
Sustainable Urban Growth Course: Land Use, Transport, Housing and Project Financing

24 – 28 May 2027
Vienna





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Programme Summary

Sustainable urban growth is the subject of this one-week training course for city, municipal and ministry leaders at strategic level, ending in a sustainable urban growth plan for one city or district. Cities add people faster than they add roads, homes and services, and each choice on land use, transport and funding constrains the next. The approach moves from a growth diagnosis, through land use, mobility and housing, to project financing and governance, and then to a worked plan. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in sustainable urban growth.

The Business Case

Unplanned growth locks cities into long commutes, stretched services and costly retrofits. Leaders who read growth pressure early, test land use scenarios and rank projects against funding can direct limited budgets to the investments that serve the most residents, and can explain those choices to councils, investors and communities with evidence.

- Service Coverage Gaps: Narrow as growth areas are matched with transport, water and social infrastructure in sequence.
- Capital Programme Quality: Improves as projects are ranked by a scoring model before funds are allocated.
- Reporting Credibility: Strengthens as indicators track benefits against a set baseline.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 37101: Its management system requirements for sustainable development in communities shape the governance work in Session 4.
- ISO 37120: Its indicators for city services and quality of life provide the baseline and tracking set in Sessions 1 and 4.
- New Urban Agenda: This UN-Habitat framework guides the commitments mapping in Session 1 and the spatial choices in Session 2.

Intended Participants

- Leaders accountable for city or regional growth strategy and master plans.
- Planning and development directors who approve land use and infrastructure sequencing.
- Transport and housing leaders who must align programmes with growth areas.
- Finance and investment leaders who fund and prioritise urban capital projects.
- Policy advisers who report on urban sustainability to councils.



The programme serves municipalities, development authorities, housing and transport agencies, and planning ministries.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose urban growth pressure using a baseline of city service indicators.
2. Participants will be able to compare land use scenarios for their effect on travel, cost and liveability.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate transport, housing and service plans for consistency with one another.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise urban projects with a scoring model and test funding options.
5. Participants will be able to construct a governance and benefit tracking arrangement for an urban programme.
6. Participants will be able to justify a sustainable urban growth plan to a council or ministry committee.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Sustainable Urban Growth Diagnosis

Where is the city growing, and what does that growth demand of land, services and budgets?

- Urban Growth Profile and Trend Review
- New Urban Agenda Commitments Mapping
- ISO 37120 City Service Indicator Baseline
- Growth Pressure and Land Consumption Map
- Case Review of Two Contrasting City Regions

Day 2: Land Use and Spatial Structure

How does the pattern of land use shape travel, cost and liveability?

- Compact and Mixed-Use Growth Options
- Density and Land Value Analysis
- Green Space and Public Realm Standards
- Infrastructure Sequencing Plan
- Spatial Scenario Comparison Matrix

Day 3: Transport, Housing and Services

How are mobility, homes and services planned so that each supports the others?

- Transit-Oriented Development Test
- Housing Demand and Affordability Segmentation
- Network Capacity and Service Coverage Review
- Informal Settlement and Regeneration Options
- Resilience Screen for Heat, Flood and Water Stress



Day 4: Project Financing and Governance

How are priority projects funded, governed and held to account?

- ISO 37101 Management System Requirements for Communities
- Project Prioritisation Scoring Model
- Public Funding, Land Value and Partnership Options
- Stakeholder and Delivery Governance Map
- Benefit Tracking Indicator Set

Day 5: Applying Sustainable Urban Growth to One City

Is the urban growth plan ready for a council or ministry committee to adopt?

- Applying the Session 1 Baseline to the Chosen City
- Testing the Session 2 Land Use Scenarios
- Checking Session 3 Transport and Housing Links
- Running the Session 4 Prioritisation and Funding Tests
- Completing the Sustainable Urban Growth Plan

Methodology

The programme is built around case analysis and structured exercises. Participants work with an anonymised city dataset and spatial scenarios, score options in small teams, and defend their plan before a simulated council committee.

- Suggested activity: Comparing two growth scenarios for a coastal city.
- Suggested activity: Scoring a package of ten transport and housing projects.
- Suggested activity: Drafting a benefit tracking indicator set for a new district.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a sustainable urban growth plan for one city or district. It contains a growth baseline, a preferred land use scenario, a transport and housing alignment note, a ranked project list with funding options and a governance and tracking arrangement. It is used to brief a council or ministry committee.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is sustainable urban growth training suitable for leaders without a planning qualification?

Yes. Sustainable urban growth training is set at strategic level and assumes responsibility for city, transport, housing or investment decisions, not a planning or design qualification.



Which standards does sustainable urban growth rest on in this programme?

Sustainable urban growth rests on ISO 37101 for community sustainable development management systems, ISO 37120 for city indicators and the UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda as a framework.

How is the sustainable urban growth plan used at work?

You use the sustainable urban growth plan to brief a council or ministry committee, rank capital projects and open talks with funders.

How does sustainable urban growth differ from a course on smart city technology?

Sustainable urban growth centres on land use, services and funding choices that shape a city over decades, while smart city technology centres on digital systems and data platforms.