



El futuro
es de todos

Gobierno
de Colombia



In collaboration with
Arup and AlphaBeta

BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming Cities' Relationship with Nature

INSIGHT REPORT
JANUARY 2022



1.1 Cities: The engine of the modern global economy

Cities are at the heart of the global economy.

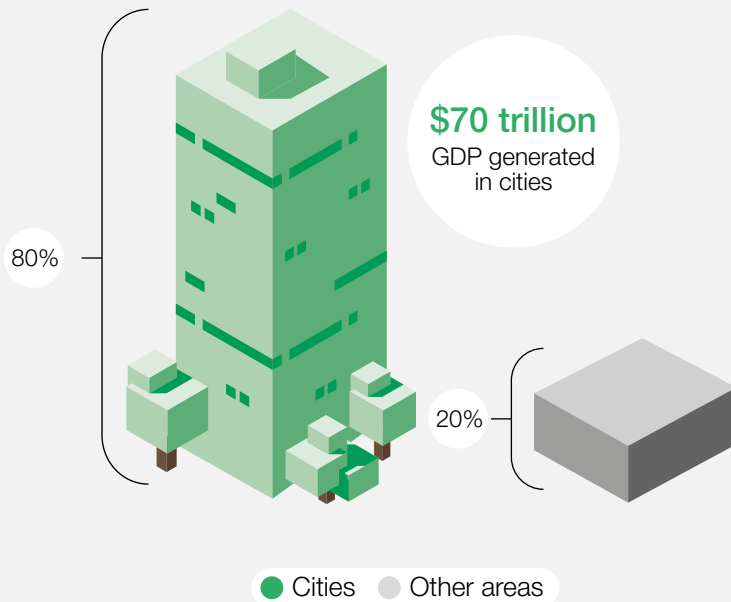
As the main stages for human activity, cities now generate over 80% of global GDP and contain 56% of the global population (Figure 1).¹ Cities around the world are projected to add 1.5 million people to their populations each week before 2030. This means that over 5.5 billion humans will be interacting, eating, collaborating, producing,

consuming, creating, breeding and sheltering in urban areas by 2030 – up from 4.4 billion today.² Cities, in turn, rely on nature to provide key services for these activities, such as sufficient safe, and clean water; productive and resilient food systems; and energy, medicine, and other materials.³ By 2050, three out of every four people on Earth are expected to be living in cities.

FIGURE 1 Cities are at the heart of our economies and societies, accounting for 80% of global GDP and 56% of global population

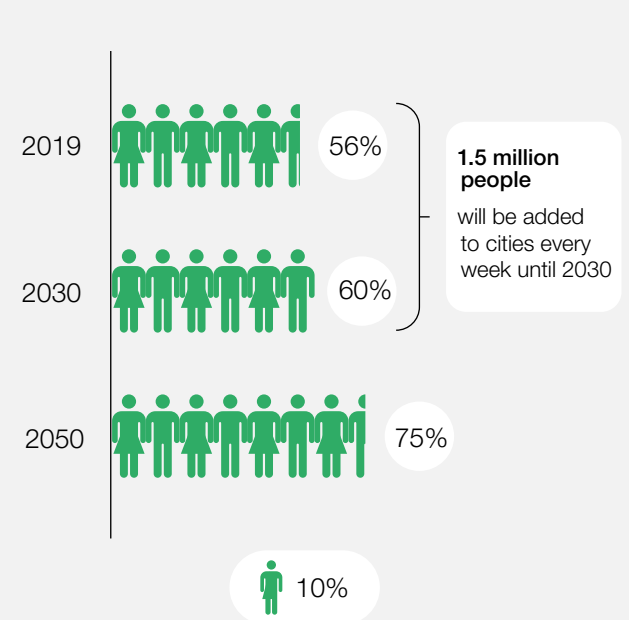
Global cities' GDP

Percentage of 2019 GDP originating in cities



Global cities' population

Percentage of global population living in cities



Source: World Bank; UN Population Division; Alphabet analysis

1.2 Cities' impact on nature

Coupled with this urban rise, the world is witnessing a sharp decline in biodiversity.⁴

Cities have historically been established and developed in or near ecosystems that provide abundant contributions to urban societies, including water, rich soils and areas protected from extreme weather events. This natural layer underpinning the built environment has been increasingly degraded through the direct and indirect impacts of urbanization.

The most noticeable direct impact of urban growth on biodiversity is the loss of natural habitats. The rapid expansion of the global built environment – a 66% area increase in the first 12 years of the 21st century⁵ – has significantly impacted natural ecosystems. Much of the land in and around cities is degraded, threatening native habitats, the genetic and functional diversity of flora and fauna, and the quality of air and waterways.⁶ A high proportion of the direct impact to nature from this urban expansion is forecast to occur in some