

Housing resettlement and urban renewal

Region	Middle East and North Africa
Award Scheme	Others
Themes	Environmental Resilience Housing Innovation Regeneration Slum Upgrading Social Inclusion Urban Governance and Legal Frameworks
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Algiers is executing a coordinated programme of housing resettlement, green restoration and digital transformation to steer rapid urbanization toward inclusive and sustainable outcomes. Since 2014 the capital has rehoused more than 61,000 families from slums, rooftops and precarious dwellings into new neighbourhoods equipped with schools, clinics, markets, civil-protection posts and parks, backed by the construction of 84,000 public rental units. In parallel, the Green Plan is restoring degraded land and expanding urban forests and parks; its flagship converts the 45-hectare Oued Smar landfill into a sealed, monitored eco-park with 127 biogas wells, a 720 m³/day leachate plant and a 637 kW cogeneration unit that powers park operations. The Yellow Plan improves multimodal mobility, roads and flood-control works, while the Smart City Initiative integrates AI, IoT and big-data tools for traffic, water and energy management and fosters a local startup ecosystem through summits, accelerators and PPPs. Inter-ministerial governance, legal measures against illegal construction and a shift toward 50:50 public-private financing underpin delivery. Results include safer housing, improved health and learning conditions, rising green coverage, circular-economy gains in composting and construction-waste reuse, and a growing digital economy; positioning Algiers as a transferable model for socially inclusive, climate-resilient and innovation-driven urban renewal.

Background and Objective

As Algeria’s political and economic hub, Algiers concentrates population, employment and national institutions, but faces housing deficits, informal settlements, aging infrastructure, flood risk, land degradation and a widening digital divide. The city’s 2015–2035 master plan and post-2016 programmes pursue a people-centred transformation that eradicates precarious housing, expands affordable options, restores ecosystems, strengthens climate resilience, modernizes mobility and embeds digital governance. Objectives are to achieve dignified living standards, reduce inequality, unlock serviced land, protect health and biodiversity, decarbonize waste and energy systems, and catalyse a diversified innovation economy through open data, startups and PPPs—delivered via transparent, intersectoral coordination and

community participation.

Actions and Implementation

A state-funded resettlement drive built 84,000 social units and orchestrated relocations—up to 1,000 families in 24 hours, recovering 750 hectares of public land and rehousing 61,000 families to serviced districts. Income-tailored schemes (public rental, rent-to-own, participatory social, assisted and public promotional housing) expanded access to ownership; emergency stock and civil-protection protocols support post-disaster rehousing. The Oued Smar transformation sealed and ventilated the landfill, installed biogas capture and cogeneration, leachate treatment and park infrastructure; composting, plastics recovery and a C&D crushing line scaled circularity. The Yellow Plan advanced multimodal transport and flood works. The Smart City Initiative deployed AI/IoT pilots and convened global summits, incubators and PPPs.

Outcomes and Impacts

Socially, dignified housing and serviced neighbourhoods improved safety, health and education while tailored finance broadened access for low- and middle-income households. Environmentally, landfill remediation cut methane emissions; citywide greening surpassed 8,000 hectares across forests and parks, enhancing carbon sinks and biodiversity. Economically, startup support and smart-infrastructure projects attracted investment and skills, while diversified financing reduced fiscal pressure. Circular-economy facilities produced organic compost, recycled nearly a million tons of demolition material for roads and initiated plastics recovery. Governance gains include stronger inter-agency coordination, inspection regimes and legal tools against illegal construction, with digital platforms expanding transparency and citizen participation.

Sustainability and Scalability

Long-term direction comes from the 2015–2035 master plan (82 projects) aligned to the SDGs and New Urban Agenda. A mixed financing model now balances central funds with PPPs and cost-recovery green enterprises; smart-city actions draw multilateral and private support. Institutional durability is ensured through inter-ministerial committees, technical standards and routine audits. Programmes are designed for replication: modular housing schemes by income band; landfill-to-park methodology using sealing, gas capture and cogeneration; and a portfolio of AI/IoT use-cases that scale from pilots to city systems. Participatory processes and digital tools embed feedback loops that sustain operations and adapt to shocks.

Gender and Social Inclusivity

Resettlement prioritizes vulnerable households including women-headed families, the elderly and people with disabilities allocating accessible units near schools, clinics, childcare and transit. Income-graduated housing finance reduces exclusion and supports pathways to ownership. New neighbourhoods integrate public spaces, markets and services that expand women's mobility and safety. Post-disaster protocols provide temporary shelter, legal assistance and rapid case management to prevent prolonged displacement. Digital participation channels within the smart-city programme widen access to services and grievance redress, helping close the digital divide. Together these measures strengthen social cohesion, reduce multi-dimensional poverty and ensure that renewal directly improves daily life for diverse groups.

Innovative Initiative

Policy innovation blends slum eradication with legal regularization, intersectoral delivery and transparent relocation logistics. The Oued Smar project exemplifies technological and financial ingenuity multi-layer landfill sealing, biogas-to-power, leachate treatment, and a circular-economy chain spanning compost, plastics and C&D reuse. Smart-city innovation couples a “city OS” vision with AI/IoT pilots for traffic, water and energy, and an ecosystem approach international summits, coding schools, startup funds and incubators—to translate research into deployable services. Data-driven census updates, digital permitting and early-warning integration bring precision to planning and flood resilience. The model ties technology to tangible welfare gains rather than tech-for-tech's-sake deployment.

Resources devoted to delivery

Algiers shows how a capital confronting informal growth can simultaneously deliver dignified housing, restore ecosystems and modernize governance. The city's resettlement and income-tailored housing schemes address equity at scale; landfill-to-park regeneration and circular-economy plants cut emissions and reclaim land; and a pragmatic smart-city agenda links AI/IoT tools to core services while nurturing a startup economy. Underpinned by long-term planning, mixed financing and inter-agency execution, the model is transferable to fast-urbanizing cities seeking social inclusion, climate resilience and economic diversification. Algiers' approach turns renewal into a platform for human development, environmental recovery and digitally enabled, participatory governance.

Conclusion

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