

Plan to Accelerate

Greening Cities to Beat the Heat: Harnessing nature-based, passive and efficiency solutions for sustainable cooling and energy demand reduction

Axis:

- 1. Transitioning Energy, Industry and Transport
- 4. Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure and Water

Key objective:

- 1. Tripling renewables and doubling energy efficiency
- 13. Resilient urban development, mobility and infrastructure

Solution: Greening Cities to Beat the Heat: Harnessing nature-based, passive and efficiency solutions for sustainable cooling and energy demand reduction

Host Initiative: UNEP-led Cool Coalition and Secretariat to the Global Cooling Pledge, co-chaired by the COP30 Presidency – Brazil

Scope:

- Geographic: Latin America, Africa, and Asia (global reach)
- Sectoral: Mitigation (co-benefits in adaptation and biodiversity)
- Focus: Urban heat mitigation and energy sector demand reduction through Nature-Based Solutions (urban forests, parks, green roofs, cool corridors, wetlands, ponds, lakes and storm drainage), passive cooling in buildings and reflective surfaces, and public procurement of high energy efficiency and low GWP cooling technologies (fans, evaporative coolers, efficient AC).

Levers assessment:

- **Risk-informed decision-making:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Heat-risk mapping and vulnerability assessments are expanding, but integration into national Climate Action Plans, Heat Action Plans and disaster frameworks remains uneven. The plan promotes open-source heat mapping tools and Local Heat Action Plans.*
- **Technology shifts:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Transition toward low-GWP, energy-efficient cooling technologies is underway, with strong emphasis on fans, passive cooling and NbS as low-cost innovations.*
- **Knowledge & Capacity building:** Low maturity
 - *Rationale: Many cities, especially in the Global South, lack technical and institutional capacity for NbS and sustainable cooling planning. The plan includes partner-led training, toolkits, and city-to-city exchanges.*
- **Inclusive decision-making governance & design:** Low maturity

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- *Rationale: The initiative promotes multi-level governance ('mutirão' approach) and aims to bridge national–local coordination gaps in urban cooling and green planning, building codes and public procurement.*
- **Standards & Taxonomies:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Encourages inclusion of passive cooling and NbS in building codes and urban planning standards, aligned with the Global Cooling Pledge principles.*
- **Supply:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Scaling up supply chains for native trees, green roof materials, low-carbon cooling equipment and material goods for nature-based solutions via public procurement and private partnerships.*
- **Demand:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Driven by urban populations' exposure to extreme heat and local governments' need to meet climate adaptation goals.*
- **Public/private finance:** Low maturity
 - *Rationale: Mobilization of philanthropic resources and creation of new credit lines; articulation with international funds (GEF, GCF, MDBs) to include NbS and urban cooling as eligible financing areas.*
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** High maturity
 - *Rationale: Involves over 70 countries and 80 key partners (UNEP, C40, ICLEI, World Bank, IFC, WRI, ARUP, GCoM) for capacity building, finance, and project design.*
- **Policy & regulatory:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Promotes integration of heat resilience and improved energy efficiency in national climate and urban policies and encourages cities to adopt local ordinances for cooling and greening.*
- **Public opinion:** Medium maturity
 - *Rationale: Global campaign positioning "Beat the Heat" as a collective call for climate action under COP30's 'mutirão' concept to raise awareness on urban heat resilience.*

Expected impact of this plan on the 2030 targets (if any): High

- SDG Alignment: SDGs 3, 11, 13, and 15
- Climate Goals: Contributes to mitigation and adaptation targets of the Global Stocktake (GST) and the Global Cooling Pledge.

Expected Impacts:

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- Support 500 cities with local heat action and greening plans by COP30.
- Reduce heat-related risks for 3.5 billion people globally through passive and sustainable cooling.
- Reduce cooling-related emissions in the pathway towards near-zero emissions from cooling in the period to 2030 through passive and sustainable cooling.
- Integrate NbS and urban forestry into at least 50 Climate Action Plans frameworks by 2030.
- Promote cross-sector coordination (“mutirão”) between government levels, technical partners, private sector, financial partners and communities.
- Strengthen resilience, equity, and public health through green cooling infrastructure.

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Output	Action Scope	Action	Type of action	Implementation Lever	Responsible	Time horizon	Stakeholder engagement	Committed Stakeholders
Support 500 cities with local heat action and greening plans by COP30.	Policy & Planning	Promote cooling and urban heat vulnerability assessments and prioritize cooling projects	Existing a... ▾	Risk-informed... ▾	Local governments with national support	Novemb... ▾	Multi-stakehol... ▾	WRI, C40, MapBiomas, UNEP Cool Coalition
Integrate NbS and urban forestry into at least 50 Climate Action Plans frameworks by 2030.	Coordination & Governance	Mobilization of 50 countries to create national and subnational steering committees for NbS and urban greening	New action ▾	Inclusive deci... ▾	Cool Coalition / COP30 Presidency	Novemb... ▾	Multi-stakehol... ▾	UNEP, ICLEI, C40, GCoM
Integrate NbS and urban forestry into at least 50 Climate Action Plans frameworks by 2030.	Policy & Planning	Streamline cooling policies using National Cooling Action Plans (NCAPs) and city-level Heat Action Plans with NbS integration	Existing a... ▾	Risk-informed... ▾	Local governments with national support	Novemb... ▾	Multi-stakehol... ▾	São Paulo, Teresina, Freetown, Lagos, Santiago, etc.
Reduce cooling-related emissions in the pathway towards near-zero emissions from cooling in the period to 2030 through passive and sustainable cooling.	Regulation	Incorporate energy codes, passive cooling and urban forestry in public infrastructure and housing codes	Existing a... ▾	Standards & T... ▾	National and municipal governments	Novemb... ▾	Multi-stakehol... ▾	Brazil, Kenya, India
Reduce heat-related risks for 3.5 billion people globally through passive and sustainable cooling.	Finance	Establish new financing lines for NbS and sustainable urban cooling through public-private partnerships	New action ▾	Public/private ... ▾	UNEP, IFC, World Bank	Novemb... ▾	Multi-stakehol... ▾	Cool Coalition partners
Integrate NbS and urban forestry into at least 50	Capacity Building	Develop city-to-city learning and training modules on NbS	New action ▾	Knowledge & ... ▾	UN-Habitat, WRI, ICLEI	Novemb... ▾	Multi-stakehol... ▾	Cool Coalition Secretariat

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Output	Action Scope	Action	Type of action	Implementation Lever	Responsible	Time horizon	Stakeholder engagement	Committed Stakeholders
Climate Action Plans frameworks by 2030.		and sustainable urban cooling						
Promote cross-sector coordination ("mutirão") between government levels, technical partners, private sector, financial partners and communities.	Communication	Global 'Beat the Heat' campaign to raise public awareness in 500 cities	Existing a...	Public opinion	UNEP / COP30	Novemb...	Multi-stakehol...	COP30 Presidency
Reduce cooling-related emissions in the pathway towards near-zero emissions from cooling in the period to 2030 through passive and sustainable cooling.	Regulation	Enhance efficiency and use of low-GWP refrigerants and renewable/non-fossil fuel energy	New action	Standards & T...	National and municipal governments	Novemb...	Multi-stakehol...	Cool Coalition Secretariat
Reduce cooling-related emissions in the pathway towards near-zero emissions from cooling in the period to 2030 through passive and sustainable cooling.	Policy & Planning	Promote public procurement of high energy efficiency and low GWP cooling technologies (fans, evaporative coolers, efficient AC).	New action	Standards & T...	National and municipal governments	Novemb...	Multi-stakehol...	Cool Coalition Secretariat