

# Earth's global powerhouses

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IN AN INTERNATIONAL survey that looks at how key metropolises around the world measured up in terms of how successful, liveable and attractive they are, Kuala Lumpur came in 17th out of 30 cities – not bad, but not great either.

Unsurprisingly, as lovers of London will no doubt agree, the home of Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, and Will and Kate, claimed the top spot in the survey's overall rankings for the first time since it began in 2007.

Conducted annually by auditing firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), the survey – titled Cities of Opportunity – named Britain's capital as the one to beat, citing the city's combination of infrastructure, economic influence, and readiness to embrace technology as factors that puts it ahead of its closest competitors.

Those competitors include last year's top-ranked city, New York, which dropped to 2nd place. Singapore made an impressive leap up the list, from last year's 7th to 3rd, with the island state's "transportation

and infrastructure" and "ease of doing business" scoring highest. Paris however, lost a bit of love, as it dropped from 4th to 6th, but still leads the other cities in "intellectual capital and innovation".

According to PWC, the survey aims "to examine urban life in a way that can help our 30 cities (and through them, cities in general) to understand the patterns and pathways toward building healthy, prosperous communities."

In the latest and sixth edition of the survey – published via PWC's website on May 20 as a free PDF download – the team looked at the 30 cities on the list and checked their performance against 10 indicators that broadly cover the areas of technology and infrastructure, quality of life, and potential for creating economic wealth.

Although the survey's scope has evolved since its first edition, PWC said that the set of criteria for selecting cities to the list – their importance as commercial hubs; their broad geographical distribution; and to represent both "mature" and "emerging" cities – remain unchanged since it started. Meanwhile, the scores are based on publicly available informa-

tion, augmented by the survey team's own research.

This year's list of 30 is the longest yet, more than double the survey's initial list of 11 in 2007. Three new cities added to the list this year are Jakarta, Nairobi and World Cup host Rio de Janeiro. Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi was dropped and replaced with Dubai. Kuala Lumpur was added to the list in 2012.

While it's good news that the nation's beloved capital moved up the overall rankings – from last year's 18th to 17th – and even outperformed other well-established urban hubs like Beijing, Moscow and Rio de Janeiro, KL's report card reveals it as an average city at best.

KL scored mostly average points on almost every indicator in the survey, only managing the highest ranking of 8th for "cost" (which measures a city's standard of living). Most worrying is KL's ranking for "sustainability and the natural environment" – the city placed a dismal 27th. Two other indicators where KL came in the bottom ten are "intellectual and capital innovation" and "health, safety and security".

Other cities in the Asean block, Bangkok included, were not ranked.





A train drives through the Bukit Bintang shopping district of Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia's capital was ranked 17th out of 30 cities in a global survey.