

CITIES INVESTMENT FACILITY



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"Anonymous woman sitting on the slope of the old city", Fes, Morocco © Ryutaro Tsukata



CONTENTS

3
FOREWORD

4
DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

6
MOBILISING RESOURCES FOR YOUR URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

8
UN-HABITAT DRAFTING POSITION ON WASTE-TO-ENERGY

10
WASTE-TO-ENERGY IN MOROCCO

12
TURNING WASTE INTO POWER

14
EVENTS

20
NEW PERSONNEL INTRODUCTION

22
CONTRIBUTORS

The Cities Investment Facility (CIF) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that strives to unlock significant capital flows to inclusive, sustainable urbanization projects. Through its pillars, CIF structures projects at the (pre)feasibility stage to become “financeable” and connect them with investors. By convening and preparing a pipeline of SDG-compliant financeable infrastructure projects, this facility, makes a significant contribution to achieving the UN’s Agenda 2030.

<https://citiesinvestmentfacility.org>

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FOREWORD

This edition delves into the progress of the Cities Investment Facility (CIF) in convening a pipeline of sustainable urban development projects in the affordable housing, waste management, energy, water and sanitation, and transport and mobility sectors.

This work is guided by UN-Habitat's new strategic plan that puts housing at the center of sustainable and inclusive development, not in isolation but as part of a broader urban ecosystem supported by basic services, urban financing, knowledge, and capacity building. CIF's thematic sectors form the foundation of well-planned and serviced urban environments, ensuring that housing is not only available but also livable, connected, and sustainable.

CIF has commenced targeted project sourcing efforts in the Arab States in the waste-to-energy (WtE) sector in collaboration with Shanghai SUS Environment Co. LTD. The Arab states region is ideal given its growing waste production, overburdened landfills, and strong policy momentum that prioritizes the development of waste-to-energy solutions to support the transition towards a circular economy. CIF is sourcing WtE projects as part of a broader, integrated solid waste management approach that prioritizes waste prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling and only where local conditions such as waste composition, governance, and infrastructure support their safe and sustainable application.

The issue also features a practical guide on how to submit projects to CIF, highlighting our unique approach to project preparation that blends sustainable development with private investment standards. We also highlight why strategic project sourcing, grounded in local context, community engagement, and catalytic interventions, is at the core of designing impactful and investment-ready projects.

We are also excited to announce the second iteration of our sustainable finance masterclass, a capacity-building initiative aimed at equipping city officials and project promoters in Arab States and Africa with the tools and frameworks needed to submit and prepare bankable SDG-aligned infrastructure projects.

Looking ahead to the second half of the year, CIF is focused on project sourcing to build a strong project pipeline with an emphasis on early-stage support for projects that align with community needs, national priorities, and investor interest. As we work to conceptualize our pilot projects, we invite our partners and stakeholders to follow the groundwork we are laying towards sustainable urban transformation.



DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

WHY PROJECT SOURCING IS AT THE CORE OF PROJECT PREPARATION

Oliver Schaper, Cities & Urban Design Leader, Design Director, and Principal at Gensler's New York Office

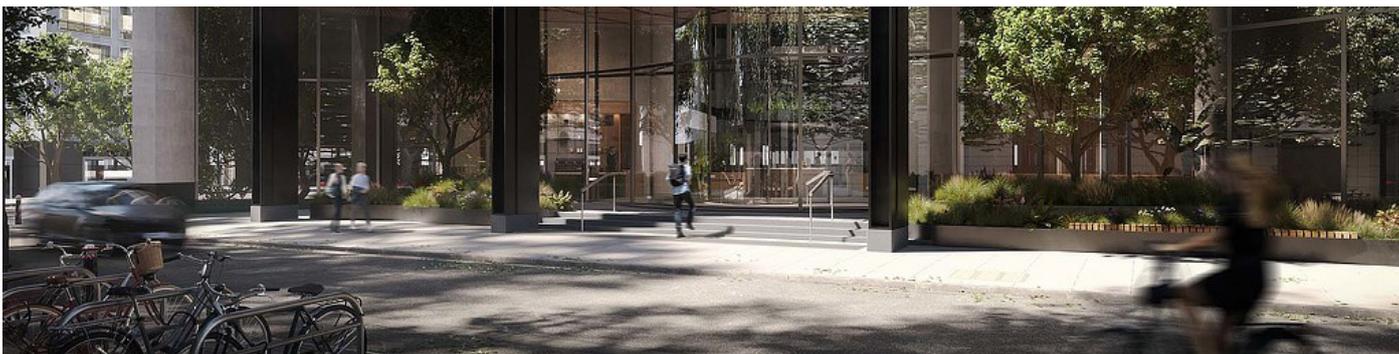


Source: Gensler, in 10 Gresham Street (2023).

Urban development projects are critical to sustainable growth of cities, and their success hinges on the ability to attract investment and create sustained value. These projects encompass a wide range of initiatives, including mobility infrastructure, housing, commercial and institutional real estate, public realm assets such as streets, parks and urban plazas, and, of course, public works. However, municipal governments often lack the administrative and technical resources to create city-wide comprehensive master plans that provide the necessary context to set urban development projects up for success. In an ideal scenario, city-wide master plans allow governments to effectively build for the communities they serve, while providing private-sector developers with an understanding of the context they need to

maximize the return on their investment. Instead, understaffed government bodies do not have the time or money to accurately portray local needs, and isolated problems often go unsolved.

In urban development, no project exists in isolation. While technical excellence in planning and execution is the basis of any urban project, design thinking and creative strategy should come first to establish a comprehensive understanding of the complex context within which a project is situated. Using proven shareholder methods like PPPs and considering both global and local best practices, cities should look towards creating agencies dedicated to ensuring economic success through urban development.



Source: Gensler, in 10 Gresham Street (2023).

Identifying bankable urban development projects

What helps attract economic investment? Success begins with a thorough understanding of the local context and needs, assessing how best to implement economic resilience, regulatory certainty, and even the city brand can help attract shareholders. In order to gain this understanding, conducting comprehensive market research, engaging with community stakeholders, and analyzing demographic trends can help community leaders gain insight into the strengths of their cities.

Community engagement and stakeholder collaboration

The public and shareholder relationship is key in helping to shape a project's focus and understand the challenges that need solving. Proven partnership models, such as PPPs, can facilitate collaboration and alignment of interests. Key considerations include stakeholder mapping to identify and engage key stakeholders to pool resources and expertise. Feasibility Studies should be conducted to assess the technical, economic, and environmental viability of projects, which can then be used to identify the catalytic interventions needed for success.

Catalytic Interventions supporting projects as multipliers

Catalytic interventions are strategic actions that can trigger significant positive changes in urban development. These interventions often serve as the initial spark that attracts further investment and development, they can include anchor projects in large-scale developments, such as transportation hubs or cultural centers, but also mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create vibrant communities. Catalytic interventions increase the value of surrounding areas, enhancing the quality of life and thoughtfully implementing community knowledge.

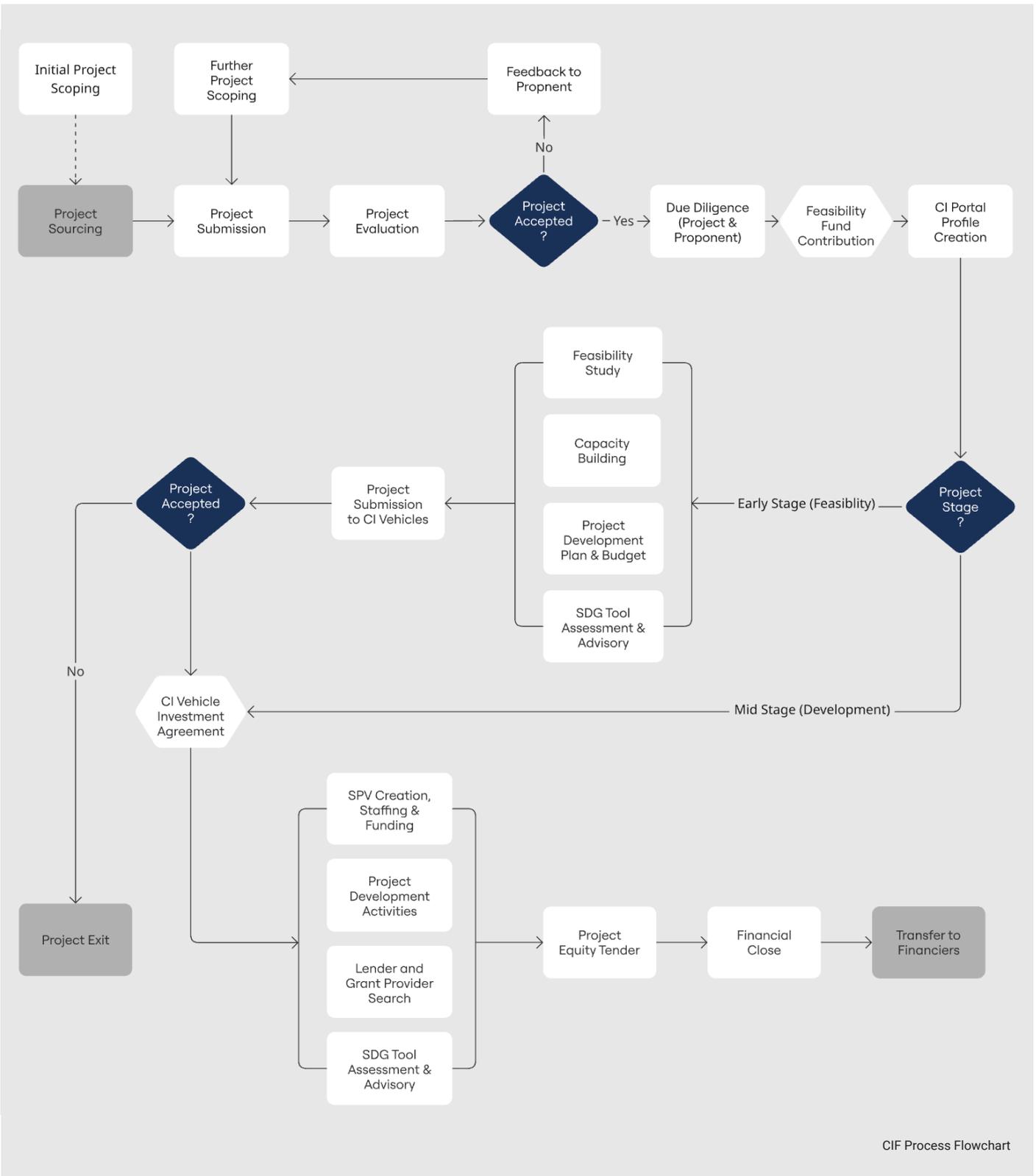
Global thinking and a holistic approach

Urban development is inherently complex, involving many interconnected elements. A systems thinking approach acknowledges this complexity and seeks to understand the relationships between different components. Therefore, developing a holistic perspective leads to deploying adaptive planning strategies and flexible plans that can evolve with changing conditions and feedback. While global best practices in planning and design help to set up successful projects, it is equally important to tailor strategies to the specific needs and context of each city. This involves local context analysis to understand the unique characteristics and challenges of the local environment and create designs that are adaptable to local conditions and community needs.

A proposal: The establishment of a "City Success Agency"

To ensure continuous improvement and making sure that learned experiences continue to influence city-making decisions, a new type of city agency dedicated to urban development can ensure a living master plan for the city, continuously updating and refining based on feedback and research. A dedicated agency would allow a space for innovation and experimentation and allow local governments to apply lessons learned from experiences made - both successes and failures - to continuously improve the understanding of a city. Designing impactful urban development projects requires a strategic approach to project sourcing, planning, and execution. By adhering to the principles of community and continued innovation, the proposed city agency would play a crucial role, ensuring that urban development projects remain beneficial for all stakeholders - both privately and within the community.

MOBILISING RESOURCES FOR YOUR URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: SUBMITTING PROJECT PROPOSALS TO CIF



CIF Process Flowchart



Transforming infrastructure plans into viable projects can be challenging. For city officials and local governments, the path to securing investment for such projects may be unclear. CIF attracts private investment to support sustainable urban infrastructure projects from early-stage scoping through to financial close.

The CIF Project Pipeline

CIF distinguishes itself from other project preparation facilities through its close engagement with the global expert network of UN-Habitat. By working closely with regional offices of UN-Habitat, CIF is able to identify and select the most feasible projects that are most likely to effectively contribute to sustainable urban development. CIF receives and evaluates project proposals on a rolling basis. These projects can conveniently be submitted via a structured project submission questionnaire, which requests detailed information about the project plan. To ensure the bankability of projects, CIF requires that they at least meet the following screening criteria in order to be considered:

The project must:

- Align with these one single infrastructure sectors; Transport & Mobility, Waste Management, Water & Sanitation, Energy and Affordable Housing.
- Amount to a ticket size of at least USD\$50mil.
- Demonstrate local and/or national government backing.
- Be clearly connected to an urban masterplan and/or official development agenda
- Align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Following submission and preliminary screening, projects are thoroughly evaluated. Each proposal is reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of representatives from UN-Habitat, CIF implementing partners, and private investors. If the project shows promise, it moves forward to a due diligence phase, where legal experts of UN-Habitat approve its legitimacy and that of the proponent. With legal approval, a Memorandum of Understanding is signed between CIF and the project proponent. This formalises the partnership and paves the way for creating a detailed project profile, which is uploaded to the Cities Investment Portal (CIP). The CIP is a digital platform that hosts and tracks the progress of projects admitted into CIF throughout the project preparation lifecycle and opens up opportunities for matchmaking city projects to potential investors.

Between Bankability and Sustainability

In order to effectively attract capital, a project must clearly demonstrate its potential to generate revenue. In particular, as CIF focuses on lower- and middle-income markets, its project sourcing relies on rigorous financial assessments. Through an iterative engagement with local governments and private investors, CIF has increasingly sought to source for demand. Projects are more likely to successfully attract capital if they align with investment strategies.

However, CIF's core business lies within the sustainability of infrastructure projects. As an initiative co-led by UN-Habitat, the UN SDGs are at the core of CIF's work. Ultimately, CIF contributes to the objective of developing more liveable, resilient and sustainable cities in the world's most rapidly urbanizing regions. Therefore, a significant proportion of the project submission and evaluation processes assesses the alignment of the project with the SDGs. To be proposed to CIF investors, a project must demonstrate its contribution to inclusive urbanization.

Preparing Projects with CIF

CIF offers more than visibility. Once investments are sourced through the CIP, the Cities Investment Advisory Platform (CIAP) provide technical support and project development assistance during the feasibility stage. After feasibility, the project is submitted to a Cities Investment Vehicle (CIV). CIVs assess and effectively ensure the bankability of projects, the availability of necessary land and permits, all the way to creating and publicizing a bid/tender package and assisting with investor due diligence, selection and negotiation. Throughout, CIF implementing partners work to build investor confidence while ensuring the project stays rooted in community needs.

While guiding infrastructure projects through the critical early and mid-development stages, CIF continuously builds new partnerships with technical partners and investors. Should you be interested in contributing to the technical preparation of projects or investing in the CIF pipeline, please do [register your interest](#).

UN-HABITAT DRAFTING POSITION ON WASTE-TO-ENERGY: INCLUSIVITY, SAFEGUARDS, AND LOCAL CONTEXT

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Cities Investment Facility (CIF), is implementing a Waste-to-Energy (WtE) sourcing project to identify sustainable investment opportunities. To support this effort, UN-Habitat is currently working on a draft position paper to provide clear, evidence-based guidance on the role of such technologies in sustainable urban waste management.

As the UN's focal point for urbanization, UN-Habitat remains committed to promoting inclusive, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable waste management systems. The forthcoming position paper on WtE will emphasize that WtE incineration is not a substitute for upstream strategies such as waste prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling. Instead, it may be considered in specific contexts where strong governance, financial capacity, and environmental safeguards are guaranteed.

The draft position paper will also highlight the importance of assessing WtE technologies based on local waste composition, institutional capacity, and social acceptance, while paying a special attention to protect the livelihoods of informal waste workers and ensure that any waste treatment approach aligns with zero-waste initiatives and circular economy principles.

The paper will also draw on insights derived from the UN-Habitat-developed Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT), which provides standardized data to assess municipal waste management systems and inform evidence-based decisions which is critical for waste management planning including WtE.





Source: WtE project in Sousse, Tunisia

This position paper is significant given the escalating global waste crisis exacerbated by rapid urbanisation and the lack of adequate waste infrastructure. The waste sector accounts for 20%¹ of human-related methane emissions. Further, the world produces about 2 million tons of waste annually expected to increase by 70% by 2050¹. It is estimated that this increase will be primarily in the Global South countries that lack reliable waste infrastructure and rely on direct landfilling. WtE technologies present a compelling opportunity to address

these challenges but it remains underutilised due to regulatory, financial, technical and environmental as well as social barriers. Hence, UN-habitat aims to provide guidance on the sustainable use of WtE technology, through this position paper. The position paper has been drafted by the Urban Basic Services Section (UBSS) and is expected to be finalized in the coming months. UN-Habitat will invite relevant stakeholders to engage in dialogue as the position paper evolves.

1. Lama, N. (2024, April 26). The world has a waste problem. Here's how to fix it. IFC. <https://www.ifc.org/en/blogs/2024/the-world-has-a-waste-problem>

WASTE-TO-ENERGY IN MOROCCO: NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

Rajae Haissouss, Programme Associate, UN-Habitat Morocco

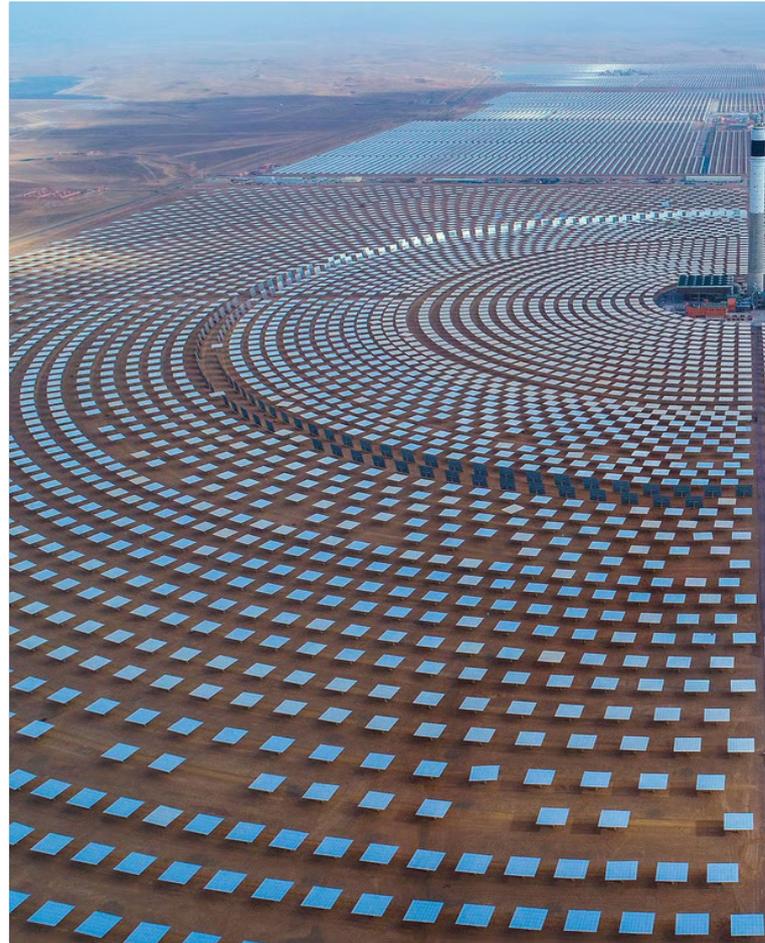
Morocco is undergoing a significant energy transition. As of early 2025, total electricity production stood at nearly 12 GW, of which approximately 5.4 GW or 44%¹, is now sourced from renewables, including solar, wind, and emerging green hydrogen. While large-scale solar and wind remain dominant, interest in converting municipal and industrial waste into energy is increasing, aligned with circular economy priorities and national climate objectives. Amidst challenges like rapid urbanization and the urgent need to cut greenhouse gas emissions, waste-to-energy (WtE) is increasingly recognized as a strategic component of Morocco's sustainable development pathway. It not only supports the country's renewable energy targets but also reinforces its vision for a resilient and circular economy.

Waste management in Morocco has undergone significant reforms over the past decade, notably through the National Program for Household Waste Management (PNDM), which has improved waste collection coverage, progressively closed uncontrolled dumpsites, and introduced 26 sanitary landfills². Despite these achievements, landfilling remains the dominant method of disposal, and the rate of waste recovery remains low. Morocco generates around 7 to 8 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually, with an annual growth of approximately 3%. Household waste is composed of nearly 80% organic matter³, which offers strong potential for biogas and biomethane production. However, the current recycling and recovery rate remains below 10%, far from the 20% target set for 2030 under the National Program for Waste Recovery (PNVR).

Several pilot projects have been initiated to move towards energy recovery from waste⁴. In Rabat and Oum Azza, methane capture systems have been integrated into sanitary landfills to produce electricity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Similar initiatives exist in Kenitra and Fès, where biogas recovery is being deployed. In the industrial sector, some companies have started valorizing agricultural residues and organic by-products to generate biomass energy, further illustrating the potential for scaling up these solutions. Yet,

large-scale WtE plants remain limited, and the opportunity lies in leveraging Morocco's high share of organic waste to expand anaerobic digestion facilities and biogas upgrading units for injection into the gas grid or for local energy consumption.

Morocco's commitment to WtE development is anchored in several national strategies. The National Program for Household Waste Management (PNDM) aims to modernize the entire waste management chain, including energy recovery from landfills. The National Program for Waste Recovery



The Noor photovoltaic park in Ouarzazate, Morocco @ CHINA NEWS/SIPA

1. AGBI. (2025, May). Morocco reports growth in power production. AGBI.

2. Ministry of Interior. (2018). National Program for Household Waste Management (PNDM) – Review and Perspectives.

3. World Bank. (2018). Solid Waste Management in Morocco: Opportunities and Challenges for Energy Recovery. Washington, D.C.

4. GIZ Morocco. (2019). Report on Integrated Solid Waste Management and Valorization Opportunities.

(PNVR) specifically targets 20% waste recovery by 2030⁵, promoting the valorization of non-recyclable and organic waste streams. The National Energy Strategy, adopted in 2009, set an ambitious goal of 52% of installed electricity capacity from renewable sources by 2030⁶, explicitly recognizing WtE as part of this renewable energy mix. Furthermore, the National Sustainable Development Strategy (SNDD) emphasizes circular economy principles and resource optimization, positioning waste valorization as a critical tool for sustainable growth⁷. Finally, the National Climate Plan 2030 includes WtE as a mitigation measure to reduce methane emissions from landfills⁸, aligned with Morocco's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Together, these strategies create a favorable policy environment for the deployment of WtE projects through innovative financing models such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).

Moreover, the recent Voluntary Local Review (VLR)⁹ conducted in Agadir by the UN-Habitat office in Morocco provided a comprehensive overview of progress at all levels and across various areas related to the selected Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), including: SDG 7 on energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 13 on climate action, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. Among the key thematic areas, the VLR offers a valuable basis for strengthening the city's overall waste management system. It assessed local waste streams, urban services, and key sustainability challenges, identifying significant opportunities to improve waste collection, treatment, and recycling practices. It emphasized the importance of reducing landfill reliance, promoting circular economy approaches, and enhancing institutional coordination.

The outlook for WtE in Morocco is promising due to several factors. The high organic content of municipal waste makes the country well suited for biogas production. Ambitious national targets for renewable energy and waste recovery require accelerated investment in energy valorization solutions. Moreover, municipalities are increasingly interested in reducing their dependency on landfills while monetizing waste streams. PPP models such as Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and long-term concession agreements offer viable frameworks for financing and operating WtE infrastructure, supported by revenue streams from tipping fees and energy sales, making these projects financially attractive and sustainable. However, challenges persist, waste sorting at source remains insufficient, which affects feedstock quality for WtE processes. Local authorities have limited technical experience in planning and operating WtE facilities, and financing remains a key obstacle for large-scale projects.

Morocco has the regulatory frameworks, resource potential, and strategic vision to make waste-to-energy a central pillar of its circular economy agenda. With the support of the Cities Investment Facility and UN-Habitat, the country can develop a pipeline of bankable WtE projects structured through PPPs, ensuring environmental benefits, energy diversification, and economic opportunities. If implemented effectively, these initiatives will not only help Morocco meet its renewable energy and climate targets but also transform its waste challenge into a driver of sustainable urban development and green growth.



5. Ministry of Interior. (2020). National Program for Waste Recovery (PNVR).

6. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Environment. (2009). National Energy Strategy 2030. Rabat, Morocco.

7. State Secretariat in Charge of Sustainable Development. (2017). National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).

8. Kingdom of Morocco. (2019). National Climate Plan 2030 (PCN).

9. Agadir Municipality. (2023). Voluntary Local Review (VLR) – Implementation of the SDGs at the Local Level.

TURNING WASTE INTO POWER: TUNISIA'S FIRST LANDFILL BIOGAS-TO- ELECTRICITY PILOT LAUNCHED IN SOUSSE

Asma Shili, Communications Assistant, UN-Habitat Tunisia



Source: WtE project in Sousse, Tunisia, micro cogeneration unit

UN-Habitat Tunisia has launched a pioneering waste-to-energy project in Tunisia, converting landfill biogas into clean electricity. The initiative, implemented at the Oued Laya controlled landfill in Sousse, marks a major milestone in addressing the country's waste management and energy challenges.

Tunisia has been facing a growing waste management crisis since 2022, with accumulating waste polluting the environment and degrading water quality, posing severe public health and environmental hazards. Methane emissions from landfills have increased the dangers in already vulnerable regions, affecting health, sanitation, and environmental

deterioration. At the same time, Tunisia relies heavily on imported fossil fuels, particularly natural gas and oil, to meet its energy needs. In 2022, about 48% of primary energy needs were met through imports, with natural gas imports accounting for around 62% of total gas supply. Given that 97% of the country's electricity is generated from fossil fuels⁵, energy security has become a pressing national priority.

This project, implemented in collaboration with national and international partners, employs a 50kW micro-cogeneration unit to treat and recover landfill biogas. The system generates 60 kWh of electricity daily, enough to provide electricity for 500 households yearly. When replicated at a large scale, it would be able to provide electricity to over 22,000 households yearly, reducing Tunisia's energy dependence along with its greenhouse gas emissions.

From Local Crisis to Scalable Solutions

Oued Laya project indicates how waste might be turned into a valuable energy source, promoting a circular economy and co-benefits like cleaner air, fewer environmental hazards, and sustainable urban development. It also indicates Tunisia's enhanced promotion of climate action through renewable energy, particularly biogas.

With over 2.8¹ million tonnes of household waste produced every year and recycling standing at a staggering 4%², Tunisia's landfills are a relatively underutilized renewable energy resource. Biogas emitted by decomposition in landfills has a high methane content (50–60%), with good calorific value for electricity generation. Not only does it substitute for fossil fuel consumption, but it also limits methane emission, 28 times more potent than CO₂ in global warming impact.

Scaling Impact through Innovation and Partnerships

This pilot project benefits from years of groundwork established by UN-Habitat Tunisia and its partners. Former analyses of municipal waste, in Beni Khalled and Sousse, were carried out through the Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT), highlighting tremendous obstacles and potentials. Beni Khalled alone generates 17,600 tonnes of citrus waste annually, with only a 14% recycling rate. A proposed circular economy model there can potentially generate up to USD 10 million annually, yielding investment returns within fewer than five years. Such a scalable model illustrates how valorization of organic waste can release economic and environmental values.

In Sousse, supportive interventions were carried out in the informal waste economy, particularly with plastic waste collectors known as *barbechas*. UN-Habitat Tunisia supported efforts towards improving their working conditions, formalizing their role in the waste value chain, and providing

better tracking and accountability. These kinds of interventions and inclusive local engagement make waste management systems more equitable, professionalized, and sustainable.

The **waste collectors initiative** also demonstrated that effective waste governance requires long-term behavioral change, strengthened institutional coordination, and community-driven innovation, especially in contexts where informal actors play a key role in the circular economy.

Toward a Greener Energy Transition

Tunisia's reliance on imported fossil fuels, over 97%⁵ of its electricity production, has placed its economy under tension and added to the demand for alternatives further. Initiatives like Oued Laya present a two-way solution: clean, local energy production and improved waste management. Methanation, utilized to its maximum capability, can convert municipal eyesores into national treasures.

The official commissioning ceremony in February 2025 was graced by key stakeholders like the Japanese Ambassador to Tunisia, representatives from the Ministry of Environment, the National Agency for Waste Management (ANGED), the National Agency for Energy Management (ANME), and other stakeholders. The facility tour featured a glimpse of the **first-ever biogas unit connection to Tunisia's national electricity grid**.

"Transforming waste into renewable energy not only reduces emissions but also establishes a model of resilience and sustainability that can inspire similar efforts across Tunisia and beyond," said Mr. Majdi Frihi, project lead at UN-Habitat Tunisia.

Japan's Ambassador to Tunisia, Mr. Takeshi Osuga, noted: "This project marks Tunisia's first initiative to convert waste into renewable energy. I am pleased to see the recommendation of the Tunis Declaration from TICAD 8 materializing in collaboration with our trusted partners, including UN-Habitat, the Ministry of Environment, STEG, the Governorate of Sousse, and ANGED."

With rising ambition for climate action by Tunisia, public-private partnerships (PPPs) will be key to mobilizing capital, talent, and innovation. Not only do such projects generate clean energy but also have co-benefits: cleaner public health, reduced risk of community outrage in the area around landfill sites, and formal and informal job creation.

UN-Habitat remains committed to supporting Tunisia's transition to a circular, inclusive, and climate-resilient future, one landfill, one community, and one kilowatt at a time.

1. (Eco-Lef: A National System for the Recovery and Recycling of Post-consumer Packaging That Focuses on Plastic Waste – Best Practices in Achieving Waste Reduction in the Mediterranean, n.d.)

2. Dalberg Advisors, WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature, De Wit, W., Hamilton, A., & Freschi, A. (2019). Stop the plastic flood [Report]. WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature. https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/05062019_wwf_tunisia_guidebook.pdf

EVENTS

UN-HABITAT AND MEDEF INTERNATIONAL UNITE FOR STRONGER URBAN PARTNERSHIPS

On 12 March 2025, UN-Habitat met with Mouvements des Entreprises de France (MEDEF) International to explore new opportunities for collaboration in sustainable urban development. The meeting aimed to strengthen public-private partnerships and align shared goals ahead of major global milestones like the World Urban Forum 13, UNOC 2025 in Nice, and COP30 in Brazil.

UN-Habitat took the opportunity to present its global work and strategic vision, highlighting key focus areas including smart cities, basic services, climate resilience, and inclusive infrastructure. Special attention was given to initiatives that integrate energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and digital innovation into city planning. UN-Habitat also highlighted its commitment to supporting secondary cities, informal settlements, and biodiversity hotspots, particularly across Africa. At the same time, MEDEF International, representing a wide network of

French businesses, expressed strong interest in co-developing practical solutions in areas such as circular economy, water, energy, transport, and local employment.

UN-Habitat also emphasised its role in bridging the gap between urban projects and private finance, aiming to unlock funding for infrastructure that's inclusive, bankable, and climate-smart.

The meeting wrapped up on a collaborative note, with all sides recognizing the value of continued dialogue and joint initiatives. There's a shared vision to co-host future events and drive forward innovation, investment, and impact in cities across the globe. It's a promising step towards stronger public-private collaboration in shaping the cities of tomorrow.



Representatives from MEDEF International and UN-Habitat

PINUA – FINANCIAL MODELLING EVENT

On 20 June 2025, the Cities Investment Facility (CIF) participated in a high-level technical workshop on financial and de-risking instruments for affordable housing in Kenya. The event was organized under the Partnership for Implementing the New Urban Agenda (PINUA) – a flagship collaboration between the Government of Kenya, the European Union, and UN-Habitat – and brought together a diverse group of stakeholders including the State Department for Housing and Urban Development (SDHUD), development finance institutions (DFIs), the University of Nairobi, and implementing agencies from Kenya's Affordable Housing Programme.

The workshop served as a platform to present and critically review the preliminary financial modelling developed for two proof-of-concept projects in Kisumu and Nairobi Counties. Presentations highlighted blended financing structures, risk mitigation tools, and social impact frameworks designed to support Kenya's ambitious housing delivery targets.

The event featured contributions from the European Union, the Affordable Housing Board, SDHUD, and UN-Habitat's housing analytics and financial modelling teams, as well as DFIs including the European Investment Bank and Agence Française de Développement. Key themes included job creation, affordability in rental markets, innovative PPP-based funding structures, and the role of interest rate subsidies and guarantees in de-risking investments. The University of Nairobi also engaged in discussions on how academic institutions can strengthen the evidence base for investment-ready urban projects.

As part of the event's technical panel, CIF contributed insights on the value of early-stage project preparation for the development of sustainable and inclusive affordable housing projects. CIF emphasized its exclusive use of public-private partnership (PPP) modalities and its mission to mobilize private capital in order to de-risk projects from the outset. By enhancing early-stage project preparation up until financial close, CIF reduces the risks, accelerates the development, increases the potential scale and enhances the bankability of urban development projects.

The session provided a valuable opportunity for CIF to learn from Kenya's evolving housing landscape, including its rich cooperative movement, the layered challenges of affordability in rental markets, and the practical models being developed under the PINUA initiative. Key themes – such as how to scale successful pilots, secure long-term sustainability, and navigate land tenure complexities – closely align with CIF's broader work across the continent. In turn, this high-level meeting was also an excellent opportunity to consider how CIF can better collaborate with new implementing partners and investors to improve its pipeline of projects and technical preparation.

Looking ahead, CIF sees great potential to collaborate with local governments, DFIs, and academic institutions in Kenya to support the next generation of inclusive, investment-ready housing and infrastructure projects. CIF stands ready to assist in scaling the efforts of the PINUA project through tailored upstream project preparation. Our team remains available for the preparation of similar project across the African continent, and beyond.



Source: PINUA – Financial Modelling Event, July 2025.

UN-HABITAT AND SUS ENVIRONMENT COLLABORATE TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Lily Liu, Brand Manager, SUS Environment Co.,LTD

The 11th Waste-to-Energy Technology and Equipment Conference and the 1st ISWA Beacon Conference on Waste to Energy were held in Xi'an, China, from July 1st to 4th. This global conference was co-hosted by the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) and the China Association of Urban Environmental Sanitation (CAUES). It provided a unique opportunity for over 500 experts from around the world to collaborate and exchange knowledge on the best available techniques and practices in waste-to-energy.

UN-Habitat, the United Nations focal point for all urbanization and human settlement elements, was invited to attend the conference and visit the SUS Gaoling Project—China's first operational service leader in waste-to-energy plants and municipal solid waste incineration-based co-generation projects for district heating.

Mrs. Cecilia Andersson, the team lead for solid waste management and urban mobility at UN-Habitat, was impressed by the advanced flue gas treatment technologies applied at the project. Supported by real-time online emission monitoring systems, SUS Gaoling Project has achieved emission standards that exceed both the Chinese National Standards and the EU Emission Standards.

Following the site visit, an official meeting was held between UN-Habitat and SUS ENVIRONMENT. As the world's largest provider of waste incineration technology and one of the top three global investor in waste-to-energy projects, SUS ENVIRONMENT signed a USD 3.2 million contribution agreement with UN-Habitat in November 2024 to enhance collaboration and accelerate action on sustainable waste management globally.

The organizations have jointly developed action plans that combine technical assistance, policy support, capacity-building, and knowledge exchange to mobilize resources for urban development through sustainable waste management. During the China visit, they discussed how to tap into each expertise to promote cooperation in target regions.

"With over 89 waste-to-energy projects worldwide, SUS ENVIRONMENT possesses extensive experience in solid waste management. Through this collaboration, we aim to help cities become more sustainable and resilient," said Erastus Ndugire, programme manager, UN-Habitat.

Mr. Zhang, the general manager of SUS International, expressed "I am delighted that SUS ENVIRONMENT and UN-Habitat are partnering on the development of cities. UN-Habitat maintains offices in numerous cities,



many of which are in developing countries. We aim to leverage our expertise to promote global urban environmental development."

Urbanization drives economic growth, but it also brings about an increase in waste generation. By 2050, the amount of urban solid waste is expected to reach 3.8 billion tons, presenting both opportunities and challenges for sustainable development[1]. Landfilling remains the main source of methane (CH₄) emissions, which is the second largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. With more than 30% of waste still disposed of in landfills, people around the world are increasingly facing extreme weather events and deteriorating living conditions¹. Looking ahead, SUS ENVIRONMENT and UN-Habitat are working hand in hand to support cities in addressing these issues and transforming urban growth into a positive force for sustainability.

About SUS ENVIRONMENT

SUS ENVIRONMENT is the global leading comprehensive environment provider. As of December 2024, SUS ENVIRONMENT has established 11 management centers worldwide, providing environmental and energy services to over 100 million people. It has invested in and constructed 89 waste-to-energy projects (low-carbon Eco-industrial parks), with a daily processing capacity nearly 120,000 tons of municipal solid waste and annual green power generation of approximately 18,000 GWh. Its equipment and technology are applied in 287 waste-to-energy plants across the world, comprising 532 incineration lines, with a daily capacity of over 300,000 tons of municipal solid waste.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action.



From left to right: Lily Liu, Brand Manager, SUS Environment, Koki Takano, Associate Expert, UN-Habitat, Cecilia Andersson, OIC, Chief Urban Basic Services Section, UN-Habitat, Erastus Ndugire, Programme Manager, Cities Investment Facility, UN-Habitat, Eric Zhan, General Manager, SUS Environment, Zhenshan Zhang, Head of Beijing Country Office, UN-Habitat, Gao Feng, Vice President, SUS International, Guo Xiaowu, Project Manager, SUS Gaoling Project, Zhao Yue, Technical Support Engineer, SUS International, He Lanyao, Brand Specialist, SUS Environment

CIF PROJECT SOURCING AND PREPARATION INITIATIVE

CIF is seeking partners to provide funding for a three-year commitment as part of a broader five-year plan. This support will cover UN-Habitat project sourcing and the preparation of projects in the sectors of affordable housing, waste management, water, energy, transport and mobility.

The calculations to source and prepare five projects amount to the following costs:

- Project sourcing + Advocacy (paid to UN-Habitat) – USD 500,000
- Project preparation + Advocacy (paid to UN-Habitat) – USD 1,500,000
- Project preparation (paid to UN-Habitat external partners) – USD 2,000,000 (external partners to be selected by donor and UN-Habitat)

This total of USD 4,000,000 may be paid in tranches over the 5-year period, according to the project sourcing and preparation targets agreed upon by both parties.

The following illustration provides an example of how this support could be structured.



CIF GENERAL PROJECT CRITERIA

At its core, CIF is a project preparation facility concerned with de-risking urban infrastructure projects to ensure bankability and alignment with sustainable infrastructure goals.

For consideration, projects must meet the following criteria:

- Have undergone preliminary scoping, conceptualization, and ideation (i.e., pre-feasibility) such that the basic technical concept, business model (under a user-pays, government-pays, or hybrid model), approximate budget and schedule, and SDG alignment can be described and are complementary.
- Be clearly connected with an existing urban master plan or similar development plan strategy for the municipality.
- Projects must have secured funded support for project preparation
- Align with UN-Habitat’s existing geographical footprint.
- Align with one or more of the above-mentioned sectors
- Align with at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Further, priority is given to projects that

- Are larger in size/have larger construction budgets. Packages of aggregated smaller projects (by both geography and sector) may be considered.
- Present evidence of government support for the project, ideally at the national and/or regional levels. At a minimum, this means public endorsement of the project but can also include financial and regulatory support. If the project promoter is a public entity, this means support from other (generally higher) levels of government.
- Showcase more advanced levels of project preparation into the feasibility or development stages. (For example, this can mean having progressed with feasibility study, project development planning, relevant statutory approvals and permits, land/site control, environmental and social impact assessments, financial/regulatory government support negotiations, financial modelling, and/or design engineering, among other development activities. .

CIF offers an [online course](#) that provides step-by-step guidance on submitting the right type of projects into its pipeline.

Contact us at unhabitat-cip@un.org for more details on accessing the online course.

NEW PERSONNEL INTRODUCTION



Jonas Le Thierry, Project Officer

Jonas Le Thierry d'Ennequin is a Franco-German urbanist specialized in sustainable infrastructure development in African cities. Before joining the Cities Investment Facility, Jonas acquired extensive international experience across the private, non-profit and academic sectors, working at the nexus of urban development, strategic communications and stakeholder engagement. He recently completed his PhD at University College London (UCL). His research examines the interaction between new infrastructure developments and the existing infrastructures they are built on. His

doctoral work involved in-depth field studies on solid waste management in Dakar, Senegal. Jonas holds an MSc in Urban Development Planning from UCL and a BA in Global Challenges from Leiden University College and Universidad de Chile. He is fluent in French, German, English and Spanish. As a young scholar with practical expertise, Jonas brings deep knowledge in sustainable urbanism and infrastructure resilience in emerging economies.



Bethia Havyarimana, Project Development Intern

Bethia Havyarimana recently graduated from Daystar University in Kenya with a Bachelor of Arts, double majoring in International Relations and Security Studies, and Psychology and Counseling. Her interdisciplinary academic background spans global development policy, governance, and the international political economy, alongside an understanding of human behavior and community dynamics.

Beyond her academic background, Bethia revived and led the Daystar Writing and Speech Center. During her role at Umoja Refugee Creative (URC), a community-based organization that seeks to create sustainable livelihoods for urban refugees in Nairobi, she interacted directly with displaced communities, witnessing firsthand

the importance of urban development in addressing economic and social inequalities in low and middle-income countries. These experiences sparked her desire to contribute to projects that drive the long-term socio-economic transformation of communities and cities.

As a project development intern at the Cities Investment Facility (CIF), Bethia assists in project sourcing, feasibility analysis, and project preparation for sustainable infrastructure projects. She also supports the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in CIF's methodologies.



Manfred Schweda, Project Sourcing Consultant, Morocco

Manfred Schweda is founder/owner of MSConex/generizon, 2 companies based in Morocco he founded in 2014 and 2015 respectively. MSConex operates as a consulting firm, while Generizon serves as its technical arm, specializing in equipment and machinery installations for landfills and wastewater treatment plants. Inspired by extensive travels across South America and West Africa, Manfred pivoted his career to focus on sustainable, environmental, and renewable energy projects at the strategic intersection of Europe and Africa.

From the outset, the company's work has centered on modern waste

management, circular economy principles, and methane capture, with anaerobic digestion and biogas production forming the core, expanding into broader waste-to-energy solutions. Morocco, as a rapidly industrializing economy, provides an ideal backdrop for these ambitions, which extend beyond renewable energy generation to include green hydrogen on biogenic carbon pathways for synthetic fuels and chemicals.

Manfred is a former banker and trader, he has an MBA from the Vienna University of Business and Economics. Morocco has eventually become Manfred's chosen home.



Yuting Chen, Communications and Graphic Design Intern

Yuting graduated from the Royal Danish Academy with a master's degree in media design. She has over two years of hands-on experience in communication- and user experience design. Her work spans brand identity, user interface design and digital media, with a focus on creating clear, intuitive, and user-centered visual experiences.

Outside of academia, Yuting has volunteered for cultural and public welfare events. Notably, as an organizer for "Kind of Art" and as an art teacher for "Guarding Left-behind Children."

She has also developed, and put into practice, complete brand visual systems and promotional materials for both businesses and cultural projects alike.

Yuting is particularly interested in the intersection between design and the Sustainable Development Goals and hopes to contribute meaningfully to the UN's development mission through practical design work.

As a Communications and Design Intern at UN-Habitat, Yuting supports the creation of internal communication materials and promotional visuals, contributes to the refinement of the organization's visual identity system, and assists with the design and implementation of digital outreach products.

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