

No.	Indicator	Description/unit of measurement	Source
1	Sustainability/ESG strategy	Number of SDGs addressed in city-wide sustainability strategy	Local government reports
2	Climate transparency	City's participation in CDP reporting and disclosure of climate actions	CDP Cities, States and Regions Open Data Portal
3	Adaptation and mitigation plans	Existence of comprehensive climate planning	CDP 2022 Cities Renewable Energy Targets
4	Government effectiveness and stability	Aggregated score combining political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, control of corruption, rule of law, and voice and accountability	World Bank Group – Worldwide Governance Indicators
5	Sustainable procurement policies	Existence and disclosure of sustainable procurement practices	CDP 2023 Full Cities Data Separated by Question

2. SUSTAINABLE FINANCE AND BUSINESS INDICATORS

No.	Indicator	Description/unit of measurement	Source
6	Collaboration of cities and businesses	Number of collaborations reported by cities on sustainability topics	CDP 2023 City Stakeholder Collaboration
7	Business environment	Business environment favorability rating	The Economist/EIU Business Environment Rankings
8	Financial incentives for sustainability	Availability of financial incentives for sustainable practices	Local government reports
9	Corporate green bonds	Ratio of corporate ESG bonds to total corporate bonds issued	Capital IQ

3. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION INDICATORS

No.	Indicator	Description/unit of measurement	Source
10	Smart city development	City's performance and ranking in digital and smart technology adoption	IMD Smart City Index
11	Startup ecosystem development	City's ranking in global startup ecosystem, including strengths and performance	StartupBlink – Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2024
12	Early-stage entrepreneurs	Percentage of population engaged in early-stage entrepreneurial ventures	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)
13	Education opportunities	Percentage of population with primary and post-secondary education	World Bank Group, Educational Attainment by Level of Education

4. SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL INDICATORS

No.	Indicator	Description/unit of measurement	Source
14	Participation of civic society	Extent of resident participation in local project ideation, decision-making, and feedback	IMD Smart City Index
15	Global livability	City's livability score reflecting challenges to individual lifestyle and standard of living	The Economist – The Global Liveability Index
16	E-government services and digital governance	Quality and accessibility of digital services offered by city's e-government portal	UN E-Government Survey
17	Social justice advocacy	Average of vulnerable group integration programs and anti-modern slavery government response measures	Economist Resilient Cities Index, Global Slavery Index
18	Socioeconomic equality	Barometer of social inequality	GINI index

5. GLOBAL INTEGRATION INDICATORS

No.	Indicator	Description/unit of measurement	Source
19	City's connectivity	City's ability to attract and generate global flows of capital, people, and ideas	Global Cities Report
20	Participation in international sustainability organizations	City's membership in selected international sustainability networks	C40 Cities, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, CNCA – Carbon Neutral Cities Alliances
21	ICCA World City	Number of international association meetings held	International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)
22	Foreign-born population	Number of foreign-born residents	Global Cities Report

CITIES RANKING

	Institutional governance	Sustainable finance and business	Technology and innovation	Social and human capital	Global integration
1. London	05	13	03	03	01
2. Amsterdam	14	12	06	01	11
3. New York	06	09	09	11	02
4. Dubai	09	15	02	07	12
5. Toronto	02	11	14	12	03
6. Berlin	04	08	11	09	09
7. Paris	17	02	17	04	04
8. Singapore	20	01	05	10	14
9. Madrid	08	19	12	05	13
10. Stockholm	01	07	10	14	15
11. Sydney	24	14	13	02	05
12. San Francisco	07	10	15	08	08
13. Abu Dhabi	18	04	04	06	23
14. Tokyo	03	16	23	13	07
15. Beijing	12	18	07	21	17
16. Shanghai	13	17	08	22	19
17. Milan	10	03	21	17	16
18. Mexico City	16	05	26	24	10
19. Riyadh	21	25	01	20	25
20. Bangkok	19	20	18	15	20
21. Istanbul	25	30	20	16	06
22. São Paulo	15	21	24	27	18
23. Mumbai	11	22	28	23	27
24. Johannesburg	28	29	19	18	21
25. Doha	30	06	16	19	24
26. Jakarta	22	31	25	26	22
27. Bogotá	23	24	22	29	26
28. Delhi	26	23	27	25	28
29. Nairobi	27	26	30	30	29
30. Lagos	29	27	31	31	30
31. Casablanca	31	28	29	28	31

CONTRIBUTORS



Javier Herrera
Partner, Kearney



Hani Tohme
Partner, Kearney



Sascha Treppte
Partner, Kearney



Valentin Lavail
Principal, Kearney



Rita Carvalho
Manager, Kearney



Hale de Vera
Consultant, Kearney



David Kana
Consultant, Kearney



Ilia Khaliavin
Consultant, Kearney



Kanika Nargotra
Researcher, Kearney



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