



Eco² Cities: A Model for Sustainable Urban Development

Developing countries are projected to triple their built-up urban areas between 2000 and 2030, despite severe resource constraints. To help them manage this transformation in an ecologically and economically sustainable and socially inclusive way, the World Bank—with the support of the Cities Alliance (using Japanese funds)—developed the *Eco2 Cities Initiative* in 2009. It is now globally disseminating the concept and helping several Asian countries adopt them.

Eco² cities enhance their citizens' well-being through integrated urban planning and management that harnesses the benefits of ecological systems, while protecting them for future generations. They also enhance their resource efficiency while reducing pollution and waste. This improves their economic competitiveness and resilience, strengthens their fiscal capacity, and provides significant benefits to the poor.

How the Eco² Cities Initiative works

The Eco² Cities Initiative provides cities with a bottom-up analytical and operational framework that can be adapted to each city's local conditions and needs. It also includes methods and tools that make it easier to integrate the Eco² approach in city planning and management, and it helps cities gain access to financial resources for strategic infrastructure investments.

The Eco² framework has been structured around the following key principles:

- **A city-based approach.** Enables local governments to lead a process that takes into account their specific circumstances;
- **An expanded platform for collaborative design and decision-making.** Accomplishes sustained synergy by coordinating and aligning the actions of key stakeholders;

Project: The First Eco² East Asia Programme: Proposal of Knowledge Management and Capacity Building

Partners: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Duration: 2010 - ongoing

Financing: USD1.5 million

Key Results:

- Promoted a more holistic and strategic approach to urban development
- Already influenced almost USD1 billion worth of World Bank project investments
- **A one-system approach.** Enables cities to realize the benefits of integration by planning and managing the whole urban system; and
- **An investment framework that values sustainability and resiliency.** Incorporates lifecycle cost-benefit analysis, the value of all capital assets (manufactured, natural, human, and social), and a broader scope of risk assessments for resilience.

These underpin a set of core elements that each city may transform into a unique action plan, called an “Eco² pathway.” Cities may begin incrementally, by engaging in capacity building and data management and by initially concentrating on their most critical priorities.

Eco² pilot projects are currently being rolled out in several Asian countries. The initial efforts have focused on building capacity, designing cross-sector catalyst projects, and engaging key national ministries. High-ranking government officials in Indonesia and Vietnam now agree on the need for an integrated development

approach, and Phillipines officials are considering applying the Eco² framework to low-income housing initiatives.

This has led the Bank to formulate a plan to lend approximately USD400 million to three Indonesian cities to increase their capacity to carry out effective planning and management and to design and run some catalyst projects based on the Eco² Cities concept.

Two ongoing projects in Vietnam (whose funding amounts to USD465 million) are also using the Eco² framework to design green transportation systems that promote mass transit and integrate it with the development of surrounding land. The collaborative process using the Eco² “Design Charrette” tool has been revolutionary: In the case of Ho Chi Minh City, government departments (which typically remain siloed) jointly developed a design within a week.

On a global basis, Eco² Cities is increasingly focusing on knowledge dissemination. The initiative has been presented at conferences, and a book has been translated into several languages. These efforts have inspired some nations to adopt Eco² cities initiatives as national programs and to organize Eco² Cities workshops and study tours. The *Eco² Cities Guide* was published, as well as a report on Japan’s experiences with urban and environmental management. With the support of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bank also published a book about transit and land use integration. And it is helping an Asian university consortium promote sustainable urban development through their research symposia and sustainable urban development courses.

Best Practices

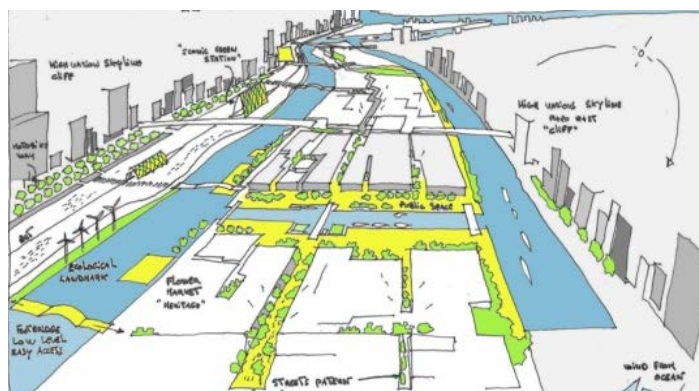
Almost all Eco² solutions are taking place in cities with a committed leadership and a citywide approach. A city’s success depends on how effectively and creatively it uses and develops the levers within its control, such as its human and technical capacity, its knowledge of local

realities, and its formal urban planning tools and municipal finance strategies.

A city’s capacity to act also depends on levers beyond its control, such as the cooperation of national or state governments, thus requiring city leadership to occur at many levels, including the regional. Cities are centres of resource consumption, and resource efficiency is driven by how well the city is integrated into the local and regional ecologies. Lastly, to act effectively, a city may need technical, administrative, and financial support, including knowledge, skills, and tools.

It is often appropriate to develop an overarching planning framework, including a growth management strategy, to guide all other plans. An Eco² pathway may feature many different projects involving players from the private, public, civil, and other sectors.

By extending the platform for decision-making to include planning institutes, and by encouraging alignment among stakeholders, the governance of a city becomes less vulnerable to the inevitable disruptions created by elections, political incidents, and the manipulation of policy by special-interest groups. An expanded platform for collaboration compensates for the inherent short-term mindset often associated with mayoral terms and the next election.



Representatives of two government departments used the Eco² “Design Charrette” tool to create this green transport system design concept for Ho Chi Minh City.