



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Safe and Sound (S²Cities) Programme

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Questions about the design of the programme

1. What is the programme's objective?

The programme aims to improve young people's safety and wellbeing in urban environments. To achieve this objective, the programme aims to empower young people aged 15 - 24 to shape safer and more inclusive urban environments through ideation and innovation. By partnering with young people, city governments, strategic advisors, learning partners and local implementation organisations, the programme connects young people to the resources they need to become agents of change in their cities.

2. Who does the programme target?

The programme primarily targets young people aged 15 - 24 years living in secondary cities of [Low and Middle-Income Countries](#) in the [Global South](#). In addition, the programme engages local governments, civil society organisations, (academic) institutions, the private sector, youth-led organisations, community actors and other key stakeholders.

3. What is the structure of programme partners?

The S²Cities Global Programme Team is a collaborative of organisations leveraging their individual knowledge and expertise to create safer cities for young people. The team consists of global and local partners. Refer to this interactive [map](#) for an overview of the programme's partner structure and to meet the individuals who compose our team.

4. Which safety issues does the programme focus on?

The programme does not predefine safety issues per focus city. The identification of relevant safety issues per local context is meant to occur as part of programme activities. The identification of relevant safety issues is meant to take place together with young people, public officials and other stakeholders. The co-identified safety issues are then meant to frame the innovation activities. Refer to “[What are the programme activities?](#)” for more details.

That said, there are certain contexts and topics deemed in scope and out of scope which offer a general guidance.

- In scope: secondary cities, young people aged 15 -24, crime, violence, sexual harassment, discrimination, road traffic and mobility, safe public spaces, safe infrastructures, policing, placemaking, aesthetics, public health, waste management, climate change (clean air, heat protection, Nature-Based Solutions, etc.), wellbeing drivers & markers (personal, societal, environmental, autonomy, relatedness, competence)
- Out of scope: mega city contexts, rural contexts, emergency / disaster contexts, young people under 14 years, highest socio-economic groups, war, child labour, child marriage, FGM, human trafficking

5. What are the programme activities?

You can view our Theory of Change [here](#), which outlines the program activities. Generally, the programme consists of four components with related activities:

1. **Building understanding of urban systems to reveal tactical triggers for change.** This includes looking at safety from young people’s perspectives, examining the interrelations of safety issues which affect young people, and analysing the root causes of safety issues;
2. **Building capacities to foster long-term sustainable change.** This includes connecting actors and building networks, creating inclusive structures for decision-making, and developing the capacities of youth and public and private sector actors to sustain change;
3. **Catalysing innovation to challenge the status quo.** This includes applying design thinking methodology, framing new mindsets to tackle complex safety issues and harnessing young people’s creativity to solve local challenges; and
4. **Scaling systems to generate widespread change.** This includes adapting and improving methods to fit local contexts, scaling the learnings to other cities and changing the system on a personal, societal and environmental level.

Local partners design their own methodologies for carrying out programme activities according to the local context and the city’s needs and priorities. Youth engagement is central to all stages of the programme. Monitoring, evaluation and learning is also woven into all programme activities. Refer to our [integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning \(iMEL\) framework](#).

6. What is the timeline of programme activities?

In cities which join the programme in 2022 onwards, the overall timeline is about 12-13 months and should adhere to the rough timeline as outlined below. Specific deadlines will be agreed once organisations are selected to lead local implementation.

Program component	Role of the grantee	Overarching deliverables/activities for the grantee	Tentative duration (note: components can be carried out in parallel)
Component 1 Building System Understanding	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder mapping Objective data collection Subjective data collection with young people Building systems model 	3 months
Component 2 Capacity Building and Bridge-building	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of capacity gaps Capacity development with city authorities Capacity development with young people and bridge building Engagement with private sector to create opportunities for young people 	3 months
Component 3 Innovation and Youth Driven Action	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 prototype innovation incubator round Implementation of innovation 	3 months 3 - 4 months
Component 6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and provide data as required by the iMEL framework. 	Ongoing throughout components 1 - 3

The above timeline is offered as a guide, to be adjusted to the start date of the grantee's contract and the needs of the proposal. We estimate that each component has a duration of 2-3 months, however some activities from different components can be implemented in parallel. Once the innovations are selected (towards the end of component 3), we estimate a few months to support their implementation.

7. What are the outcomes of the programme at the local level?

Young people will develop actual solutions for addressing safety issues via the innovation component. The solutions will undergo evaluation and selection via an innovation event e.g. hackathon, and the winning solutions will be implemented with support from the local lead

implementation partners, city government, private sector and other key stakeholders. These solutions will take the form of tactical urbanism projects grounded in theories of systems change, placemaking and relational wellbeing. Seed funding is available to implement the winning initiatives. See “[What should be the scale and intended impact of the innovations developed by young people?](#)” for more information.

8. What is the intended impact of the innovations developed by young people?

The innovations are meant to address local safety issues co-identified by young people, public officials and other key stakeholders of each respective focus city and to improve safety and wellbeing for young people living in that city. The innovations can take the form of tactical interventions in the urban space and/or projects which synergise with the city’s Master plans/comprehensive development plans/other relevant urban development projects. The innovations are intended to support Systemic Change and reflect the principles of urban safety, relational well-being approach, innovation, co-creation, placemaking and participatory decision-making.

Furthermore, the solutions developed by young people are meant to be sustainable over time. Close partnership with cities and commitment of the city governments to support the implementation of young people’s ideas is meant to help support the sustainability of ideas beyond the end of the programme. The establishment of meaningful relationships between relevant local stakeholders (youth, city agencies, private sector, etc.) as part of programme activities is also meant to support the sustainability of young people’s ideas.

9. What is the programme’s source of funding?

The current main source of funding is philanthropic. The programme’s main donor is Fondation Botnar. [Fondation Botnar](#) is a Swiss philanthropic foundation working to improve the health and wellbeing of young people living in cities around the world. Advocating for the inclusion of youth voices and the equitable use of AI and digital technology, the foundation invests in and supports innovative programs and research, and brings together actors from across sectors to create dialogue and partnerships: www.fondationbotnar.org.

10. Who receives funding within the context of this programme?

At the local level, the only partners to receive financial support are [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#) and the organisation recruited to collaborate with ICLEI to lead implementation of programme activities. ICLEI and the selected organisation will each hold a grant agreement with [Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation](#), the global programme manager of S²Cities. At the local level, young people’s winning innovations also receive seed funding. At the global level, other partner organisations receive funding.

Note: cities do not receive direct funding within the context of this programme.

11. How many cities will take part in the programme and how long is the programme active in each respective city?

Currently the programme will have a total of 6 cities in 4 countries: Bandung, Indonesia; Envigado, Colombia; Ambato and Naga, the Philippines, and Cuenca and Ambato, Ecuador. The programme aims to stay 3 years in each city depending on several factors including the implementation timeline of each of GIB's local grantees and total funding available. The current phase of the program will last a total of 3 years, from 2021 to 2024, and GIB's presence will be planned accordingly. If scaling opportunities arise or a new phase of the programme is approved, this will be updated accordingly.

12. How can young people take part in the programme?

Young people aged 15 – 24 years can participate in the programme in different forms. Young people living in one of the programme's focus cities can be directly involved in local programme activities. This can take the form of open application process, a survey, a registration link, etc. led by the local partners. The local partners will also seek to establish partnerships with local youth-led organisations for carrying out programme activities.

Young people not living in one of the programme's focus cities can still participate in the programme by taking part in online events throughout the year. Receive updates on these events by [signing up for our mailing list](#) and following the S²Cities social networks [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#). Young people can also follow the local partners' social media networks to learn how to engage and can always reach out via e-mail to the global programme e-mail address (info@s2cities.org) or directly to the local partners for further information on how to get involved.

Questions about joining the programme (cities)

13. Which cities are eligible to participate in the programme?

The programme targets secondary cities in [Low and Middle-Income Countries](#) in the [Global South](#). The programme's current focus countries are Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Vietnam. However, the programme does consider cities located in countries other than these priority countries.

At this time, cities in the Global North are not eligible. Megacities, capital cities and large municipal cities not fitting the [definition of secondary cities](#) are also not eligible. Additionally, cities in warzones, in emergency contexts or in rural areas are not eligible.

14. Why does the programme focus on secondary cities? And how do you define secondary cities?

Whereas many development projects benefit major cities (where governments have capacity to attract international donors) or rural areas (where development fits into agricultural strategies), S²Cities focuses on mid-sized cities in low- and middle-income countries that rarely receive the support needed.

In selecting a secondary city, we consider population size as a general guidance. We note that secondary cities can range in size between “150,000 and five million, representing one

of the biggest opportunities for urbanising economies globally” (source: [Cities Alliance, Secondary Cities](#)). However, we do not have a strict minimum or maximum population size requirement. In addition to population size we consider other factors, noting that “apart from [cities’] size, more important is their function and geographical location in a national system of cities” (source: [Cities Alliance, Secondary Cities](#)). We therefore seek to partner with sub-national or sub-metropolitan cities that are connected to other cities and their surrounding areas (including rural areas, where applicable) and are positioned to influence national flows of people, goods and services.

15. How can cities apply to join the programme? And when is the next open call?

The S²Cities programme hosts an annual call for new cities in partnership with [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability](#). Cities are asked to first [register their interest](#) and then to follow the instructions communicated via email for submitting the required application documents. These documents include an official Letter of Interest signed by a city representative.

The annual call for new cities is communicated through the S²Cities website, social media channels and the networks of our global and local partners. Refer [here](#) for more information on the overall process and the next open call for new cities.

16. How will cities benefit from joining the programme?

The S²Cities programme will support cities to improve urban safety for young people by creating an exciting way for city officials to engage with young people, enabling better understanding of urban safety and what needs to be done to improve it.

Participating governments will furthermore receive the following support:

- Support in the establishment and furnishment of a youth hub to support youth innovation (note: it is the city’s responsibility to allocate a space free of charge to serve as the youth hub). See “[What is the youth hub?](#)” for more information.
- Expert analysis of urban safety status quo.
- Training and capacity development of city staff in understanding urban safety and youth engagement.
- Participation in an annual youth innovation challenge and award programme which results in youth-driven solutions for improving urban safety and security, e.g. through tactical interventions in the urban space.
- Access to a global learning network and its benefits, such as invitation to key international and local events.

Note: cities do not lead the actual activities of youth engagement and capacity building; rather, they are beneficiaries of these activities and can look forward to working in partnership with organisations to support the implementation of young people’s innovative ideas for solving safety issues. See “[How can organisations apply to join the programme?](#)” for more information.

17. What must cities provide to join the programme?

In general, cities should demonstrate interest in youth development and innovation as well as willingness and commitment to support the programme. =

Additionally, we request in-kind contribution from cities in the form of:

- Appointment of a focal person(s) for the programme, to take the role of ‘Chief Youth Safety Officer.’
- Participation of the focal person and other relevant city staff in training and capacity building.
- Use of a city’s physical space free of charge to serve as the Youth Hub for programme activities during the whole duration of the programme. See “[What is the youth hub?](#)” for more information.
- Cooperation in creation of urban safety analysis.
- Provision of some municipal funds to support the implementation of young people’s innovations for safety improvement (each city defines their own budget, according to their needs and capacities). This budget can come from an existing city budget item that the city is willing to have influenced by young people’s ideas (e.g. if young people identify spaces that need repair or new street lighting and propose a winning idea for how to address these needs, the city would spend some of its urban renewal budget on this issue). Additionally, cities are encouraged to identify planned city projects and/or policies which the city is willing to have influenced by young people’s innovations for safety improvement.

18. What is the youth hub, and will the hub be defined before programme activities begin?

The Youth Hub space is meant to be the space where young people, city officials and other relevant actors can gather for the activities of the programme. The youth hub in each location is defined according to the implementation activities in each city and each implementation partner’s own timeline and workplan.

There are no strict requirements for what type of space it should be, as this depends on the local context and availability of spaces which could serve as the Youth Hub. At minimum, the space is meant to belong to the government, be provided free of charge by the government for programme activities, be large enough to accommodate groups of people and should be easily accessible e.g. via public transportation.

If it is strategically advantageous to identify multiple spaces of different sizes which can accommodate different numbers of people depending on the activity (e.g. smaller spaces for focus group discussions and a larger space for innovation activities), then this can be discussed between the city, ICLEI and the selected grantee.

19. Who should apply on behalf of a city to join the programme?

City representatives employed by the local government should [register their city’s interest](#) and then follow the instructions communicated via email for submitting the required application documents, including an official Letter of Interest. We do not have strict criteria for which type of city representative should register interest on behalf of the city. However, participation of the city mayor and representatives of relevant city agencies is viewed favourably.

Young people can support a city's application, e.g. by providing input on the Letter of Interest. However, youth participation is not required. A city's application should be led by city representatives who can comment on the city's motivation for joining the programme and the city's ability to meet the required in-kind contributions (see "[What must cities provide to join the programme?](#)").

20. Can a city apply in partnership with another city or involving adjacent areas?

No. A city cannot create a partnership outside of its municipality. The programme is implemented in the jurisdiction of the city that applied and was selected for joining the programme.

21. Can a city participate in the programme even if it is participating in other international projects related to safety and empowerment of young people?

Yes. The S²Cities programme is not bounded to other international programmes. Therefore, a city can already have other ongoing projects concerning safety and youth empowerment.

22. How long does the application process for cities wishing to join the programme last?

At least one month after receiving applications. The process usually entails interviews with short-listed candidates. Depending on the number and strength of applications, additional follow-up information might be requested from the applicant cities.

23. Who evaluates applications from cities wishing to join the programme?

Applications are reviewed jointly by the [Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation](#), [ICLEI](#) regional offices and the programme's key strategic advisors.

24. How are applications from cities evaluated?

First and foremost, cities should meet the [eligibility requirements](#). Priority will be given to cities that have higher sensitivity to supporting youth empowerment and demonstrate commitment to providing the required in-kind contributions (see "[What must cities provide to join the programme?](#)").

In particular, we consider favourably the allocation of some municipal funds to support the implementation of young people's innovations for safety improvement (each city defines their own budget, according to their needs and capacities). This budget can come from an existing city budget item that the city is willing to have influenced by young people's ideas. E.g. if young people identify spaces that need repair or new street lighting and propose a winning idea for how to address these needs, the city would spend some of its urban renewal budget on this issue. Additionally, we also consider favourably the identification of planned city projects and/or policies which the city is willing to have influenced by young people's innovations for safety improvement.

Furthermore, membership in the [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability network](#) is viewed favourably. This is because ICLEI is the key local implementation partner of [Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation \(GIB\)](#), the global managing partner of the S²Cities program. ICLEI serves as GIB's "eyes and ears" on the ground and facilitates communication with the city and organisations which are recruited to lead the implementation activities in each respective program city.

Finally, participation in the application process of the city mayor and representatives from relevant city agencies is also viewed favourably.

25. What are the next steps if my city is selected to join the programme?

After your city is selected, the engagement is made official through a legal document such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This agreement is signed between the city, [ICLEI](#) regional offices and perhaps also the organisation(s) selected to lead local implementation. The MoU or other similar legal agreement will specify the roles and responsibilities of the local partners, including the city.

Questions about joining the programme (organisations)

26. How can organisations apply to join the programme? And when is the next open call?

Once new cities are selected to join the programme, we will release a Request for Proposals to recruit Youth Innovation and Capacity Building Grantees to lead the implementation of programme activities in the respective cities. Organisations can respond to this Request for Proposals.

The Request for Proposals is communicated through the S²Cities website, social media channels and the networks of our global and local partners. Refer to the [S²Cities Grants & Opportunities webpage](#) for information on our current open calls.

27. How many organisations take part in the programme per city?

We typically partner with one lead organisation per city with the expertise and skills to deliver the youth engagement and capacity building activities. However, organisations are encouraged to apply as a consortium of complementary experts/organisations, including private sector entities, who bring together the required expertise, qualifications and resources. This consortium can be composed of civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, (academic) institutions, grassroots organisations, voluntary organisations, youth-led organisations, private sector entities, individual consultants, etc.

In case organisations apply as a consortium, then we expect one organisation to be the lead partner who submits the Request for Proposals and, if selected, manages the other sub-partners in the consortium. The lead organisation will hold the grant agreement and will be responsible for managing the division of work and budget to ensure the completion of activities.

Even if organisations do not apply for funding as a consortium, the selected grantee is still expected to collaborate with other local actors/organisations as relevant to carry out programme activities.

28. Which organisations are eligible to apply to join the programme? And what are the guidelines regarding conflict of interest?

Organisations which work with the local communities in the countries and cities as described in the Request for Proposals are eligible to apply. This includes civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, (academic) institutions, grassroots organisations, voluntary organisations, youth-led organisations, etc. We also consider applications from private organisations and social enterprises with a proven contribution to the public good as well as religious-affiliated organisations.

Organisations do not need to operate solely in the respective countries and cities of implementation. Furthermore, organisations do not need to be headquartered in the cities of implementation. However, it is essential that organisations have well-established local connections, strong networks and presence in the countries and cities of implementation. Furthermore, the lead organisation selected to implement programme activities must be based in the region of interest and preferably in the country of interest. Additionally, at least the majority of the team implementing the programme should be based in the respective countries and cities of implementation.

In case global organisations wish to apply as part of a consortium of partners, then the global organisation's local chapter should be represented in the consortium.

Organisations based in the Global North can apply as part of a consortium of organisations, but not as the lead partner of the consortium. Funding is not granted directly to organisations based in the Global North.

In evaluating conflict of interest, we refer to international guidance such as those provided by the [European Research Council](#). There is a disqualifying conflict of interest if any of the reviewers of proposals is a close collaborator of the applicant entity, and a potential conflict of interest if the reviewer is already involved in a contract or collaboration with an applicant legal entity or had been so in the previous three years.

In case of doubt regarding eligibility, you can email info@s2cities.org or ask questions during the recruitment process.

29. Can individual consultants implement programme activities?

On their own, no. However, individual consultants can be part of a consortium of partners which applies for funding to carry out programme activities.

30. Which activities are organisations expected to implement?

The selected organisation is responsible for developing and implementing a workplan in line with the programme's [Theory of Change](#) and global workplan, which includes activities related to:

Program component	Role of the grantee	Overarching deliverables/activities for the grantee
Component 1 Building System Understanding	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder mapping Objective data collection Subjective data collection with young people Building systems model
Component 2 Capacity Building and Bridge-building	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of capacity gaps Capacity development with city authorities Capacity development with young people and bridge building Engagement with private sector to create opportunities for young people
Component 3 Innovation and Youth Driven Action	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 prototype innovation incubator round Implementation of winning innovations
Component 6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and provide data as required by the programme’s Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework)

Organisations are expected to follow the overall flow of activities in the global workplan as per the table above. However, we value innovation and bottom-up approaches. When responding to our Request for Proposals, organisations are invited to present an innovative approach in line with the global workplan but tailored to the local context. There is no “one size fits all” approach. Refer to “[What is the timeline of programme activities?](#)” for details on the timeline for programme activities.

31. How are applications from organisations evaluated?

The Request for Proposals will outline eligibility requirements. In general, we look for experience and competency in working with or engaging young people and youth organisations, preferably on topics of urban safety and security; experience and competency in developing and managing innovation hubs/accelerators/processes or similar, including mobilisation of the target audience, dissemination, running of events at the incubator, follow-up, etc.; experience and competency in preparing and conducting capacity building workshops and activities to audiences of diverse backgrounds, including young people and public sector officials; experience in systems thinking and participatory processes; experience in urban planning and familiarity with placemaking approaches; and experience bringing together various urban stakeholders, including local governments, social organisations, young people, private entities together and facilitating dialogues as well as consensus building.

Organisations are encouraged to apply as a consortium of complementary experts/organisations, including private sector entities, who bring together the required expertise, qualifications and resources.

32. Should organisations already hold a Memorandum of Understanding (or similar document) with the city to join the programme?

Not necessarily, but if it contributes to the programme outcomes this could be an advantage. In case there is no existing MOU or it has to be updated according to the needs of the programme, then [ICLEI](#), our local implementation support partner, leads conversations with the selected cities on signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise the city's engagement in the programme. The MoU specifies the respective responsibilities of ICLEI, the city and the selected grantee. The selected grantee can also sign the MoU as a trilateral agreement. Alternatively, depending on the local context, a separate complementary agreement between the city and grantee (once selected) can later be signed as an amendment to the MoU secured by ICLEI.

33. How much funding does the selected grantee receive?

The exact funding amount will be indicated in the Request for Proposals.

Questions about operational matters

34. What is the language of the programme?

At the global level, the official language of the programme is English. Lead implementation partners must be able to communicate verbally and in written form in English. At the local level, implementation activities and engagement with young people and other stakeholders (government actors, private sector actors, etc.) is carried out in the local languages.

35. Which personal inputs does the programme collect from participants during implementation?

The programme collects media and communications inputs including photographs, filmed footage and personal testimonials.* The programme also collects research inputs and original creations of young people, for example photographs, videos, drawings, texts and other arts.

*Personal testimonial refers to written, spoken and/or recorded opinions, reflections, experiences and other personal inputs on the S²Cities program, your participation in the program and/or topics related to the program.

36. Do you collect consent for collecting personal inputs?

Yes. In addition to ensuring informed verbal consent for participating in programme activities, our local implementation partners use standardized consent forms for collecting written consent for collecting media and communication inputs as well as research inputs. Our local implementation partners also use standardized consent forms for collecting written consent before anyone such as S²Cities partners, municipal councils and others publicly display the original creations of young people such as photos, videos, drawings, texts and other arts created within the scope of this programme. For young people under the age of majority, we also collect the consent of parents / guardians.

37. Why do you need personal inputs such as photograph (s) / filmed footage / personal testimonials / research inputs? And how they will be used?

The programme collaborates with young people in making cities safer and more secure for young people. By sharing your pictures and personal testimonials, you will enable others to understand the challenges of being young and living in a big city, and what young people can do to alleviate the problems. By sharing your research inputs, you will help us build a holistic understanding of urban safety challenges affecting young people and develop capacities to address these challenges.

We use personal inputs in a range of publications and analyses to promote the S²Cities programme and highlight our work and your stories. We will never use any of the inputs in a way that is condescending, offensive or in any other way inappropriate.

38. How long does consent for personal inputs last?

Consent continues with no time limit. However, you can request your personal or identifying information to be deleted by contacting us at info@s2cities.org. We will not be able to withdraw any inputs that have already been published in print media, but we will do our best to remove your inputs from any digital publications and will not use it again in the future. The S²Cities team can provide further details if needed.

39. How can I submit a complaint or whistleblowing report?

Refer to the [complaint and whistleblowing section of our website](#) for instructions.

40. How can I get involved in other ways in the programme? (e.g. as co-funder)

Please refer to our [Grants & Opportunities webpage](#) or contact us at info@s2cities.org.