Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability: Maltese Maritime Fortified Cities
UN Global Cities Compact

December 2013

Saviour Formosa - Malcolm Borg

CULTURE: The Fourth Domain

ECONOMICS
Production & Resourcing
Exchange & Transfer
Accounting & Regulation
Consumption & Use
Labour & Welfare
Technology & Infrastructure
Wealth & Distribution

ECOLOGY
Materials & Energy
Water & Air
Flora & Fauna
Habitat & Settlements
Built-Form and Transport
Embodiment and Food
Emission & Waste

Organization & Governance
Law & Justice
Communication & Critique
Representation & Negotiation
Security & Accord
Dialogue & Reconciliation
Ethics & Accountability
POLITICS

Identity & Engagement
Creativity & Recreation
Memory & Projection
Belief & Ideas
Gender & Generations
Enquiry & Learning
Health & Wellbeing
CULTURE

Vibrant
Good
Highly Satisfactory
Satisfactory+
Satisfactory
Satisfactory–
Highly Unsatisfactory
Bad
Critical

SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT
December 2013

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
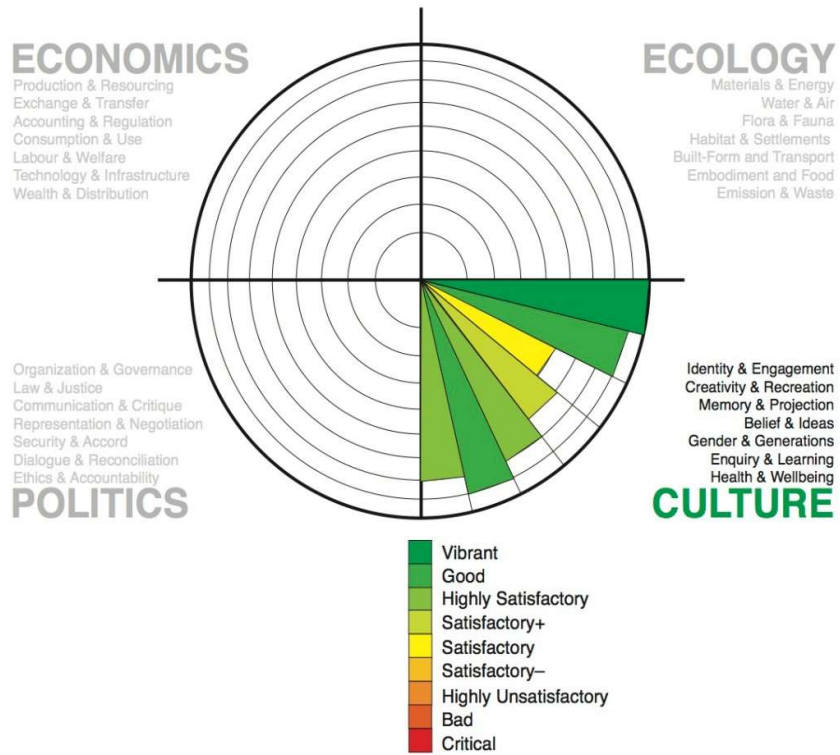ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
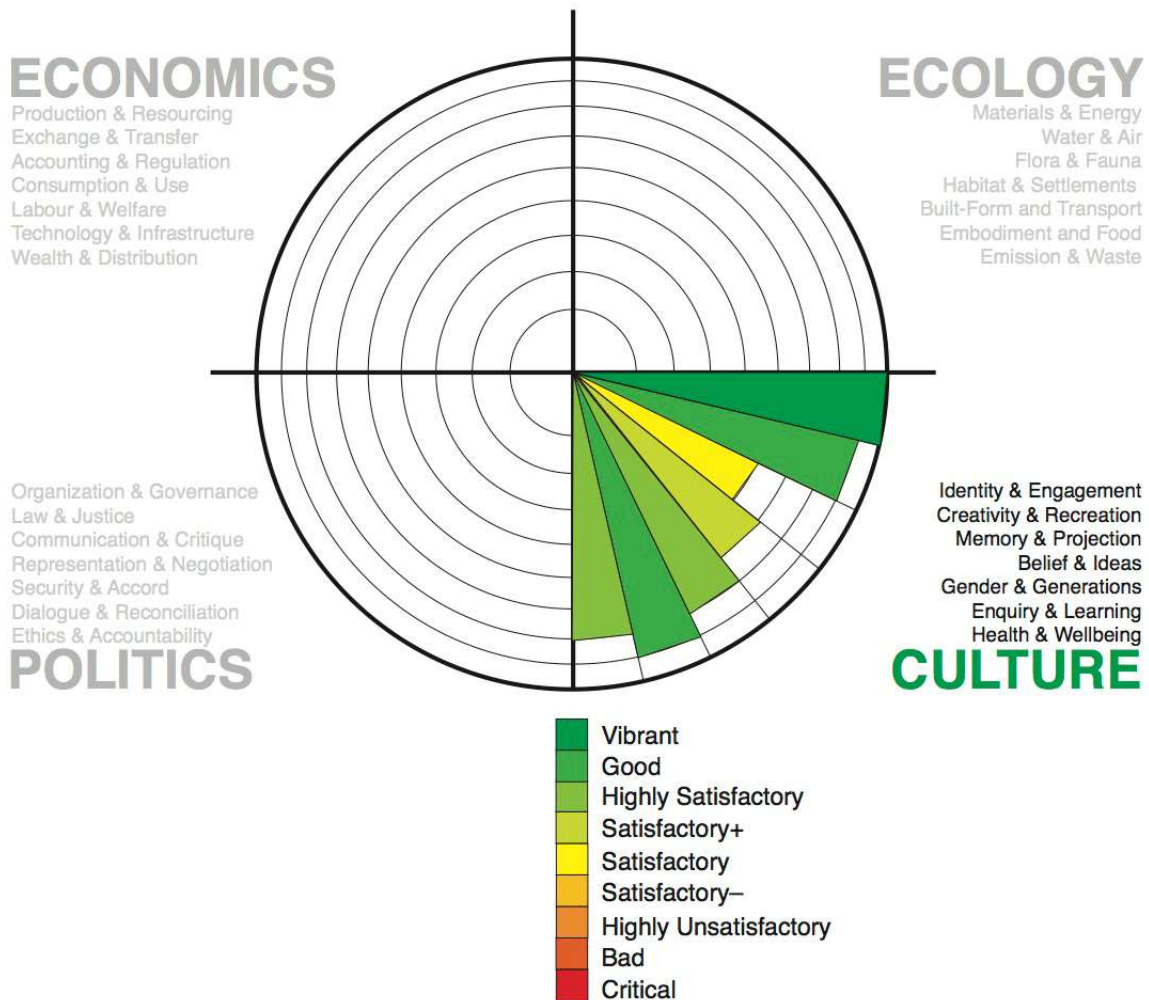Cities Programme

Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability[1]

Based on Guideline 1. Urban Profile Process v3.3 2013[2]

Figure 1. Culture: The Fourth Domain

Culture is a fundamental domain of social life. It is called the 'Fourth Domain' here, not because it is the fourth most important domain, but rather because for too long it has been ignored and subordinated in a flawed metaphor called the 'triple bottom line'. That approach problematically presents three domains—economics, environment and the social—and incorporates the domain of culture as an extra consideration inside the social. Economics is treated wrongly as the master domain, and it stands alone against which others are judged. In the radical alternative presented here all social life, including economics, is considered social. Thus we work with four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. They are all social domains, and culture is as important as any of the other three domains. It is only the fourth domain in the sense that it is being brought back in.

Some approaches use the term 'the fourth pillar' rather than 'fourth domain'. We are uncomfortable with the building metaphor. Pillars standalone. They are fixed. Three pillars can hold up a building without the fourth. In our metaphor domains, the four domains are integrally inter-related. The culture of economics is as

fundamental as the economics of culture, and so on. The culture of economics, ecology or politics is critical to the sustainability and vibrancy of those other domains of social life.

Defining Social Domains

Defining such fundamental terms as *economy*, *ecology*, *politics* and *culture* is extraordinarily difficult. It is not just because they are *essentially contested concepts* such as 'democracy', 'justice' or 'aesthetics'.[1] Rather it is more fundamentally because they have become taken for granted as the fields across which we walk, the basis of our understanding of our world. Everybody assumes that they know what is meant by economy or culture, and we are rarely called upon to define them. It is increasingly rare for even academics to actually try to define these basic terms. The classic text *Keywords*, for example, only explores one of these four concepts.[2]

In summary then, the approach to understanding sustainability presented here begins with the social. The concept of sustainability thus also is quite different from the 'triple bottom line' approach. Sustainability in that approach is not more than the durability of a particular practice. *Positive* sustainability as defined here is practices and meanings of human engagement that project an ongoing life-world of natural and social flourishing. Thus sustainability is a *social* phenomenon long before it is an economic or even just an ecological phenomenon.

It is analytically possible to divide 'the social' into any number of domains. Social domains are dimensions of social life understood in the broadest possible sense. In this case we have chosen the minimal number of domains that are useful for giving a complex sense of the whole of social life: namely, ecology, economics, politics and culture. The particular words that we use to name each of the domains are less important than the social space that the combinations of those words evoke. The 'social domains', as we name and define them here, are analytically derived by considering the human condition broadly across time, across different places, and across different ways of life. In practice, the four domains remain mutually constitutive.

Defining Culture

Taking into account the many earlier controversies over defining these concepts, here is our definition:

The cultural is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material objects, which, over time, express the social meaning of a life held-in-common.

In other words, culture expresses 'how and why we do things around here'.

The 'how' in this simple sentence refers to how we practice, how we describe those practices to ourselves, and how any objects produced by that practice are given meaning. Just as there are ecological, economic and political questions about practice, the core cultural question is what is the meaning of 'how we do things'. This relations to the question of 'why?'. It emphasizes the centrality of meaning. The 'we' refers to the specificity of a life held-in-common. Culture is always a question of the meaning in relation to others. And 'around here' specifies the spatial and, also by implication, the temporal particularity of all culture.

The concept of 'culture' had its beginnings in agriculture and cultivation, with subsidiary senses of 'honour with worship' of *cultura*, which in the sixteenth century were linked to understanding of human growth and development.[3] In some contemporary definitions, culture is reduced to the arts divided into high culture and

---

[1] The notion of 'essentially contested concepts' comes from Walter Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 167–198.

[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana/Croom Helm, Glasgow, 1976. Politics, ecology and economics do not appear in his list. The key to understanding why Williams leaves out politics, economics and ecology is that he is living in a period where, already, the vocabulary has already separated out the domain of the cultural, and his book is presented as a vocabulary of cultural concepts.

[3] Williams, *Keywords*.

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

popular culture, but here we treat culture much more broadly and deeply. Questions of power are ever-present in the cultural domain in relation to contested outcomes over social meaning.

Domains, Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the social domains—ecology, economics, politics and culture—can analytically be divided in the 'perspectives'. These perspectives were called 'subdomains' in an earlier stage of our thinking, but the less formalistic metaphor of perspectives works better to register the interconnected nature of any of these provisional subdivisions. It emphasizes the issue that the subdivisions are *points of view*; not categorically separate or standalone categories. For example, the cultural perspective of 'Enquiry and Learning' reaches out to all the other domains in relation to enquiring about economics, politics and ecology, even though we have located its primary home in the domain of culture. This can be seen graphically in the figure of the Circle of Sustainability (Figure 1). All perspectives are inter-related through the centre-point of the circle, sometimes tellingly in mathematics called 'the origin' of the circle'.[4] Each of the cultural perspectives such as 'identity and engagement' or 'creativity and recreation' is analytically derived using the same process that is used for working through broad considerations of the human condition to derive the four social domains.

Table 1. Social Domains and Perspectives

Economics	Ecology
1. Production and Resourcing	1. Materials and Energy
2. Exchange and Transfer	2. Water and Air
3. Accounting and Regulation	3. Flora and Fauna
4. Consumption and Use	4. Habitat and Settlements
5. Labour and Welfare	5. Built-Form and Transport
6. Technology and Infrastructure	6. Embodiment and Food
7. Wealth and Distribution	7. Emission and Waste
Politics	**Culture**
1. Organization and Governance	1. Identity and Engagement
2. Law and Justice	2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Communication and Critique	3. Memory and Projection
4. Representation and Negotiation	4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Security and Accord	5. Gender and Generations
6. Dialogue and Reconciliation	6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Ethics and Accountability	7. Health and Wellbeing

Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the *perspectives* is divided in seven *aspects*. The rationale for this is to generate a finer assessment process. While the figure of the circle, coloured according to levels of sustainability (Figure 1), gives a simple graphic representation of the outcome of an assessment process, there are a series of background considerations that need to be brought to the fore. A primary consideration involves having a way of assessing why, from a particular perspective, a city or locale is judged to have a certain level of sustainability. In the background to the graphic circle are sets of questions linked to social indicators. To decide systematically on what is a good range of questions the 'Circles of Sustainability' approach entails

---

[4] The philosophical history of the centre-point of the circle is extraordinarily rich, and for our purposes provides a way of qualifying the modern tendency to treat geometrical ordering as a simple technical exercise. For classical Greek philosopher from Euclid to Aristotle a 'point' is both the most abstract and the particular of entities. The tenth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Nairzi, who wrote commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy, responded that 'If any one seeks to know the essence of a point, a thing more single than a line, let him, in the sensible world, think of the centre of the universe and the poles'. (Cited from the notes by Thomas L Heath, accompanying *Euclid, The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Dover Publications, Mineola, 1956, p. 157.) For the thirteenth-century Andalusian Sufi writer, Ibn Arabi, the centre point of a circle is the point of 'necessary being' while the circumference is the circle of 'possible' or contingent existence. 'The "possible" is the space between the point of the real and the circumference'. (Cited from Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn Arabi: Time and Cosmology*, Routledge, Abington, 2008, p. 120.

analytical dividing the perspectives into different aspects. For example, one aspect of the cultural perspective of 'identity and engagement' is 'diversity and difference'. All of this is laid out below in Table 2.

Table 7. Summary of the Matrix of the Urban Profile Processes

Domains	Perspectives	Aspects
Culture *Defined as the practices, discourses, and material objects, which express the social meaning of a life held-in-common*	1. Identity and Engagement	1. Diversity and Difference
		2. Belonging and Community
		3. Ethnicity and Language
		4. Religion and Faith
		5. Friendship and Affinity
		6. Home and Place
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	2. Creativity and Recreation	1. Aesthetics and Design
		2. Performance and Representation
		3. Innovation and Adaptation
		4. Celebrations and Festivals
		5. Sport and Play
		6. Leisure and Relaxation
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	3. Memory and Projection	1. Tradition and Authenticity
		2. Heritage and Inheritance
		3. History and Records
		4. Indigeneity and Custom
		5. Imagination and Hope
		6. Inspiration and Vision
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	4. Beliefs and Ideas	1. Knowledge and Interpretation
		2. Ideologies and Imaginaries
		3. Reason and Rationalization
		4. Religiosity and Spirituality
		5. Rituals and Symbols
		6. Emotions and Passions
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	5. Gender and Generations	1. Equality and Respect
		2. Sexuality and Desire
		3. Family and Kinship
		4. Birth and Babyhood
		5. Childhood and Youth
		6. Mortality and Care
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	6. Enquiry and Learning	1. Curiosity and Discovery
		2. Deliberation and Debate
		3. Research and Application
		4. Teaching and Training
		5. Writing and Codification
		6. Meditation and Reflexivity
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	7. Health and Wellbeing	1. Integrity and Autonomy
		2. Embodiment and Corporeal Knowledge
		3. Mental Health and Pleasure
		4. Care and Comfort
		5. Inclusion and Participation
		6. Cuisine and Nourishment
		7. Monitoring and Reflection

In setting up the Circles of Sustainability approach we have kept in mind the following considerations:

- *Accessible* — At one level, the approach should be readily interpretable to non-experts, but at deeper levels it needs to be methodologically sophisticated enough to stand up against the scrutiny of experts in assessment, monitoring and evaluation and project management tools;
- *Graphic* —The approach needs to be simple in its graphic presentation and top-level description, but simultaneously have consistent principles carrying through to its lower, more complex, and detailed levels;
- *Cross-locale* —The approach needs on the one hand to be sufficiently general and high-level to work across a diverse range of cities and localities, big and small, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to be used to capture the detailed specificity of each of those different places;
- *Learning-based* —The approach should allow cities to learn from other cities, and provide support and principles for exchange of knowledge and learning from practice;
- *Comparable* —The approach should allow comparison between cities, but not locate them in a league table or hierarchy;
- *Tool-generating* —The approach needs to provide the basis for developing a series of tools—including web-based electronic tools (compatible with various information and communications technology platforms). These range from very simple learning tools to more complex planning, assessment, and monitoring tools;
- *Indicator-generating*—The approach needs to provide guidance for selecting indicators as well as methods for assessing their outcomes;
- *Relational* — The approach needs to focus not only on identification of critical issues, indicators that relate to those critical issues, but also the relationships between them;
- *Cross-domain* — The approach needs to be compatible with new developments that bring 'culture' in serious contention in sustainability analysis—such as the United Cities and Local Governments four pillars of sustainability. The approach therefore uses a domain-based model which emphasizes interconnectivity of economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions, each of which are treated as social domains;
- *Participatory* — Even if it is framed by a set of global protocols, the approach needs to be driven by stakeholders and communities of practice;
- *Cross-supported* — The approach needs to straddle the qualitative/quantitative divide, and uses just enough quantification to allow for identification of conflicts.
- *Standards-oriented* — The approach (and its methods) should connect to current and emerging reporting and modelling standards.
- *Curriculum-oriented*—The approach needs to be broad enough to provide guidance for curriculum development, and therefore useful for training.
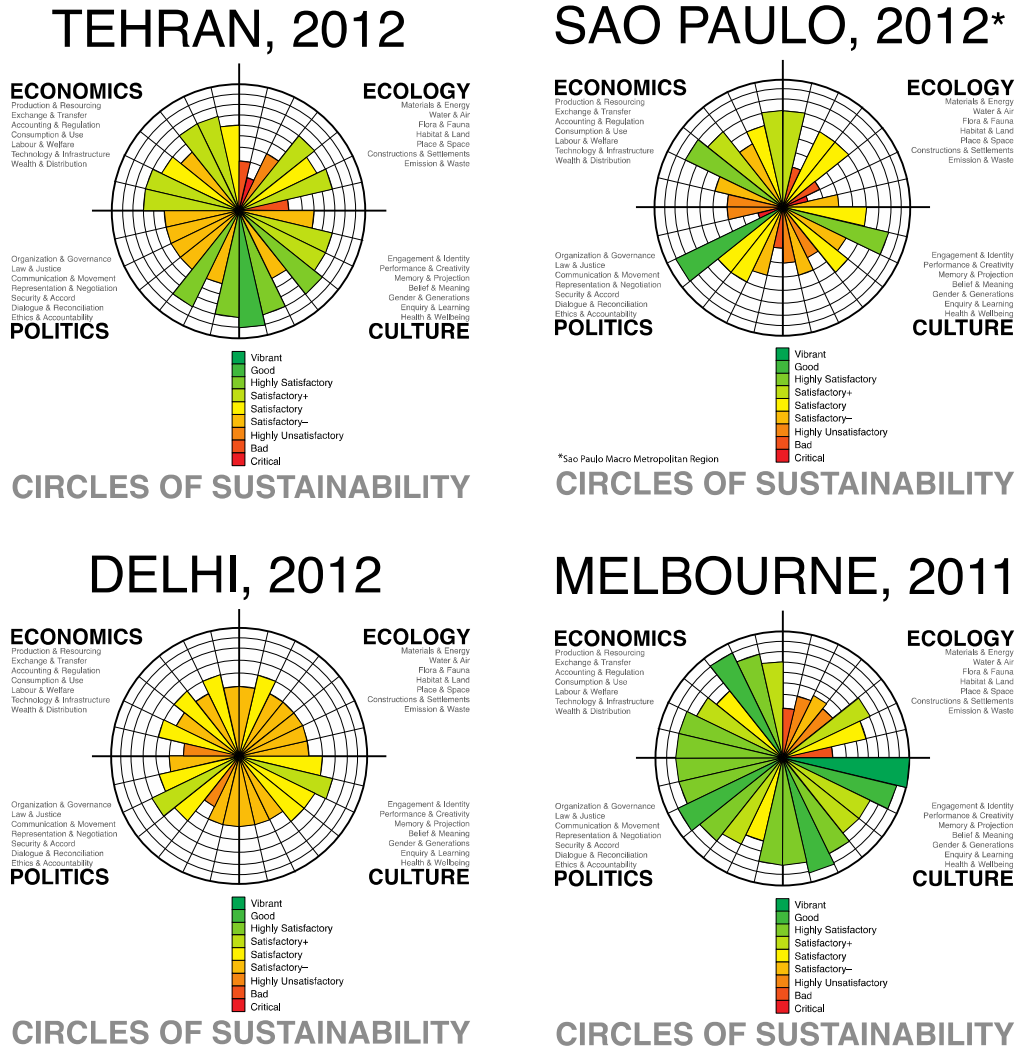
Background

The Circles of Sustainability profile process is intended as a way of developing an interpretative description of the sustainability of an urban region and its immediate hinterland. Here *sustainability* is understood in relation to local, national, and global processes: ecological, economic, political and cultural.

The approach, developed across the period from 2007 to the present, suggests that social life should be understood holistically across these intersecting domains. This bypasses either the dominant triple-bottom-line approach or narrower carbon accounting approaches. Our alternative is intended to offer an integrated method for deciding on the critical issues associated with responding to complex problems and then acting upon them. It takes a city, community or organization through the difficult process of deciding on the terms of its approach and guides the engagement. It allows for an understanding of competing issues and tensions. It then provides continuing feedback and monitoring in relation to implementation difficulties and successful outcomes. And it supports a reporting process, including a graphic presentation of the sustainability of a city or locale (Figure 2 below).

The approach provides a way of achieving urban sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported approach with guiding tools for investigating problems faced by communities, and does so in such a way as to be flexibly applicable across the very different contexts of a city, community, or organization. It is particularly sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local level to the global.

The profile template is intended as way of developing a more comprehensive understanding of an 'urban region'—city, metropolis, town, municipality, village, etc. By responding to the questions in the Urban Profile Question it is possible to generate a clear and simple graphic representation of the sustainability profile of that region. Examples are shown in Figure 2 (below) for representative cities around the world.

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Figure 2. Circles of Sustainability Assessments

Each of these figures represents a qualitative assessment by local and other experts of the sustainability of the respective urban areas. The assessment group should define the precise nature of the urban area in question before the assessment begins (see Table 3 below). For example, in Figure 2 above 'Sao Paulo' refers to the greater Sao Paulo Metropolitan region. Similarly 'Melbourne' in this case is assessed across the metropolitan region of Melbourne rather than the Municipality of Melbourne, which is much smaller geographically and demographically.

Conducting an Urban Profile for the Domain of Culture

Table 3. The Urban Region being Assessed

The name of urban area in question: (That is, the name of the city, town, or municipality, etc., that is being assessed.)	**Vittoriosa Local Council**
Geographical spread of the urban area in km2.	**0.5 sq km**
Population of the urban area.	**2,476 (Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report, 2012)**
Date or period of the assessment: Month(s), Year	**November 2013**

The quality and standing of the assessment depends upon the expertise of the persons who are conducting the assessment. Optimally, we suggest that the assessment group should comprise three to ten people with different and complementary expertise about the urban area in question. Table 4 below is intended for recording the names and expertise of the persons on the Assessment Panel.

Table 4. Urban Profile Assessors on the Assessment Panel

The profile mapping process can be done by different kinds of respondents. Different people have different knowledge sets, all of which can be valuable in making an urban assessment. In order to understand the nature of the assessment, we just need to know what kind of knowledge held by each respondent in the Assessment Panel.	Please indicate which kind of respondent(s) you are by adding names in the boxes below. Add more lines or more space to the list if necessary.	
	Name	Position and/or Training
1. **Internal Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question and have expert knowledge* of that region or a significant aspect of that region. * Here 'expert knowledge' is defined as either being trained in some aspect of urban planning / administration, etc., or working in that capacity for some time.	Mr Lawrence (Lorry) Attard	Councillor Birgu Local Council
2. **External Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who do not live in the urban region in question, but have expert knowledge of that region or a significant aspect of that region.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Dr Malcolm Borg	Urban Planner
3. **Lay Assessors**	Name	Length of time having lived in

That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question, and who have extensive local knowledge of the region or an aspect of the region, (without necessarily either being trained in urban planning, administration, or working in the field).		the urban region
	Dr Saviour Formosa	Senior Lecturer (Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, – University of Malta)

The Assessment Panel should meet for a sustained period to conduct the assessment. The amount of time taken depends upon the nature of the assessment. (See Table 5 below.) Two hours is optimal for a Rapid Assessment; four hours is minimal for an Aggregate Assessment, but a day would be better. It might, however, take significantly longer for an Annotated Assessment. And a comprehensive assessment would take from a few months to a year depending upon how much dedicated time is given to it. Ideally, individuals on the panel should read through the questions before meeting as a panel and where necessary seek information about issues with which they are not familiar.

Table 5. The Nature of the Assessment Process

The profile mapping process can be done at four levels:	Please indicate which profile exercise you intend to complete by ticking the box or boxes.
1. **Rapid Assessment Profile** Responding to the single 'general question' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale.	☐
2. **Aggregate Assessment Profile** Responding to the 'particular questions' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale).	and/or ☐
3. **Annotated Assessment Profile** Completing the exercise at Level 2 *and* writing detailed annotations about how the points on the scale were derived.	and/or X
4. **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, I** Completing the exercise at Level 3 *and* writing a major essay on the urban area using the questions to guide the writing. and/or **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, II** Completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale.	and/or ☐ and/or X

If you are conducting a *Rapid Assessment* only the *General Question* in each set needs to be answered. That question works as a proxy question for that whole area of sustainability.

If you are conducting an *Aggregate Assessment* at least six of the questions in each set of seven questions need to be answered. If one of the questions in each set is deemed to be particularly inappropriate for your

urban area, you can either choose to replace that one question by alternative question that you formulate for yourself or choose not to answer that question and leave the assessment blank.

In most cases, the questions will be weighted equally in finalizing the assessment—that is, unless a prior round of assessment is done to rank-and-weight the questions in each perspective in relation to each other.

Definitions for the Purposes of this Questionnaire

- 'Urban area' or 'area' means the area that you have defined as the basis for making this assessment. The concept of 'local' is used to mean within the urban area.
- 'Urban region' means the urban area and its immediate hinterlands, including its peri-urban extensions, adjacent agricultural and rural land, and its water catchment areas if they are in the vicinity of the urban area.
- 'Broader region' is taken to mean within two-three hour's land transport.
- Concepts such as 'good' and 'appropriate' are to be defined in terms of the values of the sustainability assessment respondents, but in an Annotated Assessment these are the sorts of issues that would need to be defined by the Assessment Panel.

The Scale for Critical Judgement

The questionnaire asks for critical judgement on a nine-point scale of sustainability from critical sustainability to vibrant sustainability. *Critical sustainability* means a level of sustainability that requires critical or urgent change in order to be assured of continuing viability. *Vibrant sustainability* means a level of sustainability that is currently active in reproducing vibrant social and environmental conditions for long-term positive viability. The mid-point, *satisfactory sustainability*, signifies a level of sustainability that allows for a basic equilibrium over the coming period. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

The Issues in Contention

The full Urban Profile process works on the basis of a four-domain model (see Appendix 1 for a discussion on the basis of the model). Each domain is divided into seven perspectives (as set out in Table 5 below), and seven questions are asked about each perspective (see the questionnaire beginning on the next page).

Table 5. Summary of the Domain of Culture

Domain	Perspectives (or Subdomains)	Possible issues to consider
Culture	• Identity and Engagement • Creativity and Recreation • Memory and Projection • Belief and Ideas • Gender and Generations • Enquiry and Learning • Health and Wellbeing	• Ethnicities; identities; public engagement • Celebrations; events and rituals, sport • Indigenous history; museums; monuments • Religions and spiritualities; ideologies • Gender relations; family life; generations • Education and training systems • Heath and medical systems; mental health

Urban Profile Questionnaire: Culture

1. Identity and Engagement

General Question: Does the urban area have a positive cultural identity that brings people together over and above the various differences in their individual identities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The active cultural diversity of different local communities and groups.	7
2. The sense of belonging and identification with the local area as a whole in a way that connects across community and group differences.	8
3. The tolerance and respect for different language groups and ethnic groups in the urban area.	7
4. The tolerance and respect for different religions and communities of faith in the urban area.	7
5. The possibility of strangers to the urban area establishing and maintaining personal networks or affinity groups with current residents.	8
6. The sense of home and place.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of community relations into strategies for enhancing identity and engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:*	

2. Creativity and Recreation

General Question: How sustainable are creative pursuits in the urban area—including sporting activities and creative leisure activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of participation in and appreciation of the arts—from painting to story-telling.	8
2. The level of involvement in performance activities such as music, dance and theatre as participants and spectators.	9
3. The level of cultural creativity and innovation.	9
4. The level of support for cultural events—for example, public festivals and public celebrations.	9
5. The level of involvement in sport and physical activity as participants and spectators.	9
6. The affordance of time and energy for creative leisure.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of creative pursuits into strategies for enhancing creative engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of creativity and recreation activities as a tool for the enhancement of social	8

cohesion

3. Memory and Projection

General Question: How well does the urban area deal with its past history in relation to projecting visions of possible alternative futures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of respect for past traditions and understanding of their differences.	7
2. The protection of heritage sites and sacred places.	9
3. The maintenance of monuments, museums and historical records.	8
4. The active recognition of indigenous customs and histories.	9
5. The sense of hope for a positive future for the urban area as a whole.	6
6. The level of public discussion that actively explores possible futures.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of themes of past and future into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:* *The translation of the physical fabric into a digital domain to ensure knowledge dissemination and memory preservation*	5

4. Belief and Ideas

General Question: Do residents of the urban area have a strong sense of purpose and meaning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of knowledgeable engagement in cultural pursuits in the urban area.	8
2. The possibilities for counter-ideologies being discussed and debated publicly.	5
3. The level of thoughtful consideration that lies behind decisions made on behalf of the people of the urban area.	6
4. The sense of meaning that local people have in their lives?	7
5. The extent to which people of different faiths or spiritualities feel comfortable practicing their various rituals, even when their beliefs are not part of the dominant culture.	5
6. The possibility that passions can be publicly expressed in the urban area without descending into negative conflict.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of ideas and debates into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

5. Gender and Generations

General Question: To what extent is there gender and generational wellbeing across different groups?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory—	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The equality of men and women in public and private life.	5
2. The positive expression of sexuality in ways that do not lead to intrusion or violation.	6
3. The contribution of both men and women to bringing up children.	6
4. The availability of child-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	8
5. The positive engagement of youth in the life of the urban area.	9
6. The availability of aged-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of gender and generational relations into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* Effective activities that stem depopulation	4

6. Enquiry and Learning

General Question: How sustainable is formal and informal learning in the urban region?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory—	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban region?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The accessibility of active centres of discovery—ranging formal scientific research institutes to places of playful discovery for children.	6
2. The active participation of people in the urban area in deliberation and debate over ideas.	6
3. The accessibility of active centres of social enquiry—both formal and informal—ranging in focus from scientific research to interpretative and spiritual enquiry.	6
4. The active participation of people in formal and informal education, across gender, generation, ethnicity, and class differences.	6
5. The existence of local cultures of writing—from philosophical and scientific to literary and personal.	7
6. The setting aside of time in the various education processes—both formal and informal—for considered reflection.	5
7. The translation of the monitoring of education practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

THE GLOBAL COMPACT
Global Compact
Cities Programme

7. Health and Wellbeing

General Question: What is the general level of health and wellbeing across different groups of residents?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The sense of control that people have in the urban area over questions of bodily integrity and wellbeing.	5
2. The level of knowledge that people in the urban area have in relation to basic health issues.	5
3. The availability of consulting professionals or respected community elders to support people in time of hardship, stress or grief.	6
4. The capacity of the urban area to meet reasonable expectations that people in the urban area hold about health care or counselling.	6
5. The participation of people in practices that promote wellbeing.	6
6. The cultural richness of cuisine and good food.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of health and wellbeing practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

Notes

[1] There were numerous consultants involved in setting up this method. For Metropolis, the Framework Taskforce comprised Paul James (Melbourne), Barbara Berninger and Michael Abraham (Berlin); Tim Campbell (San Francisco), Emile Daho (Abidjan), Sunil Dubey (Sydney), Jan Erasmus (Johannesburg), Jane McCrae (Vancouver), and Om Prakesh Mathur and Usha Raghupathi (New Delhi). In Australia, we would particularly need to acknowledge Peter Christoff, Robin Eckersley, Mary Lewin, Howard Nielsen, Christine Oakley, and Stephanie Trigg. In Brazil helpful responses came from Eduardo Manoel Araujo (UN Cities Programme Advisor), Luiz Berlim, Marcia Maina, Luciano Planco and Paulo Cesar Rink. In the United States important suggestions for reworking came from Jyoti Hosagrahar (New York) and Giovanni Circella (Davis, California). The Cities Programme Working Group which worked to develop the matrix comprised Paul James, Liam Magee, Martin Mulligan, Andy Scerri, John Smithies and Manfred Steger with others. The author of this paper is Paul James.
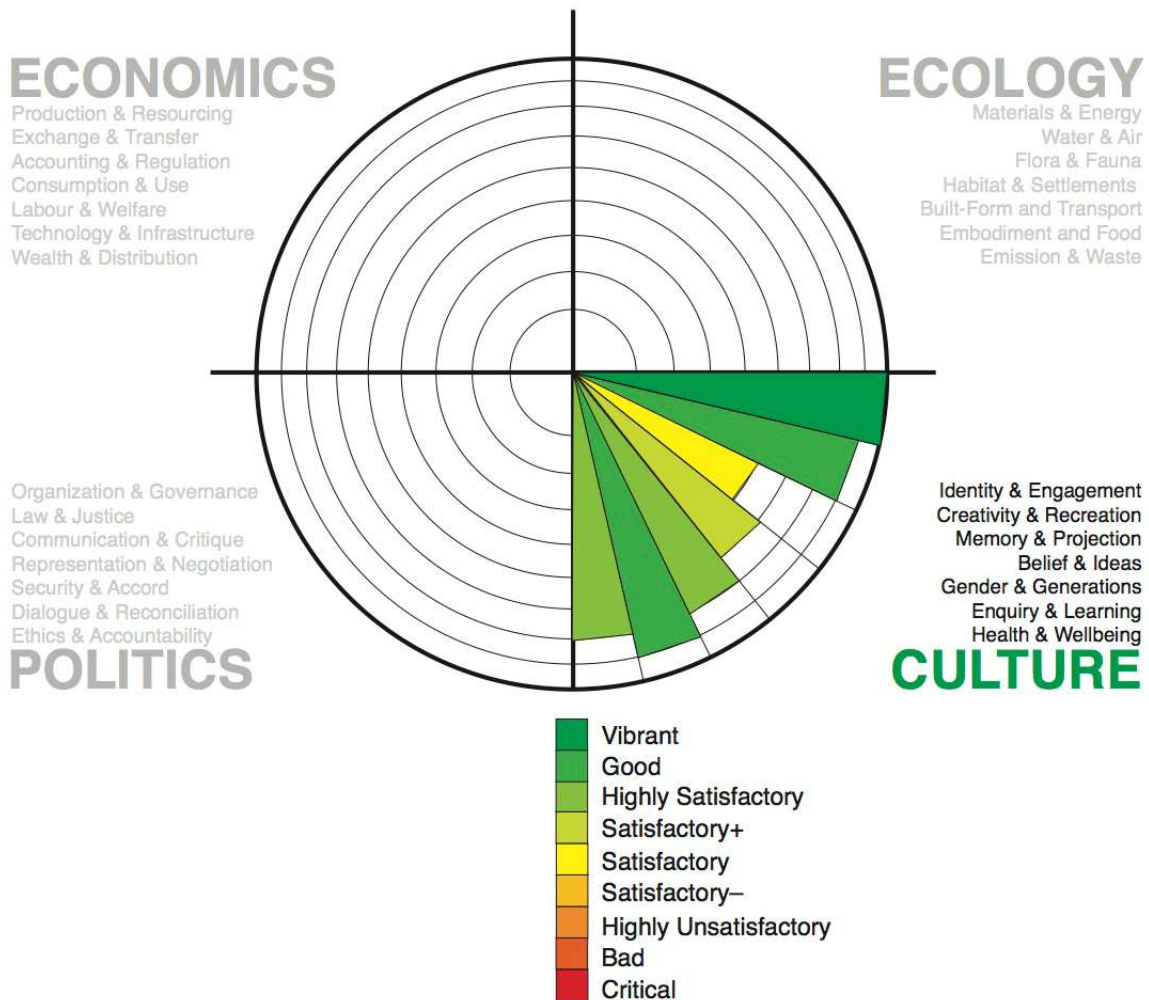
[2] Pilot studies have already been conducted in a number of cities across the world using the various parts in draft form. Some of those are represented in Figure 2. In 2011, the research team were invited by Metropolis to work with the Victorian Government and the Cities Programme on one of their major initiatives. The methodology is central to the approach used by the 'Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships Initiative' organized by Metropolis, 2012–2013 for Indian, Brazilian and Iranian cities. A workshop was held in New Delhi, 26–27 July 2012, and senior planners from New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata used the two of the assessment tools in the 'Circles of Sustainability' toolbox to map the sustainability of their cities as part of developing their urban-regional plans. Other cities to use the same tools have been Tehran (in relation to their mega-projects plan) and Sao Paulo (in relation to their macro-metropolitan plan). Our team in Curitiba, Brazil, has done considerable work and we will soon have pilot studies of cities in the State of Parana as the Regional Secretariat rolls out the Circles of Sustainability method.

Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability[1]

Based on Guideline 1. Urban Profile Process v3.3 2013[2]

Figure 1. Culture: The Fourth Domain

CULTURE: The Fourth Domain

ECONOMICS
Production & Resourcing
Exchange & Transfer
Accounting & Regulation
Consumption & Use
Labour & Welfare
Technology & Infrastructure
Wealth & Distribution

ECOLOGY
Materials & Energy
Water & Air
Flora & Fauna
Habitat & Settlements
Built-Form and Transport
Embodiment and Food
Emission & Waste

Organization & Governance
Law & Justice
Communication & Critique
Representation & Negotiation
Security & Accord
Dialogue & Reconciliation
Ethics & Accountability
POLITICS

Identity & Engagement
Creativity & Recreation
Memory & Projection
Belief & Ideas
Gender & Generations
Enquiry & Learning
Health & Wellbeing
CULTURE

Vibrant
Good
Highly Satisfactory
Satisfactory+
Satisfactory
Satisfactory–
Highly Unsatisfactory
Bad
Critical

Culture is a fundamental domain of social life. It is called the 'Fourth Domain' here, not because it is the fourth most important domain, but rather because for too long it has been ignored and subordinated in a flawed metaphor called the 'triple bottom line'. That approach problematically presents three domains—economics, environment and the social—and incorporates the domain of culture as an extra consideration inside the social. Economics is treated wrongly as the master domain, and it stands alone against which others are judged. In the radical alternative presented here all social life, including economics, is considered social. Thus we work with four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. They are all social domains, and culture is as important as any of the other three domains. It is only the fourth domain in the sense that it is being brought back in.

Some approaches use the term 'the fourth pillar' rather than 'fourth domain'. We are uncomfortable with the building metaphor. Pillars standalone. They are fixed. Three pillars can hold up a building without the fourth. In our metaphor domains, the four domains are integrally inter-related. The culture of economics is as

fundamental as the economics of culture, and so on. The culture of economics, ecology or politics is critical to the sustainability and vibrancy of those other domains of social life.

Defining Social Domains

Defining such fundamental terms as *economy*, *ecology*, *politics* and *culture* is extraordinarily difficult. It is not just because they are *essentially contested concepts* such as 'democracy', 'justice' or 'aesthetics'.[1] Rather it is more fundamentally because they have become taken for granted as the fields across which we walk, the basis of our understanding of our world. Everybody assumes that they know what is meant by economy or culture, and we are rarely called upon to define them. It is increasingly rare for even academics to actually try to define these basic terms. The classic text *Keywords*, for example, only explores one of these four concepts.[2]

In summary then, the approach to understanding sustainability presented here begins with the social. The concept of sustainability thus also is quite different from the 'triple bottom line' approach. Sustainability in that approach is not more than the durability of a particular practice. *Positive* sustainability as defined here is practices and meanings of human engagement that project an ongoing life-world of natural and social flourishing. Thus sustainability is a *social* phenomenon long before it is an economic or even just an ecological phenomenon.

It is analytically possible to divide 'the social' into any number of domains. Social domains are dimensions of social life understood in the broadest possible sense. In this case we have chosen the minimal number of domains that are useful for giving a complex sense of the whole of social life: namely, ecology, economics, politics and culture. The particular words that we use to name each of the domains are less important than the social space that the combinations of those words evoke. The 'social domains', as we name and define them here, are analytically derived by considering the human condition broadly across time, across different places, and across different ways of life. In practice, the four domains remain mutually constitutive.

Defining Culture

Taking into account the many earlier controversies over defining these concepts, here is our definition:

The cultural is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material objects, which, over time, express the social meaning of a life held-in-common.

In other words, culture expresses 'how and why we do things around here'.

The 'how' in this simple sentence refers to how we practice, how we describe those practices to ourselves, and how any objects produced by that practice are given meaning. Just as there are ecological, economic and political questions about practice, the core cultural question is what is the meaning of 'how we do things'. This relations to the question of 'why?'. It emphasizes the centrality of meaning. The 'we' refers to the specificity of a life held-in-common. Culture is always a question of the meaning in relation to others. And 'around here' specifies the spatial and, also by implication, the temporal particularity of all culture.

The concept of 'culture' had its beginnings in agriculture and cultivation, with subsidiary senses of 'honour with worship' of *cultura*, which in the sixteenth century were linked to understanding of human growth and development.[3] In some contemporary definitions, culture is reduced to the arts divided into high culture and

---

[1] The notion of 'essentially contested concepts' comes from Walter Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 167–198.

[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana/Croom Helm, Glasgow, 1976. Politics, ecology and economics do not appear in his list. The key to understanding why Williams leaves out politics, economics and ecology is that he is living in a period where, already, the vocabulary has already separated out the domain of the cultural, and his book is presented as a vocabulary of cultural concepts.

[3] Williams, *Keywords*.

popular culture, but here we treat culture much more broadly and deeply. Questions of power are ever-present in the cultural domain in relation to contested outcomes over social meaning.

Domains, Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the social domains—ecology, economics, politics and culture—can analytically be divided in the 'perspectives'. These perspectives were called 'subdomains' in an earlier stage of our thinking, but the less formalistic metaphor of perspectives works better to register the interconnected nature of any of these provisional subdivisions. It emphasizes the issue that the subdivisions are *points of view*; not categorically separate or standalone categories. For example, the cultural perspective of 'Enquiry and Learning' reaches out to all the other domains in relation to enquiring about economics, politics and ecology, even though we have located its primary home in the domain of culture. This can be seen graphically in the figure of the Circle of Sustainability (Figure 1). All perspectives are inter-related through the centre-point of the circle, sometimes tellingly in mathematics called 'the origin' of the circle'.[4] Each of the cultural perspectives such as 'identity and engagement' or 'creativity and recreation' is analytically derived using the same process that is used for working through broad considerations of the human condition to derive the four social domains.

Table 1. Social Domains and Perspectives

Economics	**Ecology**
1. Production and Resourcing	1. Materials and Energy
2. Exchange and Transfer	2. Water and Air
3. Accounting and Regulation	3. Flora and Fauna
4. Consumption and Use	4. Habitat and Settlements
5. Labour and Welfare	5. Built-Form and Transport
6. Technology and Infrastructure	6. Embodiment and Food
7. Wealth and Distribution	7. Emission and Waste
Politics	**Culture**
1. Organization and Governance	1. Identity and Engagement
2. Law and Justice	2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Communication and Critique	3. Memory and Projection
4. Representation and Negotiation	4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Security and Accord	5. Gender and Generations
6. Dialogue and Reconciliation	6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Ethics and Accountability	7. Health and Wellbeing

Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the *perspectives* is divided in seven *aspects*. The rationale for this is to generate a finer assessment process. While the figure of the circle, coloured according to levels of sustainability (Figure 1), gives a simple graphic representation of the outcome of an assessment process, there are a series of background considerations that need to be brought to the fore. A primary consideration involves having a way of assessing why, from a particular perspective, a city or locale is judged to have a certain level of sustainability. In the background to the graphic circle are sets of questions linked to social indicators. To decide systematically on what is a good range of questions the 'Circles of Sustainability' approach entails

---

[4] The philosophical history of the centre-point of the circle is extraordinarily rich, and for our purposes provides a way of qualifying the modern tendency to treat geometrical ordering as a simple technical exercise. For classical Greek philosopher from Euclid to Aristotle a 'point' is both the most abstract and the particular of entities. The tenth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Nairzi, who wrote commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy, responded that 'If any one seeks to know the essence of a point, a thing more single than a line, let him, in the sensible world, think of the centre of the universe and the poles'. (Cited from the notes by Thomas L Heath, accompanying *Euclid, The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Dover Publications, Mineola, 1956, p. 157.) For the thirteenth-century Andalusian Sufi writer, Ibn Arabi, the centre point of a circle is the point of 'necessary being' while the circumference is the circle of 'possible' or contingent existence. 'The "possible" is the space between the point of the real and the circumference'. (Cited from Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn Arabi: Time and Cosmology*, Routledge, Abington, 2008, p. 120.

analytical dividing the perspectives into different aspects. For example, one aspect of the cultural perspective of 'identity and engagement' is 'diversity and difference'. All of this is laid out below in Table 2.

Table 7. Summary of the Matrix of the Urban Profile Processes

Domains	Perspectives	Aspects
Culture *Defined as the practices, discourses, and material objects, which express the social meaning of a life held-in-common*	1. Identity and Engagement	1. Diversity and Difference
		2. Belonging and Community
		3. Ethnicity and Language
		4. Religion and Faith
		5. Friendship and Affinity
		6. Home and Place
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	2. Creativity and Recreation	1. Aesthetics and Design
		2. Performance and Representation
		3. Innovation and Adaptation
		4. Celebrations and Festivals
		5. Sport and Play
		6. Leisure and Relaxation
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	3. Memory and Projection	1. Tradition and Authenticity
		2. Heritage and Inheritance
		3. History and Records
		4. Indigeneity and Custom
		5. Imagination and Hope
		6. Inspiration and Vision
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	4. Beliefs and Ideas	1. Knowledge and Interpretation
		2. Ideologies and Imaginaries
		3. Reason and Rationalization
		4. Religiosity and Spirituality
		5. Rituals and Symbols
		6. Emotions and Passions
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	5. Gender and Generations	1. Equality and Respect
		2. Sexuality and Desire
		3. Family and Kinship
		4. Birth and Babyhood
		5. Childhood and Youth
		6. Mortality and Care
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	6. Enquiry and Learning	1. Curiosity and Discovery
		2. Deliberation and Debate
		3. Research and Application
		4. Teaching and Training
		5. Writing and Codification
		6. Meditation and Reflexivity
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	7. Health and Wellbeing	1. Integrity and Autonomy
		2. Embodiment and Corporeal Knowledge
		3. Mental Health and Pleasure
		4. Care and Comfort
		5. Inclusion and Participation
		6. Cuisine and Nourishment
		7. Monitoring and Reflection

In setting up the Circles of Sustainability approach we have kept in mind the following considerations:

- *Accessible* — At one level, the approach should be readily interpretable to non-experts, but at deeper levels it needs to be methodologically sophisticated enough to stand up against the scrutiny of experts in assessment, monitoring and evaluation and project management tools;

- *Graphic* —The approach needs to be simple in its graphic presentation and top-level description, but simultaneously have consistent principles carrying through to its lower, more complex, and detailed levels;

- *Cross-locale* —The approach needs on the one hand to be sufficiently general and high-level to work across a diverse range of cities and localities, big and small, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to be used to capture the detailed specificity of each of those different places;

- *Learning-based* —The approach should allow cities to learn from other cities, and provide support and principles for exchange of knowledge and learning from practice;

- *Comparable* —The approach should allow comparison between cities, but not locate them in a league table or hierarchy;

- *Tool-generating* —The approach needs to provide the basis for developing a series of tools—including web-based electronic tools (compatible with various information and communications technology platforms). These range from very simple learning tools to more complex planning, assessment, and monitoring tools;

- *Indicator-generating*—The approach needs to provide guidance for selecting indicators as well as methods for assessing their outcomes;

- *Relational* — The approach needs to focus not only on identification of critical issues, indicators that relate to those critical issues, but also the relationships between them;

- *Cross-domain* — The approach needs to be compatible with new developments that bring 'culture' in serious contention in sustainability analysis—such as the United Cities and Local Governments four pillars of sustainability. The approach therefore uses a domain-based model which emphasizes interconnectivity of economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions, each of which are treated as social domains;

- *Participatory* — Even if it is framed by a set of global protocols, the approach needs to be driven by stakeholders and communities of practice;

- *Cross-supported* — The approach needs to straddle the qualitative/quantitative divide, and uses just enough quantification to allow for identification of conflicts.

- *Standards-oriented* — The approach (and its methods) should connect to current and emerging reporting and modelling standards.

- *Curriculum-oriented*—The approach needs to be broad enough to provide guidance for curriculum development, and therefore useful for training.
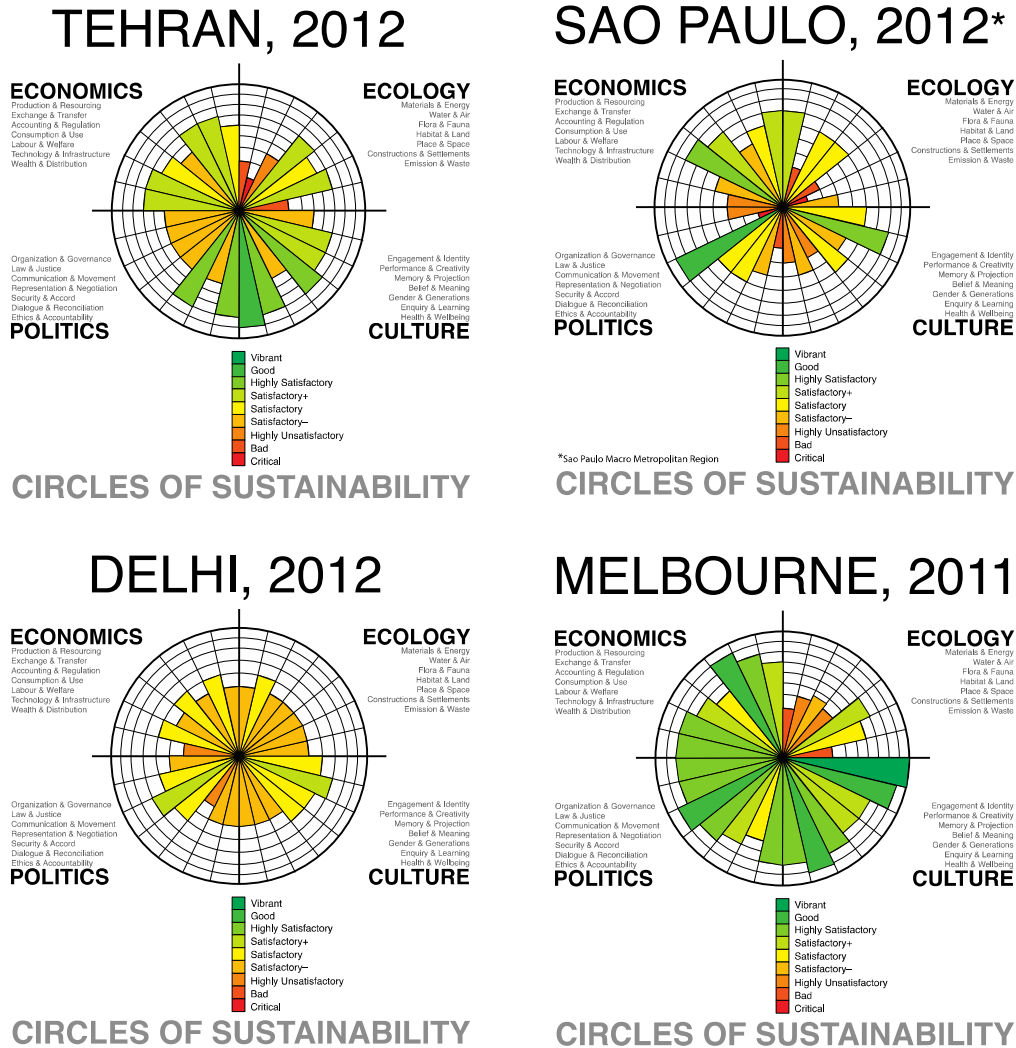
Background

The Circles of Sustainability profile process is intended as a way of developing an interpretative description of the sustainability of an urban region and its immediate hinterland. Here *sustainability* is understood in relation to local, national, and global processes: ecological, economic, political and cultural.

The approach, developed across the period from 2007 to the present, suggests that social life should be understood holistically across these intersecting domains. This bypasses either the dominant triple-bottom-line approach or narrower carbon accounting approaches. Our alternative is intended to offer an integrated method for deciding on the critical issues associated with responding to complex problems and then acting upon them. It takes a city, community or organization through the difficult process of deciding on the terms of its approach and guides the engagement. It allows for an understanding of competing issues and tensions. It then provides continuing feedback and monitoring in relation to implementation difficulties and successful outcomes. And it supports a reporting process, including a graphic presentation of the sustainability of a city or locale (Figure 2 below).

The approach provides a way of achieving urban sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported approach with guiding tools for investigating problems faced by communities, and does so in such a way as to be flexibly applicable across the very different contexts of a city, community, or organization. It is particularly sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local level to the global.

The profile template is intended as way of developing a more comprehensive understanding of an 'urban region'—city, metropolis, town, municipality, village, etc. By responding to the questions in the Urban Profile Question it is possible to generate a clear and simple graphic representation of the sustainability profile of that region. Examples are shown in Figure 2 (below) for representative cities around the world.

Figure 2. Circles of Sustainability Assessments

Each of these figures represents a qualitative assessment by local and other experts of the sustainability of the respective urban areas. The assessment group should define the precise nature of the urban area in question before the assessment begins (see Table 3 below). For example, in Figure 2 above 'Sao Paulo' refers to the greater Sao Paulo Metropolitan region. Similarly 'Melbourne' in this case is assessed across the metropolitan region of Melbourne rather than the Municipality of Melbourne, which is much smaller geographically and demographically.

Conducting an Urban Profile for the Domain of Culture

Table 3. The Urban Region being Assessed

The name of urban area in question: (That is, the name of the city, town, or municipality, etc., that is being assessed.)	**Floriana Local Council**
Geographical spread of the urban area in km2.	**0.094 sq km**
Population of the urban area.	**2,034 (Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report, 2012)**
Date or period of the assessment: Month(s), Year	**November 2013**

The quality and standing of the assessment depends upon the expertise of the persons who are conducting the assessment. Optimally, we suggest that the assessment group should comprise three to ten people with different and complementary expertise about the urban area in question. Table 4 below is intended for recording the names and expertise of the persons on the Assessment Panel.

Table 4. Urban Profile Assessors on the Assessment Panel

The profile mapping process can be done by different kinds of respondents. Different people have different knowledge sets, all of which can be valuable in making an urban assessment. In order to understand the nature of the assessment, we just need to know what kind of knowledge held by each respondent in the Assessment Panel.	Please indicate which kind of respondent(s) you are by adding names in the boxes below. Add more lines or more space to the list if necessary.	
1. **Internal Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question and have expert knowledge* of that region or a significant aspect of that region. * Here 'expert knowledge' is defined as either being trained in some aspect of urban planning / administration, etc., or working in that capacity for some time.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Mr Nigel Holland	Mayor Floriana Local Council
2. **External Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who do not live in the urban region in question, but have expert knowledge of that region or a significant aspect of that region.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Dr Malcolm Borg	Urban Planner
	Dr Saviour Formosa	Senior Lecturer (Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, – University of Malta)
	Mr Victor Sladden	Architect and urban planner (European Walled Towns Advisor)

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

3. Lay Assessors That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question, and who have extensive local knowledge of the region or an aspect of the region, (without necessarily either being trained in urban planning, administration, or working in the field).	Name	Length of time having lived in the urban region
	Mr Sandro Bonanno	Senior Planning Officer

The Assessment Panel should meet for a sustained period to conduct the assessment. The amount of time taken depends upon the nature of the assessment. (See Table 5 below.) Two hours is optimal for a Rapid Assessment; four hours is minimal for an Aggregate Assessment, but a day would be better. It might, however, take significantly longer for an Annotated Assessment. And a comprehensive assessment would take from a few months to a year depending upon how much dedicated time is given to it. Ideally, individuals on the panel should read through the questions before meeting as a panel and where necessary seek information about issues with which they are not familiar.

Table 5. The Nature of the Assessment Process

The profile mapping process can be done at four levels:	Please indicate which profile exercise you intend to complete by ticking the box or boxes.
1. **Rapid Assessment Profile** Responding to the single 'general question' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale.	☐
	and/or
2. **Aggregate Assessment Profile** Responding to the 'particular questions' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale).	☐
	and/or
3. **Annotated Assessment Profile** Completing the exercise at Level 2 *and* writing detailed annotations about how the points on the scale were derived.	X
	and/or
4. **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, I** Completing the exercise at Level 3 *and* writing a major essay on the urban area using the questions to guide the writing. and/or **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, II** Completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale.	☐
	and/or
	X

If you are conducting a *Rapid Assessment* only the *General Question* in each set needs to be answered. That question works as a proxy question for that whole area of sustainability.

If you are conducting an *Aggregate Assessment* at least six of the questions in each set of seven questions need to be answered. If one of the questions in each set is deemed to be particularly inappropriate for your

urban area, you can either choose to replace that one question by alternative question that you formulate for yourself or choose not to answer that question and leave the assessment blank.

In most cases, the questions will be weighted equally in finalizing the assessment—that is, unless a prior round of assessment is done to rank-and-weight the questions in each perspective in relation to each other.

Definitions for the Purposes of this Questionnaire

- 'Urban area' or 'area' means the area that you have defined as the basis for making this assessment. The concept of 'local' is used to mean within the urban area.
- 'Urban region' means the urban area and its immediate hinterlands, including its peri-urban extensions, adjacent agricultural and rural land, and its water catchment areas if they are in the vicinity of the urban area.
- 'Broader region' is taken to mean within two-three hour's land transport.
- Concepts such as 'good' and 'appropriate' are to be defined in terms of the values of the sustainability assessment respondents, but in an Annotated Assessment these are the sorts of issues that would need to be defined by the Assessment Panel.

The Scale for Critical Judgement

The questionnaire asks for critical judgement on a nine-point scale of sustainability from critical sustainability to vibrant sustainability. *Critical sustainability* means a level of sustainability that requires critical or urgent change in order to be assured of continuing viability. *Vibrant sustainability* means a level of sustainability that is currently active in reproducing vibrant social and environmental conditions for long-term positive viability. The mid-point, *satisfactory sustainability*, signifies a level of sustainability that allows for a basic equilibrium over the coming period. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

The Issues in Contention

The full Urban Profile process works on the basis of a four-domain model (see Appendix 1 for a discussion on the basis of the model). Each domain is divided into seven perspectives (as set out in Table 5 below), and seven questions are asked about each perspective (see the questionnaire beginning on the next page).

Table 5. Summary of the Domain of Culture

Domain	Perspectives (or Subdomains)	Possible issues to consider
Culture	• Identity and Engagement • Creativity and Recreation • Memory and Projection • Belief and Ideas • Gender and Generations • Enquiry and Learning • Health and Wellbeing	• Ethnicities; identities; public engagement • Celebrations; events and rituals, sport • Indigenous history; museums; monuments • Religions and spiritualities; ideologies • Gender relations; family life; generations • Education and training systems • Health and medical systems; mental health

Urban Profile Questionnaire: Culture

1. Identity and Engagement

General Question: Does the urban area have a positive cultural identity that brings people together over and above the various differences in their individual identities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The active cultural diversity of different local communities and groups.	6
2. The sense of belonging and identification with the local area as a whole in a way that connects across community and group differences.	8
3. The tolerance and respect for different language groups and ethnic groups in the urban area.	8
4. The tolerance and respect for different religions and communities of faith in the urban area.	8
5. The possibility of strangers to the urban area establishing and maintaining personal networks or affinity groups with current residents.	9
6. The sense of home and place.	8
7. The translation of the monitoring of community relations into strategies for enhancing identity and engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:*	

2. Creativity and Recreation

General Question: How sustainable are creative pursuits in the urban area—including sporting activities and creative leisure activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of participation in and appreciation of the arts—from painting to story-telling.	8
2. The level of involvement in performance activities such as music, dance and theatre as participants and spectators.	9
3. The level of cultural creativity and innovation.	9
4. The level of support for cultural events—for example, public festivals and public celebrations.	9
5. The level of involvement in sport and physical activity as participants and spectators.	9
6. The affordance of time and energy for creative leisure.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of creative pursuits into strategies for enhancing creative engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of creativity and recreation activities as a tool for the enhancement of social	6

cohesion

3. Memory and Projection

General Question: How well does the urban area deal with its past history in relation to projecting visions of possible alternative futures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of respect for past traditions and understanding of their differences.	7
2. The protection of heritage sites and sacred places.	9
3. The maintenance of monuments, museums and historical records.	8
4. The active recognition of indigenous customs and histories.	9
5. The sense of hope for a positive future for the urban area as a whole.	6
6. The level of public discussion that actively explores possible futures.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of themes of past and future into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of the physical fabric into a digital domain to ensure knowledge dissemination and memory preservation	5

4. Belief and Ideas

General Question: Do residents of the urban area have a strong sense of purpose and meaning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of knowledgeable engagement in cultural pursuits in the urban area.	8
2. The possibilities for counter-ideologies being discussed and debated publicly.	6
3. The level of thoughtful consideration that lies behind decisions made on behalf of the people of the urban area.	6
4. The sense of meaning that local people have in their lives?	5
5. The extent to which people of different faiths or spiritualities feel comfortable practicing their various rituals, even when their beliefs are not part of the dominant culture.	6
6. The possibility that passions can be publicly expressed in the urban area without descending into negative conflict.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of ideas and debates into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

5. Gender and Generations

General Question: To what extent is there gender and generational wellbeing across different groups?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The equality of men and women in public and private life.	5
2. The positive expression of sexuality in ways that do not lead to intrusion or violation.	6
3. The contribution of both men and women to bringing up children.	7
4. The availability of child-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	7
5. The positive engagement of youth in the life of the urban area.	9
6. The availability of aged-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	8
7. The translation of the monitoring of gender and generational relations into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* Effective activities that stem depopulation	5

6. Enquiry and Learning

General Question: How sustainable is formal and informal learning in the urban region?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban region?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The accessibility of active centres of discovery—ranging formal scientific research institutes to places of playful discovery for children.	6
2. The active participation of people in the urban area in deliberation and debate over ideas.	6
3. The accessibility of active centres of social enquiry—both formal and informal—ranging in focus from scientific research to interpretative and spiritual enquiry.	5
4. The active participation of people in formal and informal education, across gender, generation, ethnicity, and class differences.	6
5. The existence of local cultures of writing—from philosophical and scientific to literary and personal.	7
6. The setting aside of time in the various education processes—both formal and informal—for considered reflection.	5
7. The translation of the monitoring of education practices into quality-improvement strategies.	5
• *Optional alternative question:*	

7. Health and Wellbeing

General Question: What is the general level of health and wellbeing across different groups of residents?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	Number 1–9
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The sense of control that people have in the urban area over questions of bodily integrity and wellbeing.	5
2. The level of knowledge that people in the urban area have in relation to basic health issues.	5
3. The availability of consulting professionals or respected community elders to support people in time of hardship, stress or grief.	8
4. The capacity of the urban area to meet reasonable expectations that people in the urban area hold about health care or counselling.	7
5. The participation of people in practices that promote wellbeing.	6
6. The cultural richness of cuisine and good food.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of health and wellbeing practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

Notes

---

[1] There were numerous consultants involved in setting up this method. For Metropolis, the Framework Taskforce comprised Paul James (Melbourne), Barbara Berninger and Michael Abraham (Berlin); Tim Campbell (San Francisco), Emile Daho (Abidjan), Sunil Dubey (Sydney), Jan Erasmus (Johannesburg), Jane McCrae (Vancouver), and Om Prakesh Mathur and Usha Raghupathi (New Delhi). In Australia, we would particularly need to acknowledge Peter Christoff, Robin Eckersley, Mary Lewin, Howard Nielsen, Christine Oakley, and Stephanie Trigg. In Brazil helpful responses came from Eduardo Manoel Araujo (UN Cities Programme Advisor), Luiz Berlim, Marcia Maina, Luciano Planco and Paulo Cesar Rink. In the United States important suggestions for reworking came from Jyoti Hosagrahar (New York) and Giovanni Circella (Davis, California). The Cities Programme Working Group which worked to develop the matrix comprised Paul James, Liam Magee, Martin Mulligan, Andy Scerri, John Smithies and Manfred Steger with others. The author of this paper is Paul James.
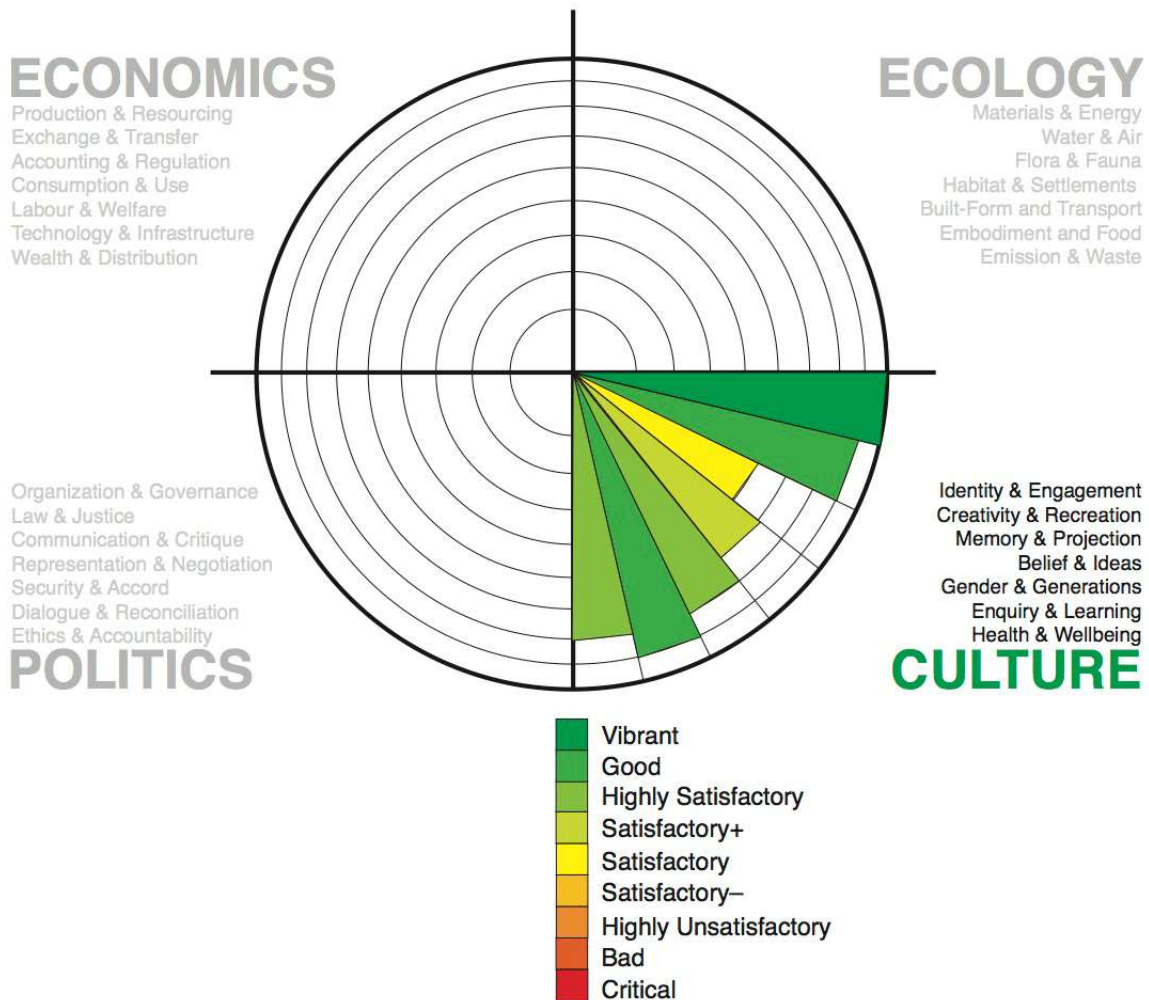
[2] Pilot studies have already been conducted in a number of cities across the world using the various parts in draft form. Some of those are represented in Figure 2. In 2011, the research team were invited by Metropolis to work with the Victorian Government and the Cities Programme on one of their major initiatives. The methodology is central to the approach used by the 'Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships Initiative' organized by Metropolis, 2012–2013 for Indian, Brazilian and Iranian cities. A workshop was held in New Delhi, 26–27 July 2012, and senior planners from New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata used the two of the assessment tools in the 'Circles of Sustainability' toolbox to map the sustainability of their cities as part of developing their urban-regional plans. Other cities to use the same tools have been Tehran (in relation to their mega-projects plan) and Sao Paulo (in relation to their macro-metropolitan plan). Our team in Curitiba, Brazil, has done considerable work and we will soon have pilot studies of cities in the State of Parana as the Regional Secretariat rolls out the Circles of Sustainability method.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability[1]

Based on Guideline 1. Urban Profile Process v3.3 2013[2]

Figure 1. Culture: The Fourth Domain

Culture is a fundamental domain of social life. It is called the 'Fourth Domain' here, not because it is the fourth most important domain, but rather because for too long it has been ignored and subordinated in a flawed metaphor called the 'triple bottom line'. That approach problematically presents three domains—economics, environment and the social—and incorporates the domain of culture as an extra consideration inside the social. Economics is treated wrongly as the master domain, and it stands alone against which others are judged. In the radical alternative presented here all social life, including economics, is considered social. Thus we work with four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. They are all social domains, and culture is as important as any of the other three domains. It is only the fourth domain in the sense that it is being brought back in.

Some approaches use the term 'the fourth pillar' rather than 'fourth domain'. We are uncomfortable with the building metaphor. Pillars standalone. They are fixed. Three pillars can hold up a building without the fourth. In our metaphor domains, the four domains are integrally inter-related. The culture of economics is as

fundamental as the economics of culture, and so on. The culture of economics, ecology or politics is critical to the sustainability and vibrancy of those other domains of social life.

Defining Social Domains

Defining such fundamental terms as *economy*, *ecology*, *politics* and *culture* is extraordinarily difficult. It is not just because they are *essentially contested concepts* such as 'democracy', 'justice' or 'aesthetics'.[1] Rather it is more fundamentally because they have become taken for granted as the fields across which we walk, the basis of our understanding of our world. Everybody assumes that they know what is meant by economy or culture, and we are rarely called upon to define them. It is increasingly rare for even academics to actually try to define these basic terms. The classic text *Keywords*, for example, only explores one of these four concepts.[2]

In summary then, the approach to understanding sustainability presented here begins with the social. The concept of sustainability thus also is quite different from the 'triple bottom line' approach. Sustainability in that approach is not more than the durability of a particular practice. *Positive* sustainability as defined here is practices and meanings of human engagement that project an ongoing life-world of natural and social flourishing. Thus sustainability is a *social* phenomenon long before it is an economic or even just an ecological phenomenon.

It is analytically possible to divide 'the social' into any number of domains. Social domains are dimensions of social life understood in the broadest possible sense. In this case we have chosen the minimal number of domains that are useful for giving a complex sense of the whole of social life: namely, ecology, economics, politics and culture. The particular words that we use to name each of the domains are less important than the social space that the combinations of those words evoke. The 'social domains', as we name and define them here, are analytically derived by considering the human condition broadly across time, across different places, and across different ways of life. In practice, the four domains remain mutually constitutive.

Defining Culture

Taking into account the many earlier controversies over defining these concepts, here is our definition:

The cultural is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material objects, which, over time, express the social meaning of a life held-in-common.

In other words, culture expresses 'how and why we do things around here'.

The 'how' in this simple sentence refers to how we practice, how we describe those practices to ourselves, and how any objects produced by that practice are given meaning. Just as there are ecological, economic and political questions about practice, the core cultural question is what is the meaning of 'how we do things'. This relations to the question of 'why?'. It emphasizes the centrality of meaning. The 'we' refers to the specificity of a life held-in-common. Culture is always a question of the meaning in relation to others. And 'around here' specifies the spatial and, also by implication, the temporal particularity of all culture.

The concept of 'culture' had its beginnings in agriculture and cultivation, with subsidiary senses of 'honour with worship' of *cultura*, which in the sixteenth century were linked to understanding of human growth and development.[3] In some contemporary definitions, culture is reduced to the arts divided into high culture and

---

[1] The notion of 'essentially contested concepts' comes from Walter Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 167–198.

[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana/Croom Helm, Glasgow, 1976. Politics, ecology and economics do not appear in his list. The key to understanding why Williams leaves out politics, economics and ecology is that he is living in a period where, already, the vocabulary has already separated out the domain of the cultural, and his book is presented as a vocabulary of cultural concepts.

[3] Williams, *Keywords*.

popular culture, but here we treat culture much more broadly and deeply. Questions of power are ever-present in the cultural domain in relation to contested outcomes over social meaning.

Domains, Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the social domains—ecology, economics, politics and culture—can analytically be divided in the 'perspectives'. These perspectives were called 'subdomains' in an earlier stage of our thinking, but the less formalistic metaphor of perspectives works better to register the interconnected nature of any of these provisional subdivisions. It emphasizes the issue that the subdivisions are *points of view*; not categorically separate or standalone categories. For example, the cultural perspective of 'Enquiry and Learning' reaches out to all the other domains in relation to enquiring about economics, politics and ecology, even though we have located its primary home in the domain of culture. This can be seen graphically in the figure of the Circle of Sustainability (Figure 1). All perspectives are inter-related through the centre-point of the circle, sometimes tellingly in mathematics called 'the origin' of the circle'.[4] Each of the cultural perspectives such as 'identity and engagement' or 'creativity and recreation' is analytically derived using the same process that is used for working through broad considerations of the human condition to derive the four social domains.

Table 1. Social Domains and Perspectives

Economics	Ecology
1. Production and Resourcing	1. Materials and Energy
2. Exchange and Transfer	2. Water and Air
3. Accounting and Regulation	3. Flora and Fauna
4. Consumption and Use	4. Habitat and Settlements
5. Labour and Welfare	5. Built-Form and Transport
6. Technology and Infrastructure	6. Embodiment and Food
7. Wealth and Distribution	7. Emission and Waste
Politics	**Culture**
1. Organization and Governance	1. Identity and Engagement
2. Law and Justice	2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Communication and Critique	3. Memory and Projection
4. Representation and Negotiation	4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Security and Accord	5. Gender and Generations
6. Dialogue and Reconciliation	6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Ethics and Accountability	7. Health and Wellbeing

Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the *perspectives* is divided in seven *aspects*. The rationale for this is to generate a finer assessment process. While the figure of the circle, coloured according to levels of sustainability (Figure 1), gives a simple graphic representation of the outcome of an assessment process, there are a series of background considerations that need to be brought to the fore. A primary consideration involves having a way of assessing why, from a particular perspective, a city or locale is judged to have a certain level of sustainability. In the background to the graphic circle are sets of questions linked to social indicators. To decide systematically on what is a good range of questions the 'Circles of Sustainability' approach entails

---

[4] The philosophical history of the centre-point of the circle is extraordinarily rich, and for our purposes provides a way of qualifying the modern tendency to treat geometrical ordering as a simple technical exercise. For classical Greek philosopher from Euclid to Aristotle a 'point' is both the most abstract and the particular of entities. The tenth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Nairzi, who wrote commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy, responded that 'If any one seeks to know the essence of a point, a thing more single than a line, let him, in the sensible world, think of the centre of the universe and the poles'. (Cited from the notes by Thomas L Heath, accompanying *Euclid, The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Dover Publications, Mineola, 1956, p. 157.) For the thirteenth-century Andalusian Sufi writer, Ibn Arabi, the centre point of a circle is the point of 'necessary being' while the circumference is the circle of 'possible' or contingent existence. 'The "possible" is the space between the point of the real and the circumference'. (Cited from Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn Arabi: Time and Cosmology*, Routledge, Abington, 2008, p. 120.

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

THE GLOBAL COMPACT
Global Compact
Cities Programme

analytical dividing the perspectives into different aspects. For example, one aspect of the cultural perspective of 'identity and engagement' is 'diversity and difference'. All of this is laid out below in Table 2.

Table 7. Summary of the Matrix of the Urban Profile Processes

Domains	Perspectives	Aspects
Culture *Defined as the practices, discourses, and material objects, which express the social meaning of a life held-in-common*	1. Identity and Engagement	1. Diversity and Difference
		2. Belonging and Community
		3. Ethnicity and Language
		4. Religion and Faith
		5. Friendship and Affinity
		6. Home and Place
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	2. Creativity and Recreation	1. Aesthetics and Design
		2. Performance and Representation
		3. Innovation and Adaptation
		4. Celebrations and Festivals
		5. Sport and Play
		6. Leisure and Relaxation
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	3. Memory and Projection	1. Tradition and Authenticity
		2. Heritage and Inheritance
		3. History and Records
		4. Indigeneity and Custom
		5. Imagination and Hope
		6. Inspiration and Vision
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	4. Beliefs and Ideas	1. Knowledge and Interpretation
		2. Ideologies and Imaginaries
		3. Reason and Rationalization
		4. Religiosity and Spirituality
		5. Rituals and Symbols
		6. Emotions and Passions
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	5. Gender and Generations	1. Equality and Respect
		2. Sexuality and Desire
		3. Family and Kinship
		4. Birth and Babyhood
		5. Childhood and Youth
		6. Mortality and Care
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	6. Enquiry and Learning	1. Curiosity and Discovery
		2. Deliberation and Debate
		3. Research and Application
		4. Teaching and Training
		5. Writing and Codification
		6. Meditation and Reflexivity
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	7. Health and Wellbeing	1. Integrity and Autonomy
		2. Embodiment and Corporeal Knowledge
		3. Mental Health and Pleasure
		4. Care and Comfort
		5. Inclusion and Participation
		6. Cuisine and Nourishment
		7. Monitoring and Reflection

In setting up the Circles of Sustainability approach we have kept in mind the following considerations:

- *Accessible* — At one level, the approach should be readily interpretable to non-experts, but at deeper levels it needs to be methodologically sophisticated enough to stand up against the scrutiny of experts in assessment, monitoring and evaluation and project management tools;
- *Graphic* —The approach needs to be simple in its graphic presentation and top-level description, but simultaneously have consistent principles carrying through to its lower, more complex, and detailed levels;
- *Cross-locale* —The approach needs on the one hand to be sufficiently general and high-level to work across a diverse range of cities and localities, big and small, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to be used to capture the detailed specificity of each of those different places;
- *Learning-based* —The approach should allow cities to learn from other cities, and provide support and principles for exchange of knowledge and learning from practice;
- *Comparable* —The approach should allow comparison between cities, but not locate them in a league table or hierarchy;
- *Tool-generating* —The approach needs to provide the basis for developing a series of tools—including web-based electronic tools (compatible with various information and communications technology platforms). These range from very simple learning tools to more complex planning, assessment, and monitoring tools;
- *Indicator-generating*—The approach needs to provide guidance for selecting indicators as well as methods for assessing their outcomes;
- *Relational* — The approach needs to focus not only on identification of critical issues, indicators that relate to those critical issues, but also the relationships between them;
- *Cross-domain* — The approach needs to be compatible with new developments that bring 'culture' in serious contention in sustainability analysis—such as the United Cities and Local Governments four pillars of sustainability. The approach therefore uses a domain-based model which emphasizes interconnectivity of economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions, each of which are treated as social domains;
- *Participatory* — Even if it is framed by a set of global protocols, the approach needs to be driven by stakeholders and communities of practice;
- *Cross-supported* — The approach needs to straddle the qualitative/quantitative divide, and uses just enough quantification to allow for identification of conflicts.
- *Standards-oriented* — The approach (and its methods) should connect to current and emerging reporting and modelling standards.
- *Curriculum-oriented*—The approach needs to be broad enough to provide guidance for curriculum development, and therefore useful for training.
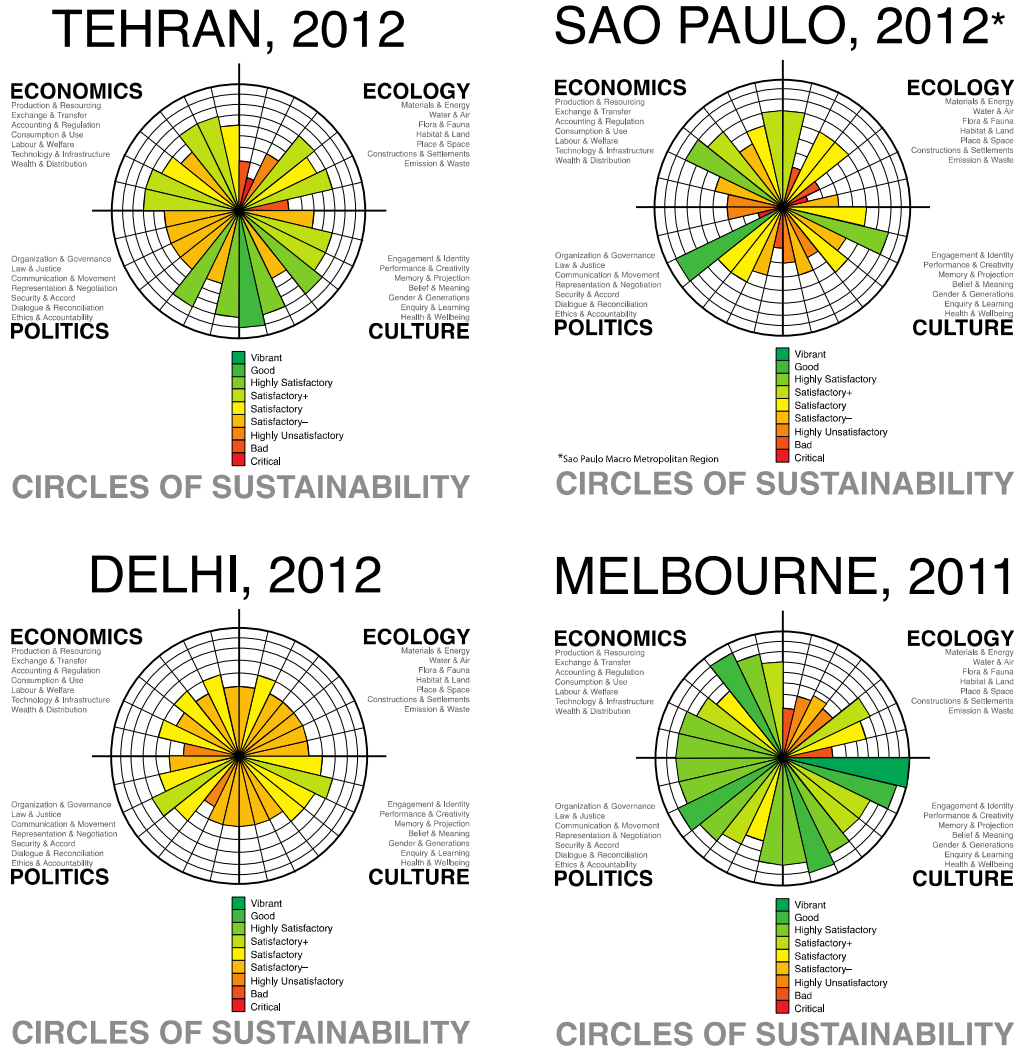
Background

The Circles of Sustainability profile process is intended as a way of developing an interpretative description of the sustainability of an urban region and its immediate hinterland. Here *sustainability* is understood in relation to local, national, and global processes: ecological, economic, political and cultural.

The approach, developed across the period from 2007 to the present, suggests that social life should be understood holistically across these intersecting domains. This bypasses either the dominant triple-bottom-line approach or narrower carbon accounting approaches. Our alternative is intended to offer an integrated method for deciding on the critical issues associated with responding to complex problems and then acting upon them. It takes a city, community or organization through the difficult process of deciding on the terms of its approach and guides the engagement. It allows for an understanding of competing issues and tensions. It then provides continuing feedback and monitoring in relation to implementation difficulties and successful outcomes. And it supports a reporting process, including a graphic presentation of the sustainability of a city or locale (Figure 2 below).

The approach provides a way of achieving urban sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported approach with guiding tools for investigating problems faced by communities, and does so in such a way as to be flexibly applicable across the very different contexts of a city, community, or organization. It is particularly sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local level to the global.

The profile template is intended as way of developing a more comprehensive understanding of an 'urban region'—city, metropolis, town, municipality, village, etc. By responding to the questions in the Urban Profile Question it is possible to generate a clear and simple graphic representation of the sustainability profile of that region. Examples are shown in Figure 2 (below) for representative cities around the world.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Figure 2. Circles of Sustainability Assessments

Each of these figures represents a qualitative assessment by local and other experts of the sustainability of the respective urban areas. The assessment group should define the precise nature of the urban area in question before the assessment begins (see Table 3 below). For example, in Figure 2 above 'Sao Paulo' refers to the greater Sao Paulo Metropolitan region. Similarly 'Melbourne' in this case is assessed across the metropolitan region of Melbourne rather than the Municipality of Melbourne, which is much smaller geographically and demographically.

Conducting an Urban Profile for the Domain of Culture

Table 3. The Urban Region being Assessed

The name of urban area in question: (That is, the name of the city, town, or municipality, etc., that is being assessed.)	**Paola Local Council**
Geographical spread of the urban area in km2.	**2.5 sq km**
Population of the urban area.	**8,273 (Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report, 2012)**
Date or period of the assessment: Month(s), Year	**November 2013**

The quality and standing of the assessment depends upon the expertise of the persons who are conducting the assessment. Optimally, we suggest that the assessment group should comprise three to ten people with different and complementary expertise about the urban area in question. Table 4 below is intended for recording the names and expertise of the persons on the Assessment Panel.

Table 4. Urban Profile Assessors on the Assessment Panel

The profile mapping process can be done by different kinds of respondents. Different people have different knowledge sets, all of which can be valuable in making an urban assessment. In order to understand the nature of the assessment, we just need to know what kind of knowledge held by each respondent in the Assessment Panel.	Please indicate which kind of respondent(s) you are by adding names in the boxes below. Add more lines or more space to the list if necessary.	
1. **Internal Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question and have expert knowledge* of that region or a significant aspect of that region. * Here 'expert knowledge' is defined as either being trained in some aspect of urban planning / administration, etc., or working in that capacity for some time.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Perit Roderick Spiteri	Mayor/Architect
2. **External Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who do not live in the urban region in question, but have expert knowledge of that region or a significant aspect of that region.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Dr Malcolm Borg	Urban Planner
	Dr Saviour Formosa	Senior Lecturer (Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, – University of Malta)

3. Lay Assessors That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question, and who have extensive local knowledge of the region or an aspect of the region, (without necessarily either being trained in urban planning, administration, or working in the field).	Name	Length of time having lived in the urban region
	Eng. Christopher Borg	Engineer / Member of the Paola Heritage Foundation

The Assessment Panel should meet for a sustained period to conduct the assessment. The amount of time taken depends upon the nature of the assessment. (See Table 5 below.) Two hours is optimal for a Rapid Assessment; four hours is minimal for an Aggregate Assessment, but a day would be better. It might, however, take significantly longer for an Annotated Assessment. And a comprehensive assessment would take from a few months to a year depending upon how much dedicated time is given to it. Ideally, individuals on the panel should read through the questions before meeting as a panel and where necessary seek information about issues with which they are not familiar.

Table 5. The Nature of the Assessment Process

The profile mapping process can be done at four levels:	Please indicate which profile exercise you intend to complete by ticking the box or boxes.
1. **Rapid Assessment Profile** Responding to the single 'general question' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale.	☐
2. **Aggregate Assessment Profile** Responding to the 'particular questions' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale).	and/or ☐
3. **Annotated Assessment Profile** Completing the exercise at Level 2 *and* writing detailed annotations about how the points on the scale were derived.	and/or X
4. **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, I** Completing the exercise at Level 3 *and* writing a major essay on the urban area using the questions to guide the writing. and/or	and/or ☐ and/or
Comprehensive Assessment Profile, II Completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale.	X

If you are conducting a *Rapid Assessment* only the *General Question* in each set needs to be answered. That question works as a proxy question for that whole area of sustainability.

If you are conducting an *Aggregate Assessment* at least six of the questions in each set of seven questions need to be answered. If one of the questions in each set is deemed to be particularly inappropriate for your

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

urban area, you can either choose to replace that one question by alternative question that you formulate for yourself or choose not to answer that question and leave the assessment blank.

In most cases, the questions will be weighted equally in finalizing the assessment—that is, unless a prior round of assessment is done to rank-and-weight the questions in each perspective in relation to each other.

Definitions for the Purposes of this Questionnaire

- 'Urban area' or 'area' means the area that you have defined as the basis for making this assessment. The concept of 'local' is used to mean within the urban area.
- 'Urban region' means the urban area and its immediate hinterlands, including its peri-urban extensions, adjacent agricultural and rural land, and its water catchment areas if they are in the vicinity of the urban area.
- 'Broader region' is taken to mean within two-three hour's land transport.
- Concepts such as 'good' and 'appropriate' are to be defined in terms of the values of the sustainability assessment respondents, but in an Annotated Assessment these are the sorts of issues that would need to be defined by the Assessment Panel.

The Scale for Critical Judgement

The questionnaire asks for critical judgement on a nine-point scale of sustainability from critical sustainability to vibrant sustainability. *Critical sustainability* means a level of sustainability that requires critical or urgent change in order to be assured of continuing viability. *Vibrant sustainability* means a level of sustainability that is currently active in reproducing vibrant social and environmental conditions for long-term positive viability. The mid-point, *satisfactory sustainability*, signifies a level of sustainability that allows for a basic equilibrium over the coming period. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory—	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

The Issues in Contention

The full Urban Profile process works on the basis of a four-domain model (see Appendix 1 for a discussion on the basis of the model). Each domain is divided into seven perspectives (as set out in Table 5 below), and seven questions are asked about each perspective (see the questionnaire beginning on the next page).

Table 5. Summary of the Domain of Culture

Domain	Perspectives (or Subdomains)	Possible issues to consider
Culture	• Identity and Engagement • Creativity and Recreation • Memory and Projection • Belief and Ideas • Gender and Generations • Enquiry and Learning • Health and Wellbeing	• Ethnicities; identities; public engagement • Celebrations; events and rituals, sport • Indigenous history; museums; monuments • Religions and spiritualities; ideologies • Gender relations; family life; generations • Education and training systems • Heath and medical systems; mental health

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Urban Profile Questionnaire: Culture

1. Identity and Engagement

General Question: Does the urban area have a positive cultural identity that brings people together over and above the various differences in their individual identities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The active cultural diversity of different local communities and groups.	7
2. The sense of belonging and identification with the local area as a whole in a way that connects across community and group differences.	8
3. The tolerance and respect for different language groups and ethnic groups in the urban area.	7
4. The tolerance and respect for different religions and communities of faith in the urban area.	7
5. The possibility of strangers to the urban area establishing and maintaining personal networks or affinity groups with current residents.	6
6. The sense of home and place.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of community relations into strategies for enhancing identity and engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:*	

2. Creativity and Recreation

General Question: How sustainable are creative pursuits in the urban area—including sporting activities and creative leisure activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of participation in and appreciation of the arts—from painting to story-telling.	9
2. The level of involvement in performance activities such as music, dance and theatre as participants and spectators.	9
3. The level of cultural creativity and innovation.	9
4. The level of support for cultural events—for example, public festivals and public celebrations.	9
5. The level of involvement in sport and physical activity as participants and spectators.	8
6. The affordance of time and energy for creative leisure.	8
7. The translation of the monitoring of creative pursuits into strategies for enhancing creative engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of creativity and recreation activities as a tool for the enhancement of social	7

cohesion

3. Memory and Projection

General Question: How well does the urban area deal with its past history in relation to projecting visions of possible alternative futures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of respect for past traditions and understanding of their differences.	8
2. The protection of heritage sites and sacred places.	9
3. The maintenance of monuments, museums and historical records.	9
4. The active recognition of indigenous customs and histories.	9
5. The sense of hope for a positive future for the urban area as a whole.	8
6. The level of public discussion that actively explores possible futures.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of themes of past and future into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:* *The translation of the physical fabric into a digital domain to ensure knowledge dissemination and memory preservation*	6

4. Belief and Ideas

General Question: Do residents of the urban area have a strong sense of purpose and meaning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of knowledgeable engagement in cultural pursuits in the urban area.	8
2. The possibilities for counter-ideologies being discussed and debated publicly.	6
3. The level of thoughtful consideration that lies behind decisions made on behalf of the people of the urban area.	6
4. The sense of meaning that local people have in their lives?	6
5. The extent to which people of different faiths or spiritualities feel comfortable practicing their various rituals, even when their beliefs are not part of the dominant culture.	6
6. The possibility that passions can be publicly expressed in the urban area without descending into negative conflict.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of ideas and debates into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

5. Gender and Generations

General Question: To what extent is there gender and generational wellbeing across different groups?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	Number 1–9
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The equality of men and women in public and private life.	5
2. The positive expression of sexuality in ways that do not lead to intrusion or violation.	6
3. The contribution of both men and women to bringing up children.	8
4. The availability of child-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	7
5. The positive engagement of youth in the life of the urban area.	9
6. The availability of aged-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of gender and generational relations into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* Effective activities that stem depopulation	7

6. Enquiry and Learning

General Question: How sustainable is formal and informal learning in the urban region?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	Number 1–9
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban region?	
1. The accessibility of active centres of discovery—ranging formal scientific research institutes to places of playful discovery for children.	6
2. The active participation of people in the urban area in deliberation and debate over ideas.	6
3. The accessibility of active centres of social enquiry—both formal and informal—ranging in focus from scientific research to interpretative and spiritual enquiry.	7
4. The active participation of people in formal and informal education, across gender, generation, ethnicity, and class differences.	6
5. The existence of local cultures of writing—from philosophical and scientific to literary and personal.	8
6. The setting aside of time in the various education processes—both formal and informal—for considered reflection.	5
7. The translation of the monitoring of education practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

7. Health and Wellbeing

General Question: What is the general level of health and wellbeing across different groups of residents?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The sense of control that people have in the urban area over questions of bodily integrity and wellbeing.	5
2. The level of knowledge that people in the urban area have in relation to basic health issues.	5
3. The availability of consulting professionals or respected community elders to support people in time of hardship, stress or grief.	8
4. The capacity of the urban area to meet reasonable expectations that people in the urban area hold about health care or counselling.	8
5. The participation of people in practices that promote wellbeing.	6
6. The cultural richness of cuisine and good food.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of health and wellbeing practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

Notes

---

[1] There were numerous consultants involved in setting up this method. For Metropolis, the Framework Taskforce comprised Paul James (Melbourne), Barbara Berninger and Michael Abraham (Berlin); Tim Campbell (San Francisco), Emile Daho (Abidjan), Sunil Dubey (Sydney), Jan Erasmus (Johannesburg), Jane McCrae (Vancouver), and Om Prakesh Mathur and Usha Raghupathi (New Delhi). In Australia, we would particularly need to acknowledge Peter Christoff, Robin Eckersley, Mary Lewin, Howard Nielsen, Christine Oakley, and Stephanie Trigg. In Brazil helpful responses came from Eduardo Manoel Araujo (UN Cities Programme Advisor), Luiz Berlim, Marcia Maina, Luciano Planco and Paulo Cesar Rink. In the United States important suggestions for reworking came from Jyoti Hosagrahar (New York) and Giovanni Circella (Davis, California). The Cities Programme Working Group which worked to develop the matrix comprised Paul James, Liam Magee, Martin Mulligan, Andy Scerri, John Smithies and Manfred Steger with others. The author of this paper is Paul James.
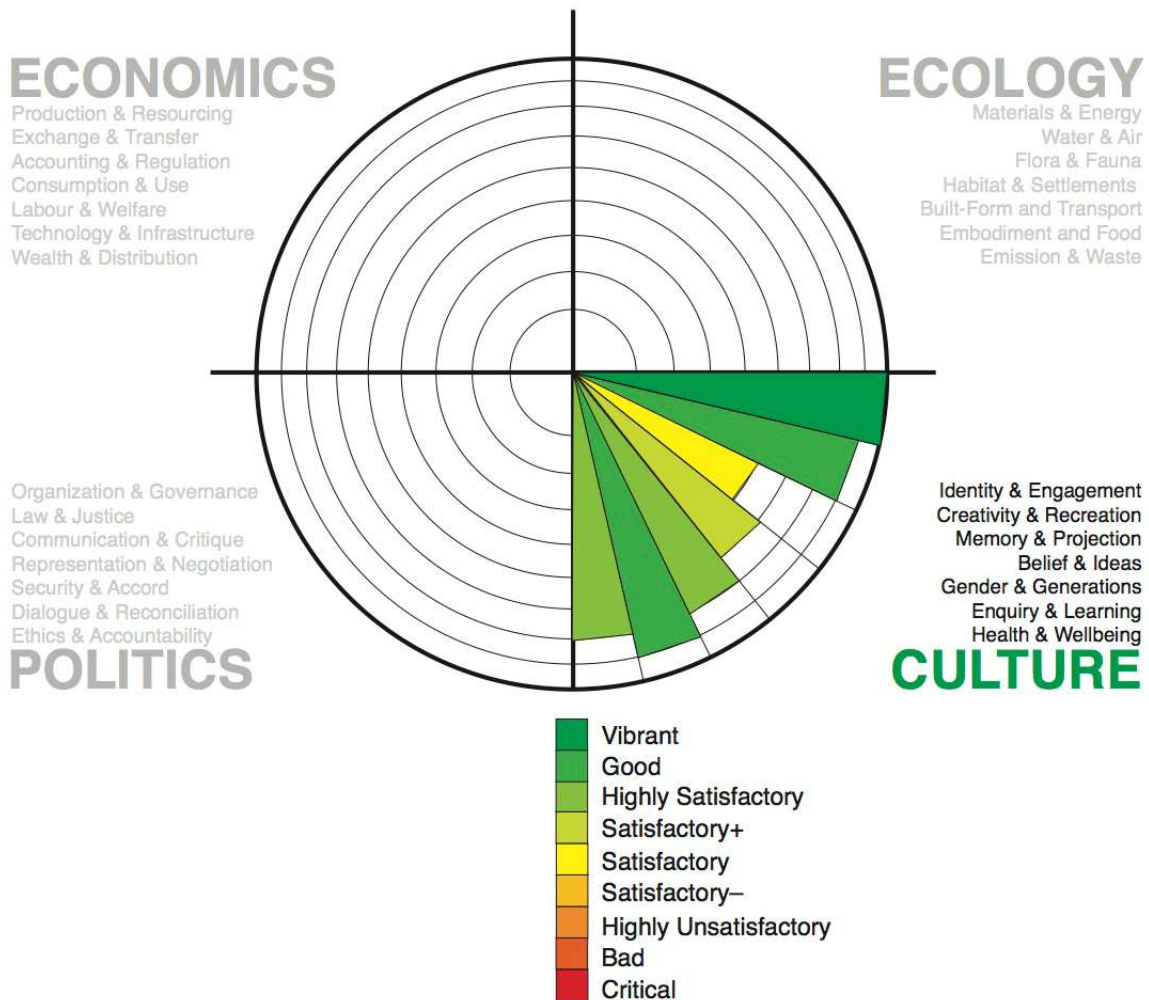
[2] Pilot studies have already been conducted in a number of cities across the world using the various parts in draft form. Some of those are represented in Figure 2. In 2011, the research team were invited by Metropolis to work with the Victorian Government and the Cities Programme on one of their major initiatives. The methodology is central to the approach used by the 'Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships Initiative' organized by Metropolis, 2012–2013 for Indian, Brazilian and Iranian cities. A workshop was held in New Delhi, 26–27 July 2012, and senior planners from New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata used the two of the assessment tools in the 'Circles of Sustainability' toolbox to map the sustainability of their cities as part of developing their urban-regional plans. Other cities to use the same tools have been Tehran (in relation to their mega-projects plan) and Sao Paulo (in relation to their macro-metropolitan plan). Our team in Curitiba, Brazil, has done considerable work and we will soon have pilot studies of cities in the State of Parana as the Regional Secretariat rolls out the Circles of Sustainability method.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability[1]

Based on Guideline 1. Urban Profile Process v3.3 2013[2]

Figure 1. Culture: The Fourth Domain

Culture is a fundamental domain of social life. It is called the 'Fourth Domain' here, not because it is the fourth most important domain, but rather because for too long it has been ignored and subordinated in a flawed metaphor called the 'triple bottom line'. That approach problematically presents three domains—economics, environment and the social—and incorporates the domain of culture as an extra consideration inside the social. Economics is treated wrongly as the master domain, and it stands alone against which others are judged. In the radical alternative presented here all social life, including economics, is considered social. Thus we work with four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. They are all social domains, and culture is as important as any of the other three domains. It is only the fourth domain in the sense that it is being brought back in.

Some approaches use the term 'the fourth pillar' rather than 'fourth domain'. We are uncomfortable with the building metaphor. Pillars standalone. They are fixed. Three pillars can hold up a building without the fourth. In our metaphor domains, the four domains are integrally inter-related. The culture of economics is as

fundamental as the economics of culture, and so on. The culture of economics, ecology or politics is critical to the sustainability and vibrancy of those other domains of social life.

Defining Social Domains

Defining such fundamental terms as *economy*, *ecology*, *politics* and *culture* is extraordinarily difficult. It is not just because they are *essentially contested concepts* such as 'democracy', 'justice' or 'aesthetics'.[1] Rather it is more fundamentally because they have become taken for granted as the fields across which we walk, the basis of our understanding of our world. Everybody assumes that they know what is meant by economy or culture, and we are rarely called upon to define them. It is increasingly rare for even academics to actually try to define these basic terms. The classic text *Keywords*, for example, only explores one of these four concepts.[2]

In summary then, the approach to understanding sustainability presented here begins with the social. The concept of sustainability thus also is quite different from the 'triple bottom line' approach. Sustainability in that approach is not more than the durability of a particular practice. *Positive* sustainability as defined here is practices and meanings of human engagement that project an ongoing life-world of natural and social flourishing. Thus sustainability is a *social* phenomenon long before it is an economic or even just an ecological phenomenon.

It is analytically possible to divide 'the social' into any number of domains. Social domains are dimensions of social life understood in the broadest possible sense. In this case we have chosen the minimal number of domains that are useful for giving a complex sense of the whole of social life: namely, ecology, economics, politics and culture. The particular words that we use to name each of the domains are less important than the social space that the combinations of those words evoke. The 'social domains', as we name and define them here, are analytically derived by considering the human condition broadly across time, across different places, and across different ways of life. In practice, the four domains remain mutually constitutive.

Defining Culture

Taking into account the many earlier controversies over defining these concepts, here is our definition:

The cultural is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material objects, which, over time, express the social meaning of a life held-in-common.

In other words, culture expresses 'how and why we do things around here'.

The 'how' in this simple sentence refers to how we practice, how we describe those practices to ourselves, and how any objects produced by that practice are given meaning. Just as there are ecological, economic and political questions about practice, the core cultural question is what is the meaning of 'how we do things'. This relations to the question of 'why?'. It emphasizes the centrality of meaning. The 'we' refers to the specificity of a life held-in-common. Culture is always a question of the meaning in relation to others. And 'around here' specifies the spatial and, also by implication, the temporal particularity of all culture.

The concept of 'culture' had its beginnings in agriculture and cultivation, with subsidiary senses of 'honour with worship' of *cultura*, which in the sixteenth century were linked to understanding of human growth and development.[3] In some contemporary definitions, culture is reduced to the arts divided into high culture and

---

[1] The notion of 'essentially contested concepts' comes from Walter Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 167–198.

[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana/Croom Helm, Glasgow, 1976. Politics, ecology and economics do not appear in his list. The key to understanding why Williams leaves out politics, economics and ecology is that he is living in a period where, already, the vocabulary has already separated out the domain of the cultural, and his book is presented as a vocabulary of cultural concepts.

[3] Williams, *Keywords*.

popular culture, but here we treat culture much more broadly and deeply. Questions of power are ever-present in the cultural domain in relation to contested outcomes over social meaning.

Domains, Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the social domains—ecology, economics, politics and culture—can analytically be divided in the 'perspectives'. These perspectives were called 'subdomains' in an earlier stage of our thinking, but the less formalistic metaphor of perspectives works better to register the interconnected nature of any of these provisional subdivisions. It emphasizes the issue that the subdivisions are *points of view*; not categorically separate or standalone categories. For example, the cultural perspective of 'Enquiry and Learning' reaches out to all the other domains in relation to enquiring about economics, politics and ecology, even though we have located its primary home in the domain of culture. This can be seen graphically in the figure of the Circle of Sustainability (Figure 1). All perspectives are inter-related through the centre-point of the circle, sometimes tellingly in mathematics called 'the origin' of the circle'.[4] Each of the cultural perspectives such as 'identity and engagement' or 'creativity and recreation' is analytically derived using the same process that is used for working through broad considerations of the human condition to derive the four social domains.

Table 1. Social Domains and Perspectives

Economics	Ecology
1. Production and Resourcing	1. Materials and Energy
2. Exchange and Transfer	2. Water and Air
3. Accounting and Regulation	3. Flora and Fauna
4. Consumption and Use	4. Habitat and Settlements
5. Labour and Welfare	5. Built-Form and Transport
6. Technology and Infrastructure	6. Embodiment and Food
7. Wealth and Distribution	7. Emission and Waste
Politics	**Culture**
1. Organization and Governance	1. Identity and Engagement
2. Law and Justice	2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Communication and Critique	3. Memory and Projection
4. Representation and Negotiation	4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Security and Accord	5. Gender and Generations
6. Dialogue and Reconciliation	6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Ethics and Accountability	7. Health and Wellbeing

Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the *perspectives* is divided in seven *aspects*. The rationale for this is to generate a finer assessment process. While the figure of the circle, coloured according to levels of sustainability (Figure 1), gives a simple graphic representation of the outcome of an assessment process, there are a series of background considerations that need to be brought to the fore. A primary consideration involves having a way of assessing why, from a particular perspective, a city or locale is judged to have a certain level of sustainability. In the background to the graphic circle are sets of questions linked to social indicators. To decide systematically on what is a good range of questions the 'Circles of Sustainability' approach entails

---

[4] The philosophical history of the centre-point of the circle is extraordinarily rich, and for our purposes provides a way of qualifying the modern tendency to treat geometrical ordering as a simple technical exercise. For classical Greek philosopher from Euclid to Aristotle a 'point' is both the most abstract and the particular of entities. The tenth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Nairzi, who wrote commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy, responded that 'If any one seeks to know the essence of a point, a thing more single than a line, let him, in the sensible world, think of the centre of the universe and the poles'. (Cited from the notes by Thomas L Heath, accompanying *Euclid, The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Dover Publications, Mineola, 1956, p. 157.) For the thirteenth-century Andalusian Sufi writer, Ibn Arabi, the centre point of a circle is the point of 'necessary being' while the circumference is the circle of 'possible' or contingent existence. 'The "possible" is the space between the point of the real and the circumference'. (Cited from Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn Arabi: Time and Cosmology*, Routledge, Abington, 2008, p. 120.

analytical dividing the perspectives into different aspects. For example, one aspect of the cultural perspective of 'identity and engagement' is 'diversity and difference'. All of this is laid out below in Table 2.

Table 7. Summary of the Matrix of the Urban Profile Processes

Domains	Perspectives	Aspects
Culture *Defined as the practices, discourses, and material objects, which express the social meaning of a life held-in-common*	1. Identity and Engagement	1. Diversity and Difference
		2. Belonging and Community
		3. Ethnicity and Language
		4. Religion and Faith
		5. Friendship and Affinity
		6. Home and Place
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	2. Creativity and Recreation	1. Aesthetics and Design
		2. Performance and Representation
		3. Innovation and Adaptation
		4. Celebrations and Festivals
		5. Sport and Play
		6. Leisure and Relaxation
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	3. Memory and Projection	1. Tradition and Authenticity
		2. Heritage and Inheritance
		3. History and Records
		4. Indigeneity and Custom
		5. Imagination and Hope
		6. Inspiration and Vision
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	4. Beliefs and Ideas	1. Knowledge and Interpretation
		2. Ideologies and Imaginaries
		3. Reason and Rationalization
		4. Religiosity and Spirituality
		5. Rituals and Symbols
		6. Emotions and Passions
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	5. Gender and Generations	1. Equality and Respect
		2. Sexuality and Desire
		3. Family and Kinship
		4. Birth and Babyhood
		5. Childhood and Youth
		6. Mortality and Care
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	6. Enquiry and Learning	1. Curiosity and Discovery
		2. Deliberation and Debate
		3. Research and Application
		4. Teaching and Training
		5. Writing and Codification
		6. Meditation and Reflexivity
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	7. Health and Wellbeing	1. Integrity and Autonomy
		2. Embodiment and Corporeal Knowledge
		3. Mental Health and Pleasure
		4. Care and Comfort
		5. Inclusion and Participation
		6. Cuisine and Nourishment
		7. Monitoring and Reflection

In setting up the Circles of Sustainability approach we have kept in mind the following considerations:

- *Accessible* — At one level, the approach should be readily interpretable to non-experts, but at deeper levels it needs to be methodologically sophisticated enough to stand up against the scrutiny of experts in assessment, monitoring and evaluation and project management tools;

- *Graphic* —The approach needs to be simple in its graphic presentation and top-level description, but simultaneously have consistent principles carrying through to its lower, more complex, and detailed levels;

- *Cross-locale* —The approach needs on the one hand to be sufficiently general and high-level to work across a diverse range of cities and localities, big and small, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to be used to capture the detailed specificity of each of those different places;

- *Learning-based* —The approach should allow cities to learn from other cities, and provide support and principles for exchange of knowledge and learning from practice;

- *Comparable* —The approach should allow comparison between cities, but not locate them in a league table or hierarchy;

- *Tool-generating* —The approach needs to provide the basis for developing a series of tools— including web-based electronic tools (compatible with various information and communications technology platforms). These range from very simple learning tools to more complex planning, assessment, and monitoring tools;

- *Indicator-generating*—The approach needs to provide guidance for selecting indicators as well as methods for assessing their outcomes;

- *Relational* — The approach needs to focus not only on identification of critical issues, indicators that relate to those critical issues, but also the relationships between them;

- *Cross-domain* — The approach needs to be compatible with new developments that bring 'culture' in serious contention in sustainability analysis—such as the United Cities and Local Governments four pillars of sustainability. The approach therefore uses a domain-based model which emphasizes interconnectivity of economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions, each of which are treated as social domains;

- *Participatory* — Even if it is framed by a set of global protocols, the approach needs to be driven by stakeholders and communities of practice;

- *Cross-supported* — The approach needs to straddle the qualitative/quantitative divide, and uses just enough quantification to allow for identification of conflicts.

- *Standards-oriented* — The approach (and its methods) should connect to current and emerging reporting and modelling standards.

- *Curriculum-oriented*—The approach needs to be broad enough to provide guidance for curriculum development, and therefore useful for training.
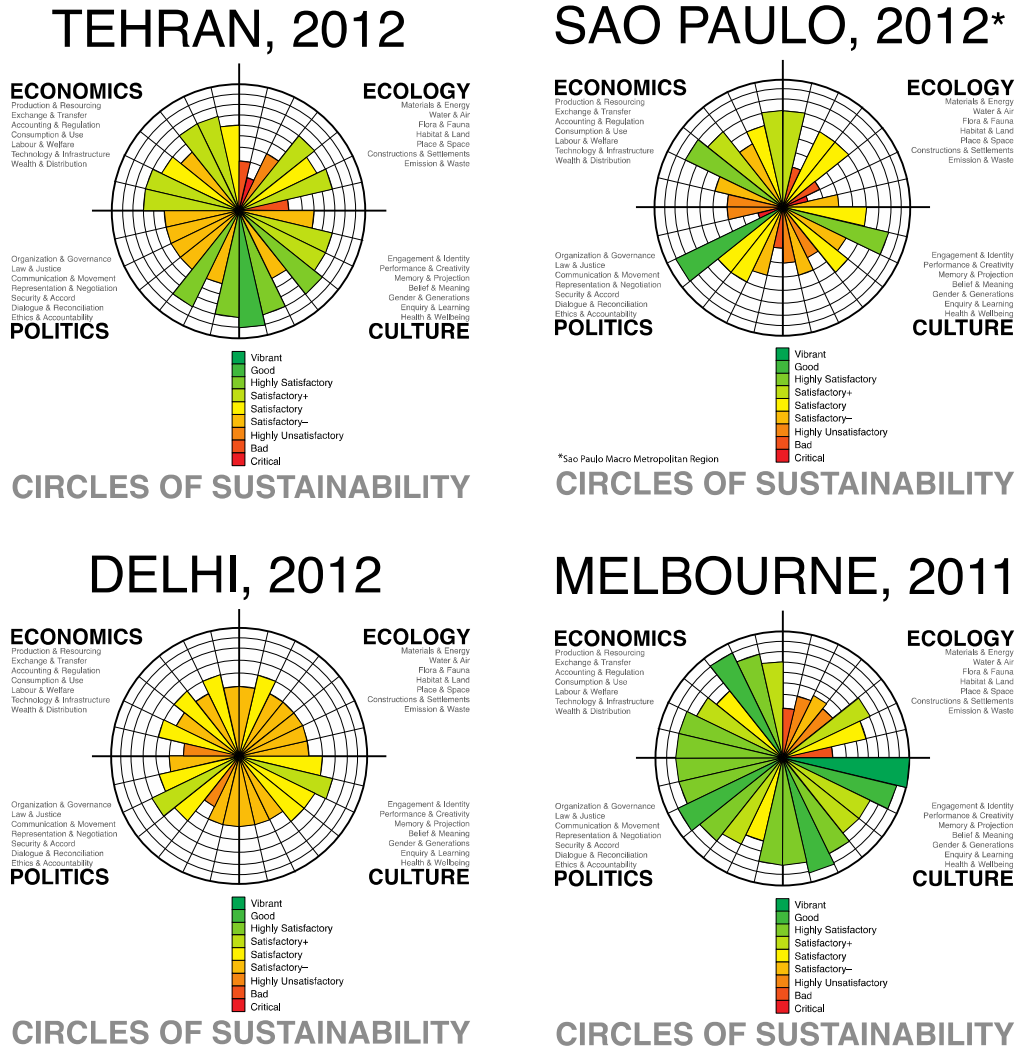
Background

The Circles of Sustainability profile process is intended as a way of developing an interpretative description of the sustainability of an urban region and its immediate hinterland. Here *sustainability* is understood in relation to local, national, and global processes: ecological, economic, political and cultural.

The approach, developed across the period from 2007 to the present, suggests that social life should be understood holistically across these intersecting domains. This bypasses either the dominant triple-bottom-line approach or narrower carbon accounting approaches. Our alternative is intended to offer an integrated method for deciding on the critical issues associated with responding to complex problems and then acting upon them. It takes a city, community or organization through the difficult process of deciding on the terms of its approach and guides the engagement. It allows for an understanding of competing issues and tensions. It then provides continuing feedback and monitoring in relation to implementation difficulties and successful outcomes. And it supports a reporting process, including a graphic presentation of the sustainability of a city or locale (Figure 2 below).

The approach provides a way of achieving urban sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported approach with guiding tools for investigating problems faced by communities, and does so in such a way as to be flexibly applicable across the very different contexts of a city, community, or organization. It is particularly sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local level to the global.

The profile template is intended as way of developing a more comprehensive understanding of an 'urban region'—city, metropolis, town, municipality, village, etc. By responding to the questions in the Urban Profile Question it is possible to generate a clear and simple graphic representation of the sustainability profile of that region. Examples are shown in Figure 2 (below) for representative cities around the world.

![metropolis - WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES / ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS / ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES]

![Global Compact Cities Programme]

Figure 2. Circles of Sustainability Assessments

Each of these figures represents a qualitative assessment by local and other experts of the sustainability of the respective urban areas. The assessment group should define the precise nature of the urban area in question before the assessment begins (see Table 3 below). For example, in Figure 2 above 'Sao Paulo' refers to the greater Sao Paulo Metropolitan region. Similarly 'Melbourne' in this case is assessed across the metropolitan region of Melbourne rather than the Municipality of Melbourne, which is much smaller geographically and demographically.

Conducting an Urban Profile for the Domain of Culture

Table 3. The Urban Region being Assessed

The name of urban area in question: (That is, the name of the city, town, or municipality, etc., that is being assessed.)	**Senglea Local Council**
Geographical spread of the urban area in km2.	**0.2 sq km**
Population of the urban area.	**2,721 (Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report, 2012)**
Date or period of the assessment: Month(s), Year	**November 2013**

The quality and standing of the assessment depends upon the expertise of the persons who are conducting the assessment. Optimally, we suggest that the assessment group should comprise three to ten people with different and complementary expertise about the urban area in question. Table 4 below is intended for recording the names and expertise of the persons on the Assessment Panel.

Table 4. Urban Profile Assessors on the Assessment Panel

The profile mapping process can be done by different kinds of respondents. Different people have different knowledge sets, all of which can be valuable in making an urban assessment. In order to understand the nature of the assessment, we just need to know what kind of knowledge held by each respondent in the Assessment Panel.	Please indicate which kind of respondent(s) you are by adding names in the boxes below. Add more lines or more space to the list if necessary.	
	Name	Position and/or Training
1. **Internal Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question and have expert knowledge* of that region or a significant aspect of that region. * Here 'expert knowledge' is defined as either being trained in some aspect of urban planning / administration, etc., or working in that capacity for some time.	Mr Justin John Camilleri	Councillor Senglea Local Council
2. **External Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who do not live in the urban region in question, but have expert knowledge of that region or a significant aspect of that region.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Dr Malcolm Borg	Urban Planner
3. **Lay Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the	Name	Length of time having lived in the urban region

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

urban region in question, and who have extensive local knowledge of the region or an aspect of the region, (without necessarily either being trained in urban planning, administration, or working in the field).	Dr Saviour Formosa	Senior Lecturer (Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, – University of Malta)

The Assessment Panel should meet for a sustained period to conduct the assessment. The amount of time taken depends upon the nature of the assessment. (See Table 5 below.) Two hours is optimal for a Rapid Assessment; four hours is minimal for an Aggregate Assessment, but a day would be better. It might, however, take significantly longer for an Annotated Assessment. And a comprehensive assessment would take from a few months to a year depending upon how much dedicated time is given to it. Ideally, individuals on the panel should read through the questions before meeting as a panel and where necessary seek information about issues with which they are not familiar.

Table 5. The Nature of the Assessment Process

The profile mapping process can be done at four levels:	Please indicate which profile exercise you intend to complete by ticking the box or boxes.
1. **Rapid Assessment Profile** Responding to the single 'general question' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale.	☐
2. **Aggregate Assessment Profile** Responding to the 'particular questions' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale).	and/or ☐
3. **Annotated Assessment Profile** Completing the exercise at Level 2 *and* writing detailed annotations about how the points on the scale were derived.	and/or ☒ X
4. **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, I** Completing the exercise at Level 3 *and* writing a major essay on the urban area using the questions to guide the writing. and/or **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, II** Completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale.	and/or ☐ and/or ☒ X

If you are conducting a *Rapid Assessment* only the *General Question* in each set needs to be answered. That question works as a proxy question for that whole area of sustainability.

If you are conducting an *Aggregate Assessment* at least six of the questions in each set of seven questions need to be answered. If one of the questions in each set is deemed to be particularly inappropriate for your urban area, you can either choose to replace that one question by alternative question that you formulate for yourself or choose not to answer that question and leave the assessment blank.

In most cases, the questions will be weighted equally in finalizing the assessment—that is, unless a prior round of assessment is done to rank-and-weight the questions in each perspective in relation to each other.

Definitions for the Purposes of this Questionnaire

- 'Urban area' or 'area' means the area that you have defined as the basis for making this assessment. The concept of 'local' is used to mean within the urban area.
- 'Urban region' means the urban area and its immediate hinterlands, including its peri-urban extensions, adjacent agricultural and rural land, and its water catchment areas if they are in the vicinity of the urban area.
- 'Broader region' is taken to mean within two-three hour's land transport.
- Concepts such as 'good' and 'appropriate' are to be defined in terms of the values of the sustainability assessment respondents, but in an Annotated Assessment these are the sorts of issues that would need to be defined by the Assessment Panel.

The Scale for Critical Judgement

The questionnaire asks for critical judgement on a nine-point scale of sustainability from critical sustainability to vibrant sustainability. *Critical sustainability* means a level of sustainability that requires critical or urgent change in order to be assured of continuing viability. *Vibrant sustainability* means a level of sustainability that is currently active in reproducing vibrant social and environmental conditions for long-term positive viability. The mid-point, *satisfactory sustainability*, signifies a level of sustainability that allows for a basic equilibrium over the coming period. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

The Issues in Contention

The full Urban Profile process works on the basis of a four-domain model (see Appendix 1 for a discussion on the basis of the model). Each domain is divided into seven perspectives (as set out in Table 5 below), and seven questions are asked about each perspective (see the questionnaire beginning on the next page).

Table 5. Summary of the Domain of Culture

Domain	Perspectives (or Subdomains)	Possible issues to consider
Culture	• Identity and Engagement • Creativity and Recreation • Memory and Projection • Belief and Ideas • Gender and Generations • Enquiry and Learning • Health and Wellbeing	• Ethnicities; identities; public engagement • Celebrations; events and rituals, sport • Indigenous history; museums; monuments • Religions and spiritualities; ideologies • Gender relations; family life; generations • Education and training systems • Heath and medical systems; mental health

Urban Profile Questionnaire: Culture

1. Identity and Engagement

General Question: Does the urban area have a positive cultural identity that brings people together over and above the various differences in their individual identities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory[—]	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The active cultural diversity of different local communities and groups.	7
2. The sense of belonging and identification with the local area as a whole in a way that connects across community and group differences.	7
3. The tolerance and respect for different language groups and ethnic groups in the urban area.	7
4. The tolerance and respect for different religions and communities of faith in the urban area.	7
5. The possibility of strangers to the urban area establishing and maintaining personal networks or affinity groups with current residents.	6
6. The sense of home and place.	8
7. The translation of the monitoring of community relations into strategies for enhancing identity and engagement.	5
• *Optional alternative question:*	

2. Creativity and Recreation

General Question: How sustainable are creative pursuits in the urban area—including sporting activities and creative leisure activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory[—]	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The level of participation in and appreciation of the arts—from painting to story-telling.	8
2. The level of involvement in performance activities such as music, dance and theatre as participants and spectators.	9
3. The level of cultural creativity and innovation.	9
4. The level of support for cultural events—for example, public festivals and public celebrations.	9
5. The level of involvement in sport and physical activity as participants and spectators.	9
6. The affordance of time and energy for creative leisure.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of creative pursuits into strategies for enhancing creative engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:*	4
The translation of creativity and recreation activities as a tool for the enhancement of social	

cohesion

3. Memory and Projection

General Question: How well does the urban area deal with its past history in relation to projecting visions of possible alternative futures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of respect for past traditions and understanding of their differences.	7
2. The protection of heritage sites and sacred places.	9
3. The maintenance of monuments, museums and historical records.	8
4. The active recognition of indigenous customs and histories.	8
5. The sense of hope for a positive future for the urban area as a whole.	5
6. The level of public discussion that actively explores possible futures.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of themes of past and future into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of the physical fabric into a digital domain to ensure knowledge dissemination and memory preservation	3

4. Belief and Ideas

General Question: Do residents of the urban area have a strong sense of purpose and meaning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of knowledgeable engagement in cultural pursuits in the urban area.	8
2. The possibilities for counter-ideologies being discussed and debated publicly.	5
3. The level of thoughtful consideration that lies behind decisions made on behalf of the people of the urban area.	6
4. The sense of meaning that local people have in their lives?	7
5. The extent to which people of different faiths or spiritualities feel comfortable practicing their various rituals, even when their beliefs are not part of the dominant culture.	4
6. The possibility that passions can be publicly expressed in the urban area without descending into negative conflict.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of ideas and debates into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

5. Gender and Generations

General Question: To what extent is there gender and generational wellbeing across different groups?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The equality of men and women in public and private life.	5
2. The positive expression of sexuality in ways that do not lead to intrusion or violation.	6
3. The contribution of both men and women to bringing up children.	5
4. The availability of child-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	7
5. The positive engagement of youth in the life of the urban area.	9
6. The availability of aged-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of gender and generational relations into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* Effective activities that stem depopulation	3

6. Enquiry and Learning

General Question: How sustainable is formal and informal learning in the urban region?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban region?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The accessibility of active centres of discovery—ranging formal scientific research institutes to places of playful discovery for children.	5
2. The active participation of people in the urban area in deliberation and debate over ideas.	6
3. The accessibility of active centres of social enquiry—both formal and informal—ranging in focus from scientific research to interpretative and spiritual enquiry.	5
4. The active participation of people in formal and informal education, across gender, generation, ethnicity, and class differences.	6
5. The existence of local cultures of writing—from philosophical and scientific to literary and personal.	7
6. The setting aside of time in the various education processes—both formal and informal—for considered reflection.	4
7. The translation of the monitoring of education practices into quality-improvement strategies.	5
• *Optional alternative question:*	

7. Health and Wellbeing

General Question: What is the general level of health and wellbeing across different groups of residents?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory—	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The sense of control that people have in the urban area over questions of bodily integrity and wellbeing.	5
2. The level of knowledge that people in the urban area have in relation to basic health issues.	5
3. The availability of consulting professionals or respected community elders to support people in time of hardship, stress or grief.	6
4. The capacity of the urban area to meet reasonable expectations that people in the urban area hold about health care or counselling.	5
5. The participation of people in practices that promote wellbeing.	6
6. The cultural richness of cuisine and good food.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of health and wellbeing practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

Notes

[1] There were numerous consultants involved in setting up this method. For Metropolis, the Framework Taskforce comprised Paul James (Melbourne), Barbara Berninger and Michael Abraham (Berlin); Tim Campbell (San Francisco), Emile Daho (Abidjan), Sunil Dubey (Sydney), Jan Erasmus (Johannesburg), Jane McCrae (Vancouver), and Om Prakesh Mathur and Usha Raghupathi (New Delhi). In Australia, we would particularly need to acknowledge Peter Christoff, Robin Eckersley, Mary Lewin, Howard Nielsen, Christine Oakley, and Stephanie Trigg. In Brazil helpful responses came from Eduardo Manoel Araujo (UN Cities Programme Advisor), Luiz Berlim, Marcia Maina, Luciano Planco and Paulo Cesar Rink. In the United States important suggestions for reworking came from Jyoti Hosagrahar (New York) and Giovanni Circella (Davis, California). The Cities Programme Working Group which worked to develop the matrix comprised Paul James, Liam Magee, Martin Mulligan, Andy Scerri, John Smithies and Manfred Steger with others. The author of this paper is Paul James.

[2] Pilot studies have already been conducted in a number of cities across the world using the various parts in draft form. Some of those are represented in Figure 2. In 2011, the research team were invited by Metropolis to work with the Victorian Government and the Cities Programme on one of their major initiatives. The methodology is central to the approach used by the 'Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships Initiative' organized by Metropolis, 2012–2013 for Indian, Brazilian and Iranian cities. A workshop was held in New Delhi, 26–27 July 2012, and senior planners from New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata used the two of the assessment tools in the 'Circles of Sustainability' toolbox to map the sustainability of their cities as part of developing their urban-regional plans. Other cities to use the same tools have been Tehran (in relation to their mega-projects plan) and Sao Paulo (in relation to their macro-metropolitan plan). Our team in Curitiba, Brazil, has done considerable work and we will soon have pilot studies of cities in the State of Parana as the Regional Secretariat rolls out the Circles of Sustainability method.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability[1]

Based on Guideline 1. Urban Profile Process v3.3 2013[2]

Figure 1. Culture: The Fourth Domain

Culture is a fundamental domain of social life. It is called the 'Fourth Domain' here, not because it is the fourth most important domain, but rather because for too long it has been ignored and subordinated in a flawed metaphor called the 'triple bottom line'. That approach problematically presents three domains—economics, environment and the social—and incorporates the domain of culture as an extra consideration inside the social. Economics is treated wrongly as the master domain, and it stands alone against which others are judged. In the radical alternative presented here all social life, including economics, is considered social. Thus we work with four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. They are all social domains, and culture is as important as any of the other three domains. It is only the fourth domain in the sense that it is being brought back in.

Some approaches use the term 'the fourth pillar' rather than 'fourth domain'. We are uncomfortable with the building metaphor. Pillars standalone. They are fixed. Three pillars can hold up a building without the fourth. In our metaphor domains, the four domains are integrally inter-related. The culture of economics is as

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

fundamental as the economics of culture, and so on. The culture of economics, ecology or politics is critical to the sustainability and vibrancy of those other domains of social life.

Defining Social Domains

Defining such fundamental terms as *economy*, *ecology*, *politics* and *culture* is extraordinarily difficult. It is not just because they are *essentially contested concepts* such as 'democracy', 'justice' or 'aesthetics'.[1] Rather it is more fundamentally because they have become taken for granted as the fields across which we walk, the basis of our understanding of our world. Everybody assumes that they know what is meant by economy or culture, and we are rarely called upon to define them. It is increasingly rare for even academics to actually try to define these basic terms. The classic text *Keywords*, for example, only explores one of these four concepts.[2]

In summary then, the approach to understanding sustainability presented here begins with the social. The concept of sustainability thus also is quite different from the 'triple bottom line' approach. Sustainability in that approach is not more than the durability of a particular practice. *Positive* sustainability as defined here is practices and meanings of human engagement that project an ongoing life-world of natural and social flourishing. Thus sustainability is a *social* phenomenon long before it is an economic or even just an ecological phenomenon.

It is analytically possible to divide 'the social' into any number of domains. Social domains are dimensions of social life understood in the broadest possible sense. In this case we have chosen the minimal number of domains that are useful for giving a complex sense of the whole of social life: namely, ecology, economics, politics and culture. The particular words that we use to name each of the domains are less important than the social space that the combinations of those words evoke. The 'social domains', as we name and define them here, are analytically derived by considering the human condition broadly across time, across different places, and across different ways of life. In practice, the four domains remain mutually constitutive.

Defining Culture

Taking into account the many earlier controversies over defining these concepts, here is our definition:

The cultural is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material objects, which, over time, express the social meaning of a life held-in-common.

In other words, culture expresses 'how and why we do things around here'.

The 'how' in this simple sentence refers to how we practice, how we describe those practices to ourselves, and how any objects produced by that practice are given meaning. Just as there are ecological, economic and political questions about practice, the core cultural question is what is the meaning of 'how we do things'. This relations to the question of 'why?'. It emphasizes the centrality of meaning. The 'we' refers to the specificity of a life held-in-common. Culture is always a question of the meaning in relation to others. And 'around here' specifies the spatial and, also by implication, the temporal particularity of all culture.

The concept of 'culture' had its beginnings in agriculture and cultivation, with subsidiary senses of 'honour with worship' of *cultura*, which in the sixteenth century were linked to understanding of human growth and development.[3] In some contemporary definitions, culture is reduced to the arts divided into high culture and

---

[1] The notion of 'essentially contested concepts' comes from Walter Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 167–198.
[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana/Croom Helm, Glasgow, 1976. Politics, ecology and economics do not appear in his list. The key to understanding why Williams leaves out politics, economics and ecology is that he is living in a period where, already, the vocabulary has already separated out the domain of the cultural, and his book is presented as a vocabulary of cultural concepts.
[3] Williams, *Keywords*.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

popular culture, but here we treat culture much more broadly and deeply. Questions of power are ever-present in the cultural domain in relation to contested outcomes over social meaning.

Domains, Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the social domains—ecology, economics, politics and culture—can analytically be divided in the 'perspectives'. These perspectives were called 'subdomains' in an earlier stage of our thinking, but the less formalistic metaphor of perspectives works better to register the interconnected nature of any of these provisional subdivisions. It emphasizes the issue that the subdivisions are *points of view*; not categorically separate or standalone categories. For example, the cultural perspective of 'Enquiry and Learning' reaches out to all the other domains in relation to enquiring about economics, politics and ecology, even though we have located its primary home in the domain of culture. This can be seen graphically in the figure of the Circle of Sustainability (Figure 1). All perspectives are inter-related through the centre-point of the circle, sometimes tellingly in mathematics called 'the origin' of the circle'.[4] Each of the cultural perspectives such as 'identity and engagement' or 'creativity and recreation' is analytically derived using the same process that is used for working through broad considerations of the human condition to derive the four social domains.

Table 1. Social Domains and Perspectives

Economics	Ecology
1. Production and Resourcing	1. Materials and Energy
2. Exchange and Transfer	2. Water and Air
3. Accounting and Regulation	3. Flora and Fauna
4. Consumption and Use	4. Habitat and Settlements
5. Labour and Welfare	5. Built-Form and Transport
6. Technology and Infrastructure	6. Embodiment and Food
7. Wealth and Distribution	7. Emission and Waste
Politics	**Culture**
1. Organization and Governance	1. Identity and Engagement
2. Law and Justice	2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Communication and Critique	3. Memory and Projection
4. Representation and Negotiation	4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Security and Accord	5. Gender and Generations
6. Dialogue and Reconciliation	6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Ethics and Accountability	7. Health and Wellbeing

Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the *perspectives* is divided in seven *aspects*. The rationale for this is to generate a finer assessment process. While the figure of the circle, coloured according to levels of sustainability (Figure 1), gives a simple graphic representation of the outcome of an assessment process, there are a series of background considerations that need to be brought to the fore. A primary consideration involves having a way of assessing why, from a particular perspective, a city or locale is judged to have a certain level of sustainability. In the background to the graphic circle are sets of questions linked to social indicators. To decide systematically on what is a good range of questions the 'Circles of Sustainability' approach entails

---

[4] The philosophical history of the centre-point of the circle is extraordinarily rich, and for our purposes provides a way of qualifying the modern tendency to treat geometrical ordering as a simple technical exercise. For classical Greek philosophers from Euclid to Aristotle a 'point' is both the most abstract and the particular of entities. The tenth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Nairzi, who wrote commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy, responded that 'If any one seeks to know the essence of a point, a thing more single than a line, let him, in the sensible world, think of the centre of the universe and the poles'. (Cited from the notes by Thomas L Heath, accompanying *Euclid, The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Dover Publications, Mineola, 1956, p. 157.) For the thirteenth-century Andalusian Sufi writer, Ibn Arabi, the centre point of a circle is the point of 'necessary being' while the circumference is the circle of 'possible' or contingent existence. 'The "possible" is the space between the point of the real and the circumference'. (Cited from Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn Arabi: Time and Cosmology*, Routledge, Abington, 2008, p. 120.

analytical dividing the perspectives into different aspects. For example, one aspect of the cultural perspective of 'identity and engagement' is 'diversity and difference'. All of this is laid out below in Table 2.

Table 7. Summary of the Matrix of the Urban Profile Processes

Domains	Perspectives	Aspects
Culture *Defined as the practices, discourses, and material objects, which express the social meaning of a life held-in-common*	1. Identity and Engagement	1. Diversity and Difference
		2. Belonging and Community
		3. Ethnicity and Language
		4. Religion and Faith
		5. Friendship and Affinity
		6. Home and Place
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	2. Creativity and Recreation	1. Aesthetics and Design
		2. Performance and Representation
		3. Innovation and Adaptation
		4. Celebrations and Festivals
		5. Sport and Play
		6. Leisure and Relaxation
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	3. Memory and Projection	1. Tradition and Authenticity
		2. Heritage and Inheritance
		3. History and Records
		4. Indigeneity and Custom
		5. Imagination and Hope
		6. Inspiration and Vision
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	4. Beliefs and Ideas	1. Knowledge and Interpretation
		2. Ideologies and Imaginaries
		3. Reason and Rationalization
		4. Religiosity and Spirituality
		5. Rituals and Symbols
		6. Emotions and Passions
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	5. Gender and Generations	1. Equality and Respect
		2. Sexuality and Desire
		3. Family and Kinship
		4. Birth and Babyhood
		5. Childhood and Youth
		6. Mortality and Care
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	6. Enquiry and Learning	1. Curiosity and Discovery
		2. Deliberation and Debate
		3. Research and Application
		4. Teaching and Training
		5. Writing and Codification
		6. Meditation and Reflexivity
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	7. Health and Wellbeing	1. Integrity and Autonomy
		2. Embodiment and Corporeal Knowledge
		3. Mental Health and Pleasure
		4. Care and Comfort
		5. Inclusion and Participation
		6. Cuisine and Nourishment
		7. Monitoring and Reflection

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

In setting up the Circles of Sustainability approach we have kept in mind the following considerations:

- *Accessible* — At one level, the approach should be readily interpretable to non-experts, but at deeper levels it needs to be methodologically sophisticated enough to stand up against the scrutiny of experts in assessment, monitoring and evaluation and project management tools;
- *Graphic* —The approach needs to be simple in its graphic presentation and top-level description, but simultaneously have consistent principles carrying through to its lower, more complex, and detailed levels;
- *Cross-locale* —The approach needs on the one hand to be sufficiently general and high-level to work across a diverse range of cities and localities, big and small, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to be used to capture the detailed specificity of each of those different places;
- *Learning-based* —The approach should allow cities to learn from other cities, and provide support and principles for exchange of knowledge and learning from practice;
- *Comparable* —The approach should allow comparison between cities, but not locate them in a league table or hierarchy;
- *Tool-generating* —The approach needs to provide the basis for developing a series of tools— including web-based electronic tools (compatible with various information and communications technology platforms). These range from very simple learning tools to more complex planning, assessment, and monitoring tools;
- *Indicator-generating*—The approach needs to provide guidance for selecting indicators as well as methods for assessing their outcomes;
- *Relational* — The approach needs to focus not only on identification of critical issues, indicators that relate to those critical issues, but also the relationships between them;
- *Cross-domain* — The approach needs to be compatible with new developments that bring 'culture' in serious contention in sustainability analysis—such as the United Cities and Local Governments four pillars of sustainability. The approach therefore uses a domain-based model which emphasizes interconnectivity of economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions, each of which are treated as social domains;
- *Participatory* — Even if it is framed by a set of global protocols, the approach needs to be driven by stakeholders and communities of practice;
- *Cross-supported* — The approach needs to straddle the qualitative/quantitative divide, and uses just enough quantification to allow for identification of conflicts.
- *Standards-oriented* — The approach (and its methods) should connect to current and emerging reporting and modelling standards.
- *Curriculum-oriented*—The approach needs to be broad enough to provide guidance for curriculum development, and therefore useful for training.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES
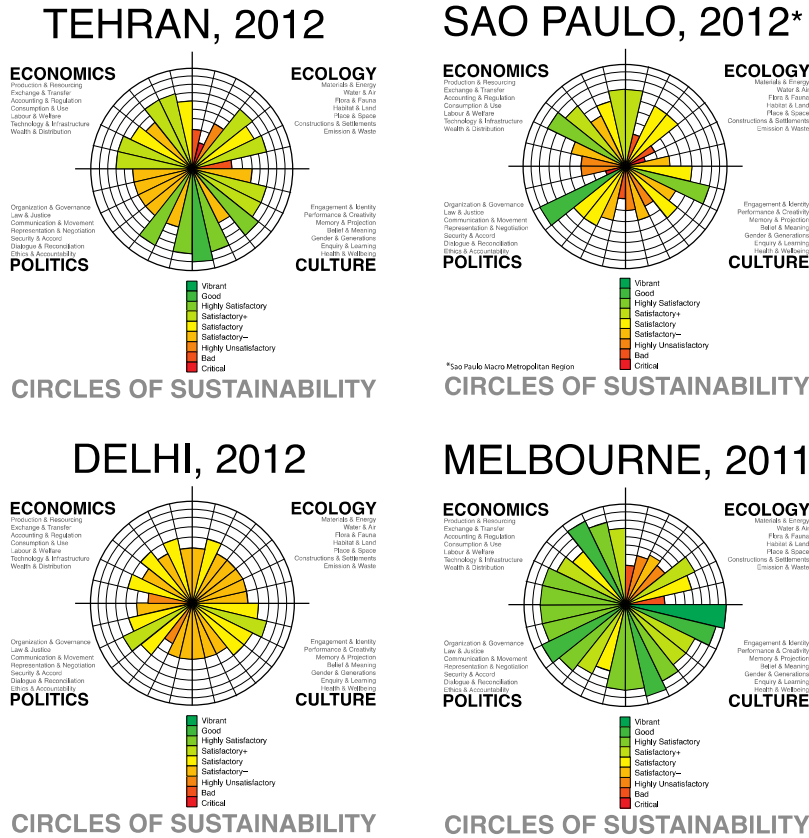
Global Compact
Cities Programme

Background

The Circles of Sustainability profile process is intended as a way of developing an interpretative description of the sustainability of an urban region and its immediate hinterland. Here *sustainability* is understood in relation to local, national, and global processes: ecological, economic, political and cultural.

The approach, developed across the period from 2007 to the present, suggests that social life should be understood holistically across these intersecting domains. This bypasses either the dominant triple-bottom-line approach or narrower carbon accounting approaches. Our alternative is intended to offer an integrated method for deciding on the critical issues associated with responding to complex problems and then acting upon them. It takes a city, community or organization through the difficult process of deciding on the terms of its approach and guides the engagement. It allows for an understanding of competing issues and tensions. It then provides continuing feedback and monitoring in relation to implementation difficulties and successful outcomes. And it supports a reporting process, including a graphic presentation of the sustainability of a city or locale (Figure 2 below).

The approach provides a way of achieving urban sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported approach with guiding tools for investigating problems faced by communities, and does so in such a way as to be flexibly applicable across the very different contexts of a city, community, or organization. It is particularly sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local level to the global.

The profile template is intended as way of developing a more comprehensive understanding of an 'urban region'—city, metropolis, town, municipality, village, etc. By responding to the questions in the Urban Profile Question it is possible to generate a clear and simple graphic representation of the sustainability profile of that region. Examples are shown in Figure 2 (below) for representative cities around the world.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact Cities Programme

Figure 2. Circles of Sustainability Assessments

Each of these figures represents a qualitative assessment by local and other experts of the sustainability of the respective urban areas. The assessment group should define the precise nature of the urban area in question before the assessment begins (see Table 3 below). For example, in Figure 2 above 'Sao Paulo' refers to the greater Sao Paulo Metropolitan region. Similarly 'Melbourne' in this case is assessed across the metropolitan region of Melbourne rather than the Municipality of Melbourne, which is much smaller geographically and demographically.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Conducting an Urban Profile for the Domain of Culture

Table 3. The Urban Region being Assessed

The name of urban area in question: (That is, the name of the city, town, or municipality, etc., that is being assessed.)	**Valletta Local Council**
Geographical spread of the urban area in km2.	**0.8 sq km**
Population of the urban area.	**5,784 (Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report, 2012)**
Date or period of the assessment: Month(s), Year	**November 2013**

The quality and standing of the assessment depends upon the expertise of the persons who are conducting the assessment. Optimally, we suggest that the assessment group should comprise three to ten people with different and complementary expertise about the urban area in question. Table 4 below is intended for recording the names and expertise of the persons on the Assessment Panel.

Table 4. Urban Profile Assessors on the Assessment Panel

The profile mapping process can be done by different kinds of respondents. Different people have different knowledge sets, all of which can be valuable in making an urban assessment. In order to understand the nature of the assessment, we just need to know what kind of knowledge held by each respondent in the Assessment Panel.	Please indicate which kind of respondent(s) you are by adding names in the boxes below. Add more lines or more space to the list if necessary.	
1. **Internal Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question and have expert knowledge* of that region or a significant aspect of that region. *Here 'expert knowledge' is defined as either being trained in some aspect of urban planning / administration, etc., or working in that capacity for some time.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Ms Gabriella Agius	Executive Secretary Valletta Local Council
2. **External Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who do not live in the urban region in question, but have expert knowledge of that region or a significant aspect of that region.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Dr Malcolm Borg	Urban Planner
	Dr Saviour Formosa	Senior Lecturer (Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, – University of Malta)
	Mr Victor Sladden	Architect and urban planner (European Walled Towns Advisor)

3. **Lay Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question, and who have extensive local knowledge of the region or an aspect of the region, (without necessarily either being trained in urban planning, administration, or working in the field).	Name	Length of time having lived in the urban region
	Denis Darmanin	Senior Tech Officer / Founding Member for Voluntary Organisations

The Assessment Panel should meet for a sustained period to conduct the assessment. The amount of time taken depends upon the nature of the assessment. (See Table 5 below.) Two hours is optimal for a Rapid Assessment; four hours is minimal for an Aggregate Assessment, but a day would be better. It might, however, take significantly longer for an Annotated Assessment. And a comprehensive assessment would take from a few months to a year depending upon how much dedicated time is given to it. Ideally, individuals on the panel should read through the questions before meeting as a panel and where necessary seek information about issues with which they are not familiar.

Table 5. The Nature of the Assessment Process

| The profile mapping process can be done at four levels:

1. **Rapid Assessment Profile**
Responding to the single 'general question' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale.
2. **Aggregate Assessment Profile**
Responding to the 'particular questions' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale).
3. **Annotated Assessment Profile**
Completing the exercise at Level 2 *and* writing detailed annotations about how the points on the scale were derived.
4. **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, I**
Completing the exercise at Level 3 *and* writing a major essay on the urban area using the questions to guide the writing.
and/or
Comprehensive Assessment Profile, II
Completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale. | Please indicate which profile exercise you intend to complete by ticking the box or boxes.

☐
and/or
☐
and/or   [X]
and/or
☐
and/or
[X] |

Commented [s1]: Malcolm, should this be 2 or 3 as for each we need to draft text on how eavh mark was arrived at? Din tkun trid tara kemm isiru activites, kemm jghamlu laqghat, kemm hemm ethnic groups, etc. U 7x7x7 jigu 343 indicators. X'tahseb?

If you are conducting a *Rapid Assessment* only the *General Question* in each set needs to be answered. That question works as a proxy question for that whole area of sustainability.

9

If you are conducting an *Aggregate Assessment* at least six of the questions in each set of seven questions need to be answered. If one of the questions in each set is deemed to be particularly inappropriate for your urban area, you can either choose to replace that one question by alternative question that you formulate for yourself or choose not to answer that question and leave the assessment blank.

In most cases, the questions will be weighted equally in finalizing the assessment—that is, unless a prior round of assessment is done to rank-and-weight the questions in each perspective in relation to each other.

Definitions for the Purposes of this Questionnaire

- 'Urban area' or 'area' means the area that you have defined as the basis for making this assessment. The concept of 'local' is used to mean within the urban area.
- 'Urban region' means the urban area and its immediate hinterlands, including its peri-urban extensions, adjacent agricultural and rural land, and its water catchment areas if they are in the vicinity of the urban area.
- 'Broader region' is taken to mean within two-three hour's land transport.
- Concepts such as 'good' and 'appropriate' are to be defined in terms of the values of the sustainability assessment respondents, but in an Annotated Assessment these are the sorts of issues that would need to be defined by the Assessment Panel.

The Scale for Critical Judgement

The questionnaire asks for critical judgement on a nine-point scale of sustainability from critical sustainability to vibrant sustainability. *Critical sustainability* means a level of sustainability that requires critical or urgent change in order to be assured of continuing viability. *Vibrant sustainability* means a level of sustainability that is currently active in reproducing vibrant social and environmental conditions for long-term positive viability. The mid-point, *satisfactory sustainability*, signifies a level of sustainability that allows for a basic equilibrium over the coming period. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

The Issues in Contention

The full Urban Profile process works on the basis of a four-domain model (see Appendix 1 for a discussion on the basis of the model). Each domain is divided into seven perspectives (as set out in Table 5 below), and seven questions are asked about each perspective (see the questionnaire beginning on the next page).

Table 5. Summary of the Domain of Culture

Domain	Perspectives (or Subdomains)	Possible issues to consider
Culture	• Identity and Engagement • Creativity and Recreation • Memory and Projection • Belief and Ideas • Gender and Generations • Enquiry and Learning • Health and Wellbeing	• Ethnicities; identities; public engagement • Celebrations; events and rituals, sport • Indigenous history; museums; monuments • Religions and spiritualities; ideologies • Gender relations; family life; generations • Education and training systems • Heath and medical systems; mental health

Commented [s2]: Wellbeing as identified in UoM is related to the holistic social wellbeing approach (psychology, inclusion, disability, family, security and safety, youths, community, gender, social policy, social work)

Urban Profile Questionnaire: Culture

1. Identity and Engagement

General Question: Does the urban area have a positive cultural identity that brings people together over and above the various differences in their individual identities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The active cultural diversity of different local communities and groups.	7
2. The sense of belonging and identification with the local area as a whole in a way that connects across community and group differences.	9
3. The tolerance and respect for different language groups and ethnic groups in the urban area.	6
4. The tolerance and respect for different religions and communities of faith in the urban area.	6
5. The possibility of strangers to the urban area establishing and maintaining personal networks or affinity groups with current residents.	8
6. The sense of home and place.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of community relations into strategies for enhancing identity and engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

2. Creativity and Recreation

General Question: How sustainable are creative pursuits in the urban area—including sporting activities and creative leisure activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The level of participation in and appreciation of the arts—from painting to story-telling.	8
2. The level of involvement in performance activities such as music, dance and theatre as participants and spectators.	9
3. The level of cultural creativity and innovation.	9
4. The level of support for cultural events—for example, public festivals and public celebrations.	9
5. The level of involvement in sport and physical activity as participants and spectators.	9
6. The affordance of time and energy for creative leisure.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of creative pursuits into strategies for enhancing creative engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of creativity and recreation activities as a tool for the enhancement of social cohesion	4

> **Commented [s3]:** Malc, din zidtha minhabba l-fatt li dawn l-areas ibatu minn low cohesion fejn jidhlu offenders u squatters u peress li jibqghu jaraw hafna offerender-residences

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

3. Memory and Projection

General Question: How well does the urban area deal with its past history in relation to projecting visions of possible alternative futures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The level of respect for past traditions and understanding of their differences.	8
2. The protection of heritage sites and sacred places.	8
3. The maintenance of monuments, museums and historical records.	8
4. The active recognition of indigenous customs and histories.	9
5. The sense of hope for a positive future for the urban area as a whole.	6
6. The level of public discussion that actively explores possible futures.	9
7. The translation of the monitoring of themes of past and future into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	7
• *Optional alternative question:* *The translation of the physical fabric into a digital domain to ensure knowledge dissemination and memory preservation*	6

4. Belief and Ideas

General Question: Do residents of the urban area have a strong sense of purpose and meaning?

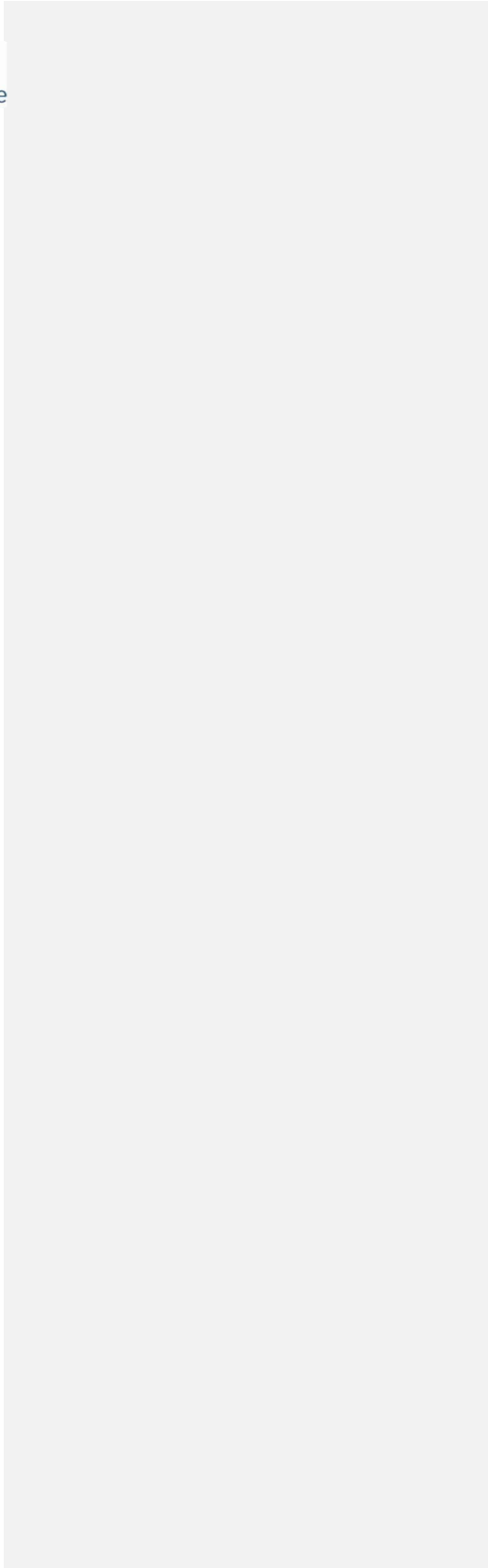| 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The level of knowledgeable engagement in cultural pursuits in the urban area.	8
2. The possibilities for counter-ideologies being discussed and debated publicly.	5
3. The level of thoughtful consideration that lies behind decisions made on behalf of the people of the urban area.	6
4. The sense of meaning that local people have in their lives?	4
5. The extent to which people of different faiths or spiritualities feel comfortable practicing their various rituals, even when their beliefs are not part of the dominant culture.	6
6. The possibility that passions can be publicly expressed in the urban area without descending into negative conflict.	5
7. The translation of the monitoring of ideas and debates into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

5. Gender and Generations

General Question: To what extent is there gender and generational wellbeing across different groups?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The equality of men and women in public and private life.	5
2. The positive expression of sexuality in ways that do not lead to intrusion or violation.	5
3. The contribution of both men and women to bringing up children.	6
4. The availability of child-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	6
5. The positive engagement of youth in the life of the urban area.	9
6. The availability of aged-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of gender and generational relations into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:* Effective activities that stem depopulation	3

6. Enquiry and Learning

General Question: How sustainable is formal and informal learning in the urban region?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban region?	
1. The accessibility of active centres of discovery—ranging formal scientific research institutes to places of playful discovery for children.	6
2. The active participation of people in the urban area in deliberation and debate over ideas.	5
3. The accessibility of active centres of social enquiry—both formal and informal—ranging in focus from scientific research to interpretative and spiritual enquiry.	5
4. The active participation of people in formal and informal education, across gender, generation, ethnicity, and class differences.	6
5. The existence of local cultures of writing—from philosophical and scientific to literary and personal.	8
6. The setting aside of time in the various education processes—both formal and informal—for considered reflection.	3
7. The translation of the monitoring of education practices into quality-improvement strategies.	4
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

7. Health and Wellbeing

General Question: What is the general level of health and wellbeing across different groups of residents?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The sense of control that people have in the urban area over questions of bodily integrity and wellbeing.	5
2. The level of knowledge that people in the urban area have in relation to basic health issues.	5
3. The availability of consulting professionals or respected community elders to support people in time of hardship, stress or grief.	6
4. The capacity of the urban area to meet reasonable expectations that people in the urban area hold about health care or counselling.	6
5. The participation of people in practices that promote wellbeing.	5
6. The cultural richness of cuisine and good food.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of health and wellbeing practices into quality-improvement strategies.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Notes

[1] There were numerous consultants involved in setting up this method. For Metropolis, the Framework Taskforce comprised Paul James (Melbourne), Barbara Berninger and Michael Abraham (Berlin); Tim Campbell (San Francisco), Emile Daho (Abidjan), Sunil Dubey (Sydney), Jan Erasmus (Johannesburg), Jane McCrae (Vancouver), and Om Prakesh Mathur and Usha Raghupathi (New Delhi). In Australia, we would particularly need to acknowledge Peter Christoff, Robin Eckersley, Mary Lewin, Howard Nielsen, Christine Oakley, and Stephanie Trigg. In Brazil helpful responses came from Eduardo Manoel Araujo (UN Cities Programme Advisor), Luiz Berlim, Marcia Maina, Luciano Planco and Paulo Cesar Rink. In the United States important suggestions for reworking came from Jyoti Hosagrahar (New York) and Giovanni Circella (Davis, California). The Cities Programme Working Group which worked to develop the matrix comprised Paul James, Liam Magee, Martin Mulligan, Andy Scerri, John Smithies and Manfred Steger with others. The author of this paper is Paul James.
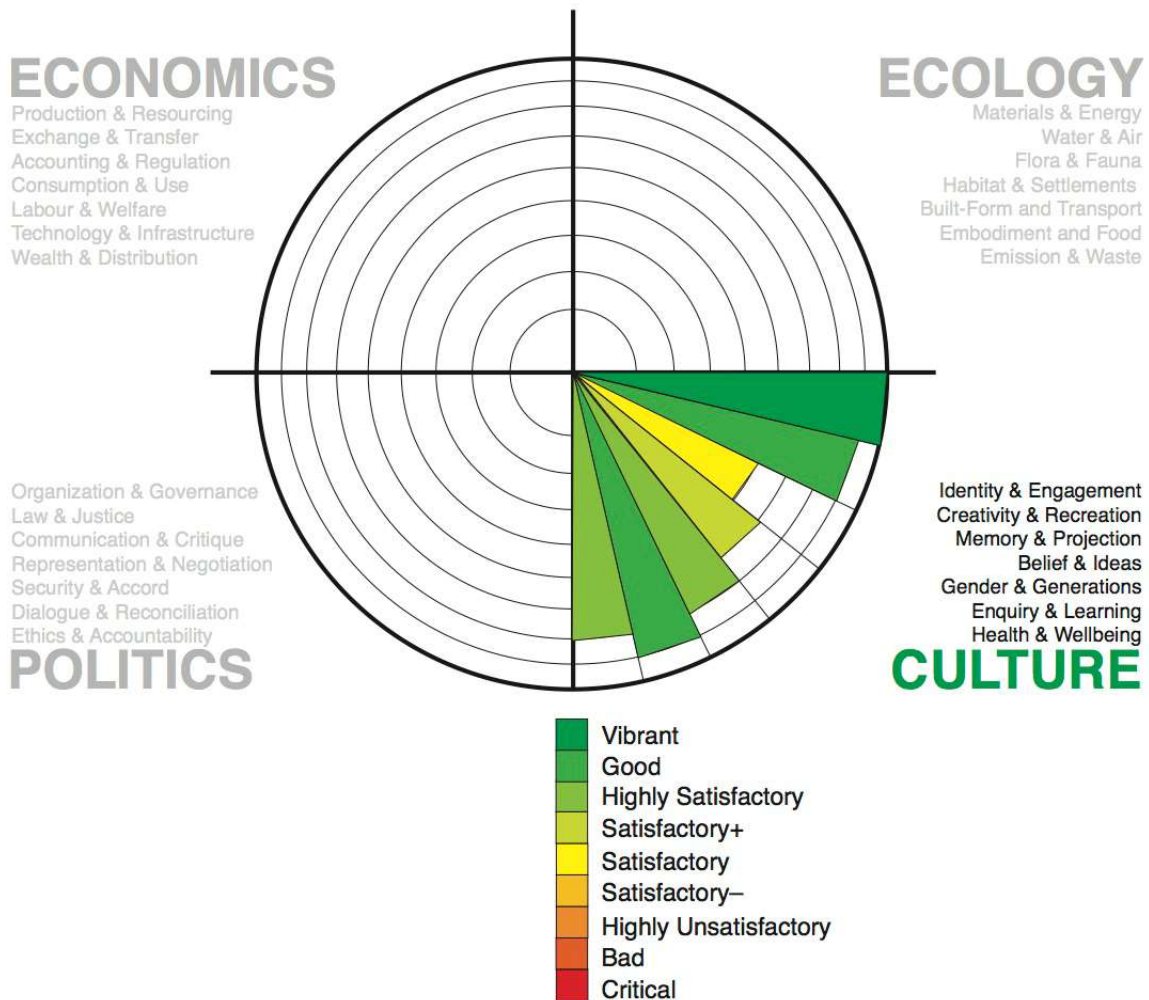
[2] Pilot studies have already been conducted in a number of cities across the world using the various parts in draft form. Some of those are represented in Figure 2. In 2011, the research team were invited by Metropolis to work with the Victorian Government and the Cities Programme on one of their major initiatives. The methodology is central to the approach used by the 'Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships Initiative' organized by Metropolis, 2012–2013 for Indian, Brazilian and Iranian cities. A workshop was held in New Delhi, 26–27 July 2012, and senior planners from New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata used the two of the assessment tools in the 'Circles of Sustainability' toolbox to map the sustainability of their cities as part of developing their urban-regional plans. Other cities to use the same tools have been Tehran (in relation to their mega-projects plan) and Sao Paulo (in relation to their macro-metropolitan plan). Our team in Curitiba, Brazil, has done considerable work and we will soon have pilot studies of cities in the State of Parana as the Regional Secretariat rolls out the Circles of Sustainability method.

metropolis ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

Culture: The Fourth Domain of Sustainability[1]

Based on Guideline 1. Urban Profile Process v3.3 2013[2]

Figure 1. Culture: The Fourth Domain

Culture is a fundamental domain of social life. It is called the 'Fourth Domain' here, not because it is the fourth most important domain, but rather because for too long it has been ignored and subordinated in a flawed metaphor called the 'triple bottom line'. That approach problematically presents three domains—economics, environment and the social—and incorporates the domain of culture as an extra consideration inside the social. Economics is treated wrongly as the master domain, and it stands alone against which others are judged. In the radical alternative presented here all social life, including economics, is considered social. Thus we work with four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. They are all social domains, and culture is as important as any of the other three domains. It is only the fourth domain in the sense that it is being brought back in.

Some approaches use the term 'the fourth pillar' rather than 'fourth domain'. We are uncomfortable with the building metaphor. Pillars standalone. They are fixed. Three pillars can hold up a building without the fourth. In our metaphor domains, the four domains are integrally inter-related. The culture of economics is as

fundamental as the economics of culture, and so on. The culture of economics, ecology or politics is critical to the sustainability and vibrancy of those other domains of social life.

Defining Social Domains

Defining such fundamental terms as *economy*, *ecology*, *politics* and *culture* is extraordinarily difficult. It is not just because they are *essentially contested concepts* such as 'democracy', 'justice' or 'aesthetics'.[1] Rather it is more fundamentally because they have become taken for granted as the fields across which we walk, the basis of our understanding of our world. Everybody assumes that they know what is meant by economy or culture, and we are rarely called upon to define them. It is increasingly rare for even academics to actually try to define these basic terms. The classic text *Keywords*, for example, only explores one of these four concepts.[2]

In summary then, the approach to understanding sustainability presented here begins with the social. The concept of sustainability thus also is quite different from the 'triple bottom line' approach. Sustainability in that approach is not more than the durability of a particular practice. *Positive* sustainability as defined here is practices and meanings of human engagement that project an ongoing life-world of natural and social flourishing. Thus sustainability is a *social* phenomenon long before it is an economic or even just an ecological phenomenon.

It is analytically possible to divide 'the social' into any number of domains. Social domains are dimensions of social life understood in the broadest possible sense. In this case we have chosen the minimal number of domains that are useful for giving a complex sense of the whole of social life: namely, ecology, economics, politics and culture. The particular words that we use to name each of the domains are less important than the social space that the combinations of those words evoke. The 'social domains', as we name and define them here, are analytically derived by considering the human condition broadly across time, across different places, and across different ways of life. In practice, the four domains remain mutually constitutive.

Defining Culture

Taking into account the many earlier controversies over defining these concepts, here is our definition:

The cultural is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material objects, which, over time, express the social meaning of a life held-in-common.

In other words, culture expresses 'how and why we do things around here'.

The 'how' in this simple sentence refers to how we practice, how we describe those practices to ourselves, and how any objects produced by that practice are given meaning. Just as there are ecological, economic and political questions about practice, the core cultural question is what is the meaning of 'how we do things'. This relations to the question of 'why?'. It emphasizes the centrality of meaning. The 'we' refers to the specificity of a life held-in-common. Culture is always a question of the meaning in relation to others. And 'around here' specifies the spatial and, also by implication, the temporal particularity of all culture.

The concept of 'culture' had its beginnings in agriculture and cultivation, with subsidiary senses of 'honour with worship' of *cultura*, which in the sixteenth century were linked to understanding of human growth and development.[3] In some contemporary definitions, culture is reduced to the arts divided into high culture and

---

[1] The notion of 'essentially contested concepts' comes from Walter Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 167–198.

[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana/Croom Helm, Glasgow, 1976. Politics, ecology and economics do not appear in his list. The key to understanding why Williams leaves out politics, economics and ecology is that he is living in a period where, already, the vocabulary has already separated out the domain of the cultural, and his book is presented as a vocabulary of cultural concepts.

[3] Williams, *Keywords*.

popular culture, but here we treat culture much more broadly and deeply. Questions of power are ever-present in the cultural domain in relation to contested outcomes over social meaning.

Domains, Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the social domains—ecology, economics, politics and culture—can analytically be divided in the 'perspectives'. These perspectives were called 'subdomains' in an earlier stage of our thinking, but the less formalistic metaphor of perspectives works better to register the interconnected nature of any of these provisional subdivisions. It emphasizes the issue that the subdivisions are *points of view*; not categorically separate or standalone categories. For example, the cultural perspective of 'Enquiry and Learning' reaches out to all the other domains in relation to enquiring about economics, politics and ecology, even though we have located its primary home in the domain of culture. This can be seen graphically in the figure of the Circle of Sustainability (Figure 1). All perspectives are inter-related through the centre-point of the circle, sometimes tellingly in mathematics called 'the origin' of the circle'.[4] Each of the cultural perspectives such as 'identity and engagement' or 'creativity and recreation' is analytically derived using the same process that is used for working through broad considerations of the human condition to derive the four social domains.

Table 1. Social Domains and Perspectives

Economics	**Ecology**
1. Production and Resourcing	1. Materials and Energy
2. Exchange and Transfer	2. Water and Air
3. Accounting and Regulation	3. Flora and Fauna
4. Consumption and Use	4. Habitat and Settlements
5. Labour and Welfare	5. Built-Form and Transport
6. Technology and Infrastructure	6. Embodiment and Food
7. Wealth and Distribution	7. Emission and Waste
Politics	**Culture**
1. Organization and Governance	1. Identity and Engagement
2. Law and Justice	2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Communication and Critique	3. Memory and Projection
4. Representation and Negotiation	4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Security and Accord	5. Gender and Generations
6. Dialogue and Reconciliation	6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Ethics and Accountability	7. Health and Wellbeing

Perspectives and Aspects

Each of the *perspectives* is divided in seven *aspects*. The rationale for this is to generate a finer assessment process. While the figure of the circle, coloured according to levels of sustainability (Figure 1), gives a simple graphic representation of the outcome of an assessment process, there are a series of background considerations that need to be brought to the fore. A primary consideration involves having a way of assessing why, from a particular perspective, a city or locale is judged to have a certain level of sustainability. In the background to the graphic circle are sets of questions linked to social indicators. To decide systematically on what is a good range of questions the 'Circles of Sustainability' approach entails

---

[4] The philosophical history of the centre-point of the circle is extraordinarily rich, and for our purposes provides a way of qualifying the modern tendency to treat geometrical ordering as a simple technical exercise. For classical Greek philosopher from Euclid to Aristotle a 'point' is both the most abstract and the particular of entities. The tenth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Nairzi, who wrote commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy, responded that 'If any one seeks to know the essence of a point, a thing more single than a line, let him, in the sensible world, think of the centre of the universe and the poles'. (Cited from the notes by Thomas L Heath, accompanying *Euclid, The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Dover Publications, Mineola, 1956, p. 157.) For the thirteenth-century Andalusian Sufi writer, Ibn Arabi, the centre point of a circle is the point of 'necessary being' while the circumference is the circle of 'possible' or contingent existence. 'The "possible" is the space between the point of the real and the circumference'. (Cited from Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn Arabi: Time and Cosmology*, Routledge, Abington, 2008, p. 120.

analytical dividing the perspectives into different aspects. For example, one aspect of the cultural perspective of 'identity and engagement' is 'diversity and difference'. All of this is laid out below in Table 2.

Table 7. Summary of the Matrix of the Urban Profile Processes

Domains	Perspectives	Aspects
Culture *Defined as the practices, discourses, and material objects, which express the social meaning of a life held-in-common*	1. Identity and Engagement	1. Diversity and Difference
		2. Belonging and Community
		3. Ethnicity and Language
		4. Religion and Faith
		5. Friendship and Affinity
		6. Home and Place
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	2. Creativity and Recreation	1. Aesthetics and Design
		2. Performance and Representation
		3. Innovation and Adaptation
		4. Celebrations and Festivals
		5. Sport and Play
		6. Leisure and Relaxation
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	3. Memory and Projection	1. Tradition and Authenticity
		2. Heritage and Inheritance
		3. History and Records
		4. Indigeneity and Custom
		5. Imagination and Hope
		6. Inspiration and Vision
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	4. Beliefs and Ideas	1. Knowledge and Interpretation
		2. Ideologies and Imaginaries
		3. Reason and Rationalization
		4. Religiosity and Spirituality
		5. Rituals and Symbols
		6. Emotions and Passions
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	5. Gender and Generations	1. Equality and Respect
		2. Sexuality and Desire
		3. Family and Kinship
		4. Birth and Babyhood
		5. Childhood and Youth
		6. Mortality and Care
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	6. Enquiry and Learning	1. Curiosity and Discovery
		2. Deliberation and Debate
		3. Research and Application
		4. Teaching and Training
		5. Writing and Codification
		6. Meditation and Reflexivity
		7. Monitoring and Reflection
	7. Health and Wellbeing	1. Integrity and Autonomy
		2. Embodiment and Corporeal Knowledge
		3. Mental Health and Pleasure
		4. Care and Comfort
		5. Inclusion and Participation
		6. Cuisine and Nourishment
		7. Monitoring and Reflection

In setting up the Circles of Sustainability approach we have kept in mind the following considerations:

- *Accessible* — At one level, the approach should be readily interpretable to non-experts, but at deeper levels it needs to be methodologically sophisticated enough to stand up against the scrutiny of experts in assessment, monitoring and evaluation and project management tools;

- *Graphic* —The approach needs to be simple in its graphic presentation and top-level description, but simultaneously have consistent principles carrying through to its lower, more complex, and detailed levels;

- *Cross-locale* —The approach needs on the one hand to be sufficiently general and high-level to work across a diverse range of cities and localities, big and small, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to be used to capture the detailed specificity of each of those different places;

- *Learning-based* —The approach should allow cities to learn from other cities, and provide support and principles for exchange of knowledge and learning from practice;

- *Comparable* —The approach should allow comparison between cities, but not locate them in a league table or hierarchy;

- *Tool-generating* —The approach needs to provide the basis for developing a series of tools— including web-based electronic tools (compatible with various information and communications technology platforms). These range from very simple learning tools to more complex planning, assessment, and monitoring tools;

- *Indicator-generating*—The approach needs to provide guidance for selecting indicators as well as methods for assessing their outcomes;

- *Relational* — The approach needs to focus not only on identification of critical issues, indicators that relate to those critical issues, but also the relationships between them;

- *Cross-domain* — The approach needs to be compatible with new developments that bring 'culture' in serious contention in sustainability analysis—such as the United Cities and Local Governments four pillars of sustainability. The approach therefore uses a domain-based model which emphasizes interconnectivity of economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions, each of which are treated as social domains;

- *Participatory* — Even if it is framed by a set of global protocols, the approach needs to be driven by stakeholders and communities of practice;

- *Cross-supported* — The approach needs to straddle the qualitative/quantitative divide, and uses just enough quantification to allow for identification of conflicts.

- *Standards-oriented* — The approach (and its methods) should connect to current and emerging reporting and modelling standards.

- *Curriculum-oriented*—The approach needs to be broad enough to provide guidance for curriculum development, and therefore useful for training.
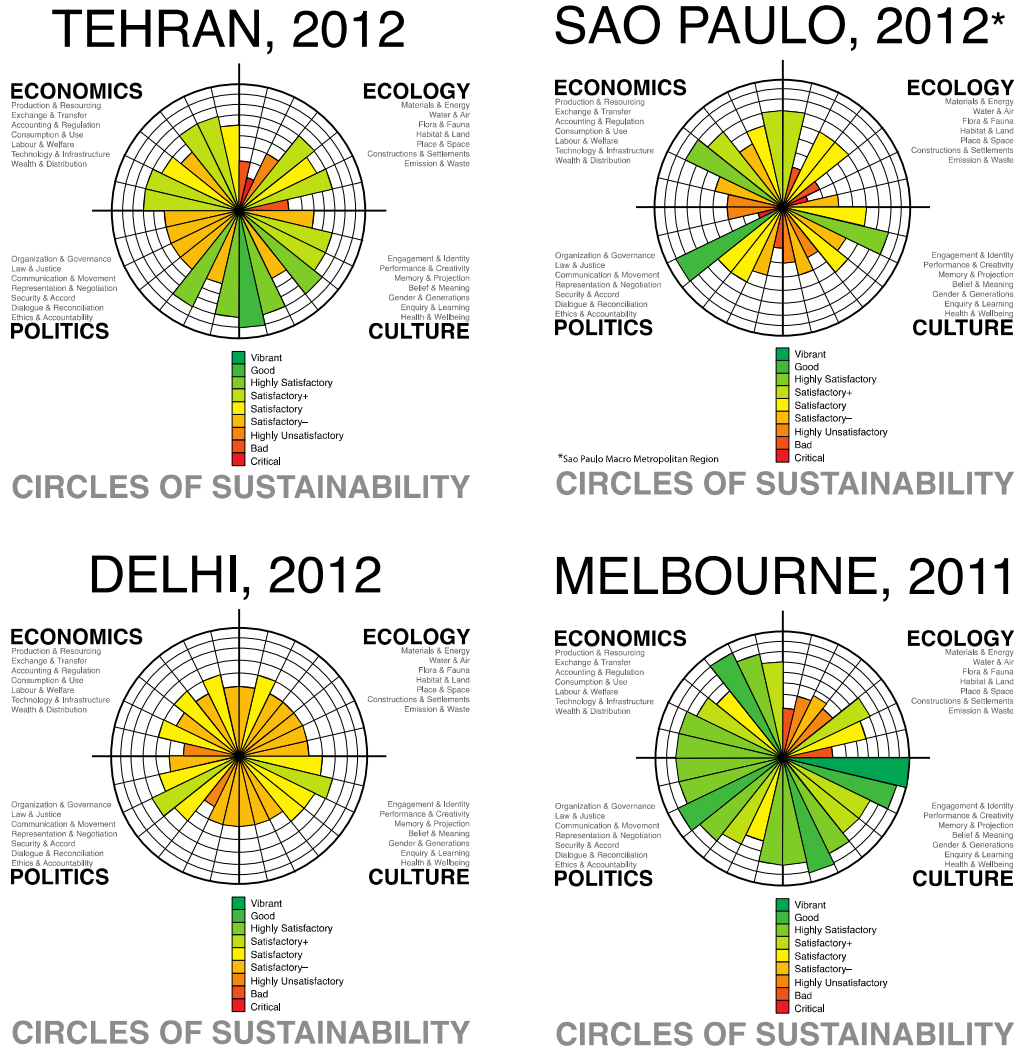
Background

The Circles of Sustainability profile process is intended as a way of developing an interpretative description of the sustainability of an urban region and its immediate hinterland. Here *sustainability* is understood in relation to local, national, and global processes: ecological, economic, political and cultural.

The approach, developed across the period from 2007 to the present, suggests that social life should be understood holistically across these intersecting domains. This bypasses either the dominant triple-bottom-line approach or narrower carbon accounting approaches. Our alternative is intended to offer an integrated method for deciding on the critical issues associated with responding to complex problems and then acting upon them. It takes a city, community or organization through the difficult process of deciding on the terms of its approach and guides the engagement. It allows for an understanding of competing issues and tensions. It then provides continuing feedback and monitoring in relation to implementation difficulties and successful outcomes. And it supports a reporting process, including a graphic presentation of the sustainability of a city or locale (Figure 2 below).

The approach provides a way of achieving urban sustainability and resilience that combines qualitative with quantitative indicators. It sets up a conceptual and technology-supported approach with guiding tools for investigating problems faced by communities, and does so in such a way as to be flexibly applicable across the very different contexts of a city, community, or organization. It is particularly sensitive to the need for negotiation from the local level to the global.

The profile template is intended as way of developing a more comprehensive understanding of an 'urban region'—city, metropolis, town, municipality, village, etc. By responding to the questions in the Urban Profile Question it is possible to generate a clear and simple graphic representation of the sustainability profile of that region. Examples are shown in Figure 2 (below) for representative cities around the world.

Figure 2. Circles of Sustainability Assessments

Each of these figures represents a qualitative assessment by local and other experts of the sustainability of the respective urban areas. The assessment group should define the precise nature of the urban area in question before the assessment begins (see Table 3 below). For example, in Figure 2 above 'Sao Paulo' refers to the greater Sao Paulo Metropolitan region. Similarly 'Melbourne' in this case is assessed across the metropolitan region of Melbourne rather than the Municipality of Melbourne, which is much smaller geographically and demographically.

Conducting an Urban Profile for the Domain of Culture

Table 3. The Urban Region being Assessed

The name of urban area in question: (That is, the name of the city, town, or municipality, etc., that is being assessed.)	**Cospicua Local Council**
Geographical spread of the urban area in km2.	**0.9 sq km**
Population of the urban area.	**5,251 (Census of Population and Housing 2011, Preliminary Report, 2012)**
Date or period of the assessment: Month(s), Year	**November 2013**

The quality and standing of the assessment depends upon the expertise of the persons who are conducting the assessment. Optimally, we suggest that the assessment group should comprise three to ten people with different and complementary expertise about the urban area in question. Table 4 below is intended for recording the names and expertise of the persons on the Assessment Panel.

Table 4. Urban Profile Assessors on the Assessment Panel

The profile mapping process can be done by different kinds of respondents. Different people have different knowledge sets, all of which can be valuable in making an urban assessment. In order to understand the nature of the assessment, we just need to know what kind of knowledge held by each respondent in the Assessment Panel.	Please indicate which kind of respondent(s) you are by adding names in the boxes below. Add more lines or more space to the list if necessary.	
1. **Internal Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question and have expert knowledge* of that region or a significant aspect of that region. * Here 'expert knowledge' is defined as either being trained in some aspect of urban planning / administration, etc., or working in that capacity for some time.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Ms Alison Zerafa	Mayor /Teacher
2. **External Expert Assessors** That is, individuals who do not live in the urban region in question, but have expert knowledge of that region or a significant aspect of that region.	Name	Position and/or Training
	Dr Malcolm Borg	Urban Planner
	Dr Saviour Formosa	Senior Lecturer (Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, – University of Malta)

metropolis ●

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

Global Compact
Cities Programme

3. **Lay Assessors** That is, individuals who live in the urban region in question, and who have extensive local knowledge of the region or an aspect of the region, (without necessarily either being trained in urban planning, administration, or working in the field).	Name	Length of time having lived in the urban region
	Mr Victor Sladden	Architect and Urban Planner (European Walled Town Advisor)

The Assessment Panel should meet for a sustained period to conduct the assessment. The amount of time taken depends upon the nature of the assessment. (See Table 5 below.) Two hours is optimal for a Rapid Assessment; four hours is minimal for an Aggregate Assessment, but a day would be better. It might, however, take significantly longer for an Annotated Assessment. And a comprehensive assessment would take from a few months to a year depending upon how much dedicated time is given to it. Ideally, individuals on the panel should read through the questions before meeting as a panel and where necessary seek information about issues with which they are not familiar.

Table 5. The Nature of the Assessment Process

The profile mapping process can be done at four levels:	Please indicate which profile exercise you intend to complete by ticking the box or boxes.
1. **Rapid Assessment Profile** Responding to the single 'general question' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale.	☐
2. **Aggregate Assessment Profile** Responding to the 'particular questions' under each 'perspective' by marking the 9-point scale).	and/or ☐
3. **Annotated Assessment Profile** Completing the exercise at Level 2 *and* writing detailed annotations about how the points on the scale were derived.	and/or X
4. **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, I** Completing the exercise at Level 3 *and* writing a major essay on the urban area using the questions to guide the writing. and/or **Comprehensive Assessment Profile, II** Completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale.	and/or ☐ and/or X

If you are conducting a *Rapid Assessment* only the *General Question* in each set needs to be answered. That question works as a proxy question for that whole area of sustainability.

If you are conducting an *Aggregate Assessment* at least six of the questions in each set of seven questions need to be answered. If one of the questions in each set is deemed to be particularly inappropriate for your urban area, you can either choose to replace that one question by alternative question that you formulate for yourself or choose not to answer that question and leave the assessment blank.

In most cases, the questions will be weighted equally in finalizing the assessment—that is, unless a prior round of assessment is done to rank-and-weight the questions in each perspective in relation to each other.

Definitions for the Purposes of this Questionnaire

- 'Urban area' or 'area' means the area that you have defined as the basis for making this assessment. The concept of 'local' is used to mean within the urban area.
- 'Urban region' means the urban area and its immediate hinterlands, including its peri-urban extensions, adjacent agricultural and rural land, and its water catchment areas if they are in the vicinity of the urban area.
- 'Broader region' is taken to mean within two-three hour's land transport.
- Concepts such as 'good' and 'appropriate' are to be defined in terms of the values of the sustainability assessment respondents, but in an Annotated Assessment these are the sorts of issues that would need to be defined by the Assessment Panel.

The Scale for Critical Judgement

The questionnaire asks for critical judgement on a nine-point scale of sustainability from critical sustainability to vibrant sustainability. *Critical sustainability* means a level of sustainability that requires critical or urgent change in order to be assured of continuing viability. *Vibrant sustainability* means a level of sustainability that is currently active in reproducing vibrant social and environmental conditions for long-term positive viability. The mid-point, *satisfactory sustainability*, signifies a level of sustainability that allows for a basic equilibrium over the coming period. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

The Issues in Contention

The full Urban Profile process works on the basis of a four-domain model (see Appendix 1 for a discussion on the basis of the model). Each domain is divided into seven perspectives (as set out in Table 5 below), and seven questions are asked about each perspective (see the questionnaire beginning on the next page).

Table 5. Summary of the Domain of Culture

Domain	Perspectives (or Subdomains)	Possible issues to consider
Culture	• Identity and Engagement • Creativity and Recreation • Memory and Projection • Belief and Ideas • Gender and Generations • Enquiry and Learning • Health and Wellbeing	• Ethnicities; identities; public engagement • Celebrations; events and rituals, sport • Indigenous history; museums; monuments • Religions and spiritualities; ideologies • Gender relations; family life; generations • Education and training systems • Heath and medical systems; mental health

![metropolis logo] **metropolis** ●
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES
ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LAS GRANDES METRÓPOLIS
ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES GRANDES MÉTROPOLES

**Global Compact
Cities Programme**

Urban Profile Questionnaire: Culture

1. Identity and Engagement

General Question: Does the urban area have a positive cultural identity that brings people together over and above the various differences in their individual identities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The active cultural diversity of different local communities and groups.	7
2. The sense of belonging and identification with the local area as a whole in a way that connects across community and group differences.	8
3. The tolerance and respect for different language groups and ethnic groups in the urban area.	5
4. The tolerance and respect for different religions and communities of faith in the urban area.	6
5. The possibility of strangers to the urban area establishing and maintaining personal networks or affinity groups with current residents.	5
6. The sense of home and place.	8
7. The translation of the monitoring of community relations into strategies for enhancing identity and engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

2. Creativity and Recreation

General Question: How sustainable are creative pursuits in the urban area—including sporting activities and creative leisure activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	*Number 1–9*
1. The level of participation in and appreciation of the arts—from painting to story-telling.	8
2. The level of involvement in performance activities such as music, dance and theatre as participants and spectators.	8
3. The level of cultural creativity and innovation.	7
4. The level of support for cultural events—for example, public festivals and public celebrations.	9
5. The level of involvement in sport and physical activity as participants and spectators.	8
6. The affordance of time and energy for creative leisure.	8
7. The translation of the monitoring of creative pursuits into strategies for enhancing creative engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of creativity and recreation activities as a tool for the enhancement of social	4

cohesion

3. Memory and Projection

General Question: How well does the urban area deal with its past history in relation to projecting visions of possible alternative futures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	Number 1–9
1. The level of respect for past traditions and understanding of their differences.	8
2. The protection of heritage sites and sacred places.	9
3. The maintenance of monuments, museums and historical records.	8
4. The active recognition of indigenous customs and histories.	9
5. The sense of hope for a positive future for the urban area as a whole.	4
6. The level of public discussion that actively explores possible futures.	4
7. The translation of the monitoring of themes of past and future into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:* The translation of the physical fabric into a digital domain to ensure knowledge dissemination and memory preservation	4

4. Belief and Ideas

General Question: Do residents of the urban area have a strong sense of purpose and meaning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions *How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?*	Number 1–9
1. The level of knowledgeable engagement in cultural pursuits in the urban area.	8
2. The possibilities for counter-ideologies being discussed and debated publicly.	4
3. The level of thoughtful consideration that lies behind decisions made on behalf of the people of the urban area.	6
4. The sense of meaning that local people have in their lives?	5
5. The extent to which people of different faiths or spiritualities feel comfortable practicing their various rituals, even when their beliefs are not part of the dominant culture.	5
6. The possibility that passions can be publicly expressed in the urban area without descending into negative conflict.	6
7. The translation of the monitoring of ideas and debates into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	6
• *Optional alternative question:*	

5. Gender and Generations

General Question: To what extent is there gender and generational wellbeing across different groups?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The equality of men and women in public and private life.	4
2. The positive expression of sexuality in ways that do not lead to intrusion or violation.	6
3. The contribution of both men and women to bringing up children.	5
4. The availability of child-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	8
5. The positive engagement of youth in the life of the urban area.	9
6. The availability of aged-care in the urban area—whether formal or informal, public or private.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of gender and generational relations into strategies for enhancing positive engagement.	8
• *Optional alternative question:* Effective activities that stem depopulation	3

6. Enquiry and Learning

General Question: How sustainable is formal and informal learning in the urban region?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban region?	
1. The accessibility of active centres of discovery—ranging formal scientific research institutes to places of playful discovery for children.	4
2. The active participation of people in the urban area in deliberation and debate over ideas.	5
3. The accessibility of active centres of social enquiry—both formal and informal—ranging in focus from scientific research to interpretative and spiritual enquiry.	6
4. The active participation of people in formal and informal education, across gender, generation, ethnicity, and class differences.	6
5. The existence of local cultures of writing—from philosophical and scientific to literary and personal.	6
6. The setting aside of time in the various education processes—both formal and informal—for considered reflection.	4
7. The translation of the monitoring of education practices into quality-improvement strategies.	5
• *Optional alternative question:*	

7. Health and Wellbeing

General Question: What is the general level of health and wellbeing across different groups of residents?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory⁻	Satisfactory	Satisfactory+	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

Particular Questions	*Number 1–9*
How sustainable are the following aspects of the urban area?	
1. The sense of control that people have in the urban area over questions of bodily integrity and wellbeing.	5
2. The level of knowledge that people in the urban area have in relation to basic health issues.	5
3. The availability of consulting professionals or respected community elders to support people in time of hardship, stress or grief.	7
4. The capacity of the urban area to meet reasonable expectations that people in the urban area hold about health care or counselling.	6
5. The participation of people in practices that promote wellbeing.	6
6. The cultural richness of cuisine and good food.	7
7. The translation of the monitoring of health and wellbeing practices into quality-improvement strategies.	5
• *Optional alternative question:*	

Notes

---

[1] There were numerous consultants involved in setting up this method. For Metropolis, the Framework Taskforce comprised Paul James (Melbourne), Barbara Berninger and Michael Abraham (Berlin); Tim Campbell (San Francisco), Emile Daho (Abidjan), Sunil Dubey (Sydney), Jan Erasmus (Johannesburg), Jane McCrae (Vancouver), and Om Prakesh Mathur and Usha Raghupathi (New Delhi). In Australia, we would particularly need to acknowledge Peter Christoff, Robin Eckersley, Mary Lewin, Howard Nielsen, Christine Oakley, and Stephanie Trigg. In Brazil helpful responses came from Eduardo Manoel Araujo (UN Cities Programme Advisor), Luiz Berlim, Marcia Maina, Luciano Planco and Paulo Cesar Rink. In the United States important suggestions for reworking came from Jyoti Hosagrahar (New York) and Giovanni Circella (Davis, California). The Cities Programme Working Group which worked to develop the matrix comprised Paul James, Liam Magee, Martin Mulligan, Andy Scerri, John Smithies and Manfred Steger with others. The author of this paper is Paul James.

[2] Pilot studies have already been conducted in a number of cities across the world using the various parts in draft form. Some of those are represented in Figure 2. In 2011, the research team were invited by Metropolis to work with the Victorian Government and the Cities Programme on one of their major initiatives. The methodology is central to the approach used by the 'Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships Initiative' organized by Metropolis, 2012–2013 for Indian, Brazilian and Iranian cities. A workshop was held in New Delhi, 26–27 July 2012, and senior planners from New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata used the two of the assessment tools in the 'Circles of Sustainability' toolbox to map the sustainability of their cities as part of developing their urban-regional plans. Other cities to use the same tools have been Tehran (in relation to their mega-projects plan) and Sao Paulo (in relation to their macro-metropolitan plan). Our team in Curitiba, Brazil, has done considerable work and we will soon have pilot studies of cities in the State of Parana as the Regional Secretariat rolls out the Circles of Sustainability method.