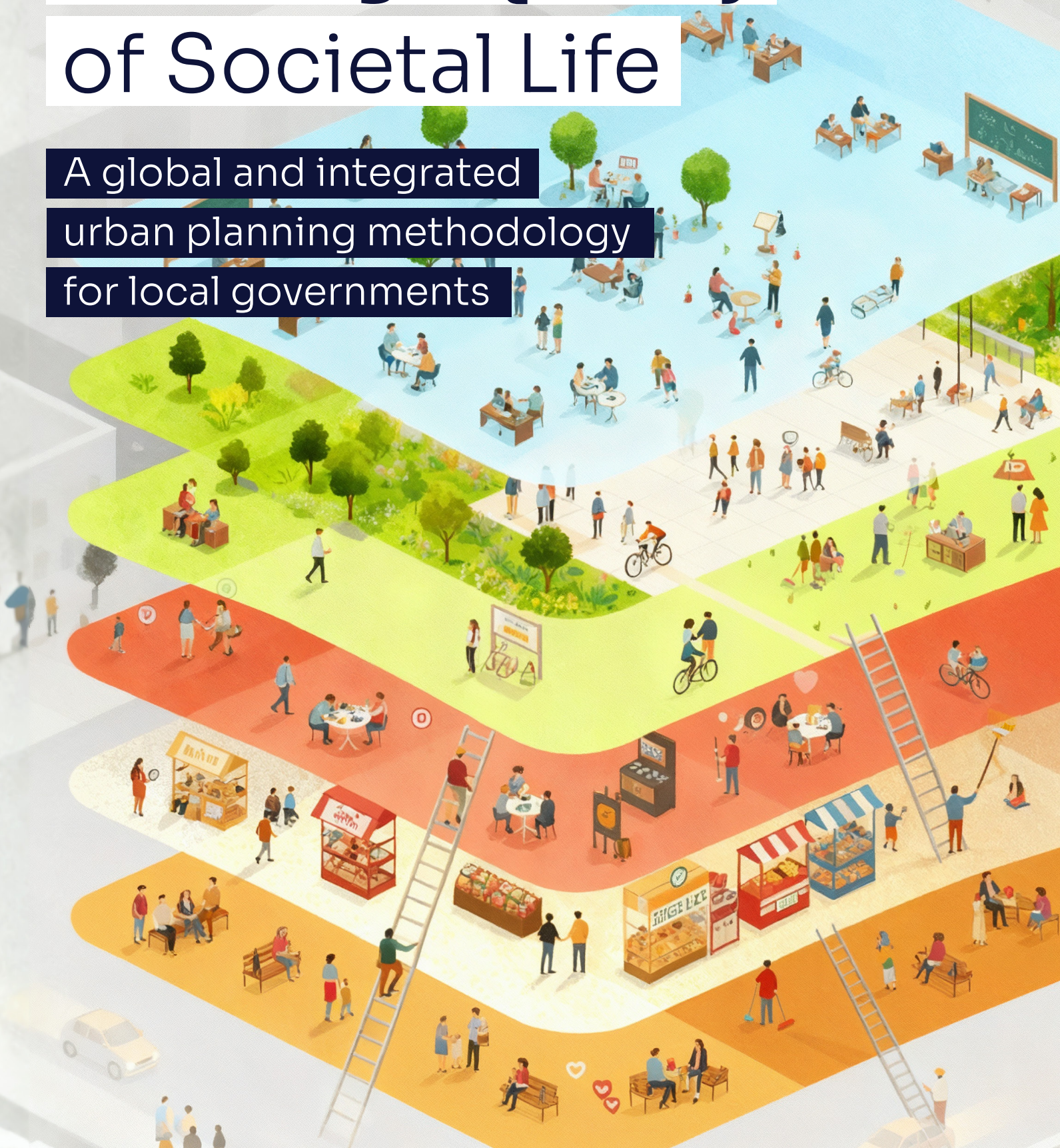


Sustainable Proximities for a High Quality of Societal Life

A global and integrated
urban planning methodology
for local governments



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Acknowledgement

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The process - 5 steps towards sustainable proximities

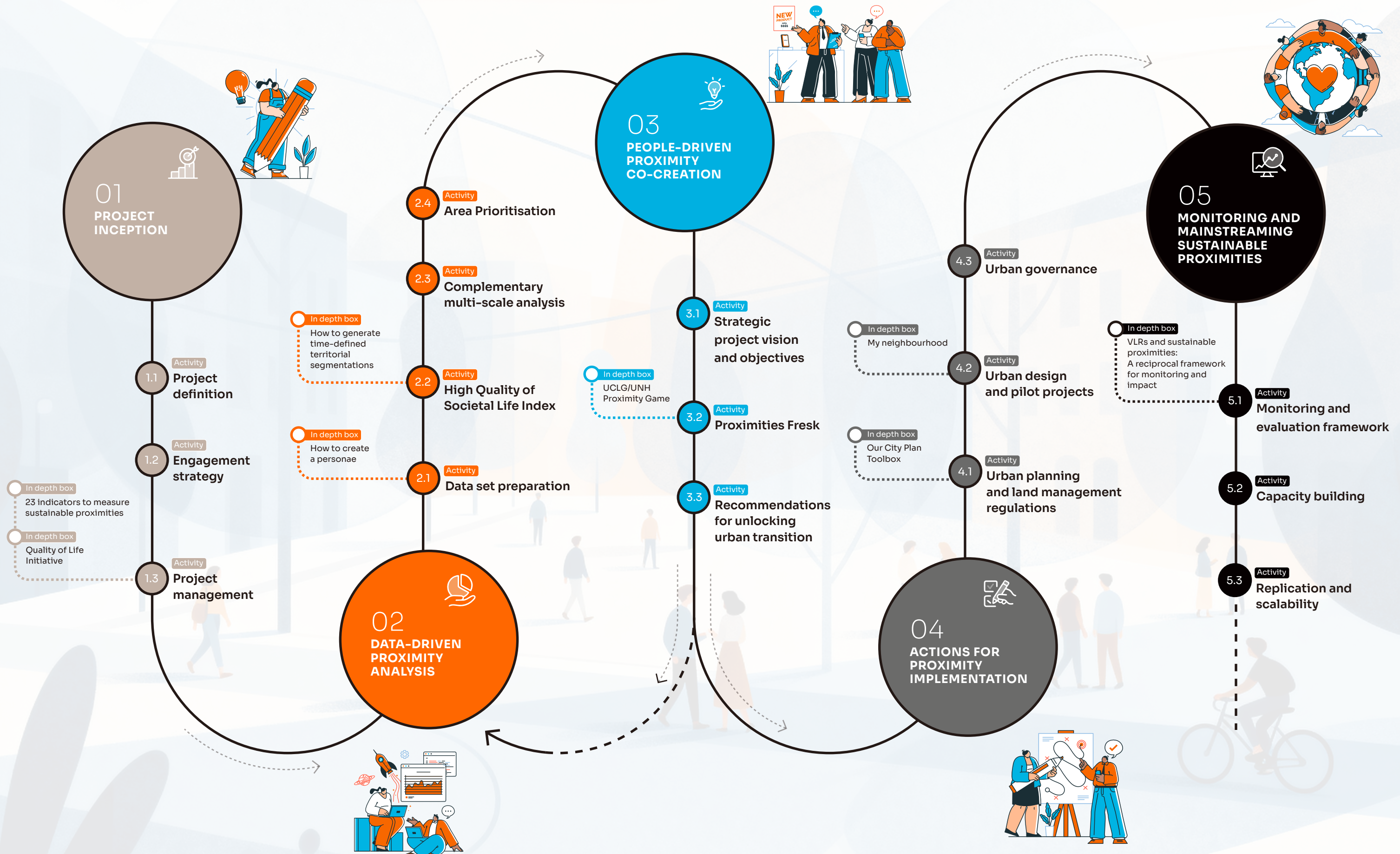


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Foreword

The pursuit of a better quality of life in cities, home to a majority of the world's population, is prompting local governments to rethink traditional urban planning and embrace new and transformative urban models. Among these, the sustainable proximities model has emerged as a powerful catalyst – offering a compelling, flexible approach to a wide range of urban challenges.

As cities around the world face growing challenges, including the effects of the global housing crisis and climate change, proximity-based planning becomes key for improved access to adequate housing, land and basic services. We believe that cities promoting local life – where essential social functions are accessible within a short walk or bike ride from people's homes – are more inclusive, liveable, and sustainable. We believe these cities represent our future. The 15-minute city as a model for enhancing proximity was championed in 2020 by the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, as part of a long-term strategy to improve quality of life and respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Since then, the idea has evolved from specific models – 15, 30, or X-minute cities – to a broader global movement grounded in the concept of 'sustainable proximities'. This shift reflects a growing need to adapt the model to diverse urban realities and scale it up globally. Indeed, while the 15-minute city served as an important starting point, we must now move toward a more inclusive and globally adaptable model.

In fact, proximity is already being applied in various forms across the world – from UTOPIAS in Mexico City to Complete Neighbourhoods in Portland, Compact City in Busan, 20 Minute-Neighbourhoods in Scotland and in Melbourne. These examples demonstrate the versatility of the model, which can be tailored to different contexts, including cities with limited resources.

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities is turning the concept of proximity into a set of concrete methods that cities can apply on the ground. The three lead partners – Chaire ETI, UN-Habitat and UCLG – have co-developed the foundations of this new global approach, defining guiding principles, measurable indicators, and practical tools to support implementation. The Observatory aims to become a leading knowledge platform, gathering and disseminating information on local initiatives, best practices, guidelines, and tools to promote sustainable proximities worldwide.

Proximity is already highlighted in a growing number of strategic international urban guidelines. The Observatory was proposed by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, in preparation for the Summit of the Future, as a High Impact Initiative Coalition to deliver on the SDGs by 2030. Proximity is also at the heart of UN-Habitat's strategic plan, as a proximity-based approach to adequate housing is an efficient vehicle in providing affordable living in the Global North as well as improving housing conditions in informal settlements in the Global South.

This publication marks one of the first outcomes of the Observatory's collective work. It presents the core building blocks of the methodology: principles, indicators and tools; and defines a collaborative and comprehensive process to implement sustainable proximities in our neighbourhoods, cities and territories. It provides an operational framework to assess, co-create, implement and monitor urban projects in cities and communities around the world. This work has benefited from the collective expertise of Chaire ETI, UN-Habitat and UCLG, and the numerous '15 minute cities' worldwide that have laid strong foundations for the work of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities and this methodology.

We need to come together and build synergies among global partners, leveraging each other's capacity and ambition. We invite you to join us, to share and discover solutions for building a more inclusive and sustainable urban future.



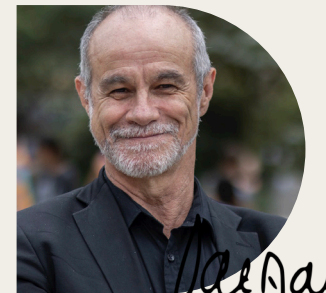
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Introduction

“Sustainable Proximities for a High Quality of Societal Life” is a global methodology for urban leaders on how to promote proximity in cities and neighbourhoods. As cities are facing the combined effects of the rapid urbanisation, climate change and humanitarian crises, local governments must adopt more sustainable and transformative approaches to urban development, detaching themselves from previous exclusionary practices. The publication represents a significant milestone for urban development, aiming to guarantee societal well-being, foster social cohesion and inclusion, and minimise environmental impact. It provides guidelines and key activities to promote sustainable proximities in our cities that could be tailored and integrated within the local urban planning framework.

The document is an outcome of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities, a joint initiative of the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the research LAB Chaire ETI at IAE Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne University. The document leverages the knowledge and the experience of the three partners and it has been drafted and curated by the academic leadership of Chaire ETI.

The methodology highlights in a simple and concise manner the overall process and steps required for sustainable proximities transformation. It encompasses five main phases of the urban planning and design process. Firstly, it provides guidelines on how to set-up and frame urban projects to enhance long-term impact. Following, it describes quantitative and qualitative methods to gather and analyse data for urban assessment and co-creation. Evidence-based and georeferenced research forms the foundation of a project, involving comprehensive background study and data analysis to grasp the social and environmental challenges and opportunities of the project. Meanwhile, the interactive and participatory workshop gathers qualitative inputs, gauging the diverse expectations of stakeholders and initiating behaviour changes. While these phases could operate independently, they synergise to offer a holistic understanding of the project landscape. Upon the completion of both analyses and co-creation, the project team consolidates the findings into recommendations for implementation, ranging from innovative approaches to territorial and urban planning and design, to transformative policy and governance mechanisms. Finally, through the monitoring and mainstreaming phase, the document provides additional insights on how to measure impact, referring to global evaluation frameworks, how to promote advocacy and capacity building initiatives, and how to scale up sustainable proximities through national urban policy and scalable actions. The methodology also integrates tools, additional resources and case studies from the Observatory partners, to leverage best practices and enhance quality of project outcomes.

The publication targets local governments and authorities willing to promote the systemic integration of sustainable urban practices within the existing urban development framework. It also provides insights to academics and practitioners for innovation in urban projects. Finally, it hints at the potential participation of civil society, international organisations and national governments for a sustainable change.

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities (GOSP)

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities (GOSP) is a joint initiative that mainstreams the concept of proximity in sustainable urban development. The Observatory is the **go-to knowledge and capacity building platform**, collecting information about local initiatives, research, and advocacy activities that promote sustainable proximities across the globe. The aim is to develop a common understanding of sustainable proximities and become a centre of reference for knowledge sharing and capacity building, creating a network to support cities in implementation.

Launched in 2022 at the World Urban Forum 11 in Katowice (Poland), the Observatory is co-led by UN-Habitat, UCLG and Chaire ETI. Together, the leading partners aim to gather global urban actors, join forces and create a global network for proximity. Moving beyond the academic concepts, this initiative allows us to drive large-scale change by informing urban policies worldwide.

Starting from the concept of the 15-minute city, the Observatory has expanded its scope to gain a more global and inclusive reach, particularly targeting developing countries and cities. The Observatory has worked collaboratively to integrate the sustainable urban development approach promoted in global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda, and its SDG 11, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), defining a set of global **principles** that promote sustainable proximities.

Moreover, it has developed **indicators** that can orient cities while framing urban projects, as well as measuring and monitoring long-term impact. Finally, the Observatory gathered and developed interactive **tools** that promote participation and innovation in proximity initiatives. The team continuously revises its database of best practices and welcomes new integrations and updates.

This publication combines the knowledge of the Observatory partners on sustainable proximities, and it will be used by the Observatory as a methodological framework to promote proximity worldwide.

UN-Habitat is the United Nations agency for sustainable cities and communities. With a mandate to advance urban development that leaves no one behind, UN-Habitat supports governments and local authorities in designing inclusive, resilient, and safe urban environments. It develops frameworks, policies, and practical tools to address challenges such as informal settlements, social housing, climate change, and urban inequality. Grounding its work in the principles promoted by the New Urban Agenda and the SDG 11, the agency drives global urban transformation through pilot projects, technical assistance, and capacity building. Operating across over 90 countries, UN-Habitat engages in collaborative partnerships and applies a people-centered approach to urban planning and governance.

UCLG is the largest global network of cities, local and regional governments, and municipal associations. Acting as the united voice and advocate of democratic local government worldwide, UCLG fosters collaboration among cities to address global challenges through local action. The organisation promotes decentralisation, citizen participation, and local democracy, aligning its initiatives with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. With its headquarters in Barcelona, UCLG convenes members across all continents to exchange knowledge, shape policy, and influence global debates. It provides a unique platform for local governments to co-create sustainable urban futures and share transformative practices.

Chaire ETI is an interdisciplinary LAB, under the scientific direction of Professor Carlos Moreno. It has specialised in pioneering the theory, tools, and operational methodologies underlying the concept of the "15-minute city". This visionary approach envisions urban spaces where residents can access most of their daily needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride, promoting sustainability, community resilience, and well-being. With a mission to enhance the quality of life in cities and other territories, the research lab is at the forefront of exploring innovative models and solutions. Since 2016, Chaire ETI has consolidated international experience working on applied research projects in Europe, Latin America and Asia. This methodology is the result of the combined knowledge and highly collaborative process, built through our multi-sectoral network of partners.

Theoretical framework

The following chapter describes the historical and theoretical evolution of the proximity-based models, from the 15-minute city (15mC) and 30-minute Territory (30mT), into the broader sustainable proximities model.

Background

Cities today face unprecedented challenges arising from demographic pressure, climate change, biodiversity loss, and escalating economic, social, and humanitarian crises — all of which demand a fundamental rethinking of urban planning, governance, and spatial justice. **Concerning urban trends leading to rapid urbanisation, urban fragmentation, increasing traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and deepening social disparities** are testing the resilience of cities. Traditional approaches to urban development often fail to address the interconnected nature of these issues, exacerbating social inequalities and threatening environmental ecosystems. Modern urban planning practices that promote top-down planning actions, zoning, specialised land use and car-oriented urban settings, are pushing cities towards unappealing futures.

In this evolving landscape, local governments must adopt innovative, inclusive, and sustainable strategies to create cities that are livable, resilient, and equitable. By prioritising integrated urban planning that **repositions the needs of our communities and the environment as the first priority**, while balancing economic development, cities can navigate these complex challenges and seize opportunities to foster cohesive and thriving urban environments.

Proximity offers a comprehensive and transformative perspective towards sustainable urban development. **Proximity promotes urban environments where residents can access to most of their daily needs within a short walking or cycling distance**, fostering accessibility and reducing car dependency. Acting as a catalyst for change, proximity aims to improve residents' quality of life, fostering social cohesion and environmental benefits. It promotes compact neighbourhoods, equipped with comprehensive amenities and services, that enhance vibrancy and diversity of users, increasing opportunities for social interaction, cultural exchange and thriving economies. It encourages soft mobility, reducing air pollution and urban heat island effects, increasing physical activities and boosting health and well-being.

Finally, proximity promotes a decentralised city governance model, where decision-making should be delegated to local neighbourhood administration, promoting tailored decision-making and investments, inclusionary urban planning processes, community participation, and just societies where different social groups are adequately represented.

Background

The 15-minute City: a catalytic model for urban transformation

The 30-minute territory and the three levels of proximity framework

The Sustainable Proximities model

The 15-minute city: a catalytic model for urban transformation

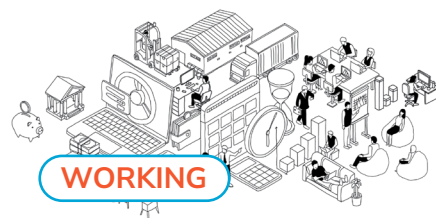
Proximity has its roots in chrono-urbanism theories, where cities are conceptualised and planned both in spatial and temporal terms. Particularly, **it originates from the 15-minute city (15mC)** model developed by Professor Carlos Moreno. Before that, there is a rich selection of theories and models promoting proximity, including Howard's Garden City (1902), Perry's Neighbourhood Units (1929), Harris and Ullman's Polycentric City (1945), Hagerstrand's Time Geography (1970), New Urbanism models (1979) and Transit-oriented Development (1993) (TUM, 2025; Marchigiani et al., 2022). It is also integrated into urban plans such as Cerdà's Master Plan and the more recent Superblocks model of Barcelona and the Complete Neighbourhoods of Portland (C40, 2020).

The 15mC model creates a polycentric city with interconnected, self-sufficient and vibrant neighbourhoods. The ontologic model defines **six essential social functions** that should be accessible to all residents within 15 minutes walking or cycling: living, working, supplying, caring, learning and enjoying (Chaire ETI, 2023). The social functions classify essential individual or social activities that usually structure people's life and needs. There are general categories applicable to all urban residents, independently from their gender, age, abilities, social group and background. Every urban resident requires adequate access to services, amenities and opportunities to perform such functions, tailored to the local context and cultural background. Below is a short definition of each social function:



LIVING

This function relates to the individual's domestic activities (household maintenance), personal affairs (administrative, financial), daily mobility (parking, access to public transit) and citizen engagement.



WORKING

It covers all dimensions of professional activity: from workplaces, job search/offer services to conferences and modes of professional travel.



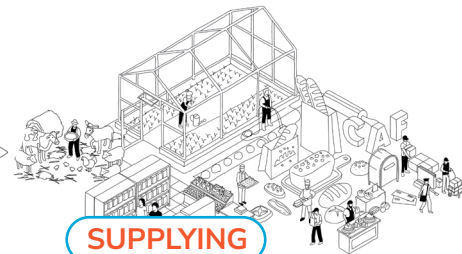
LEARNING

It relates to all forms of education and vocational learning: nursery, school, higher education, adult education and other professional training.



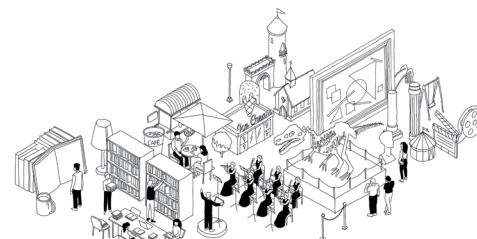
CARING

It includes both the use of the medical and paramedical services, as well as the practice of physical activities and sport, elderly and child care.



SUPPLYING

It considers all means of supplying the household with everyday consumer goods, household equipment or personal items.



ENJOYING

It includes leisure and free time in a broad sense. It includes cultural activities, (re)creative, associative and festive activities, social rituals as well as entertainment, relaxation, going to restaurants, bars and vacations.

The ultimate goal of the 15mC is to promote a high quality of societal life, focusing on three main dimensions of well-being: individual, societal and environmental (Chaire ETI, 2023). These dimensions enable local governments, researchers and practitioners to orient actions towards effective and long-term impact, and to monitor and measure change.



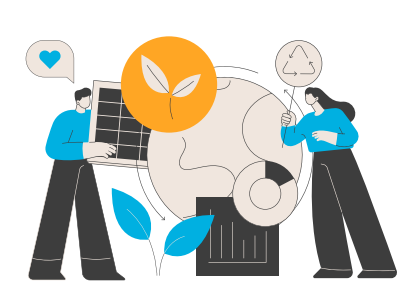
Individual well-being

It evaluates the physical and mental well-being of each individual and its close family.



Societal well-being

It evaluates the social interactions and cohesion of a community and society.



Environmental well-being

It evaluates the impact on biodiversity and environmental ecosystems.

The 15mC concept has inspired governmental actions and policies around the world. Initially, it was adopted by the city of Paris in 2020 with its motto "La ville du quart d'heure", as a strategic approach to face the threats of the COVID-19 pandemic and put the bases to build back better. Soon after, multiple mayors and local governments utilise and tailor this model as a unique vision to address pressing urban challenges. For instance, other successful examples of the application of the 15mC are in China, with the "15-minute community life circles", in Iztapalapa and Mexico City with the "Units of Transformation and Organisation for Inclusion and Social Harmony" (UTOPIAS), in Glasgow and its "Livable Neighbourhoods", in Melbourne and the "20 minutes neighbourhood", among others (C40, 2020; Teixeira et al., 2024).

The 30-minute territory and the 3 levels of proximity framework

According to the 15mC model, citizens should be able to fulfil all their essential needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride (Moreno et al., 2021). While this model has proven valuable for large cities, it seems to fall short when applied to low-density areas. Following the intention of broadening the opportunities unlocked by proximity, Chaire ETI **has adapted the 15-minute City (15mC) model into the 30-minute Territory (30mT)**, extending its principles to address the needs of low-density areas (Moreno et al., 2022; Chaire ETI, 2023). The 30mT guides cities on strategic investments and planning required to decentralise essential functions that would considerably decongest city centres and improve citizens' quality of life in low-density areas.

As small cities and rural agglomerates might lack resources and capacities to fulfill the entire spectrum of essential functions, the 30mT introduced the so-called the **3 levels of proximity framework**, which classifies services into three tiers: local, intermedial and central services, covering the 6 social functions (see Annex IV). Local services are essential services that must be provided independently from the area density, and they should be accessible within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. Intermedial are those services that depend on the area density and should be accessible within a 30-minute walk or bike ride. Finally, central services should be located only in central and high density areas, and should be accessible by car or public transport within a 30 minute ride even by peri-urban and low-density areas (Gall et al., 2024). The services classification can vary from context to context and it usually depends on the level of priority, frequency of use and intensity of infrastructure.

The Sustainable proximities model

The sustainable proximities model is an extension of the 15-minute City and the 30-minute Territory, as it recognises the need of building more inclusive and replicable frameworks, truly adaptive and responsive to residents' needs and motorial capabilities. Through the global movement for sustainable proximities, **the Observatory encourages cities to tailor proximity into their specific context and to move beyond the mere number of 15 or 30**, detaching from the Global North city typologies, and considering a more diverse range of mobility and accessibility patterns, urban morphologies and functions.

Combining the knowledge and the experience of UN-Habitat, UCLG and Chaire ETI, the Observatory has leveraged the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks, integrating additional considerations to support the needs of cities in developing contexts.

In fact, the Observatory has included an **additional essential function - governing** - that refers to administrative and financial services provided at the city and neighbourhood level. By extrapolating the governing essential function, it highlights the importance of active and inclusive governance to promote local and sustainable development, that leverages participatory mechanisms and e-governance. In addition, the Observatory also integrates the economic dimension to the individual, societal and environmental dimension defining High Quality of Life and Well-being.

The Observatory has established **7 guiding principles**, one for each essential function, to promote the multidimensional impact of sustainable urban development based on proximity.



01

An affordable city (living)

A city or territory that promotes social mix through safe, affordable, diverse and evenly distributed housing, inclusive and quality basic services and amenities. Improving citizens' access to public services, promoting solidarity and including informal perspectives, to limit gentrification and segregation.

02

A thriving city (working)

A prosperous, thriving and vibrant city or territory that provides equal, well-distributed and accessible livelihood opportunities for all. Promoting sustainable lifestyles, green, circular and smart economies.

03

A just city (governing)

A just city or territory built on inclusive local institutions and participatory and accessible governance structures. Empowering individuals and communities through multi-stakeholder mechanisms for decision-making and co-creation in urban planning and design, increasing transparency and accountability. A city or territory that considers high quality, innovative, accessible, context-specific and culturally sensitive sustainable solutions. Building on local assets, technology and data, adapting to the local needs of all inhabitants, specifically of those in vulnerable situations.

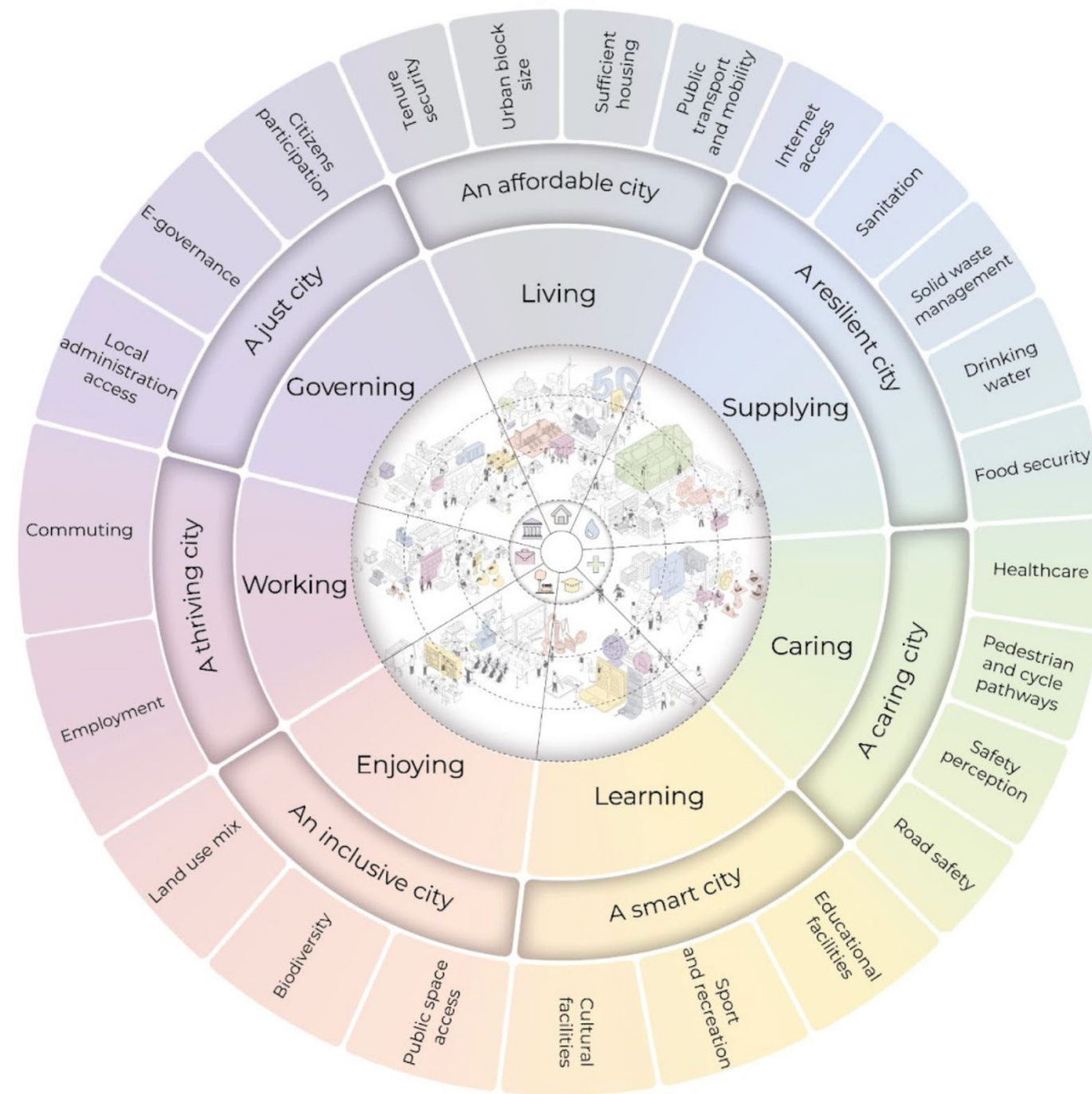


Fig. 1, Seven essential functions, seven principles and 23 indicators for proximity-based urban development

04

An inclusive city (enjoying)

A city or territory made of safe, inclusive, evenly distributed public space and complete street networks, accessible and well-connected in city wide systems. Promoting the diversity of shared use & users, well-being, comfort and safety, while protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage.

05

A resilient city (supplying)

A resilient and green city or territory that considers access to clean air, water and biodiversity as a common good. Promoting mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change limiting the effect of natural disasters, such as adopting nature-based solutions, green energy, sustainable building and construction.

06

A caring city (caring)

An interconnected accessible city or territory of well-distributed, low-carbon and resilient mobility networks, priorities accessible, safe, efficient, affordable and sustainable infrastructure for public transport, as well as non-motorised options such as walking and cycling. Promoting physical activities, health and well-being, social interaction, the sustainment and reproduction of life at its core.

07

A mixed-use city (learning)

A polycentric, compact, mixed-use, and spatially integrated city or territory with limited land-use specialisation. Enabling people to perform all key social and economic functions close to their homes, while avoiding or mitigating the negative externalities of high urban density, such as overcrowding.

Methodological framework

The following chapter describes the step-by-step process to integrate the Sustainable proximities model in urban projects. It encompasses the five main phases of the urban planning and design process:

1. PROJECT INCEPTION

The project scoping serves as a preparatory phase to **define the objectives and the expectations of the project**. Once a project team is established, it sets-up the boundaries of the project and it aligns them with the city's priorities and urban planning framework, through desk research and urban policy review. Depending on the available capacities and resources, the project team defines the geographical scope, the stakeholder engagement strategy, and the management and monitoring framework.

1. PROJECT INCEPTION

2. DATA-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES ANALYSIS

3. PEOPLE-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES CO-CREATION

4. ACTIONS FOR PROXIMITIES IMPLEMENTATION

5. EVALUATING AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE PROXIMITIES

1.1 Project objectives and boundaries

GUIDELINES

During this initial step, a highly **multi-disciplinary project team is formed**, involving the city technicians from various departments (urban planning, housing, transport, environment, etc.). When specific expertise is missing in-house, the team can mobilise external professionals coming from private sector, academia and other organisations, while ensuring there is always representation of civil society. City leaders should also be part of or highly involved with the project team, as **ensuring strong political commitment is a fundamental step to build the strong foundations to the project**.

The team conducts **preliminary desk research and multi-scale urban policy review**, to consolidate a good understanding of the current urban trends, the socio-economic and environmental challenges and opportunities of the city, analysing potential synergies and conflicts between the project and the overall governance and regulatory framework. Through collaborative sessions, the team tries to answer questions such as Where are we? What is our most ambitious objective? How do we want to get there?

Based on the findings, the **project team defines the project objectives**, to guide and align the city's initiatives, fundings and efforts, and identify key thematic streams of work. While promoting sustainable proximities, project objectives could target accessibility of essential functions, affordability of services, sustainable mobility, as well as address the various social functions, such as affordable housing, thriving livelihood opportunities for all, equitable education, accessible health care services, innovative supply and logistics platforms, and inclusive cultural and recreational offers.

Finally, the project team defines the **geographical scope of the project**. Proximity-based studies can be applicable at the metropolitan, city, district, neighbourhood, street or block level. While the decision makers may already have in mind the geographical scope of the project, adopting a multi-scalar approach enables to unlock mutual benefits. Depending on the scope of the project, involve key administrative representatives from the regional and district level.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Urban Policy Review
- Project objectives
- Map with defined project area



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Observatory website



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Political authorities
- Urban policy specialist
- Technical city departments
- Project manager
- GIS specialist

1.2 Engagement strategy

GUIDELINES

The project team identifies the relevant stakeholders and elaborates an engagement strategy to involve them throughout the project. By integrating a solid engagement strategy, not only is the city able to deliver more qualitative results, leveraging on the knowledge and expertise of stakeholders, but it will also boost the project success and longevity by establishing a trustworthy relation.

Depending on the geographical scope and the project's objective, the project team lists down all the relevant stakeholders, assessing their roles, interests and relationships with the project. The stakeholder mapping tool can facilitate the exercise, as it maps stakeholders from all sectors - private, public, academia and civil society - according to their level of interest and influence towards the project. It also supports the team to identify the interrelationships and potential tensions between stakeholders. Additional consultations with identified strong stakeholders could help to refine the stakeholder list and capture community champions, informal actors or underrepresented groups.

Then, the project team can prepare an engagement strategy that tailors engagement methods - such as workshops, interviews, surveys, public meetings, etc. - according to the role and relation of each stakeholder, posing a particular attention to the most vulnerable groups. This is crucial to limit potential conflicts throughout the project lifecycle. The project team may consider to recruit or collaborate closely with any identified stakeholders that could complement the project team with specific expertise. The engagement strategy also structures the validation and co-creation activities, which are described in chapter 3. Finally, the project team also elaborates a communication strategy, suggesting adequate channels, target audience and means, to effectively communicate the project and maintain a feedback loop between the various project actors.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Engagement strategy
- Communication strategy



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Annex I: Stakeholder mapping template



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- Social science specialist

1.3 Project management and monitoring

GUIDELINES

Based on the previous activities, the project team elaborates a comprehensive project management and monitoring framework. These help to ensure the correct execution of the project and a transparent and collaborative process, while maintaining a high level of quality and alignment with the city's expectations. The project management framework typically takes the shape of a Logframe or Theory of Change, indicating main objectives, expected outcomes, list of activities and monitoring mechanisms. It defines a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a workplan to measure project' progress. KPIs help define tangible and realistic targets to maximise short-, medium- and long-term impact of the project actions at different scales, including territorial, urban, district and neighbourhood level. The following table provides a list of KPI elaborated by the Observatory, that integrates global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

The project framework also indicates expected deliverables, role and responsibilities of each partner, key milestones and project deadlines, as well as the budget and financial mechanisms of each activity. This activity should be fine-tuned with the project impact, described in 5.1 Evaluation framework.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Logframe / Theory of Change of the project
- Work plan
- KPI list



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Annex II: Project Gantt chart template
- Annex III: GOSP KPI short-list
- GOSP KPI long-list
- White Paper n.3



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- Data analyst

23 indicators to measure sustainable proximities

The Observatory has gathered indicators to measure and evaluate proximity in sustainable development projects. Through a thorough literature review, the Observatory has elaborated a long-list of KPI, integrating the indicators from the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF), the SDGs - particularly the SDG 11 - and other academic references, and leveraging monitoring mechanisms such as the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). Each indicator is linked to a social function and a principle of the Observatory. The Observatory has **shortlisted 23 KPIs**, considered as the basic monitoring requirements to measure sustainable proximities. Further details are available in the Annex III GOSP KPI short-list.

Social function	KPI	Social function	KPI
Living	Urban block size	Learning	Educational facilities
	Overcrowding		Sport and recreation
	Access to public transport and mobility		Cultural facilities
Supplying	Access to internet	Enjoying	Proximity to public spaces
	Access to drinking water		Biodiversity
	Sanitation		Land use mix
	Food security	Working	Unemployment
	Solid waste management		Commuting
Caring	Proximity to healthcare	Governing	Proximity to local administration
	Share occupied by pedestrian pathways or cycle paths		Access to e-governance
	Perception of safety		Structure allowing citizens participation
	Road safety		

Table 1: 23 shortlisted indicators of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities.



The Quality of Life Initiative



Fig. 3, The Quality of Life Initiative

The Quality of Life Initiative (QoLI) is a good example on how to set-up a monitoring framework to systematically measure proximity-based urban planning processes and the impact on people's quality of life. It supports local governments and decision makers to understand how their current investment and policy priorities improve the well-being of the individuals and communities and how to make tangible, long-term improvements in the lives of urban populations.

The Initiative promotes a comprehensive, human-centric understanding of quality of life that incorporates both objective and subjective dimensions, recognising that people's lived experiences are shaped by multiple factors, closely linked to the idea of proximity. In fact, physical, functional, social, and temporal nearness influence how residents experience and navigate their city.

Created through wide ranging consultations, QoLI developed a globally relevant and locally applicable **performance monitoring tool** incorporating innovative data gathering techniques and aligned with the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF). As part of its broader methodology, the Initiative explores also ways for cities to reflect on urban challenges through a series of cross-cutting lenses—such as adequacy, affordability, inclusion, and belonging—that help unpack how structural conditions, issues of fairness, and perceptions interact to shape outcomes across urban domains.

The Initiative is being implemented by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the UN agency focused on sustainable urban development, and is sponsored by the Quality of Life Program in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By helping subnational governments translate global ambition into practical tools and strategies, the Initiative supports cities in advancing a more connected and livable urban future, helping cities align and accelerate progress for the SDGs.



Methodological framework

The following chapter describes the step-by-step process to integrate the Sustainable Proximities model in urban projects.. It encompasses the five main phases of the urban planning and design process:

2.

DATA-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES ANALYSIS

Once the project objectives have been clearly defined, the project team conducts a quantitative analysis to assess the current spatial gaps and opportunities of the project area. The Observatory has developed a data-driven methodology based on the Chaire ETI's **High Quality of Societal Life methodology (HQSL)**, integrating further considerations for its global applicability. The method **evaluates the provision, diversity and accessibility of the essential social functions** in relation with the needs of the various socio-economic groups. Based on the services provision, the methodology evaluates their impact on quality of life, looking at the personal, societal and environmental well-being. The assessment also integrates complementary multi-scalar analysis on mobility, environmental and social dynamics, to establish strengths and weaknesses of the area and propose priority actions.

1. PROJECT INCEPTION

2. DATA-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES ANALYSIS

3. PEOPLE-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES CO-CREATION

4. ACTIONS FOR PROXIMITIES IMPLEMENTATION

5. EVALUATING AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE PROXIMITIES

2.1 Data set preparation

GUIDELINES

Before starting any quantitative analysis, it is important to gather primary and secondary information related to the physical and social environment. Typically, open source repositories - such as national or local databases, census, OpenStreetMap, Google Map - are sufficient to complete a proximity-based assessment. Alternatively, the project team can consider to design ad-hoc data gathering activities (e.g. surveys) or procure them through data service providers. The final outcome is a comprehensive database, which should be regularly organised and cleaned, to ensure metrics and units are consistent, and a list of personae profiles.

2.1.1 Physical environment

The main objective of this step is to generate the Functions Matrix, which gathers and organises all the available geographic information related to urban functions. These are understood as all the infrastructure and services necessary for personal, social, and professional life, including shops, health clinics, nurseries, schools, administrative facilities, bus stops, public spaces, co-working spots, recreational and cultural facilities, etc. The project team can categorise the services into the 6 social functions: living, supplying, working, caring, learning, enjoying and governing. Usually, the land use provides insights on the nature of the services and could facilitate the categorisation. For the case of low-density areas, services and facilities can also be classified into the 3 levels of proximity, depending on the degree of priority use: local (e.g. primary school), intermediate (e.g. secondary school) or central services (e.g. high school and university). Annex IV and V support this exercise.

The assessment also studies complementary aspects related to mobility patterns, environmental factors and social dynamics, therefore it is essential to collect additional GIS data, including the street network, the transport network, the land-use composition, population density and diversity, biodiversity assets, among others. The complementary analysis utilises a multiscalar approach, to examine the project's integration at the city or territorial level and its potential long-term impact. Looking outside the project boundaries, by defining a buffer zone and collecting additional data, could help to identify unnoticed assets or threats.

HQSL: elements and facilities integrated into the six social functions - Chaire ETI

LIVING	WORKING	SUPPLYING	ENJOYING	LEARNING	CARING
Housing Energy Waste management Transportation Services / Infrastructure	Office Co-working Employment	Food Non-food related consumption Public services	Holidays Culture Leisure Association	Mandatory education Non-mandatory education Professional trainings	Access to care Prevention Emergency Living environment Wellness Sport Pollution

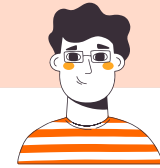
Fig. 5, Main facilities and services under each social function, according to the HQSL method

2.1.2 Social Environment and personae definition

Together with the physical environment, it is crucial to also investigate the current and future users of the space. This involves collecting socio-economic and demographic data on the residents and daily users, including information on their age, gender, income, education, and household composition. This step aims to **identify social groups that predominantly use urban services**, such as families, students, or minorities, as well as their daily needs. Additionally, studying their mobility patterns and behaviours, such as commuting methods and frequency of visits, helps to understand how these groups interact with the space and what are the gaps and constraints of the existing physical environment.

The outcome of the social environment review will highlight key target groups, which present a certain level of vulnerability due to the mismatch between services demand and offer. Based on the findings, the project team **elaborates 4 to 6 personae - or typical users profiles** - that represent the features and behaviours of the targeted groups. The identification of these personae enables to prioritise the accessibility of services linked to those groups (e.g. children need nurseries and recreational facilities), enabling a tailored and localised approach. However, it is important not to forget about everyone else's basic needs, the project team is still planning for the entire population.

Francisco



20 years old
University student studying social sciences
Uses a wheelchair for mobility
Lives independently in student housing
in central Rotterdam, Netherlands

Esperanza



45 years old
Single mother, lives with son, Marcos (17 yrs)
Runs a small bookstore stall in a local market
Lives in a self-built house in an informal neighbourhood
in the outskirts of Bogotá, Colombia

Fig. 6, Examples of personae profiles used in various Chaire ETI projects



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Function Matrix
- Complementary GIS database
- 4-6 Personae profiles



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- White Paper n.3
- Annex IV: Functions Matrix
- Annex V: 3 levels of proximity framework



INVOLVED ACTORS

- GIS specialist
- Social science specialist

How to create a persona

Personae are fictional and representative profiles created to embody key traits, needs and behaviours of real social groups in our society. They are typically used in participatory workshops and activities to help participants empathise with marginalised individuals with special needs, and design more inclusive urban solutions.

The sustainable proximities methodology integrates the use of personae to identify and think of strategic target groups throughout all the phases of the project, from assessment to co-creation and implementation.

Once the team has captured the demographic data of the intervention area, as well as analysed the current trends, spatial distribution and forecasted population growth, the project team can identify 4 to 6 profiles that highly represent the city dynamic and the most vulnerable groups. The shortlisting of the 4 to 6 profiles could be aligned with existing agendas and initiatives promoted by the city (e.g. child-friendly city, gender-sensitive city, etc.).

Then, the team elaborates further details of the daily routine of the personae, their physical features, general attitude and preferences, reflecting on their movement patterns and physical ability. These should reflect the current population statistics and should be highly evocative, promoting empathy among participants. Below a list of recommended features to describe:



2.2 High Quality of Societal Life Index (HQSL)

GUIDELINES

The High Quality of Societal Life (HQSL) index measures the services provision, diversity and accessibility within the project area. This is done by counting and analysing the services associated with a social function within a defined area (already compiled in the Functions Matrix - see chapter 2.1). To conduct this exercise, the team **defines a grid of analysis and subdivides the project area into smaller territorial units**, to better understand the distribution of services in the overall project area. The territorial units could vary in dimension depending on the mode of transport and time of travel. Further details related to the territorial segmentation are available in the following table.

Once the adequate grid of analysis has been defined, each territorial unit is ranked with a score that measures the level of services' provision associated with a social function. The services' provision index uses a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 corresponds to the highest amount of services and 1 corresponds to the lowest amount or absence of services associated with a social function. The amount of services that determine a score can drastically change from context to context. For instance, in low-density areas 1-2 educational services might be already satisfying the users' demand and therefore the territorial unit gets a high score for the learning social function, while in high-density areas it might not be sufficient and it will score low. The scoring system must be carefully elaborated with sectoral experts to ensure that the overall evaluation adequately represents the city dynamics.

The services' provision score does not take into consideration the diversity of service associated with a specific social function. If the city is interested in studying the service diversity, the project team shall elaborate a services' diversity index, which counts the type of services available instead of the total amount and it is proportional to the total amount of services typologies available in the overall city. For instance, in a territorial unit there are 4 primary schools and in another segment there are 2 primary schools, 1 university and 1 high school. While the two segments have the same services provision score for the "learning" social function, the second segment has a higher diversity score.



Sofia (12 years old)
Student
Daughter of single mother
Lives in a social housing district in the outskirts of the city

PERSONA JOURNEY
Persona Sofia

Personality

Responsible Mature for her age, used to managing herself during her mother's work hours

Curious Enjoys reading, learning new things, and exploring her environment

Independent Adapts her routine independently when needed

Daily Routine



Living

- Lives with her mother in a social housing apartment in the outskirts of the city
- Walks 20 minutes to her school located within the community



Supplying

- Walks 10 minutes to a local fruit shop for her mother when needed
- Sometimes buys snacks with friends at a small mini-market (5-minute walk)



Learning

- Walks daily to school (20 minutes)
- After school, spends an hour in the library waiting for her mother, often feeling uneasy and wishing for more after-school activities
- Attends free English and Science Club activities at the community centre every Saturday morning (15-minute bus ride)



Caring

- Joins her mother during regular check-ups at the local health clinic (20-minute bus ride)
- Often stays overnight at a neighbour's house when her mother works night shifts



Working

- (Not applicable - student)



Enjoying

- Spends weekends walking and playing in nearby parks (10-minute walk)
- Occasionally visits the city centre with her mother for movies or exhibitions (30-minute bus ride)

"I spend too much time alone in the library after school."

"It's a bit scary going alone to the clinic or community center without mom."

- Sofia

- ☒ **Name**
- ☐ **Age**
- ☐ **Status:** Are they married? Do they have children? Other care duties?
- ☐ **Occupation:** What is their main occupation, regarding work or education? And digital skills?
- ☐ **Living conditions:** Where do they live? What type of household is it?
- ☐ **Relevant physical or identity features:** If any, highlight vulnerabilities such as physical impairments, members of a minority group, etc.
- ☐ **General attitude and passions:** Are they shy, disciplined, active members of the society, sociable, etc.?
- ☐ **Daily routine:** Describe their typical daily activities and movement patterns, according to the 6 social functions

Fig. 7, Example of comprehensive personae profile description



How to generate time-defined territorial segmentations

The territorial segmentation allows the city to better understand the distribution of services in the overall project area. Depending on the scale of the project, this can be done in two different ways. If the project area is a neighbourhood, the project team usually generates an isochrone. Isochrones are geometrical features utilised for territorial and urban analysis in GIS softwares, helping visualise areas of accessibility defined by a time variable and the speed of transit. Specifically, **it is a polygon or a line that connects all the points reachable within the same amount of time** from a specific location, using the same speed or correlated mode of transport (e.g. walking, cycling, or driving). Isochrones usually follow the existing road networks and therefore take into consideration street junctions, physical barriers and traffic restrictions.

If the project extends to the whole city territory, it is recommended to **define a grid of analysis and divide the city in equal segments**, avoiding the distortion of local morphological specificities. Each territorial unit describes an area that could be reached within the same amount of time from the central point, using the same speed or correlated mode of transport. They represent perfect isochrones and they usually take a square or hexagonal shape.

For instance, a grid of analysis or an isochrone that measures the accessibility of services within a 15-minutes walk utilises a 1-kilometer radius as this is the corresponding distance of the average human speed while walking. Consider that not all people have the same walking and cycling speed, so speed could be adjusted according also to the main target group. Also the time distance can vary depending on the context. Depending on the project objectives, the project team can elaborate different territorial grids to compare walking, cycling and driving opportunities in a defined timeframe.

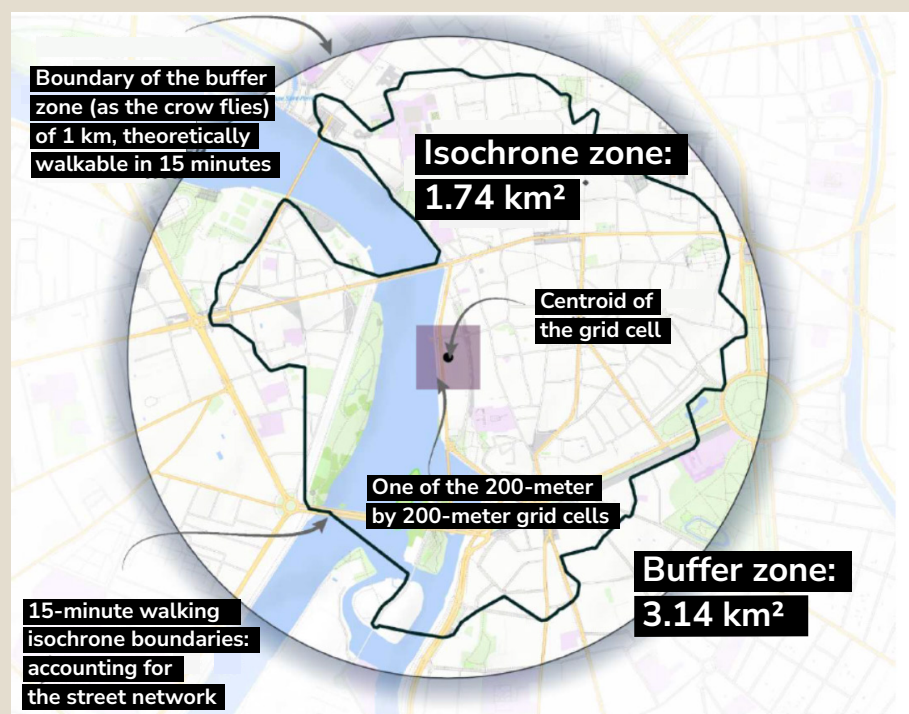


Fig. 8, Visual representation of a hypothetical isochrone of 15-minute walking distance

Once the adequate grid of analysis has been defined, each territorial unit is ranked with a score that measures the level of services' provision associated with a social function. The **services' provision index** uses a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 corresponds to the highest amount of services and 1 corresponds to the lowest amount or absence of services associated with a social function. The amount of services that determine a score can drastically change from context to context. For instance, in low-density areas 1-2 educational services might be already satisfying the users' demand and therefore the territorial unit gets a high score for the learning social function, while in high-density areas it might not be sufficient and it will score low. The scoring system must be carefully elaborated with sectoral experts to ensure that the overall evaluation adequately represents the city dynamics.

The services' provision score does not take into consideration the diversity of service associated with a specific social function. If the city is interested in studying the service diversity, the project team shall elaborate a **services' diversity index**, which counts the type of services available instead of the total amount and it is proportional to the total amount of services typologies available in the overall city. For instance, in a territorial unit there are 4 primary schools and in another segment there are 2 primary schools, 1 university and 1 high school. While the two segments have the same services provision score for the "learning" social function, the second segment has a higher diversity score.

Once the scoring systems have been defined, the project team classifies the territorial units according to the provision and diversity of services available. The output of this step will be a series of scorecards - one for each social function - describing the distribution of services in the project area. These scorecards feature maps, charts and infographics highlighting strengths and weaknesses of each social function. Additionally, a **final proximity scorecard**, which ponderates the results of each social function, could be elaborated to have an overall understanding of the well- and under-served areas.

Example: quality index for the distribution of school facilities in a territory

Additional variables:

Proximity to a school
Sectorisation
Continuity of the school cycle

Sub-indices

- 1 very low level of school facilities = no school facilities
- 2 low level of school facilities
= presence of 1 or 2 schools without continuity of education
- 3 if intermediate level of school facilities
= presence of 2 schools with continuity of education
- 4 if good level of school facilities
= presence of 2 schools with continuity of education
- 5 if very good level of school facilities
= presence of 4 or more schools or more with full continuity of education



Fig. 9, Example of services' provision index (a) and visual representation of the HQSL ranking process (b)

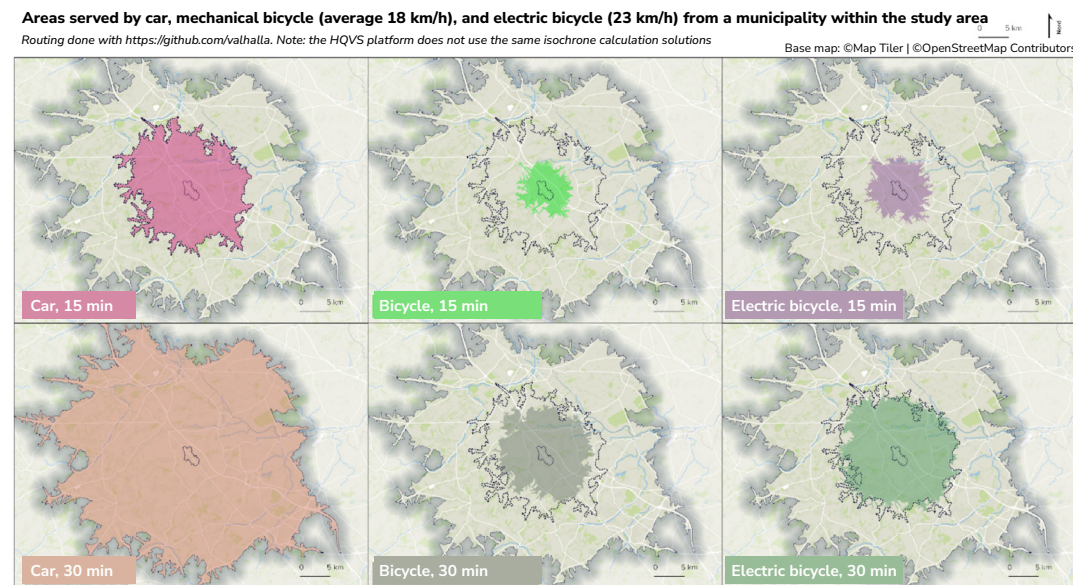


Fig. 10 Comparison of areas served by car, mechanical and electric bicycles from a municipality in the west of the agglomeration community - Chaire ETI

Scorecards are usually linked to the territorial grid of analysis selected. However, to ensure endorsement and actionability of the results, the project team can consolidate its findings into **multi-scale elaborates**, associating the ponderated findings with the administrative boundaries of the city, district, neighbourhood, street or block. In this way, cities are able to mobilise stakeholders and resources accordingly, depending on the areas of priority.

Macro Analysis

City polarities and centralities system



Neighbourhood Analysis

Liveability Score card



Micro Analysis

Streets ranking



Fig. 11, Examples of Multi-scale elaborates, associating services' provision score to the various administrative boundaries and units - Chaire ETI

Depending on the project ambitions, the assessment could integrate different perspectives, accounting the 3 levels of proximity framework (2.2.1), the personae needs (2.2.2), and the three well-being dimensions (2.2.3). While these additional steps are not mandatory, they provide tailored and detailed insights to the project.

2.2.1 HQSL index and the 3 levels of proximity

This additional step is recommended for the case of low-density urban settings. The main objective is to evaluate the services distribution in the project area, accounting the 3 levels of proximity framework. It categorises services into local (available within 15-minute walk or bike ride), intermediate (within 30-minute walk or bike ride) and central (within 30-minutes drive by car or public transport). This categorisation is developed depending on the service's frequency of use, intensity of infrastructure and overall priority. While during the previous step, the methodology evaluates the accessibility of all the services at once, this exercise disaggregates services in the three categories and measures them at the three corresponding scales. For instance, primary school is considered a local requirement, therefore it needs to be analysed with a 15-minute walking grid. Secondary schools and universities, instead, are classified as intermedial and central services, therefore they should be analysed with an enlarged grid. The territorial units ensuring these requirements have a higher score.

Three final scorecards, integrating maps and charts, ponderates the **provision of local, intermediate and central services** of the social functions, highlighting key gaps in the project area.

2.2.2 HQSL Index and the personae needs

This additional step is recommended for the case of cities and neighbourhoods with a strong socio-demographic identity. The main objective is to tailor the analysis according to the specific needs of the predefined personae profiles. Services often do not reach marginalised populations, and do not take into consideration specific needs that certain social groups may have.

The project team can integrate a weighting coefficient to prioritise specific services primarily needed for targeted social groups. For instance, elderly people tend to have an increased need for health services, therefore these need to be prioritised in the list of services. Additionally, depending on the chosen persona, the grid of analysis can also slightly change as special categories such as children or elderly people might have a reduced walking or cycling speed.

The output of this step is **personae-based proximity scorecards**, integrating spatial maps and infographics, describing the services available in proximity for targeted social groups.

Personae choice

Profile



Age
Family composition

Filtered amenities

Has interests



Selection suiting personae needs

Uses

Travelling mode



Among
foot | bike | car

Fig. 12, Visual representation of the HQSL ranking process filtered according to the personae needs (b)

2.2.3 HQSL Index and the well-being dimensions

The main objective is to evaluate the project area according to the three dimensions of well-being: **individual, social and environmental**. To monitor the impact of services provision according to these dimensions, services can be classified depending on which dimension they predominantly impact. For instance, medical facilities mostly impact the individual well-being, while parks impact environmental well-being. The project team shall cluster and count available services, ponderating a percentage result. The expected output is a chart or infographic representing the alignment of available services and well-being impact.

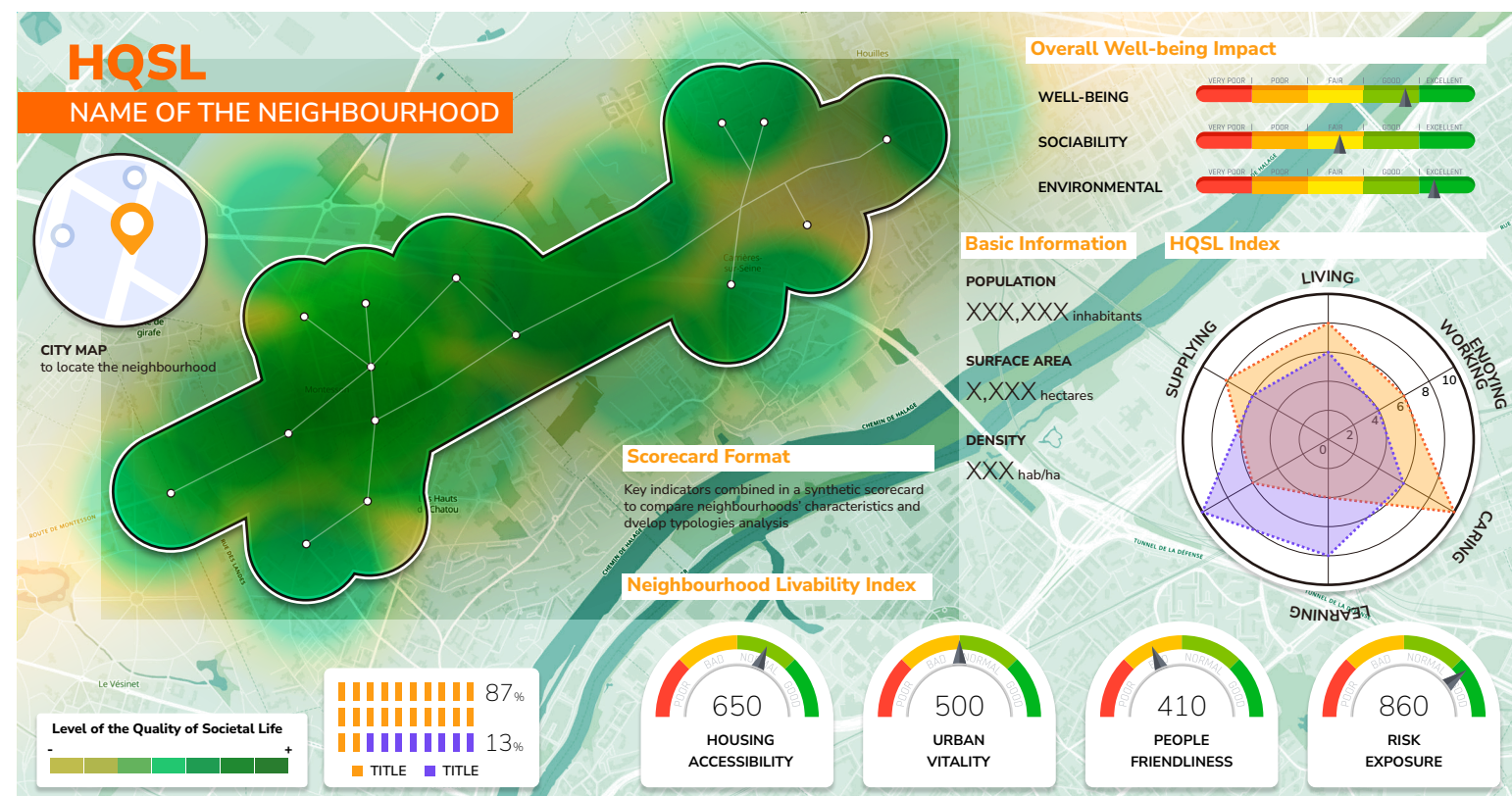


Fig. 13, Final scorecard, evaluating accessibility of services according to the six social functions and the 3 dimensions of well-being - Chaire ETI

2.3 Complementary multi-scale analysis

GUIDELINES

While measuring the accessibility of services is the core activity of the data-driven assessment, the methodology also integrates complementary analysis, to comprehend better the overall territorial dynamics, focusing on mobility, environmental and social aspects. Beyond the designated project area, it examines the surrounding areas, city-wide and territorial systems to understand its integration and correlated challenges with the city and the region. Collecting and analysing this comprehensive set of data will provide a detailed understanding of the current urban challenges and opportunities, informing strategies and solutions for enhanced proximity.

2.3.1 Mobility Patterns

Assessing mobility patterns requires a multi-dimensional analysis of the existing infrastructure, services and users' behaviours. It includes evaluating **walkability**, assessed through the availability and quality of pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian zones and universal accessibility features, as well as pedestrian flow patterns. The condition and distribution of **cycling** infrastructure must be evaluated including safe bike lanes and racks, bike-sharing amenities, usage statistics, and preferred cycling routes. **Public transportation** analysis — routes, schedules, and service frequency of buses, trams, and trains — aims to measure distribution in space and time, identifying well-served and underserved areas. Ridership statistics and peak usage times also offer further insight into demand and capacity. Finally, **vehicle traffic data**, including traffic volume, vehicle speeds, congestion points, and accident data, provide key indicators of road network efficiency and safety. While mobility of people is prioritised, the methodology also encourages analysis of the mobility of goods, to capture efficiency and impact of logistics in urban settings.

Qualitative analysis sheds light on economic, environmental and social dimensions of urban mobility. On the economic front, analysing transportation costs for individuals, the influence of mobility on local business revenues, employment in mobility-related sectors, and quantifying the economic benefits of reduced congestion and improved efficiency provides insightful data on the mobility analysis. Environmental assessments, including emissions data, air quality measurements in traffic-heavy zones, analysis of mitigation measures, help align mobility strategies with environmental goals. Lastly, user experience and satisfaction, gathered through surveys and performance data, are central to evaluating service reliability and responsiveness to residents' needs. Collectively, this integrated data-driven approach provides a nuanced understanding of mobility conditions.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Scorecards by social functions
- Scorecards by proximity levels
- Scorecards by personas
- Scorecards by well-being levels



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- White Paper n.3
- Annex IV: Functions Matrix
- Annex V: 3 levels of proximity framework



INVOLVED ACTORS

- GIS specialist
- Urban analyst
- Thematic city experts

2.3.2 Environmental Factors

Evaluating environmental factors into urban analysis is essential to quantify benefits of sustainable proximities. **Green coverage** and **biodiversity** analysis, including the extent, distribution and diversity of parks, tree canopies, bioclimatic corridors and other vegetated areas, provides insight into the city's ecological conditions. The **3-30-300 concept** is also an approach that complements the coverage of accessible greening in proximity, and serves as an important reference (Konijnendijk, 2021). **Blue networks**, such as rivers, lakes, wetlands, as well as the extent and distribution of permeable surfaces, must be analysed to understand their role in **stormwater management** and urban cooling. Evaluating **flood risk** areas through hydrological modeling and past flood data is also critical to understand urban resilience, particularly in case of extreme weather events. **Air quality** monitoring, focusing on pollutant concentrations in high-traffic and industrial zones, identifies vulnerable areas and populations. The **Urban Heat Island (UHI)** effect must also be evaluated, using temperature mapping to detect heat accumulation in densely built environments. Together, these environmental indicators offer a detailed understanding of the interplay between natural systems and urban development. Depending on the context, estimating **additional environmental urban risks and hazards**, including coastal erosion, landslides, hurricanes, earthquakes, among others, would provide relevant information to plan and design facilities and infrastructure in a resilient, cost-effective and safe manner.

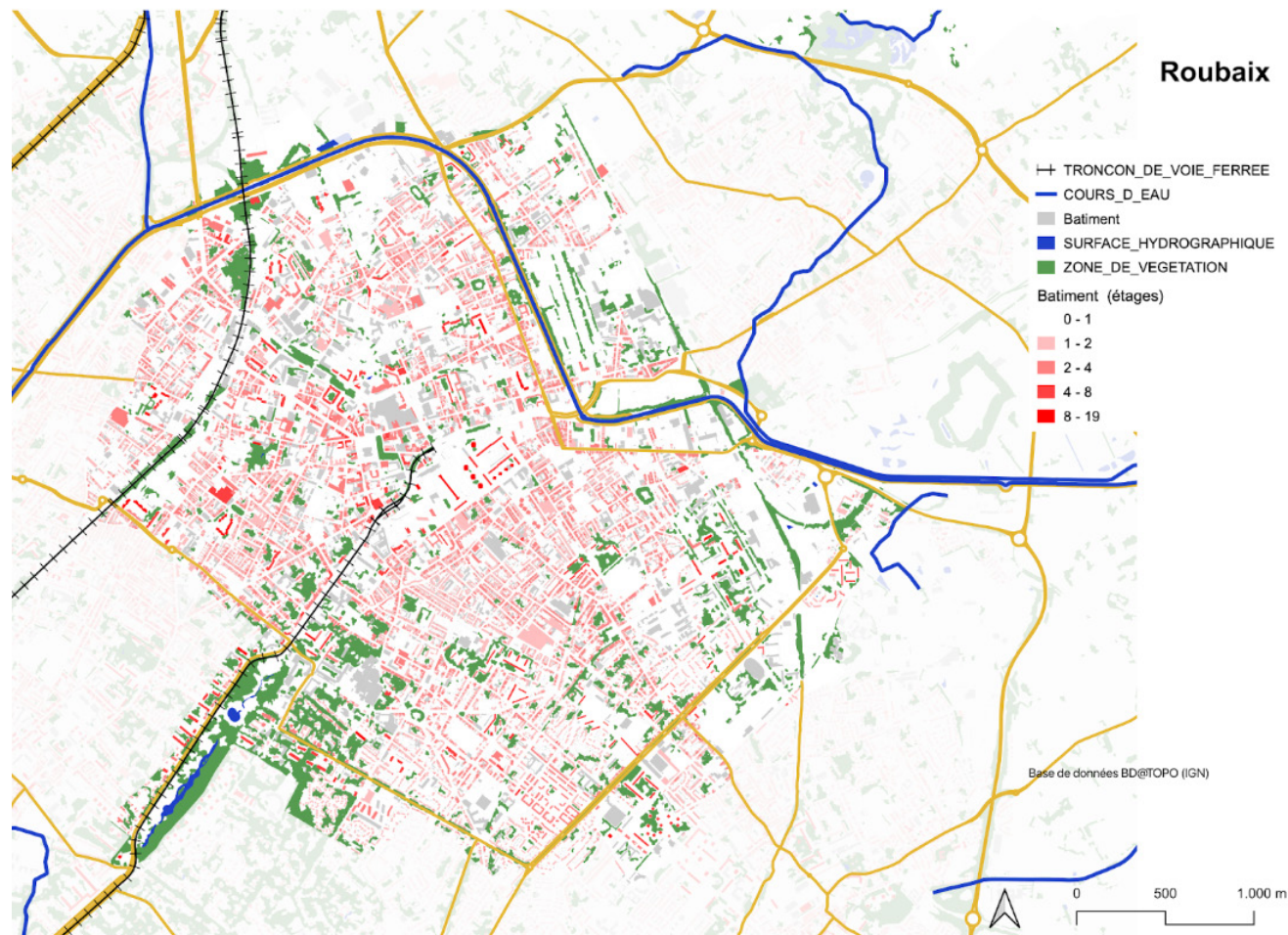


Fig. 14, Example of territorial analysis of the green coverage and the building footprint in Roubaix, France

2.3.3 Social Dynamics

Understanding social dynamics within urban environments can uncover complex interdependencies and enables to **spatialise cultural and behavioural patterns**. This includes housing conditions, employment statistics, income distribution, population density and diversity, crime rates, public health metrics, educational outcomes, and other relevant variables that shape everyday life. These insights are crucial for identifying structural disparities and social vulnerabilities, which in turn inform equitable and targeted interventions. **Projected population growth** and differentiated patterns of urban development across the city should also be considered, given that projects must accommodate upcoming demographic pressure and spatial imbalances. Temporal dimensions — such as time of day, day of the week, and seasonal variations — highly impact usage of urban services and infrastructure and therefore must also be factored in.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Thematic maps of mobility, environmental and social patterns



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Our City Plan Toolbox
- My neighbourhood
- UNITAC



INVOLVED ACTORS

- GIS specialist
- Urban analyst
- Thematic city experts



Photo Credits : WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities

UNITAC

United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC) is an interdisciplinary lab that leverages technology, data and applied research to develop innovative solutions aimed at accelerating progress toward the SDGs.

Based in Hamburg, UNITAC is a collaboration between UN-Habitat, the United Nations Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT), and HafenCity University. The initiative operates within UN-Habitat's broader work on digital technologies, data, and innovation for sustainable development.

UNITAC supports national and local governments with their digital transition, applying a multi-level governance strategy and helping them build skills and capabilities to design digital strategies and develop, procure and effectively use digital technologies in an ethical and inclusive way to ensure no one is left behind.

Digital tools and data platforms developed by UNITAC include:

- Mapping of urban areas and settlements with machine learning and satellite imagery
- Data platforms for basic urban services provision and monitoring
- Participatory tools for inclusive planning and policymaking
- Spatial decision support systems for integrated planning, crisis response and resilience building

Among the various tools, UNITAC promotes principles of proximity, encouraging connected, resilient and greener urban environments, equipped with equally distributed services and opportunities.

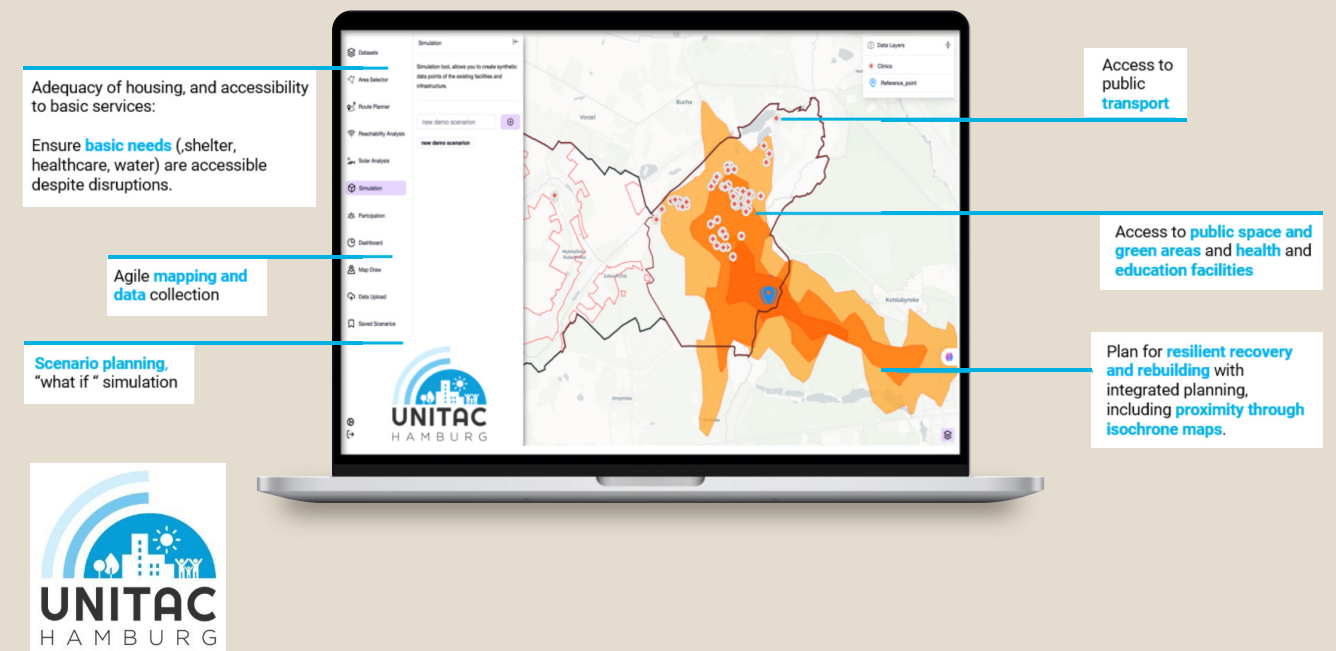
Proximity in crisis response and urban recovery

In crisis contexts, proximity and reachability become critical for crisis response and recovery planning. When conflict disrupts infrastructure, displaces populations, and creates ongoing hazards, understanding who can safely reach what services is fundamental to effective humanitarian response and recovery planning.

The Urban Recovery Planning System (URPS) is a digital platform developed by UN-Habitat through UNITAC in partnership with three partner Ukrainian Territorial Communities, also called hromadas, and the Ukrainian Ministry for Communities and Territories Development.

URPS provides the digital infrastructure and analytical capabilities that hromadas and the Ministry can use to plan Ukraine's recovery systematically, transparently, and efficiently. The platform includes reachability analysis through isochrone maps to evaluate accessibility under various conditions, depending on the data available.

Critical priorities in recovery contexts include:



2.4 Area prioritisation

The data-driven assessment provides a clear understanding of the urban challenges and opportunities, through the lens of sustainable proximities. It identifies gaps of accessibility of services within a certain territory and it provides complementary insights linked to mobility, environment and social dynamics. Through the findings, the project team can contextualise the project with the broader urban and territorial trends, informing tailored urban strategies and corroborating the following planning and design phases.

Additionally, the city could use the data-drive assessment as a **prioritisation tool to identify vulnerable areas** requiring intervention. Prioritised areas shall be aligned with the overarching urban strategies and agendas of the city, to ensure strategic resource mobilisations and development investments.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Map indicating priority
- intervention areas



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Our City Plan Toolbox
- UNITAC



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- City Leaders

Methodological framework

The following chapter describes the step-by-step process to integrate the Sustainable Proximities model in urban projects.. It encompasses the five main phases of the urban planning and design process:

3. PEOPLE-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES CO-CREATION

The people-driven proximities co-creation phase gathers the perspectives and qualitative insights of the project's stakeholders to develop resilient, inclusive and innovative proximity-based solutions. The methodology provides guidelines on how to collaboratively validate the project's objectives and analyses with a broader stakeholder group, and co-create innovative proximity-based solutions responsive to the specific needs of various groups. This requires a combination of various methods and activities, calibrated according to the stakeholders' different levels of expertise, including focus group discussion, expert interviews, workshops, exploratory walks, etc. A final list of recommendations for actions is consolidated, gathering the spatial, quantitative and qualitative insights elaborated by the project team and the stakeholders.

1. PROJECT INCEPTION

2. DATA-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES ANALYSIS

3. PEOPLE-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES CO-CREATION

4. ACTIONS FOR PROXIMITIES IMPLEMENTATION

5. EVALUATING AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE PROXIMITIES

3.1 Validation through multi-scalar collaborations

GUIDELINES

Based on the engagement strategy, the project team can mobilise stakeholders and plan engagement activities, to validate the projects' objective and analyses, and develop a shared action plan. Validation and co-creation should occur at three strategic levels: governmental, technical and citizen-level.

Before engaging external stakeholders, the local government should **conduct an internal validation and consultation with other public entities**. As mentioned in activity 1.1, key representatives from various city departments should be part of the multidisciplinary project team, however if integral involvement of other parts was not possible, this is a fundamental step to engage them in **collaborative consultations and focus group discussions** and get their technical insights. Likewise, the city should consult and engage administrative representatives of the various districts and the region, to capture additional considerations, and potentially build partnerships to implement actions leveraging the existing capacities and resources.

Then, the project team can **consult complementary external experts** to integrate specialised thematic perspectives, engaging with ecologists, sociologists, economists, etc. Experts consultations are usually conducted through individual **interviews or structured review activities** that dives deep into the operational details of the studies (Bogner et al., 2009).

Finally, validation of project objectives and analyses should also **involve citizens**. Beside traditional consulting methods such as online portals and open public hearings, the project team can organise **creative workshops and empowering activities** that enable everyone to clearly understand the contents of the project as well as provide tangible contributions and suggestions. This is also an opportunity to raise awareness about the concept of sustainable proximities and how it can benefit citizens' daily life.

3.1.1 Exploratory walks

Among the various engagement activities, the project team can organise a series of on-site observations and exploratory walks in the project area. This activity can be done with both experts and citizens. It is an immersive and empathic exercise that not only deepens the comprehension of the local dynamics, but also **fosters creation of synergies and local partnerships**. Explorative walks can also be used to raise awareness and dive deeper into the user's routine, encouraging participants to reflect on their mobility pattern, accessibility of services and daily needs.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Revised project objectives and analysis based on feedback



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Our City Plan Toolbox
- Public Space Site-Specific Assessment
- Her City Toolbox



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project team
- District, regional and national governmental representatives
- Thematic experts
- Civil society representatives
- Citizens

3.2 Creative workshops: Proximities Fresk

GUIDELINES

Among the various methods suggested to promote co-creation, the Proximities Fresk is a participatory and creative workshop that aims at **raising awareness** about the impact of proximity in people's quality of life, and **co-creating innovative urban actions** within the framework of the project.

It is a collaborative engagement tool to help participants reflect on their daily routines and mobility patterns, by uncovering new perspectives. The workshop utilises pre-defined personae profiles to unpack their needs into the essential social functions: living, working, supplying, learning, caring, enjoying and governing. Participants familiarise with the lifestyles of vulnerable groups and propose valuable and **tailored solutions to the specific needs of the personae**. The workshop can target a variety of stakeholders, from city experts to citizens, and it offers valuable insights to inform decision-making processes.

After a first introductory presentation where the facilitator describes the main principles of proximity, **participants work together in small groups**, following the steps described below. The workshop typically runs for 1.5 - 2 hours and at the end participants are invited to present their process and solutions, while the facilitator encourages a constructive discussion. Participants receive a series of **templates to structure and inspire the co-creation exercise**, including 1) a bookmark, summarising key concepts and definitions, 2) the worksheet, guiding participants in the various steps of the workshops and describing the personae profiles, 3) the challenge card, providing the participant with a challenge to solve, and 4) the challenge canvas, structuring the co-creation process from problem definition to solutions and resources identification.

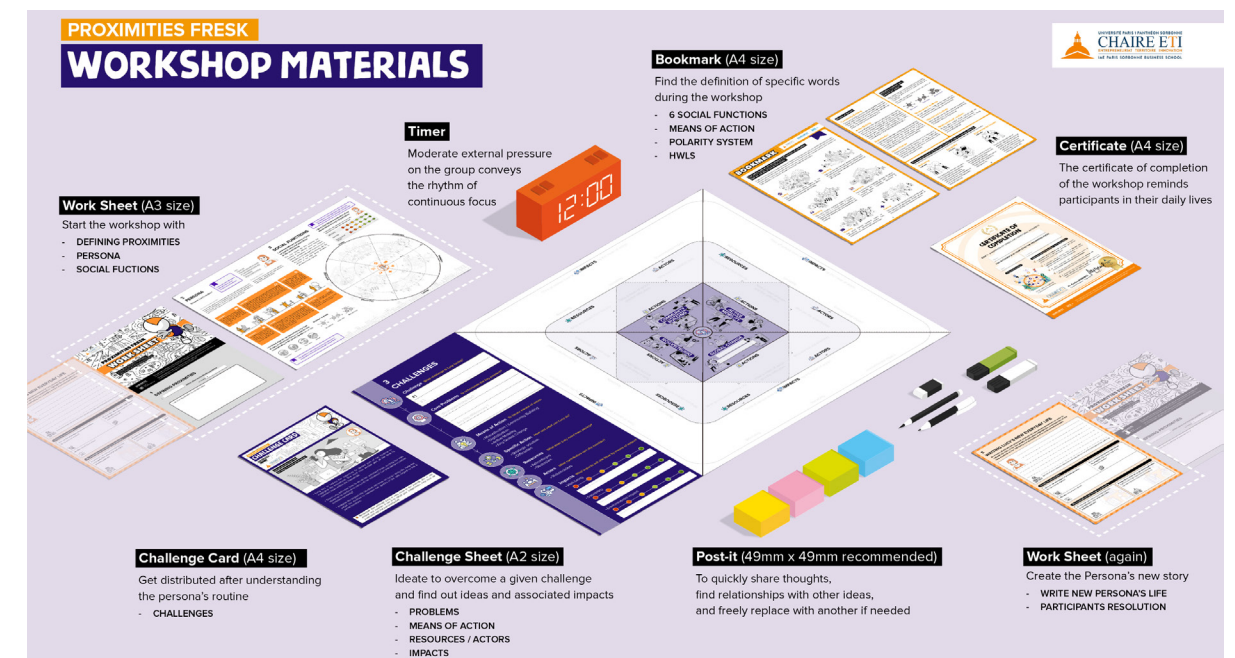


Fig. 15, Visualisation of the Proximities Fresk workshop materials

The **workshop is modular and can be tailored according to the project objectives** and ambitions. The main steps of the workshop are described below:

- 01**
Define sustainable proximities
- Each participant takes the time to reflect on what is proximity and describes examples of urban proximity.
- 02**
Understand the personae
- Each group is assigned with a fictitious persona with specific life arrangements, geographic context, personality traits and mobility patterns based on the project area. Participants familiarise with their lifestyle and daily routine, reflecting on what are their main challenges and opportunities. Following, participants are invited to collaboratively map out the persona's weekly activities on the proximity wheels, according to the social functions. The wheel helps visualise the extent of the personae's daily life, including the mode of transport adopted and the time allocated for each activity. Based on the activities, participants will then evaluate the personae's quality of life in relation to their well-being, sociability and environmental impact score.
- 03**
Challenge card
- Once the groups are well-acquainted with the persona's routine, the facilitator distributes the challenge cards - one for each persona - presenting an unexpected change that significantly disrupts the persona's daily life or environment. This is the starting point of the creative process, where participants must develop adaptive strategies for the persona to manage this challenge.
- 04**
Elaborate innovative solutions
- Participants unpack the challenge into core problems and the practical implications of the unexpected change. A discussion is engaged to propose innovative solutions, tailored to the needs and possibilities of each persona, and inspired by real-life best practices. While elaborating possible solutions, the workshop encourages the participants not to just create and build new amenities - which is resource intensive, but rather to leverage four complementary means of action.

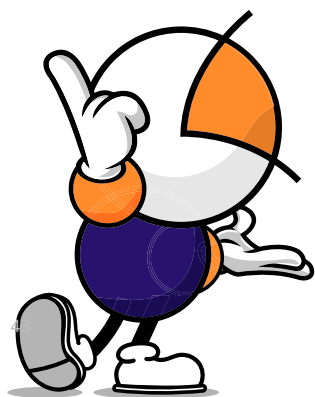
Participants then dive deeper into the operationalisation mechanisms of the proposed solutions, elaborating on required resources, actors and expected impact.

Community building

promoting a sharing culture that supports the collective use of urban facilities and infrastructures throughout the entire city — from co-living and co-working to community care, and inclusive social and affordable housing initiatives.

Active mobility

promoting active, low-carbon, and multimodal transport systems that reduce dependence on private cars and foster healthier, more connected communities. This includes prioritising walking, cycling, and other forms of active mobility; expanding shared and collective transport options such as car-pooling, public transit, and micro-mobility services; and encouraging the transition toward electric and renewable-energy-based mobility.



Optimising time and space consumption

promoting mixed-used neighbourhoods and centers, encouraging services to extend opening hours for different uses (e.g. opening schools on week-end for other uses). Redesigning and reusing underutilised or misused urban spaces and facilities by integrating environmental assets, multifunctional uses, and new purposes — for example, transforming parking lots or vacant buildings into parks, retail spaces, or social housing.

Digitalisation

promoting a new balance between physical and virtual presence in daily life. By integrating digital access to education, work, health, and commercial services, cities can encourage hybrid work models that limit long commutes, strengthen local economies, and foster more inclusive and sustainable lifestyles.

05 New narratives

Finally, all groups craft new narratives for their personas, by using a storytelling approach. Participants describe the future scenarios, imagining the new user's journey and behavioural change. Participants re-evaluate the quality of life of each persona, in terms of well-being, sociability and environmental impact, highlighting the benefits gained through proximity-based solutions.



Fig. 16, Proximities Fresk workshop with university students in Paris, France, exploring persona-based urban/territorial challenges through interactive, self-guided group work.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Proximity-based solutions list
- Personae new narratives
- Compiled on-site observations



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Public space site-specific assessment
- Her City Toolbox
- The Block by Block Playbook



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- Social science specialist
- Civil society representatives
- Citizens

Building sustainable proximities: The 15-minute neighbourhood

Building Sustainable Proximities: The 15-Minute Neighbourhood is part of the broader learning module Planning for Change with the SDGs, co-developed by UCLG and UN-Habitat. This module provides a comprehensive approach to integrating the SDGs into urban and territorial planning processes, empowering local governments to take concrete steps toward sustainable and inclusive urban development.

Building Sustainable Proximities: The 15-Minute Neighbourhood explores the concept of the 15mC, by simulating urban planning challenges and solutions. This interactive exercise allows participants to engage in decision-making processes, taking on the role of urban planners tasked with improving the quality of life in a peripheral neighbourhood while minimising environmental impacts, all within the constraints of a limited budget.

This practical simulation focuses on creating accessible, walkable neighbourhoods where essential services—such as housing, healthcare, education, employment, culture, green spaces, and safe public areas—are all within a 15-minute walking distance. The game not only addresses climate change mitigation by reducing reliance on private vehicles but also supports the achievement of global climate targets by lowering carbon emissions. Additionally, by designing neighbourhoods where people can meet their daily needs by walking, it enhances public health and helps address socio-economic inequalities resulting from poor access to services.

Building sustainable proximities:

The 15-minute neighbourhood is also a key component of ongoing efforts to localise the SDGs. The game encourages participants to think critically about urban design and spatial planning, providing a hands-on learning experience that fosters deeper connections between urban development and the SDGs. Participants navigate realistic zoning regulations, budget constraints, diverse community needs, and unexpected challenges, all while applying SDG principles in real-world scenarios. This process contributes to creating more sustainable, resilient, and equitable urban environments, in line with the 2030 Agenda's principle of leaving no one and no space behind.

Fig. 17, Visualisation of part of the game “Building Sustainable Proximities: The 15-Minute Neighbourhood” workshop material

Her City Toolbox

Additional tools and participatory methods to assess, validate and co-create innovative solutions for inclusive urban planning and design can be found in the Her City Toolbox.

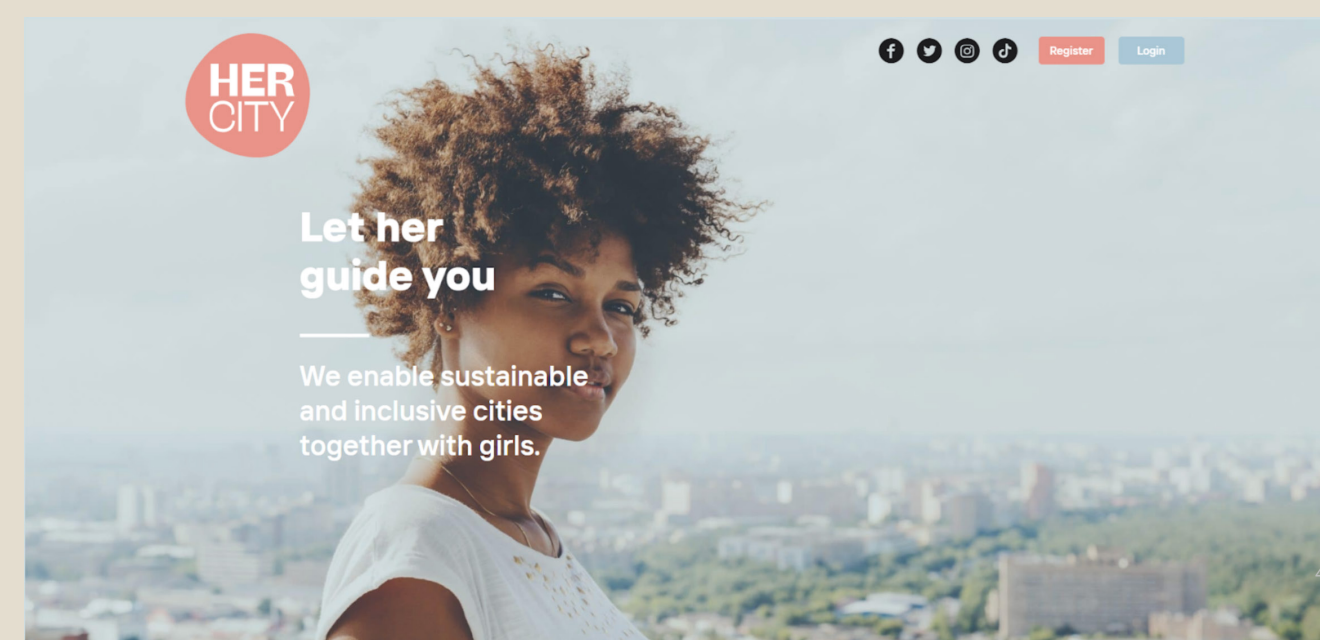
The **Her City Toolbox** is an innovative digital platform, providing a step-by-step methodology to guide local government and urban actors to make cities more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable. Developed for, by and with women and girls, it adopts a participatory and co-design approach to urban planning and design. The Toolbox integrates a variety of innovative tools and methods that boost female participation and empowerment. It is a guide to mainstream inclusion in any urban development project by girls and women of all ages, ensuring their engagement throughout the process.

Structured around 11 building blocks, the Toolbox serves as a digital guideline on how to assess, co-plan and co-implement better cities from a girl's perspective. Each block includes specific activities, clear steps, and varying levels of participation, guaranteeing that girls and women of all ages are involved throughout every stage of development.

The tools in the digital Her City toolbox platform supports 1500 users leading 430 independent initiatives, from 540 cities in 125 countries. UN-Habitat and partners have co-managed 20 UN partnership projects, resulting in 30 gender-transformative sites indirectly benefitting 1,000,000 people. Over 150 participatory workshops have engaged 3,000; 30 trainings have built capacity of 1,500 professionals; and 100 events have informed 8,000 participants, with a media reach of 8,000,000.

Additionally, Her City Toolbox promotes **principles of sustainable proximities**, through the initiative Her 15-minute city. In fact, by reducing the distance of services, women and girls can benefit from improved access to opportunities and their participation in public life would increase.

The Her City Toolbox is a joint initiative between UN-Habitat and Shared City Foundation, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Swedish Innovation Agency (Vinnova).



3.3 Recommendations for unlocking urban transition

GUIDELINES

After concluding the data-driven assessment and the people-driven co-creation, the project team has a comprehensive understanding of the urban and social dynamics of the intervention area, capturing main challenges, opportunities and trends. To elaborate final recommendations and innovative solutions, the project team can reflect on which are the main lock-ins that prevent the urban ecosystem from changing.

Particularly, **lock-ins** represent constraints and blockages faced by practitioners during the implementation of urban initiatives and projects, **limiting the transition to more sustainable urban development**. These are typically linked with the inertia of consolidated traditional practices - internal or external - and could be categorised into:

Institutional lock-in implies the perpetuation of policies, norms and organisational structures that reinforce the status quo in urban planning (urban policies, financial incentives, institutions and networks).

Infrastructural lock-in refers to the dependence on existing physical infrastructures and technologies that hinder the implementation of new sustainable alternatives (road networks, density development, energy infrastructures, public transport system, management platforms).

Behavioural lock-in refers to habits, cultural norms and individual preferences that hinder the adoption of more sustainable behaviours. These are often reinforced by lack of knowledge and resistance to change.

By unpacking and understanding these lock-ins, urban actors can leverage key drivers of change, to overcome the identified challenges and implement urban changes.

Finally, the project team consolidates a series of recommendations to trigger transformation and urban transition, reflecting on the institutional, infrastructural and behavioural lock-ins. **Recommendations encompass urban planning, urban design and urban governance measures**, including multi-scale spatial and thematic development plans, urban policies, decentralised governance mechanisms, financial incentives and investments, pilot infrastructural projects, advocacy and awareness campaigns, tactical urbanism interventions, among others. Recommendations should also cover all the social functions and be linked to the projects' objectives.

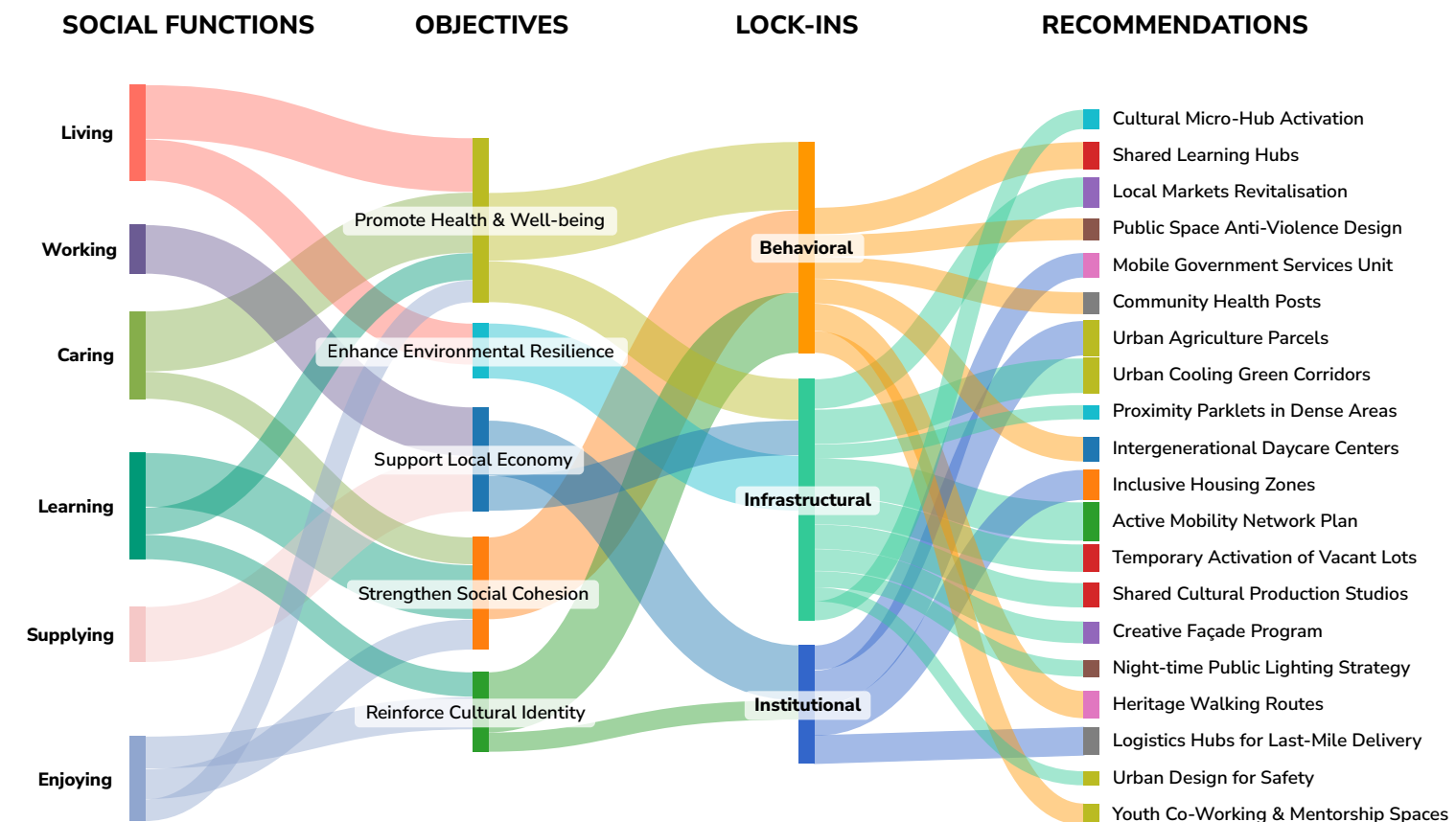


Fig. 18, Sankey diagram illustrating hypothetical linkages between social functions, urban objectives, structural lock-ins, and potential recommendations within a proximity-based urban development framework.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- List of recommendations



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Carbon lock-ins (Seto et al., 2016)
- UNITAC



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- Thematic city experts
- Civil society representatives

Methodological framework

The following chapter describes the step-by-step process to integrate the Sustainable Proximities model in urban projects.. It encompasses the five main phases of the urban planning and design process:

4.

ACTIONS FOR PROXIMITIES IMPLEMENTATION

Once the findings from the assessment and the co-creation phases have been consolidated, the project team can initiate a series of actions to design, operationalise and implement urban proximity, following the recommendations provided in 3.3. Urban proximity requires an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to ensure short-, medium- and long-term impact of the project. In fact, actions for proximity implementation should span across urban planning, urban design and urban governance. Multi-scalar approach is also important while implementing urban proximity, covering national, regional, territorial, urban and local levels.

1. PROJECT INCEPTION

2. DATA-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES ANALYSIS

3. PEOPLE-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES CO-CREATION

4. ACTIONS FOR PROXIMITIES IMPLEMENTATION

5. EVALUATING AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE PROXIMITIES

4.1 Urban planning and land management regulations

GUIDELINES

This chapter highlights key urban planning actions to implement sustainable proximities. Urban plans and land management regulations are essential binding tools to operationalise proximity-based urban planning, covering territorial, urban and local scale. Urban policy and financial mechanisms must be aligned and supporting the urban planning actions.

At the core of proximity-based urban planning lies the **intentional organisation of the social functions following a decentralised approach**, which reduces travel time, promotes walkability, and equitable access to essential services and opportunities. Contrary to modern urban planning zoning and land specialisation, proximity-based urban planning prioritises mixed-use land management and a polycentric system of centralities, limiting the disequalities between peripheral and central urban districts. This needs to be supported by a thoughtful mobility system that puts walking, cycling and public transport first, and decentralises amenities and utilities.

For these reasons, proximity must be integrated across different scales, from local to regional planning. **Territorial and regional plans** can enhance large scale decentralisation, identifying key axes of development, ensuring interconnectivity of the urban centers and its peripheral municipalities, as well as larger transport poles, industrial and logistical areas, and ecological and entertainment parks. **Urban plans and masterplans** can ensure equal distribution of services and affordable housing among all neighbourhoods, leveraging the local assets of each area (e.g. heritage, natural resources, etc.). **Sectoral or thematic plans**, such as Sustainable Mobility Plans (SUMs), housing, or Climate Actions Plans, set-up the necessary infrastructures to leverage the potential of proximity and reduce car-dependency. **Local development or neighbourhood plans** can regulate urbanisation and enforce private developers to promote complete neighbourhoods, prioritising the most vulnerable areas.

Additional considerations that should be integrated in urban plans while promoting sustainable proximities are the following:

- ☐ **Mixed-used neighbourhoods** are essential to promote proximity and equal access to basic services. This can be supported by the land management system that promotes **neighbourhood minimum services' requirements and standards**. Typically, cities - depending on the population - require minimum provision of essential services within the urban boundaries. Proximity-based urban planning encourages cities' to adopt a land management system that refers to the smallest administrative unit instead of the city boundary.
- ☐ Land-use regulations and **compatibility of urban functions** should be revised according to principles of proximity, which limit land specialisation and promote mixed-use neighbourhoods, enforcing mutual existence of housing and essential services (not only commerce).

- ☐ **Polycentric urban structures** enable to limit traffic congestion of the city centre and promote equal opportunities. This can be supported by **density bonuses** distributed according to a transit-oriented development approach, which promote density along primary axes equipped with affordable public transport facilities. Density bonuses should be distributed only if projects comply with proximity requirements and inclusion of public interest provisions, such as social housing, green areas and mobility infrastructure.
- ☐ **Stricter development rights approval** shall be enforced, limiting developers to bypass local services requirements - including affordable housing, public spaces, sustainable mobility - and their “buy out” through fees. Private developers must ensure that projects will promote public goods and impact on citizen's quality of life, beyond the purchased/leased plot.
- ☐ Socially-driven public ownership of land and assets should be promoted. National and regional assets, especially of underused or abandoned land and facilities, should be **purchasable or leasable by local administrations with a discounted price**, lower to the free market, and as preferred buyers, since they would typically promote public interest. Local administrations should be always empowered and involved as decision-maker in multi-municipal projects and infrastructures, ensuring interests of local governments.
- ☐ **Land acquisition and eviction for public purposes** must be carefully justified, promoting principles of “living a local life”. This should ensure adequate procedural times and reimbursement, and displacement should be temporary or within the same administrative district.
- ☐ Land value capturing and **property taxation** should promote redistribution of wealth, to improve public areas and facilities, by boosting the budget for maintenance and greening, or purchasing assets for public interest (e.g. social housing). These mechanisms should not reinforce the beautification of high-value neighbourhoods, but rather address vulnerable and prioritised areas.
- ☐ Illegal development and **land encroachments** must be carefully controlled and regularised. While land encroachment of large businesses or organisations should be punished, informal housing of individual households is an indicator of inadequate social measurements to support housing demand of the most vulnerable groups.
- ☐ **Priorities sufficiency strategies rather than quantity of services**. Cities should carefully evaluate alternatives before investing towards the development of new services and infrastructures, and instead optimise land and time consumption, combine compatible services within the same assets, leverage underused assets, extend opening hours, etc.
- ☐ **Social housing units** should be equally distributed among the various neighbourhood, to avoid the creation of segregated social housing districts. In fact, cities shall establish a minimum percentage of social housing units that should be counted within the smallest administrative unit (neighbourhood or district level) rather than the city boundaries.

- **Extension of rail transport system** (metro, tram, train) towards peripheral neighbourhoods and municipalities promotes transit-oriented development, limiting social segregation and enhancing urban equity.
- **Smart multimodal mobility hubs** enable switching from private vehicles or large scale connectivity to soft mobility means such as walking, cycling and capillary public transport, reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion in denser urban areas.
- **Continuity of large territorial ecological corridors** preserve and enrich biodiversity and fauna migration, mitigating urban heat island effects and improving air quality. Integrate minimum green coverage and impermeable surface requirements at the smallest administrative unit level.
- **Mechanisms to identify and protect land for sustainable agricultural use**, coupled with urban-rural food strategies that encourage consumption of local products and reduce transport chain of imported aliments, boosts local economies and reduces carbon emissions and traffic congestion and logistics of large vehicles.
- **Decentralised offices, retails and commerce** that reduce the presence of large “ghost” business or commercial districts at night, leveraging opportunity of working-from-home, co-working spaces and incentivising small businesses and local shops.
- Incentives and subsidies for **proximity healthcare**, which decentralise basic health-related functions (such as laboratories, family doctors or community health centres) would decongest large health infrastructures and hospitals.
- **Re-imagining proximity logistics**: promoting new models of urban logistics that reinforce local commerce and circular economies. By integrating soft mobility into last-mile delivery — such as electric vans, cargo-bikes, and pedestrian delivery — cities can lower emissions, reduce congestion, and create vibrant neighbourhood economies based on short supply chains and sustainable consumption.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Multi-scale planning documents
- Land use management system



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- International guidelines for urban and territorial planning
- Our City Plans Toolbox



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Urban planner
- Policy experts
- Economist and finance experts
- Land management authorities
- Thematic city expert



Our City Plans Toolbox

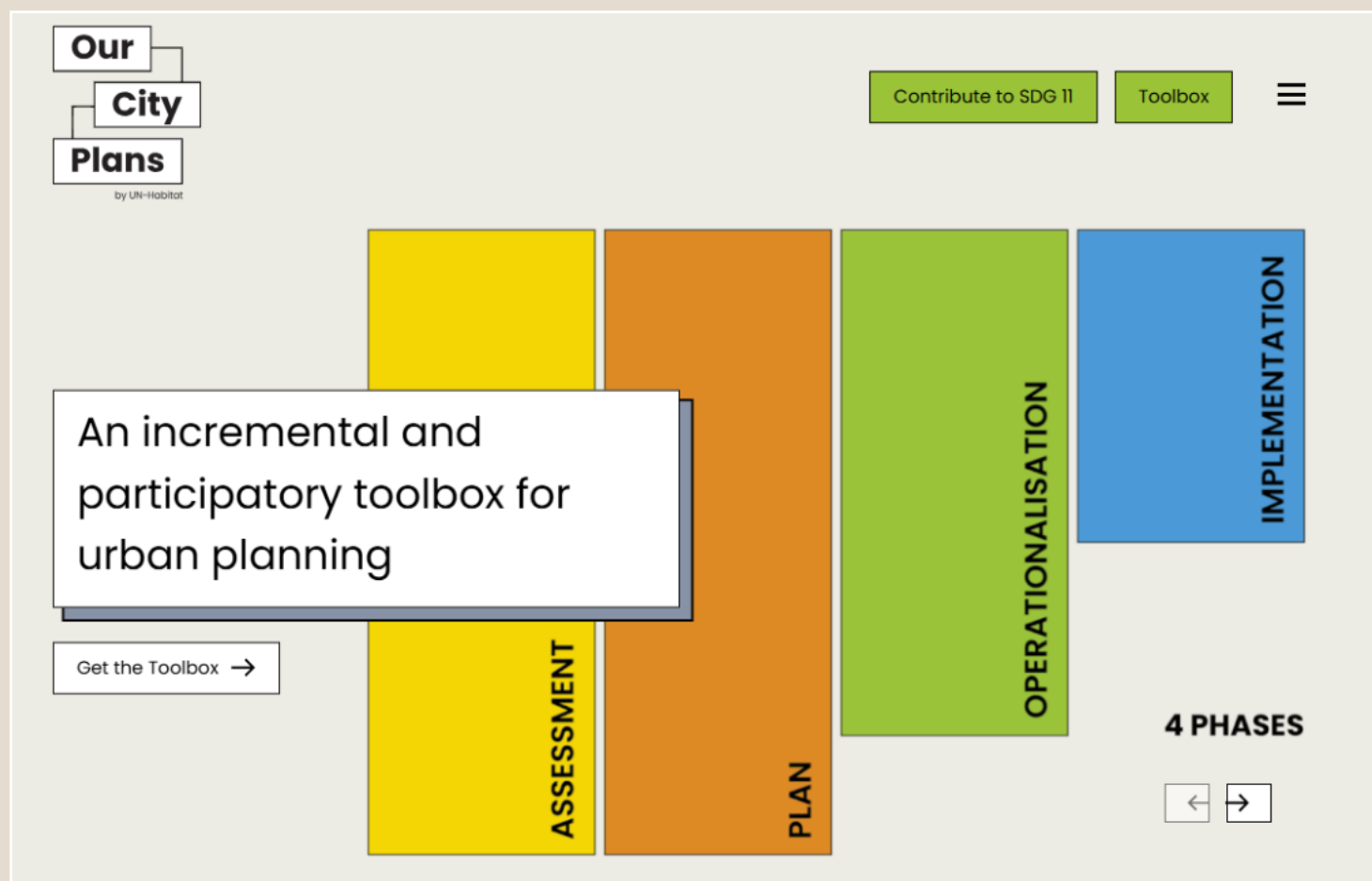


Fig. 19, OurCityPlan Toolbox, an interactive digital platform that support local government in urban planning and design processes

Our City Plans is a global toolbox that guides and supports local governments and urban stakeholders to understand, customise and develop inclusive and integrated urban planning processes, following a participatory and incremental methodology that adapts to their needs and local context.

This global methodology has been developed by a multidisciplinary team within UN-Habitat and is the result of the work of UN-Habitat and partner organisations in more than 100 participatory urban planning processes implemented in different global contexts since 2014.

Organised according to the Assessment, Plan, Operationalisation, and Implementation phases, it includes 15 thematic blocks and 57 activities. The methodology recognises the importance of defining a process framework rather than a design framework in urban planning. It is incremental and flexible, as it allows planners, city leaders, and other stakeholders to tailor their planning process according to their context. In addition, the blocks and activities include cross-cutting themes, such as climate action, urban nature, urban health, participation, socio-spatial inclusion, sustainable mobility, and urban finance. This allows cities to adapt the planning process to a specific focus or objective.

Assessment	This phase aims to understand and assess the context and the territory in which the plan will be developed (political, social, economic, legal, etc.) and of the territory for which the plan is elaborated (analysis and diagnosis).
Plan	Develop the technical document for different types of plans, according to the planning objective: Strategic Development and Spatial Plan (city-wide), Land Management Plan (city-wide or specific sector), and Neighbourhood Plan (sector of the city).
Operationalisation	Prioritise projects, develop enabling instruments for their implementation (land management, financial, legal, governance and management, monitoring and evaluation) and set an action plan.
Implementation	Establish the mechanisms and process for the execution of the projects within the plan and their evaluation.

Our City Plans lives in the digital platform that offers diverse functionalities and sections such as intuitive navigation through step-by-step activities, the customisation of the planning process, downloading tools, taking notes, and tracking the plan's progress, a repository of project experiences from around the world, additional resources and references, and ways to engage and receive support from Our City Plans team.



4.2 Urban design and pilot projects

GUIDELINES

Once proximity has been embedded within the overall city structure and strategic planning documents, **urban design manages the efficient use of public land**, promoting compact, healthy and vibrant environments. Proximity-driven urban design secures adequate space for safe walking, cycling and public transport, it promotes greener spaces and soil permeabilisation to boost air quality, urban cooling and resilience from flood risks. It enhances the innovative coexistence of multiple uses and the alternation of activities during various times of the day or the week, encouraging a sharing culture (co-living, co-working) as well as social interactions of different social groups. It integrates smart technological systems that promote digitalisation of basic services, such as online booking and consultations, and it localises strategically urban utilities, promoting more efficient and greener urban logistics and maintenance procedures.

Local governments can elaborate **proximity-based urban design guidelines** to provide a public framework and recommendations for sustainable design solutions. Permanent and temporary pilot projects act as catalysts of change, to apply and capture the benefits of proximity-based urban design. **Placemaking and tactical urbanisms** are powerful tools to test temporary redefinition of the space, promoting slow behavioural change and enhancing project acceptability in the long-term (e.g. deviating vehicle traffic, removing parking areas for greener public spaces, etc.). Depending on the citizens' reaction to temporary installations, cities can then reconfigure the public realm through larger investments and permanent solutions.

More detailed urban design actions that promote sustainable proximities are the following:



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- ☐ **Pedestrianisation and traffic calming initiatives** are essential actions to de-congest denser urban areas and give back space to people and nature. Different pavement materials or smart urban design using mobile furniture such as planters, bollards and speed calming bumps could be integrated to reserve areas for pedestrians and maintain space flexibility.
- ☐ **Functional sidewalks that promote safe walking**, should be carefully designed. Ideally, sidewalks should be composed of three main parts: shop front, circulation area and furniture area. In denser urban areas, a minimum of 2-meters sidewalk section for free circulation is recommended. Utilities, benches, waste bins, street lights, car parking, bike racks, underground access, bus stops and greenery should be located within the furniture section, to enhance maintenance operations and provide a physical barrier between vehicle traffic and pedestrians. Groundfloor businesses can lease and use the shop front section, ensuring its cleaning and maintenance.
- ☐ **Prioritised lanes for public transport** and emergency vehicles enhance the efficiency of the mobility system on wheels. This is possible by reducing the street section dedicated to private vehicles.
- ☐ **Bike lanes networks and shared biking systems** promote safe cycling in urban areas and reduce car dependency. Bike lanes should have an adequate section for one or two ways flow and be safely separated by vehicle traffic (e.g. curb).
- ☐ Street crossing, including **zebra crossing, sound devices and traffic light**, should always be intuitive for pedestrians and prioritise walkability (e.g. extending crossing time and frequency for pedestrians to ensure safety). Universal accessibility must be mainstreamed through ramps, limiting change of levels and integrating elevators and tactile surfaces.
- ☐ **Minimum green coverage** could be integrated in various ways: depaving parking lots or unnecessary paved areas, substituting traditional material with porous and permeable materials, integrating green rooftops, terraces or green facades. Selection of adequate species that minimise maintenance and irrigation is also essential to guarantee cooling benefits throughout the seasons.
- ☐ **Local climate resilience solutions**, allocating spaces for rainwater harvesting and bioswamps, promotes a circular resource consumption and urban climate resilience.
- ☐ **Urban gardens and community composting** managed by citizens' associations boost sustainable and local food supply and social interaction, while reducing food production, organic waste and carbon emission linked to transport and waste management.
- ☐ **Revision of parking lot minimum requirements for buildings** is essential to secure urban spaces for different uses and discourage car dependency. Parking lots could also be regulated in time, integrating different uses during specific times of the day and week. Paved parking lots should be substituted with permeable materials to increase resilience to floods.

- **Essential services should be typically located at the ground floor to enhance accessibility.** Active groundfloors, designed thinking at the aesthetic value of the public realm, enhance walking for leisure and promote social interactions, natural surveillance and perception of safety.
- **Opening underused spaces**, such as school courtyards, abandoned stations or buildings, and fenced green areas, would increase spaces for essential services, promoting versatile urban design solutions that can accommodate different audiences and functions throughout the week.
- Residential buildings should always integrate a **mix of household typologies and cost ranges**, to promote social mix, as well as integrating communal areas and centralised services (e.g. laundry, resting areas, co-working spaces, bike racks, etc.).
- **Integrating co-working and co-living** as a new urban model fosters a sharing culture, strengthens social interaction, and optimises the use of resources and infrastructures. These hybrid spaces bring living and working closer together, reducing commuting and supporting local economies.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Project documents, including urban design proposals



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- My neighbourhood
- A new strategy of sustainable neighbourhood planning
- City-wide public space assessment
- Site-specific public space assessment
- Her City Toolbox



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Urban planner
- Urban designer
- Landscaper
- Sociologist

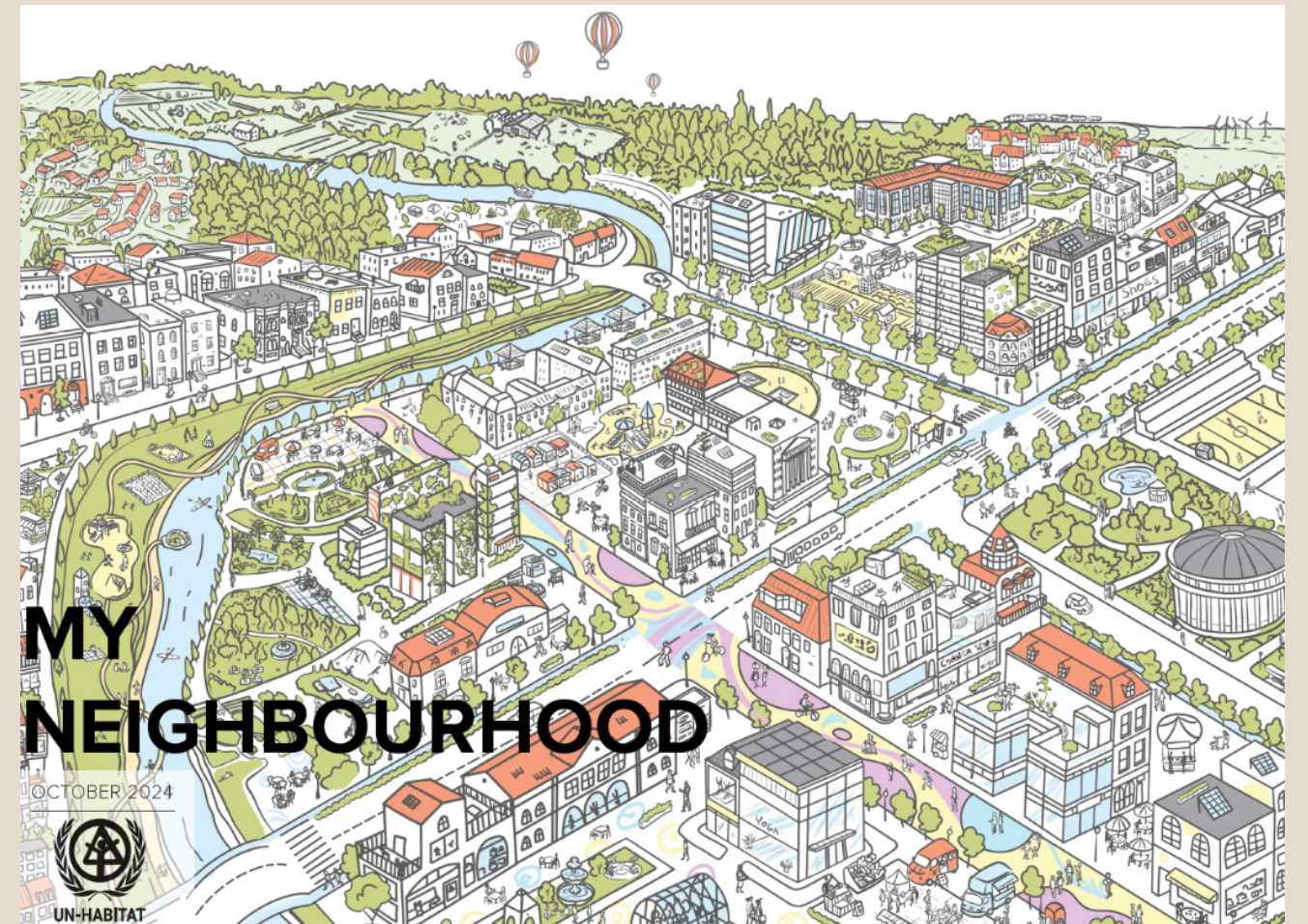


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In depth

My Neighbourhood



My Neighbourhood is a comprehensive urban-design guideline developed by UN-Habitat's Urban Lab to support the planning and design of urban spaces at the neighbourhood scale. It serves as a practical manual to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and resilient neighbourhoods by translating sustainable urban development principles into locally applicable design strategies. Structured around five key core objectives - the **compact, connected, inclusive, vibrant, and resilient city** - the methodology offers a clear framework and a spatial checklist to evaluate and shape interventions in urban neighbourhoods.

The Observatory has adopted My Neighbourhood as its urban design guideline. By following its five core objectives, cities can create proximity-driven urban spaces and walkable, attractive, mixed-used and complete neighbourhoods.

My Neighbourhood emphasises integrated urban planning by addressing multiple sectors and social functions, including mobility, housing, green spaces and public, operating across four design scales: neighbourhood, street, open public space and building unit. The methodology promotes a people-centered approach, incorporating participatory tools and stakeholder engagement, and it is adaptable to various geographic and cultural contexts.

4.3 Urban governance

GUIDELINES

Urban planning and design actions require a comprehensive and supporting urban governance and regulations framework that decentralises decision-making, leveraging the involvement of various urban actors. Sustainable proximities promoted through harmonised national, subnational, urban and local policies and procedures, secure adequate funding and ensure efficiency in the decision-making process. **Political endorsement** at the city level is crucial to integrate principles of proximity in the overall urban strategies and city vision, ensuring alignment of investments and initiatives towards promoting a local life. **Institutionalisation of decentralised administration**, where the district or neighbourhood level (sub-urban) is empowered with concrete responsibilities and resources to govern their territory - under the overarching vision of the city - is also an essential mechanism to promote tailored-made proximity solutions.

Cities can leverage the expertise of private companies, academia and civil society organisations, **by creating long-standing partnerships or multi-stakeholders** consortiums. Through institutionalised relations and Private-Public-People Partnerships (PPPPs), the city synergies efforts to sustain and operationalise its vision. The **integration and institutionalisation of participatory mechanisms** - such as workshops, consultations, referendums, participatory budgeting - that engage and empower citizens' is fundamental to prioritise actions, boost project acceptability and promote individual and collective responsibility toward maintaining a clean and vibrant environment. Institutionalising of bottom-up self-organised initiatives and organisations, builds trust among citizens and institutions, delegating tasks and creating a community.

More detailed considerations regarding proximity-based urban governance are following:

- ☐ **Technological platforms**, such as digital twins and AI-applications, are the future of urban management and governance. While being aware of their risks and environmental impact, intelligent and fair digital models can help urban actors to assess, plan and operationalise procedures, coordinating and delegating actions among different actors in real time. This also includes digital platforms for administrative procedures and consultations, which enhance services' digitalisation, improve time efficiency and decongest urban areas.
- ☐ **Extension of opening hours or flexible working hours** of essential services and facilities, using bonuses or incentives, support the integration of additional services and manage temporary or seasonal picks of service demands. For instance, in touristic cities, population density can drastically change and therefore pressure on essential services such as transport or supplies must be managed adequately.
- ☐ Public transport reduced tariffs for students that are commuting to educational facilities or alternative initiatives, such as the **pedibus or cyclobus**, limit congestion and enhance road safety and social cohesion.

- ☐ Implementing social-mix does not necessarily come with social integration. Conscious **mechanisms to support lower-income households** shall be established, including bonuses for rent and basic services.
- ☐ **Smart schedules for urban logistics and maintenance**, integrating online timeslot booking, for commerce and retails loading operations, as well as waste collection, cleaning and greenery maintenance procedures - carefully planned out of the rush hours, limits traffic congestion, reduces space reserved for loading bays, and smooth operations of different departments.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Urban governance framework



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- UNITAC



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- GIS expert
- ICT expert
- Technology providers



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Methodological framework

The following chapter describes the step-by-step process to integrate the Sustainable Proximities model in urban projects.. It encompasses the five main phases of the urban planning and design process:

5. EVALUATING AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE PROXIMITIES

Every project promoting sustainable proximities shall integrate a final phase to evaluate and mainstream project's best practices. Firstly, through the monitoring framework established during the project inception, the project team evaluates the achievements and challenges of the project execution, extracting valuable lessons learnt. Then, a series of capacity building and dissemination activities are conducted to promote the success of the project and improve technical and strategic capability of identified urban actors. Finally, the project team should reflect on future application of the project best practices, looking at the replicability and scalability of the process and assets.

1. PROJECT INCEPTION
2. DATA-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES ANALYSIS
3. PEOPLE-DRIVEN PROXIMITIES CO-CREATION
4. ACTIONS FOR PROXIMITIES IMPLEMENTATION

5. EVALUATING AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE PROXIMITIES

5.1 Evaluation framework

GUIDELINES

The main objective of this step is to measure the achievements of the project and investigate the challenges faced during the project execution. This is based on the monitoring framework and the KPIs initially identified during the project management and monitoring activity (1.3). The project team utilises the **KPIs list to measure the successes and failures of the project**, following an evidence-based approach. Through a series of consultation activities with the various project actors, the project team identifies the challenges that emerged during the project which might have limited the achievements of the expected outcomes. A final project report is finally elaborated, highlighting the project lessons learnt and investigating alternative scenarios and procedures that could be adopted moving forwards.

Reflections on the global development frameworks - 2030 Agenda, its SDGs and the NUA - through tools such as the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), is a valuable integration of the project evaluation phase, to understand the contribution of the project towards global sustainability agendas and goals.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Evaluation Matrix
- Final project report with lesson learnt



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Annex III: GOSP KPIs shortlist
- SDG Localisation and the Voluntary Local Reviews



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager

VLRs and sustainable proximities: A reciprocal framework for monitoring and impact

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) are a globally recognised tool for localising and monitoring the SDGs at the city and territorial level. They provide a voluntary yet formalised mechanism through which local and regional governments can assess their progress on sustainable development, while contributing meaningfully to national and global SDG reporting processes by bridging local realities with global agendas. Over time, VLRs have evolved into dynamic and locally driven instruments that not only support strategic planning and performance tracking, but also strengthen cross-departmental coordination, foster data-informed policymaking, and reinforce dialogue between communities, governments, and global institutions. Integrating VLRs while monitoring sustainable proximities offers mutual benefits, as both frameworks aim to support inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban development.

VLRs provide a mechanism through which proximity-based strategies can be evaluated, monitored, and institutionalised over time. For sustainable proximities planning, this creates opportunities to scale impact, sustain momentum across political cycles, and enhance legitimacy of proximity-based initiatives. **VLRs provide a clear and comparable reporting structure aligned with the 2030 Agenda, allowing proximity actions to be mapped against relevant SDG targets and indicators**, creating a shared language for proximity-based strategies and sustainable development that clearly links local proximity relevant indicators to global development. This alignment ensures that proximity strategies are not isolated urban experiments, but rather part of a broader development trajectory with shared metrics and shared accountability. Thereby, **VLRs connect proximity planning with national and global monitoring systems**, making local priorities more visible and informing national policies. As such, VLRs foster coherence between local planning and national development strategies, helping to overcome fragmentation in urban governance and adding legitimacy to local innovations. They also align different local efforts, helping cities integrate their innovations into SDG data ecosystems. Additionally, VLRs offer a pathway to policy continuity, encouraging periodic assessment and enabling learning loops that build long-term institutional memory for transformative planning approaches such as sustainable proximities. In addition, VLRs encourage cities to consolidate diverse data sources, including administrative, geospatial, and citizen-generated data; this reinforces the technical robustness of proximity-based urban planning and supports its scale-up and replication.

At the same time, **proximity-based urban planning offers spatial, functional, and equity-focused insights that can meaningfully enrich the substance and granularity of VLRs**, making them more attuned to human-scale, context-specific urban experiences. Rooted in principles of accessibility, spatial justice, and integrated urban systems, the proximity approach introduces a planning logic that helps to make SDG progress more tangible, experiential, and relevant to everyday urban life. It equips local governments with tools to interrogate how urban form, mobility systems, and service provision shape

residents' quality of life, particularly at the neighbourhood scale where many SDGs are realised. By bringing attention to human-scale dynamics, proximity strategies enhance the spatial and social resolution of VLRs, offering grounded insights into how urban policies perform across different communities. Thereby, they help uncover disparities and opportunities for targeted intervention that may be obscured by more aggregate data. The multiscale approach of proximity-based urban planning encompassing the local, intermedial, and central dimension, offers a vocabulary to identify where urban systems work well and where they fail which helps translate the SDGs into actionable planning interventions while maintaining alignment with their universal and interconnected nature.

Together, the two frameworks - VLRs and proximity-based urban planning - operate in synergy. VLRs provide a formal channel for reporting, institutional uptake, and alignment with national and global development frameworks, helping to anchor and legitimise proximity strategies within governance systems. In turn, proximity planning offers a strategic methodology for advancing the SDGs in spatial, tangible, and lived terms, adding depth, meaning, and local specificity to SDG monitoring. By embedding sustainable proximities into VLRs - either as a transversal theme, a dedicated chapter, or an indicator subset - cities gain a powerful and coherent monitoring ecosystem that is both globally anchored and locally grounded. Together, they enable cities to more fully embody the transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda - connecting different spatial scales, governance layers, and developmental priorities.



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5.2 Capacity building

GUIDELINES

Capacity building is an essential step to **facilitate the learning and knowledge interiorisation of a project best practices**. The project team can design ad-hoc interactive sessions, to present and discuss the project procedures with various internal and external actors. These sessions could be structured in different formats, online or in-person, defining the adequate tone of voice and details of information to address the audience's expertise. For instance, guided training sessions on the GIS methodology could be proposed to technical departments of local and territorial administration that were not involved in the project, while training of trainers for the Proximities Fresk could be extended to civil society and citizens.

Capacity building activities could also be planned throughout the project implementation, not only at the end, as a way to improve on-going procedures, smoothen bureaucratic obstacles and enhance replicability mechanisms in the future. Similarly, **advocacy campaigns and dissemination activities** enhance acceptability of the project among citizens, while raising awareness about the potential impact of sustainable proximities in people's quality of life. A series of e-learnings and masterclasses are available online, covering proximity, as well as complementary concepts and operational tools, such as urban resilience, sustainability, public space, monitoring mechanisms, etc.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Capacity building package



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Knowledge and capacity building resources
- UN-Habitat Learn



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- Capacity building expert

5.3 Replication and scalability

GUIDELINES

Sustainable proximities cannot work in silos and therefore it is essential to identify key streams of work for replication and project scalability. A series of brainstorming sessions with different city departments could help the project team identify potential areas for project replication, either in terms of substantial transformation or through the adoption of similar procedures and monitoring frameworks. These sessions could also target other adjacent municipalities, or local entities facing similar issues related to proximity.

The project team can organise **exchange sessions with the regional and national authorities** that were not involved so far, highlighting the benefits and successes achieved through the project. These sessions could help the institutionalisation of proximity policies and procedures into the broader urban regulatory framework, as a key step for the project scalability.

The final narrative report and the tangible experience and knowledge derived by the project can be used as practical reference while applying to national and international fundings, and it could be presented during international conferences to inspire other cities worldwide on how to assess, co-create and implement sustainable proximities.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Interactive sessions with local, regional and national authorities



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- SDG Localisation and the Voluntary Local Reviews
- UNITAC



INVOLVED ACTORS

- Project manager
- City leaders



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Seunghoon HAN, Chaire ERI

Conclusions

Sustainable Proximities for a High Quality of Societal Life is the result of a shared and sustained effort between the founding partners of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities. This publication marks an important step in the collective journey to define, understand, and advance the concept of sustainable proximities. It builds a shared language and a common ground for dialogue, exchange, and action across diverse geographies and disciplines.

With this publication, the Observatory consolidates over six years of international research, experimentation, and practice in urban development. Our work has spanned a variety of global contexts, each contributing critical insights into how proximity can support more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban environments.

The Observatory promotes urban planning and design processes grounded in political commitment, sustainability ambitions, and a steadfast focus on peoples' well-being. We emphasise that a high quality of societal life is never accidental, and it is the outcome of deliberate choices, inclusive governance, and people-centered development strategies.

This publication represents an effort to move beyond a European-centric view, and to support the development of frameworks that are globally relevant. We recognise both the limitations and the opportunities that exist in under-resourced and rapidly changing urban contexts. A key part of this work is the development of a methodological framework that is common and flexible—one that is not dogmatic, but instead can be adapted and adjusted to reflect the specificities of each local context. We envision this document as a living resource that will continue to grow and evolve through the integration of new tools, methods, and case-based insights.

The Observatory is the go-to platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building. We are continuously collecting and curating local initiatives, instruments, and experiences that advance the principles of sustainable proximities. By doing so, we hope to amplify practices that foster polycentric and equitable cities, where opportunities are not a privilege, but a right accessible to all.

Through this publication, we invite local governments, planners, researchers, and community actors to reflect on their roles and responsibilities in shaping sustainable urban futures. We encourage the sharing of best practices, innovative strategies, and scalable models that align with the shared goal of promoting sustainable proximities.

To learn more about our work and access further resources, please visit our website or contact us at **info@sustainableproximities.org**. Your engagement is vital to the continued development and application of this framework, and we look forward to building this knowledge community together.

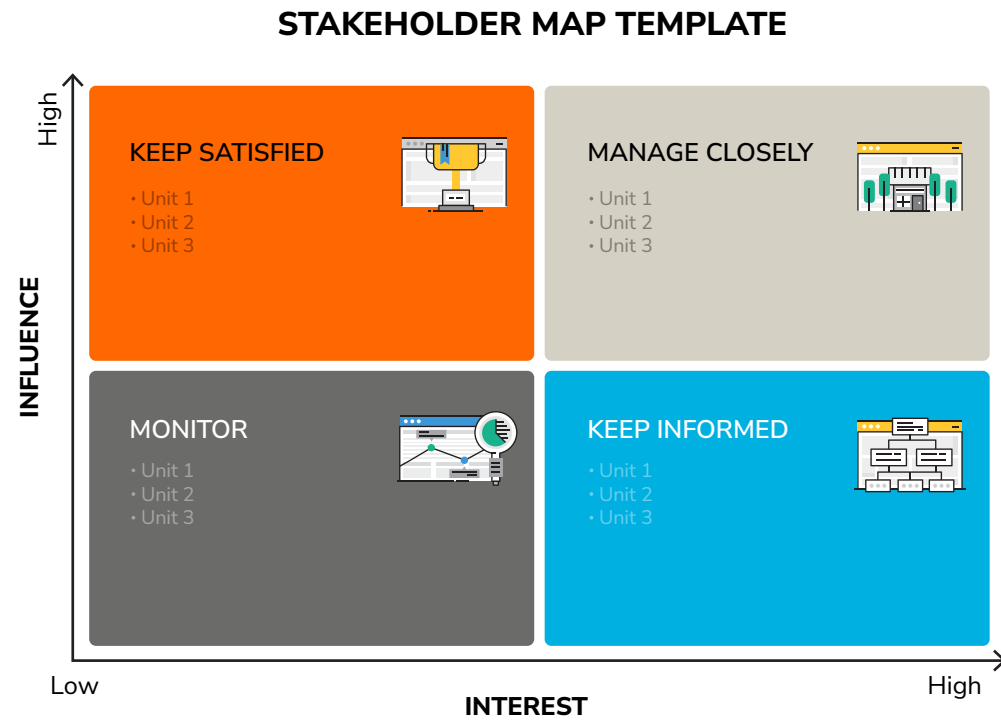
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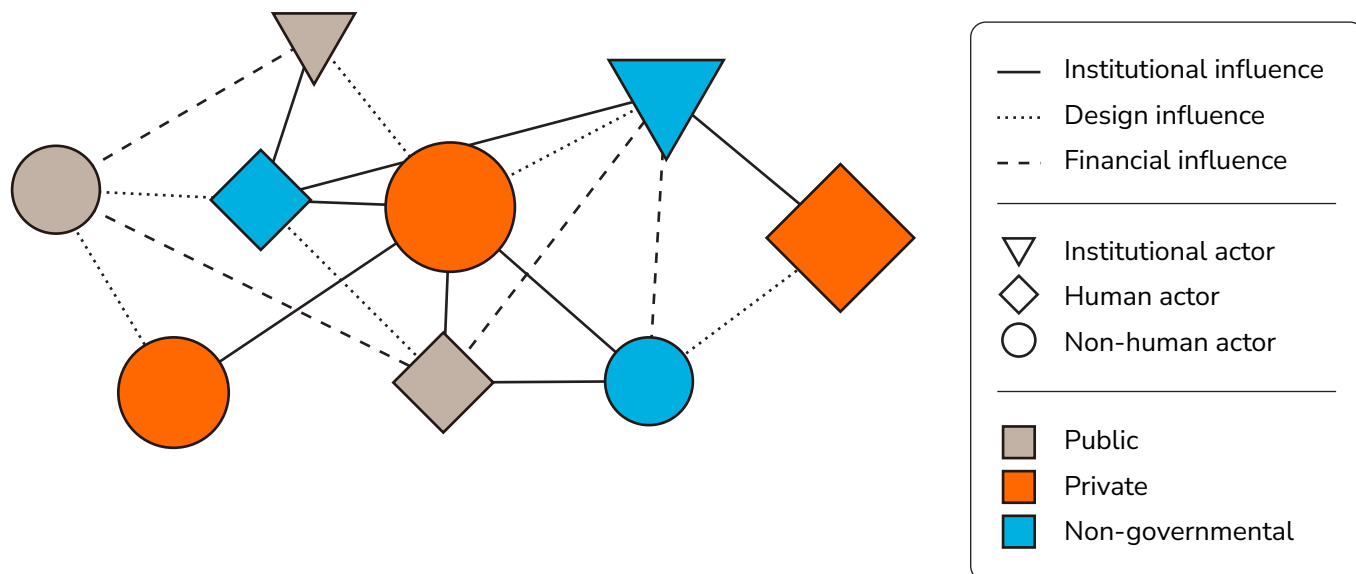
Annexes

I. Stakeholder mapping template

The below templates are useful to map the project's stakeholders according to their level of interest and power towards the project. Additionally, it also helps understanding the relations among the most relevant partners.

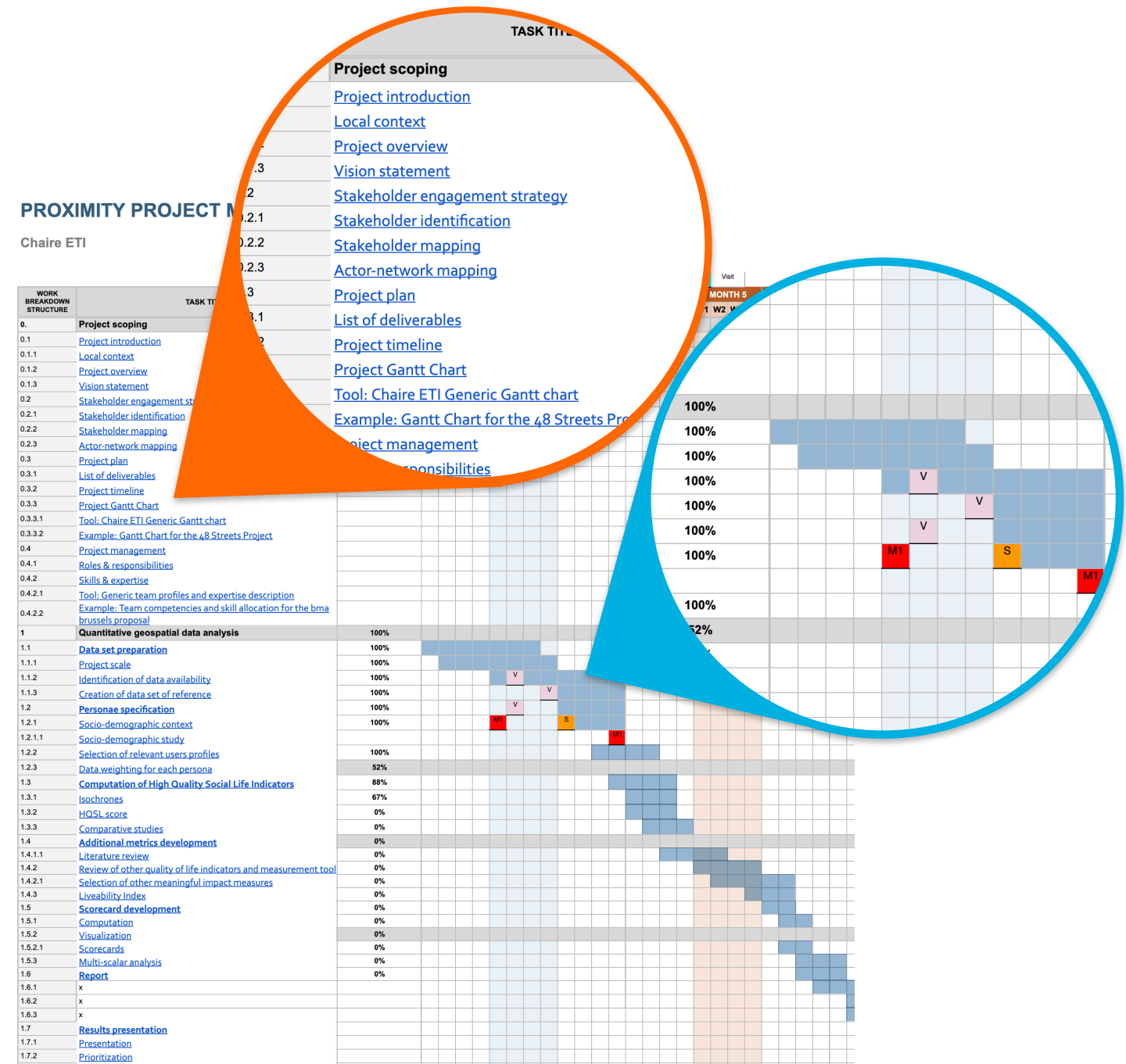


Chaire ETI - Actor-Network Mapping



II. Work plan template: Gantt chart

The below table provides an example of how the Gantt chart looks like. However, depending on the complexity of the project, the project team can simplify or advance it.



III. GOSP KPIs short-list

The below table is a short-list of KPI, to access the long-list of KPI contact the Observatory partners.

Domain	Target	Minimum scale	Indicators	UMF / SDG correlation
Living	Urban block size	Sub-neighbourhood scale	The average area-weighted urban block perimeter (AwaP) in meters	No
	Overcrowding	Sub-neighbourhood scale	Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing	Yes (as a constituent of SDG 11.1.1 / UMF 23)
Supplying	Access to public transport and mobility	Sub-neighbourhood scale	Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, disaggregated by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Yes (UMF 10 / SDG 11.2.1)
	Access to internet	City scale	Share of population with access to broadband connection	Yes (UMF 30 and 34) but Indicator statement is required / 17.6.1 and 17.8.1)
	Access to drinking water	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Proportion of population with access to safely managed drinking water	Yes (UMF 2 / SDG 6.1.1) but Indicator statement is required
	Sanitation	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Proportion of population with access to safely managed sanitation services	Yes (UMF 3 / SDG 6.2.1a) but Indicator statement is required
	Food security	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Proportion of population with access to affordable food options (proximity to food market, supermarkets, etc.)	Yes (UMF 22 / SDG 2.1.2)
Caring	Solid waste management	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal solid waste generated by cities	Yes (UMF 41 / SDG 11.6.1)
	Proximity to healthcare	Sub-neighbourhood scale	Proportion of population living in households with access to a) Health Facilities (distance based); and/ or b) Essential Health Services	Yes (UMF 9 - SDG 1.4.1)
	Share occupied by pedestrian pathways or cycle paths	Sub-neighbourhood scale	Proportion of streets surface with reserved space for pedestrian and/or cyclists	No
	Perception of safety	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live after dark	Yes (UMF 6 / SDG 16.1.4)
Learning	Road safety (number of traffic incidents)	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Death rate due to road traffic injuries	Yes (UMF 8 / SDG 3.6.1)
	Educational facilities	Sub-neighbourhood scale	Proportion of population living in households with access to primary schools	Yes - component of UMF 9 (access to services) / SDG 1.4.1
	Sport and recreation	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Proportion of population with access to recreational facilities (playgrounds, sport facilities, community halls, etc.)	Yes - UMF 44, 47 & 55 (SDG 11.7.1)
Enjoying	Cultural facilities	Sub-neighbourhood scale	Proportion of population with access to cultural infrastructure (museums, theatres or cinemas)	Yes - UMF 55 & 61
	Proximity to public spaces	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Yes - UMF 44 & SDG 11.7.1
	Biodiversity	City scale	Green area per capita	Yes - UMF 47 / CPI / SDG 15.5.1
Working	Land use mix	City scale or neighbourhood	The diversity of land use per square kilometer, within a city or urban area.	CPI Land use mix indicator (4 Urban Diversity (UD) Sub-Index)
	Unemployment	Neighbourhood or smallest census scale	Unemployment rate disaggregated by gender, age, income groups, disabilities	SDG 8.5.2 / The various components are included in UMF 27 / CPI
	Commuting	City scale	Average time spent commuting between work and home	
Governing	Proximity to local administration	City scale	Distance to essential local financial and administrative facilities, including post office, cash withdrawal point, etc.	No
	Access to e-governance	City scale	Use of e-governance and citizen-centric digital governance tools by city/Local authority	No
	Structure allowing citizen participation	City scale	Presence of direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically	Yes - UMF67 and 11.3.2

CARING

CARING

Well-being

Sociability

Sustainable planet

Well-being

Sociability

Sustainable planet

ENJOYING

Well-being

Sociability

Sustainable planet

6 SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

THE
FIFTEEN MINUTES
CITY

WORKING

SUPPLYING

- Surface area of accommodations
- Parks and gardens
- Urban density
- Purchase price (land value)
- Rental (rental value)
- Lighting (which can be modulated)
- Security (police station)
- Directive 96/82/EC (proximity to an industrial site...)
- Sunshine (weather/urban density/built height)
- Local services (laundry/dry cleaning...)
- Broadband network, 4G and +
- Home care services
- Shared accommodation
- Shared bike stations
- Bike garages
- Public transport station

Neighbours' Day
Community centers
neighbourhood associations
Nursing homes
Student accommodation

- High environmental quality housing
- Social housing (low-cost housing, supervised rents)
- Energy strainers
- Energy performance of housing
- Water / energy consumption
- Autoconsumption of energy
- Energy cheque / Energy renovation grants
- LEZ (Low-emission Zone)
- Safety
- Noise pollution / sound insulation
- Heat island control (ALBEDO)

- Places and types of employment
- Working-age adults
- Active job seekers
- Self-employed workers
- Teleworking
- Home-based professionals (home help, housekeeping, childminding)
- Bank
- Services
- Office buildings
- Warehouse
- Industrial site

- Service relays
- Coworking
- Incubators
- Associations
- Workshops

CO2 footprint of daily commute
Modes of transport
Social and solidarity economy
Carpooling areas
Pay-and-ride

- Bakeries
- Butcheries
- Markets
- Craftsmen
- Shops / supermarkets
- Organic shops
- Professional home service
- Electrical and gas services
- Water services
- Telecoms
- District heating

Farmers organisations
Repair café
Yard sales
Departmental Registry
Prefecture of the department
Special taxation department of the department
Corporate taxation department of the department
Family allowance fund
Town hall of the municipality
Tobacconist
Post office

Solidarity grocery store
Urban agriculture
Agricultural zone
Solidarity grocery store
Urban agriculture
Agricultural zone
Short-circuit producer
Bulk grocery store
Compost collection
Collection of waste and bulky items
Recycling

Pharmacies
Hospital medical services
Non-hospital medical services
Non-hospital paramedical
Opticians, hearing care professionals
Vaccination center
Screening center
Health auxiliaries
Fitness rooms

Sports associations
Swimming pools
Sports fields
Yoga (clubs, classes)
Climbing spots
Leisure bases, nautical bases
Swimming spots
Meditation (associations, centers)
Plogging
Defibrillators
Firefighters
Number of citizens trained in first aid
Fire brigade intervention
First aid centre (call centers)

Air quality
Noise / light / atmospheric pollution
Health insurance
Eco-friendly hospitals
Maternal and child protection

Well-being	
	Nursery schools
	Digital institutions
	Learning center
	Distance learning
Elementary schools, middle schools, private and public high schools	Driving schools
	Leisure centers
	Size of middle schools and high schools
	Number of places for young children by type of care
	Number of pupils in primary and secondary schools
Successful completion of the middle school and high school graduation exams	Libraries
	Studies (extracurricular time)

- Parental nurseries
- Associative nurseries
- Third places
- Fab labs
- After-school sports activities
- Summer internships
- Parents' association

- Adult training center/institutions
- Specialized education center (disabilities...)
- Facilities and services for disabled adults
- Priority education
- Vocational retraining center
- Municipal courses for adults
- Orientation center
- Reintegration assistance associations
- School support associations

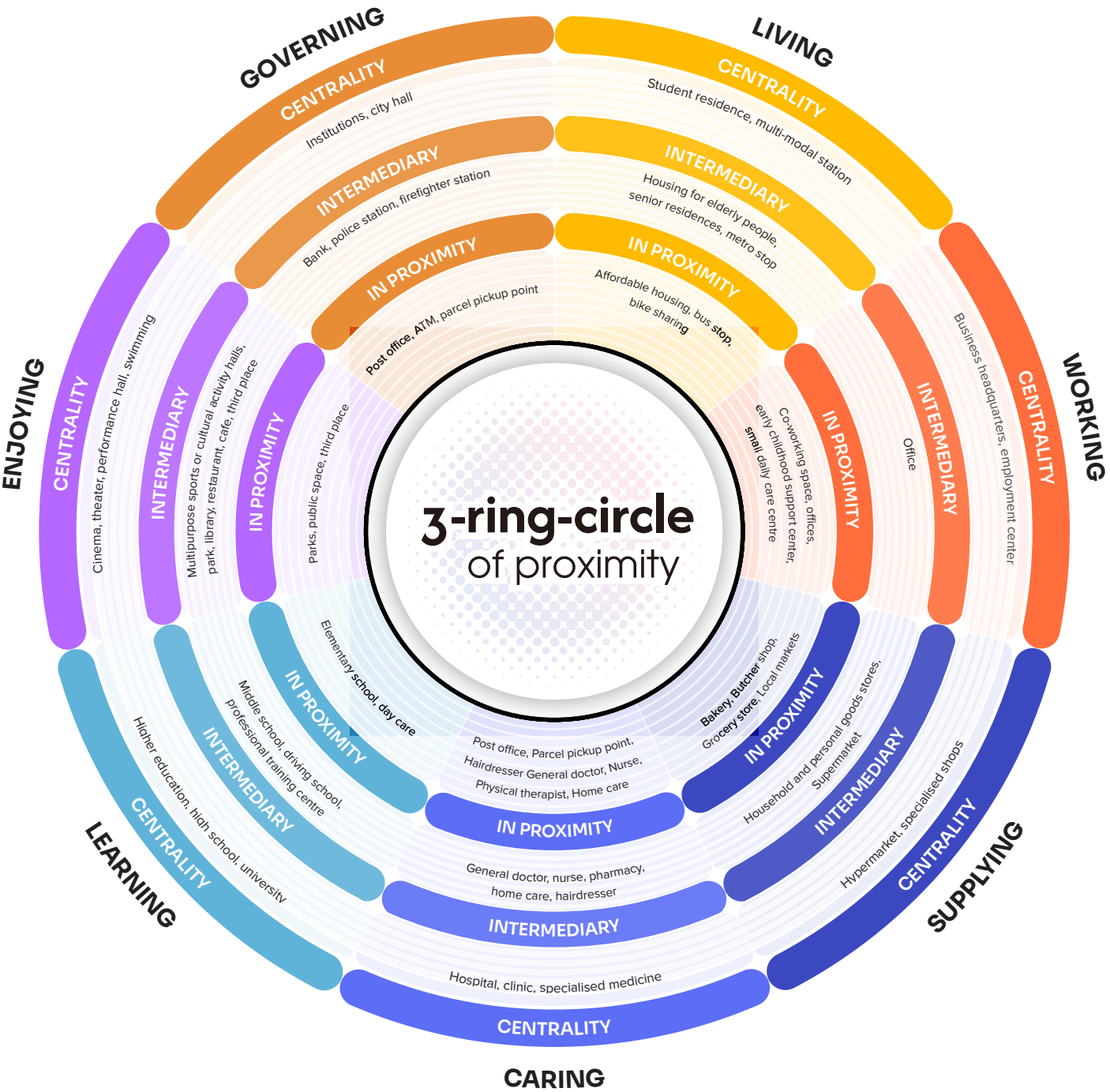
- Movie theaters
- Media libraries
- Game libraries
- Libraries
- Bookstores
- Exhibitions, museums
- Theatres, shows, operas, concerts
- Sports events

- Coffee shops
- Bars
- Restaurants
- Associations, humanitarian associations
- Civic service
- Places of worship
- Green spaces and squares
- Religion, spirituality
- Children stays in the municipalities

- Greening
- Shared gardens
- Urban playgrounds
- Municipal adult education courses
- Orientation center
- Reintegration assistance associations
- School support associations

V. 3 levels of proximity framework

The below table is not comprehensive and should not be taken as a dogma. It provides an indication of the overall hierarchy of public services and their accessibility requirements that requires local tailorisation.



Level of proximity	Social function	Services
Local Walk / bike 15 minutes	Living	Affordable housing, bus stop, bike sharing
	Working	Co-working space, offices, early childhood support center, small daily care centre
	Supplying	Bakery, butcher shop, grocery store, local market
	Learning	Elementary school, day care
	Caring	General doctor, nurse, pharmacy, home care, hairdresser
	Enjoying	Parks, public space, third place
	Governing	Post office, ATM, parcel pickup point
Intermediate Walk / bike	Living	Housing for elderly people, senior residences, metro stop
	Working	Office
	Supplying	Household and personal goods stores, supermarket
	Learning	Middle school, driving school, professional training centre
	Caring	Dentist, laboratory, hiking trail,
	Enjoying	Multipurpose sports or cultural activity halls, park, library, restaurant, cafe, third place
	Governing	Bank, police station, firefighter station
Central Car / public transport 30 minutes	Living	Student residence, multi-modal station
	Working	Business headquarters, employment center
	Supplying	Hypermarket, specialised shops
	Learning	Higher education, high school, university
	Caring	Hospital, clinic, specialised medicine
	Enjoying	Cinema, theater, performance hall, swimming pool
	Governing	Institutions, city hall

