



Local Governments
for Sustainability

EAST ASIA

2025 Annual Report



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FOREWORD



ZHU Shu
Regional Director & China Representative

In 2025, amid numerous global challenges and an escalating climate crisis, ICLEI remains committed to advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a global network connecting local governments worldwide, we promote practical action through multilateral cooperation, focusing on the zero-carbon transition, ecological conservation, building resilience, the circular economy, equitable growth, and international cooperation.

ICLEI leveraged multiple platforms to advance zero-carbon transformation. At the Macao International Environmental Forum, the Secretary General highlighted global climate action trends, while East Asia Secretariat roundtables fostered exchanges on green technology between cities and companies from China, South Korea, and Brazil. Forums in Shenzhen and Beijing facilitated cooperation between China, Uzbekistan, and other regions on low-carbon development and pollution reduction, advancing urban zero-carbon strategies globally.

ICLEI maintained its focus on ecological protection and nature-based solutions. At the Global Coastal Forum in Yancheng, representatives from 36 countries discussed coastal restoration and biodiversity finance. The Qingdao Ocean City Mayors Dialogue attracted nearly 400 participants from over 20 countries to explore marine carbon neutrality and coastal tourism innovation, expanding cooperation in marine protection and the blue economy.

Addressing increasingly frequent climate disasters, ICLEI's East Asia Secretariat hosted a "Climate Resilience and Resilient Cities" study tour in South Korea in October. Chinese city representatives and non-profit organizations learned from Seoul and Suwon's advanced approaches to resilience, community governance, and green technology, enhancing their capacity to adapt to environmental challenges.

ICLEI advanced the circular economy by addressing food waste. At the 2025 Seoul International Forum on Climate and Environment, city leaders from Beijing, Córdoba, Helsingborg, and Quezon City shared innovative strategies for reducing food waste and promoting sustainable consumption.

Equity and inclusivity remained central to ICLEI's mission. The organization facilitated capacity-building initiatives like the seventh GEF City Academy of China, partnering with the UN Environment Programme and World Bank to empower Chinese cities in sustainable transformation.

ICLEI expanded its international network through major events in 2025. The World Local Government Climate Summit in South Korea convened over 1,500 delegates to discuss climate economy and resilient city development. The Guiyang International Forum on Ecological Civilization attracted representatives from 62 countries to explore green development. At COP30 in Brazil, ICLEI led the "Global Cities and Regions Hub," promoting knowledge sharing on blue carbon and climate finance.

ICLEI welcomed new members including Shijiazhuang City and Qingdao West Coast New Area in 2025, strengthening its global network. With ongoing communication and capacity-building support, these new members are poised to contribute to and benefit from ICLEI's collective expertise. Looking ahead to 2026, the organization remains dedicated to empowering local governments, facilitating knowledge exchange, and advancing a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future worldwide.

ABOUT ICLEI

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125 countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for zero-emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

ICLEI East Asia Secretariat

Hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, ICLEI East Asia has developed local and regional programs and exchange platforms to accelerate sustainable and low carbon development in the region under the ICLEI's five development pathways. By providing technical consulting, training and information services to build capacity and share knowledge, we support local government Members in China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and Central Asia, such as Uzbekistan in pursuing sustainable urban development.

To further extend our support to Chinese cities, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat opened the Beijing Office in March 2018.

Memberships

Globally, ICLEI Membership has been active in over 125 countries worldwide since 1990. As of the end of 2025, 116 local governments in the East Asia and Central Asia region have joined and are actively participating in ICLEI's global network. In 2025, we continued to expand the membership in the region, with new local governments joining the network from China.



New Members

Qingdao West Coast New Area, China

Qingdao West Coast New Area (Qingdao WCNA) is a State-level new area approved by China's State Council in June 2014, making it the ninth such area nationwide and the only one in Shandong Province. Located on the western shore of Jiaozhou Bay, it is one of Qingdao's three main urban areas, covering about 2,096 km² of land and nearly 5,000 km² of sea. With a strong focus on the marine economy, Qingdao WCNA plays a strategic role in driving the city's and the region's socio-economic development.

At the same time, Qingdao WCNA serves as a frontier for reform, opening-up, and modern urban development. Home to the Qingdao Area of the China (Shandong) Pilot Free Trade Zone, it has pioneered numerous institutional innovations, many of which have been replicated at provincial and national levels. The area actively promotes sustainable urban renewal, cultural vitality, and livability, while striving to become a "Metropolis of Film, Island of Music, City of Beer, and Coast of Exhibition." With rich natural resources, sound public services, and a high-quality living environment, Qingdao WCNA represents a dynamic and inclusive model of coastal urban development in China.

Shijiazhuang, China

Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei Province, is the political, economic, scientific, cultural, and transportation center of the province, as well as a key hub linking northern and central China. Covering an area of 15,800 square kilometers and home to over 11.24 million residents, the city comprises multiple urban districts, counties, county-level cities, and several state-level development and free trade zones. With an outstanding transportation network, where major railways, high-speed rail lines, and Zhengding International Airport converge, Shijiazhuang enjoys strong connectivity and plays a strategic role as a regional gateway city. It has been recognized with multiple national honors, including National Civilized City, National Forest City, and permanent host city of the China International Digital Economy Exposition.

Rich in history and culture, Shijiazhuang is home to renowned heritage sites such as the Zhaozhou Bridge, Zhengding Ancient City, and Xibaipo, a landmark of China's revolutionary history. At the same time, it is a major industrial and innovation center, with strong foundations in biomedicine, advanced manufacturing, electronic information, modern logistics, and modern food industries. Through ambitious urban renewal initiatives, industrial transformation, and continuous improvements to its business environment and public services, Shijiazhuang is accelerating its development toward a modern, international, and livable provincial capital, one that combines deep cultural roots with forward-looking, high-quality growth.



Qingdao Xinhai New District, China

GOVERNANCE

ICLEI Council

ICLEI is democratically governed by our members through the ICLEI Council -- the overarching decision making and guiding body. The Council approves the ICLEI Strategic Plan with a six-year scope and has the sole power to amend the Charter and elect the Global Executive Committees -- the GexCom -- portfolio seats.

Chaired by elected President and Vice Presidents, the GexCom is composed of up to 6 appointed Members and Representatives from the 9 Regional Executive Committees -- the RexComs -- and represents ICLEI towards international institutions and has the authority to make strategic decisions concerning the organization.

2024-2027 President and Vice President



Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh
President | Mayor of Malmö, Sweden



Minna Arve
First Vice President | Mayor of Turku, Finland



Marjorie Kauffmann
Vice President | State Secretary for Environment and Infrastructure of State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil



Mohamed Sefiani
Vice President | Mayor of Municipality of Chefchaouen, Morocco

2024-2027 East Asia RexCom



MATSUI Koji
Chair | Mayor of Kyoto



Her-Ran Liou
Portfolio | Deputy Mayor of New Taipei



Tae Kyoon Kim
Vice Chair | Vice Mayor of Seoul Metropolitan Government



Prof. Dr. Kazuhiko Takemoto
Advisory Member | Chair of ICLEI Japan



Dong-yeon Kim
Portfolio | Governor of Gyeonggi Province



Alex Zhang
Advisory Member | Secretary General of Eco Foundation Global



Weishu Li
Portfolio | Vice Mayor of Changchun

On the occasion of the World Local Government Climate Summit held in Goyang, South Korea, on 15 April, ICLEI East Asia held the East Asia Regional Executive Committee (RexCom) Annual Meeting, attended by RexCom members from Seoul, Changchun, Gyeonggi Province, and New Taipei City, with Kyoto City participating virtually, to review progress in sustainable development and discuss their strategic role in global climate action.



Group photo of the RexCom. (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)



Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI, delivered the opening remarks at the RexCom meeting. (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

2025 OVERVIEW

02.26-02.27

First Ocean Decade International Coastal Cities Conference | Qingdao, China

03.27-03.29

2025 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition | Macao, China

04.14-04.16

World Local Government Climate Summit | KINTEX, Goyang, South Korea

05.13-05.14

World Circular Economy Forum | São Paulo, Brazil

06.09-06.13

2025 UN Ocean Conference | Nice, France

06.16-06.18

Daring Cities 2025 | Bonn, Germany

07.01-07.03

GEF-7 UrbanShift China City Academy | Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone, China

07.04-07.06

Eco Forum Global Annual Conference Guiyang 2025 | Guiyang, China

07.09-07.12

The 12th International e-Mobility Expo | Jeju, South Korea

07.14-07.23

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) | New York, US

07.23-07.31

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP15) & City Summit | Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe

08.25-08.27

The 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities (IFLCC) and the 2025 Regional Partners Forum on Sustainable Urban Development (RPF) | Bangkok, Thailand

09.07-09.09

2025 Global Ocean Development Forum and Mayoral Dialogue | Qingdao, China

09.11-09.12

2025 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions | Beijing, China

09.19-09.26

Climate Week NYC | New York, US

09.23

2025 Seoul International Forum on Climate and Environmental | Seoul, South Korea

09.23-09.25

World Coastal Forum | Yancheng, China

09.29-09.30

International Disaster Resilience Leaders Forum Incheon 2025 (IDRLF 2025) | Incheon, South Korea

10.23-10.24

Yeoncheon Global Forum on Peace with Nature | Yeoncheon, South Korea

10.28-10.29

International Low Carbon City Forum (Shenzhen) | Shenzhen, China

11.08-11.14

12th Meeting of Partners of EAAFP (EAAFP MOP12) | Cebu, Philippines

11.10-11.21

UNFCCC COP30 | Belém, Brazil

12.08-12.08

7th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) | Nairobi, Kenya



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convened in Belém, Brazil, from November 11 to 22, 2025. This pivotal gathering demonstrated renewed vigor for international climate cooperation and underscored the global commitment to keep the 1.5°C target within reach, sustaining hope for a livable planet.

Throughout this COP, the Constituency witnessed a genuine acknowledgment of the vital role that local action, multilevel cooperation, and urbanization play. This was evident in the Ministerials, the progress made on the Action Agenda, and multiple Parties advocating for a structured dialogue focused on multilevel governance and urbanization.

Thousands of local and regional leaders participated in COP30, responding to the call for an “implementation COP.” Many cities, states, and regions shared their ongoing transitions away from fossil fuels, adaptation efforts, and direct responses to climate impacts.

The Cities & Regions Hub, co-convened by ICLEI and UN-Habitat and hosted by Brazil’s Ministry of Cities, served as a focal point for multilevel action and urbanization at COP30. The Hub highlighted how sustainable urbanization can transform cities, address inequality and informality, and build resilience. It also demonstrated how national governments can enhance their next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0) by partnering with cities for broader climate impact.



Shenzhen side event “Restore Mangrove Ecosystem, Unlock Blue Carbon Potential – Integrate Climate and Nature Action in Cities” on 12 November 2025. (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

Shenzhen’s Leadership in Mangrove Conservation and Blue Carbon

The Shenzhen Session at COP30, titled “Restore Mangrove Ecosystem, Unlock Blue Carbon Potential – Integrate Climate and Nature Action in Cities,” was a hallmark event held at the Cities & Regions Pavilion on November 12, 2025. Organized by ICLEI with direction from the International Mangrove Center and the Shenzhen Municipal Planning and Natural Resources Bureau, the session assembled representatives from governments, international organizations, research bodies, and local administrations from around the globe.

Central to the discussion was Shenzhen’s groundbreaking “Mangroves Plus” initiative. This program leverages natural capital accounting, methodological research, and market-based mechanisms to innovate mangrove conservation and blue carbon development. Shenzhen’s approach encompasses ecological monitoring, value assessment, and successful carbon transaction models—demonstrating how urban centers can align nature-based solutions with climate action.

The session featured opening remarks by Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI, who stressed the interconnectedness of climate change, biodiversity, and urban development. He advocated for reinvesting in natural systems, especially regenerative ecosystems like mangroves, as the most effective and economical path forward.

A roundtable brought together experts who praised Shenzhen’s achievements and discussed scaling up efforts through technical training, pilot projects, regional governance, and the creation



Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI, delivered the opening remarks. (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

of equitable trading systems. The event also saw the release of the “Methodology for Mangrove Conservation (Version 2.0),” which provides a technical foundation for global carbon-sink accounting and project development.

Significantly, new collaborations were formalized through bilateral MoUs between the Shenzhen Natural Resources and Real Estate Assessment Research Center, ICLEI East Asia, and the State of Sergipe, Brazil, paving the way for joint research, urban capacity building, and cross-regional initiatives in blue carbon.



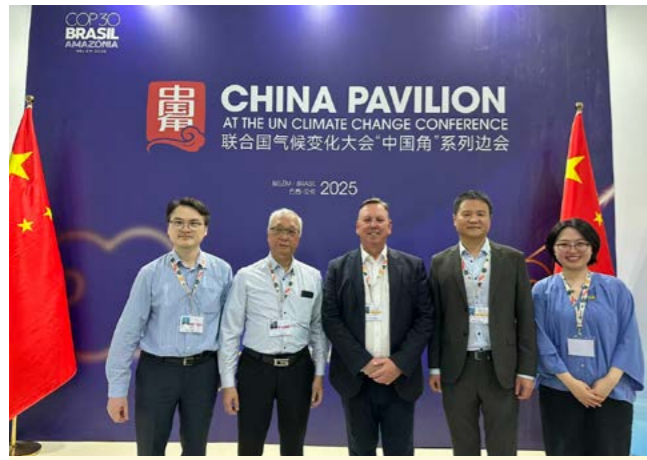
At the roundtable discussion, Kobie Brand, Deputy Secretary-General of ICLEI, praised Shenzhen’s ongoing efforts in mangrove conservation and shared ICLEI’s experience in advancing coastal ecological protection in Africa. (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)



Site visit in Cubatão (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

Hong Kong Session: Green Finance and Urban Climate Innovation at COP30

At COP30, Hong Kong took center stage by hosting a prominent side event on November 11, 2025, at the China Pavilion: “Converging Innovation in Hong Kong: Forging a Resilient City and a Global Green Finance Hub.” The session highlighted Hong Kong’s progress in climate change mitigation, energy transition, and its emergence as a global leader in green finance, drawing wide interest from delegates.



Group photo of the Hong Kong side event. (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

Mr. Tse Chin-wan, Hong Kong's Secretary for Environment and Ecology, outlined the city's robust roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Pillars of this plan include net-zero power generation, sustainable buildings, green transport, resource recycling, hydrogen energy, and expanded renewable energy. Hong Kong's recent achievements in carbon reduction and energy transition were underscored, reaffirming its commitment to a zero-carbon future for its 7 million residents.

The event featured influential keynote speakers, including Gino Van Begin (ICLEI), Zhao Yingmin (BRIGC), Dr. Lam Ching Choi (Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development), and Ms. Lin Shun Heung Ophelia (Friends of the Earth Hong Kong). ICLEI's Secretary General praised Hong Kong's pioneering investment in clean technology and sustainable urban planning, noting its significance in the global sustainable development movement.



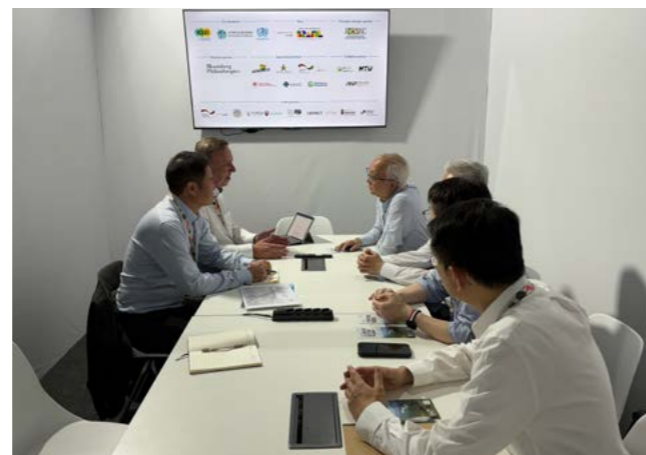
Secretary for the Environment and Ecology of Hong Kong, Mr. Tse Chin-wan, delivered a speech (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)



Group photo of the Hong Kong delegation and the ICLEI delegation at the COP30 Cities & Regions Hub (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

Another highlight was the practical examples shared by the Mayor of Renca, Chile, on engaging residents in community resilience, offering inspiration for grassroots climate action.

Additionally, Hong Kong's delegation held bilateral discussions with ICLEI leaders about future cooperation in climate action, resilience building, and energy transition, particularly under the Belt and Road Initiative. Since joining ICLEI in 2019, Hong Kong has actively participated in global sustainable development efforts and aims to further its influence through these international collaborations.



Bilateral meeting with the Hong Kong delegation (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

COP30 reaffirmed that the fight for a livable planet hinges on empowering cities and regions, fostering multilevel cooperation, and bridging global ambition with local action. As climate challenges intensify, the lessons and partnerships forged in Belém offer a blueprint for inclusive, resilient, and impactful climate governance in the years ahead.

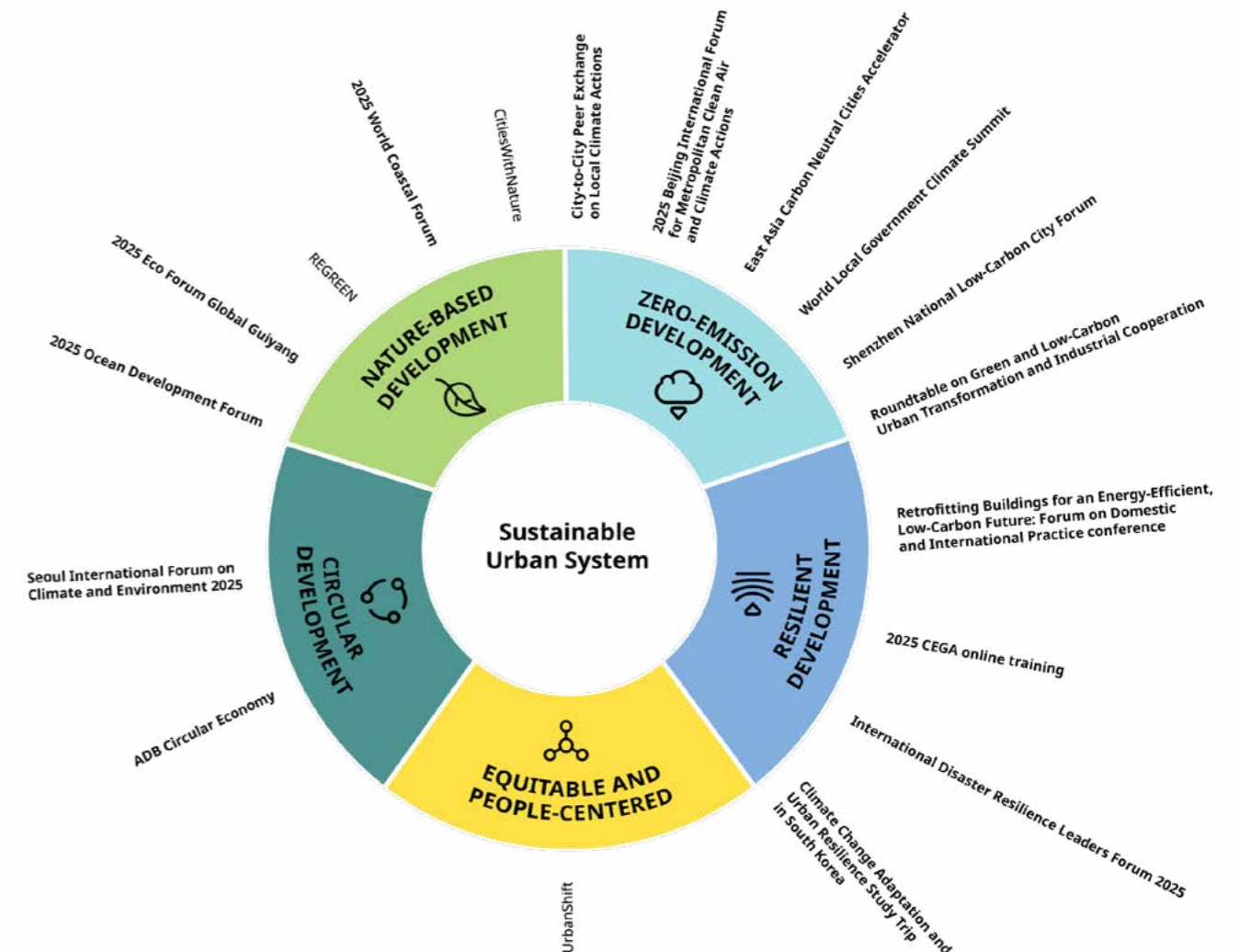
PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

In the urban era, cities, towns, and their surrounding regions are centers of opportunity and prosperity and, indeed, act as important hubs of economy, innovation and co-creation, production and consumption, as well as social and cultural interaction. At the same time, numerous cities, towns and regions are places where deep poverty and inequity prevail, and where severe natural degradation proliferates with ecosystems pushed past their thresholds.

Local and regional governments across the ICLEI Network have recognized the warning signs of global challenges, and have responded through the new ICLEI Malmö Commitment and Strategic Vision 2021-2027, which was built on the five pathways set out by the Network in Montréal in 2018, aiming to facilitate deep and lasting systemic change globally.

The five ICLEI pathways towards zero-emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development are designed to create systemic change. They serve as a basis for sustainable urban development that considers the complexity of urban systems and provide a framework enabling local and regional governments to think holistically and design integrated solutions that balance the patterns of human life and the built and natural environments.

ICLEI East Asia incorporates different pathways and helps local and regional governments advance sustainable urban development. Often, our activities are guided by a predominant pathway or set of pathways. But we design our works to integrate as many pathways as possible into any given activity, such as a project, partnership, or initiative.





ZERO-EMISSION DEVELOPMENT

Curbs climate change, creates new economic opportunities and improves the health of human and natural systems.

Contribute to SDGs



East Asia Carbon Neutral Cities Accelerator

Cities are at the forefront of experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change and global warming, while also playing a critical role in advancing solutions toward carbon neutrality. In this context, ICLEI East Asia has implemented the East Asia Carbon-Neutral Cities Accelerator (EACNCA) since 2024, an annual project that provides a platform for East Asian cities to showcase their experience and achievements in realizing carbon neutrality, and to strengthen peer learning and partnerships.

The 2025 EACNCA project focused on the co-benefits of reducing air pollutants and carbon emissions, with an emphasis on the governance of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). In recent years, East Asian countries, notably China, Japan and South Korea, have made significant progress in air pollution control. However, VOCs have emerged as a key contributor to both PM_{2.5} and ozone pollution, posing increasing risks to public health and urban climate resilience.

Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo have prioritized VOCs control as one of the primary tasks in their air pollution management strategies and have introduced a series of policy instruments,

regulations, and innovative governance initiatives. Against this backdrop, the 2025 Compendium of Best Practices on Carbon-Neutral Cities in East Asia systematically reviews recent policies, regulatory frameworks, and governance approaches related to VOCs control and management in these three cities. By assessing their implementation experiences and observed outcomes of VOCs-related policies and practices, the 2025 Compendium helps identify valuable lessons for other international cities, aiming to serve as a valuable reference for future city-to-city environmental cooperation.



The 2025 Compendium of Best Practices on Carbon-Neutral Cities in East Asia

City-to-City Peer Exchange on Local Climate Actions

In 2025, ICLEI East Asia and ICLEI South America jointly initiated and implemented the City-to-City Peer Exchange on Local Climate Actions Project, in partnership with the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG). The project aims to facilitate practical knowledge exchange and strengthen long-term cooperation between cities in East Asia and South America on climate action and sustainable urban development.

The 2025 City-to-City Peer Exchange on Local Climate Actions was held in Seoul, South Korea, from 22 to 25 September. The four-day peer exchange brought together five high-level environmental officials from Bogotá (Colombia), Córdoba (Argentina), Quito (Ecuador), Renca (Chile), and Barcarena (Brazil), as well as a representative from ICLEI Argentina. Through expert-led lectures, site visits, and participation in the 2025 Seoul International Forum on Climate and Environment, the South American delegates gained systematic insights into Seoul's climate governance and practices. The 2025 exchange enhanced mutual learning on carbon neutrality, air quality management, resource circulation, and smart urban systems, further laying the groundwork for continued cross-regional collaboration on local climate action.



Group photo of the visit team, Seoul Metropolitan Government officials and ICLEI East Asia Secretariat (image: ICLEI East Asia)

Roundtable on Green and Low-Carbon Urban Transformation and Industrial Cooperation

ICLEI East Asia hosted a Roundtable on Green and Low-Carbon Urban Transformation and Industrial Cooperation in Macao on 27 March 2025, as a key event during the 2025 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition. The roundtable brought together over 60 representatives, including officials from local governments and experts from international organizations, research institutes, and the private sector across East Asia and beyond. It provided a platform for exchanging practical experiences on green and low-carbon urban transformation and for exploring the role of city-business partnerships in scaling up local climate action.

The roundtable also marked the introduction of the East Asia Carbon-Neutral Cities Accelerator and the official launch of the Green City-Business Alliance which showcases ICLEI East Asia's commitment to advance sustainable urban development by connecting cities with innovative solutions and private-sector partners. Through broad and inclusive participation, the event contributed to promoting practical solutions and accelerating the green transition at both regional and global levels.



Group Photo of Participants of Roundtable on Green and Low-Carbon Urban Transformation and Industrial Cooperation

2025 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions

The 2025 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions was held in Beijing from 11 to 12 September 2025 under the theme Pollution and Carbon Reduction – Regional Coordination. Hosted by the Beijing Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau, the forum convened policymakers, experts, and practitioners to explore science-based and technology-enabled pathways for coordinated air pollution and carbon reduction.

As a committed partner of the forum, ICLEI East Asia actively mobilized global resources, enriching the forum with international perspectives and practical experience. These included ICLEI’s global technology-based and data-driven initiatives, highlighted by Mr. Gino van Begin, the Secretary General of ICLEI; the DRYADS project in Greece that uses AI technology for wildfire risk management. In addition, ICLEI East Asia facilitated knowledge exchange through a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Shu Zhu, Regional Director and China Representative, focusing on the role of advanced technologies and regional cooperation in addressing air pollution and climate challenges. Through these contributions, ICLEI continued to strengthen cross-regional exchange and supported cities in advancing collaborative and innovative climate action.



ICLEI Panel discussion at the 2025 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions

Shenzhen National Low-Carbon City Forum

On 27-28 October 2025, ICLEI East Asia supported the 2025 Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality Forum and Shenzhen National Low-Carbon City Forum, hosted by the Shenzhen Municipal People’s Government under the theme of Empowering Green Cities with AI. ICLEI East Asia facilitated the participation of a delegation of local government officials and business representatives from Uzbekistan, strengthening exchanges between Chinese and Central Asian cities on low-carbon urban development and sustainable industrial transition.

Uzbek business representatives’ participation in the forum featured technology roadshows, project matchmaking, and site visits to leading green enterprises in Shenzhen. These activities enabled Uzbek businesses to better understand proven low-carbon solutions and explore opportunities for technology adaptation and cooperation, while offering Chinese cities and enterprises pathways to expand international collaboration. By linking diverse needs with practical solutions and business partners, ICLEI East Asia helped establish a foundation for future cooperation and support sustainable development across East and Central Asia.



Group photo of the 2025 Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality Forum and Shenzhen National Low-Carbon City Forum (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

World Local Government Climate Summit

From 14 to 16 April 2025, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat played a key role in the World Local Government Climate Summit in Goyang, co-hosted by ICLEI and the Gyeonggi Provincial Government. The Summit brought together more than 1,600 registered participants from 44 countries, including city leaders, senior local government officials and diverse stakeholders, providing a major global platform to showcase climate action and strengthen regional and international cooperation. ICLEI East Asia mobilized broad participation from East and Central Asia, with representatives from China (Guiyang, Changchun, and Chengdu), Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan, and Erdenet), and Uzbekistan (Kattakurgan and Gijduvan District) contributing to high-level thematic sessions and panel discussions on climate governance, data-driven solutions, renewable energy, and ecosystem-based approaches, strengthening peer learning and regional collaboration among local governments.



Retrofitting Buildings for an Energy-Efficient, Low-Carbon Future: Forum on Domestic and International Practice conference

Retrofitting Buildings for an Energy-Efficient, Low-Carbon Future: Forum on Domestic and International Practice conference was held on 16-17 October 2025, Beijing, China. The event is hosted by the National Center of Technology Innovation for Green and Low-Carbon Buildings (NCTI-GB) and the Energy Efficiency Hub. This forum brings together government officials and experts from the private sector, international organizations, and research institutions to discuss existing and emerging practices, including four modules: building retrofit technologies, key drivers for policy implementation, financing models for scaling up building energy efficiency, and financing for energy-saving retrofits. At the conference, ICLEI shared its promoted TAP (Transformative Actions Program) financing mechanism, systematically introducing the core principles, participation requirements, implementation processes, and successful practical cases of this model in various cities and regions. This provides innovative funding solutions for local climate action. In the future, ICLEI will continue to promote the application of TAP in East Asia and encourage more applications from Chinese projects.

Protects and enhances biodiversity and urban ecosystems, which underpin key aspects of local economies and the well-being and resilience of our communities.

Contribute to SDGs

NATURE-BASED DEVELOPMENT

2025 Eco Forum Global Guiyang

The 2025 Eco Forum Global Guiyang was successfully held in Guiyang from 5 to 6 July 2025. Under the theme “Harmony between Humanity and Nature: Advancing the Green Transition for Global Development”, the Forum convened political leaders, experts, scholars, and business representatives from 62 countries and regions to engage in high-level dialogue on green development and sustainable transformation.

Emani Kumar, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General, participated in the 2025 Advisory Committee Plenary Meeting on behalf of the ICLEI Secretary General. Leveraging its global perspective and professional expertise, ICLEI provided strong support to the Forum in communication and coordination, resource mobilization, and international outreach, contributing to its enhanced international profile and professional depth. Within the framework of the Forum, ICLEI also served as a co-organizer, working together with the Foreign Affairs Office of Guizhou Province and the People’s Government of Guiyang Municipality to jointly convene the Sub-Forum on Green Development and Cooperation Between Guizhou Province and International Friendship Cities, hosted by the People’s Government of Guizhou Province, thereby promoting in-depth exchanges on local green development and international cooperation.



During the forum, Guiyang municipal leaders met with attending guests



Eco Forum Global Guiyang 2025

2025 Ocean Development Forum

Within the framework of the 2025 Ocean Development Forum, jointly hosted by the People’s Government of Shandong Province and the Ministry of Natural Resources of China, the Dialogue of Mayors of Coastal Cities was held in Qingdao West Coast New Area. Nearly 400 senior representatives from more than 20 countries and regions participated, including delegations from China, France, the Maldives, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Belgium, and Kenya. Under the theme “Better Ocean, Better City” the Dialogue facilitated high-level exchanges on resilient urban governance, marine science and technological innovation, ecosystem protection, ocean-based carbon neutrality, and sustainable coastal tourism. Through mayoral dialogues, business exchanges, and policy presentations, the event strengthened international cooperation and advanced shared understanding on sustainable and resilient ocean-city development.

Gino Van Begin, ICLEI Secretary General, participated in the Dialogue and announced a new cohort of

cities joining the CitiesWithNature. Eight cities and districts from China were newly recognized for their achievements and commitments in biodiversity conservation, alongside more than ten international cities from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. CitiesWithNature is co-founded by ICLEI, together with The Nature Conservancy and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and supported by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international partners. Managed by ICLEI, the initiative serves as the world’s largest knowledge and action platform for local and regional governments advancing nature-positive development and supporting the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. On the margins of the event, Qingdao West Coast New Area was officially announced as a new member of the ICLEI global network, reflecting its commitment to international cooperation and sustainable development. ICLEI will continue to support the New Area through its global network and technical expertise, particularly in climate action, marine and coastal ecosystem protection, biodiversity conservation, and the sustainable development of the marine economy.



Qingdao West Coast New Area was officially announced as a new member of the ICLEI global network (image: ICLEI East Asia)



Gino Van Begin, ICLEI Secretary General, participated in the Dialogue (image: ICLEI East Asia)



8 Cities and counties joined the CityWithNature Platform during the 2025 Ocean Development Forum (image: ICLEI East Asia)



Cities joining the CitiesWithNature (image: ICLEI East Asia)

2025 World Coastal Forum

The 2025 World Coastal Forum was held from 24 to 25 September 2025 in Yancheng, Jiangsu Province, under the theme “Beautiful Coasts: Ecological Priority and Green Development.” Bringing together more than 300 representatives from 36 countries and regions, the Forum provided a high-level platform for dialogue and cooperation on coastal ecosystem conservation and sustainable development. Through a series of plenary sessions, parallel forums, workshops, and thematic events, participants exchanged knowledge and practical experiences on key issues including coastal ecosystem conservation and restoration, climate change response, biodiversity finance and the blue economy, protection of the Asian migratory bird flyway, and the strengthening of partnerships for sustainable coastal governance. As the host city, Yancheng showcased the Yellow Sea Wetlands, China’s first coastal wetland World Natural Heritage site, highlighting its global significance for biodiversity conservation and its role as a model for large-scale wetland protection and management.

Since the launch of the World Coastal Forum in 2023, ICLEI has served as one of the founding members of the Forum’s International Coordination Group, actively supporting its preparation and implementation alongside a broad coalition of international partners. At the 2025 Forum, ICLEI participated in the Coordination Group Plenary Meeting, where Kobie Brand, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General, delivered a video intervention on behalf of the Local Governments and subnational Engagement Task Team. She reviewed key progress achieved since the release of the World Coastal Forum Partnership Initiative, underscored the critical role of local action in advancing global



Kobie Brand, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General, delivered a video intervention at the World Coastal Forum (image: ICLEI East Asia)

coastal and biodiversity goals, and reaffirmed ICLEI’s commitment to supporting the Forum through its global network, flagship platforms such as the CitiesWithNature Action Platform, and its engagement in major international environmental processes, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.



The World Coastal Forum's International Coordinating Committee

Yeoncheon Global Forum on Peace with Nature

ICLEI East Asia Secretariat supported the Yeoncheon Global Forum on Peace with Nature on October 23-24, hosted by Yeoncheon County and ICLEI Korea. The Forum brought together local governments and international partners to advance nature-based solutions, biodiversity conservation, and transboundary cooperation, aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework and ICLEI’s nature-based development pathway. ICLEI East Asia contributed to session design and moderation, and coordinated the participation of Guiyang (China) and Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), facilitating exchanges on local approaches to achieving peaceful coexistence with nature.



Yeoncheon Global Forum on Peace with Nature

Anticipates, prevents, absorbs and recovers from shocks and stresses, especially those brought about by rapid environmental, technological, social and demographic change, and improves essential basic response structures and functions.

Contribute to SDGs

RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

International Disaster Resilience Leaders Forum 2025

The International Disaster Resilience Leaders Forum (IDRLF) 2025 took place on September 29–30 at Songdo Convensia in Incheon, South Korea, under the theme “Strengthening Global Cooperation on Disaster.” Co-hosted by Incheon Metropolitan City, UNDRR, and the Incheon Institute, and supported by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of Korea, the forum brought together over 400 participants to advance collaboration on disaster risk reduction and urban resilience.



Group photo with Participants (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

As a key partner of UNDRR’s Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat continues to support cities through peer learning and capacity-building. The Secretariat previously facilitated resilience assessment workshops in several Chinese cities and contributed to the expansion of MCR2030 participation in the region, with six Chinese municipalities joining the initiative by 2023.

At IDRLF 2025, the Secretariat supported the participation of China–Singapore Tianjin Eco-City and Changning District, Shanghai. The forum provided a valuable platform for cities to exchange experiences and strengthen partnerships on resilience and sustainability. Overall, the forum reaffirmed the importance of city-to-city cooperation and demonstrated ICLEI’s continued role in advancing disaster resilience through global networks and collaborative action.



Group photo of the International Disaster Resilience Leaders Forum (image: UNDRR-ONEA)

Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience Study Trip in South Korea

ICLEI East Asia Secretariat, in collaboration with the Environmental Development Center of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) of China, organized a Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience Study Trip to South Korea from October 13 to 17, 2025. Supported by Partnerships for Community Development (PCD), the program served as a platform for cross-border knowledge exchange on climate adaptation and sustainable urban development.

The 12-member delegation included representatives from the Environmental Development Center of MEE, Xiong'an New Area in Hebei Province, Changzhi City, Lishui City, Partnerships for Community Development, Friends of Nature Environmental Research Institute, and the China Blue Sustainability Institute. During the visit, participants traveled to Seoul Metropolitan City and Suwon Special City.

The program featured site visits to ICLEI East Asia Secretariat, Seoul Metropolitan City Hall, Suwon Hwaseong Museum, Haenggung-dong Eco-Mobility Village, the Nowon EZ Center, Gongneung Youth Cultural Information Center, Lotte World Tower, and the Cheonggyecheon Stream. In parallel, participants engaged in meetings and policy discussions with key institutions, including the Seoul Metropolitan Government's Climate and Environmental Policy Division, the Citizens' Committee for Green Seoul, the Korean Environment Institute (KEI), Suwon Special City's

Environmental Policy Division, the Suwon Council for Sustainable Development, the ICLEI Korea Office, the Nowon Environment Foundation, the Gongneung Youth Cultural Information Center, and the Seoul Tourism Organization.

Through these exchanges, participants gained practical insights into Korea's approaches to climate change adaptation and urban resilience, including policy implementation across different governance levels, citizen engagement in climate action, energy-efficient buildings, sustainable mobility, and nature-based solutions. Overall, the delegation expressed high satisfaction with the study trip's comprehensive content and organization and showed strong interest in pursuing a more in-depth follow-up study in 2026 to further strengthen collaboration between Korean and Chinese stakeholders in advancing sustainable and resilient cities.



Group photo of the Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience Study Trip at the Seoul City Hall (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)



Group photo in Suwon City (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)



Group photo at the Seoul Global Center (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

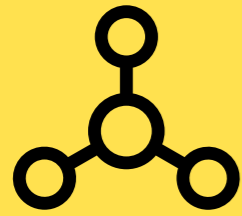
2025 CEQA online training

Co-hosted by China Environmental Grantmakers Alliance (CEGA) and Vanke Foundation, the Climate Change Adaptation Co-Learning Camp aims to help domestic environmental funders and social organizations including NGOs address climate change challenges. The project primarily carries out activities through two major modules: general knowledge lectures on climate adaptation and on-site visits and exchanges at project locations, building a platform for domestic and international experience sharing and promoting climate-resilient city development. Through the "learning-research integration" model, it empowers social organizations to become key forces in climate action. The general knowledge courses were conducted via online live streaming, starting on August 19 and successfully concluding on September 2.

ICLEI was invited to serve as the keynote speaker for the online general knowledge course. On August 27, Zhu Shu, Director of ICLEI East Asia Secretariat, delivered a lecture titled "Climate Adaptation Design Cases of International Institutions," introducing ICLEI's work in the field of climate adaptation and sharing relevant practical cases from an international organization's perspective. Subsequently, Wang Keli, Senior Project Officer of the Beijing Office, provided an in-depth explanation on "Methodology for Climate Adaptation Planning," focusing on the theoretical frameworks and tools for climate resilience and risk assessment, offering a systematic pathway reference for enhancing urban climate adaptation capabilities.



City Hall Plaza, Seoul, South Korea



EQUITABLE AND PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

Builds more just, liveable and inclusive urban communities and addresses poverty. It is inclusive development that safeguards the natural support system for human life.

Contribute to SDGs



UrbanShift China City Academy



UrbanShift, brand name for the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It aims to transform cities for people and the planet through integrated urban development. It engaged with more than 23 cities across 9 countries (China, India, Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Morocco, Costa Rica, Brazil and Argentina). ICLEI East Asia Secretariat has been supporting China in participating in UrbanShift Global Platform activities.

The GEF-7 UrbanShift China City Academy was successfully held in Chengdu from 1 to 3 July 2025. Co-hosted by the ICLEI East Asia Secretariat and the China Center for Urban Development (CCUD), the Academy brought together approximately 150 participants, including government officials and urban experts from 28 cities across China, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Mongolia.

The Academy focused on two critical pillars of urban sustainability: "Urban Biodiversity: Data, Finance, and Implementation" and "Green and Thriving Neighbourhoods". Through thematic training led by WRI and UNEP, participants explored innovative tools to integrate nature-based solutions into urban planning and addressed challenges such as high population density and climate vulnerability.

A highlight of the event was the deep dive into Chengdu's "Park City" model, where the delegation conducted immersive field visits to Luxelakes Eco City and the Sino-Singapore (Chengdu) Innovation Park. These visits showcased world-class practices in water-ecology restoration and the integration of artificial intelligence into urban services. By facilitating cross-regional knowledge sharing among pilot cities like Chengdu, Chongqing, and Ningbo alongside their Asian peers, the Academy served as a vital bridge for international cooperation, equipping city leaders with the practical expertise needed to foster equitable, zero-carbon, and resilient urban futures.



Group photo of the UrbanShift China Academy (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)



CIRCULAR DEVELOPMENT

Together with new models of production and consumption, builds sustainable societies that use recyclable, shareable and replenishing resources to end the linear model of "produce, consume, discard," while continuing to meet the material and development needs of a growing global population.

Contribute to SDGs



Seoul International Forum on Climate and Environment 2025



On 23 September, the Seoul International Forum on Climate and Environment (SIFCE) was held in Seoul under the theme "Practical Responses to Food Waste and Building Sustainable Cities".

The forum addressed food waste as a key urban environmental and climate challenge, highlighting its significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and resource loss. Seoul shared its long-term experience under the Zero Waste Seoul vision, including food waste separation, volume-based fees, and citywide RFID systems, which have reduced food waste by 25% over the past decade and enabled full recycling into feed, compost, and biogas.

As a long-standing partner of the forum, the ICLEI East Asia Secretariat supported international knowledge exchange by organizing and moderating a session that brought together cities including Beijing, Córdoba, Helsingborg, and Quezon City to share policies and practices on food waste reduction and sustainable food systems. The session demonstrated the value of city-to-city learning and collaboration in advancing practical and scalable urban solutions.

ADB Circular Economy



The "Circular Economy Zero Waste Cities Workshop," hosted by the Asian Development Bank, was held in Beijing on June 24. The workshop discussed the findings from the implementation of technical assistance (TA), shared results from pilot projects, offered policy recommendations, designs for market-based instruments, and business models to enhance private sector engagement, and provided training to participants. ICLEI was invited to attend the event and shared its circular economy transformation demonstration projects for textile factories in Shaoxing and Huzhou. The projects showcased diversified financing pathways and, through a systematic approach, helped traditional textile enterprises achieve efficient resource utilization, waste reduction, and optimization of energy structures. This provided practical local cases and solutions for green, low-carbon transformation in the industrial sector.



ICLEI session on the Seoul International Forum on Climate and Environment 2025 (image: ICLEI East Asia Secretariat)

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2025, ICLEI East Asia deepened its commitment to global sustainability through strategic partners. This reflects our strengthened engagement and increasing recognition in the region and globally.

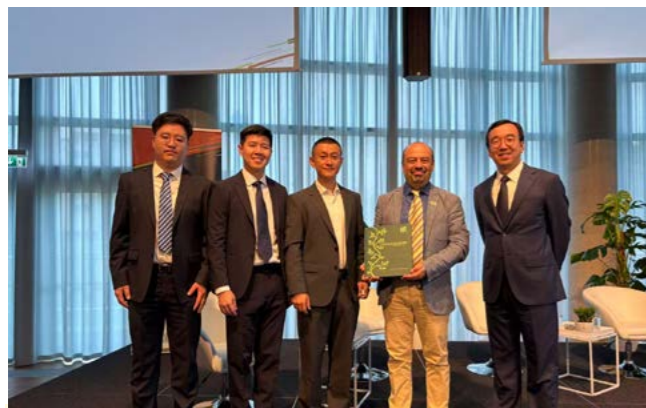
Daring Cities 2025 Bonn Dialogues have been successfully held from 16–18 June 2025 in Bonn, Germany, in close alignment with the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies session (SB62), co-hosted by ICLEI and the Federal City of Bonn. The event has connected local and subnational governments with national authorities, the research community, and the private sector to advance climate action. It supported the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships for Climate Action (CHAMP) and promoted integrated, holistic approaches to the climate emergency. Building on the successes of Daring Cities 2024, the 2025 edition emphasized multilevel collaboration to strengthen national climate plans ahead of COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

Representatives from the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the China-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City Administrative Committee of Tianjin, China actively participated in the event. Tianjin Eco-City shared its innovative experiences in sustainable urban development, fostering constructive dialogue and building mutual understanding. Under ICLEI’s coordination, CPAFFC also contributed to the Subnationals’ Dialogue of the UNFCCC Executive Secretariat during SB62, enhancing

China’s subnational engagement in global climate discussions. Building on this collaboration, a CPAFFC delegation led by its Vice President, Mr. Shen Xin visited Bonn in December 2025, meeting with ICLEI Secretary General and the UNFCCC Secretariat team to further strengthen consensus on advancing climate action and cooperation at the local level.

On 29-30 September, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat participated in the 9th Megacity Think Tank Alliance (MeTTA) General Assembly and Forum in Seoul, South Korea. As a founding Associate Member of MeTTA, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat contributed to governance discussions at the General Assembly, where future collaboration and the 2026 Assembly in Beijing were confirmed, and shared expertise on urban resilience and disaster risk reduction at the Forum, co-hosted by the Seoul Institute and MeTTA.

On 12 November 2025, during UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Development Research Center for Natural Resources and Real Estate Assessment of Shenzhen at the side event “Restore Mangrove Ecosystem, Unlock Blue Carbon Potential – Integrate Climate and Nature Action in Cities”, held at the Cities & Regions Pavilion, to strengthen cooperation on blue carbon and mangrove-based nature-based solutions.



Group photo of representatives from China-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City and ICLEI at the Daring Cities



CPAFFC delegation visited Bonn



The 9th Megacity Think Tank Alliance



MoU signed with the Development Research Center for Natural Resources and Real Estate Assessment of Shenzhen

As part of its efforts to diversify resource mobilization and strengthen engagement with the business sector, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat increased its focus on dialogue with private-sector actors. In this context, ICLEI East Asia engaged with the Korea Business Council for Sustainable Development (KBCSD) as a partner platform and participated in the BNPB (Biz & Biodiversity

Platform) General Assembly and Stakeholders Collaboration Meeting (September 4, Seoul) and the BNPB Business Forum (December 5, Seoul). Through these exchanges, ICLEI East Asia met several companies and gained insights into corporate perspectives on biodiversity and urban sustainability, informing potential areas for future cooperation.

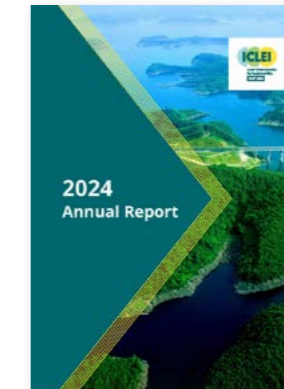


KNOWLEDGE SHARING



The Climate Card

February 2025
English



2024 Annual Report

March 2025
Chinese / English



Adaptation and Urban Resilience Study Trip in South Korea Program Report

April 2025
English



Annual Compendium of Best Practices on Carbon Neutral Cities in East Asia (2024 Edition)

May 2025
English



Mapping and Assessing Existing and Potential Financing Instruments and Mechanisms that Support Local Biodiversity Actions

July 2025
English

2026 PREVIEW

- Mar.**
 - ▶ The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP15)
03.23-03.29 | Campo Grande, Brazil
 - ▶ The 13th International e-Mobility Expo
03.24-03.27 | Jeju, South Korea
 - ▶ 2026 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition
03.26-03.28 | Macao SAR, China

- Apr.**
 - ▶ AIM Congress 2026
04.13-04.15 | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

- May**
 - ▶ World Urban Forum (WUF) 13
05.17-05.22 | Baku, Azerbaijan
 - ▶ 2026 International Hydrogen Development Symposium
05.17-05.22 | Hong Kong SAR, China

- Jun.**
 - ▶ Climate Tech Conference
06.23-06.26 | Seoul, South Korea
 - ▶ Daring Cities 2026 & UNFCCC Bonn Climate Conference
Bonn, Germany

- Jul.**
 - ▶ Symposium 2026 for Eco Forum Global Guiyang
07.03-07.06 | Guiyang, China

- Aug.**
 - ▶ 17th session of the Convention's Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17)
08.17-08.28 | Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

- Sep.**
 - ▶ 2026 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions
Beijing, China

- Oct.**
 - ▶ The Seventeenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP17)
10.19-10.30 | Yerevan, Armenia
 - ▶ National Low Carbon City Forum (Shenzhen)
Shenzhen, China
 - ▶ The 10th Megacity Think Tank Alliance (MeTTA) Forum
Beijing, China

- Nov.**
 - ▶ The Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP31)
11.09-11.02 | Antalya, Türkiye

MEET OUR TEAM

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Nakyung Kim
Regional Administrator

Minkyu Kim
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Siaqiao Yuan
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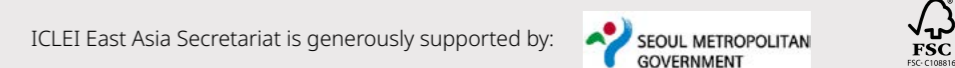
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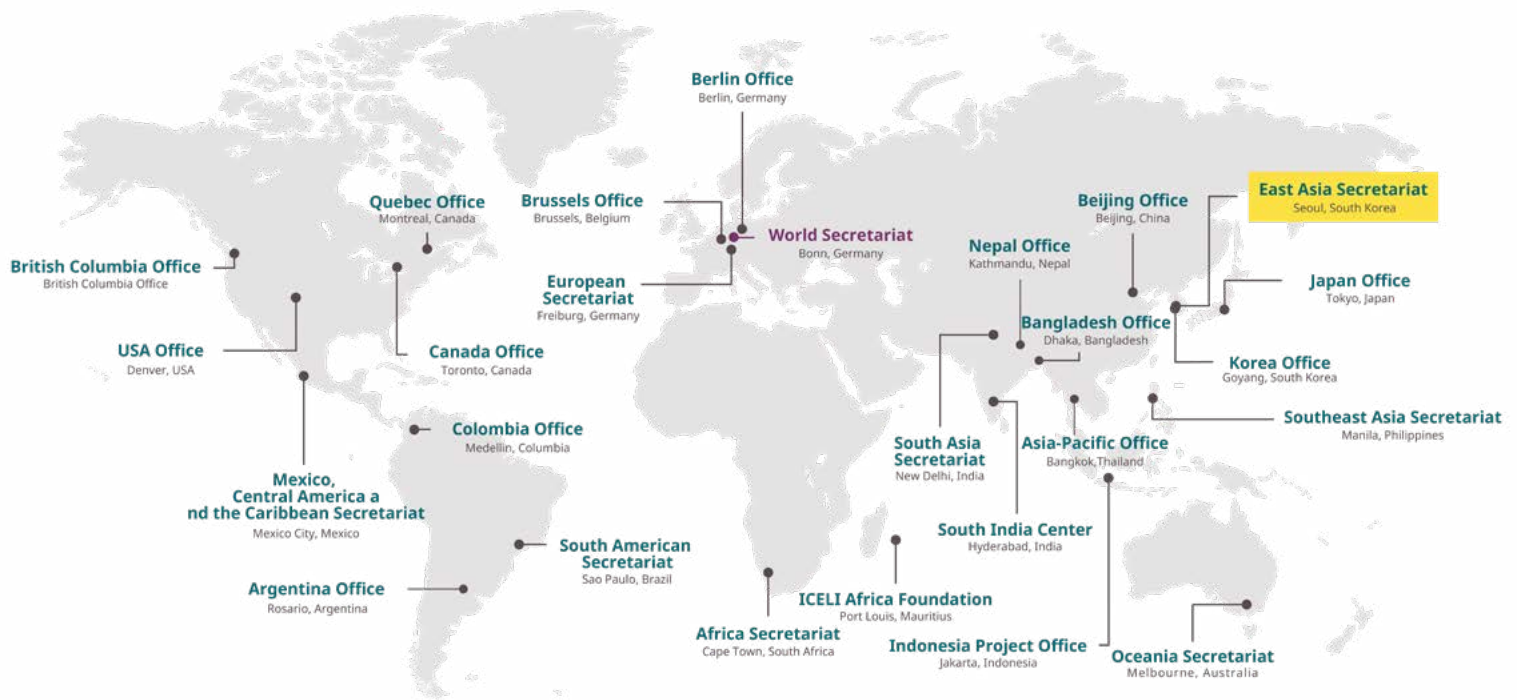


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ICLEI WORLDWIDE

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Capacity Center / Bonn • **Local Renewables Center** / New Delhi

Sustainable Procurement Center / Freiburg

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