



GOODLIFE INDEX

2ND EDITION / 2026 • A Report by **CS Global**
partners 

*Why more
people are
moving to
Portugal*

— **TOP** —
DESTINATIONS
for Quality of Life

*What's behind
America's declining
Quality of Life
Rankings?*





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ABOUT CS GLOBAL PARTNERS

Established in London in 2012 and headquartered in Mayfair, CS Global Partners is a renowned consultancy dedicated to providing bespoke citizenship and residency solutions for high-net-worth individuals globally. Our specialised team, committed to maintaining client confidentiality, focuses on delivering transformative options in citizenship and residency.

At CS Global Partners, our mission is to empower governments and individuals, fostering economic growth, stability, and security for enhanced lifestyles under the visionary leadership of our CEO. We champion a culture of corporate innovation and excellence, leveraging collective expertise to drive transformative results. Our emphasis on corporate values and inclusivity fosters a dynamic environment that encourages collaborative decision-making and forward-thinking strategies.

Backed by a highly proficient and skilled legal team, CS Global Partners has a strong understanding of the legal frameworks required to make Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programmes reputable and successful.

As one of the only firms in the world with exclusive marketing and advisory mandates for two governments, namely the Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis, we have worked hand-in-hand with these governments to increase their foreign direct investment and drive positive transformation in their countries.

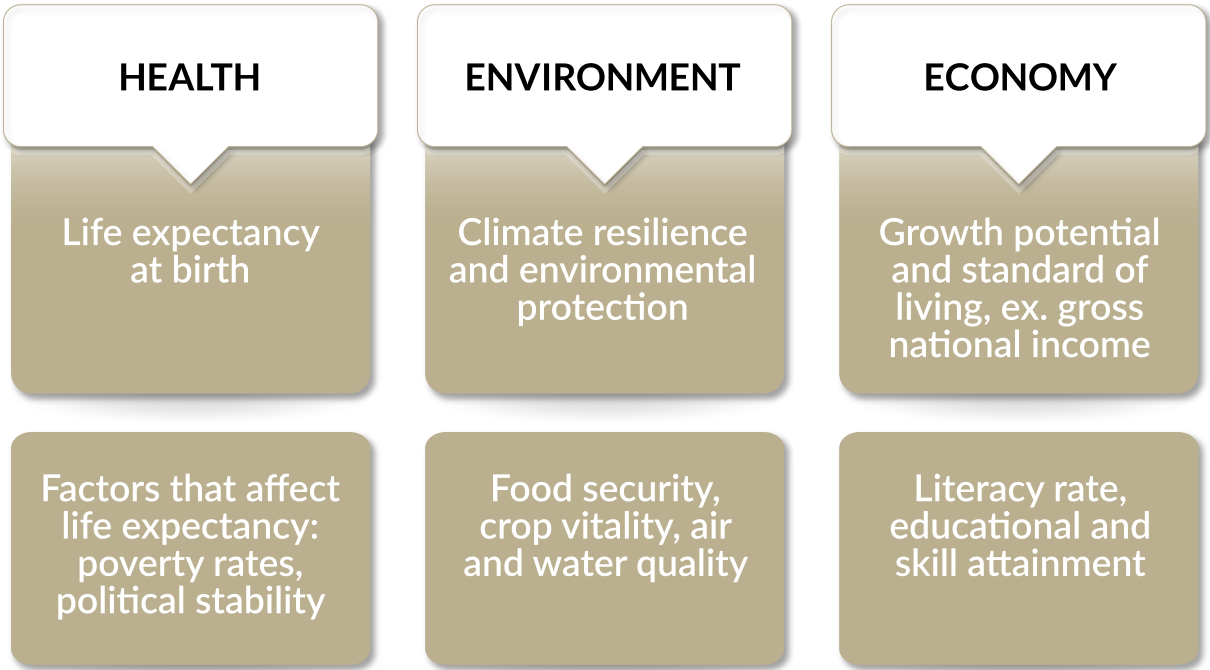
CS Global Partners plays a pivotal role in empowering government institutions for lasting prosperity. Entrusted with providing expert advice, we attract significant foreign direct investments ethically, maintaining a strictly advisory role without interference in decision-making processes. Collaborating with governments globally, our expertise contributes to the successful promotion and transformation of Citizenship by Investment (CBI) and Residency by Investment (RBI) programmes, significantly impacting economic development and global prominence.



Our Good Life Index ranking relies on the Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is the world’s most authoritative measure of human development across multiple dimensions. Crucially, the HDI does not recognise economic growth as the sole value to be considered when measuring human development progress. Rather, economic growth is one of the few different variables.

The secondary component of the Quality of Life motivator assesses the ability of a nation to provide a cleaner, more resilient environment through sustainable practices. This component relies on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), produced by Yale University and Columbia University in conjunction with the World Economic Forum.

The EPI collects data and ranks countries on their performance across several environmental health indicators, such as air and water quality, climate change mitigation strategies, waste management efficiency, and environmental protection policies.



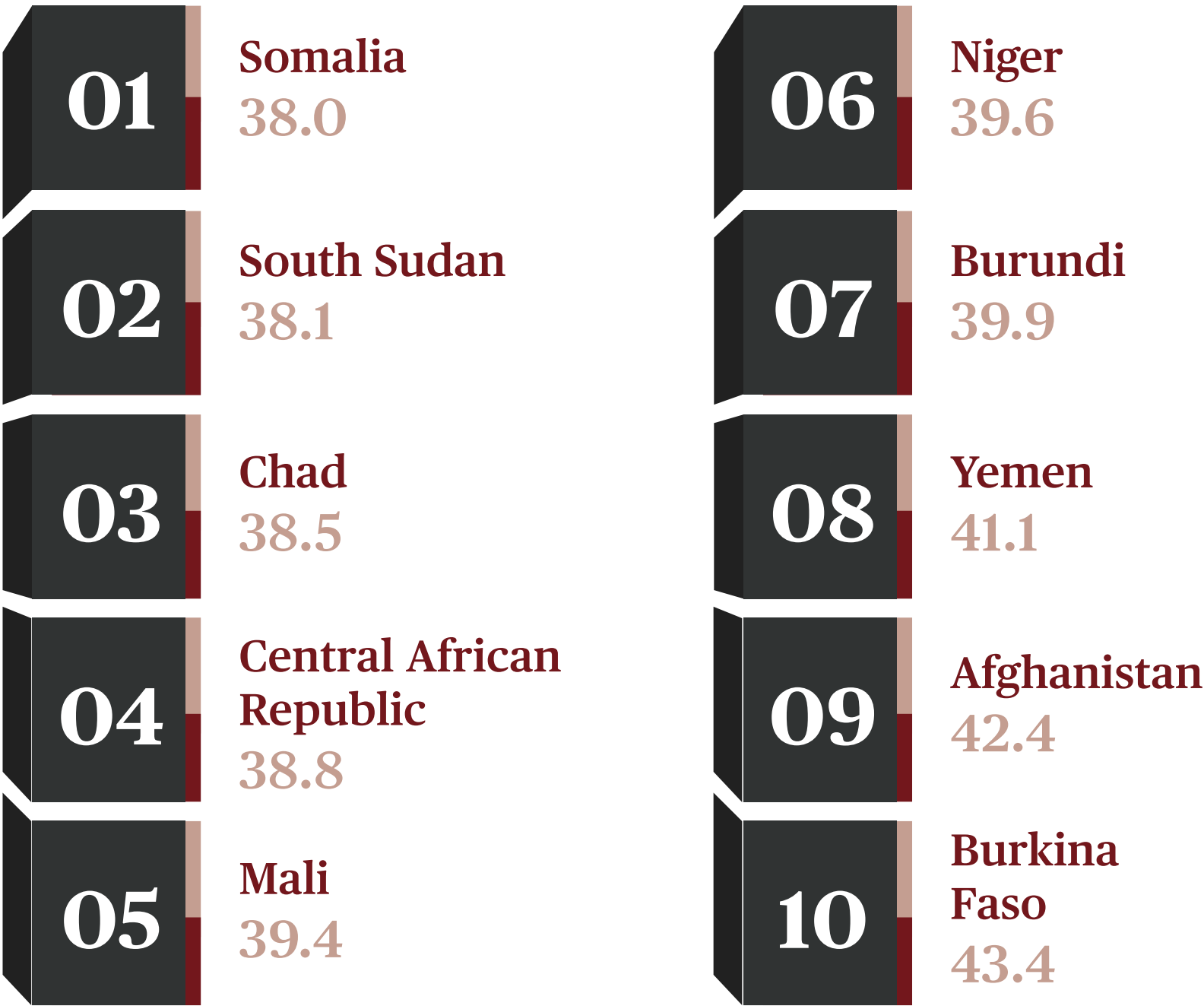
THE TOP DESTINATIONS FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

The Good Life Index highlights destinations that excel in providing residents and visitors with a combination of prosperity, well-being, safety, and overall quality of life.



THE WORST DESTINATIONS FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

The Good Life Index highlights destinations that excel in providing residents and visitors with a combination of prosperity, well-being, safety, and overall quality of life.





What's behind America's declining Quality of Life Rankings?

The United States, long regarded as a beacon of opportunity and prosperity, has seen its standing in global quality of life rankings slip in recent years. In the CS Global Good Life Index, which combines the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI), measuring health, education, and standard of living, with the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) from Yale and Columbia Universities, assessing sustainability, air/water quality, climate efforts, and more - the USA scores 83.8, placing it at rank 20.

This positions it behind many Western European nations, as well as countries like Canada (14), Australia (11), and even Hong Kong and Monaco.

While the USA maintains a 'very high' human development category (ranking 19th), its overall Good Life Index score reflects challenges in balancing human progress with environmental and broader well-being factors. Several interconnected issues have contributed to this relative decline, making the USA less desirable for some seeking a high-quality, sustainable lifestyle.

Persistent Affordability and Economic Pressures

A major driver has been rising costs outpacing wage growth. High inflation from 2021–2022, lingering affordability challenges in housing, healthcare, food, and energy, have eroded optimism.

Polls like Gallup's show American expectations for a 'high-quality life' in five years hitting a near two-decade low (around 59% in late 2025), with steep drops among younger adults, minorities, and certain political groups. Wages have failed to keep up with expenses - medical premiums surged over 300% in recent decades, leaving many, especially the bottom 60% of earners, struggling to achieve even a minimal quality of life.

These pressures contribute to a sense of economic insecurity, contrasting sharply with Nordic countries like Norway (top-ranked at 89.9), where strong social safety nets, universal healthcare, and balanced work-life policies foster greater stability and well-being.

Declining Happiness and Social Factors, Especially Among the Young

The USA has fallen in global happiness rankings, dropping to 24th in the 2025 World Happiness Report, its lowest ever, with young people under 30 faring particularly poorly (not even in the top 60 if assessed alone).

Factors include rising loneliness, reduced social support, less freedom in life choices, and pessimism about living standards. Increased political polarisation, declining interpersonal trust (down from 46% in the 1970s to around 34% recently), and fragmented media landscapes exacerbate isolation.

By comparison, top Good Life Index nations like Norway, Switzerland, and Finland excel in social cohesion, trust, and community support, which bolster overall life satisfaction beyond pure economic metrics.

USA

DECLINING QUALITY OF LIFE RANKINGS



ECONOMIC TROUBLES



Rising inflation,
job losses,
increasing debt

SOCIAL DIVISION



Growing polarisation,
civil unrest

POLITICAL DYSFUNCTION



Gridlock and lack
of leadership

DECLINING EDUCATION



Lower standards,
poor outcomes

WEAKENED GLOBAL STANDING



Loss of influence
on the world stage

HEALTH AND SECURITY ISSUES



Public health crises,
rising crime

Healthcare, Inequality and Environmental Performance All Lags

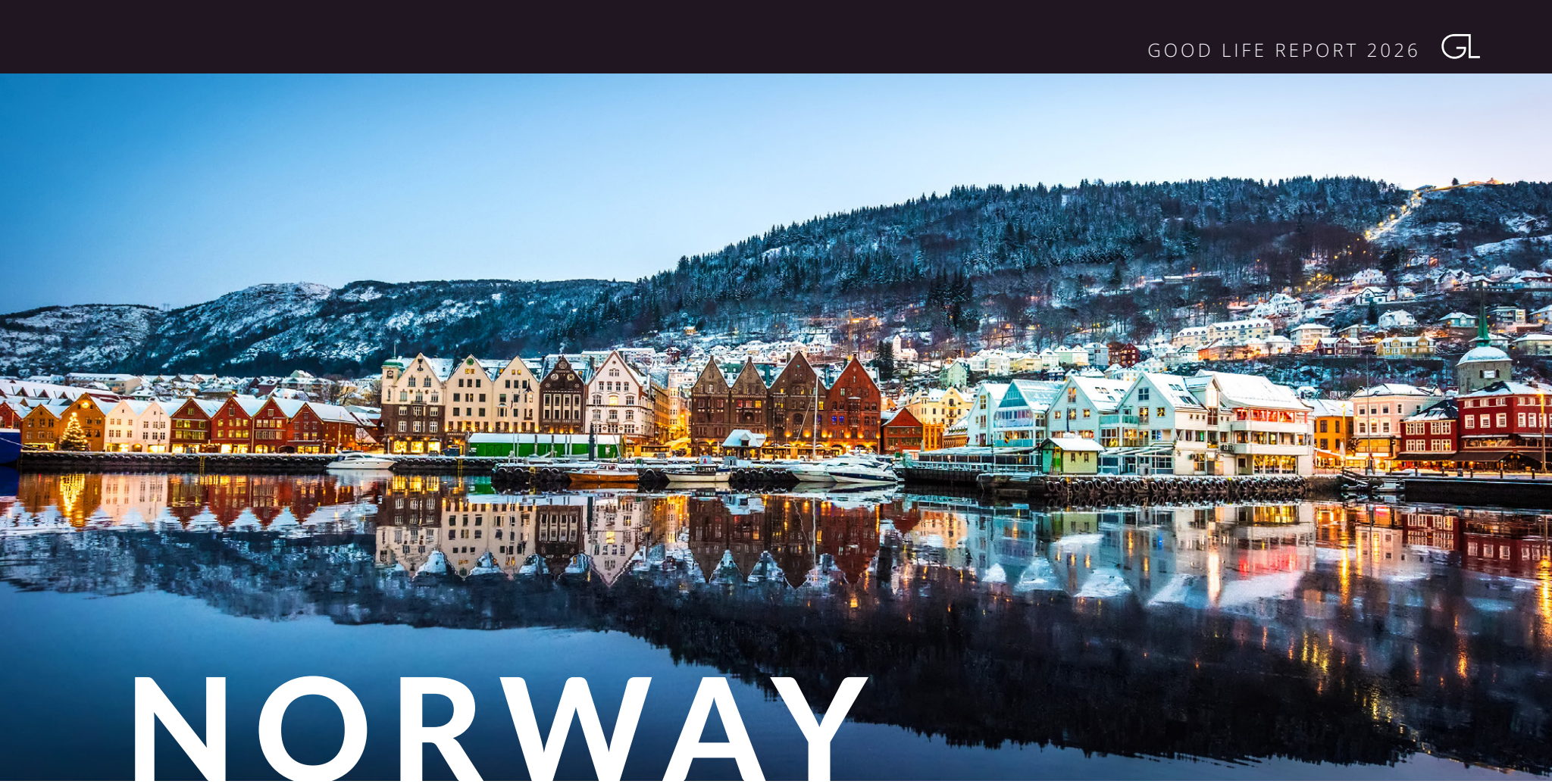
The USA's lack of universal healthcare, high costs, and uneven access contribute to disparities in health outcomes. While life expectancy has improved globally, inequalities persist, and issues like healthcare insecurity hit vulnerable groups hardest. Income and wealth gaps remain wider than in many peer nations, limiting broad-based progress in human development.

The EPI component highlights another area of concern. The USA has scored around 57 in recent rankings (e.g., 2022 data placed it 69th overall), trailing leaders in climate mitigation, pollution control, and ecosystem protection. While not the sole factor, this drags down the composite Good Life Index score compared to environmentally progressive nations like those in Scandinavia or Germany.

A Shift In The States

Post-pandemic effects, political turbulence, and global uncertainties have compounded these issues. Optimism slumped across demographics, with some reports noting sharper drops tied to economic policies, administration changes, and ongoing affordability woes. In the CS Global Good Life Index, nations like Norway lead by excelling across dimensions, strong HDI fundamentals paired with top-tier environmental stewardship and social policies. The USA's score of 83.8 reflects solid achievements in education and some health metrics but reveals gaps in equity, affordability, social wellbeing, and sustainability.

For high-net-worth individuals exploring citizenship or residency options, these trends underscore the appeal of alternatives. Countries like Malta (14th), Portugal (29th), or investment-linked Caribbean nations (e.g., St. Kitts and Nevis at 39th, yet offering lifestyle and tax advantages) provide pathways to environments with stronger quality-of-life balances. The data shows that a truly good life extends beyond economic power, it demands societies that nurture health, education, environment, and human connections for lasting prosperity.



NORWAY

Why Norway is the best place on earth to live right now

Norway stands at the pinnacle of global quality of life rankings in the CS Global Good Life Index, achieving a top score of 89.9 and sharing the number one position with Germany.

This composite ranking draws from the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI), which evaluates long and healthy lives, access to knowledge, and decent standards of living, and the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) from Yale and Columbia Universities, measuring sustainability, air and water quality, climate action, and ecosystem protection.

Life expectancy at birth hovers around 83.6 years, supported by universal healthcare, a preventive focus, and high living standards. Education remains world-class, with near-universal access and strong outcomes in literacy, schooling years, and skills development. Income and living standards benefit from one of the world's highest GDP per capita levels, bolstered by prudent resource management through the sovereign wealth fund.

Norway's EPI performance reinforces its position: ranking 7th globally in the 2024 EPI (latest available) with a score of 69.9, it excels in ecosystem vitality, biodiversity protection (including strong marine safeguards), and renewable energy leadership, often topping categories for clean energy transitions.

These factors create a holistic environment where human progress aligns with planetary responsibility, setting Norway apart in an era of climate challenges.

However, what truly elevates Norway as the best place on earth to live right now goes beyond metrics and numbers.

Exceptional Work-Life Balance and Social Support

Norwegians enjoy some of the world's strongest labour protections: a standard workweek of about 37.5 hours, generous paid vacation (often 5+ weeks), substantial parental leave, and policies promoting gender equality.

This fosters lower stress, more family time, and higher life satisfaction. Trust in institutions and fellow citizens remains exceptionally high, contributing to a sense of security and community rarely matched elsewhere.

Crime rates are among the lowest globally, creating safe streets and communities. Norway consistently ranks as one of the best places to raise children, thanks to affordable childcare, excellent public education, and family-oriented policies. Gender equality is deeply embedded, with progressive workplace norms and societal values supporting balanced opportunities.



Nature, Beauty, and Happiness

Norway's oil wealth funds green transitions, positioning it as a leader in renewables and climate resilience. This forward-thinking approach ensures long-term stability amid global uncertainties. In the CS Global Good Life Index, Norway's excellence across human development and environmental dimensions illustrates that true prosperity integrates health, education, income, sustainability, and social harmony. For those seeking citizenship or residency pathways to elevate their lifestyle, whether through investment, work, or family, Norway exemplifies an ideal benchmark.

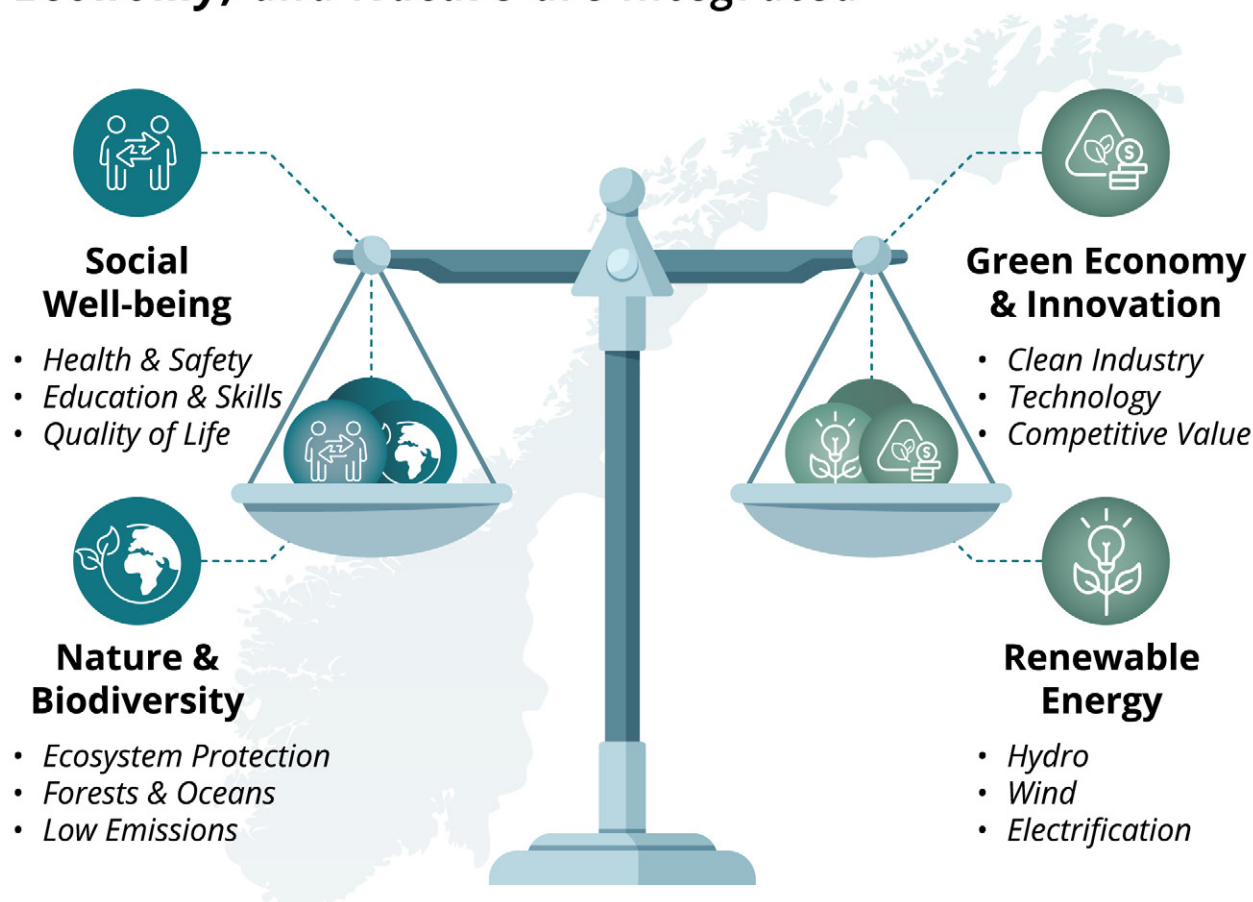
Norway proves that the good life isn't just about wealth - it's about creating societies where people thrive sustainably, equitably, and joyfully. Right now, few places do it better.

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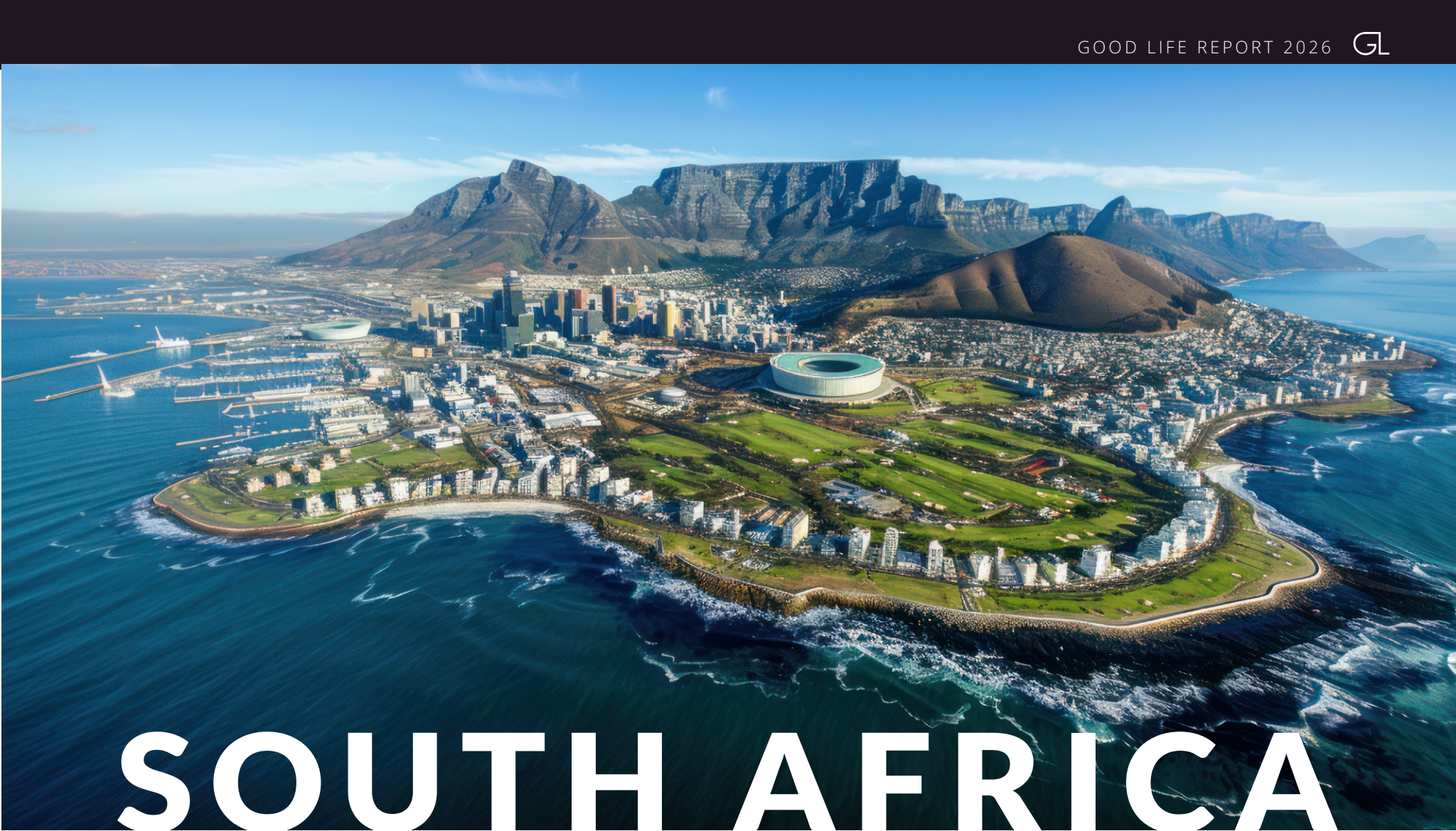
NORWAY
A BALANCED APPROACH
TO SUSTAINABILITY



*Sustainability works when **People,**
Economy, and **Nature** are integrated*



Sources: World Bank, OCED, Statistics Norway, IEA.



SOUTH AFRICA

A spotlight on South Africa: The duality of the good life

South Africa occupies a complex position in the CS Global Good Life Index, scoring 64.5 and ranking 89th overall. This places it in the mid-to-lower range globally, reflecting a blend of notable strengths and persistent challenges.

The Best of Living in South Africa

South Africa's unparalleled natural beauty remains a defining strength. From the iconic Table Mountain and dramatic coastlines of Cape Town to world-class safari destinations like Kruger National Park, the country offers breathtaking landscapes and biodiversity.

Expats and residents frequently praise the outdoor lifestyle—hiking, surfing, wine tasting in Stellenbosch, and year-round sunshine (over 2,500 hours annually in many regions). The climate is mild and varied, supporting an active, nature-connected way of life often described as relaxed and vibrant.



Culturally, South Africa is a “Rainbow Nation,” with rich diversity in traditions, languages, music, art, and cuisine - from braai barbecues to Cape Malay influences. Cities like Cape Town excel in leisure options, fine dining, arts scenes, and community vibrancy. For many expats, the cost of living remains attractive compared to Western nations, enabling spacious homes, high-quality food and wine, and access to amenities. Recent trends show increasing returns of South Africans citing family ties, quality of life, and opportunities, alongside a growing digital nomad scene in areas like the Western Cape and Garden Route.

Expatriate surveys show South Africa scores well in personal finances, housing, and leisure, appealing to those seeking affordability, natural beauty, and cultural richness.

The Worst of Living in South Africa

Persistent challenges significantly affect the overall quality of life. High unemployment hovers around 32-42% (with youth rates even higher, near 58%), contributing to economic insecurity, poverty, and inequality.

Economic growth remains sluggish (around 1-1.5% projected for recent periods), limiting broad-based opportunities.

Crime rates remain a major concern, with endemic violent crime, corruption, and safety issues eroding trust and daily security.

In happiness metrics, South Africa ranks 95th in the 2025 World Happiness Report (score around 5.213), reflecting declines tied to social inequality, governance concerns, and negative emotions.

Infrastructure strains, though load shedding (frequent power outages) has improved dramatically (with extended periods without outages in recent years), and issues like municipal debt and electricity affordability persist. These factors, combined with uneven access to services, create disparities that contrast sharply with the country’s potential.



SOUTH AFRICA

THE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES



Exploring the Pros and Cons of Life in South Africa

01

Beautiful landscapes and wildlife

02

Great weather and outdoor lifestyle

03

Affordable cost of living

04

Excellent food and wine

05

Adventure and leisure activities

THE BRIGHT SIDE

THE DOWN SIDE

×

High crime rates

01

Unemployment and poverty

02

Political corruption

03

Concerns over water and electricity supply

04

High levels of inequality

05

16

A Balanced Perspective

South Africa's Good Life Index score of 64.5 captures this duality: solid human development foundations in education and health for many, paired with environmental and social gaps that hinder broader prosperity.

It excels in natural assets and cultural vibrancy, qualities that make it a leader on the continent, but trails in equity, safety, and sustainability compared to top-ranked nations like Norway (89.9) or even regional peers.

For high-net-worth individuals and families evaluating global options, South Africa offers compelling lifestyle elements, stunning environments, dynamic communities, and relative affordability, but requires careful consideration of security and stability.

South Africa embodies both promise and challenge - a nation of immense beauty and resilience, yet one where addressing inequality, safety, and sustainable growth remains essential to unlocking its full potential for the good life.





Demand in Portugal rises as Expats Chase Affordable Healthcare, Safety, and Work-Life Balance

Portugal continues to shine in the CS Global Good Life Index, earning a score of 81.0 and ranking 29th overall. This solid placement among European nations highlights its balanced strengths in human development, via the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI), covering health, education, and living standards, and environmental stewardship through the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) from Yale and Columbia Universities.

Recent metrics reinforce Portugal's appeal: The latest UNDP data reflects a very high HDI of approximately 0.874, with life expectancy around 82 years, strong education access, and solid income levels. In Numbeo's 2026 Quality of Life Index, Portugal scores around 169.5–170.5, benefiting from excellent climate (nearly 98 index), good healthcare (72+), and moderate costs.

Expat surveys, including InterNations' 2025 Expat Insider, rank Portugal in the top 20 overall (17th out of 46), with top-10 results in Quality of Life (10th), excelling in environment, climate, leisure, and safety/security.

As of February 2026, demand for residency in Portugal surges among expats, particularly from the US, UK, and other regions, drawn by affordable high-quality healthcare, exceptional safety, enviable work-life balance, and accessible residency options.

These factors counter frustrations with higher costs, stress, and uncertainties in origin countries, positioning Portugal as a top choice for families, retirees, remote workers, professionals, and high-net-worth individuals seeking European residency.

Healthcare, Safety, and Stability Are Major Draws

Portugal's Serviço Nacional de Saúde (SNS) delivers universal coverage with low co-pays and high standards, often at a fraction of US costs. Expats praise efficient public care for residents, supplemented by affordable private insurance for quicker access.

This value-for-money system supports high life expectancy while keeping expenses low, making it a key motivator for relocation, especially for retirees and families facing healthcare challenges elsewhere.



Ranking among the world's safest countries (7th in recent Global Peace Index assessments), Portugal offers low crime, political stability, and peaceful communities. Expats feel secure in cities like Lisbon and Porto or coastal areas, a stark contrast to safety concerns in some home nations. Surveys highlight high safety/security scores, boosting overall happiness and family appeal.

Portugal promotes relaxed living with shorter work hours (around 31–32 per week), generous vacations, and a cultural focus on family, leisure, and nature. With over 300 sunny days annually, beaches, hiking, and mild weather encourage an active lifestyle. Affordable living (Numbeo cost index around 49–50) supports comfortable homes and amenities, even amid rising demand in popular spots.

Surging Demand

Portugal's residency pathways make it particularly attractive for non-EU expats in 2026. The Golden Visa (residency by investment, now primarily through €250,000+ fund investments) remains one of Europe's most in-demand programs, top-ranked in industry surveys despite processing backlogs and citizenship timeline changes (e.g., proposed extensions to 10 years for naturalisation, upheld but with ongoing clarifications).

Record approvals in recent years (e.g., nearly 5,000 in 2024) and continued high interest reflect its appeal for family inclusion, low stay requirements (minimal days per year), Schengen mobility, and long-term EU access.

These options provide flexible entry points - whether through income proof, remote work, or investment, enabling expats to secure residency, enjoy EU benefits, and pursue citizenship pathways over time. In the CS Global Good Life Index, Portugal's 81.0 score captures this equilibrium: strong HDI in health and education, paired with environmental and social advantages that surpass many alternatives.

It models prosperity aligned with well-being, sustainability, and connections. For high-net-worth individuals and families pursuing enhanced security, mobility, and quality of life, Portugal stands out as an accessible European destination with proven residency routes.

Quality of Life

Country	Quality of Life Rank	Score
Norway	89.9	1
Germany	89.9	1
Switzerland	89.5	2
Finland	89.1	3
Sweden	89.0	4
United Kingdom	88.7	5
Denmark	88.3	6
Luxembourg	88.3	6
Hong Kong (SAR China)	88.1	7
Monaco	88.1	7
Iceland	88.0	8
Ireland	87.7	9
Netherlands	87.7	9
Belgium	87.4	10
Australia	86.7	11
Austria	86.7	11
Liechtenstein	86.6	12
Estonia	86.4	13
Canada	85.4	14
Malta	85.4	14
Slovenia	85.1	15
France	85.0	16
New Zealand	84.8	17
Singapore	84.4	18
Macao (SAR)	84.4	18
Japan	84.4	18
Spain	84.3	19
United States of America	83.8	20

Country	Quality of Life Rank	Score
Greece	83.8	20
Czech Republic	83.5	21
United Arab Emirates	83.2	22
Italy	83.0	23
Korea (Republic)	82.3	24
Poland	82.1	25
Taiwan	82.0	26
Lithuania	82.0	26
Cyprus	81.5	27
Croatia	81.4	28
Portugal	81.0	29
Latvia	81.0	29
Israel	80.6	30
Slovakia	80.4	31
Andorra	80.4	31
Hungary	78.8	32
San Marino	78.6	33
Qatar	77.3	34
Chile	76.9	35
Romania	76.4	36
Saudi Arabia	76.3	37
Antigua and Barbuda	75.9	38
Saint Kitts and Nevis	75.7	39
Bahamas	75.5	40
Argentina	75.4	41
Bahrain	75.4	41
Montenegro	75.2	42
Panama	74.7	43
Belarus	74.6	44
Kuwait	74.6	44
Costa Rica	74.3	45

Country	Quality of Life Rank	Score
Oman	74.3	45
Trinidad and Tobago	74.2	46
Bulgaria	74.0	47
Barbados	74.0	47
Brunei Darussalam	73.8	48
Turkey	73.4	49
Uruguay	73.3	50
Russia	73.3	50
Georgia	72.9	51
Serbia	72.8	52
Albania	72.2	53
Seychelles	72.1	54
Kazakhstan	72.1	54
Palau Islands	71.7	55
Thailand	71.7	55
Mauritius	71.5	56
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	71.5	56
Grenada	70.9	57
Malaysia	70.8	58
Cuba	70.4	59
Brazil	70.3	60
Ecuador	70.2	61
Armenia	70.2	61
Macedonia (FYROM)	70.0	62
Bosnia and Herzegovina	69.9	63
Mexico	69.6	64
Dominican Republic	69.4	65
Colombia	69.3	66
Iran	69.0	67
Peru	68.8	68
Moldova	68.8	68
Ukraine	68.7	69
Sri Lanka	68.2	70
Kosovo	68.0	71

Country	Quality of Life Rank	Score
China	68.0	71
Guyana	67.9	72
Dominica	67.8	73
Saint Lucia	67.2	74
Azerbaijan	67.1	75
Jordan	67.0	76
Libya	67.0	76
Maldives	66.7	77
Algeria	66.3	78
Tunisia	66.2	79
Suriname	66.0	80
Turkmenistan	66.0	80
Venezuela	65.8	81
Egypt	65.5	82
Botswana	65.4	83
Gabon	65.3	84
Uzbekistan	65.2	85
Jamaica	65.1	86
Mongolia	64.9	87
Paraguay	64.7	88
South Africa	64.5	89
Belize	64.4	90
Palestinian Territory	64.3	91
Lebanon	64.2	92
Bolivia	63.7	93
Kyrgyzstan	63.3	94
Morocco	62.2	95
Nicaragua	62.0	96
Bhutan	61.9	97
Indonesia	61.9	97
Philippines	61.3	98
El Salvador	61.0	99
Viet Nam	60.6	100
Equatorial Guinea	59.2	101
Cape Verde	59.1	102

Country	Quality of Life Rank	Score
Tajikistan	59.0	103
Iraq	58.1	104
Vanuatu	57.3	105
Bangladesh	57.3	105
Honduras	56.9	106
Namibia	56.8	107
Eswatini	55.4	108
Guatemala	55.3	109
India	55.2	110
São Tomé and Príncipe	55.0	111
Timor-Leste	54.9	112
Ghana	54.4	113
Angola	54.4	113
Congo (Democratic Republic)	54.4	113
Zambia	54.4	113
Kenya	54.3	114
Zimbabwe	54.2	115
Cameroon	53.7	116
Comoros	53.5	117
Nepal	53.4	118
Laos	53.1	119
Cambodia	52.8	120
Myanmar	52.4	121
Papua New Guinea	51.8	122
Syria	51.1	123
Tanzania	50.8	124
Cote d'Ivoire	50.8	124
Nigeria	50.6	125
Haiti	50.5	126
Uganda	50.2	127

Country	Quality of Life Rank	Score
Togo	50.0	128
Senegal	49.7	129
Benin	49.7	129
Rwanda	49.6	130
Mauritania	49.2	131
Sudan	48.5	132
Lesotho	48.3	133
Pakistan	46.9	134
Malawi	46.9	134
Guinea-Bissau	46.7	135
Djibouti	46.7	135
Gambia	46.5	136
Congo (Republic)	46.5	136
Ethiopia	46.0	137
Liberia	45.1	138
Guinea	44.5	139
Mozambique	44.3	140
Sierra Leone	44.3	140
Eritrea	44.2	141
Madagascar	44.1	142
Burkina Faso	43.4	143
Afghanistan	42.4	144
Yemen	41.1	145
Burundi	39.9	146
Niger	39.6	147
Mali	39.4	148
Central African Republic	38.8	149
Chad	38.5	150
South Sudan	38.1	151
Somalia	38.0	152

CONCLUSION

A well-functioning society depends on a range of human development factors that extend beyond GDP and economic growth. Infrastructure, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability all contribute to a higher quality of life, fostering happier, more secure societies that promote wellbeing for individuals and families.

As sustainable development and climate resilience become central to international agreements and policy discussions, governments are increasingly integrating climate-conscious infrastructure into urban planning.

This shift reflects a growing recognition that balancing economic progress with environmental responsibility is essential for long-term prosperity. In an era where globalisation is being reassessed, nations are weighing the benefits of interconnected economies against the risks of overconsumption and environmental degradation. The World Citizenship Index (WCI) evaluates quality of life using the Human Development Index (HDI), published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

As the world's most authoritative measure of human progress, the HDI emphasises health, education, and standard of living, ensuring that economic growth is not the sole determinant of national development. In addition to human development factors, the WCI incorporates a measure of a nation's commitment to environmental sustainability.

This component relies on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), produced by Yale University, Columbia University, and the World Economic Forum.

The EPI assesses countries across multiple environmental health indicators, including air and water quality, climate change mitigation, waste management, and conservation policies. By integrating these metrics, the WCI provides a comprehensive evaluation of quality of life, recognising that a truly prosperous society balances human development with environmental responsibility.



Questions? Get in touch!

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