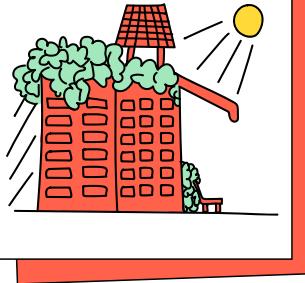


# C40 COOL CITIES ACCELERATOR



How cities are protecting lives and leading the transformation to cooler, safer and fairer cities

## SIGNATORY CITIES

Accra, Ahmedabad, Amsterdam, Athens, Austin, Barcelona, Bengaluru, Boston, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Durban/eThekewini, Fortaleza, Freetown, Guadalajara, Karachi, London, Melbourne, Milan, Mumbai, Nairobi, New York City, Paris, Phoenix, Quezon City, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Salvador, Santiago, Singapore, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Tokyo, Tshwane, Vancouver

## WHAT IS IT

The C40 Cool Cities Accelerator strengthens city resilience to the impacts of urban heat. Through this Accelerator, city mayors are empowered to lead coordinated efforts to protect the frontline communities experiencing the worst impacts of the climate crisis, cool their cities, and drive systemic change.

Mayors of C40 cities are already responding to heat by increasing tree canopy, building shade, depaving streets, and working towards safer indoor temperatures; protecting vulnerable residents; and using climate projections to coordinate with stakeholders on emergency response and preparedness.

This Accelerator recognises the urgent need to increase the current local response to keep up with the pace and intensity of urban heating. Leadership across city agencies, the private sector, and city residents is needed now to see vital cross-cutting action against rising temperatures.

The C40 Cool Cities Accelerator provides the dedicated framework to equip mayors with the tools and structure needed to deliver a strategic, coordinated and cross-departmental response to warming cities, and instead build cooler, safer, and fairer places for all.

## WHY IT'S NEEDED

Extreme heat stands as the deadliest weather-related disaster, contributing to an estimated [546,000 deaths globally each year](#).

By 2050, the **number of urban residents exposed to life-threatening temperatures is projected to increase five-fold**, threatening the wellbeing and prosperity of billions if we leave our cities to overheat.

Globally, extreme heat is projected to cause [US\\$2.4 trillion in lost labour productivity by 2030](#) as it becomes too dangerous to work outdoors in key sectors like construction and agriculture.

Direct economic losses from heat stress for 12 of the world's major cities are already estimated at [US\\$44 billion annually](#) – a figure projected to nearly double by the 2050s.

Heat is a lethal and accelerating climate threat in cities. This silent killer is intensifying, due to rising global temperatures and the urban heat island effect, where materials like concrete and asphalt absorb and re-radiate heat. Extreme heat is a multiplier of inequity, disproportionately harming the most vulnerable, including the elderly, infants, outdoor workers, women, people with disabilities, and those living in low-income communities. Existing social and economic disparities are deepened, as these residents often lack access to cooling measures, live in buildings that can't withstand high temperatures, and in neighbourhoods with less green space and fewer opportunities to find cool places to escape from extreme heat.

Direct economic losses from heat stress for 12 of the world's major cities are already estimated at US\$44 billion annually, stemming from a loss in labour productivity and most likely leading to diminished worker incomes. These costs ripple through city economies, straining essential services, reducing overall economic activity, and felt most by those already struggling to get by.

## COMMITMENTS BY MAYORS

### PROTECT

#### We commit to protecting residents from extreme heat

##### WITHIN TWO YEARS, WE WILL:

- **Establish and authorise heat leadership** and a cross-agency heat governance structure with clear coordination protocol.
- **Activate heat-health awareness outreach and Early Warning Systems** informed by climate data to protect the health and livelihoods of vulnerable communities.
- **Deploy cooling solutions** during heat emergencies, such as at designated cooling centres and critical facilities, home and work based cooling support, and outdoor cooling pop-ups.



##### ATHENS, FREETOWN, LOS ANGELES, MELBOURNE, QUEZON CITY

Chief Heat Officers (CHOs) are appointed officials who are responsible for creating a unified response to extreme heat within their cities, addressing the issue of multiple agencies working in parallel, often without coordination. Although not the only effective heat governance structure, CHOs have overall demonstrated a positive impact on cities' abilities to plan and respond to heat emergencies.



##### AHMEDABAD

As a part of its Heat Plan, the city shares heat alerts via TV, radio, SMS, and WhatsApp, while also supporting frontline workers like teachers and health staff to deliver door-to-door heat safety messages in low-income and informal settlements. Following the implementation of the heat plan in 2013, mortality on extremely hot days has dropped by 27%.



##### BUENOS AIRES

The city has created a network of 51 cool shelters (Refugios Climáticos), and is using heat maps to identify where more are needed. Residents can view a map of all the sites online, with descriptions of each site's facilities. The map also includes areas where residents can access clean, free drinking water.

## TRANSFORM

### We commit to cooling our city for the future by investing in medium- and long-term solutions

#### WITHIN FIVE YEARS, WE WILL:

- **Update building codes and promote cool buildings** by implementing policies and regulations for safe indoor temperatures in a sustainable way, such as mandating cool or green roofs, improved insulation, or renewably powered active cooling for new and existing buildings.
- **Create a network of cool corridors and public spaces**, such as by increasing tree canopy, green cover, and shading, cooling or depaving streets, and deploying water features to make public spaces and routes accessible and comfortable.
- **Future-proof critical infrastructure for increasing temperatures** by assessing climate vulnerability and implementing design standards to ensure essential services like energy grids, water supply and public transportation.



#### AUSTIN

In April 2025, Austin's City Council adopted a property maintenance code which requires all homes to have some form of mechanical cooling equipment in place that can keep the temperature indoors at or below 85°F (29.4°C). This code is applicable to all 'habitable' rooms in a home – any of the rooms that people regularly occupy. Austin views this new code as a public health necessity, and crucial to the wellbeing of their residents, especially renters.



#### MILAN

As part of its Piano Aria Clima (Air and Climate Plan), the city is using a number of strategies to create cooler public spaces. One of these is the depaving strategy – under which the city is planning on halving its impermeable grey areas by 2030 and replacing them with permeable green areas.

