



♦ QUARTZ MEMBERSHIP

# 30 cities changing the global economy

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# We built these cities

Quartz thinks a lot about cities—how they affect our daily lives, the role they play in the global economy, and what we can do to make them better.

Some cities, though, are **indicators** of where the world is headed. We've compiled 30 of them that showcase the industries, policies, and trends that will shape the world in the future.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive ranking conducted with a singular methodology, but rather a different **framework** to consider the cities that are having an **outsized influence** on the global economy.



Cities where you're likely  
to get a green job

Slide 4



Cities growing thanks to  
remote work

Slide 10



The new startup hubs

Slide 16



Scientific and medical hubs

Slide 22



Cities well positioned to  
take on climate change

Slide 28



Cities already living  
in the future

Slide 34

**Cities where you're likely to  
get a green job**



# Stockholm, Sweden

Lots of parks, a historic old town, the ABBA museum—Stockholm has a lot going for it. It's also the capital of a country that values sustainability and eco-friendliness. So it makes sense that Stockholm is a place where the number of green jobs is on the rise.

**1:** Stockholm's rank for cities with the highest concentration of green jobs, according to a [LinkedIn report](#)





# Aberdeen, Scotland

**12,500**: Green sector and energy transition-related jobs to be located in Aberdeen by 2030

A port city perched in northeast Scotland, Aberdeen has for decades been called the oil capital of Europe for its ample reserves of offshore oil and gas. But as it pushes for net zero emissions, the UK government has designated Aberdeen an “energy transition zone” and allocated millions of pounds for new jobs.

# Vancouver, Canada

In 2008, the mayor of Vancouver promised something ambitious: By 2020, this city would be the greenest in the world. That deadline has come and gone, and although Vancouver made great progress, it [didn't hit every goal](#) it intended. Still, the number of green jobs in the city grew from 18,250 in 2010 to nearly 25,000 in 2016, a 35% increase.

## Vancouver's Greenest City 2020 Action Plan results, 2020

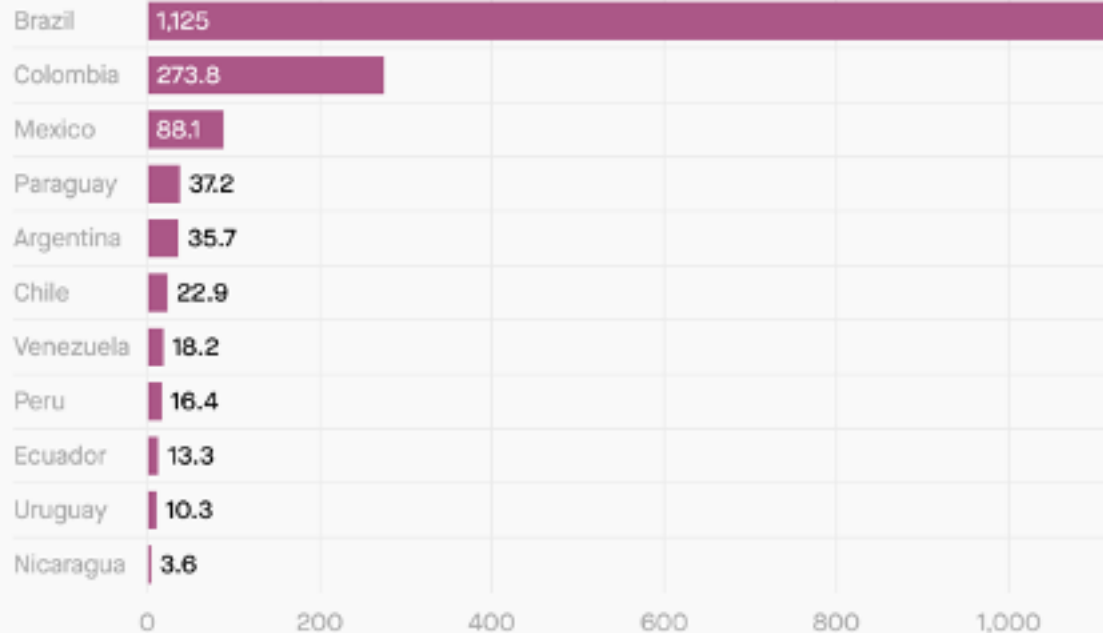
10 years after Vancouver set out to be the "greenest city in the world," here's what it achieved.

Goal	Achieved?	Improvement?
Reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions by 33%	✗	✓
Require all buildings constructed from 2020 onward to be carbon neutral in operations	✓	✓
Reduce energy use and GHG emissions in existing buildings by 20% over 2007 levels	✗	✓
Make the majority of trips (over 50%) by foot, bicycle and public transit	✓	✓
Reduce average distance driven per resident by 20% from 2007 levels	✓	✓
Reduce total solid waste going to the landfill or incinerator by 50% from 2006 levels	✗	✓
Ensure that every person lives within a five minute walk of a park, greenway or other green space	✗	✓
Plant 150,000 additional trees	✗	✓
Restore or enhance 25 hectares of natural areas between 2010 and 2020	✓	✓
Increase canopy cover to 22% by 2050	n/a*	n/a*
Meet or beat the most stringent of British Columbia, Canadian and appropriate international drinking water quality standards and guidelines	✓	✓
Reduce per-capita potable water consumption by 33% from 2006 levels	✗	✓
Increase city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels	✗	✓
Meet or beat the most stringent air quality guidelines from Metro Vancouver, BC, Canada, and the World Health Organization	✗	✗
Double the number of green jobs over 2010 levels	✗	✓

# Curitiba, Brazil

## Latin American countries with the most green jobs, 2019

Number of jobs in thousands



Quartz | qz.com | Data: IRENA via Statista

Brazil is an economic and ecological powerhouse in Latin America. It's home to some of the most delicate ecosystems in the world, which organizations are trying to protect.

One early effort to live harmoniously with nature took place in [Curitiba](#), a southern city that is the country's eighth most populous. A 1968 [master plan](#) revamped its public transport system, improved its waste management, and fostered eco-friendly industries that continue to create jobs.



# Kigali, Rwanda

For decades, Rwanda's government has set out plans to raise the income and living standards of its 13 million residents. Nowhere is that effect more obvious than in its capital city; as the population becomes more urban, the government is [taking steps](#) to create sustainable cities with plenty of green jobs.

**>140,000:** Green jobs created by Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy as of 2018



**Cities growing thanks to remote work**

# Tulsa, USA

For a few years, the population of Oklahoma's second largest city had been declining. In 2018, the city government launched a program that offers remote workers \$10,000 to move to the city. It's been an overwhelming success; the city anticipates that the program [could be responsible](#) for 5,000 local jobs and \$500 million in additional revenue by 2025.

**1,200**: People who have moved to Tulsa as a result of the program between 2018 and 2021







## Canggu, Bali

With stunning beaches and balmy climate, Bali has been a tourist destination for decades. But only in the past few years has it also become home to a thriving community of remote workers. Though tourism has [slowed](#) during the pandemic, the Balinese government is [creating special visas](#) to retain remote workers in the long term.

**373%:** Growth of remote workers in Canggu between 2016 and 2020, according to site Nomad List

# Melbourne, Australia

Life in Australia's covid bubble hasn't been easy. But for remote workers, the city of Melbourne still has a lot to offer. At least that's the finding of a [recent index](#) of global cities; with its digital nomad visa and relatively low cost of living, and high rankings for stability and equality, Melbourne has set the standard for remote work hubs.

**1:** Melbourne's rank in the list of cities best facilitating remote work, according to WorkMotion







## Reykjavik, Iceland

With easy access to nature, a thriving cultural scene, and occasional glimpses of the northern lights, there's no doubt that Iceland is a great place to visit. Recently, the government announced a new scheme to attract remote workers: the “Work in Iceland” visa allows non-EU citizens to work remotely from the country for up to 180 days.

**19:** Reykjavik's ranking as a city for remote work according to Remote.com

# Istanbul, Turkey

As the meeting of East and West, Istanbul looms big in the collective imagination. With its low cost of living, friendly residents, and decent infrastructure, it's also increasingly a destination for remote workers. The country has kept [covid restrictions loose](#) as it tries to keep up its steady flow of tourists, which includes remote workers.

**118%:** Istanbul's growth in 2021, according to remote work site Nomad List



# **The new startup hubs**

# Miami, USA

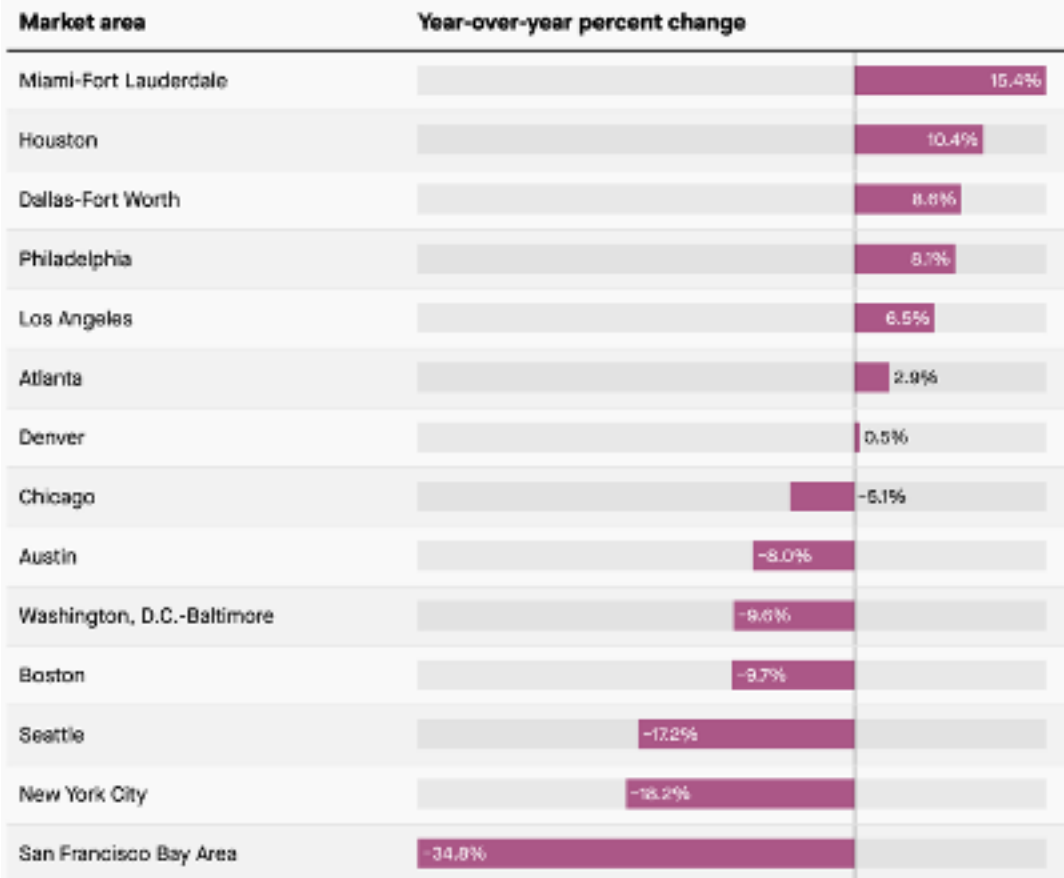
Long a center of commerce between the US and Latin America, Miami historically didn't have much of a startup scene to speak of.

That all changed during the pandemic—when mayor Francis Suarez [suggested in a tweet](#) that founders move to the city. All of a sudden, VC funds and financial incumbents flocked to Miami, while SoftBank committed \$100 million to local startups (though it's infused more than double that).

For founders, the draws include zero income tax, looser business regulations, lower costs of living than other coastal cities, and wonderful weather.

## Change in the number of tech workers moving into major US cities

Difference in net migration March 2020-February 2021 vs. March 2019-February 2020



Source: qz.com | Data: LinkedIn



# Mumbai, India

For two years in a row, Mumbai has been ranked as the top emerging startup hub, [according to Startup Genome](#). Its startup-friendly policies, growing crop of VC firms, and nearly two dozen startup incubators have fostered a more inviting environment for entrepreneurs.

Top 10 emerging ecosystems, ranked by their value

City	Country	Startup ecosystem value
Detroit	United States	\$37.2 billion
Bucharest	Romania	\$35.3 billion
Jakarta	Indonesia	\$34.0 billion
Guangzhou	China	\$26.4 billion
Nanjing	China	\$17.4 billion
Miami	United States	\$17.0 billion
Wuxi	China	\$16.4 billion
Mumbai	India	\$16.3 billion
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	\$16.1 billion
Copenhagen	Denmark	\$15.1 billion

Source: Startup Genome



# Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen was ranked as the fourth best city to do business globally by the [World Bank](#), thanks to [low bureaucratic regulation](#) for businesses, public innovation centers that fund startups, plentiful coworking spaces, and a thriving tech scene.

It's home to unicorns such as Zendesk, Unity, Tradeshift, and Trustpilot.

**8:** Number of unicorns (companies with \$1B+ valuations) founded in Denmark



# Jakarta, Indonesia

As the most populous city in Southeast Asia, Jakarta boasts a burgeoning middle class and a mobile-first population—a prime market for startup experimentation.

The government also encourages entrepreneurs via a slew of pitching competitions, seminars, and incubation programs.

**51%:** Share of venture capital invested in Southeast Asia that went to Indonesian startups

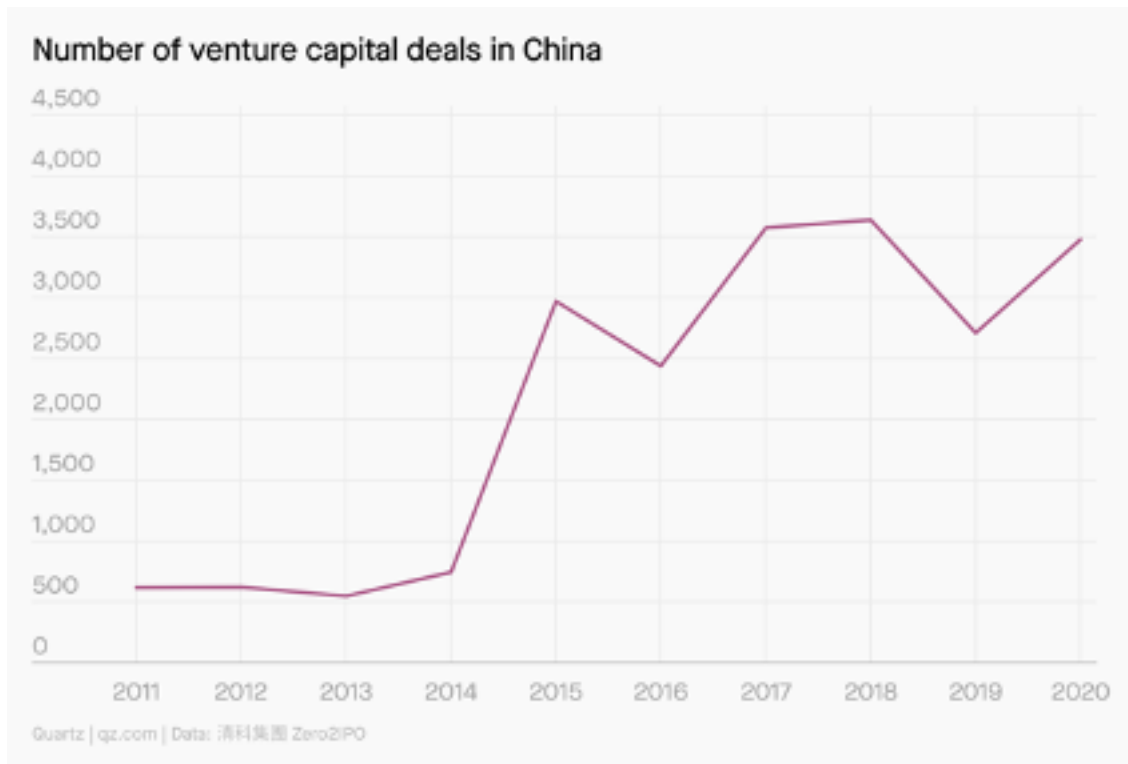
## Indonesia's unicorns

Company	Valuation	Date joined	Industry	Select investors
J&T Express	\$20 billion	April 7, 2021	Supply chain, logistics, & delivery	Hillhouse Capital Management, Boyu Capital, Sequoia Capital China
Traveloka	\$3 billion	January 1, 2017	Travel	Global Founders Capital, East Ventures, Expedia Inc.
Ovo	\$2.9 billion	March 14, 2019	Fintech	Grab, Tokopedia, Tokyo Century Corporation
Ajaib	\$1 billion	October 4, 2021	Fintech	Softbank Ventures Asia, Alpha JWC Ventures, Insignia Ventures Partners
Xendit	\$1 billion	September 14, 2021	Fintech	Accel, Y Combinator, Amasia

Quartz | qz.com | Data: CB Insights

# Beijing, China

Despite regulatory crackdowns, the startup industry in China continues to draw robust funding ([\\$1.2 trillion yuan](#), or US\$188 billion, as of Q3 2021). The government is still funneling trillions of yuan into the startup scene via special economic zones, startup incubators, and guidance funds (government-guided funds focused on investing in startups).

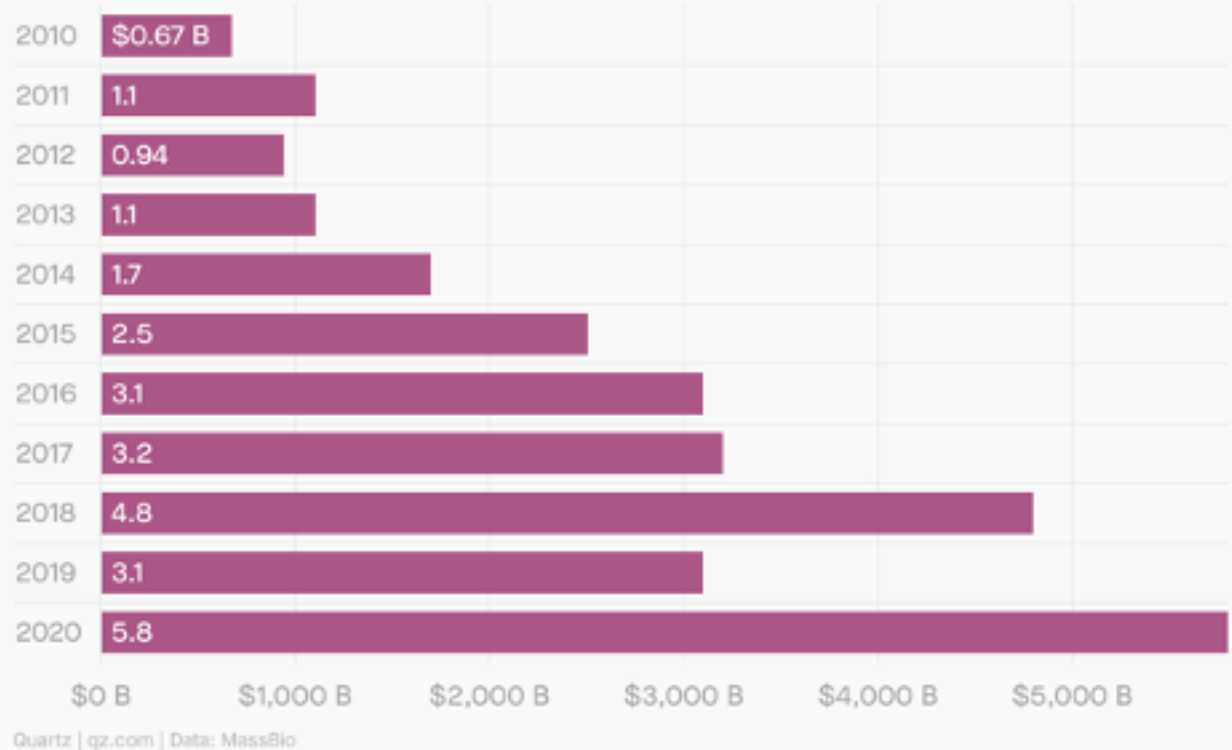


# **Scientific and medical hubs**

# Boston, USA

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call Boston the Silicon Valley of biotech in the US. There are more than 430 biotech and biopharma companies in Massachusetts, against a backdrop of 122 universities. And while Boston's biotech industry has been around for a while, it's [recently sped up](#); companies there raised \$4.3 billion in venture funding in the first quarter of 2021, after raising \$5.8 billion in 2020.

Venture capital investment in Massachusetts biopharma industry





# Tel Aviv, Israel

Israel has been building a med tech and life sciences sector for years, and is now home to roughly [1,600 companies](#) focused on medical devices, healthcare IT, and telemedicine, most of them concentrated in Tel Aviv. During the pandemic, the city's thriving med tech sector helped Israel's currency appreciate enough to make Tel Aviv the [most expensive city in the world](#).



# Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo is the research and scientific innovation powerhouse of Japan, but also has standing on the global stage. Two of its universities are among the top research institutions in the world, and is home to a cutting-edge [particle physics laboratory](#), that attract researchers from around the world.

**2,500 yen:** The cost of a haircut at the research laboratory's barber shop. It also includes a gym, two restaurants, and a post office.





# Basel, Switzerland

Basel has been the longstanding base of Switzerland's pharmaceutical industry. Today it's home to over 900 pharma companies, including giants like Novartis. But it's also a hub for biotech research and startup companies—a recent Basel-based biotech company raised [\\$67 million](#) in Series B fundraising.

**US\$217,284:** Basel's average GDP per capita in 2019



# Shenzhen, China

Home to tech giants Tencent and Huawei, Shenzhen is already an established tech hub in China where much of the tech industry is focused on manufacturing. But the city is still giving rise to new [innovation](#); in 2019, half of China's 60,000 international patent applications came from the city, and nearly 5% of the city's GDP was dedicated to research activities.



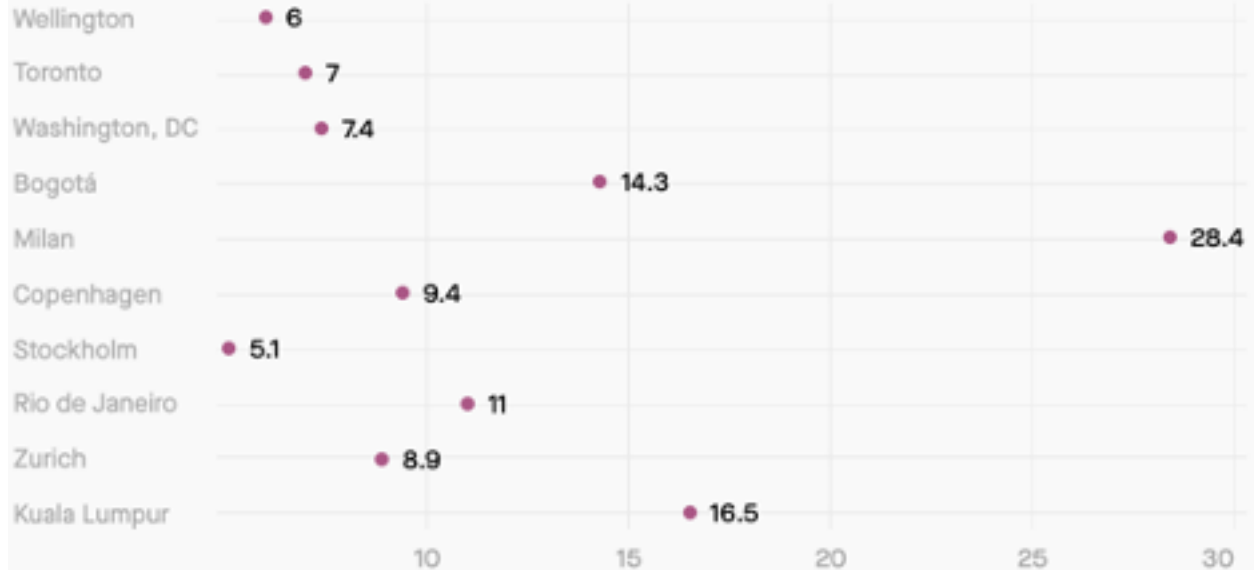
**Cities well positioned to  
take on climate change**

# Wellington, New Zealand

No place on earth can fully evade the consequences of a changing climate, but Wellington has made investments now to better prepare it for future challenges. The city has some of the [best air quality](#) in the world, as well as some of the densest urban tree cover. City leaders have also established a detailed climate action plan to be carbon neutral by 2050.

## High-ranking cities had some of the best air quality in 2020

Measure of annual average particulate matter (PM2.5) in air. Lower values indicate higher air quality.



Quartz | qz.com | Data: IQAir



# Bogotá, Colombia

The capital city of Colombia is widely recognized as one of the greenest cities in Latin America. This is due in part to its recent innovations in climate-friendly transportation. The city has an extensive bus rapid transit network, a cable car system to connect distant enclaves to the city center, and 360 km of [cycling pathways](#).



# Singapore

Singapore's tropical island climate makes it especially vulnerable to worsening climate events like typhoons and extreme heat. That's why the city-state is getting extra prepared, investing [S\\$100 billion in a plan](#) to become more resilient against rising sea levels. This means protecting the coasts, raising buildings and roadways, and fortifying essential infrastructure. The government has been at work on this since 2016, but some say progress on these plans is lagging.





# Minneapolis, USA

This northern US city that experiences sub-zero winters today could be a [balmy paradise tomorrow](#). When multiple impacts of climate change are considered all at once—temperature, sea level rise, wildfires, crop yields—cities in northern central US are some of the safest. Key crops like corn and soy that today grow further south will be produced in places like Minnesota.





# Amsterdam, Netherlands

Amsterdam will face the impact of rising sea levels, but has a major leg up because the city, like all of the Netherlands, has been devising [flood mitigation](#) strategies for years. The city's dunes, dams, and dikes are required to be built to withstand a once-in-10,000-years coastal flood.

**€7 billion:** The investment that the Netherlands national government made into sustainable energy as part of its 2022 budget



## **Cities already living in the future**

# Medellin, Colombia

Once dubbed the most dangerous city in the world, Medellin has transformed its reputation thanks to investment in education, childcare, public spaces, and transportation.

In particular, Medellin's sustainable cable system cut commute times from two hours to [30 minutes](#) for poorer residents who lived in mountain areas, expanding employment opportunities.

**15 minutes:** Decrease in average one-way travel time to work from 2003 to 2016, in part due to the Metrocable





# Dubai, UAE

Dubai is known for its audacious architectural plans, from skyscrapers (such as the world's [tallest building](#), the 163-floor Burj Khalifa) to [artificial islands](#).

It's also launched a slew of moonshot projects, including [autonomous flying taxis](#) and [robocops](#). In October 2021, the UAE government launched the [Moonshot Pilot Fund](#) as part of a 50-year program to spur innovation in tech and engineering.

**75%:** Share of energy it aims to generate via sustainable sources by 2050



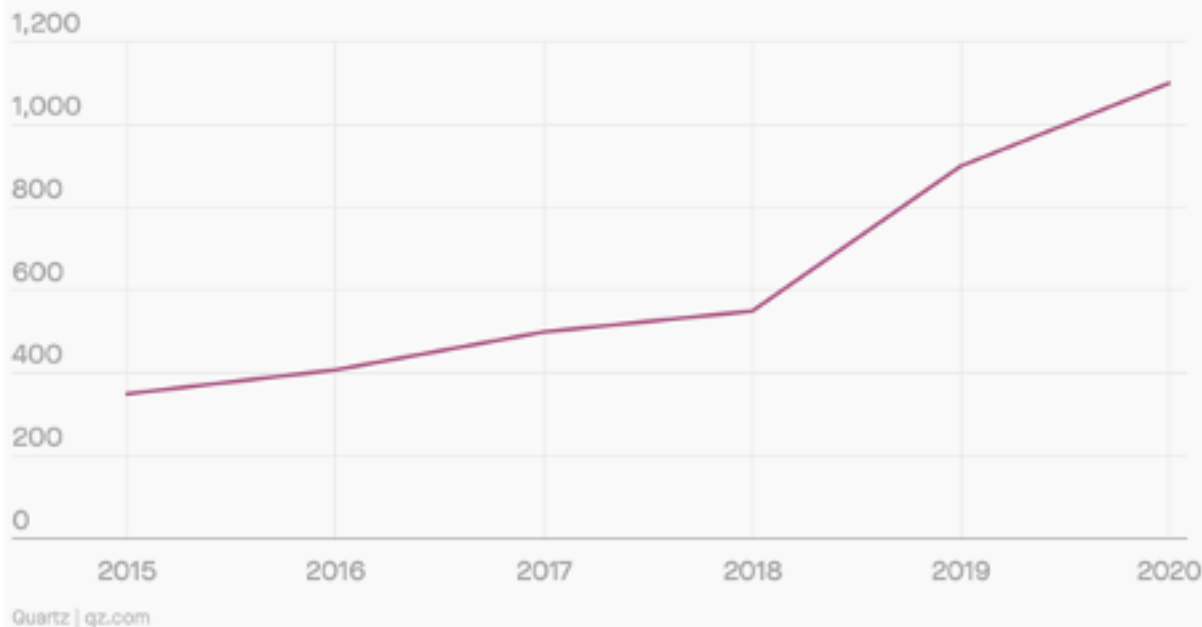


# Tallinn, Estonia

Nearly all bureaucratic processes are digital in [Estonia](#): Citizens can vote, file taxes, and pay tickets online; non-citizens can apply for residency online as well. Further, doctors can pull medical records, teachers can input grades, bankers can access savings data from a person's integrated file.

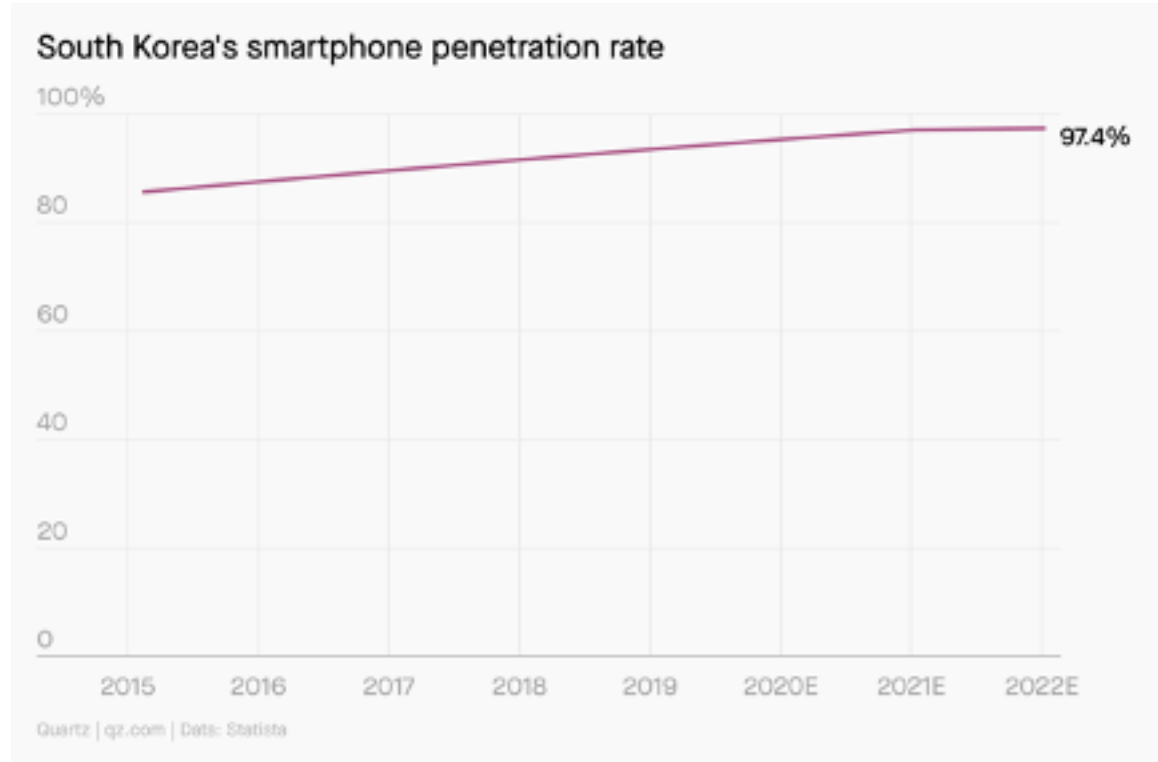
Its capital, Tallinn, is also a burgeoning startup hub: it's home to more than [1,100](#) startups (including seven unicorns).

Number of startups in Estonia



# Seoul, South Korea

An extremely connected city, Seoul has adopted several [smart city tech](#) solutions: free city-wide wifi; a shared parking app that lets people lease their spots; smart bus management systems that adapt to real-time traffic; circular garbage processing systems that turn trash into energy, and, most recently, a plan to integrate government services into the [metaverse](#) (read: VR).



# Brasilia, Brazil

Inaugurated as the capital in 1960, Brasilia was built from scratch in just five years. The modernist city consolidated civic buildings, residential towers, and open parks in its grand design.

Problems soon emerged—it was built for just 500,000 people, lacked low-income housing, and failed to account for pedestrians. However, the city is still held up as an innovative model for its futuristic architecture and progressive urban planning.

**4.7 million:** Brasilia's population today



# Index

Aberdeen, Scotland.....	<a href="#"><u>6</u></a>	Medellin, Colombia .....	<a href="#"><u>35</u></a>
Amsterdam, Netherlands.....	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>	Melbourne, Australia .....	<a href="#"><u>13</u></a>
Basel, Switzerland.....	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>	Miami, USA .....	<a href="#"><u>17</u></a>
Beijing, China.....	<a href="#"><u>24</u></a>	Minneapolis, USA.....	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
Bogota, Colombia.....	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>	Mumbai, India .....	<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>
Boston, USA.....	<a href="#"><u>23</u></a>	Reykjavik, Iceland .....	<a href="#"><u>14</u></a>
Brasilia, Brazil.....	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>	Seoul, South Korea .....	<a href="#"><u>38</u></a>
Canggu, Bali .....	<a href="#"><u>12</u></a>	Shenzhen, China .....	<a href="#"><u>27</u></a>
Copenhagen, Denmark .....	<a href="#"><u>19</u></a>	Singapore, Singapore .....	<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>
Curitiba, Brazil .....	<a href="#"><u>8</u></a>	Stockholm, Sweden .....	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
Dubai, UAE .....	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>	Tallinn, Estonia .....	<a href="#"><u>37</u></a>
Istanbul, Turkey .....	<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>	Tel Aviv, Israel .....	<a href="#"><u>24</u></a>
Jakarta, Indonesia .....	<a href="#"><u>20</u></a>	Tokyo, Japan .....	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
Kigali, Rwanda .....	<a href="#"><u>9</u></a>	Tulsa, USA .....	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
		Vancouver, Canada .....	<a href="#"><u>7</u></a>
		Wellington, New Zealand .....	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>