

Americas Manifesto for a Sustainable and Resilient Built Environment

October 2025

The WorldGBC Americas Network is calling for coordinated action to transform the built environment across the region.

With 17 Green Building Councils (GBCs) and more than 21,000 private and public sector members active throughout North, Central, and South America, the Americas Regional Network (ARN) is uniquely positioned to support policymakers and industry in delivering a built environment that is low-carbon, resilient and equitable.

Buildings sit at the intersection of the energy transition, resilient cities, and thriving communities — offering solutions that advance multiple priorities simultaneously. Whilst working to double energy efficiency, triple renewables, and reduce fossil fuels, the built environment will improve public health, create green jobs, lower energy bills, and strengthen climate resilience.

The built environment is a major lever for closing the emissions and resilience gaps across the Americas. Buildings account for 21% of energy-related CO₂ emissions in Latin America ([GlobalABC](#), 2020), 35% of total emissions in the US ([USDOE](#), 2024), and 18% in Canada ([IISD](#), 2025). The sector faces compounding pressures: over 120 million people in Latin America live in informal settlements or inadequate housing conditions ([World Habitat](#), 2023), often without access to basic services, while North America is grappling with housing affordability and homelessness crises.

Climate disasters are becoming more frequent — Brazil's 2024 floods displaced over 580,000 people ([UNHCR](#), 2024) and caused \$2.2 billion in losses ([Brazil Reports](#), 2024). With global building stock expected to grow 60% by 2050 ([GlobalABC](#), 2024), the choices around construction practices made today will lock in either carbon emissions or climate solutions for decades.

This manifesto is both a challenge and an invitation to political leaders, policymakers, and industry from across the region. On behalf of over 21,000 member organisations, the GBCs of the Americas Regional Network call on you to #BeBoldOnBuildings to unlock the positive social, economic, and environmental benefits that ambitious and equitable built environment policies can deliver.

In this manifesto, we outline the key policy priorities we call on leaders to endorse and champion. The manifesto is structured around eight interconnected pillars: carbon and energy, adaptation and resilience, biodiversity and nature, circular economy, water, health and wellbeing, equity and access, and finance. Each pillar presents the goal and impact, replicable and high-impact success examples, as well as actions required from policymakers in terms of regulations, information and incentives which should be introduced to support these priorities.

21%
of energy-related CO₂ emissions
relate to buildings in Latin America

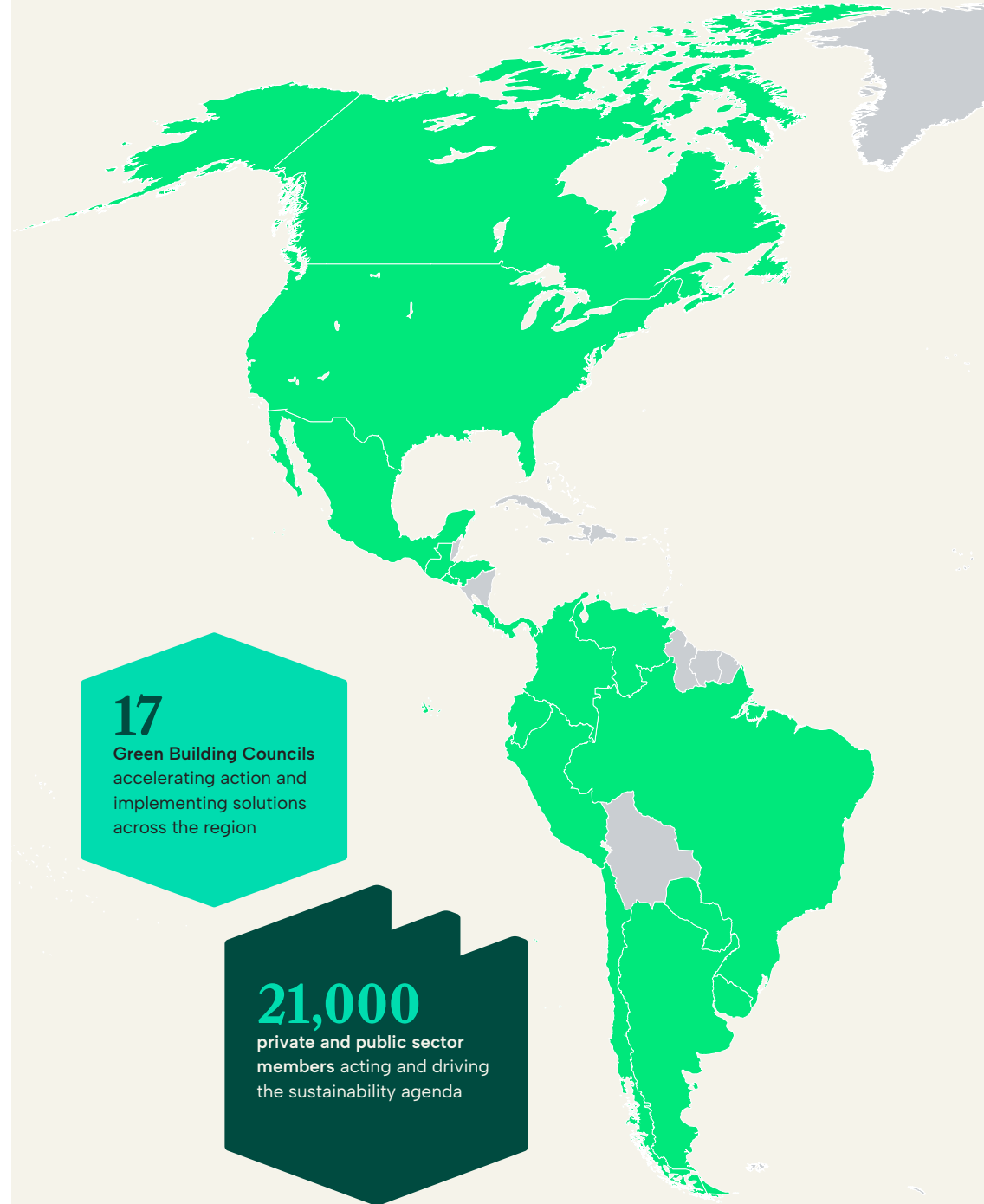
35%
of total emissions in the United States
come from buildings

17

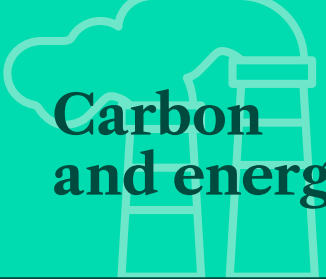
Green Building Councils
accelerating action and
implementing solutions
across the region

21,000

**private and public sector
members acting and driving
the sustainability agenda**



Americas Manifesto for a Sustainable and Resilient Built Environment



1 Carbon and energy

Prioritise energy efficiency and low-carbon materials as major drivers of decarbonisation to eliminate both operational and embodied carbon emissions across the life cycle of all buildings.



2 Adaptation and resilience

Strengthen the ability of homes and communities to respond to external shocks and stressors by integrating climate resilience and promoting adaptation.



3 Biodiversity and nature

Regenerate natural systems and restore biodiversity loss by avoiding development on land with high biodiversity, and by prioritising nature-based solutions that enhance, expand, and protect the natural environment.



4 Circular economy

Create a circular economy ecosystem by phasing out waste and optimising the use and re-use of resources and materials.



5 Water

Conserve and protect water resources and guarantee equitable access to safe, sustainable, potable water and sanitation.



6 Health and wellbeing

Develop healthy, equitable and resilient buildings and cities that improve public health.



7 Equity and access

Ensure equal access to safe, healthy, sustainable homes and communities for all citizens.



8 Finance

The built environment offers one of the most powerful levers for achieving global climate, economic, and social goals. But to unlock this potential at scale, sustainable finance must move much faster.

1. Carbon and energy

Prioritise energy efficiency and low-carbon materials as major drivers of decarbonisation to eliminate both operational and embodied carbon emissions across the life cycle of all buildings.

The built environment is one of the most critical frontiers for climate action in the region. Accelerating energy efficiency and electrification could reduce building emissions in Latin America by up to 51% by 2040 (IEA, 2020). In the US, these strategies — along with grid and building material improvements — could reduce building emissions by 90% by 2050 (USDOE, 2024).

Addressing these emissions provides major additional benefits: increased renewable energy creates energy independence, improves energy security, and shields from market price volatility. Improved energy efficiency will also lower household, commercial, and industrial energy bills (IEA, 2024). Everyone in society will feel the benefit.

Without addressing the sector's energy usage and emissions, governments cannot deliver global and regional climate goals. Achieving this requires coordinated efforts between industry and policymakers to reduce emissions across operations and material life cycles to support a decarbonised future.



Net Zero Carbon Accelerator project, Colombia Green Building Council (CCCS)

This Accelerator project developed the Colombia National Roadmap for Net Zero Buildings and City Action Plans for Bogotá and Cali to achieve net zero carbon buildings by 2050. It established a greenhouse gas (GHG) emission baseline for buildings, created progress monitoring systems, and published guidance on financial models for the transition. Policy collaboration between Colombia Green Building Council (CCCS) and the Ministry of Housing, City, and Territory resulted in Resolution 0194 of 2025, which mandates energy savings of 5–20% and water savings of 15–30% for buildings, depending on building type and climate zone. The resolution introduces phased implementation, starting with social housing, with targets that will be ramped up over time.

La Mariscal urban regeneration plan, Quito, Ecuador

This regeneration plan prioritises the renovation of existing buildings in the area. Through the analysis of sustainable incentives for refurbished older buildings and restored heritage sites, it contributes to the elimination of operational and embodied carbon emissions from new construction.



Rehabilitation tool and pilot projects for existing buildings, Mexico

As part of the All-In for Net Zero Buildings (AllIn4NZBE) project, SUMe (Green Building Council Mexico), in collaboration with World Resources Institute Mexico, developed a spreadsheet-based Rehabilitation Tool to support the decarbonisation of Mexico's existing building stock. The free tool helps stakeholders plan building rehabilitation through simple, guided questions to identify opportunities, compare benefits and costs, and prioritise impactful actions addressing embodied and operational carbon, while managing waste from material replacement. Three pilot projects have validated its replicability across public and private buildings, supporting their transition towards net zero.

Actions required

Regulations

- Existence of policies that promote locally available renewable resources (including on-site) and/or grid responsive demand management and/or avoidance of on-site fossil fuels (to the greatest extent possible).
- Mandate electrification of heating, cooling and appliances, phasing out fossil-fuel-based systems.
- Introduce mandatory energy labelling of all new and existing buildings using a single, consistent country-level scale.
- Mandate the introduction of Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) in codes and policies to drive energy efficiency in new and existing buildings. MEPS thresholds should be tightened at regular intervals and aligned with the goal of doubling energy efficiency by 2030 and full decarbonisation by 2050.
- Establish reporting and target setting across the life cycle of the building, including reporting and reduction targets for upfront, embodied and operational carbon — to be tightened at regular intervals.

Information

- Develop embodied carbon and energy consumption databases and baselines for buildings and building products of different types and uses, within each climatic zone (where relevant).
- Create free, open-access embodied carbon inventories and baselines for building products.
- Develop a national Whole Life Carbon (WLC) Roadmap which includes a plan for the introduction of WLC limit values.

Incentives

- Provide national funding for training construction industry professionals in building renovations and in completing Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs), WLC reporting and energy simulations.
- Ensure sufficient national funding is channelled towards the deep renovation of buildings as well as towards the uptake of energy efficiency building solutions for new builds. Develop a range of financial mechanisms for different tenures, ensuring these leverage private investment as much as possible.
- Consider developing a Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) approach for public building developments to estimate the dollar cost of future economic damages from emitting an additional tonne of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

2. Adaptation and resilience

Strengthen the ability of homes and communities to respond to external shocks and stressors by integrating climate resilience and promoting adaptation.

Over 80% of the Americas population lives in cities ([GlobalABC](#), 2020; [US Census](#), 2023 & [CUI](#), 2023), with many Latin American residents occupying informal housing in high-risk areas like floodplains and steep slopes ([GlobalABC](#), 2020). This urban exposure makes climate-resilient design and planning essential.

A [recent WorldGBC report](#) identified floods, landslides, power and water supply failures, and water stress as Latin America's most pressing climate risks. For example, in 2024, Brazil experienced its worst climate disaster when extreme floods in Rio Grande do Sul displaced over 580,000 people, caused US\$2.2 billion in losses, and resulted in more than 180 fatalities ([GlobalABC](#), 2020 & [Brazil Reports](#), 2024).

In North America, many US buildings are not designed to withstand intensifying hurricanes, storms, heatwaves and flooding ([US Climate Resilience Toolkit](#)). Over the past 20 years, the frequency and costs of climate disasters have surged, with 2017 alone reaching a record US\$320 billion in damages ([Hammouz](#)).

Strengthening resilience can reduce disaster impacts on communities, enhance ecosystem biodiversity, and ensure access to safe, healthy housing across the region.



Cecosesola: cooperative resilience and adaptation, Venezuela

Venezuela's Cecosesola is a cooperative network and Alternative Nobel Prize winner, serving over 100,000 families across seven states, through community buildings, six clinics and food outlets.

Its key sites, including Feria del Este and the Comprehensive Cooperative Health Centre, are built for self-sufficiency during service disruptions. These facilities remain operational during unreliable electricity supply or city-wide crises, ensuring continuous essential services. This resilience has been made possible through maximising natural light and ventilation to eliminate dependence on electricity, incorporating rainwater harvesting, and providing bicycle parking.

Climate adaptation and resilience regulations in Ecuador

Quito's adaptation strategy for 2021–2033, known as PMDOT, and the updated Land Use and Management Plan (PUGS) 2024 integrates climate adaptation by linking land use to hazard zoning for landslides, floods, and subsidence. They establish restrictions of developments in high-risk areas including ravines, slopes, floodplains, ecological corridors, and protected zones; whilst requiring building regulations to align with risk maps and vulnerability assessments. These measurements are expected to significantly reduce future disaster-related losses and costs.

LEED v5 building certification: Canada and US incorporate stronger resilience requirements

Buildings seeking LEED v5 certification in Canada and the US will need to do a [Climate Resilience Assessment as a mandatory prerequisite](#) to identify current and projected climate hazards, including: extreme heat, flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, wildfires and locally relevant hazards.

Additionally, the new Resilience Pathway pilot credit supports projects by aligning multiple LEED v5 resilience credits and strategies to reduce risks from identified hazards. It encourages deeper integration across credits that address systems, site design, operations and emergency preparedness. This means new building designs and operations seeking accreditation must plan proactively for resilience and adaptation.

Actions required

Regulations

- Mandate climate physical risk-based building regulations aligned with resilience assessments for new and existing buildings, ensuring the progressive use of future data.
- Ensure that national planning policy considers the IPCC future climate scenarios when locating, designing, and operating a building, to ensure buildings are climate resilient.
- Integrate hazard mapping and risk zoning into local planning policy to prevent construction in high-risk areas such as those in flood, seismic, wildfire or landslide-prone areas.
- New building permits require environmental impact assessments considering climate risks and mitigation measures.
- Ensure resilience and climate change adaptation indicators are integrated into national sustainable finance taxonomies as a way of reorienting capital flows to support resilience goals.

Information

- Ensure comprehensive mapping of physical risks for future climate scenarios.
- Make building and neighbourhood risk and exposure level assessment tools publicly available.

Incentives

- Ensure funding goes towards futureproofing/retrofitting neighbourhoods and cities against future climate risks.
- Offer tax credits and rebates for households and businesses investing in resilience upgrades such as floodproofing or wildfire protection — aligned with city strategies and adaptation plans.
- Recognising that insurance is not widespread across all of Latin America and Caribbean (LAC), where relevant, work with insurance industry to introduce insurance premium reductions for buildings, meeting resilience standards or upgrades to reduce climate risks.
- Create low-interest loans and targeted grants for vulnerable households and communities to support adaptation measures.
- Ensure public procurement policies prioritise climate-resilient buildings and infrastructure.



3. Biodiversity and nature

Regenerate natural systems and restore biodiversity loss by avoiding development on land with high biodiversity, and by prioritising nature-based solutions that enhance, expand, and protect the natural environment.

LAC hosts roughly 40% of the planet's biodiversity, making the region critical for global ecological stability (IDB, 2024). Yet, biodiversity is under severe threat: wildlife populations in the region have declined by 95% since 1970 — the steepest drop of any region worldwide, with a 39% biodiversity loss over the same period in North America (WWF, 2024), signaling an unprecedented ecological crisis.

Urban expansion is a major driver of biodiversity and nature loss in Latin America. Urban sprawl, often driven by the growing demand for new housing, leads to the encroachment of natural environments, causing habitat destruction and fragmentation.

With 50% of LAC's GDP dependent on nature (CEPAL, 2023), it is vital that the built environment plays its crucial role in the protection and restoration of urban ecosystems and natural habitats.



GBC Biodiversity Seal, Brazil

GBC Brasil created the GBC Biodiversity Seal Program to integrate biodiversity regeneration and preservation within the built environment. This programme addresses landscape architecture practices and/or the provision of financial support to regenerate and preserve projects in public areas or national parks.

Projects in Brazil, such as Casa SIF and the HYPE, have invested in dozens of native species, fruit trees, and flowering species to attract pollinators. The outcome of GBC Biodiversity Seal aims to create green corridors through the building's landscape architecture, delivering ecological benefits to surrounding cities and communities.

Clean production agreement for biodiversity, Chile

The Acuerdo de Producción Limpia (APL) is a voluntary agreement between businesses and public entities to implement sustainable production practices. Coordinated by Chile's Agency for Sustainability and Climate Change (ASCC), these agreements aim to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impact and provide certification by the APL Seal for compliant companies.

Chile Green Building Council led the first APL agreement focused on biodiversity and water efficiency in construction. The agreement advances decarbonisation, circularity, and regeneration — including through nature-based solutions such as green and blue roofs and blue-green urban infrastructure. It establishes toxicity standards for hazardous chemicals, addresses sustainable construction product sourcing and measures environmental impact beyond carbon.



Bosquelago, Jamundi, Colombia.
Source: Jaramillo Mora Constructora.

Bosquelago: a model of real estate development in harmony with nature, Colombia

Bosquelago, a megaproject by Jaramillo Mora Constructora, demonstrates how real estate development can enhance biodiversity through strategic environmental integration. The project includes 18 hectares of green space with ecological corridors, 5.6 hectares of conserved bamboo forest, and 5.4 hectares of restored wetland that enable wildlife movement and ecosystem regeneration. Following wetland recovery, local biodiversity increased 38% between 2022–2024, while bamboo forest biodiversity grew 11% — verified through on-site measurements.

Three housing projects (Valdiviana, Baume, and Macarena) pursue CASA Colombia certification, incorporating native landscaping, efficient resource management, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Bosquelago demonstrates how real estate development can create added value, enhance living conditions, and act as a catalyst for environmental conservation and regeneration.

Actions required

Regulations

- Mandate urban planning practices that prohibit construction and development in ecologically sensitive areas, prioritising brownfield sites.
- Integrate biodiversity protection into urban planning regulations, including ecosystem restoration and regenerative strategies: e.g. by including requirements for mandatory ecological impact assessments for large developments, explicit protection of vulnerable species, biodiversity net gain targets, and habitat preservation.
- Mandate ecological restoration post-construction, e.g. by implementing reforestation and afforestation programmes and wetland rehabilitation. Where relevant, collaborate with Indigenous communities on regenerative land management, integrating traditional knowledge and practices into ecosystem restoration.
- Implement national biodiversity strategies, embedding circularity, nature-positive materials, biodiversity indices and regenerative practices into construction and planning policies.
- Ensure sustainable finance taxonomies consider biodiversity and nature as part of the environmental objectives.

Information

- Establish clear guidance for the building sector on embedding biodiversity and nature-positive best practices into construction projects.
- Implement regional guidance setting out clear biodiversity indicators for the built environment.
- Develop national biodiversity net gain targets.
- Training for urban planners, architects, engineers and developers on biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, and nature-based solutions.

Incentives

- Provide funding towards financial incentives for building sector value chain stakeholders that follow best practice design guidance for supporting and boosting biodiversity.
- Establish fiscal incentives and subsidies for projects that restore degraded ecosystems and increase biodiversity.
- Offer expedited permitting and zoning benefits for developments that demonstrate ecological integration and restoration, whilst prioritising brownfield over greenfield developments.
- Recognise and reward leadership through awards and public procurement preferences.

4. Circular economy

Create a circular economy ecosystem by phasing out waste and optimising the use and re-use of resources and materials.

Material use and waste generation have surged with urban growth, driven largely by construction. Sustainability remains a major challenge for LAC's construction sector, where construction and demolition waste account for up to 70% of total waste generation, yet less than 10% is reused ([Nunes and Mahler, 2020](#) & [IDB, 2015](#)). Embedding circular economy principles can cut LAC's materials usage by 30% and generate over 8.8 million formal jobs ([CGR](#)), reducing the need for the extraction of raw materials and the associated environmental degradation.

Construction and demolition (C&D) makes up nearly a quarter of all solid waste in the US. Data from 24 states show C&D accounts for 23% of the nation's total waste stream ([BTS, 2016](#)). This form of waste in the US has grown dramatically over the past three decades, from 135 million tonnes in 1990 to 600 million tonnes in 2018 ([CBO, 2025](#)).



Sustainable Materials and Assets Passport P+, Chile

The "[Sustainable Materials and Assets Passport](#)" (P+ platform), developed by Chile Green Building Council and the Technological Center for Innovation in Construction (CTeC), is a comprehensive material passport system for real estate assets in Latin America.

The platform creates detailed inventories of building materials, products, and components, documenting their circularity, environmental impact, and toxicity attributes. This verified information generates indicators and reports to support sustainable asset management and visualise valorisation potential.

P+ collects and validates transparent data on construction inputs to reduce emissions, toxic components, and environmental footprint while supporting climate adaptation and public mitigation policies. The initiative advances circularity models that promote a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy while protecting human health in the built environment.



Construction and demolition waste reception and processing centre, SustainaBuild, Ecuador

The [7,000 m² recycling centre](#), operated by SustainaBuild, is responsible for managing, sorting, and recycling construction and demolition waste to reintegrate it into the production chain.

Holcim Ecuador is participating in the pilot project by contributing its technological infrastructure and international experience, acquiring concrete waste from its Pifo aggregates plant and using it as high-quality recycled material, reducing the extraction of virgin materials by 10%.



Actions required

Regulations

- Mandated minimum durability (lifespan) standards and right-to-repair legislation to prevent planned obsolescence and extend the lifespan of buildings and equipment, ensuring materials and components can be maintained, repaired, and reused.
- Implement policies that encourage optimisation of resources and materials including:
 - Prioritising renovation of existing assets over new construction.
 - Designing for modularity and adaptive reuse, and deconstruction.
 - Recovery of materials.
- Waste separation for reuse or recycling.
- Introduce a progressive landfill ban on non-hazardous construction and demolition waste and by-products.
- Ensure sustainable finance taxonomies also consider circular economy as part of the environmental objectives.

Information

- Creation of a circularity roadmap for the construction sector.
- Launch public awareness campaigns highlighting the value of sufficiency measures including optimising resource and space use.
- Develop key standards and protocols for circularity, including additional end-of-waste criteria, to validate the safety and efficacy of secondary materials. Characterisation of construction and demolition waste intensity (m³/m²) by climate zone and building type.
- Creation of a marketplace that strengthens the flow of secondary materials within the construction itself and across other industries.
- Provide detailed guidance for the building sector on implementing circular construction methods in public and private procurement.

Incentives

- Invest in creating new value chains and infrastructure for reused buildings and materials.
- Create a regional accelerator programme that provides technical assistance, funding, and market access to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) working on: recycled construction materials, modular and deconstructable building components, urban mining and material recovery technologies, digital platforms for material traceability and reuse.

5. Water

Conserve and protect water resources and guarantee equitable access to safe, sustainable, potable water and sanitation.

Water demand in LAC is expected to increase by 43% by 2050 — nearly double the global average growth rate (UNDP, 2024). On average in LAC, buildings and construction account for around 15% of freshwater use, making the built environment a key player in addressing this challenge (WorldGBC, 2023).

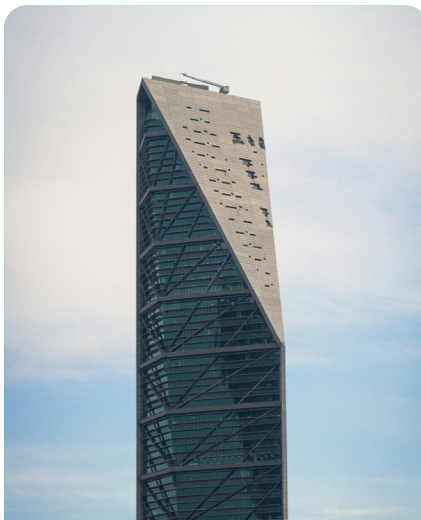
In LAC, 150 million people live in water-scarce areas, and over 400 million lack safe sanitation. As the world's most urbanised region, with over 80% of its 600 million inhabitants in cities, water systems are under severe strain (Wellenstein, A. and Makino, M., 2022). In the US, 2.2 million people do not have running water, while a further 44 million people live with inadequate water systems (WEF, 2023).

Improving water efficiency can enhance health outcomes, strengthen resilience, reduce costs, and significantly lower government spending on water infrastructure over the long term.



CE Hídrico – built environment water intensity tool, Brazil

CE Hídrico is a free-of-charge tool which calculates water performance for both building construction and during the building's operation. The tool creates a water benchmark based on the collected data which can be used to set water targets. CE Hídrico has been developed by the Builders Association with the support of water experts. It will support the development of public policies about water and resilience in Brazil.



Mexico City's NTCPA: embedding sustainability into building regulations

The Complementary Technical Standard for Architectural Design (NTCPA) is a mandatory component of Mexico City's Construction Regulations. A key innovation is the mandatory installation of rainwater harvesting systems in all new non-residential buildings as well as in large-scale housing developments. Storage capacity must meet minimum thresholds defined by rooftop area and rainfall averages, with harvested water reused for sanitation, cleaning, and irrigation.

The regulation also integrates measures such as green roofs, energy efficiency improvements, and climate-adapted design strategies. Importantly, by being embedded in the Construction Regulations, compliance is systematically verified through the permitting process, ensuring broad-scale implementation.

Actions required

Regulations

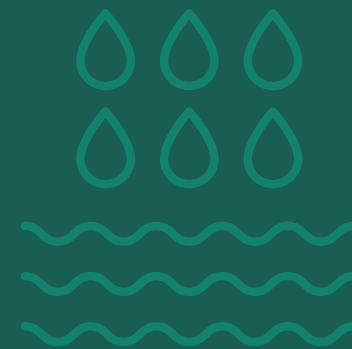
- Creation of a comprehensive water regulation for water usage within the built environment which includes a definition of minimum water requirements, including water footprint and water efficiency measures.
- Require an increase in circular water systems at both the building and urban scale, e.g. by requiring on-site water recycling systems (greywater and rainwater harvesting) in all new developments and major retrofits.
- Sustainable finance taxonomies should also consider water footprint and water efficiency measures as part of the environmental objectives as a way of reorienting capital flows towards enhancing sustainable water use.

Information

- Establish water performance benchmarks for different building typologies.
- Creation of a consistent approach to the diagnosis of leaking and broken water infrastructure and complete a county-wide diagnosis analysis at reasonable intervals.

Incentives

- Invest in the development of technology to help retain, recuperate and reuse rainwater in renovation efforts.
- Introduce financial rebates or tax incentives for buildings that achieve water efficiency certifications. These incentives could apply to both new constructions and retrofits that incorporate: low-flow fixtures and appliances, greywater reuse systems, rainwater harvesting and smart irrigation technologies.
- Create small grant programmes for community organisations, cooperatives, or local governments to implement localised water conservation and sanitation projects, including educational campaigns.



6. Health and wellbeing

Develop healthy, equitable and resilient buildings and cities that improve public health.

Across Central and South America, around 11% of people lack access to clean cooking fuels, exposing households — particularly women and children — to harmful indoor air pollution that drives respiratory and other health problems. Additionally, roughly 3% of this population still lacks access to electricity, limiting opportunities for safe and healthy living conditions ([GlobalABC](#), 2020). Ensuring cleaner energy and adequate ventilation in homes is therefore a major wellbeing priority.

Evidence shows that good indoor air quality, daylighting, acoustics, and thermal comfort reduce rates of cardiovascular and respiratory disease, while improving cognitive performance, mental health and productivity ([WorldGBC](#), 2024).

Buildings and construction shape where we live, work and learn. They directly impact air quality, thermal comfort and safety, all of which contribute to physical and mental health outcomes.



Jardines de Comfama, Colombia. Source: Comfama–Coninsa. Photographer: Melissa Ferro.

CASA Colombia: promoting healthy homes and sustainable communities

CASA Colombia is a [framework](#) leveraging the principles of [WorldGBC's Health & Wellbeing Framework](#) to champion healthy and sustainable housing. This initiative fosters environments that prioritise human health, comfort, and a harmonious relationship with nature throughout the entire life cycle of buildings.

The framework serves as an instrument for developers, homeowners, and communities to develop living spaces that are not only structurally sound but also intrinsically healthy, comfortable, and environmentally responsible. With a portfolio exceeding 6 million square metres and over 80,000 housing units, including affordable housing, CASA Colombia ensures residents benefit from sustainable, healthy homes and communities.

Actions required

Regulations

- Improve indoor environmental quality in buildings and cities by promoting fuel switching for clean electrification, air quality monitoring, and mandating low-VOC materials.
- Encourage biophilic and nature-based design in buildings and cities to support wellbeing, mental health, and biodiversity.
- Sustainable finance taxonomies should also consider pollution prevention and control as part of the environmental objectives.

Information

- Develop regional guidance setting out clear health and wellbeing indicators for the construction sector.
- Creation of best practice guidance providing holistic and neutral guidance on how different measures across the life cycle of a building can support health, mental and physical wellbeing.
- Provide guidance to all players in the construction value chain on how to identify and address health and wellbeing impacts in the workforce.

Incentives

- Introduce financial mechanisms to incentivise positive health outcomes from renovations and new buildings, such as planning fee rebates.
- Public procurement preference for healthy buildings. Governments and public institutions can prioritise leasing or purchasing buildings that meet specific health and wellbeing criteria.



7. Equity and access

Ensure equal access to safe, healthy, sustainable homes and communities for all citizens.

Access to adequate housing is a fundamental human right, yet over 120 million people in Latin America live in informal settlements, often without basic services such as safe water, sanitation, and electricity (WEF, 2025). Climate change is amplifying these inequalities. More than half of Latin Americans live in high-risk climate zones, and those most vulnerable — typically low-income communities that contribute least to emissions — bear the greatest burden of climate impacts (WEF, 2025).

The US and Canada are facing housing affordability and homelessness crises. Constrained housing supply, low construction rates and rising costs are making homes increasingly unaffordable, while the number of people experiencing homelessness continues to rise (US DOH, 2024; NAHB, 2025 & OECD, 2025).

This highlights the urgent need for inclusive, resilient urban planning that prioritises sustainable, affordable and safe housing and equitable access to essential services.



Financing sustainable social housing as a driver of green construction, Peru

Peru's Mivivienda Verde programme, developed in 2017, is the country's first green mortgage programme for social housing, linking social housing with sustainability criteria through a certification process. This approach made green building accessible to low-cost construction markets for the first time.

Today, Mivivienda Verde leads Peru's green building certification market with 7.54 million square metres certified. The certification is now internationally recognised by the Climate Bonds Initiative.

Green mortgages continue expanding toward lower-income social housing. GBC Peru advises the Ministry of Housing and real estate developers on creating national certification processes for sustainable housing construction that comply with Peru's Technical Code for Sustainable Construction.

A community-centred approach to equitable housing, El Salvador

Habitat for Humanity's "Together for Rosario de Mora" project, launched in 2023, addressed systemic barriers preventing 138 informal settlement families from accessing adequate housing. Through participatory design, the initiative tackled inequities in basic services — installing water tanks for 93 families and improving 45 roofs — while building community capacity in construction solutions and action plans for safe shelter using the Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter and Shelter Awareness. The programme has since expanded to additional communities to enable wider equitable access to decent housing.

Comunidade do Aço, Brazil

Comunidade do Aço is a community expanding to create affordable homes over 44 apartment blocks with 704 individual units. The project is a LEED for Communities certified project requiring compliance with several technical standards, including thermal, energy, acoustic, water and lighting performance. The project incorporates several measures previously only used within high-end developments in Rio de Janeiro. These include solar power generation, low-flow water fixtures, dual-flush toilets, windows that facilitate natural lighting and ventilation, high-reflectance solar materials and thermal insulation on the roof — which will reduce approximately 60% of residents' energy bills. The properties will also provide greater comfort, wellbeing, and quality of life.

Actions required

Regulations

- Ensure equitable access to adequate, affordable, and sustainable housing by embedding housing rights in national legislation (especially for vulnerable populations), mandating inclusive zoning laws, and investing in green social housing.
- Support low-income and vulnerable households in national retrofitting and renovation efforts (where relevant) through financial mechanisms such as tax credits, low-interest loans and grants.
- Enforce fair labour standards and prevent exploitative labour practices within the construction value chain, e.g. by aligning construction sector regulations with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards.
- Establish participatory urban planning by ensuring that communities, especially marginalised groups, have a voice in decision-making and urban redevelopment.

Information

- Develop a regional social equity roadmap for a just transition of the built environment.
- Map areas affected by energy poverty, where residents spend more than 50% of the year outside of thermal comfort ranges.
- Launch public information campaigns on the benefits of retraining in professions that benefit the green transition.

Incentives

- Introduce grants and schemes to incentivise underrepresented groups, such as women, to join the construction workforce.
- Funding for innovation in affordable, climate-resilient housing projects for informal and underserved communities.



8. Finance

The built environment offers one of the most powerful levers for achieving global climate, economic, and social goals. But to unlock this potential at scale, sustainable finance must move much faster.

There is growing recognition that climate risk is financial risk — and green buildings are part of the solution. Investments in green buildings future-proof assets, safeguard value, and support economic stability.

Natural catastrophes have cost the global economy US\$8.5 trillion since 2000 and are quickly spiralling. In North America in 2024, there were US\$190 billion in losses ([AJG, 2025](#)); and Brazil suffered US\$125 billion of losses between 2013–2023 ([Brazil Reports, 2024](#)). Some parts of the world are increasingly subject to chronic climate change impacts, such as floods or hurricanes, making certain assets uninsurable.

To unlock capital and tackle greenwashing in finance, governments are increasingly developing sustainable finance taxonomies — over 50 taxonomies are currently in place or under development. Taxonomies are classification systems that define which economic activities or investments can be considered environmentally sustainable.

A tax incentive for sustainable construction, Asunción, Paraguay

This tax incentive for sustainable construction grants over an 80% reduction in construction taxes for projects meeting advanced sustainability standards. The system was developed by the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología y Normalización (INTN) in collaboration with the Paraguay Green Building Council (PYGBC).

This framework acts as a rating system with prerequisites and credits. The core prerequisites include sustainable site selection, passive air conditioning, ground erosion control, construction waste management, stormwater management, indoor air ventilation, and water use reduction. Projects that complied were evaluated and monitored by the PYGBC, which acted as the certifying body, and has driven the development of more than 400,000 m² and over 15 certified projects between 2017–2024.

Sustainable Finance Taxonomy, Panama

[Panama's Sustainable Finance Taxonomy](#) delineates environmentally sustainable investments, providing a framework for real-economy and financial sector players to pinpoint activities aligned with the nation's environmental and social goals. This science-based tool aims to streamline capital mobilisation towards strategic investments, fostering Panama's transition to a sustainable economy.

Panama's Sustainable Finance Taxonomy was launched in March 2024, providing a key milestone in the country's transition toward a resilient, inclusive, and low-carbon economy. The taxonomy provides a scientifically grounded classification system to identify environmentally sustainable economic activities.



Voluntary green finance taxonomy, Guatemala

Guatemala's Green Taxonomy is in development and creates a common framework that directs investment toward assets, economic activities, and projects that contribute to sustainable development, whilst supporting Guatemala's economic and social development. It promotes access to capital for activities that significantly contribute to the country's environmental and climate objectives, focusing on climate change adaptation, resilience, and mitigation.

The proposed certification schemes consider a comprehensive perspective of the building's systems, specifically in the design and construction stages. These certifications offer the implementation of strategies that promote mitigation and/or adaptation to environmental, social, and economic conditions.

There are additional taxonomies in [Chile](#), [Colombia](#), [Costa Rica](#) and [Mexico](#), and ChileGBC has developed the [Verificador for the Taxonomy \(+Verificador+\)](#).

Actions required

Regulations

- Develop and implement impactful sustainable finance taxonomies covering construction, real estate and infrastructure to leverage private capital flows into the transition to sustainable built environments, with metrics that are interoperable, verifiable, contextualised and aligned with market practices.
- Mandate transparent measurement, monitoring, and reporting of sustainability performance (e.g. of emissions) and relevant information related to physical and transition risks by financial institutions and companies, e.g. linked to taxonomies where in place.
- Incorporate disclosure of financial impacts of climate risks in mandated Environmental Impact Assessments.
- Remove fossil fuel subsidies and consider carbon taxes, in line with social considerations, to ensure investment decisions aren't skewed towards energy/carbon intensive buildings and appliances.
- Align building regulations and codes to fiscal policies to ensure they work together effectively.

Information

- Through international partnerships, foster policy alignment on climate-related issues. This could be common standards, guidelines, and frameworks for addressing climate change. These harmonisations can provide certainty for businesses and investors, minimise regulatory barriers, and create a level playing field for sustainable practices.
- Incorporate energy efficiency, zero carbon, and building resilience into environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting frameworks and disclosure standards.
- Promote private sustainability (green) loans and mortgages for improving real estate assets in line with climate targets.

Incentives

- Creation of a National Adaption Fund for buildings (including for specific measures such as rainwater harvesting and low impact materials) with 2030 and 2050 funding targets.
- Grants and subsidies are available to support companies/ organisations make the zero-carbon transition, e.g. quantification of greenhouse gas emissions to purchase energy efficient equipment.
- Collaboration between local governments and financial institutions to establish financial models that include fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for zero-carbon and resilient construction projects.
- Create public-private agencies that channel funds to co-finance sustainability projects and initiatives.

Our Americas Regional Network is ready to deliver

By advancing the eight priority policy areas of this manifesto, we can unlock the sustainable transformation of the built environment across the Americas.

The Americas Regional Network has been leading change on the ground for many years through: policy implementation, building certification schemes, generating material passport initiatives, and designing impactful programmes that advance climate-aligned building practices and stakeholder engagement. These efforts are strengthened by regional tools such as the [NDC Scorecard for Sustainable Buildings](#), which supports countries in integrating more ambitious building and construction targets into their climate action plans (Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs),

and the [Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience Readiness Framework](#), which enables the development of national roadmaps for decarbonisation and resilience in the built environment.

With 17 active Green Building Councils and more than 21,000 private and public sector members, the Americas Regional Network is uniquely positioned to support the creation of built environment policy which delivers the Paris Agreement goals. Together with policymakers, businesses, and communities, we are ready to implement our eight key policy priorities and ensure that sustainable buildings are at the heart of a thriving, inclusive, and climate-resilient future for the Americas.

Find out more: worldgbc.org/Americas

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