



WRI TÜRKİYE
— ROSS CENTER

WRI TÜRKİYE BRIEF

Credit: Yunus Tuğ

ABOUT WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

World Resources Institute (WRI) is a trusted partner for change. Using research-based approaches, it works globally and in focus countries to meet people's essential needs, protect and restore nature, stabilize the climate, and build resilient communities.

WRI aims to fundamentally transform the world's food, land and water; energy; and cities, as well as the economic, finance and governance structures that underpin these key systems. WRI works across several topics to achieve systemic change globally and in focus countries: Cities, Climate, Energy, Food, Forests, Freshwater, Ocean, Equity, Business, Finance, Economics.

Founded in 1982, WRI has nearly 1,800 staff around the world, with country offices in Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and the United States, and regional offices in Africa and Europe. WRI has earned a reputation for practical solutions and global impact based on rigorous analysis and deep long-term engagement with governments, corporations, city leaders, and communities. It has also become a leader in the use of new technologies and big data, while expanding the "do tank" side of its work to ensure better impact from its traditional "think tank" role. Most of its experts today are actively engaged with decision-makers on the front line.

WRI'S APPROACH

Count It

WRI starts with data, creating user-friendly information systems, protocols and standards. It conducts independent, unbiased research to analyze relationships and design solutions, and communicates the findings in a compelling manner.

Change It

WRI works with leaders of cities, companies and countries to achieve change, testing its ideas in complex, messy, real-world situations. It sets clear objectives and hold itself accountable.

Scale It

WRI identifies and overcomes barriers to change so that proven solutions spread quickly and widely. It works with coalitions of remarkable leaders who transform business sectors, societies and economies, nationally and globally.



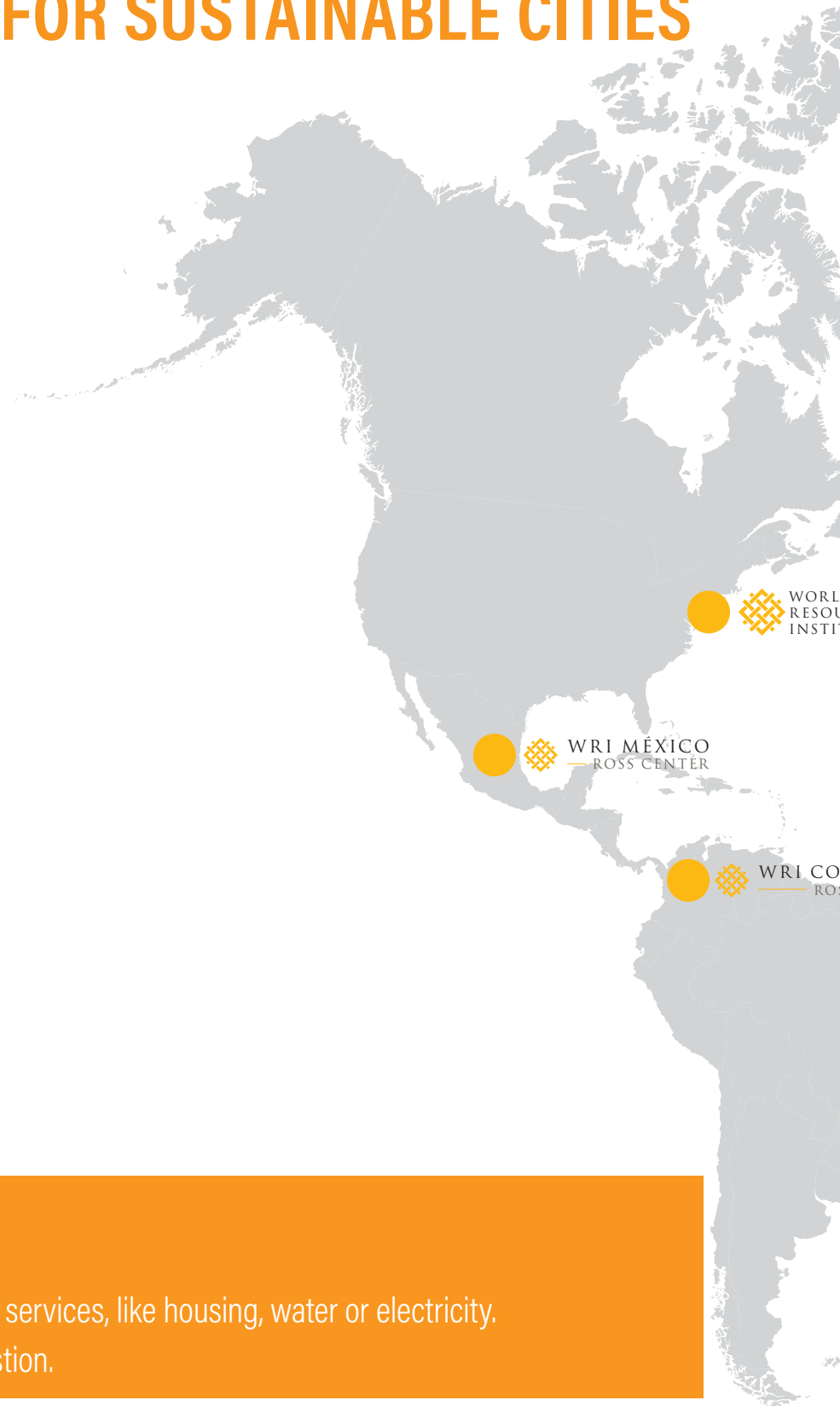
ABOUT WRI ROSS CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES

WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities focuses on integrated solutions to longstanding and new urban challenges. Through innovative research, deep engagement with urban leaders, and global partnerships, the network of local and international experts puts cities on a trajectory of more sustainable and equitable development. It accelerates transformative urban initiatives that turn cities into resilient, inclusive, low-carbon places that are good for people and the planet.

WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities is a team of 400+ local and international experts with deep expertise in urban planning and development, mobility, energy efficiency, resilience, housing, water management, and more. About 80% of its staff is based in offices in Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Türkiye. WRI Ross Center combines the research excellence of WRI with two decades of on-the-ground impact in transport and urban development by the EMBARQ network to catalyze innovative solutions in other sectors, including air quality, water, buildings, land use, and energy.

WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities focuses primarily on cities in low- and middle-income regions: Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific. Cities here represent the greatest opportunity for a radical shift in how urban areas are planned, built, and governed. It also works at the front lines of the mobility and energy revolutions, including in the United States.

- 80% of global GDP is produced in cities.
- 75% of energy-related emissions come from cities.
- 1 in 3 city dwellers lack reliable access to at least one core services, like housing, water or electricity.
- 2 - 5% of Asia's GDP is lost every year due to traffic congestion.





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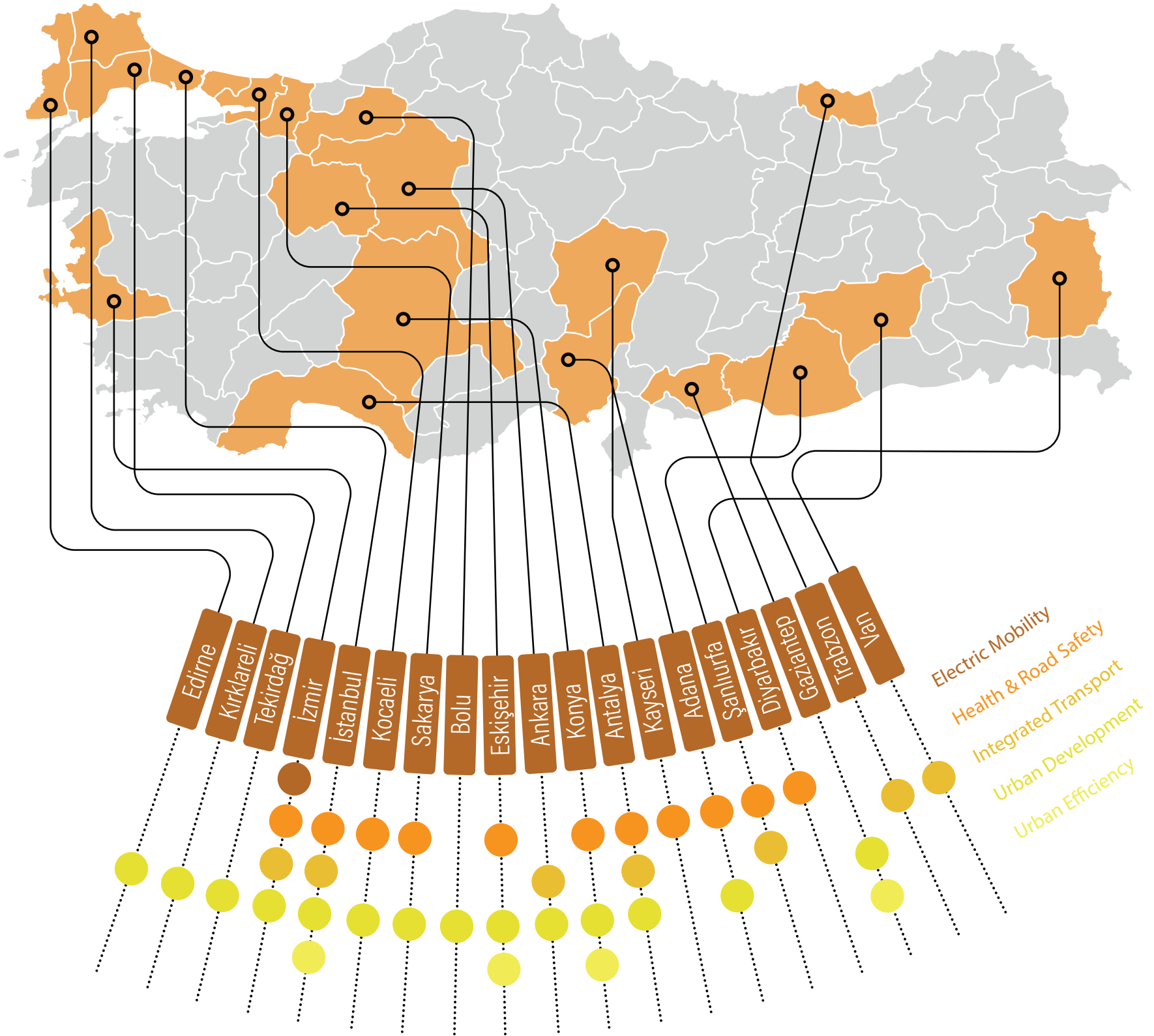
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THE CITIES WE WORK IN



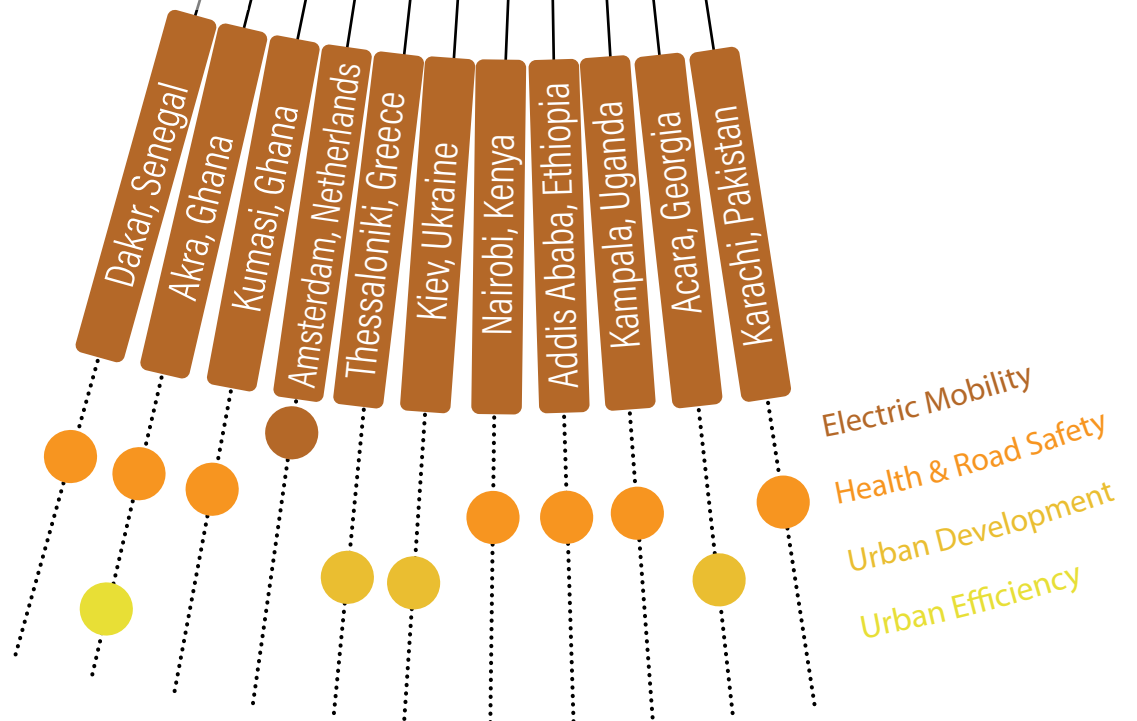
OUR WORK

WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities' goal is to help cities transform their physical infrastructure, institutions, and mindsets.

Cities are complex, living systems; single-sector solutions do not always address the full scope of urban problems. We focus on an integrated approach across three areas that form the backbone of cities: land use and economic development, mobility, and energy and resource efficiency. We have found solutions that cut across multiple sectors are most effective, with the greatest potential to trigger systemic, lasting change.

WRI Ross Center's value is that we can bring these road-tested and data-proven solutions to scale, from the local to the global level. Our unique strategy allows us to effect change from neighborhood projects to municipalities, national legislation, and global coalitions.

WRI Türkiye has been working on **urban mobility**, **urban development** and **urban efficiency & climate** since 2005.



URBAN MOBILITY

Improving quality of life, health, and opportunity in cities through sustainable and safe transport and urban design.

WRI helps cities design and operate cleaner, safer, more efficient, and more accessible mobility systems. We promote high-quality, integrated public transportation systems that include bus rapid transit (BRT), urban buses, informal transport, micro mobility, autonomous vehicles, and more. We encourage shifts to more active mobility options, like bicycling and walking, and public spaces that safely accommodate these modes. And we help cities navigate the transition to cleaner-burning fuels and electric vehicles.

Integrated Transport

Fostering multi-modal transport that connects people to opportunity and reduces emissions.

Integrated transport refers to a multi-modal transport system that expands access to opportunities and services for users while reducing emissions. This system efficiently links different modes of travel to active and micro mobility.

WRI supports countries, cities, and other transport stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions and meet Paris agreement goals; advance high-quality public transport connected to other modes such as bicycling and walking; improve informal transport that provides the plurality or majority of trips and many cities globally; foster innovations in urban mobility within the public and private sectors; and advance sustainable urban freight.

PROJECT:

Sustainable Urban Transport Network Türkiye

Enabling policy change and an engaged civil society in Türkiye through a sustainable urban transport network.

In Türkiye, road transport is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector (94%). Civil society and other actors in Türkiye who can stimulate change in this field are generally dispersed and disconnected from one another, unable to benefit from each other's technical expertise, good practices, and resources.

WRI Türkiye carries out the "Sustainable Urban Transport Network Turkey" project, which aims to establish an efficient sustainable urban transport network with its wide variety of stakeholders to create a greater impact on policy-making, democratic governance, and social change to enable a more democratic civil society in Türkiye.



Electric Mobility

Increasing access to electric vehicles, charging infrastructure and optimizing to reduce emissions.

The transport sector is responsible for 24% of CO2 emissions from fuel combustion globally, with road transport accounting for almost three-fourths of total transport emissions in 2018. Plans to reduce these emissions increasingly rely on large-scale transportation electrification.

Electric vehicles (EVs) present an opportunity to contribute to both transportation and energy transformations through vehicle-grid integration solutions, more equitable access to zero-emission fuels, and expanded options for sustainable transit and shared mobility.

REPORTS:

Barriers to Adopting Electric Buses

Electric buses (e-buses) can help cities address air quality issues and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (along with a clean grid).

Electric buses, which have zero tailpipe emissions, hold the potential to provide outsized air quality and climate benefits. Faster adoption of cleaner buses is an important part of the bigger climate solution, helping put cities on track towards sustainability.

Based on analysis from 16 case studies, one of which is the city of Izmir, and the literature, this report provides a matrix of barriers facing electric bus adoption. Barriers are categorized by three general barriers to clean energy innovation: technological, financial, and institutional barriers; and three key elements of electric buses: vehicles and batteries, agencies and operators, and grid and charging infrastructure.

How to Enable Electric Bus Adoption in Cities Worldwide

Electric buses could pioneer a new age of clean and efficient urban transport and put cities on track towards sustainability.

The aim of this report is to fill in knowledge gaps and provide actionable guidance for transit agencies and bus operating entities (ESHOT in Izmir) to help them overcome the most common and debilitating barriers to electric bus adoption. It provides step-by-step guidance to establish and achieve electric bus adoption targets using concrete and diverse real-world experiences.



Health & Road Safety

Creating safer mobility systems to connect people to opportunities and foster sustainable, equitable cities.

Through a “Safe System” approach that places people at the heart of urban design, urban mobility can be safe, equitable, and sustainable. By reducing the need for car travel, setting safe speeds, and moving people through safely designed infrastructure and mass transport, WRI works to prevent traffic crashes, encourage healthy lifestyles, and reduce air pollution. The results save lives and help advance a greener, healthier future.

PROJECTS:

Parklet Istanbul

Making Istanbul safer and more pedestrian-friendly with traffic-calming parklets.

While the modal share for walking is almost 50% in Istanbul, a city of more than 16 million, the current pedestrian infrastructure is neither sufficient nor safe. Congestion and car-oriented urban planning is degrading livability, leaving either very narrow space or no space at all for safe and attractive sidewalks.

With support from WRI Türkiye, Istanbul is introducing “parklets” to create safe, efficient, and attractive sidewalks and public spaces and encourage walking short distances. In addition to improving walking areas, the parklets also improve road safety by helping to calm surrounding traffic.

Cycling for All

Empowering cycling NGOs to better engage in policy- and decision-making through capacity development and mentoring.

Building on the experience of the Netherlands in creating a similar national-level project, WRI Türkiye brings together cycling NGOs and city administrations in eight cities with the national government to promote active, democratic participation of civil society in cycling policy and build their capacity to work with government.



Bloomberg Philanthropies for Global Road Safety (BIGRS)

WRI works to ensure the future of African cities by helping city administration, private and public investors, and donors make informed decisions on city planning and policy.

WRI Türkiye has conducted road safety audits of roads, intersections, light rail systems, and bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors, and delivered capacity-building workshops on the safe system approach in Addis Ababa, Kampala, Kumasi, and Accra in Africa.

Through its global network, WRI aims to connect these efforts across cities to advance strong national policies and strategies that prioritize road safety across a broader region.

Düzce Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

The SUMP contributes to the livability and sustainability of Düzce by providing safer, cleaner, more accessible, and cost-effective mobility options.

The objective of the Düzce Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan project is, in general, to define the policies and measures to be implemented regarding sustainable transportation systems. Policies and measures, structured in a feasible way with a strategic and medium- to long-term vision for Düzce, will promote sustainable mobility, while also increasing travel by non-motorized vehicles and public transportation. Policies and measures, developed through a participatory approach, will manage the demand for private vehicle trips and help reduce traffic congestion, time loss, traffic accidents, noise, environmental pollution, and other adverse impacts arising from the predominant use of private vehicles.



URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Designing and influencing urban spaces that build resilience, improve health, and equitably connect people and opportunities.

More equitable, resilient cities require systemic changes to how we design and govern across multiple urban systems, from land use to water resilience to the informal economy.

WRI helps to build more holistic infrastructure and thriving cities by emphasizing integrated planning. We help cities, national governments, and regional partnerships respond to the needs of all residents through innovative data initiatives, more climate-resilient and accessible built environments, nature-based solutions, and the integration of informal systems.

PROJECTS:

Deep Dive Cities

Driving transformative changes through long-term, cross-sectoral, data-driven engagement in cities to create a healthier, more resilient, and sustainable urban environment for all.

WRI Ross Center's Deep Dive Cities Initiative focuses on locally driven strategic projects as an entry point to foster long-term, cross-sectoral, and transformative change. Through this initiative, WRI provides strategic funding and additional technical capacity to support a variety of projects. These projects include reducing carbon emissions in transportation, strengthening climate action, disaster preparedness, mitigating the impacts of climate change, reducing urban heat island effects, and enhancing urban resilience.

Implemented in Istanbul in three phases, the program first supports the development of transportation policies to promote cycling, the preparation of a communication campaign, and the creation of pilot infrastructure designs. In the second phase, it facilitates the development of livable neighborhood approaches, including the definition of criteria and the preparation of a transportation-focused concept plan and methodology report. In the third phase, it provides financial support for the development of nature-based solution proposals to be implemented in active and public transportation infrastructure to mitigate urban heat island effects.



Ankara Metro Project - Opportunities Study for Land Value Capture (LVC)

Creating sustainable, accessible, and livable urban areas in Ankara by transforming the increases in land value around metro lines into public benefits.

Implemented with the support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and in collaboration with the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, the Ankara Metro Project is a comprehensive planning initiative designed to channel the land value increases generated by new metro lines for public benefit. Conducted in partnership with HR&A Advisors and Needs Map, the project seeks to diversify financing sources, enhance the sustainability of public transportation investments, and strengthen the quality of public spaces, accessibility, and green infrastructure around metro stations. WRI Türkiye participates as a technical partner in sustainable urban mobility, spatial planning, and public space quality, contributing by addressing the social, environmental, and spatial dimensions of the LVC approach in a holistic manner and translating analytical findings into design and project proposals focused on public benefit.

Stronger Civil Society for Equal Cities

Supporting the development of fair, inclusive, and equitable cities for all by strengthening the capacity of civil society.

Through the Stronger Civil Society for Equal Cities Project, the knowledge, skills, and networks of civil society organizations are enhanced, barriers to accessing basic urban services in Istanbul are analyzed, and the development of innovative, low-cost solutions is encouraged. The awareness and advocacy capacities of disadvantaged groups are increased, while strong collaboration and inclusive governance models between civil society organizations and local governments are supported.

The project is implemented in three phases. During the preparation phase, pilot districts were selected, and following a Search Conference, the report titled “A More Equal Istanbul: Fair Access to Urban Services” was produced. In the implementation phase, stakeholder civil society organizations receive support through training, consultancy, fieldwork, and study visits, and micro-grants are provided for projects developed by participants. The dissemination phase includes the preparation of a Green Paper comparing Turkish and EU legislation, as well as an inclusive policy guide for local governments.



URBAN EFFICIENCY & CLIMATE

Helping cities optimize, electrify, and decarbonize.

By 2030, 70% of the world's population will live in cities. Buildings already consume nearly 40% of global energy and account for about one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. Transport emissions account for about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions but are on track to reach as much as 40% without significant change.

Greener buildings, transport, and energy systems not only cut greenhouse gas emissions but also reduce operating costs and resource demand and improve people's health, productivity, and resilience.

PROJECTS:

Zero Carbon Building Accelerator

Helping cities reduce building emissions to meet climate goals.

The Zero Carbon Building Accelerator builds on WRI's success with the Building Efficiency Accelerator (BEA) to bring new ambition and build on the lessons, expertise, and resources of the BEA with a broader mandate to support decarbonizing the world's buildings by 2050.

Within the scope of the Zero Carbon Building Accelerator project, WRI Türkiye developed Türkiye's national and local Zero Carbon Buildings roadmap and action plans for two pilot cities in Türkiye to decarbonize the building sector, as well as their executive summaries.

Sustainable Marmara | Climate Governance

Strengthening the climate governance capacities of local governments and civil society to support Türkiye's net-zero goals.

Achieving Türkiye's 2053 net-zero emissions target requires strengthening the climate governance efforts of local governments as well as civil society organizations working in the fields of climate and environment. In this context, the Sustainable Marmara | Climate Governance Project has been developed as a comprehensive capacity-building program aimed at enhancing the climate governance capacities of local governments and civil society organizations in the Marmara Region, through the collaboration of WRI Türkiye and the Marmara Municipalities Union.

Designed around the priorities identified through a needs assessment, the program consists of online self-paced learning modules, complementary video materials, hybrid training delivered by academics and civil society representatives, interactive workshop discussions, case studies, and a booklet showcasing good practices.



Credit: Victor

Türkiye Sustainable Buildings Network

The Türkiye Sustainable Buildings Network is a national platform that brings together the building sector around the goals of green transformation and net-zero emissions.

Established in May 2024 under the leadership of WRI Türkiye, in partnership with the Zero Energy and Passive House Association (SEPEV) and with the support of the Danish Green Growth Network (DGGN), the Network is an outcome of the “Climate Proofing Building Sector CSOs for the Green Deal” Project. Co-financed by the European Union, the Network aims to enable the building sector in Türkiye to play an active role in addressing climate change, strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, and raise awareness on sustainable buildings.

Launched as a non-profit initiative and designed as an inclusive platform supporting zero-carbon buildings and livable neighborhoods, the Network seeks to transform Türkiye’s building sector through a whole life-cycle approach. Grounded in the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability, it works to accelerate the transition toward an energy-efficient, low-carbon, and climate-resilient built environment, in alignment with the European Green Deal targets.

Within this scope, the Network supports knowledge sharing, capacity development, and innovative collaborations through activities such as the Sustainable Buildings E-Learning Program, webinar series, stakeholder analyses, good practice guides, hackathons, and international study visits. In doing so, it contributes to the green transformation of the building sector in line with Türkiye’s 2053 net-zero emissions target.

Nature-Based Solutions to Increase Community Resilience Against Climate-Induced Disasters (NBS-CORES)

Building a sustainable and resilient future by enhancing community resilience to climate-induced disasters through nature-based solutions (NBS).

Supported by the European Union, the NBS-CORES Project aims to address shared challenges posed by climate-induced disasters by implementing NBS that strengthen community resilience in Georgia and Türkiye.

Drawing on experiences from Greece, the project highlights cross-border cooperation among the four partner organizations located in the Black Sea basin—GIPA, Ecolution Georgia, WRI Türkiye, and FRI—and contributes to sustainable, long-term change.

The main objective of the project is to reduce community vulnerability to climate-induced disasters by implementing NBS. Traditional approaches often fail to provide long-term solutions, whereas the NBS approach offers innovative and sustainable alternatives. By promoting the implementation of NBS, engaging local communities, and strengthening partnerships, the project aims to foster sustainable transformation, enhance community resilience, and contribute to a more adaptive and climate-resilient future.



Credit: Scott Webb

CAPACITY BUILDING

The Livable Cities Symposium

WRI Türkiye has been organizing its flagship event, the Livable Cities Symposium, every year in Autumn since 2013.

In the symposium, our focus is on sharing the recent global and local developments, best practices, and lessons learned in the areas of sustainable urban mobility, urban development, urban efficiency and climate, health and road safety, and buildings with all participants.

As is customary each year, the symposium brings together experts from around the globe to share their insights and experiences. We scrutinize exemplary practices, drawing inspiration from them, and collaboratively explore solutions for designing and implementing cities that are more conducive to vibrant and sustainable living.





OUR EXPERTS

Director, Dr. Güneş Cansız

Senior Manager, European Union Projects, Ayça Bağcı

Senior Manager, Transport & Road Safety, Celal Tolga İmamoğlu

Senior Program Manager, UEC Program, Dr. Meltem Bayraktar

Senior Manager, Urban Development, Merve Akı Yaman

Urban Mobility Manager, Cemil Oğuz

Urban Resilience Manager, Ece Ömür

Integrated Climate Action Manager, UEC Program, Tuğçe Üzümoğlu

Communications & Operations Specialist, Yaren Kıtay

Urban Mobility & Road Safety Analyst, Yunus Emre Yılmaz

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