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## **Improving Urban Management: Environmental and Social Considerations of Sectoral Reform**

USAID's urban program focuses on Making Cities Work by improving planning, management, finance, and governance to deliver improved public services, poverty reduction and economic opportunity. Environmental policies contribute to urban services by requiring and helping to finance environmental infrastructure and delivering other urban environmental amenities like green spaces, trash-free streets and riverbanks, and cleaner air. Urban programs designed to make cities work – to make them more livable – are significantly more effective and efficient when they are planned and executed in concert with compatible environmental policies.

### **How Environmental Policy and Practice Affects Urban Management**

- *Local environmental management policies reduce total societal costs in urban areas.* Most national environmental policies provide broad mandates for environmentally sustainable behavior. To complement these mandates, local environmental governance delivers tangible environmental improvements that affect people's lives everyday. Examples include planning for development that preserves open space, siting industry and dense commercial facilities along proper transportation corridors and away from sensitive populations, collecting garbage frequently to avoid unsightly and unhealthy accumulation, and financing through user-payments, adequate drinking water and sanitation facilities.
- *Disaster planning can help urban areas avoid catastrophic consequences of extreme events.* Policies that require emergency response planning to extreme environmental events like hurricanes, floods, drought, and wildfires can prepare people and communities to avoid catastrophic consequences.
- *Public-private partnerships can help deliver effective and efficient environmental services to urban areas.* Perhaps the greatest single impediment to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and responsible solid waste management in urban areas is inadequate financing. Under public management in many developing economies, these environmental services decline over time, customers refuse to pay their bills, infrastructure deteriorates, services decline further, and the cycle spirals downward. Private management of environmental assets can help stop this cycle of decline and deliver better water, sanitation, and solid waste services to more people, even in impoverished areas, at realistic prices.
- *Protection of urban watersheds creates livable cities.* Urban watersheds in city parks and along river corridors are often the principal source of relief from crowded city streets. They also provide a foundation for economic and recreational activities like boating, fishing, and tourism. When managed properly, urban watersheds also increase the value of adjacent property, creating wealth and a market for urban living spaces.

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- *Environmental education provides urban residents a sense of pride in their cities.* Environmental education and awareness programs can mobilize support for healthier urban living and opposition to projects that threaten public and environmental health. They can also lead to development and implementation of community-based environmental action plans.
- *Sensitivity to environmental quality can improve urban transportation services and the health of urban residents.* Subsidized mass transit provides poor urban residents needed mobility. But it also reduces the generation of air pollutants per capita and improves the quality of urban life. The introduction of alternative fuels and smart growth policies can have the same effects.