



Public space site-specific assessment

Guidelines to achieve quality public spaces
at neighbourhood level

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INTRODUCTION

The Global Public Space Programme

UN-Habitat promotes sustainable and inclusive urban planning to address current urbanization challenges such as population growth, urban sprawl, poverty and inequality. In 2012, UN-Habitat launched its Global Public Space Programme with the objective to promote public spaces as a keystone for sustainable cities in order to ensure good quality of life for all.

Over the years, the Programme has developed an iterative approach to public space that includes a variety of normative and operational tools, methodologies and practices that support local and national governments and other partners to make public spaces safe, inclusive, accessible and green. This includes public space assessments digital tool, policy guides, strategies and design principles, participatory tools, technology and innovation projects and carrying out advocacy work and implementation.

The Programme has adopted the definition from the Charter on Public Space which defines public spaces as **“places that are publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive”**.

Inclusively designed, well-managed and properly maintained public spaces can have a great impact on the social, economic, health and environmental life of cities and communities. Public spaces build social cohesion and improve the quality of human interactions. Public spaces provide opportunities for people to earn a living, boost economies by increasing the land value of the surrounding area and, sometimes, by attracting new businesses. Also, public spaces improve the physical and

Public space is acknowledged widely in global agendas. It can support urban centres to meet the targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); especially **Goal SDG11 — “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”**

“By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.” SDG 11.7

The New Urban Agenda also places an emphasis on public spaces with 10 separate paragraphs mentioning its importance, for example paragraph 37: **“We commit ourselves to promoting safe, inclusive, accessible, green and quality public spaces, including streets, sidewalks and cycling lanes, squares, waterfront areas, gardens and parks, that are multifunctional areas for social interaction and inclusion, human health and well-being, economic exchange, cultural expression and dialogue among a wide diversity of people and cultures, and that are designed and managed to ensure human development and build peaceful, inclusive and participatory societies as well as to promote living together, connectivity and social inclusion.”**

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