



UN-HABITAT AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS: A COMPENDIUM OF CASES

ANNEX 2 TO THE REPORT
LINKING UN-HABITAT AND UNIVERSITIES

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Melbourne Centre
for Cities

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**UN-HABITAT AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS:
A COMPENDIUM OF CASE STUDIES
ANNEX 2 TO THE REPORT
*LINKING UN-HABITAT AND UNIVERSITIES.***

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UN-HABITAT AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS: A COMPENDIUM OF CASES

ANNEX 1 TO LINKING UN-HABITAT AND UNIVERSITIES
BY THE MELBOURNE CENTRE FOR CITIES
FOR UN-HABITAT'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING UNIT

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UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY TO UN-HABITAT'S 'CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE' ASPIRATION.

THEY CAN ACT AS DRIVERS OF CAPACITY BUILDING, INNOVATION AND URBAN CHANGE. THIS COMPENDIUM OF UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS AIMS TO HIGHLIGHT THE DIVERSITY OF APPROACHES CURRENTLY AT PLAY AND ENCOURAGE CLOSER ATTENTION TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF COLLABORATION.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Information and data are pervasive aspects of the way in which we manage cities and how billions of urban dwellers go about their everyday lives. Knowledge-intensive partnerships are critical for urban development worldwide. UN-Habitat has recognised this seeking to position itself as “centre of excellence and innovation” and “a thought leader” in sustainable urbanization. Engagement with one of the prime knowledge industries, *academia*, is well recognised as central to this mission. UN-Habitat has collaborated, experimented, and engaged with universities partnerships across a vast array of programs. Yet, this variety has to date lacked clear and systematic identification as to its modalities, challenges, and possibilities. This is where the broader report *Linking UN-Habitat and Universities* comes in, gathering evidence with the explicit task to provide UN-Habitat with an **assessment of both challenges and opportunities to strengthen university partnerships**.

This annex takes a deeper dive into twelve case studies flagged throughout our report, providing a **compendium of university partnerships** that **highlights some the diversity of approaches currently at play** when it comes to collaborations between UN-Habitat and the academic world.

METHODS

This project focused explicitly on university partnerships with higher education institutions (henceforth ‘universities’), and specifically on those formally set up by or with UN-Habitat. The study underlying the report was carried out between

November 2021 and February 2022. It involved a series of methods. First, it carried out a desk review of the relevant documentation available from UN-Habitat. Second, it involved in-depth interviews as well as case-based staff consultations. Third, it ran a series of three semi-quantitative surveys inquiring about the challenges and opportunities of universities partnerships. These were complemented by 2 focus groups with UN-Habitat staff and academics.

These foreground the overall report *Linking Cities to Gown*. In this annex, we focus on a **set of twelve case studies** as more in-depth engagements into how partnership might work at different scales and for different purposes. These involved both analysis of existing documentation as well as direct input from case study leads and officers in UN-Habitat. The cases were assessed comparatively using the ‘university partnership framework’ (see below) developed in the overall report *Linking UN-Habitat and Universities* and summarised in the next pages. Data generated through these mixed methods was analysed between December 2021 and February 2022, leading to the production of this report and its annexes in March 2022.

SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

In order to unpack the often-bewildering complexity of UN-Habitat’s collaborations with universities, we developed a ‘**university partnerships framework**’ that can be used practically by UN-Habitat, but also potentially by its university partners (and indeed replicable by other UN agencies), to map and assess the landscape of university partnerships and their resulting outputs.

The framework is centred, first, on the **form of university partnerships** through descriptors of the *scale*, *nature* and *anchors* that characterize university partnerships. Second, we aligned this to a typology of the **outputs of university partnerships describing the variety of possible knowledge products** resulting from the varied forms of partnerships identified. The framework outlines three main types of cooperation mechanisms that characterize the **nature of knowledge collaborations** (the framework's 'feature A'): 1) information and research; 2) capacity-building; 3) technical collaboration and innovation. Similarly, whilst the geographies of these partnerships can vary substantially, often even within one single initiative, we speculate the **scale of cooperation** ('feature B') in university partnerships could broadly be typified as taking place at a range of five possible scales from local (e.g. city or neighbourhood) to international. Likewise, we define as 'anchor' the institutional level at which the formal linkage into the academic world of the partnership takes place. To this end we would argue that the **anchor of university collaborations** (feature C) could broadly be placed at four possible points, from individual academics to university department, to the whole of a university or a university network. In sum, our framework is designed as a **method to compare the modalities of university partnerships** via three sets of features (A [nature], B [scale] and C [anchor]) each identifying different principal focuses of the partnership. It is thus **designed for features to also work in overlap** (e.g. the case of a partnership involving information and capacity building).

| 1. Instruction products | 4. Advocacy and policy products |
|--|---|
| KPs aimed explicitly at providing guidance and direction Guides; Analytical toolkits; Frameworks ; Agendas (application/implementation); Advice and consultancy | KPs aimed explicitly at shaping urban governance and management Strategies and plans; Policy (design, delivery, implementation); Campaigns; Awareness programs |
| 2. Data and research products | 5. Convening products |
| KPs aimed principally at providing analysis and assessment and/or at information dissemination | KPs aimed linking and convening stakeholders Workshops; Networks; Participatory processes |
| TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS DISCUSSED IN THE COMPENDIUM | |
| 3. Education products | 6. Building and technology products |
| KPs aimed capacity building and skills enhancement Courses and modules; Curricula and degrees; Academies and training institutions; Staff development; Studios and student competitions | Material KPs resulting from the development of new infrastructures or technologies (including digital ones) Planning and designing; Construction analytics; Certification and operation management; Prototypes and patents; Technologies and tools |

| | Case Study | Type of Partnership | | | | Main Knowledge Products |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| | | nature | scale | anchor | main university | |
| 1 | UNITAC | Information/Technical | international | university | HafenCity University | Research/Technology |
| 2 | BEWOP | Information/Capacity building | international | university | IHE Delft Institute for Water Education | Instruction/Convening |
| 3 | HER CITY Crete | Capacity Building | local | department | School of Architecture, TUC Crete | Education |
| 4 | Global Urban Lectures | Information | international | Individual | multiple individuals | Education |
| 5 | MetroHUB | Information/Capacity Building | international | Network | multiple departments/individuals | Research/Education |
| 6 | UN-Habitat-IALS Partnership | Information/Capacity Building | international | department | IALS, University of London | Data-Research/Convening |
| 7 | Sherpa Tool | Technical | international | department | CRAterre, ENSAG Grenoble | Building-technology |
| 8 | Council on Urban Initiatives | Information/Capacity building | international | university | UCL/LSE | Convening/Advocacy-Policy |
| 9 | Urban-LEDS | Capacity building | national | department | University of Michigan | Education/Data-Research |
| 10 | GLTN Training & Res. Cluster | Capacity Building | international | Network | UEL/NUST | Education |
| 11 | Comparing Urban Observatories | Information | international | Network | UCL/Melbourne/GCRO | Data-Research/Convening |
| 12 | Waste Wise Cities Toolkit | Technical | sub-national | department | University of Leeds | Building-technology |
| 13 | Innovate4Cities2021 | Information/Capacity Building | international | Individual/university | multiple departments/individuals | Convening/Advocacy-Policy |

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF CASES PRESENTED IN THE COMPENDIUM

VISUAL SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

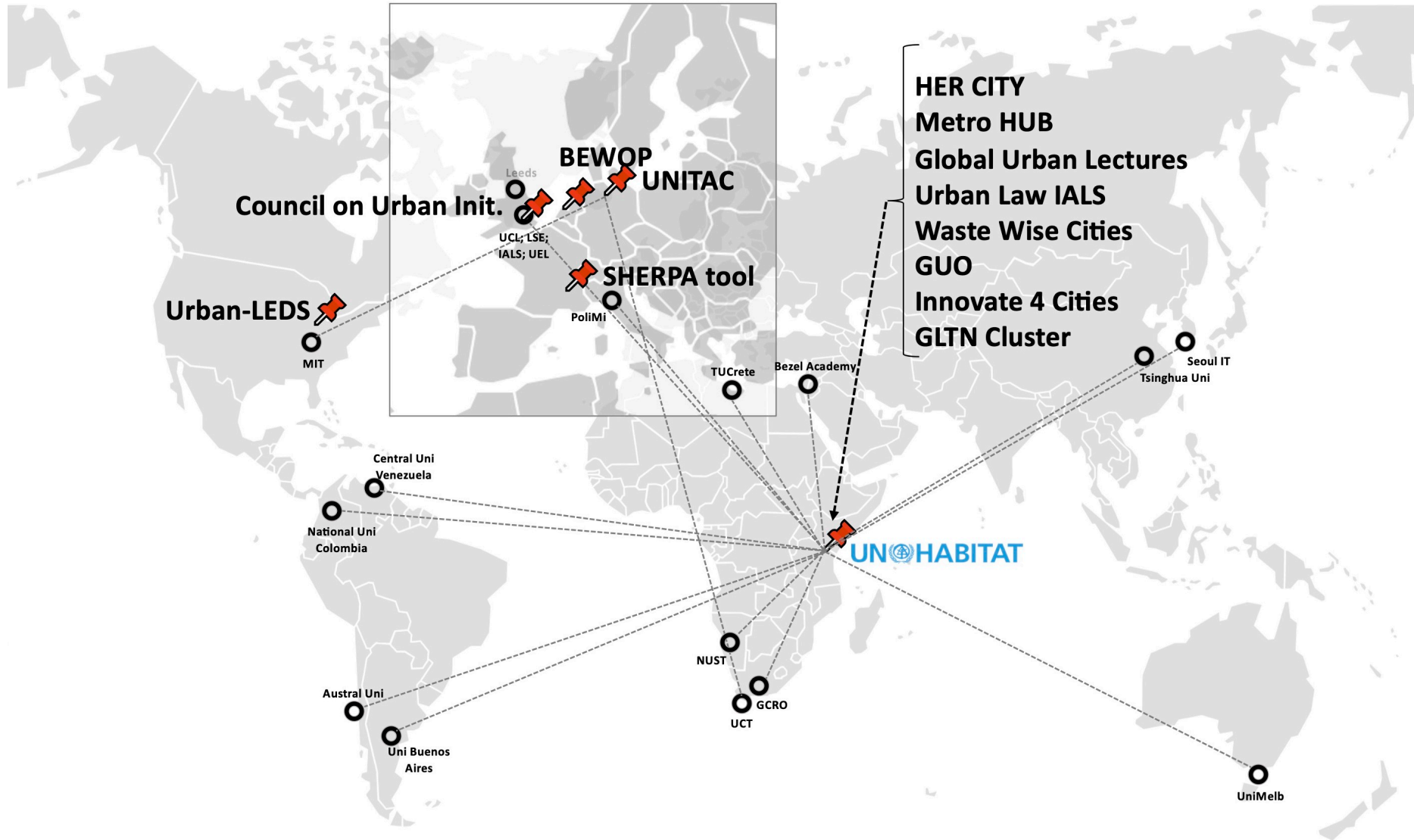


FIGURE 1. A SNAPSHOT OF THE COMPENDIUM CASES' NETWORKED CONNECTIONS © University of Melbourne

VISUAL GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

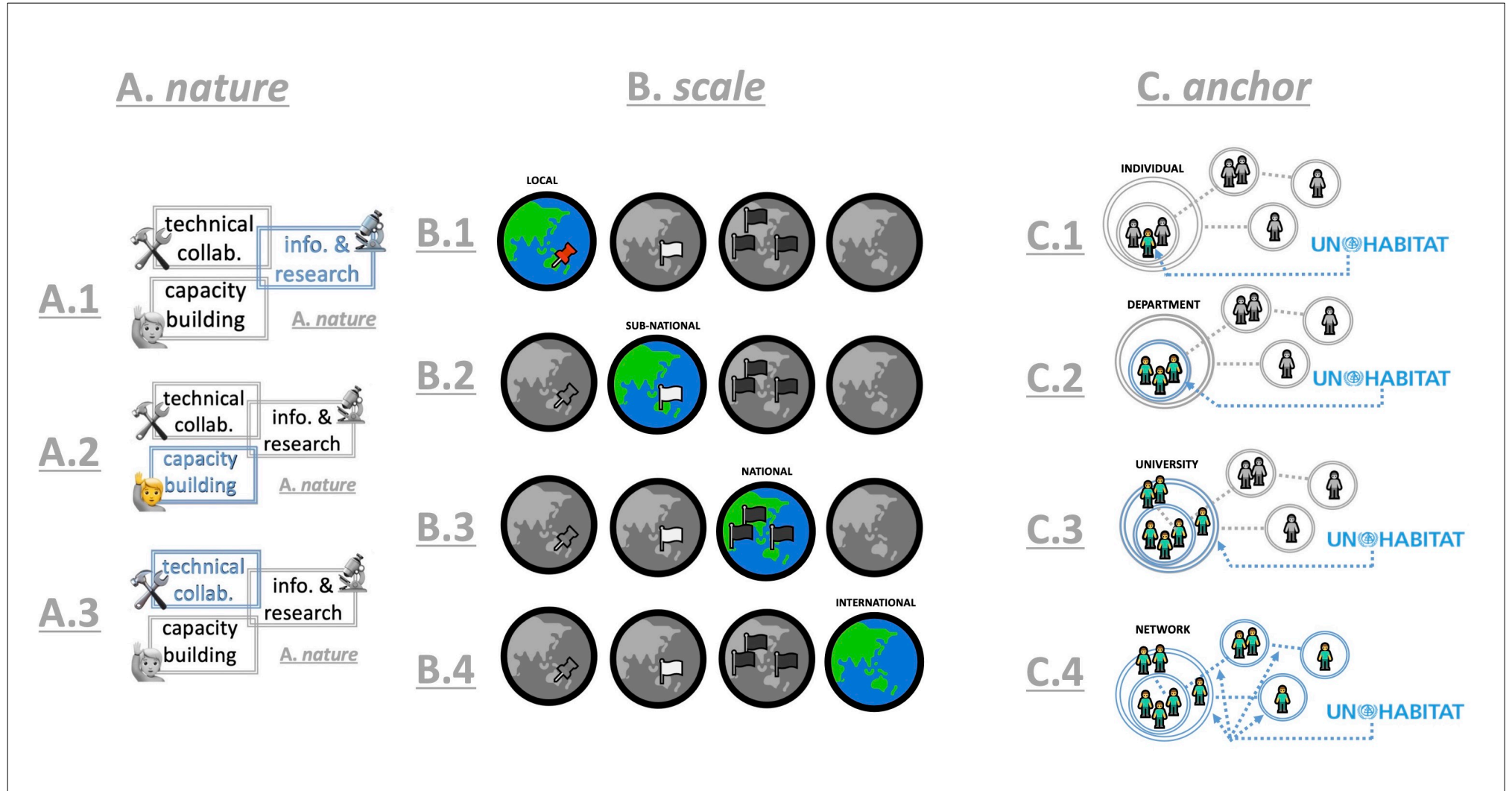


FIGURE 2. A VISUAL GUIDE TO TH UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK © University of Melbourne

1. UNITAC

DEVELOPING THE UNITED NATIONS INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATOR FOR CITIES

Partner universities

HafenCity University, University of Cape Town, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)



CASE OUTLINE

In 2021 UN-Habitat, with support from the Government of Germany and in collaboration with the UN Office for Information and Communications Technology (UN-OICT), has partnered with HafenCity University Hamburg to launch the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC Hamburg). HafenCity University hosts UNITAC in Hamburg, Germany. The program, centred on a €5.7m investment by the German federal government, aims to support the testing, development, and eventual deployment of people-centred technologies and innovations for sustainable urban development. These objectives have been explicitly set in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda and connected formally with the United Nations Secretary General's *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*. An initial application of the program has seen, for instance, the launch of a collaboration with eThekweni that sees UNITAC will help the local government develop a machine learning AI-focused model to map informal areas across the city's 580 informal settlements.



FIGURE 3. PEOPLE CENTRED SMART CITIES PROGRAMME © UN-HABITAT

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

The implementation of the UNITAC program by HafenCity University (HCU) has been significantly linked and rolled out through the City Science Lab (CSL), a collaboration of HCU with MIT Media Lab, extending the university partnership approach to a multi-university program. From this point of view, UN-Habitat and HafenCity University, via UNITAC, have also begun collaborating with the University of Cape Town's African Centre for Cities in the setup of an 'urban academy' for Africa, or developing collaboration on proto-typing and applied research with Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BUIST).

The development of the UNITAC activities approach has led to direct involvement in UN-Habitat's flagship program, "People-Centred Smart Cities" (underway since 2020), geared toward providing **strategic and technical support on digital transformation** to national, regional, and local governments. This technical advice, a product of research and data knowledge products and information knowledge products, has been shaping through a new **series of playbooks** as a critical normative component of the program, focused on centring people in smart cities, assessing and addressing the digital divide. The program has further plans to focus on key 'pillars' of action organized around infrastructure, community, and security in smart cities. Information knowledge products have, as per above, begun being coupled with a hybrid mix of advocacy and technology

LESSONS LEARNED

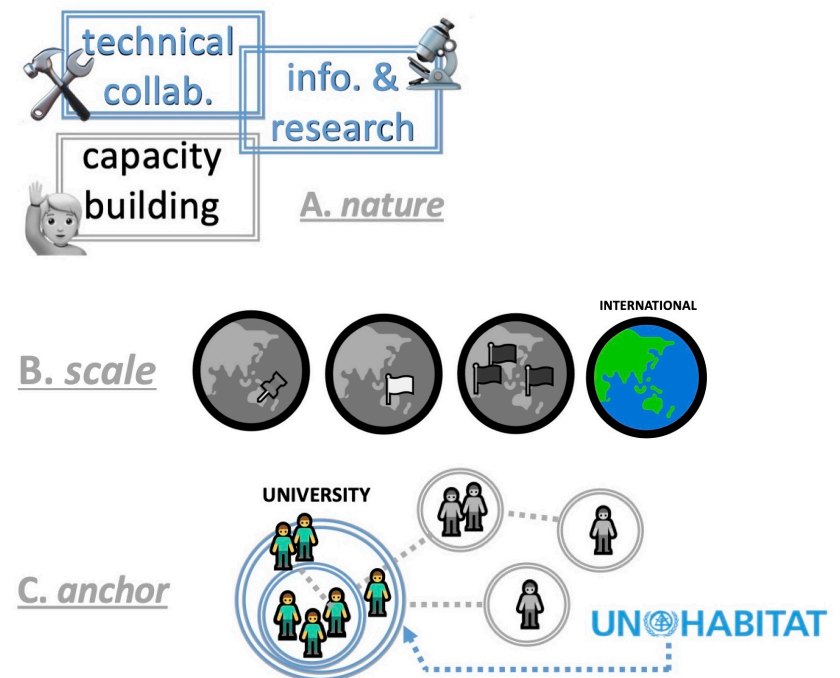
There is still a great deal of research to be done in smart cities, especially if the approach is to use the technologies in a user-oriented way. **Research enables agile work, prototypes, and accessible spaces** that allow new developments and processes to emerge. On the other hand, research benefits from un cooperation through local networks and valuable use cases. From the beginning, the City Science Lab was designed as a partnership with the MIT media lab. The partnership consists mainly in the regular exchange of technological knowledge, which flows into the tools of the CLS. These **open-source tools and the expertise** of the researchers are in turn also available to the UNITAC activities. Together with the MIT media lab, the CLS is to be understood as an ecosystem for UNITAC.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<http://www.unitac.un.org>

<https://www.hcu-hamburg.de/research/csl/>



2. BEWOP

BOOSTING EFFECTIVENESS OF WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAMME

Partner universities

IHE Delft Institute for Water Education



CASE OUTLINE

The Boosting Effectiveness of Water Operators' Partnerships Programme (BEWOP) is an operational guidance and outreach initiative to boost the effectiveness of Water Operator Partnerships (WOPs) worldwide. This partnership between IHE-Delft and UN-Habitat's GWOPA (Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance) is helping WOPs improve utilities' capacity and performance, identifying bottlenecks and pitfalls, and developing products to help address them. To this end, GWOPA and IHE combine their respective expertise and to create, disseminate, and apply resources conducive to more effective WOPs. In its first phase, BEWOP produced case studies and thematic research on WOPs and translated it into practical guidance and tools. Amongst these tools, the initiative produced comparative analyses of existing approaches for knowledge transfer and learning processes in WOPs, assessments of existing guidelines, training modules and materials to support operators' performance improvement, guidelines, training modules, and materials.



FIGURE 4. BWS EMPLOYEES AT WORK, REPAIRING A LEAK ON THE MAIN TO BELIZE CITY © VINCENT MERME / GWOPA-UN-HABITA

In the second phase, the focus of BEWOP was to convert the lessons learned through documenting WOPs around the world into two types of tools: *Process Tools*, which support WOP participants prepare for, design, implement and follow through with their WOPs, and *Operational Tools*, which help transfer knowledge on specific operational topics relevant for water utilities. A key element here was to develop a learning culture so that Water Operators can better receive, create, manage and in turn share their knowledge.

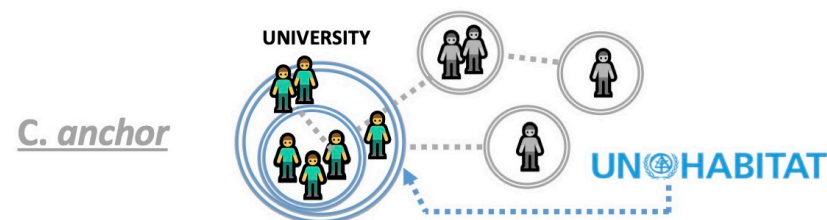
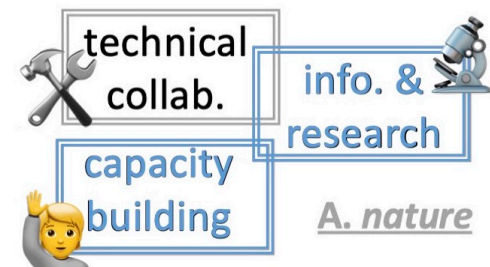
In the third phase of the BEWOP, GWOPA supported the Dutch-funded WaterWorX program through knowledge management, increased global visibility of the WOP concept, and promoted enabling frameworks for WOPs. Under the knowledge management activities, utility partners collect, document, and share knowledge through Communities of Practice centered around different themes. These Communities of Practice aim to learn from what is happening in the WOPs and to help the various WOP projects learn from one another's experiences.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

BEWOP is joint program IHE-Delft and UN-Habitat's GWOPA (Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance) which is currently (2022) entering its fourth phase on research and knowledge management around Water Operators' Partnerships. Similar to previous phases, this alliance is meant to produce instruction knowledge products aimed at improving the WOPs worldwide.

LESSONS LEARNED

This long-standing information-capacity building partnership has led to the production of an extensive set of **case studies, reports, tools, guidance, and training materials** about and for water operators and water operators' partnerships. Beyond its individual deliverables, the programme has helped GWOPA (as a UN-Habitat programme and network of WOP practitioners) design and implement more effective water operators' partnerships. For example, the design of the EU WOP programme, and the WaterWorx (WWX) programme, which are considered the world's biggest WOP programmes, were informed, and implemented by lessons and guidance derived through this partnership. The partnership has also helped **build credibility and buy-in** for this partnership practice between peer water and sanitation operators, leading to more utilities worldwide **strengthening their capacity and performance** to deliver safe water and sanitation services to all. This collaboration with IHE has been instrumental in building a solid understanding of WOPs and developing credibility for the partnership practice. It has also facilitated a strong relationship and funding modality with the government of the Netherlands.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://bewop.un-ihe.org/home>
<https://unhabitat.org/programme/global-water-operators-partnerships-alliance>

3. HER CITY CRETE

INTEGRATING THE HER CITY TOOLBOX IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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Partner universities

School of Architecture, Technical University of Crete (for this case).

Other examples of Her City university partnerships: Exeter University, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Södertörn University, Stockholms Universitet, Sorbonne University, University of Florence, Queen's University Belfast.



CASE OUTLINE

The Her City initiative supports urban development from the perspective of girls. It aims to make methods and tools available to urban actors globally to expand and incorporate girls' and young women's participation in planning as part of their long-term strategies to build sustainable cities and societies. Her City is designed to contribute explicitly to a set of Sustainable Development Goals including SDG 5 on gender equality or 10 on reducing inequality, as well as more generally to the local implementation of the SDGs by a variety of stakeholders.

Her City is a joint initiative by UN-Habitat and the independent think tank Global Utmaning (Global Challenge), financed by the Swedish Innovation Agency (Vinnova) with contributions from Block-by-Block Foundation, White Architects, Swedish Union of Tenants, and MethodKit. Her city has been implemented in 315 and 95 countries to date. The case outlined here gives a snapshot of one such example engaging a university partnership in Crete.



FIGURE 5. HERCITY, UN-HABITAT ©SHUTTERSTOC

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

Engaging stakeholders from across private and public sectors, academia and civil society, UN-Habitat created a toolbox with a cost-efficient process to be incorporated within cities and communities. The toolbox, an instruction knowledge product, contains a process of nine 'building blocks' as a digital guideline on how to co-plan cities from a girl's perspective. The nine blocks represent the three phases of the urban development process.

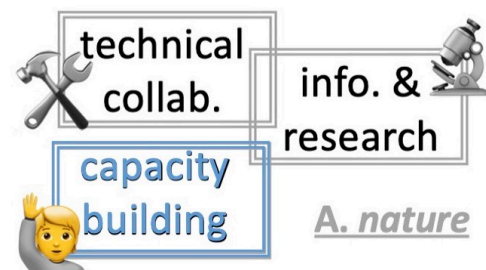
They guide urban planners through the assessment phase (stakeholder mapping, city-wide assessment, site-specific assessment), the design phase (analyzing challenges, designing ideas, recommendations for actions), and the implementation phase (action plans, sharing results, implementation, and follow-up). Each block contains several activities with detailed steps to follow. This involves tools such as checklists, calendars, agendas, manuals, forms, boards, apps, templates, surveys, and visualization services in order to help cities reach the expected results.

The university partner for the specific application of Her City depicted here is the Technical University of Crete (TUC). TUC promoted the project among School of Architecture students and created a connection between UN-Habitat and them. TUC leveraged Her City to improve the quality of the academic course, whilst in turn adding literature knowledge into the toolkit development and linking to other ongoing local projects in Crete. TUC established a connection with the municipality, involving them into the discussion from an early stage. This enabled TUC to mobilize funding for the course as well as promoting the project implementation, shifting the scope of the project from an academic course to impact on the ground.

LESSONS LEARNED

In terms of perceived impact, the partnership with TUC specifically led to a development of a **master-level academic course** on Her City Toolbox spanning two semesters. This has provided valuable input into publications, project proposals and the components of the toolbox. The partners have participated in different events and panels including the World Urban Forum. From the point of view of project leads, the main value added of collaborating with universities has centered on the nexus of education and advocacy. The students in the course strengthen their knowledge of tools to utilize in gender sensitive urban planning, becoming **young ambassadors at local level** for Her City. The collaboration has been fruitful

in integrating an academic perspective into the project and an evidence-based approach to our practical guidelines. Students are learning by doing when going through the different activities of each block performed on site, while learning the theories of gender sensitive urban planning.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/her-city--a-guide-for-cities-to-sustainable-and-inclusive-urban-planning-and-design-together-with>
<https://globalutmaning.se/her-city-toolbox-included-in-academic-curriculum-at-the-technical-university-of-crete/?lang=en>

4. GLOBAL URBAN LECTURES

Partner academics:

Individual academics from: University of Reading, University of Waterloo, University of New South Wales, University of Sussex, Delft University of Technology, University of Melbourne, University College London, University of Queensland, New York University, Leibniz University Hannover, Oxford Brookes University, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Capetown, University of California, Berkeley, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, The New School, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, University of Portsmouth, Universidad Nacional de Cordoba, University of Twente, Fordham University, London School of Economics, University of Manchester, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Breda University, Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, Cardiff University.



CASE OUTLINE

The purpose of the Global Urban Lectures is to share the experience and knowledge of renowned international scholars and practitioners on sustainable urbanization with a broad audience of urban stakeholders. Speakers are experts from UN-Habitat, universities, think tanks, governments, NGOs, and private sector institutions. In their essence, the Lectures, as instruction knowledge products, aim to demonstrate a **robust evidence-based analysis of sustainable urban development**, identify proposals, and provide cutting-edge examples. Considering the issue of fair access, UN-Habitat has not monetized this initiative, and all lecture packages remain in **open access** and available free of charge to everyone interested.

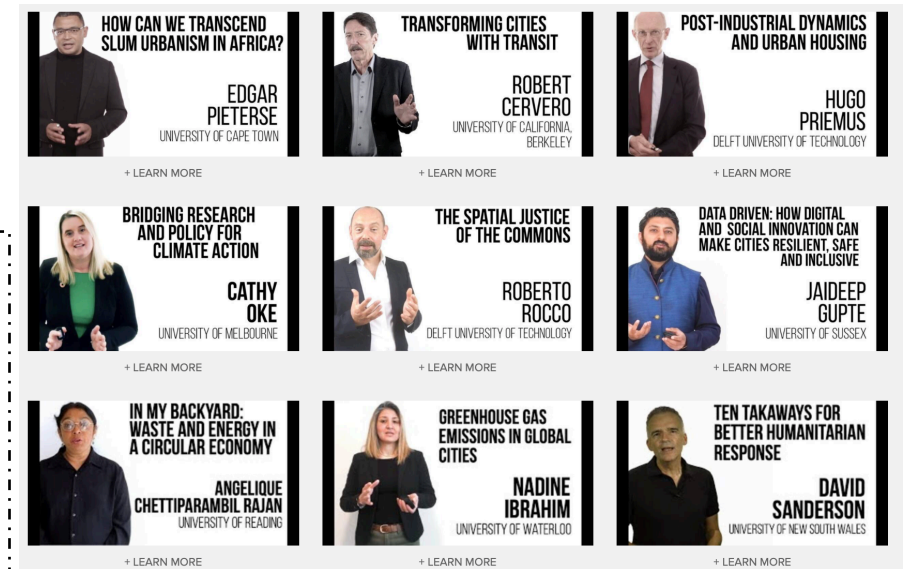


FIGURE 6. A SNAPSHOT OF GLOBAL URBAN LECTURES © UN-HABITAT

Lecture topics are aimed at a broad of leading urban practitioners, university academics, non-academic researchers, policymakers, and the general public interested in sustainable urbanization. Each lecture package comprises a 15-minute video on a topic related to sustainable urbanization, a short biography of the speaker, a synopsis of the session, and references to additional reading materials. The Lectures are for instance geared toward self-learning and as a refresher, as an addition to existing curricula offered by universities and training institutions, as resource materials for new curricula and course development, and to screen in public events as an introduction to debates on subjects relevant to cities and urban development. In the years since its founding, the series has released **six seasons** to date.

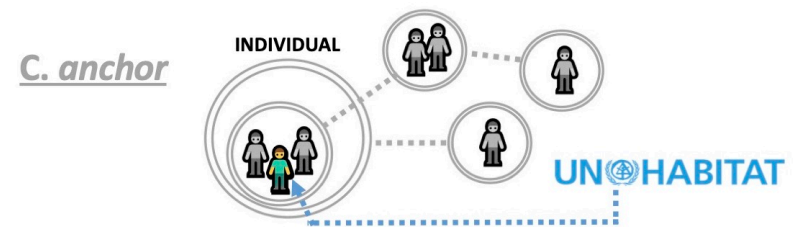
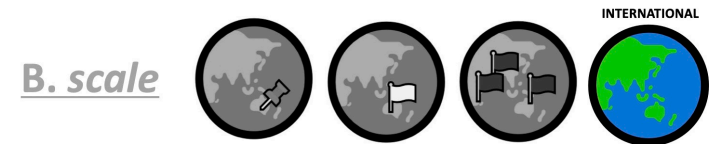
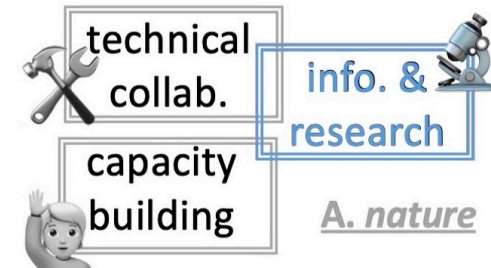
KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

Lectures have been produced by engaging individual academics (as well as other non-academic experts). A call for Lecture proposals is launched and disseminated via the Habitat UNI network channels. Individual lecturers apply and, if selected, are provided no funding from UN-Habitat or Habitat UNI and have to themselves bear the cost of recording the video. UN-Habitat provides recording guidance, edits the videos, and disseminates the videos, which are the central product of the partnership. In previous series (e.g. season 4) Lectures have been captured at a major UN-Habitat event like the World Urban Forum or the Habitat III.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Global Urban Lectures videos series is an excellent example of the added value of collaboration between UN-Habitat and academics. Through the series, UN-Habitat has made available in **attractive, concise, and engaging format research**, approaches, and case studies from lecturers. Academics are critical partners in this as they produce the latest research and can bring that knowledge to the lectures. University lecturers often have strong lecture experience and access to a recording studio and professional recording equipment and can produce high-quality video lectures.

The Habitat UNI network has been key to successfully reach out and partnering with academic researchers engaged in the lectures. The extensive network has enabled UN-Habitat to access scholars for potential lecturers through email campaigns and during events such as the World Urban Forum. The videos contribute to building urban stakeholders' capacity worldwide on topics related to urban sustainability and the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, and at the same time support UN-Habitat's outreach through free and accessible dissemination formats.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/knowledge/global-urban-lectures>

and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6yF4P9Pml&feature=emb_imp_woyt

5. UNI METRO HUB

THE METRO HUB CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Partner universities

Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Israel; Comunera University, Paraguay; José Matias Delgado University, El Salvador; Konkuk University, Korea; L'Institut Paris Region, France; Milano Polytechnic; National University of Colombia; University of Cambridge; Austral University, Chile; College of Urban Jurisprudence, Mexico; Delft University of Technology; Kadir Has University, Turkey; Los Andes University; Central University, Venezuela; National Research University Higher School of Economics and Strelka, Institute for Media, Architecture and Design, Russia; Seoul Institute of Technology, Korea; Tsinghua University; University College London; University of Buenos Aires; University of Cape Town.

MetroHUB

CASE OUTLINE

MetroHUB has been developed in partnership with several universities and academic institutions. This collaboration has aimed to provide training, facilitate field visits and knowledge exchanges, encourage studies and other capacity development-related services and connect the research with the territorial management of the government authorities. These activities have taken place, among others, in Cameroon, Mali, Uganda, Israel, Korea, Singapore, Italy, Spain, UK, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay. To do so, MetroHUB has established a consortium of universities to connect its capacity development work while strengthening the linkages and networking among the universities, academics, and metropolitan experts participating in the capacity development activities. From 2021, the consortium is being framed within the UN-Habitat UNI as a **thematic hub**: UNI-MetroHUB.



FIGURE 7. METRO HUB WORKSHOP IN BERLIN © UN-HABITAT

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

MetroHUB capacity development activities have involved the development of instruction knowledge products like **curriculum** for the three-month workshop “Urban ideas towards a sustainable and inclusive metropolis” with the Society of Architects of Buenos Aires, a **one-year post-graduate program** on “metropolitan management and governance” with the National University of Colombia, a one-month **diploma** on “metropolitan governance and governability” with the José Matias Delgado University in El Salvador as part of the technical cooperation with the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador, a one-week international summer school on territorializing SDGs at metropolitan scales with the Milano Polytechnic in Italy, and a one-month **course on metropolitan management** as part of the “diploma in

urban management and local development” with the Comunera University in Paraguay.

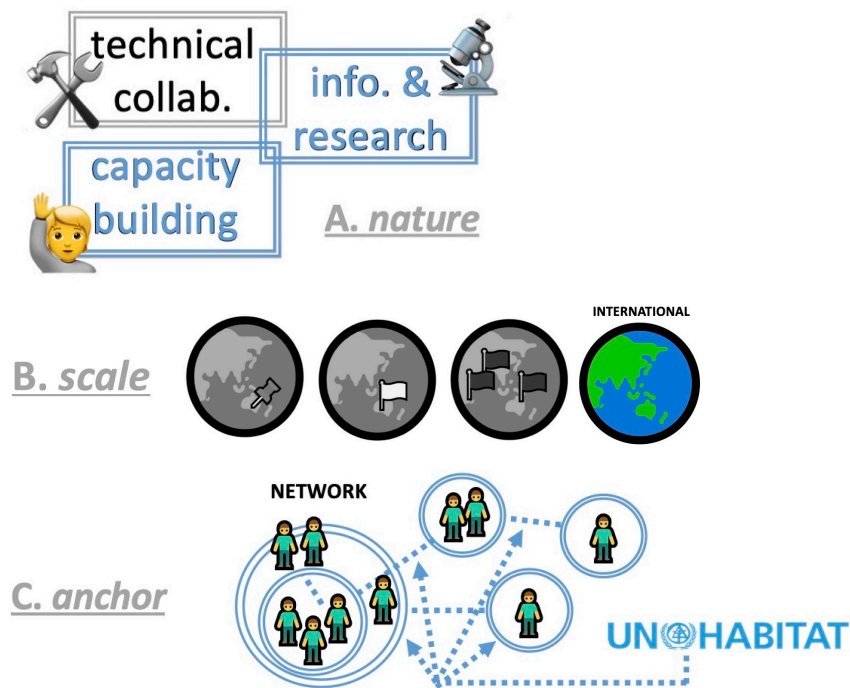
Convening knowledge products have involved programs centered on the **exchange of metropolitan research and training knowledge** & experience sharing, as with an international mission to the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara (Mexico) in October 2021 focused on strengthening the development of local capacities through technical visits in metropolitan areas. These knowledge products have been designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences between the participants and the urban authorities and actors through peer-to-peer methodologies and on-site expertise.

Emerging research and data knowledge products from the MetroHUB mainly focused on metropolitan governance, legal frameworks, planning, and finances. These include the development of an *Atlas of urban agglomerations of Colombia*, with 12 urban agglomerations under study, and an analogous effort in Paraguay with three urban agglomerations under study. The MetroHUB has also worked on hybrid research-policy knowledge products, encouraging collaborations between university and state authorities. These emerging alliances have involved the National Planning Department, the National University in Colombia, mayors of urban agglomerations, and the Universidad Comunera in Paraguay. These have been designed to facilitate **cooperation between the academic sector and urban governance institutions** to implement the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda at metropolitan levels, connecting research with public management.

LESSONS LEARNED

The alliance between UN-Habitat and universities guarantees the multidisciplinary of training, research, and knowledge transfer of metropolitan management. The program has managed to bring together disciplines such as engineering, political science, economics, law, sociology, architecture, environmental, among others, to work on the everyday affairs impacting metropolises and regions. More than 300 urban, territorial and metropolitan managers and decision-makers have incorporated the metropolitan approach in their vision and work practice. Furthermore, around ten universities have included metropolitan management in their academic programs. Finally, the alliance has provided support to the Global Network of Metropolitan and Regional Management for the capacity building of its members and applied research to their metropolises.

The partnership has **boosted innovation in the universities' academic programs** by generating new knowledge and data on territorial, urban and metropolitan dynamics. Additionally, the network between academics, students, and experts working on metropolitan and regional subjects has been optimized, consolidating a global consortium of universities.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/metrohub-supporting-metropolitan-development>

and

<https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/metropolitan-management/>

6. UN-HABITAT & IALS

A PARTNERSHIP ON URBAN LAW

Partner universities

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS), School of Advanced Study of the University of London.



CASE OUTLINE

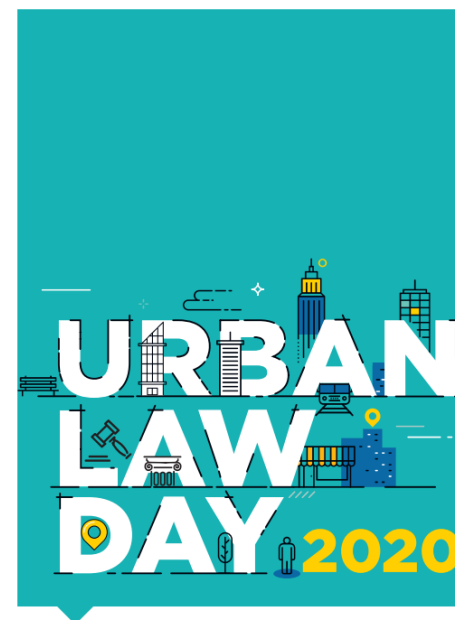
Urban law remains an underexplored field despite affecting the lives of most of the world's population. Effective legislative frameworks have been identified as a critical enabling factor of sustainable urban development. Yet, they appear to be one of the most common impediments preventing innovative mayors and urban managers from creating reforms and overcoming the pressing challenges of their cities and urban systems. Many cities are regulated by laws and bylaws that do not reflect the prevailing urban reality, have limited capacity to enforce laws and regulations, and limited access to specialist legislative expertise to respond to these challenges. In response to these challenges, UN-Habitat has partnered with IALS since 2013 to further academic knowledge, designing practical training for public officials on legislative drafting and developing a joint research agenda in urban law. Through these three pillars, this collaboration aims to assist UN-Habitat and governments at all levels in addressing urban legislative challenges and support the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership has involved a wide variety of education, research, data, and convening knowledge products and several hybrid knowledge products. For example, on the convening knowledge product front, UN-Habitat and IALS have organized eight urban law days, once a year, since 2012. The Urban Law Day is a specialized forum aiming to bring together a multidisciplinary circle of academics

and practitioners interested in urban legislation, including planners, architects, policymakers, economists, urbanists, and lawyers. The Urban Law Day aims to facilitate discussion, exchange views, network, and present new research findings and emerging issues. The latest 8th Urban Law Day (2021) was a reflective session on cities and the COVID-19 pandemic to answer the question: what did cities do

right? It was attended by a broad audience, including policymakers and urban practitioners worldwide. Overall, the Urban law days focus on a critical topic every year and bring together academics and practitioners worldwide to share ideas, knowledge, and practice. They have been well attended, and as a result, a worldwide interdisciplinary network has been initiated.



The partnership has delivered education knowledge products such as **capacity development and training modules**. For instance, between 2014-2019, UN-Habitat and IALS have designed a specialized course offering applied drafting skills to

professionals working in urban development. The course is tailored to the needs of urban practitioners and unpacks vital concepts such as the quality of urban legislation, methods, and techniques to improve its quality. It was designed as a five-day learning event. The **specialized course** has been delivered three times in

London for UN-Habitat staff and partners focused on building drafting skills to improve the quality of urban legislation. This five-day learning event has concentrated on familiarizing participants with the difference between policy and legislation, helping them understand what good urban legislation is, and developing skills to identify legislation problems. It has also aimed to introduce existing methods and tools for evidence-based policy and law-making and present basic drafting principles. More than 70 participants from all regions of the world have benefited from this training course.

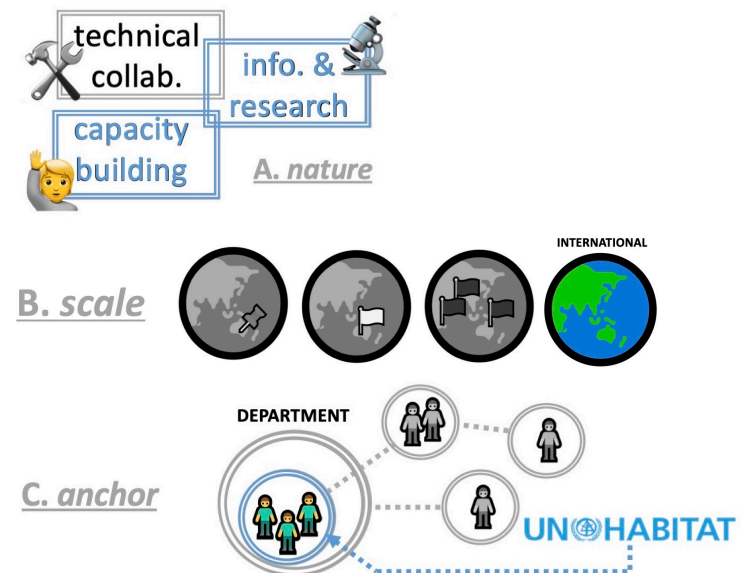
The partnerships' work on research and data knowledge products has centred on comparative analysis and research on urban law. For instance, UN-Habitat and the IALS have worked on **comparative analysis in urban law** to identify best practices and emerging and innovative pro-poor approaches. In 2019-2020, UN-Habitat and IALS undertook a comparative study on rental regulations in Kenya, Nigeria, Botswana, and South Africa. In 2020-2021, UN-Habitat and IALS, at the request of the Kingdom of Lesotho, undertook a comparative analysis on housing law and finalized a forthcoming report, Comparative Analysis of Housing Acts in Five Countries: Bolivia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa. The package includes a **policy options document**, bridging research and data knowledge products with advocacy and policy knowledge products. By leveraging comparative analysis of housing legislations, the report proposes policy recommendations to the government of Lesotho in addressing the increased demand for urban housing, improving residents' quality of life and security of land tenure while recognizing the environmental impact of climate change.

LESSONS LEARNED

The collaboration with IALS has enabled UN-Habitat to fill the identified knowledge gap in the quality of urban legislation and its links with niche areas such as climate change, housing, and health. These gaps have been addressed by **developing legal tools, policy briefs, strategies, and approaches** to respond to the urbanization challenges, enabling urban actors to improve the lives of urban dwellers. In addition to this, the capacity development programming of the partnership has equipped current and future practitioners with the necessary legal and policy skills and knowledge to address existing spatial inequalities. The partnership activities have also culminated into a robust **knowledge-sharing platform** through the **annual Urban Law Days**.

The partnership between IALS and UN-Habitat is transformative as both parties leverage their primary strengths for the common pursuit of the SDGs and the NUA. IALS brings its strength of generating knowledge, while UN-Habitat uses this

knowledge to create an impact in urban practice. Indeed, in a relatively short period (8 years), the fruits of the Initiative are already visible. The partnership has contributed to a broader recognition of the importance and role of urban law in sustainable development; facilitated networking and discussion among the academia, policymakers, and practitioners; and introduced urban law issues on the agenda by identifying niche areas for policy and legal debate. The Initiative has also promoted knowledge to **improve urban law practice and built awareness and capacity within the 'urban' community** on good legislation and law-making.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://www.ials.sas.ac.uk/research/research-centres/sir-william-dale-centre-legislative-studies/ials-un-habitat-urban-law>

and <https://unhabitat.org/urban-law>

7. SHERPA TOOL

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE HOUSING RATING TOOL FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Partner universities

International Centre for Earthen Architecture (CRAterre) at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Grenoble (ENSAG), University of Cambridge.



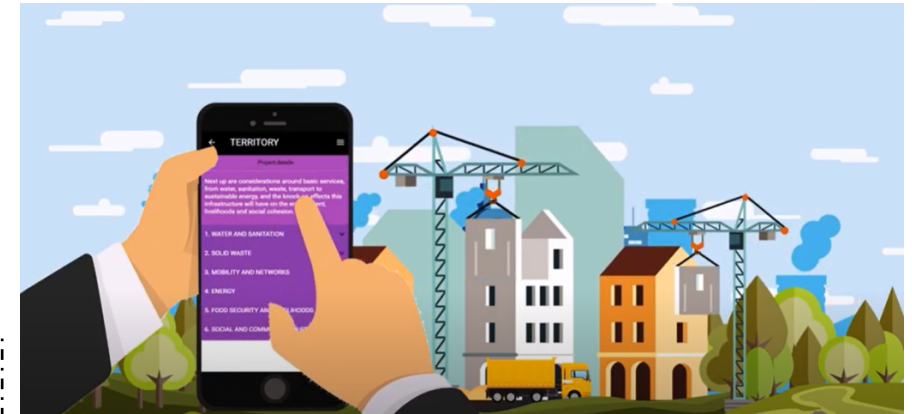
CASE OUTLINE

Sherpa is defined as a 12-indicator "self-evaluation tool" for project managers, communities, and other stakeholders involved in planning, designing, constructing, and assessing housing projects. Its housing focus is explicitly linked to the aspirations of the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement. The 12 indicators align with the four Pillars of Sustainability: Social, Economic, Environmental, and Cultural. They have been integrated into a mobile app that allows practitioners to link project input and self-assessment to dynamic on-the-spot evaluation. The tool development has also been supported financially by UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production's Sub-Programme on Sustainable Buildings and Construction led by the Ministry of Environment of Finland.

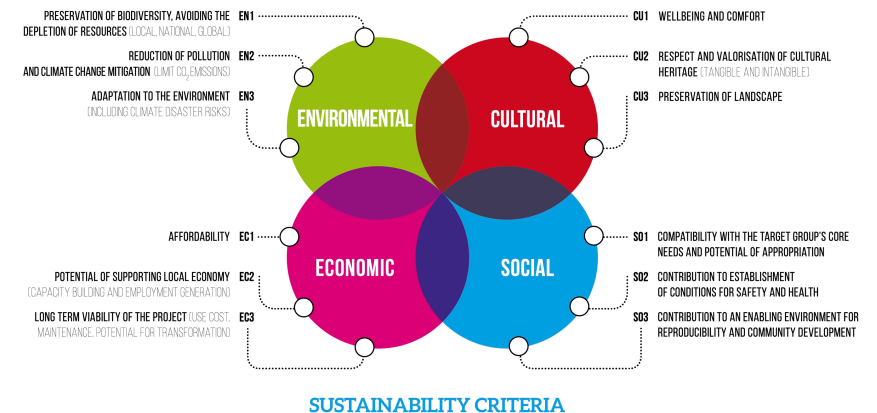
KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

Sherpa was launched in partnership with members of the Global Network of Sustainable Housing, a collaboration of diverse institutions centred on affordable and sustainable housing practices. Along with self-assessment capability, the tool has been designed explicitly as a monitoring and implementation tool for the New Urban Agenda. On the academic front, the development of Sherpa has involved

FIGURE 8. SHERPA TOOL © UN-HABITAT



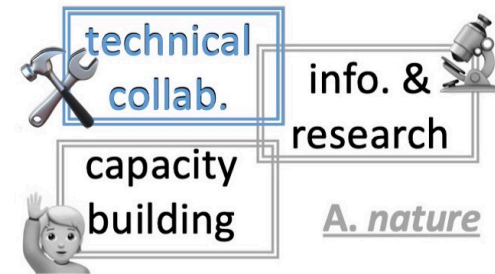
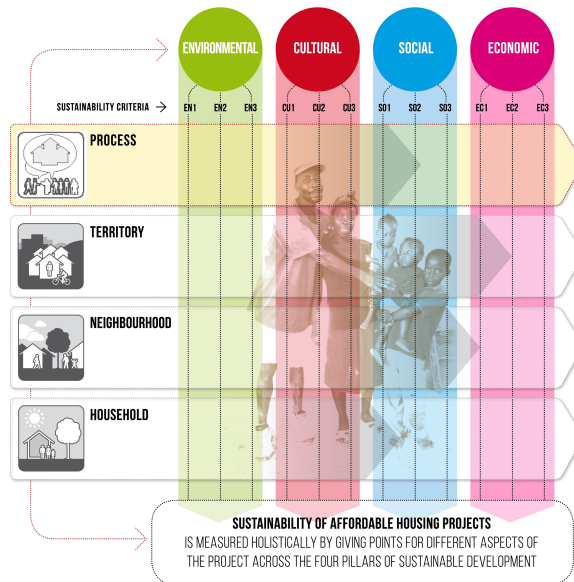
explicit collaboration with CRAterre (International Centre for Earthen Architecture), an architecture research laboratory at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Grenoble (ENSAG) and the University of Cambridge Natural Materials and Structures Group. Pilot projects for Sherpa have initially been put in place with NGO partners in Nicaragua (Ecosur Network), Burkina Faso (Yaam Solidarite), and Nepal (Architects without borders), and government partners in Kenya.



SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

LESSONS LEARNED

The main impact of the program has been the utilization of Sherpa as a methodology to conduct housing sector analysis and **project assessments**. CRAterre still uses the tool within their curricula to give students notions and technical information on sustainability aspects. Sherpa is currently being scaled up thanks to funding by the One Planet Network and the Sustainable Buildings and Constructions Programme. The program, led by UN-Habitat, is called Resource Efficient Housing. A new partnership with UNEP and UNOPS allows UN-Habitat to revise and revamp the tool to make it fitter for **National Housing Programmes and United Nations Country teams**. The revamping of Sherpa includes country-wide assessments on the sustainability of the building sector and its potential to render housing more sustainable, resource-efficient, and circular. Universities bring state-of-the-art knowledge on specialized construction and engineering aspects related to the housing sector. Likewise, they can pilot and strengthen capacity-building tools quickly.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

http://craterre.org/actualites:sherpa-methodology-for-sustainable-housing-project:-from-beta-version-to-public-dissemination?new_lang=en_GB

8. COUNCIL ON URBAN INITIATIVES

POSITIONING URBAN ISSUES AT THE HEART OF
GLOBAL DEBATES

Partner universities

University College London, London School of Economics

COUNCIL ON
URBAN
INITIATIVES

CASE OUTLINE

The Council on Urban Initiatives is a new collaboration between UCL's Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, UN-Habitat, and LSE Cities at the London School of Economics. It brings together mayors from across the world, including Mexico City, Bogotá, Freetown, Gaziantep, New Orleans, and Barcelona, with urban leaders, designers, activists, and thinkers to chart a path for empowering cities become healthier, fairer, and more environmentally responsible. The Council emerged in response to UN Secretary-General António Guterres' call to use the COVID-19 pandemic as an 'opportunity to reflect and reset how we live, interact, and rebuild our cities,' providing a platform to showcase local initiatives to replicate and scale them. The Council has been launched by a high profile line up made of the UN Secretary General, WHO Director General and UN-Habitat Executive Director. Constituted initially by an international group of eighteen pioneering mayors, practitioners, designers, activists and academics, the Council's mission is to **position urban issues at the heart of global debates; influence agendas** at the highest levels of the UN and international community, and promote



experimentation to overcome barriers to innovation and progressive policymaking at the city level.

FIGURE 9. LAUNCH EVENT FOR THE COUNCIL ON URBAN INITIATIVES © KIRSTEN HOLST

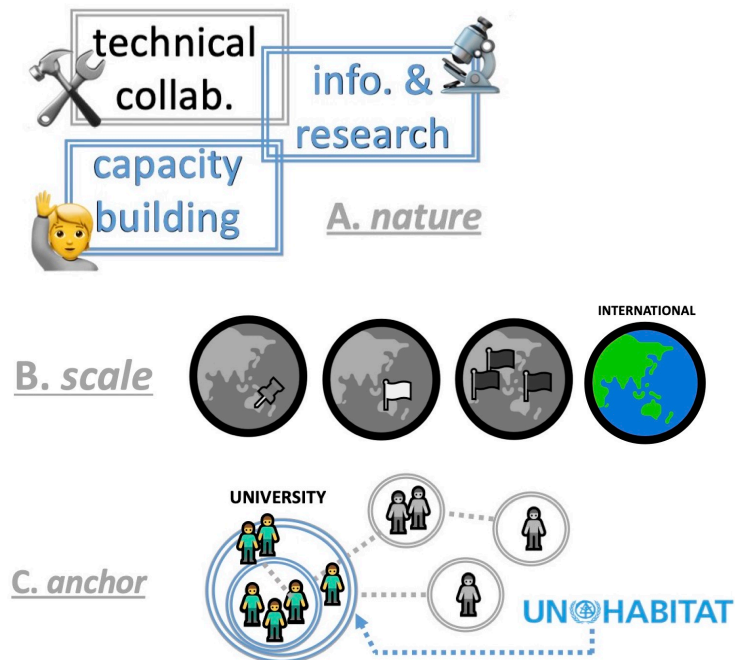
Consequently, the work of the Council has been organized around these three ambitious challenges: the JUST city, the HEALTHY city, and the GREEN city. The Council's mission is to centre the urban in global debates, influence agendas at the highest levels of the UN and international community and promote experimentation to overcome barriers to innovation and progressive policymaking at the city level. The Council seeks to take the opportunity to both expose the fragility of existing forms of governance and investment and advocate for new and more sustainable tools, frameworks, and partnerships that deliver real change on the ground for the people who need it most.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

It is perhaps early to offer a summary of the partnership's impact and outputs, but the Council has already attracted broad interest and media/social media attention. The Council is still in a preliminary development phase and aims to link exchange to practical advice and potentially research/data work. On November 3, 2021, the Council co-chairs Mariana Mazzucato, Director, IIPP UCL, and Ricky Burdett, Director, LSE Cities, hosted its first event, "Cities at the crossroads." This is best described as a hybrid **convening-advocacy/policy** knowledge product, with the event being held at the British Academy in London as part of the Council's launch initiatives. The event coincided with the COP26 and focused on the complexities and opportunities involved in generating governance, policy, and design responses at the city level around the core themes of health, justice, and the environment. Speakers included several Council members, convenors, and mayors (e.g., Mexico City, Barcelona, Freetown, Bogotá), and interventions from United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

LESSONS LEARNED

Whilst still in its early days of the initiative, the Council on Urban Initiatives program illustrates the capacity of UN-Habitat-university collaborations to **mobilise high-level conversations** that are at the same time aimed at advocacy and agenda setting. The Council has mobilised media and academic attention but also engaged directly the voices (as Council members) of major city leaders in mayoral positions around the world, with an eye at linking Southern voices (e.g. Bogota, Freetown) and Northern ones (e.g. Barcelona). Similar to prior UN-Habitat efforts for instance around the Habitat III summit and the New Urban Agenda, the Council has already focused on raising attention and level of debates **bridging research, policy and practice** (e.g. major architects and business leaders) but aspires to move from debate and advocacy to also practical 'projects' that might expand into instruction, technology and education knowledge products.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

. <https://unhabitat.org/initiative/council-on-urban-initiatives>

9. URBAN LEDS

URBAN LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION FOR COLOMBIA

Partner universities

University of Michigan (for this case study)



CASE OUTLINE

The Urban Low Emission Development Strategy (Urban LEDS) is a pathway for cities and towns to transition to a low emission, green and inclusive urban economy through its integration into city development plans and processes. Through exploring this pathway, local governments can yield immediate, direct, cost-effective, and scalable greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions while improving livelihoods for their citizens and businesses and optimizing local renewable energy and other resources. Thus, the Urban-LEDS project emerged to

help local governments in emerging economies reduce GHG by offering guidance, tools, and technical assistance, mobilizing cities to commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM). The project explores **innovative approaches to engaging stakeholders** in designing low-emission development scenarios, exploring access to finance, and supporting multi-level governance. Furthermore, it supports the improvement of effective monitoring and reporting systems through an integrated MRV (Measuring, Reporting, and Verifying) process, vital to tracking progress and accelerating climate action within cities.



FIGURE 10. MANIZALES, COLOMBIA © UN-HABITAT

In the first phase of Urban-LEDS (2012-2015), UN-Habitat guided 37 cities in 12 countries towards low-emission development through a support package that included practical process guidance, technical and policy expertise, advice on vertically integrated climate action at different levels of government, and financing models. The cities participating in the project were selected after a competitive call for interest in 2012. Approximately 50 cities responded, of which eight cities were chosen as Model Cities, and 21 were selected as Satellite Cities. In addition, eight additional European cities were chosen for their expertise and experience in mitigating climate change. Model Cities were encouraged to share their experiences with Satellite Cities at the national, regional, and international levels, creating an environment conducive to knowledge, exchange of experiences, and peer learning. The second phase of Urban-LEDS (2018-2021present) served as an extension of the program, expanding the number of countries, cities, and towns involved. In 2018, the in-country project focused on

building critical relationships with national government ministries, project cities, and other stakeholders, formalized by creating national project advisory groups. National and local government staff and other relevant stakeholders benefit from personalized training, study tours, workshops, and webinars. In each country, a training plan is designed to meet local demands. Capacity development can be institutional or technical in nature.

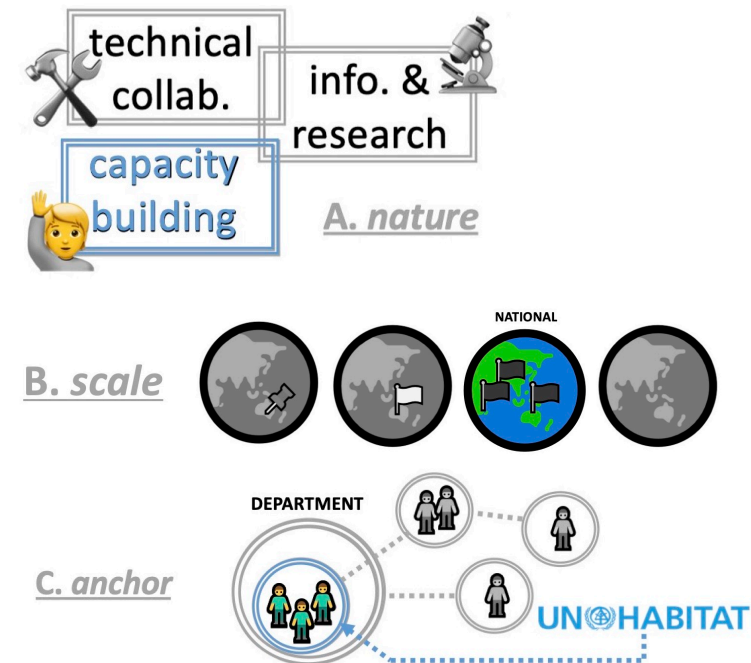
KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

The University of Michigan participates as a project partner through its Master of Urban Design (M.U.D.). Master's students have a **capstone course** dedicated to providing recommendations on improving multilevel governance for climate action in Colombia. It does so by determining the different legal requirements needed for subnational climate action plans and integrating SDGs 11 and 13 into the country's National Urban Policies. In Colombian cities, UN-Habitat and the University of Michigan's evaluation through the Law and Climate Change Toolkit focuses urban projects around the "Biodivercities" initiative, whose implementation in Manizales benefited from the added value of the collaboration. Students identify the challenges associated with the vertical links at the national, state, and local levels in implementing the National Action Plans for Climate Change (NAPCC), exploring the constraints of funds in climate-resilient infrastructure and urban development. At the end of the course, students submit an evaluation report on Colombia's national and sub-national urban and climate policies using the "Climate Law and Change Toolkit." The final reports, which could be considered a hybrid education and research knowledge products, are made publicly available.

LESSONS LEARNED

In Colombia, Urban-LEDs has supported several cities in developing low carbon development strategies and GHG emissions, integrating action plans against climate change, and implementing demonstration projects of low carbon development solutions. Collaboration has led students to **think holistically** about cities and climate change, from international commitments to the national and sub-national levels. In particular, the application of the Climate Change Law and Toolkit has highlighted the need for urban legislation that prioritizes the promotion of climate actions to reduce GHG emissions and the vulnerability of communities to natural disasters. The assessment provides critical inputs, such as **recommendations for legal adjustments and best practices**, to strengthen urban

and climate planning policy and legal frameworks at the national, regional, and local level and improve their responsiveness to climate change, enhancing Colombian cities' resilience and sustainability and allowing the country to better align with its international commitments to climate mitigation and adaptation and implement its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-and-university-of-michigan-assess-colombia's-legal-and-policy-frameworks>

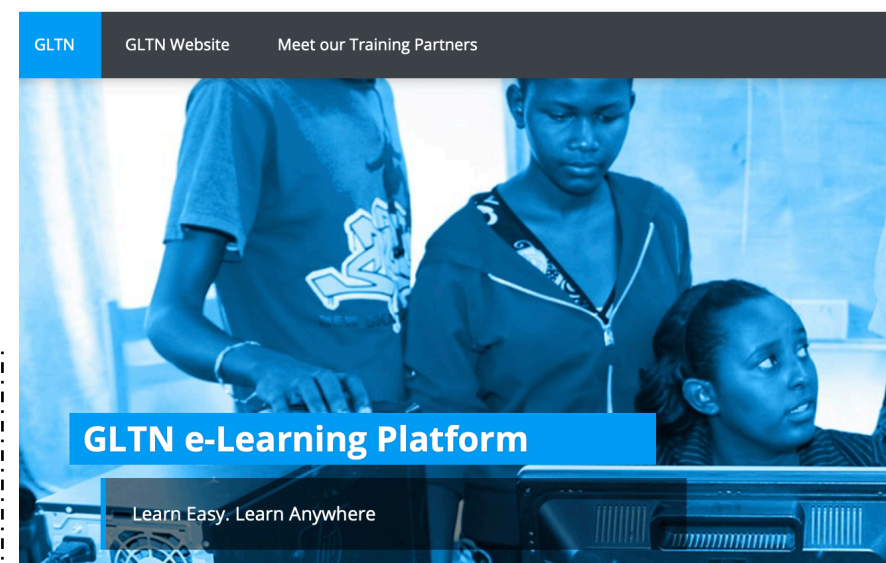
10. THE GLTN TRAINING & RESEARCH CLUSTER

A GLOBAL LAND TOOL NETWORK (GLTN)
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & RESEARCH
INSTITUTIONS CLUSTER

Partner universities

University of East London (UEL) and Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) (for this case study)

Other examples of GLTN university partnerships: Aalborg University, African Institute for Strategic Research Governance and Development (AISRGD), Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS), Centre for Land Tenure Studies (CLTS) - Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Comite Technique Foncier-Development (CTFD), Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Institute for International Urban Development (I2UD), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanization in the South (N-AERUS), RMIT University, Technical University Munich (TUM), University of Florida (UF), University of Twente, University of West Indies (UWI), Urban Training and Studies Institute (UTI), and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).



CASE OUTLINE

The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) is an international alliance of more than 85 partners working to increase access to land and tenure security for all, with particular focus on the poor, women and youth. The Network does this by developing, testing, and disseminating inclusive and gender-responsive land tools aimed to these ends. GLTN partners include universities and knowledge institutions alongside civil society organizations, professional bodies as well as bilateral and multilateral organizations. UN-Habitat is a founder member of the Network and houses its Secretariat. Over the years, the Network has developed innovative land tools, frameworks, and approaches that are tested and available for countries to use and implement in their land reforms.

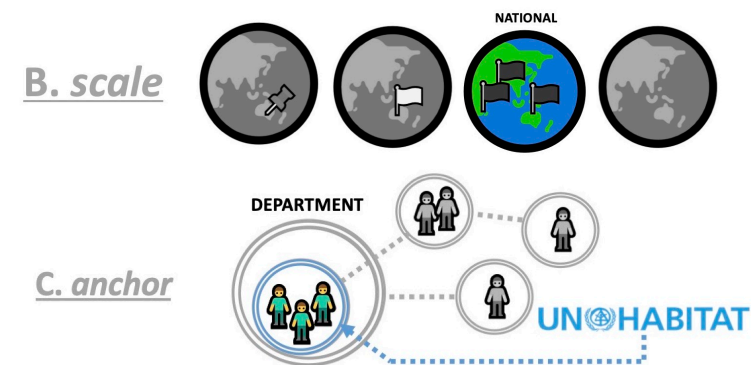
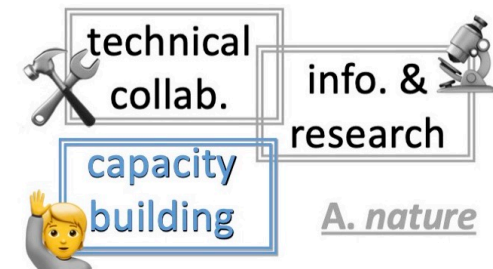
More specifically, the GLTN International Training and Research Institutions Cluster, involves UEL and NUST which presently lead and coordinate by the GLTN Secretariat in UN-Habitat for the outputs detailed below. However it is important to note the GLTN over twenty academic partners and research/training institutes.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

Capacity development, as an integral part of the ongoing work of the cluster, is critical to the Global Land Tool Network. The development of knowledge products is guided by a Capacity Development Strategy, centred on training and teaching resources to be developed in collaboration with various cluster members. For instance, the cluster has collaborated on curriculum development and teaching support by creating an online structured knowledge base designed to support flexible use in academic teaching, training, and research on Responsible Land Administration. This six-module “Teaching Essentials” resource is available online in English and French. In addition, the cluster has formulated a plan to partner students from universities in the ‘global north’ with students from universities in the ‘global south’ to undertake field research on land-related issues, with a particular focus on the use of pro-poor and gender-responsive land tools for the realization of tenure security for all. Overall, this has resulted in a wide suite of “GLTN E-learning” offering including other module-based courses like Gender Evaluation Criteria or Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning, many of which are also targeted and translated for a francophone audience.

LESSONS LEARNED

To date, the main result of this university partnerships has been that of offering, via the cluster and through the network, a substantial and growing resource base of high quality pro-poor and gender responsive land tools, implementation guides, academic papers, and teaching and training materials. Engagement with universities has offered UN-Habitat staff a substantially increased theoretical understanding, knowledge base and practical capacity in the area of increasing access to land and tenure security for all, illustrating the value of university partnerships to leverage a wide range of experts globally, from a diversity of relevant disciplines, toward an explicitly applied challenge.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/programme/global-land-tool-network-gltm>

and <https://elearning.gltm.net/>

11. COMPARING URBAN OBSERVATORIES

CONNECTING, ANALYZING AND ENHANCING
THE GLOBAL URBAN OBSERVATORY NETWORK

Partner universities

University College London, University of Melbourne, Gauteng City Region
Observatory (for this case study)



CASE OUTLINE

The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) was established as a result of the Habitat II conference in Istanbul and has the mission to support "**better information for better cities**" by building a global urban knowledge base that will enable monitoring and assessment of urban conditions and trends. This international effort is supported by a network of local urban observatories designated workshops that develop monitoring tools for urban policy formulation. Today, UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatory Unit (GUO) is overseeing and coordinating 374 urban observatories worldwide

The GUO monitors global progress in implementing the New Urban Agenda, tracking global urban conditions and trends and supports governments, local authorities, and civil society organizations in developing and applying urban indicators, statistics, and other policy-oriented urban information. Over the past decade, systematic guidance on setting up urban observatories has been provided to Member States leading to the development of a global network of observatories. Many of these are either located within or in collaboration with

universities in Global South and North. GUO has in the past two years partnered with several universities in facilitating more systematic knowledge about what observatories are and how they can be set up, run and networked effectively.



FIGURE 11. GUO NETWORK EXPERTS FROM GCRO AT UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY, NAIROBI © UN-HABITAT

In this specific case a partnership with two universities, UCL (Department of STEaPP) and University of Melbourne (Melbourne Centre for Cities), and a major Southern example of observatory capacity like the Gauteng City Region Observatory, has been leveraged to deliver convening and **research knowledge products to advance the GUO network**.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

In 2019-2021 the Global Urban Observatory partnered with University College London, University of Melbourne, Gauteng City Region Observatory for the delivery of a **comprehensive guidebook** as to the variety and challenges of urban observatories internationally. The resulting report, *Urban Observatories: A Comparative Review*, provides a review of 'urban observatories,' which explores the various features, functions, and activities these institutions have and perform

and reveals the critical role urban observatories play in knowledge mobilisation and urban governance. This first-of-a-kind landscape examines urban observatories, can leverage their ‘boundary-spanning’ role working at the interface between knowledge production and decision-making. It has informed both scholarly publication as well as **a reflection not just on but by observatories in the response to the COVID-19 crisis**. The report has thus been released alongside a companion working paper and **podcast**, both focused on the COVID-19 crisis, which build on a series of in-crisis engagement aimed not only at research but also at convening between observatories facing pandemic challenges and advocacy for the value of observatories in confronting these.

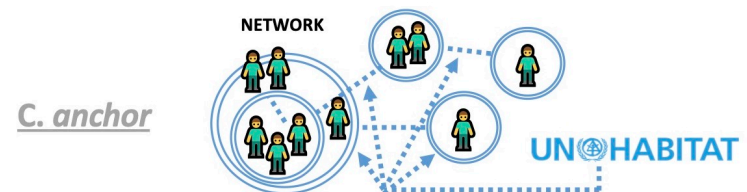
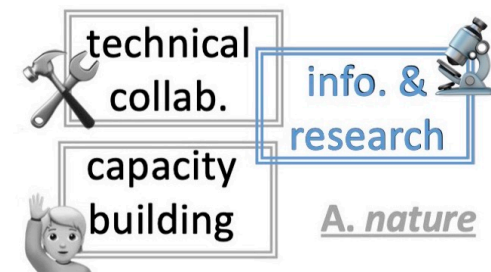
In doing so the project relied on presence at **both academic conferences** like the January 2021 *Urban Imaginaries* conference of the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), **as well as major policy fora** like the October 2021 UN World Data Forum. Supported and mediated by UCL, Melbourne and GCRO, these have allowed for reflection sessions and connecting opportunities through various working groups with urban observatories from around the world, leading to the further development of the network.

LESSONS LEARNED

Representing an academically-driven collaboration with practical convening and advocacy capacity, this partnership between UN-Habitat GUO, University College London and University of Melbourne allowed to mix a series of research knowledge products with partnership-building and deepening – thus doubling as convening knowledge product. Key in the partnership has been its focus on research knowledge products whose development process allowed explicitly for a connecting function. Also key has been the engage key exemplars of urban observatory with attention to demonstrating the **innovative capacity and international standing of Southern institutions** like GCRO, Karachi Urban Lab, Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre and more.

The partnership has leveraged a benchmarking approach explicitly oriented to strengthening the imagination of the possible for observatories and of the variety of models at work today for those either currently, or wishing to begin, operating an observatory at an urban scale. It has also underscored the potential flexibility in a (multi-) university collaboration, moving from a comparative analysis to an in-crisis engagement as the pandemic struck across continents. As such it has opened

up a chance for an explicit exchange between observatories that also reaches out to the wider public, leveraging social media dissemination of quick reflections from the field as many of these observatories confronted directly the brunt of the crisis, hence equally seeking to **strengthen a community of practice of like-minded institutions**.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/programme/global-urban-observatories>

and <https://unhabitat.org/urban-observatories-a-comparative-review>

12. WASTE WISE CITIES TOOLKIT

OPTIMISING WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH THE AID
OF DIGITAL METHODS

Partner universities

School of Civil Engineering, University of Leeds



CASE OUTLINE

The Waste Wise Cities program originated as a **call to action** for local governments worldwide to adhere to twelve fundamental principles in waste collection and management, gathering and using data in decision-making processes, and monitoring the improvement of SDG indicators related to municipal solid waste management, sustainable consumption and production and marine litter (SDG 11, 12 and 14). The program seeks to reduce spatial inequalities and poverty, making cities increasingly prosperous by providing innovative solutions to the urban waste crisis, contributing to a significant improvement of the urban environment while mitigating the negative impacts of poor waste management in climate change and plastic pollution. In addition, the program aims to help cities and local governments put the issue of waste management high on the political agenda.

Cities that decide to be part of the initiative must sign a letter of intent from local authorities and create a **waste management profile**, which is used as a baseline to measure the program's impact and evaluate and monitor cities' progress towards becoming Waste Wise.



FIGURE 12. WASTE WISE CITIES TOOL CAMPAIGN MATERIAL. © UN-HABITAT

UN-Habitat plays a facilitating and support role in the process by helping cities collect and track data, share best practices, maintain a network of member cities, design outreach, advocacy, and education activities, and help develop financial plans and profitable projects. To date, nearly 250 cities in the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Arab countries, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions have been part of this initiative.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

Waste Wise Cities program has expanded its partnership with various international organizations. One of the prominent partnerships is with Global Partnership on Marine Litter implemented by UNEP, where Waste Wise Cities have provided new findings on city's solid waste management status and plastic leakages from municipal solid waste management systems in cities in the world, using Waste Wise Cities Tool. The part of the deliverables crystalized through the Partnership is the identification of marine litter hotspot cities and river basins, where UN-Habitat collaborated with the University of Leeds School of Civil Engineering team. Based on this collaboration, the University of Leeds conducted **GIS-based modelling** to produce a global estimate of SDG indicator 11.6.1 and identify marine litter hotspot cities and river basins, using city waste

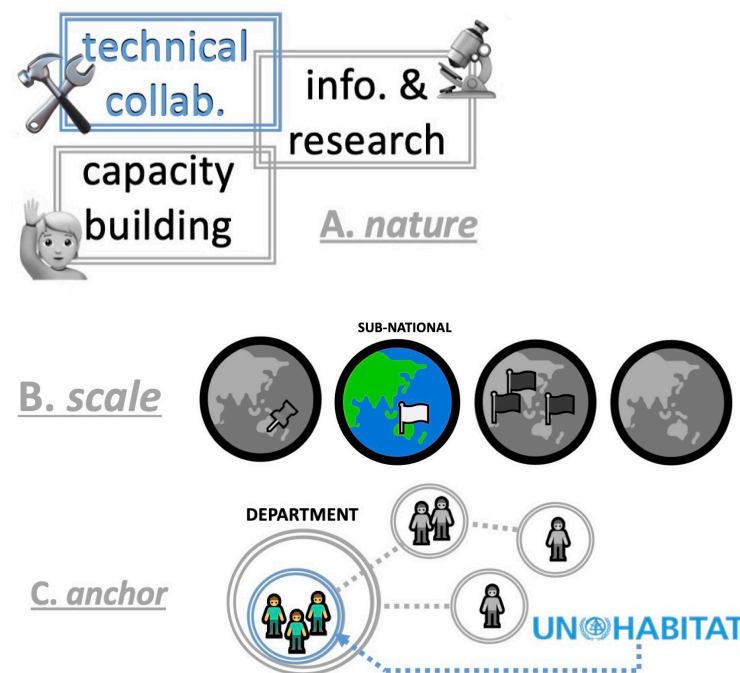
data collected in 2021 using Waste Wise Cities Tool. The modelling incorporates machine learning and AI for estimating the values for municipalities lacking data. The findings indicated the polluter countries in terms of plastic leakage into the environment and hotspot cities that urgently need policy intervention and infrastructure development to improve solid waste management.

The Waste Wise Cities partnership with university counterparts has focused on a variety of knowledge products, mainly around **data and research** generated by tracking and collecting data on waste through the Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT). WaCR is a step by step guide to assess city's municipal solid waste management performance through monitoring SDG indicator 11.6.1, "Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities, out of total municipal solid waste generated by the city". The Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT) consists of seven steps to guide cities on how to collect data on MSW generated, collected, and managed in controlled facilities. The tool provides a household survey guide for estimating total MSW generation, a questionnaire to investigate the MSW recovery chain and criteria to check the environmental control level of waste management facilities in the city. The program also delivers **education** knowledge products such as the Waste Wise Academy, a platform designed to disseminate **online courses, tools, guides and webinars** related to waste management developed and/or organized by UN-Habitat and its partners. The program also facilitates **city to city exchange**, through Waste Wise Cities Challenge, also brings together member cities looking to improve the management of their municipal solid waste management (known as 'Changemaker Cities') with mentor cities (known as 'Supporter Cities') committed to sharing their good practices and expertise. In addition to these, a number of **advocacy** knowledge products, such as advocacy toolkits, awareness raising materials and drafting project proposals, round off a complex profile of knowledge products with a wide variety of outputs and cross-regional international reach.

LESSONS LEARNED

University of Leeds was a prominent contributor for the **technical development** of Waste Wise Cities Tool. The expected results from the GIS modeling currently being conducted is potentially very **influential for engaging decision makers** in the field of plastic pollution are not to be seen as just pure research outputs. Incorporating cutting edge scientific knowledge in UN-Habitat campaigning and programming that can change the international discourse on marine litter, plastic

pollution and municipal solid waste management. The partnership has also required time, testing and prototyping. Due to the technological complexity associated to the innovative part of the modeling such as machine learning and use of AI, deliverables have been staggered at lengthier deadlines, although early results already **inform the current legal-political discussions** as for instance on the legally binding instrument on marine litter and plastic pollution.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://unhabitat.org/city-in-philippines-is-first-to-complete-waste-wise-cities-tool-assessment-with-remote-support>

and
<https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Waste%20wise%20cities%20tool%20-%20EN%207%20%281%29.pdf>

13. INNOVATE 4 CITIES 2021

A GLOBAL RESEARCH-POLICY SUMMIT

Partner universities

Individual academics and university departments from: Durham University, Universidad Católica de Quito, City University of New York, Singapore Management University, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Bayero University Kano, University of Melbourne, Georgia Institute of Technology, Columbia University, Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT), Columbia University, Australian National University, and the Indian Institute for Human Settlements.



CASE OUTLINE

Innovate4Cities (I4C) is the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy's (GCoM) city-focused research and innovation initiative that aims to answer the most pressing questions cities and local governments ask when evaluating why and how to take climate action. GCoM gathers 11751 cities and more than 100 partners for climate action. The initiative arose based on the Global Action and Research Agenda on Cities and Climate Change Science (GRAA) issued at the 'CitiesIPCC' conference in Edmonton in 2018 with extensive academic and city network ownership. In 2021 UN-Habitat has partnered with GCoM and its academic partners for I4C to deliver a unique **virtual international event** taking place across continents in subsequent sessions. The I4C Conference built on several key international summits in 2021 including Race to Zero, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the Convention on Biological Diversity and set out to advance the GRAA toward the Glasgow 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP).



FIGURE 13. INNOVATE FOR CITIES CONFERENCE 2021 CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

In October 2021, with the participation of academic institutions, the Innovate4Cities 2021 conference partnered with academic institutions across four regions as **'regional curators'** Conference sessions and exchanges, all curated live by this coalition of GCoM, UN-Habitat and academic partners, focused on the nexus between science, practice, and innovation, vital for ambitious climate action. In addition, the conference examined local challenges and priority needs and cross-sectoral and multi-thematic pathways for success in scaling up climate action.

The conference governance has taken up an inclusive and academic-engaged approach mixing scholars, city leaders, and multilateral sector officers. Alongside participation from researchers in the organising committee and as regional curators, the event delivery involved a Science and Innovation Steering Committee and a Partners' Network Organizing Committee both with numerous scholars from both Global North and South all involved in **co-producing conference** set up and delivery.

LESSONS LEARNED

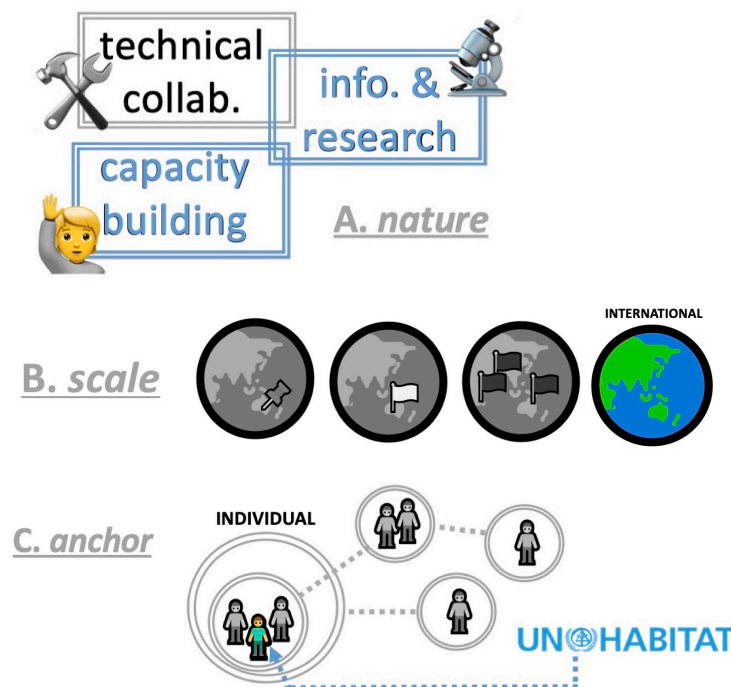
The event organisation and delivery illustrated the value of large international cooperation in both the delivery of convening-advocacy knowledge product like the mass online event of Innovate4Cities 2021, as well as the capacity to rely on cutting edge research whilst **putting cities in the ‘driver’s seat’** – as per I4C approach. Outputs from the event have been described by organisers as conference outcomes will be “knowledge-generating” and have **direct bearing on a wide network of cities** working proactively across regions. At the same time, a **keen eye for regional and local specificity**, and ownership of the event, have allowed the project to put the emphasis on tangible on-the-ground outcomes, the co-creation of regionally sensitive solutions, and the capacity for scholars and experts to present leading research, but also for city leaders to concurrently showcase innovation and practice from their nominated region.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit:

<https://www.innovate4cities.org> and
<https://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-and-global-covenant-of-mayors-call-for-programme-submissions-for-the-landmark>

and <https://unhabitat.org/climate-action>





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This document is intended to inform strategy and internal discussions on university partnerships and the Habitat UNI program. The authors have sought to ensure the accuracy of the material in this document and followed due research protocols at the University of Melbourne. They, the Centre, and the University of Melbourne are not liable for any loss or damage incurred through the use of this report.

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