

Sharing e-government practices through the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization

Region	Asia and the Pacific
Award Scheme	Shanghai Manual
Themes	Capacity-Building Data-Driven Process and Management Innovation Others
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels Goal 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Summary

Chengdu’s collaboration with the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization (WeGO) has positioned it as a hub for international smart city cooperation and South-South knowledge exchange. Hosting the WeGO East Asia Regional Office, Chengdu facilitates global sharing of digital governance and urban innovation practices through structured training, youth engagement and institutional partnerships. Since 2015, its Smart City Training Programme has trained urban professionals from over 50 countries in digital governance, smart mobility and sustainable city management, leading to replication of Chengdu’s Tianfu Smart Platform in Africa and Southeast Asia. The city has also institutionalized youth participation through initiatives such as the World Youth Smart City Innovation Competition and the Diplomat Tomorrow project, nurturing global youth leadership in smart city governance. Chengdu’s partnership with WeGO has transitioned it from a technology recipient to a governance model exporter, now ranking among the top 100 global smart cities. This experience demonstrates how a Global South city can build international influence through open data, intergenerational collaboration and institutionalized learning, while advancing inclusive, human-centred smart governance adaptable across diverse development contexts.

Background and Objective

As China’s western innovation hub, Chengdu seeks to balance rapid urbanization with technological modernization and inclusive governance. Recognizing the uneven global distribution of smart city resources, it partnered with WeGO to strengthen South-South collaboration and institutionalize global knowledge sharing. The objective is to advance smart transportation, digital governance and sustainable urban logistics while enabling mutual learning among cities at varying development stages. By hosting the WeGO East Asia Regional Office, Chengdu aims to transform itself into a regional laboratory for governance innovation, exporting scalable, people-centred smart city solutions and fostering cross-border

cooperation in urban management and capacity building.

Actions and Implementation

Chengdu embedded WeGO cooperation within its Smart City Construction Action Plan, creating frameworks for training, technology exchange and youth innovation. The Smart City Training Programme integrates lectures, field visits and technical demonstrations, leveraging partnerships with firms such as CRRC Chengdu and JINGDONG Logistics to showcase digital governance and smart mobility. The city launched youth-focused initiatives—like the World Youth Smart City Innovation Competition and Diplomat Tomorrow project—to develop policy design skills and intercultural collaboration. Through these mechanisms, Chengdu has institutionalized smart city learning, transforming itself into an exporter of digital governance knowledge for other Global South cities.

Outcomes and Impacts

Chengdu's initiatives have trained professionals from over 50 countries and inspired the adaptation of its smart city modules abroad, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia. Youth programmes have built new international leadership networks linking students, policymakers and innovators. Locally, Chengdu's governance modernization has improved public service digitization, urban mobility and citizen participation, achieving above-average global smart city ratings. Over 85 per cent of residents now engage with digital governance platforms, reflecting trust and satisfaction with city management. Chengdu's transformation into a knowledge-sharing hub demonstrates the potential for inclusive, institutionalized international cooperation to enhance governance capacity across emerging urban contexts.

Sustainability and Scalability

The Chengdu-WeGO model embeds sustainability through structured training systems, international project mechanisms and continuous learning platforms. Partnerships with universities, enterprises and multilateral organizations ensure ongoing technical and institutional support. The model's adaptability allows replication across cities of different scales by combining localized policy application with shared global frameworks. Youth involvement further guarantees intergenerational continuity and innovation. Through its role as WeGO's East Asia Regional Office, Chengdu continuously refines its approach and disseminates best practices, creating a scalable governance ecosystem that promotes long-term collaboration, resource sharing and resilience among Global South cities pursuing smart, sustainable urban transitions.

Gender and Social Inclusivity

Chengdu integrates inclusivity into smart city development by ensuring diverse participation in its training and innovation programmes. WeGO initiatives explicitly include women professionals, youth and representatives from developing cities to enhance equity in access to knowledge and governance roles. The Diplomat Tomorrow and Youth Innovation competitions cultivate diverse leadership and encourage gender balance in technology and policymaking. Locally, digital governance reforms improve transparency and accessibility for all citizens. By embedding inclusivity in international cooperation, Chengdu ensures that digital transformation benefits marginalized communities and strengthens the social dimensions of smart city development across both local and global contexts.

Innovative Initiative

Chengdu's innovation lies in reframing smart city development as a process of institutional cooperation and shared learning rather than purely technological advancement. It has created a two-way "Bring In, Go Global" model, merging local expertise with international experience through WeGO-led exchange platforms. Initiatives like the Tianfu Smart Platform demonstrate how open data and AI-driven governance can be adapted across different urban contexts. By turning training, youth competitions and collaborative laboratories into mechanisms of governance innovation, Chengdu exemplifies how cities can institutionalize knowledge circulation and scale best practices globally, establishing a model for participatory, transnational smart city development.

Resources devoted to delivery

Chengdu's smart city cooperation framework is jointly supported by the Chengdu Municipal Government, the WeGO Secretariat and corporate partners such as CRRC Chengdu, JD Logistics and Southwest Jiaotong University. Resources include international training budgets, field demonstration facilities, and policy coordination teams within the WeGO East Asia Regional Office. Multilateral partnerships provide technical assistance and co-financing, while the municipal government funds logistics, hosting and youth engagement activities. Academic and private-sector contributions offer expertise, research, and pilot technologies. This multi-source resource structure ensures continuity, operational depth and sustainability across training, capacity-building and knowledge-export functions of the Chengdu-WeGO collaboration.

Conclusion

Through its partnership with WeGO, Chengdu has evolved from a technology adopter to a global contributor of smart governance solutions. By combining institutional capacity building, youth engagement and open data cooperation, it has redefined South-South urban collaboration as an inclusive, iterative and knowledge-based process. The model demonstrates how cities can transform digitalization into a vehicle for shared learning and resilience, rather than competition. Chengdu's leadership illustrates a practical path for emerging cities seeking to globalize their governance expertise while fostering inclusive,

sustainable development grounded in mutual trust, innovation and intergenerational participation.