



Europe and Asia contain the world's smartest cities, finds 2024 edition of IMD's Smart City Index

- North American cities fall, reflecting residents' dissatisfaction
- Zurich, Oslo, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, Beijing, and Seoul are the most consistently high-performing cities in the Top 20 since the Index started
- Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tallinn, Riyadh, and Melbourne are on the rise

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Lausanne, Tuesday 9 April 2024 – Zurich retains the top spot for the fifth consecutive edition of the IMD Smart City Index, with **Oslo** in second place and **Canberra** in third. Geneva is fourth, and Singapore is fifth.

The 2024 Index is the second report produced by the [Smart City Observatory](#) – part of the IMD World Competitiveness Center – in partnership with the Seoul-based [World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization](#) (WeGO), an international association of local governments, smart tech solution providers, and institutions.

Researchers combined hard data and survey responses from citizens in 142 cities worldwide (Al Khobbar in Saudi Arabia being a new addition) to show how technology is enabling cities to achieve a greater quality of life for their inhabitants. All city profiles can be downloaded [here](#).

The detailed findings serve as a valuable benchmark for progress on openness, innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability.

“Cities must design and adopt strategies that can resist the test of a future plagued with growing uncertainties,” said Bruno Lanvin, President of the Smart City Observatory. “Health-related concerns remain high, while climate-related ones grow even larger; a mix complicated by renewed international tensions. Trust and good governance are growing in importance, and the significance of AI in city design and management is set to increase. Counterintuitive as it may sound, AI can help cities to become more human-centric.”

This year’s Top 20 features even more Asian and European cities (see Appendix 1). US cities such as Washington DC, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, and Chicago have been losing ground, as have Canada’s Ottawa and Montreal, so for the first time since the Index’s creation in 2019, there are no North American cities in the Top 20.

“Last year, most US cities rose in the Index but this year they have fallen,” said Lanvin. “Some explanation can be found in Biden’s Build Back Better, which had a positive effect. In contrast, this year elections are on the horizon, making people more critical about areas that need to be improved.”

Now that the Index has five years of data (there was a hiatus in 2022, while the methodology was improved upon), the 2024 edition allows for the calculation of moving averages, i.e. the position of a city, on average, in the Indexes that ran (a) from 2021-2023 and (b) from 2022-2024. These results will help policymakers to anticipate what might happen in the next three-year wave. They also bring to the fore two groups of high-performing cities that can serve as beacons.

1. Six cities in the Top 20 have either remained in the same position or improved: **Zurich, Oslo, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, Beijing, and Seoul**. The researchers name these cities “super champions” (See Appendix 2).
2. A different group of six cities looks likely to join the super champions in the near future: **Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tallinn, Riyadh, and Melbourne**. This is because they have either stayed in the same position or edged up the ranking after starting from lower positions (21-40). See Appendix 3.

Residents in these cities are increasingly satisfied, meaning their detailed results will be especially inspiring for policymakers in cities worldwide.

Since last year, IMD and WeGO have been working together to champion inclusive urbanization through the development of this index, but also via the Seoul Smart City Prize which identifies innovative and inclusive smart city initiatives around the world. The prize was born out of the hope of reinforcing the mutuality of inclusion on the one hand and prosperity on the other. The partnership is soon to result in a third volume of smart cities case studies presented in a book and will be a companion to the Smart City Index while also showcasing selected winners of the Seoul Prize.

Echoing the words of Dr Lanvin, WeGO Secretary-General Jung Sook Park added: “In an era where the influence of cities is rapidly expanding, their role in addressing critical issues faced by citizens has never been more crucial. From environmental concerns to public health challenges, cities are at the forefront of tackling a diverse array of pressing issues. The goal of building resilient and adept cities capable of addressing the evolving needs and disruptions in the Fourth Industrial Revolution era can be achieved when cities prioritize and understand inclusive digitalization as ‘smart investments.’”

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We support the transition to a new model that balances prosperity and growth with ecological sustainability and social inclusion. Sustainability and diversity, equity, and inclusion are in our DNA.

We combine a deep understanding of human dynamics with a pioneering approach to technology and AI. We deliver powerful learning experiences for individuals and teams across the globe. Challenging what is and inspiring what could be, we develop leaders and organizations that contribute to a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive world.

About WeGO

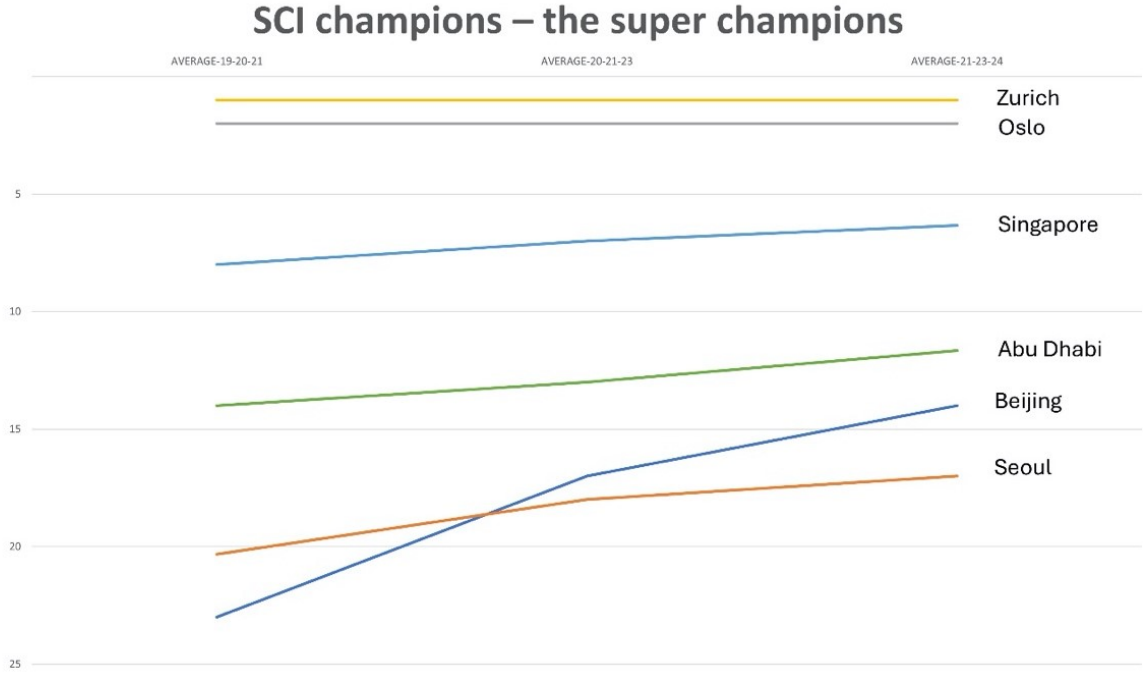
The World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization (WeGO), is a membership-based international association of local governments, smart tech solution providers, and institutions committed to the transformation of cities into smart sustainable cities through facilitating public-private partnerships (PPP). WeGO was founded by 50 member cities in 2010 as the World e-Governments Organization, hence our acronym. In response to the evolving concept of smart cities, WeGO expanded its vision and mandate at the 7th General Assembly (2017) and its name to the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization. WeGO’s Secretariat is based in Seoul, Korea, and has regional offices in East Asia (Chengdu, China), the Mediterranean (Beyoğlu, Turkey), Africa (Abuja, Nigeria), Middle East & North Africa (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates), Latin America (Cuenca, Ecuador), and Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan). As the leading platform for smart city development, WeGO’s mission is to share knowledge and good practices in e-governance; strengthen administrative efficiency and transparency; advance digital capacity; facilitate civic involvement; bridge the digital divide and inequality; and promote cooperation and solidarity among cities and local governments around the world. WeGO serves its members as an international platform to improve the quality of life, innovate in the delivery of public services, and strengthen regional competitiveness.

Appendices

Appendix 1: SCI 2024 Top 20, with European cities in red and Asian cities in green

2024
Zurich
Oslo
Canberra
Geneva
Singapore
Copenhagen
Lausanne
London
Helsinki
Abu Dhabi
Stockholm
Dubai
Beijing
Hamburg
Prague
Taipei City
Seoul
Amsterdam
Shanghai
Hong Kong

Appendix 2: SCI super champions



Appendix 3: SCI contenders

