

Urbanisation-Sensitive Programming (USP)

Assessment Tool

Version 2.1 (July 2024)

The intention & purpose of this Tool:

Urbanisation is a dynamic that is increasingly influencing and shaping entire geographical, social, economic and political systems - be it at regional, national or local level. This includes any space, even rural and remote areas because urbanisation is not limited to urban centres, but in some way or another, cities and their growth impact any kind of development throughout the entire world.

All kinds of initiatives - whether a strategy, a development programme or projects, or a smaller intervention - experience both: they are impacted by an intensifying dynamic of urbanisation, and they impact the shape and form of urbanisation in return. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly important to recognise and determine the impact of an intervention on urbanisation.

This tool builds on a simple model of urbanisation, which consists of ten different dimensions, i.e. lenses to look at this phenomenon. Each of these lenses represents a trend or dynamic, typically arising as a result of increasing urbanization. The model and tool should encourage different stakeholders to:

- a) become aware and mindful of this process being underway;
- b) consciously form an opinion on whether the initiative should or should not relate to or influence each dimension;
- c) identify how strongly this relation or influence tends to be present; and lastly
- d) provide some indications of why a relation/ influence is particularly weak or strong and what aspects - their presence or absence - may lead to a particular outcome.

Every model is arbitrary - they all carve out and portray a small part of reality and ignore the rest. This model can be both supported and questioned for many good and valid reasons. Furthermore, the kind of measurement it provides does not meet scientific standards of representativity or validity.

Instead, the purpose of the model is to increase awareness and stimulate conversations and dialogue between different actors and stakeholders. It is important to understand that this model and the tool are not normative - they don't suggest or prescribe that all dimensions must be addressed equally and/or fully. Instead, the intention is to ensure that the emerging profile is the result of a deliberate process, not the incidental result of ignorance or arbitrary choices and omissions.

Foundations of the Model

The model breaks urbanisation down into ten dimensions, which are described on the sheet "NumericAnalysis" of this workbook.

Each dimension is a composite of three different factors, which each speak to a developmentally relevant aspect of this dimension. These three factors each look at a different aspect, but together, they describe the dimension in a broader manner. Any intervention can hence address a dimension holistically (i.e. all its factors) or selectively. These factors can also be found on the sheet "NumericAnalysis" of this workbook.

Using the Tool

Switch to the sheet "Questionnaire" of this workbook.

1. You can start by creating an **"Ideal Importance" profile in the blue section** - i.e. how strongly you intend to address (i.e. relate to or influence) each dimension, ideally. Give each dimension a discretionary value, according to your understanding of what your initiative should emphasise and focus on. To create this ideal profile, fill in the ten light blue fields in column C, giving each a value between 0 and 5, whereby 0 means "not at all" and 5 means "fully".

Note: this first step is optional; it allows you to draw a comparison between your ideal and a measured profile (see next steps). You can also skip directly to the second step.

2. Continue by **"Measuring the Presence" of each dimension in your initiative in the red section**. Read the 30 questions in column E and give each a value between 0 and 5, whereby 0 means "not at all" and 5 means "fully". The term "initiatives" refers to your project, strategy or any other kind of initiative.

Here are a few hints:

- ➡ Do a first run-through: If you don't understand a question, skip it (if you have time left, you can still return at the end)
- ➡ Don't overthink it: Go with your gut feeling and provide an intuitive guess
- ➡ More is better: It's more important to answer as many questions as possible, rather than answering them very precisely

That's all - you're done!

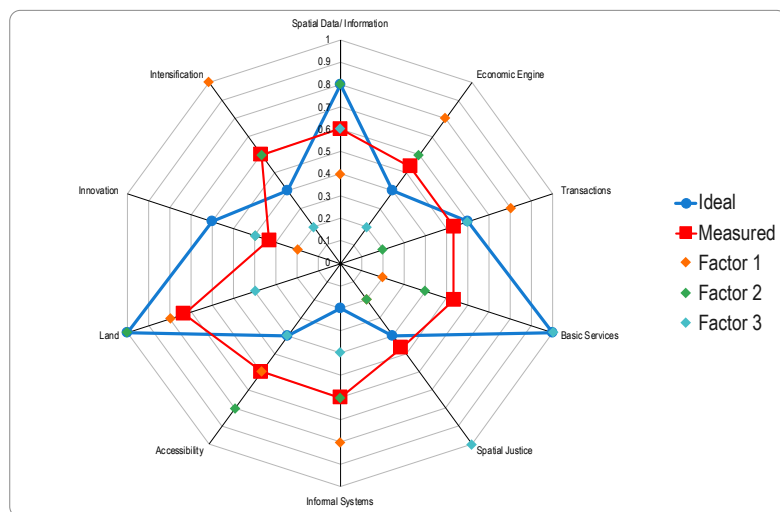
Interpreting the Result

Your profile(s) are presented in a graphic and a numeric manner. Read them in parallel.

Radar Diagram

The diagram has a red profile and possibly - if step 1 had been completed - a blue profile.

Both profiles represent how strongly a dimension is present, i.e. being addressed by the initiative - the blue line in an ideal manner (building on the discretionary opinion of the user) versus the red line presenting the result of the measurement after answering the 30 questions.



The red values are calculated as the average of the three factors composing each dimension.

Each factor is displayed in the form of a diamond, orange being the first, green the second and light blue the third factor (note that if multiple values coincide, the top one may conceal the others ones and if the user has skipped a question, the corresponding diamond will not appear).

Ask yourself the following questions:

- I) Which values of the red (measured) profile match your expectations and which ones come as a surprise?
- II) Where do the blue and the red profile coincide? These are areas where your measured presence meets your ideal intention.

- III) Where do the blue and the red profile differ significantly? Ask yourself what this may hint you towards, i.e. why this could be the case. Is there a simple explanation? Does this pose an issue?
- IV) A useful step to understanding it is to consider the three factors which lead to the result: firstly, do they scatter widely on the scale or do they coincide largely?

This is the time to look at the numeric analysis.

Numeric Analysis

The numeric analysis presents the same figures as the radar diagram.

Each dimension is listed, followed by the ideal importance value and the value of measured presence, which is the average of the three factors (normalised to a scale from 0 to 1).

The shade of each cell indicates its value, with values closer to zero becoming intenser red and values closer to one becoming intenser green:

Economic Engine	Urban centres show agglomeration effects, leading to endogenous growth and yielding an urban dividend, i.e. creating new values and assets and therefore funds to further sustain the function and evolution of the urban centres.	0.4	0.333333	To leverage the growing concentration and diversification of urban-driven economies (trade, service provision, work & jobs, cross-fertilisation of knowledge & ideas, etc.) for a rise in standard of living and wellbeing for the entire population, containing growing inequality (leave no-one behind).	0.80
				To ensure that the economic "dividend" of urbanisation is being leveraged to sustain and fund the basic functions (services, infrastructure maintenance and development) of the urban system to the benefit of all its residents and "users".	0.00
				To support and develop a functional balance between what citizens produce and what they consume in the urban system and hence lead to a robust balance between the two sides.	0.20

In this example, the two dimensional values for "Economic Engine" are quite close, i.e. the ideal and the measured presence do not differ much, however, within the dimension, one factor is very strongly represented, whereas the other two factors are almost absent.

The interpretation could be along the following lines of thought:

"In this strategy (or project), leveraging economic growth effects of urbanisation has not been a focus and in planning played a rather subordinate role. This coincides with the de-facto situation, i.e. the measured presence of addressing urbanisation as an economic engine. However, while neither using urban "dividends" to finance public services and infrastructure nor supporting a balanced development between production and consumption are important aspects, raising standards of living and well-being of the populations (and containing growing inequality) thanks to urban concentration and diversification is important, which is an "outlier" on this dimension."

A follow-on question could be: Given that factors within each dimension are highly interdependent, is it sensible to have just one factor holding such high importance while the others are insignificant (neglected?) or could a more comprehensive approach to urban centres being economic engines create more synergies?

Here is a second example, in which the two dimensional values differ greatly:

Basic Services	Basic services become increasingly complex, interdependent and their efficiency becomes dependent on the alignment with the underlying structure of the urban system and the consideration of growing demand.	1	0.533333	To adopt a spatial perspective on service delivery, allowing the identification of spatial segregation and local specificities, i.e. areas of high coverage or neglect and resulting disbalances and inequalities (→ leave no space behind).	0.20
				To build plans for operation, distribution and access to basic service delivery in harmony with the structure and interdependencies of the urban system (ind. hinterlands), allowing to harness spatial structures and locational advantages (e.g. primary/ secondary/ tertiary services tied to the optimal nodes in the system).	0.40
				To strategise, plan and deliver basic services in a forward-looking manner, making already today provisions for anticipated urban growth and development of the future.	1.00

While addressing the increasing complexity of basic service delivery was intended to be a key issue, the measured presence reveals that it plays a mediocre role. The reason may be that while the initiative pays great importance to a future-oriented manner of making strategies and plans for service delivery, at the same time the initiative neglects spatial analysis to identify spatial pockets of neglect and underprovision, as well as the potential (if not necessity) to take the underlying structure and dynamics of urban systems into account when planning the operation, distribution and access to basic services.

This allows for a more thorough reconsideration of whether the basal process of urbanisation has been taken adequately into account, i.e. whether the initiative is sufficiently urbanisation-sensitive.