

Science cities

Editorial Bec Crew, David Payne, Catherine Armitage, Rebecca Dargie **Analysis** Bo Wu, Catherine Cheung **Art & design** Tanner Maxwell, Madeline Hutchinson, Sou Nakamura, Wojtek Urbanek **Production** Jason Rayment, Ian Pope, Nick Bruni, Bob Edenbach, Paul Glaeser **Marketing & PR** Kimberly Petit, Fiona Kyprianou, Rice Song, Grace Sun Katie Baker, Sam Sule **Sponsorship and translation** Stella Yan, Sharon Wang, Rebecca Pan, Jiaqi Shi **Publishing** Rebecca Jones, Richard Hughes, David Swinbanks.

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Nature editorial offices
The Campus, 4 Crinan Street,
London N1 9XW, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7833 4000
Fax: +44 (0)20 7843 4596/7

Customer services
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Published in August, the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change makes it clear that the effects of global warming will be felt most acutely by cities – especially those located on the coast. This and other urgent challenges faced by urban centres are laid out by the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this supplement, we explore SDG-related research output by leading science cities and metropolitan areas in the 82 selected natural-sciences journals tracked by the Nature Index. Our focus on the natural sciences means that some SDGs (related to energy, health care and climate action, for instance) feature more prominently than others (such as gender equality). We concentrate on the ten SDGs for which our data are strongest (see go.nature.com/2xd598t).

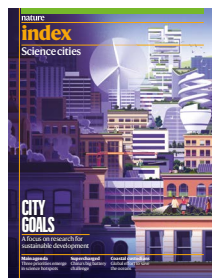
Articles are filtered using SDG-related classifiers available via Digital Science's Dimensions database. Nature Index's signature metric, Share*, is used to measure cities' SDG-related article output for the period 2015–20 and for all output in the Nature Index journals in 2020.

Research heavyweights, such as Beijing, the San Francisco Bay Area and the New York metropolitan area, are leaders in SDG-related output. But there are surprises, too. Townsville, Australia, with a population just short of 200,000, is the second-most prolific city for SDG14 (Life below water), after Beijing (see go.nature.com/2xhylz3). Insights from smaller cities, which have first-hand knowledge of the pressures on vulnerable ecosystems, or that have overcome hardships that the world's metropolises are yet to face, will be crucial in informing policies and actions that translate to real progress towards SDG targets.

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Bec Crew
Senior editor

*Share is a fractional count for an article allocated to an institution, city or country/region, that takes into account the proportion of authors on the article whose institutional affiliation is with that institution or location.



On the cover
City transition in line with SDGs.
Cover image: Sam Chivers

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