SUSTAINABLE URBAN RESILIENCE FINANCING FACILITY (SURFF)

BACKGROUND

Climate change is placing unprecedented pressure on cities. Water stress, extreme weather events, disaster risk and rapid urbanisation are compounding vulnerabilities across water, energy, transport, housing and infrastructure systems. According to the World Bank, achieving climate-resilient, low-carbon cities in low- and middle-income countries will require annual investments of USD 256-821 billion through 2050.

Urban ambition in national climate plans has reached an unprecedented level in the current cycle. Of the 142 NDC 3.0 submissions as of mid-April 2026, 80 per cent include well-developed urban content, up from 49 per cent under NDC 2.0. Furthermore, 82 per cent cite at least one enabler of urban climate action, highlighting the need to include cities in climate implementation. Yet urban climate finance remains the least developed urban means of implementation, present in only 27 NDCs (19 per cent).

This ambition is not yet matched by financing flows. Urban climate finance would need to increase more than fivefold from the USD 831 billion tracked annually in 2021/22 to meet estimated needs of USD 4.5 trillion annually through 2030. Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs) received only 11 per cent of total urban climate finance, while Least Developed Countries (LDCs) received just 1 per cent.

The gap is structural rather than one of ambition. Although countries are increasingly integrating cities into their climate commitments, these ambitions often do not translate into urban investment pipelines. Cities lack the capacity to develop finance-ready investment pipelines, while project preparation is often disconnected from finance. Planning, procurement, coordination, contract management and the systematic monitoring of implementation performance present further implementation bottlenecks even where financing is available.

An integrated mechanism is therefore needed to enable national governments, regions and cities to convert climate commitments into bankable project pipelines, mobilise finance at scale and strengthen local implementation capacity.

OBJECTIVE

SURFF envisions a future in which every city has the finance, capacity and partnerships needed to deliver climate-resilient, disaster-prepared and low-carbon development. Its mission is to accelerate urban resilience investments and translate climate targets into concrete results.

SURFF aims to accelerate cross-sectoral urban resilience investment in low- and middle-income countries by closing the disconnect between national climate policy and delivery at the urban level. Its objective is to support countries and cities in converting climate commitments into tangible investment programmes and investment-ready projects that respond to local needs, connecting NDC commitments with local implementation. SURFF follows the principle of “transformation through implementation.”

Expected results include stronger national coordination and governance for resilient urban investment, greater institutional readiness to manage and deliver projects, and partnerships

capable of scaling investment within and across countries.

SURFF is not a new fund but is conceived as a bridging mechanism that brings development partners together to strengthen synergies among existing initiatives, financing instruments and implementation mechanisms, enabling more coordinated and effective action domestically and internationally. This includes coordination with CHAMP and SURGe to extend their reach and impact. It operates through country-level platforms, knowledge and capacity development, and international cooperation.

Through this approach, SURFF will support the mobilisation of public and private finance and improve municipal access to existing financing resources, particularly through early engagement with international financial institutions, while strengthening the connection between investment-ready project pipelines, financing and implementation.

INITIATIVE OUTLINE

1. Implementation pillars

SURFF operates through three complementary mechanisms:

Pillar 1	**Resilient Cities Country Platform** A country-led platform that connects urban resilience priorities with project preparation, financing and implementation support.
Pillar 2	**Resilient Cities Centre of Excellence** A collaborative platform that develops and disseminates tools, methodologies and implementation know-how for urban resilience solutions.
Pillar 3	**International Resilient Cities Dialogue** A multistakeholder dialogue for partnership building, knowledge exchange and international cooperation on urban resilience finance and implementation.

2. Delivery

Resilient Cities Country Platform

Resilient Cities Country Platforms are envisaged as country-led platforms bringing together international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, climate funds, UN agencies, city networks and technical partners to turn NDC 3.0 plans into investment-ready projects in cities, mobilise public and private finance, improve municipal access to these resources and strengthen implementation capacity.

The Country Platforms will support end-to-end project-cycle delivery through:

- Developing investment programmes aligned with climate targets and local development plans.
- Mobilising public and private finance and improving municipal access to these resources, particularly through early engagement with international financial institutions.
- Preparing cross-sectoral, bankable project pipelines.

- Providing technical assistance to strengthen cities' planning, project preparation and implementation capacities.

Through SURFF, a Resilient Cities Country Platform will be established, and countries will be called upon to adopt a similar approach. The Country Platforms will define its scope, targets and impact, mobilise partners and financing, and monitor progress and share experience throughout its establishment and implementation.

Resilient Cities Centre of Excellence

The Resilient Cities Centre of Excellence will consolidate implementation experience, methodologies and knowledge into standardised tools and approaches applicable across countries and cities. Working closely with Country Platforms, the Centre will provide the analytical and technical support needed to translate identified resilience priorities into prioritised, investment-ready project pipelines. This will include resilience diagnostics, investment needs assessments and prioritisation, as well as project preparation and investment-readiness methodologies and tools.

The Centre will operate as a collaborative platform bringing together UN-Habitat, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, other international and bilateral development partners, city networks and technical organisations to promote joint learning, develop common methodologies and performance indicators, and disseminate urban resilience solutions. It will also serve to further disseminate work under CHAMP and SURGe, among other initiatives.

Through İLBANK, Türkiye will host and manage the Centre of Excellence, providing training, workshops and peer learning while disseminating technical guidance and knowledge products.

International Resilient Cities Dialogue

The International Resilient Cities Dialogue will provide a multistakeholder platform convening national and local governments, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, climate funds, development partners, UN agencies, city networks and other relevant stakeholders. The Dialogue will strengthen policy dialogue, partnership building and international cooperation on financing and delivering resilient urban development, while facilitating the exchange of practical experience, innovative approaches and lessons learned on urban resilience financing and implementation, and helping to connect urban resilience priorities with financing, technical assistance and implementation support.

Türkiye will convene the International Dialogue on Finance for Resilient Cities, beginning with its first edition at COP31 in collaboration with UN-Habitat. The Dialogue is envisaged as an annual platform at the margins of UNFCCC COPs or other international events and will contribute to annual Ministerial Meetings on Urbanisation and Climate Change and CHAMP high-level political dialogues, among others.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND PARTNERS

SURFF is an international, multistakeholder initiative developed by İLBANK on behalf of the COP31 Presidency of Türkiye, in consultation with UN agencies and international partners, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, development partners, existing initiatives and partnerships, city networks and other relevant stakeholders.

SURFF partners will contribute across the three mechanisms according to their respective mandates and expertise. Countries will lead Country Platforms, prioritise resilient investments and coordinate national stakeholders; multilateral development banks and international financial institutions can support investment planning, technical assistance and the alignment of financing with national priorities; and UN agencies and other development and technical partners can contribute knowledge, methodologies, capacity development and international coordination.

A secretariat and management structure is envisaged to support coordination, information sharing and monitoring of activities among SURFF stakeholders. An Advisory Committee is also envisaged as part of the governance structure.

Türkiye will play a central role in SURFF, drawing on its substantial experience in implementing large-scale infrastructure and urban resilience projects in partnership with international financial institutions. Its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans further positions Türkiye to contribute institutional knowledge, technical expertise and practical implementation experience.

Türkiye's contribution will be delivered through the three complementary SURFF mechanisms: supporting the establishment and operation of Resilient Cities Country Platforms, hosting and managing the Resilient Cities Centre of Excellence through İLBANK and convening the International Resilient Cities Dialogue.

Developed through ongoing consultation and exchange with stakeholders engaged in *Axis 4: Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure and Water* of the Global Climate Action Agenda, SURFF will support efforts to advance the Global Climate Action Agenda's objectives.

PARTICIPATION

SURFF will bring together national governments, subnational and local governments and cities, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, climate funds, UN agencies, bilateral development partners, city networks, technical organisations and other relevant partners.

Parties wishing to participate in the initiative are kindly requested to submit their request through their respective UNFCCC national focal point, by e-mail to the address indicated below. The same address may also be used by other interested stakeholders to express their support of the initiative.

CONTACT

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