

CITY PORTRAIT CANVAS GUIDE

Understand how to use the City Portrait Canvas as a tool to assess city strategies, policies, and programmes in a holistic way, integrating ecological and social, local and global considerations, inspired by the four lenses of the City Portrait.

 A3  2-8 people

STEP 1: Get to know the City Portrait Canvas

Download the City Portrait Canvas and get acquainted with the four lenses of the City Portrait. Watch the 10 minute [introductory video](#). Then read the Why, and What of each lens to familiarise yourself with the different themes related to a city's local aspirations and global responsibilities. For a deep dive into the City Portrait tool and its four lenses, we recommend reading the 'Creating City Portraits' [methodological guide](#).

STEP 2: Understand the components of your city strategy

Select a strategy you are working on in your city that you would like to assess for its social and ecological impacts, on both a local and global level. Note down the main components of the strategy on the City Strategy Worksheet. Then, write the name of your strategy inside the diamond shape in the centre of the City Portrait Canvas.

STEP 3: Analyse the strategy through the Local-Social and Local-Ecological lenses of the City Portrait Canvas

Now, dive deeper into the local impacts of your strategy.

- a. **Think about the possible positive impacts** that your strategy may have on these lenses. Take a coloured pen and indicate the themes where the strategy may create positive impact.
- b. For the same lenses, **think about the possible negative impacts** of your strategy, both direct and indirect. Use a pen of a different colour to indicate the themes where the strategy may create negative impacts.
- c. Ask yourself "how could the strategy be designed and/or implemented to **ensure and enhance these positive impacts**, and **prevent or minimise the possible negative ones**?" Note your ideas next to the lenses on the canvas.

STEP 4: Analyse the strategy through the Global-Social and Global-Ecological lenses of the City Portrait Canvas

Now explore the global impacts of your strategy. Repeat a), b) and c) from Step 3 for the Global lenses.

Tip: While doing the exercise, you might find yourself alternating between the positive and negative impacts. We recommend that you find your own intuitive way to navigate between steps a) and b).

STEP 5: Think about the interconnections between the lenses

- a. **Think about the interconnections** between the four lenses. Draw lines between the lenses to indicate when there is a positive or negative dynamic between issues identified. Use pens of different colours to indicate positive or negative interconnections.
- b. Ask yourself: "how could the strategy be designed and/or implemented to **reinforce the positive interconnections and minimise the negative**?" Note your ideas next to the lenses on the canvas.

STEP 6: Summarise your key insights

Summarise your key insights from Steps 3, 4 & 5 on the City Strategy Worksheet. Ask yourself "how would you refine the existing strategy to enhance its social and ecological benefits?"

LOCAL ASPIRATIONS

Note your ideas here:



Note your ideas here:

STRATEGY:

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Note your ideas here:



Note your ideas here:

LOCAL- SOCIAL

WHY?

This lens reflects the essence of lived experience in the city. All cities need to find innovative and transformative ways to improve their residents' wellbeing while reducing their global ecological and social impacts – this is at the core of the 21st century challenge.

WHAT?

This lens looks at the wellbeing of people in this city. It clusters wellbeing under four broad themes that are also covered by the Sustainable Development Goals – relevant to every city and nation:

- Being healthy: with health, water, housing, and food
- Being connected: through community, mobility, connectivity, and culture
- Being enabled: with education, employment, energy, and income
- Being empowered: through equality in diversity (avoiding significant differences of outcome by gender, race, and other identities), political voice, peace & justice, and social equity (avoiding extreme income and wealth inequality).

GLOBAL-SOCIAL

WHY?

The same globalized business models that drive intensive resource use in cities often lead to intensive pressure on workers in those supply chains.

The consumption of globalised goods in a city supports many jobs around the world, but these jobs often involve exploitative labour conditions. None of these workers want to lose their jobs, but they all want their rights at work to be respected.

WHAT?

This lens looks at the wellbeing of people worldwide which may be impacted by the city through global supply chains. Like the Local-Social lens, wellbeing is based on the Sustainable Development Goals, and clustered under four broad themes – Being healthy, enabled, connected and empowered - a responsibility of every city and nation.

LOCAL-ECOLOGICAL

WHY?

Every city is located within a natural habitat – be it a forest, a wetland, or a river basin. Nature has learned to thrive in these diverse places. Yet cities all too often degrade the very soil, air, and water that enables life to thrive, and on which city residents depend for their health and wellbeing.

WHAT?

This lens focuses on the essential services that nature provides – from regulating air temperature to preventing soil erosion. The ultimate aim is for the city to match or even exceed the ecological performance of the wild land next door – What if the city could sequester as much CO₂, store as much groundwater, house as much biodiversity, and cool the air, just as nature does?

GLOBAL-ECOLOGICAL

WHY?

Global ecological destruction is largely driven by the resource consumption and pollution resulting from the economic and industrial processes underpinning provision of goods and services.

WHAT?

This lens takes stock of the city's total resource use and asks how much pressure the city is putting on the life-supporting systems of our planet - such as CO₂ emissions that lead to global heating, and land use leading to deforestation. Resource use includes:

- a. resources consumed within the city (eg petrol use in cars and buses)
- b. resources used to produce all goods and services imported into the city (eg water and fertilizer used to grow imported food)

The city's resource use can be assessed in terms of the extent to which it is placing excessive pressure on planetary boundaries, and therefore must be reduced.

Strategy:

Components of the strategy:

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-
-

How would you refine the strategy to enhance its social and ecological benefits, both locally and globally?

Summarise your insights from the previous steps:

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