

International Capabilities Index

The importance of internationalization
for cities' development



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Forewords

The “International Capabilities Index” presented in this publication aims to fill a critical gap in the study of the growing phenomenon of subnational internationalization. This process, which has gained significant importance in recent decades, poses a key challenge: how can we measure and understand the degree of internationalization of cities, provinces, and regions, as well as its impact on their development? Aware of the importance of internationalization as a driver of growth, **this tool allows for an objective assessment of the global openness of territories, providing a diagnosis that guides strategic decision-making to maximize the benefits of their international projection.**

In this context, the index not only facilitates an accurate diagnosis but also identifies specific opportunities and challenges for each territory. With this information, local authorities can **design more effective strategies to increase the global competitiveness of their cities and provinces while ensuring that internationalization generates tangible benefits for their residents.** It serves as a key tool for professionalizing the areas responsible for international affairs, promoting **more technical, informed, and forward-looking administration.**

The work undertaken with this index in collaboration with the **Center for International Strategies of Governments and Social Organizations (CIG) at Universidad Austral** aligns perfectly with the goals of the **Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science, and Culture (OEI)**. Creating opportunities to build a better future involves strengthening local capacities in an increasingly interconnected world. It is precisely at this intersection of the global and the local where internationalization finds its greatest potential to contribute to social and economic progress.

Finally, this effort aligns with our mission to work directly with the governments of our 23 member countries. We strengthen their public policies with tools like this index, enabling more effective management that recognizes the role of internationalization in the development of their territories. Through programs and projects designed and implemented by committed professionals, we continue to create value for society as a whole, promoting inclusive and sustainable global integration that addresses national and local priorities.

Luis Scasso

Director - Argentina Office
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Globally-minded provincial states and cities play a decisive role in integrating Latin American economies into global value chains. In a geopolitical context marked by challenges such as energy and food security, the green transition, and the development of knowledge-intensive creative industries, **subnational governments aim to strengthen their international actions to directly influence the development of their territories and, consequently, the quality of life of their residents and visitors.**

The international projection of provinces and cities is supported by two complementary dynamics: **competition and cooperation**. On one hand, they compete to attract and retain human talent, investments, and visitors, to host major events, and to position themselves on global development agendas. On the other, they cooperate to exchange best practices, lead discussions, and build networks to find common solutions to global issues—such as the creation of Urban 20.

In this context, in 2023, we founded the **Center for International Strategies of Governments and Social Organizations (CIG) at the School of Government of Universidad Austral**. The CIG's mission is to enhance knowledge about global trends and the international projection strategies of provinces and cities worldwide. Our work is organized into three main areas: training, research and advocacy in global debates, and technical assistance. Through various initiatives, **we seek to connect policymakers with academia, the private sector, and institutions for financing and international cooperation.**

The **International Capabilities Index**, created by CIG with the **support of the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI)**, represents another step in this direction. Its goal is to **highlight the relationship between internationalization and development**, and serve as a **practical tool for global benchmarking, identify opportunities to maximize the benefits of internationalization, and promote greater professionalism within the areas responsible for international affairs.**

The Index is part of a series of [strategic tools](#) developed by CIG to **build specialized knowledge and a comprehensive vision of subnational diplomacy**. Along with other global initiatives, it can become a **key element in developing increasingly successful international strategies, grounded in evidence and with strong actionable potential.**

Fernando Straface

Director General

Center for International Strategies

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1. Introduction

In recent years, **internationalization has become imperative for the development of cities**. The advance of urbanization, the acquisition of new skills, the consolidation of a globalized economy, and the increasingly urban nature of the latest global agendas have transformed cities into centers of economic and political power (Curtis, 2018) and, consequently, into drivers for their internationalization.

Internationalization ultimately pays dividends. Therefore, more and more cities are using global insertion strategies to maximize their opportunities and expand their development frontier. As Fernández de Losada (2019) points out, major cities have well-defined strategies for brand consolidation and investment attraction, and these efforts to project themselves globally are rewarded with the mobilization of important assets for their economies. The benefits of internationalization can be both direct -such as the economic returns from the arrival of foreign visitors- and indirect -those derived from the reputation of leading global avant-garde agendas. However, it should be clarified that not all cities internationalize; **not all those that do, do so in the same way; and not all international strategies are equally effective in promoting development**.

How can we recognize a successful internationalization strategy, how can we estimate how internationalized a city is, and how do we measure the relative success of that internationalization experience?

These questions arouse interest among specialists and local governments themselves, but there are still no concrete and standardized tools that allow an exhaustive comparison of their degree of internationalization.

There are different **city indexes and rankings** capturing elements such as economic competitiveness, quality of life, or citizen safety, among others¹. However, although these indexes cover aspects that make up internationalization (and are consequently a valuable input), *they are not tools designed to measure the relative internationalization of a city and, ultimately, do not cover all the dimensions that make up this phenomenon*. **In fact, to our knowledge, there is no specific index of city internationalization that covers all the constituent elements of this process.**

¹. In order to simplify the reading and avoid redundancy of the analysis, this document includes subnational and regional governments within the terms cities and local governments.

Such an index would **fill a gap in the study of the recent phenomenon of city internationalization. If internationalization contributes to development, understanding how internationalized a city is will help to highlight the relationship between the two variables, while at the same time allowing better strategies to be designed and the necessary adjustments to be made to maximize the benefits of global projection for such development.** A tool of this type would make it possible to carry out diagnoses, identify opportunities to exploit internationalization dividends to the maximum and promote greater professionalization of the areas responsible for international affairs in local jurisdictions.

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This paper aims to identify the main factors that contribute to the internationalization of cities, the actions they implement to consolidate their identity, reputation, and visibility at the global level, and the impact of internationalization on urban development and quality of life. First, we will analyze the most significant global trends concerning the internationalization of cities. Subsequently, we will inquire into the why of internationalization; that is, what cities obtain or expect to obtain from their global insertion. Next, we will present the main elements of internationalization strategies, highlighting those that contribute most to their success. Finally, an analysis of the existing tools for measuring the internationalization of cities will be presented, together with a proposal for an index to comprehensively evaluate the degree of internationalization of cities.

2. The growing role of cities on the international scene

In general, the international arena tends to be associated with the actions of national states or governments. This conception makes sense: the architecture of the international order, the discussion of global agendas, and participation in the international economy were dominated for centuries by national states. Since the end of the 20th century, however, **new actors have emerged in the international arena, among them cities.**

According to the well-known theory of complex interdependence proposed by Keohane and Nye (1988), central governments are no longer the only actors on the global stage. Challenging the realist perspective centered on the unitary role of the state, these authors emphasize non-governmental entities, social movements, associations, and various transgovernmental organizations.

Here, it is important to highlight the prominent role of local governments as legitimized political actors, which categorically distinguishes them from other non-governmental actors, such as civil society organizations and the private sector. This does not mean that governments are the only ones contributing to the internationalization of the city. In fact, a city's international projection depends on actions promoted by the public sector, the private sector, and public-private partnerships.

It is in this complexity that cities are inserted. As Acuto (2021) states, global cities function as “centers of political power, gateways for trade (with seaports, airports, railroads, trade routes, etc.), focal points for the collection and dissemination of information and culture (with important academic institutions, museums, [...]), primary sites of religious organizations, and hubs for global mobility and/or tourism.”

The emergence of cities on the global scene is linked to two parallel processes that have been unfolding in recent decades: on the one hand, **cities are becoming actors with their own weight, looking to the world for new development opportunities.** On the other hand, **the world is looking to cities for innovation, talent, and quality of life, and as part of the solution to some of the greatest challenges of our era.**

2.a. Cities look to the world for new development opportunities

Globalization and widespread urbanization have positioned cities at the forefront of global governance within a multilateral system designed and created for states (Creutz, 2023).

The world is becoming increasingly urban. **About 55% of the world's population lives in cities** and this trend is projected to become more pronounced in the coming years (UN, 2018). In addition to the demographic weight of the urban world, there is also its economic weight: according to the consulting firm McKinsey, it is estimated that **50% of global GDP growth in the last two decades occurred in regions that occupy, as a whole, less than 1% of the territory** (Romei & Smith, 2022).

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Parallel to urbanization, **cities have gained autonomy and competencies, and thus better capacities to design and implement public policies**. Increasingly, local governments seek to become the architects of their own development, exploring various ways to promote economic growth and job creation. **It is expected that units with more demographic and economic weight, and more functional autonomy should develop more active international agendas and claim, as they have been doing, "a seat at the global table"**.

At the same time, the challenges they face have become increasingly pressing. **Climate change, migration, pandemics, and social inequality, among other phenomena, have urban epicenters**, they transcend the formal boundaries of cities, and addressing them creates a favorable environment that directly impacts the city's success.

The convergence of these agendas in cities makes them central actors in the debate and in the search for solutions, resulting in major innovations in public policy. **It should therefore come as no surprise that they seek to take the lead on cutting-edge agendas, proposing and driving new mechanisms to address major global challenges**. According to Fernández de Losada and Abdullah (2019), this is reflected

in the presence of networks of local governments at the Conferences of the Parties (COP), their influence in incorporating a territorial dimension into the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, and their participation in the development of the New Urban Agenda. These examples effectively illustrate how city networks have succeeded in ensuring that their perspectives are considered, making sure that actions to address global challenges reflect their needs, interests, and goals.

This new leadership is particularly relevant in the case of climate action.

Cities consume a large share of the world's energy supply and are responsible for approximately 70% of greenhouse gas emissions (UN, 2019). Also, the impacts of climate change can have catastrophic consequences in urban settings. For example, for coastal cities, it is estimated that sea level rise and flooding will result in economic losses of up to \$1 trillion by 2050 (C40 Cities, 2018).

For this reason, many cities have decided to come together to amplify their voice internationally, cooperate, and find new allies to finance their climate action plans. **Mayors' summits in the framework of networks such as C40 or Urban 20 are examples of initiatives that promote common agendas and make visible commitments to a sustainable future. In recent years, moreover, access to finance for climate action has become the main focus of urban diplomacy.** In fact, according to recent research (Manfredi Sánchez & Seoane Pérez, 2021), city networks are replacing nation-states as the main drivers and advocates of climate policy at the international level.

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Urban leadership attracts notice. **International organisms, financial institutions, and philanthropic initiatives are increasingly choosing cities to develop projects.** There are numerous cases of this new trend, such as the “Cities LAB” or the IDB Cities Network, the “Cities with a Future Initiative” or CAF’s Biodiverciudades, the “UrbanShift” program of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the “UrbanShift” program, the “Cities with a Future Initiative” or the “Cities with a Future” program of the World Bank.

The growing international activism of subnational governments has an impact on the links with national governments. Many foreign ministries have gone from underestimating the international action of these actors to creating spaces for cooperation and coordination. It is not by chance, for example, that the U.S. Department of State has created the office of the “Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy”, in charge of articulating national and subnational foreign policy; or that the Argentine Foreign Ministry has had the Federal Council for Foreign Relations and International Trade, whose objective is to become a forum for exchange, advice, and coordination between the National State and the provinces.

2.b. The world looks to cities

It is not only cities that are seeking greater international prominence: other actors are also demanding it. This is mainly because **economic growth is increasingly based on human capital and talent, and these tend to be found in cities.**

Richard Florida (2000) states that “knowledge has replaced natural resources and physical labor as the source of wealth creation and economic growth. In this new era, talent has become the key factor of production”. The author refers to the human capital of cities as “the creative class,” which includes workers in science and technology; business and management; arts, cultural media, and entertainment, among others. **When choosing where to settle, this new creative class not only analyzes structural factors such as the size of the labor market, average salaries, and transportation, but also elements such as quality of life, social diversity, cultural life, sports, and nightlife.**

Peter Jackson, director and producer of “The Lord of the Rings,” expressed this trend very clearly. When asked why he had chosen the city of Wellington instead of Los Angeles to develop the trilogy, he explained he wanted to free himself from “a 24/7, hyper-competitive city, where you spend 2 hours stuck in traffic and spend every penny you have to buy a house”. According to Jackson, “not all creative people want

to live like that. Many of them want a **balance between work and quality of life, they want to live in a place with a wonderful outdoor environment, be close to the water, and be able to afford to live there and bring their families**" (Florida, 2005).

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The rise of the "creative class" coincides with a trend toward decentralization of the activities of global companies. These types of firms **expand their operations while seeking to benefit from agglomeration economies**, meaning, those spaces with abundant availability of talent, innovation, and contacts (Sassen, 2005). An example that illustrates this combination of factors is the city of Houston, which in 2023 was the best U.S. city for foreign multinationals in the Financial Times and Nikkei ranking (FT-Nikkei Investing in America Ranking, 2023). This recognition was awarded due to its business-friendly policies, excellent logistics and connectivity, affordable cost of living, and diverse community. It is not surprising, then, that its metropolitan area is home to 26 Fortune 500 companies.

In addition, **the evolution of remote work in the post-pandemic context has further facilitated talent mobility**, highlighting the consolidation of the so-called "digital nomads" profile: professionals who, thanks to technology, globalization, and the nature of the industries in which they work, choose to temporarily settle in the cities they find most attractive. In this way, innovative companies (particularly technology-based ones) can expand their talent selection beyond local labor markets, allowing their employees to move to cities with a better quality of life (Florida et al., 2023).

To sum up, in this first section, we highlight how increased urbanization and the consolidation of capacities and powers to implement public policies have boosted the cities' internationalization in recent decades. City diplomacy is a peculiar phenomenon that arises from the combination of two factors -their own need to open up to the world in search of development opportunities and the demand of international actors for cities to act globally- analytically distinguishable but factually related. A corollary of this assertion is that, although always referenced in some way to the foreign policy of their countries, the international action of cities cannot be explained as an uncritical extension of that policy. In fact, **local diplomacy can**

combine - and often does combine - logics of confrontation and convergence to the foreign policies of their countries. And in both cases, such international action can pay dividends.

Thus, **some actions at the urban level can “spill over” attributes to the country as a whole.** This is, for example, the case of Lima, whose positioning as a gastronomic destination has contributed to Peru winning the World Travel Awards' World's Best Culinary Destination award for eight consecutive years. Similarly, London is working with the MedCity agency to boost the healthcare industry locally, positioning the UK as a global healthcare powerhouse.

Nonetheless, **it is also possible for local foreign policy to clash with national policy.** When former President Donald Trump announced the United States exit from the Paris Agreement, nearly 300 of the country's mayors signed the “We are still in” declaration adhering to the international agreement's goals: “The Trump administration's announcement undermines a fundamental pillar in the fight against climate change and damages the world's ability to avoid the most dangerous and costly effects of climate change...It is imperative that the world knows that in the United States, the actors who will provide the leadership necessary to deliver on our Paris commitment are found in city councils, state capitals, tribal governments, colleges and universities, investors, and businesses. Together, we will continue to actively engage with the international community (...)” (We Are Still In Declaration, 2017). These growing tensions between subnational governments and central governments in international matters are attributable to the greater levels of autonomy that the former have been acquiring in recent years.

Likewise, the global agendas represent an opportunity for cities to amass greater leadership at the international level, build alliances, and gain financing for sustainable development. Finally, the advent of a globalized, talent-centered economy has generated growing competition in the “visitor economy,” making the most competitive cities with the best quality of life a preferred destination for the creative class and companies seeking to hire their services.

3. Why do cities internationalize?

From the trends analyzed in the previous sections, there are different motivations for internationalization: to gain prestige and lead global agendas, to position a mayor or governor at the international level, or to exploit a competitive advantage in a certain industry, to name a few. **There is a wide range of international actions and each one responds to different goals.**

Given this diversity of experiences, it would seem difficult to agree on a single answer to the question “Why do cities internationalize? However, arguably, all internationalization experiences share a common element: **cities internationalize because it pays dividends. Or, put another way, because they understand internationalization as a vector of development.**

The identification of dividends is clearly expressed in different international strategies. For example, Bogota’s Internationalization Strategy (2021) establishes that **“internationalization is not an end in itself, but a tool to meet territorial development objectives”** and defines as its main objective to position Bogota as a global benchmark for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the consolidation of partnerships that add value to public policies and district management.

Along the same lines, the Chicago Global Strategy (2017) points out that the city should not have to choose between solving domestic problems or expanding its positioning globally. Cities with successful internationalization strategies, it is argued there, address both dimensions: they **“thrive abroad from a strong local base, and residents at home benefit from their city’s global reach.”**

Similarly, the International Projection Strategy of Buenos Aires City (2019) stresses that as the City becomes more recognized worldwide for its quality of life, it will be possible to attract more visitors, students, and businesses. “Thus, the Strategy promotes a virtuous circle: **the better the positioning of the City based on its quality of life, the more opportunities for its development, which at the same time contribute to improving the quality of life”.**

There are cities that have been reaping dividends from their internationalization strategies for decades. The case in point is the City of Montreal which, through the **public-private organization “Montreal International”, has helped attract foreign**

direct investment projects valued at \$24 billion since its creation in 1996. This, it is estimated, has resulted in the creation and maintenance of 80,000 jobs (Montreal International, available at: <https://www.montrealinternational.com/en/about/>).

Another success story is London & Partners, London's tourism and economic promotion agency, which **since 2011 contributed £3.4 billion to the local economy and helped create and sustain more than 70,000 jobs** (London & Partners, available at: <https://www.londonandpartners.com/about-us>). London & Partners' strategy ranges from attracting conferences, and cultural and sporting events to supporting the internationalization of local companies and creating new business opportunities, among other activities.

With a greater focus on the visitor economy, Bilbao has also managed to reap the benefits of internationalization. After the urban and social crisis resulting from the decline of the steel industry in the 1980s, the city implemented a comprehensive urban transformation and capitalized on its tourism and cultural assets (Muñiz Martínez, 2009). Thanks to this strategy, today it is internationally known for its culture, architecture, and artistic offerings. The iconic Guggenheim Museum, for example, has boosted a tourist flow that was previously almost nonexistent. Thus, **Bilbao went from 121,000 visitors in the summer of 2003** (El País, 2003) **to 454,828 in 2023** (Bilbao Turismo, 2023).

Similarly, Buenos Aires prioritized in its international strategy the attraction of international students and digital nomads. **Through the "StudyBA" program, created in 2016, it set out to become one of the best cities in the world to study. In 2023, it managed to recover the flow of international students suspended during the pandemic. The more than 80,000 international students generated an estimated economic impact of USD 500 million for that year** (GCBA, 2023). Also, in 2022, the City implemented the "Nomads BA" program, aimed at attracting digital nomads through incentives for lodging, marketing campaigns, and positioning -two editions of the "Latin American Digital Nomads Conference" were held-, and collaboration with the national government to launch a special visa for this segment, which was implemented in 2022. **Buenos Aires went from receiving 9,600 nomads in 2021 to 74,200 in 2023, with an estimated economic impact of USD 154 million** (GCBA, 2023).

Other cities have also managed to advance the sustainable development agenda through cooperation on cutting-edge agendas. This is the case for member cities of the 100 Resilient Cities network, which obtained funding to develop their first

urban resilience strategies, an innovative planning tool. Similarly, many cities in the C40 network received support to create their Climate Action Plans, which serve as a roadmap to achieve local carbon neutrality by 2050. There are numerous cooperation examples in this area, providing tangible benefits to cities.

So far, we have mentioned examples of international actions that bring direct dividends to cities. However, **international action can also yield indirect benefits, stemming from building up prestige.** This is the case of Paris, which has consistently sought to build a leadership role in the climate action agenda, hosting COP 21 in 2015—where the agreement of the same name was signed—presiding over the C40 cities network from 2016 to 2019 and positioning itself under the concept of a “15-minute city.” As expressed in the fourth update of its Climate Action Plan (2024), the City of Paris presents itself as “a unique and ambitious international voice, advocating for the place of cities in international negotiations and the principle of direct financing to support their carbon trajectories.”



Leadership in global agendas bestows prestige on a city: it signals pathways, promotes commitments and attracts attention from specialized audiences and potential strategic partners. Being at the center of an issue valued by other global actors can generate direct resources in terms of cooperation and financing, but it also implies indirect benefits. While it is not possible to adequately quantify the benefits of these actions, **leadership in global agendas is an increasingly relevant intangible in the decision-making process of both companies and individuals.**

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An example illustrates this point: in 2019 (and again in 2023), a group of Amazon employees organized a protest. They were not demanding higher salaries rather the company adopted a greater commitment to the climate action agenda (Peltz, 2019). In response, Amazon published its Climate Pledge, setting the goal of achieving carbon neutrality in its operations by 2040. The argument is simple: the decisions of highly qualified human capital (the kind that both companies and global cities seek to attract) are increasingly influenced by the commitments governments and organizations make in development agendas. All else being equal, those companies and governments that manage to consolidate a reputation for committing to these agendas will have a better chance of attracting and retaining qualified talent and human capital. **This partly explains why some cities are betting on leading these agendas.**

Thus, whether directly or indirectly, **cities internationalize because they identify dividends that, over time, translate into economic development and quality of life for their citizens.** Consequently, it is possible to affirm that **the more internationalized cities will also be those with more possibilities for development.**

4. How do cities internationalize?

There are countless opportunities to project cities internationally: leading a global agenda, attracting sporting events, organizing international forums, implementing a branding strategy to attract visitors, and promoting investments through a specific agency. The examples could go on. **This multiplicity of avenues for internationalization poses a challenge for local decision-makers: the options may be endless, but the resources of cities (especially for investing in internationalization) are not.** In an increasingly competitive context, if those scarce resources are used in isolation or sporadically, in discrete actions, without a previously agreed-upon positioning strategy, it is likely that internationalization efforts will be scattered and will not yield the expected benefits. In short, **those cities that do not have an international strategy with a defined vision, clear priorities, and associated actions will be at a disadvantage compared to those that do.**

This explains the recent **rise of international strategies at the subnational level.** These initiatives allow for identifying external and internal actors with a global vocation, creating governance for the internationalization process, and from there, establishing priorities, agreeing on goals, and measuring results to demonstrate their value to citizens and political authorities.

Next, we will analyze some examples of city international strategies developed in recent years:



London & Partners (the public-private organization that leads London's international strategy, aims to support high-growth sectors, provide resources to small businesses, boost the visitor economy, strengthen London's brand, and create profitable partnerships to reinvest in the city's economic growth. In its 2023 strategy, one of its main objectives was to grow businesses centered on the health sciences sector. Within this framework, they partner with Med City, the cluster organization for the health and life sciences sector. This partnership helps drive innovation, attract investment,

and continue developing the life sciences sector in the capital, to consolidate the UK's position as a global scientific powerhouse (Med City, n.d.).



Bogotá international strategy seeks to position the city as a global leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To achieve this, the city has focused its efforts on two lines of action: playing a leadership role in relevant international networks and presenting a Voluntary Local Review to highlight progress in meeting the SDGs. Additionally, the city conducted a mapping of international actors, both public and private, who will be key to forming alliances and positioning the city for its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. For example, it identifies the need to engage in conversations with multilateral organizations from other regions worldwide, such as the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank (District Directorate of International Relations, 2021).



The development of Madrid's international strategy proposes a plan independent of the city's international cooperation actions for development, creating a specific area—the Delegated Area for Internationalization and Cooperation—to strategically, coordinately, and participatively arrange actions that will strengthen Madrid's international role in the mid and long term. It also offers an internationalization approach that accompanies the overall government action in a cross-cutting manner, with the ability to integrate internal and external efforts and generate public-private partnerships.



The city of Melbourne, for example, identifies one of its main goals as establishing itself as an economic hub in the Asia-Pacific region and as the number one Australian city for businesses and startups. To achieve this, it has its investment promotion agency, Invest Melbourne, which assists and facilitates the experience of all companies that wish to establish themselves there. (Invest Melbourne, available at: <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/invest-melbourne/Pages/invest-melbourne.aspx>)

Intermediate cities have also developed international strategies focused on achieving specific objectives. For example, the city of **Santa Fe**, in Argentina, focused its internationalization on building urban resilience and adapting to climate change. In 2017, it published its Resilience Strategy thanks to the support and funding of the 100 Resilient Cities organization and, in 2018, it was chosen as the site for the new ICLEI network office in Argentina.

The key point is that not all cities internationalize in the same way, and depending on how it is done, internationalization can bring greater or lesser benefits. For this reason, it is worth asking: **what factors contribute to a city's successful internationalization?** **Based on the analysis of various strategies, we highlight three key elements: the triad of identity-reputation-visibility; the logic of cooperation and competition; and the visitor economy and global agendas.** We will now explore each element in depth.

4.a. Identity, reputation, and visibility

SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES



The first element common to all successful international strategies are the **3 key concepts on which they base their planning: identity, reputation, and visibility.** Identity constitutes “the DNA of the city” (Brookings, 2020). That is those unique attributes that distinguish it and on which the city wants to rely to position itself globally. These may be its history, culture, productive profile, or geographic characteristics -the proximity to the sea, for example- and the aspirational aspects that local stakeholders wish to enhance -for example, positioning itself as a leading city in business tourism. In any case, this identity must be connected in some way to development: the attributes prioritized for projection must result in more opportunities and a better quality of life for residents.

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Reputation represents the extent to which this identity is recognized externally. Meaning that the prioritized attributes are effectively perceived internationally. The city may be not known, or it is known for identity attributes other than those intended. In fact, it often happens that the intended identity and the reputation are dissociated. Returning to the case of Buenos Aires City, during the development of its International Projection Strategy (2019) it was identified that, although the city's reputation was high in Latin America (i.e., it was known for the attributes that the strategy sought to project), outside the region the identity and reputation differed,

either due to lack of knowledge or identification with other attributes. Consequently, the strategy's objective was to promote identity in prioritized geographies and segments.

Visibility denotes efforts to bring reputation closer to the intended identity. As such, it represents the heart of the international strategy. Visibility comprises the construction of a narrative and the development of an action plan. It is what ultimately determines the success of the strategy. For example, Buenos Aires also set out to be a relevant player in the climate action agenda and, in order to align its reputation to this identity, it carried out a series of high-visibility actions: in 2018, together with the City of Paris, it created the Urban 20 forum, which reaffirmed the cities' commitment to the Paris Agreement and urged G20 countries to accelerate climate action. Likewise, in 2020, the Chief of Government Horacio Rodríguez Larreta was elected vice-president for Latin America of C40 -the network that brings together the main cities committed to the fight against climate change. Subsequently, in 2022, the City hosted the C40 World Mayors Summit, and the following year published its third Climate Action Plan, which sets the goal of achieving emissions neutrality by 2050 and is aligned with the Paris Agreement.

4.b. Cooperation and competition

A second element common to all successful international strategies is that they combine, to a greater or lesser extent, logics of cooperation and competition. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has estimated that around 70-80% of cities undertake at least some form of international action -such as membership in international networks or associations (Lara, 2020). City networks like Resilient Cities, C40, or Metropolis provide different platforms for exchange and technical cooperation on key issues such as climate change adaptation, gender-based policies, or job creation. Likewise, at the bilateral level, there has been an evolution of cooperation between cities, moving from more general twinning agreements to cooperation agreements on specific projects and agendas.

In the evolution of city diplomacy, Acuto suggests different (modern) generations. First, he establishes that at the beginning of the 20th century, **city diplomacy based on bilateral relations** between cities, embodied in twinning agreements based on idiosyncratic, cultural, economic, humanitarian, or merely opportunistic coincidences. By mid-century, city diplomacy laid the **foundations for various forms of collectively organized local cooperation** that sought to take advantage of multilateral opportunities in a global context characterized by the emergence

of international communities of practice. By the 1970s, in the era of federalism and the growing autonomy granted to subnational governments, the concept of paradiplomacy emerged (Acuto, 2021).

In the 1990s, the first forms of networks between cities that went beyond peer-to-peer exchange began to emerge and sought to **institutionalize secretariats to facilitate collaboration and promote the sharing of resources and knowledge**. One of the examples Acuto sets out is ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) and how the United Nations also launched programs -such as UN-Habitat- that propelled the transformation of local diplomacy from twinning to diplomatic engagement with thousands of local governments.

Between 1990 and 2000, the secretariats expanded their memberships, giving way to what we know today as **generalist city networks**, at first. That is to say, those that do not take on a particular theme and deal with the representation of cities from a broad perspective. Then, Acuto argues, “The new millennium has seen the expansion and diversification of city diplomacy, which has led to **specialized networks created expressly to intertwine political action with private activities and philanthropic interests**. Related to this, this trend marks a generational shift in which city diplomacy involves global political agendas such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The **activities of networks such as UCLG, ICLEI and C40, along with the increasing visibility of mayors on the global stage, animates a narrative that challenges the traditional nation-centered approach. international system.**” (Acuto, 2021)

Faced with this scenario, **cities appeal to new strategies of international positioning, highlighting their participation in city networks that allow them to amplify their voices**. Thus, networks such as UCLG take over the representation of cities in traditional international architecture. Likewise, initiatives such as Urban 20 create new spaces for leadership and cooperation where cities can present their main challenges and development priorities.

The **commitment and leadership of cities in global agendas is becoming increasingly forceful, in some cases surpassing the commitment of nation-States**. For example, by 2019, the United States was part of the group of 5 countries that had not yet reported their progress in meeting the SDGs. In contrast, New York City innovated with the creation of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR), for the localization and reporting of the SDGs by cities. This reporting model is already used by more than 200 cities worldwide (Pipa & Pendrak, 2023).

Of all these global agendas, the most relevant (both in terms of visibility and geopolitics) and the one that involves the most cooperation (between cities, and between cities and networks) is **climate action**. In particular, with regard to financing for mitigation, adaptation, and -more recently- loss and damage associated with climate change. As we have mentioned, cities are largely responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and, at the same time, those that may suffer the worst consequences due to extreme weather events. However, the international architecture does not yet fully reflect this reality: national states continue to be the protagonists of the COPs, and the major financing funds -such as the Green Climate Fund- are still channeled, in the first instance, at the national level. This necessarily demands that all actors involved in local diplomacy work together in a coordinated manner to promote the interests of cities in multilateral forums.

Cooperation coexists with competition. As argued above, **many cities set as a priority in their international strategies the attraction of talent, visitors and investments, for which they strive to position their competitive advantages**. Likewise, **cities also compete to lead agendas**, especially if such leadership translates into dividends on prioritized issues.

It should be noted, then, that **the cooperation and competition logics are not mutually exclusive, and the boundary between them is not always clear**. There are areas of competition in which there is cooperation -exchange of experiences in attracting international students, for example-, and there are areas where cooperation predominates but competition is allowed -leadership of the climate agenda or access to climate finance-.



4.c. Visitor economy and global agendas

The cooperation and competition logic corresponds to a large extent with the two major verticals of internationalization: visitor economy and global agendas. As we argued above, there is interdependence and complementarity between the two. Therefore, international strategies tend to somehow combine logics of cooperation and competition. However, given the scarce resources mentioned, it is normal that cities tend to prioritize one over the other.

In this framework, **attracting visitors has become a hallmark of international strategies**, whether they are tourists, students, investors, digital nomads or Swifties. Cities use their international strategies to boost the so-called **“visitor economy”**, defined as the positive externalities generated by people who come to a city (increased consumption of goods and services), as well as by the companies and investments that settle there.

Thus, **many cities seek to position themselves as “unavoidable” destinations and focus the construction of their identity on authentic experiences**. In this context, culture, art, architecture, and gastronomy are projected as assets in the international insertion of cities. A paradigmatic case in this sense is that of the City of Lima, which proactively sought to be recognized as the gastronomic capital of the region and which, in 2023, was crowned as the home of the best restaurant in the world according to the list of World’s 50 Best Restaurants, in addition to three other establishments included in the ranking (Tegel, 2024). As mentioned in the first section, this attribute of the city spills over to the country as a whole. The Peruvian Ministry of Tourism estimates that gastronomic tourism generates annual revenues of over USD 5,000 million, and represents 4.6% of the GDP of Metropolitan Lima (USIL, 2023).

Similarly, **some cities are betting on international positioning and attracting visitors through architectural megaprojects**. For example, the Jumeirah Palm Islands in Dubai aims to extend the coastal area to accommodate 15 million tourists in its plan of becoming a luxury tourist destination in the United Arab Emirates (Darmaki & Rahman 2008). **The organization of major sporting events is used to boost the visitor economy, as well as to regenerate certain neighborhoods in host cities**. The 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games reveal the transformative potential of mega-events. Their organization was part of a broader investment strategy in sports infrastructure and convention centers focused on a process of urban revitalization. Within a few years, Barcelona doubled the 1.7 million tourists it received prior to the Olympic Games and transformed itself from a summer resort city into an urban tourist destination in its own right (Berg, Braun & Otgaar, 2002).



The organization of major sporting events is used to boost the visitor economy, as well as to regenerate certain neighborhoods in host cities.

In addition, **other cities have bet on the development of the local film industry.** This is the case of the city of Mumbai which, through Bollywood, has managed to project its image globally, as well as consolidate itself as a cultural epicenter with events such as the MAMI Film Festival and the KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival.

For its part, the city of Sydney managed to position itself as the main center of film production in Australia, with leading studios such as Fox and Marvel and renowned festivals such as the Sydney Film Festival. The city was able to attract investment through Screen NSW -the government agency that helps, promotes, and strengthens the screen industry in the state of New South Wales-, the establishment of new studios, and the attraction of new projects, granting filming incentives to international production companies. Iconic films such as “The Great Gatsby” (2013) and “Finding Nemo” (2003) used the city as a backdrop, highlighting its iconic locations such as the Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge. This prominent use of the city as a backdrop has not only attracted worldwide attention and promoted Sydney’s image as a tourist destination, it has also generated a direct economic impact. Taking into account film content, television, digital game production, and foreign productions

made in the country, they contributed an aggregate value of \$3.072 billion and generated 25,304 full-time equivalent jobs in 2014/15. Furthermore, the contribution to international tourism from Australian audiovisual content is estimated at around \$725 million in associated tourism expenditure each year.

Today, the city of Sydney continues to work to maintain that positioning, the premiere of the film “Anyone but you” leverages the city’s stages to showcase it to the world while benefiting from the expertise and talent of its industry and its incentives.

The film industry represents an opportunity to project a city’s identity, seeking to enhance its awareness and reputation, which can contribute to attracting visitors.

In all cases, it stands out that the most successful cities in attracting visitors first clearly defined their identity, whether as a gastronomic capital or a luxury destination and then implemented visibility actions to enhance their reputation.

5. How to measure the internationalization of cities?

In the previous sections, we presented the main global trends that guide the internationalization of cities, the direct and indirect dividends they obtain, the strategies they develop to achieve them, and the universe of internationalization actions they implement, as well as the elements common to any successful strategy. This brings us to the central question posed in this paper: **how do we measure internationalization?**

In recent years, a myriad of indexes and rankings have emerged that measure different aspects of urban life and governance. **Business of Cities estimates that since 2007 more than 500 indexes and rankings have been created** to monitor a heterogeneity of dimensions and indicators linked to the quality of life, competitiveness, sustainability and prosperity of cities. (Jain & Hamel, 2022).

One of the reasons for this “index inflation” is that, since they aggregate relevant information and synthesize it into a discrete and comparable index, they are useful for different stakeholders, including local governments themselves. Below, we identify 3 benefits that the indices provide to cities interested in internationalizing:

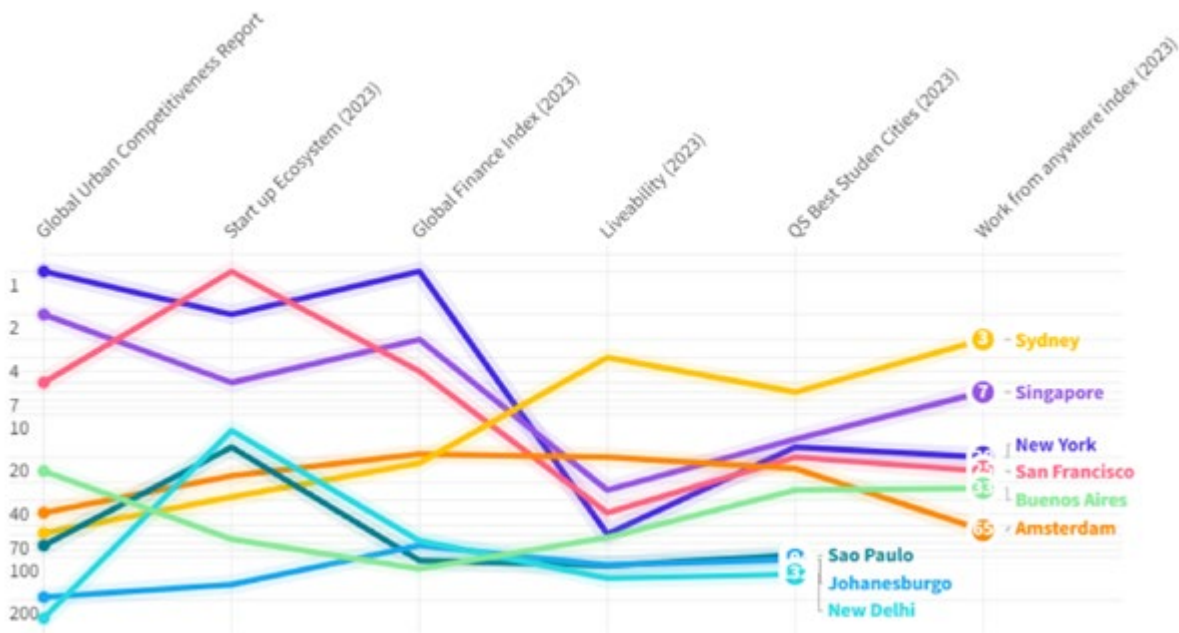
- **It allows them to assess whether the identity they wish to project is, indeed, perceived in that way at the international level.** This analysis can represent a starting point for designing the necessary visibility actions and, subsequently, evaluating their performance.
- **It facilitates the incorporation of useful indicators for management.** For example, the city of Tokyo uses the Mori Institute’s Global Power City Index to define its annual goals and objectives, based on the performance of previous years (Jain, D. and Hamel, P. 2022).
- **It helps to build reputation according to the intended identity.** Participation in a ranking constitutes a visibility action in itself and many cities consider it as an objective per se of their internationalization strategies.

Given this relevance, we have selected and analyzed the 20 city indices that we consider most relevant, including The Economist’s City Liveability Index, which analyzes the quality of urban life; UN Habitat’s Global Urban Competitiveness Report, which determines their competitiveness; and QS’s Best Student Cities Ranking,

which evaluates the best places to live and study, among many others. The analysis of the prioritized indices can be found in Annex I.

Two main conclusions emerge from this analysis: on the one hand, each of these publications reflects the relative performance of cities in its thematic area. Many of them, such as quality of life, competitiveness, or sustainability have a part in internationalization but do not capture internationalization as a phenomenon in itself. In other words, **many of these indices measure key aspects of internationalization, but not internationalization as such.** This is evident when we compare the positions that the same city occupies in different rankings: as is to be expected, when different variables are measured, the results are different.

Figure 3 - Comparison of city rankings and indices



Source: Own elaboration based on Global Urban Competitiveness Report (2021), Global Finance Index (2023), The Economist Liveability Index (2023), Starlink Start up Ecosystem (2023), QS Best Student Cities (2023), Nestpick's Work from anywhere Index (2023).

Figure 3 presents the diversity of results obtained among 9 global cities in 6 widely recognized rankings and indexes, which monitor economic competitiveness, financial centrality, innovative potential, quality of life, and visitor economy. As we can see, **New York is the most competitive city in economic terms, but not in quality of life. Similarly, Sydney is at the top of the list of cities for students, but not for start-ups.**

The second conclusion concerns the dimensions that these indexes capture. Many central elements of international strategies have not been weighted by any index that we are aware of. **Cooperative actions -such as participation in city networks- or leadership of global agendas -such as commitment to achieving carbon neutrality or meeting the SDGs- are largely absent.** Similarly, **there is little research on the development of international strategies and their governance, which are key to aligning a city's reputation with its intended identity.** The Cities and International Engagement Survey project of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the University of Melbourne is a notable exception in this area (Pejic, 2022). The Global Cities Index of Oxford Economics, for example, has the particularity of measuring the internationalization of the 1,000 largest cities in the world. The selected categories influence internationalization but do not capture the international policy-making capacity of local governments (Britton, Bernard-Sasges and Bowen, 2024).

there is little research on the development of international strategies and their governance, which are key to aligning a city's reputation with its intended identity.

A very comprehensive tool is the Truman Center's Multilevel Diplomacy Map, which details how subnational diplomacy is developing, where it is concentrated, and the local priorities it promotes in the 50 U.S. states (Truman Center, 2024). Something similar could be said of the Lowy Institute's Global Diplomacy Index (Lowy Institute, 2024), which counts the number of diplomatic representations that different cities have at the global level. This is undoubtedly a measure of international linkage, but it is hardly the only valid indicator for measuring internationalization.

The survey of city indexes and rankings shows that there is currently no tool that measures the phenomenon of internationalization in a comprehensive manner, incorporating and weighing all relevant dimensions. In other words, we are not aware of a tool that ranks cities according to their degree of internationalization.

This gap is paradoxical given the importance that, as we have seen, internationalization has acquired for the development of cities. An internationalization index could provide subnational governments with a tool to evaluate the performance of their strategies, reorient efforts, and eventually improve the quality of public policy.

The survey of city indexes and rankings shows that there is currently no tool that measures the phenomenon of internationalization in a comprehensive manner, incorporating and weighing all relevant dimensions. In other words, we are not aware of a tool that ranks cities according to their degree of internationalization.

6. International Capabilities Index

The International Capabilities Index aims to fill this gap. Made up of four dimensions selected from the analysis presented in this concept note, the study of more than a dozen international strategies and the survey of the main 20 city indexes, it incorporates the indicators most commonly used to measure the internationalization of cities as well as others that have not been duly prioritized to date.

ICI's four dimensions are representative of the identity-reputation-visibility triad and the other elements that make up internationalization strategies.

Each dimension is composed of different **indicators** - 47 in total - that will be weighted to result in the total score of each city analyzed by the index. **The information will be collected through different mechanisms.** The International Capability Index will use data already available in **existing indexes and rankings**. The development of this document implied a benchmark to justify the creation of this measurement tool, yielding relevant indicators to be used but, as the document argues, insufficient to measure internationalization comprehensively.

Thus, the data collection will be complemented by conducting **surveys and in-depth interviews** with the international relations teams of the cities covered by the index. It should also be noted that, in some cases, **proxy data** from international aggregates will be used. In this sense, the methodology of the International Capabilities Index is not perfect and will be under continuous review and analysis.

6.a. Global assets

As we mentioned earlier, identity constitutes **“the DNA of a city” (Brookings, 2020)—that is, those unique attributes that distinguish it and that it wishes to project globally to boost its development.** Thus, the components of a city's identity become its global assets—whether existing or “aspirational” elements—that a given city may seek to position and enhance. In line with this analysis, this dimension encompasses the following sub-topics:



Quality of life: The five categories taken from The Economist's Liveability Index: stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.



Talent production and innovation: The city's human capital and its capacities to generate and enhance talent and entrepreneurship, measuring the quality of universities, English proficiency, score on the Global Startup Ecosystem Index, and position in the Smart City Index.



Safety: The personal, political, and physical dimensions of security, taking into account the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants and the indicators from the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index.



Connectivity and tourist infrastructure: The availability and quality of infrastructure for accommodating visitors, as well as connectivity with other cities. This includes the number of 4- and 5-star hotels, airport connectivity, public transportation, and sustainable mobility options.



Coexistence and diversity: The equal treatment and absence of discrimination based on socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity, regarding public services, employment, judicial procedures, and the justice system. It is measured through the score of the equal treatment and absence of discrimination indicator and freedom of worship from the Rule of Law Index.



Business environment and local economy: The size of the local economy and the institutional framework, measured by geographic gross product and the variables of business freedom and government integrity from the Heritage Economic Freedom Index.



Cultural attractions: The quantity and international recognition of the city's cultural offerings, including its nightlife, gastronomy, theaters, museums, stadiums, and architecture. This encompasses restaurants listed in the Michelin Guide, the number of art galleries, theaters, and museums, as well as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



Environment: Data related to environmental management, effects of climate change, and other impacts, including its greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, natural disasters, and anomalies in temperatures and precipitation, based on the city’s ranking in the “Environment” category of the Global Cities Index.

6.b. Local ecosystem for internationalization

This second dimension **evaluates the network of public and private actors involved in the internationalization process, as well as the institutional arrangements and resources that enable the coordination and implementation of initiatives.**

The centerpiece of the ecosystem is the **development of an international strategy**, with its elements of identity, reputation, and visibility clearly defined, and with efficient mechanisms for coordination among the involved actors. Successful governance of internationalization helps improve the reputation of cities by clearly projecting their global assets and preventing the dissemination of contradictory messages or the waste of resources.

The sub-topics for this dimension are:



Actors for international promotion: The public and private actors that promote the city’s internationalization. This includes the number of public, private, civil society, and public-private institutions that carry out international promotion actions.



International strategy: The existence of an internationalization plan, a dedicated office for international relations, human resources, and a budget for diplomatic actions.



International organisms: The international organizations that choose the city as their headquarters.

6.c. International projection

The third dimension covers **the visibility actions cities implement to position their global assets abroad, improve their reputation, and attract visitors.** In international projection, leadership in global agendas -such as climate action and sustainable development- is highlighted through participation in international networks and forums. Hosting major sporting and cultural events, as well as promoting the local film industry, also contributes to a city's international projection. This type of prestige helps attract businesses, talent, and visitors, as well as secure international funding.

This dimension considers the following sub-topics:



Global agendas: The city's participation and leadership in agendas such as climate change, gender, and migration, among other topics. This is measured by the number of international forums organized, leadership roles in city networks, the number of city networks they participate in, and published plans related to global agendas.



The city on the global stage: Visibility actions that help project the city's global assets internationally, enhancing its recognition, reputation, and visitor attraction. This is measured in terms of cultural and sports events, conferences and conventions, and the number of films that use the city as a filming location.



Reputation: The perception and recognition of the city at an international level. In other words, the score obtained in the Brand Directory's City Index and the international awards received.

6.d. Internationalization dividends

Finally, ICI's fourth dimension is linked to the **benefits cities gain from their internationalization.** Some of the dividends are associated with the visitor economy, meaning the positive externalities generated by people arriving in a city (such as increased consumption of goods and services), as well as by companies and investments that establish themselves there. Similarly, participation in global agendas can also yield dividends, such as access to financing or technical assistance, in addition to enhancing reputation and attractiveness.

Thus, the last dimension will focus on:



Visitor economy: The results the city achieves in terms of international visitors —tourists, students, and digital nomads— have a positive impact on the local economy. This will be measured by the number of tourists, the score obtained in the QS Best Student Cities ranking, and the number of digital nomads received.



Global economic integration: The presence of large international companies and the role of exports of goods and services in the local economy. We will measure the G2000 companies in the city according to the STC Economic Power Index and the percentage of exports of goods and services over the total GDP.



Development financing: The financing and international technical cooperation received thanks to the city's involvement in global agendas.

The International Capabilities Index we present in this work has a dual goal. On one hand, it aims to fill an existing gap in the study of city diplomacy. As we argue, despite the growing interest in the study of local government internationalization, there is still no applied analysis tool regarding the level of relative internationalization that takes into account all the relevant dimensions of this process. On the other hand, considering the positive impact internationalization has on local development agendas (a point we attempt to demonstrate in these pages), **the International Capabilities Index can become a public policy evaluation device** that allows for improving the quality of subnational international action, adequately evaluating its impact, and designing new initiatives.

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8. Annex I: Analyzed indexes and rankings

Ranking/Index	Purpose and topics	#Cities	Frequency
City Liveability Index Report de la Economist Intelligence Unit	Evaluate the quality of life in various cities. Topics addressed include air quality, infrastructure, education, health, stability, culture, climate, economy, and access to housing.	173	Annual
The Competitiveness of Cities del World Economic Forum (WEF)	Evaluate the competitiveness of various cities worldwide. Topics addressed include factors such as infrastructure, economic stability, innovation, connectivity, governance, sustainability, and quality of life. This report provides a global perspective on the ability of cities to attract investment, retain talent, and foster sustainable economic development.	7	Every 2 years
The Global Urban Competitiveness Report (UN-HABITAT)	Promote the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda through the evaluation of urban competitiveness. The topics addressed include aspects such as sustainable urban planning, social equity, accessibility to basic services, infrastructure, resilience to urban challenges, and citizen participation.	1006	Annual
The Global Cities Report de Kearney	It examines the current performance of cities based on 27 metrics spanning five critical dimensions: business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement. Provides information on the current global reach, performance, and level of development of the world's largest cities. It also allows for the comparison of various cities and the identification of core strengths and distinctive differences.	135	Annual
City Competitiveness Index de KPMG	KPMG used its proprietary competitive alternatives cost model to analyze location-sensitive costs for different types of business operations across geographic locations. Measures: Labor, facilities, public services, taxes, transportation, business environment and intangible factors.	62	No information
Safe Cities Index	Classifies and compares cities in terms of their urban safety and security.	60	Every 2 years
Global power city index	Measures the power to attract talent, capital, and investment.	48	Annual
Smart City Index (IMD)	It evaluates residents' perceptions of issues related to the technological structures and applications available in their city.	141	Annual

International Congress and Convention Ranking	The International Congress and Convention Association specializes in the international association meetings sector, offering data, educational opportunities, communication channels, as well as business development and networking opportunities.	326	Annual
Global Fintech Index	Ranking of all cities in the world where there is a cluster or community of fintech companies	220	No information
Euromonitor Top 100 City Destinations	Measures which were the most visited cities worldwide and the main advances that help cities stay ahead of their competitors	600 (top 100)	Every 2 years
On location	Measure the most filmed places in the world.	60	Once
StartupBlink Startup Ecosystem	Explore the world's top 100 countries and 1,000 cities ranked by startup ecosystem strength.	1000	Annual
QS Best Students Cities	It ranks top study destinations around the world to reveal which cities are the most student-friendly based on several factors, including affordability and convenience.	160	Annual
Nestpick´s Work from anywhere Index	A study that highlights the most attractive destinations for digital nomads looking for a new home, according to legislation, as well as liveability factors such as climate, cost of living, and equality.	75	No information

9. Annex II: Pilot implementation notes

The development of the International Capabilities Index was a theoretical endeavor based on literature, benchmarking of existing indices and rankings, and the experience of local government decision-makers. Once completed, it underwent two stages of review: a theoretical review by experts from the CIG International Council and a practical review through a pilot test administered in five Ibero-American cities: Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Madrid, Montevideo, and São Paulo. Both stages allowed for testing its functionality, the feasibility of data collection, and the reasonableness of the results produced by the ICI.

Below is a summary of the main challenges and inconsistencies encountered throughout the pilot test implementation process, which will be considered for the future implementation of the CIG's International Capabilities Index.

1. GLOBAL ASSETS

1.1 QUALITY OF LIFE

1.1.1 Global score on the Liveability Index

Source: Global Liveability, The Economist
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.2 TALENT AND INNOVATION PRODUCTION

1.2.1 Score based on the number of universities among the top 100 in QS and their rating

Source: QS Rankings
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.2.2.Score in the English Proficiency Global Ranking

Source: EF - Education First
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.2.3 Position in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index ranking

Source: Startup Blink
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.2.4 Position in the Smart Cities Index

Source: Smart Cities Index
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.3 SAFETY

1.3.1 Homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants

Source: Local statistics
 Type of Source: Desk research
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.3.2 Average score of the indicators “Right to life and personal security guaranteed,” “Due process and rights of the accused,” and “Freedom of opinion and expression effectively guaranteed” from the Rule of Law Index

Source: Rule of Law Index, World Justice Project
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.4 TOURIST CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1.4.1. Number of 4- and 5-star hotels

Source: Trip Advisor
 Type of Source: Desk research
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.4.2 Ranking in the OAG Megahubs Index 2023

Source: OAG Megahubs Index, OAG Aviation
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.4.2 Position in the Urban Mobility Readiness Index 2023 ranking

Source: Urban Mobility Readiness Index, Oliver Wyman Forum
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.5 COEXISTENCE AND DIVERSITY

1.5.1 Score for the indicator “Equality of treatment and absence of discrimination” from the Rule of Law Index

Source: Rule of Law Index, World Justice Project
 Type of Source: Desk research
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.5.2 Score for the indicator “freedom of worship” from the Rule of Law Index

Source: Rule of Law Index, World Justice Project
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.6 BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL ECONOMY

1.6.1 Geographic Gross Product per Capita in constant dollars

Source: Estadísticas locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note: Comparability issues of the information provided.

1.6.2 Score for the “Business freedom” variable from the Index of Economic Freedom

Source: Index of Economic Freedom, The Heritage Foundation
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.6.3 Score for the “Government integrity” variable from the Index of Economic Freedom

Source: Index of Economic Freedom, The Heritage Foundation
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

1.7 CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

1.7.1 Number of restaurants recognized by the Michelin Guide / among the top 100 by 50 Best

Source: Guía Michelin
Type of Source: Desk research
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.7.2 Number of theaters, museums, and art galleries

Source: Trip Advisor
Type of Source: Desk Research
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.7.3 Number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites located within a 100 km radius of the city center

Source: UNESCO
Type of Source: Desk Research
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

1.8 ENVIRONMENT

1.8.1 Ranking in the “Environment” category of the Global Cities Index

Source: Global Cities Index, Oxford Economics
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

2. LOCAL ECOSYSTEM FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

2.1 ACTORS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION

2.1.1 Number of private institutions or civil society organizations that participated in 2023 in international promotion actions for the city, in collaboration with government areas with support/knowledge from the International Relations office

Source: Local data
Type of Source: Encuesta a la ciudad
Pilot Implementation Note: Narrow the definition of the indicator

2.1.2 Existence of a formal entity (public or public-private) dedicated to the international promotion of the city

Source: Local data
Type of Source: Encuesta a la ciudad
Pilot Implementation Note: Narrow the definition of the indicator

2.2 INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

2.2.1 Existence of an internationalization plan published and updated in the last 4 years with clear and measurable goals

Source: Local data
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note:Narrow the definition of the indicator

2.2.2 Existence of a formal administrative structure for international relations

Source: Datos locales
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note:Narrow the definition of the indicator

2.2.3 Number of human resources

Source: Datos locales
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note:Narrow the definition of the indicator

2.2.4 Number of international missions and/or meetings attended by the mayor and the head of international relations in the past year

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

2.2.5 Officially received international delegations by the Mayor or the head of international relations during 2023

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3. INTERNATIONAL PROJECTION

3.1 GLOBAL AGENDAS

3.1.1 Number of international forums related to global agendas organized in the city in 2023

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3.1.2 Existence of a leadership role in city networks in the past 3 years

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3.1.3 Number of plans related to global agendas published in the past 3 years (climate change, migration, gender, innovation, etc.)

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3.2 THE CITY IN THE GLOBAL STAGE

3.2.1 Number of large cultural events (+50,000 people) in 2023

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: City survey
 Pilot Implementation Note:Clarify in the indicator definition whether these events are organized by the government or by private entities.

3.2.2 Number of international sports events hosted in the city in the last 4 years, weighted by their magnitude and relevance

Source: Urban Mobility Readiness Index, Oliver Wyman Forum
 Type of Source: Desk research
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3.2.3 Number of congresses and conventions held in the last year

Source: Ranking ICCA
 Type of Source: Desk research
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3.2.4 Number of films featuring the city as a filming location in the last 3 years

Source: Datos locales
 Type of Source: Index
 Pilot Implementation Note:N/A

3.3 REPUTATION

3.3.1 Score obtained in the City Index

Source: City Index, Brand Directory
Type of Source: Encuesta a ciudad
Pilot Implementation Note: Problemas de comparabilidad de la información suministrada

3.3.2 Number of international awards received in the last 5 years

Source: Datos locales
Type of Source: Index
Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

4. GLOBAL DIVIDENDS

4.1 VISITOR ECONOMY

4.1.1 Number of international tourists received in the last year

Source: Local statistics
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

4.1.2 Score in the Best Student Cities ranking

Source: Datos locales
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

4.1.3 Number of digital nomads received in the last year

Source: Nomad List
Type of Source: Desk research
Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

4.2 GLOBAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

4.2.1 Number of G2000 companies in the city

Source: STC Economic Power Index
Type of Source: Desk research
Pilot Implementation Note: N/A

4.2.2 Percentage of exports of goods and services over the total geographic gross product

Source: Estadísticas locales
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note: Issues establishing comparability of information due to different data collection methods

4.3 FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 Number of projects completed in the last 2 years with international funding greater than USD 50,000

Source: Datos locales
Type of Source: City survey
Pilot Implementation Note: Issues establishing comparability of information due to different data collection methods



Índice de Capacidades Internacionales

La importancia de la internacionalización para el desarrollo de las ciudades

Con el apoyo de



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Centro de Estrategias
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