

# 1. About CLOSER CITIES

**Cities face enormous challenges that require smart solutions to be implemented; challenges such as equality and poverty, inclusion, health, and sustainability. Only a small amount of the knowledge applied to these issues is shared among cities and urban professionals. How can we *optimise* the worldwide exchange and sharing of urban knowledge? This initiative is aimed at finding the answers to this question. We welcome you to become part of this exciting journey.**

## URBAN SCIENCE, URBAN PRACTICE

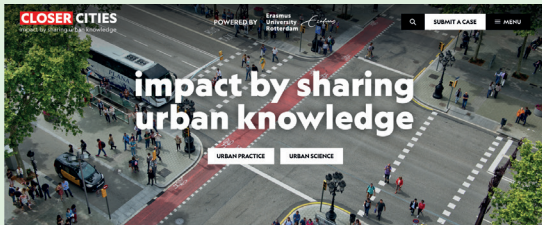
The project has two main interconnecting avenues: urban practice (cases from around the world) and urban science. The link between the two will be evident on the digital platform thanks to the continuous addition of science-related content: researchers from universities around the world, led by Erasmus University Rotterdam, will share their projects, experiences, and reflections on cases and urban data analysis on a regular basis.

## CREATING POSITIVE SOCIETAL IMPACT

In order to realise truly societal impact, particularly in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is essential that innovative and effective urban practice can be shared among urban professionals worldwide. As urban practices are context-specific, sharing projects and initiatives often proves difficult. Sharing cases and projects is even more complex as these cases tend to be run by multiple actors and across sectors and disciplines. The CLOSER CITIES initiative aims to stimulate sharing between urban professionals and researchers in a meaningful and impactful way. On our platform, urban professionals share urban practices and lessons learned, while researchers study the sharing content and mechanisms to further stimulate learning between urban professionals in cities across the globe.

## MULTI-ANNUAL

The project starts in 2020 and runs until 31 December 2030 – the deadline for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This long-term commitment allows us to continue learning and reporting on trends in sharing.



**CLOSER CITIES**  
 How can we best pass on urban experiences and scientific insights? This is what CLOSER CITIES is all about: an international research initiative with a focus on how to make optimal use of all urban expertise available around the world. We welcome you to be part of this ambitious and exciting journey!

- ✓ USP
- ✓ Science at the core
- ✓ Cross-border collaboration

**2736 CASES**

Last update: 25-03-20

Let's co-create a global platform on urban science & urban practice

[SUBMIT A CASE](#)

[TELL US HOW YOU SHARE](#)

**Urban Practice.**  
 Nulla vitae elit libero, a pharetra augue. Vestibulum id ligula porta felis euismod semper. Fusce dapibus, tellus ac cursus commodo, tortor mauris condimentum nibh, ut fermentum massa justo ut amet risus.



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

[ALL CASES](#)

**Urban Science.**  
 Nulla vitae elit libero, a pharetra augue. Vestibulum id ligula porta felis euismod semper. Fusce dapibus, tellus ac cursus commodo, tortor mauris condimentum nibh, ut fermentum massa justo ut amet risus.



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Jack Brown: Safety & Security  
 ● SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

[ALL ARTICLES](#)



**Fertilising ideas. Harvesting impact.**  
 Fusce dapibus, tellus ac cursus commodo, tortor mauris condimentum nibh, ut fermentum massa justo ut amet risus. Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Donec id elit non mi porta gravida et eget massa. Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit. Vivamus sagittis lacus vel augue.

[MORE ABOUT THIS PLATFORM](#)

**LATEST CASES**  
 The latest added cases

Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit. Aenean eu leo quam.

[SUBMIT A CASE](#)



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 5: Gender equality



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 4: Quality education



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

[ALL CASES](#)



**Sharing around the world**

Cras justo odio, dapibus ac facilisis in, egestas eget quam. Curabitur blandit tempus porttitor.

**FILTER CASES**

**Topics**

- Sustainability
- Migration
- Health
- [View more](#)

**Sustainable Development Goals**

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 2: Zero hunger
- SDG 3: Good health and well-being
- [View more](#)



**CASES IN THE SPOTLIGHT**  
 SDG 8: decent work and economic growth

Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit. Aenean eu leo quam.

[SUBMIT A CASE](#)



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 5: Gender equality



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 4: Quality education



**Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes**  
 Sustainability  
 ● SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

## 2. Objectives

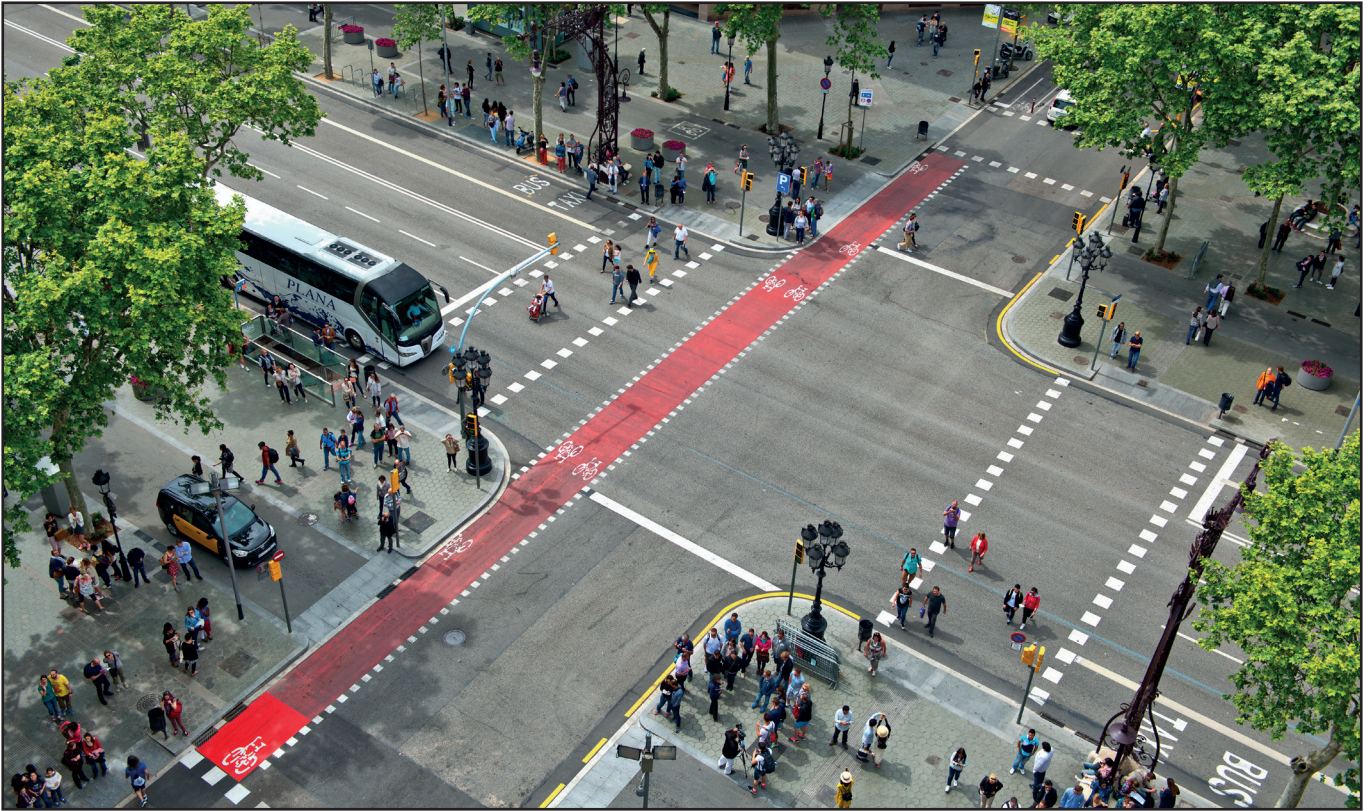
The main ambition is to generate, facilitate and study the means of learning and sharing among urban professionals across the globe. The project has three specific objectives:

- acquiring and sharing knowledge among urban professionals, thus optimising the sharing of urban expertise and knowledge;
- analysing the barriers, factors and processes involved in worldwide sharing of diverse urban projects;
- acquiring and sharing knowledge regarding the role that cities can play in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## 3. Research questions

The project's three leading questions are:

1. How and what do urban professionals learn from each other?
2. What are the motivations for and barriers to sharing urban knowledge?
3. How can optimising the sharing of urban knowledge accelerate the implementation of the SDGs?



## 1. HOW AND WHAT DO URBAN PROFESSIONALS LEARN FROM EACH OTHER?

This question deals with the way urban professionals reach out to each other: what do they share with others and how/where is this picked up across the globe? The levels of learning (individual, organisation, network/system level) are also considered. Finally, we explore the different ways of learning, such as conferences, websites, living labs or training courses.

## 2. WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS FOR AND BARRIERS TO SHARING URBAN KNOWLEDGE?

The sharing of urban experiences can be hindered by various barriers, ranging from unwillingness to share to the difficulties of applying an experience to another context. When we find mechanisms that facilitate the sharing of knowledge, we can

help urban professionals to make effective use of knowledge from one case, actor and location in another.

## 3. HOW CAN OPTIMISING THE SHARING OF URBAN KNOWLEDGE ACCELERATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS?

This question deals with the relationship between the SDGs and the urban projects reported on the digital platform. Making use of interactive maps, the platform will visualise the locations in which urban SDG initiatives are underway, showing the project members and the resources utilised. The maps will also show which information is shared, which parties share this information, and who they share it with. In addition, research will assess how knowledge-sharing contributes to meeting the SDGs. In short: we aim to uncover the deeper mechanisms that lead to successful knowledge exchange.

## 4. Methods

We use three methods to enhance shareability:

### DIGITAL RESEARCH PLATFORM

The CLOSER CITIES research platform is unique in its setup. The anchoring of this project's platform in research and its subsequent opening for further academic use and analysis (including big data analysis) are both novel and highly innovative.

The platform offers a wide array of urban cases along with lessons learned and insights that can be shared. In the first year, we aim to collect over 5,000 urban cases. Scientific research forms a key component: the platform is designed in such a way that researchers analyse the shared data, generate lessons learned, and draw conclusions. By analysing the search behaviour of urban professionals who visit the website, read and/or contribute cases and answer questions, we expect to gain important insights regarding the deeper mechanisms behind the sharing of urban knowledge.

### EVENTS

The CLOSER CITIES team will organise events regularly in the 2020-2030 period. At these events we will further share and deepen knowledge among urban professionals. Events will include locally-organised focus groups, workshops during international urban networks forums, and larger conferences.

### DATA ANALYSIS/ DATA MANAGEMENT

The platform offers rich data on urban projects and on the sharing of urban projects. Researchers will collect additional information on sharing through surveys and in-depth interviews. The datasets created will subsequently be made available to affiliated researchers for scientific purposes.

Research results will be made available on the platform, in accessible form. For example, the platform will map SDG projects and their respective target groups, project descriptors, approaches, facilitating conditions, and the organisation of scaling up and mainstreaming. The platform's functionalities will deliver important information on specific cases that align with people's interests. By asking visitors to answer a small number of additional questions, we obtain information on their motivations and learning levels. We will also conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups with small panels, in order to map the deeper processes and barriers to sharing knowledge across cities and to assess sharing's impact on meeting SDGs.

## 5. Focus on SDGs

The CLOSER CITIES initiative aims to contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With CLOSER CITIES, we aim to draw and share lessons to help cities accomplish all 17 identified SDGs. We also map various monitoring and measuring tools to assess the project's impact on SDGs. The platform helps to identify cases and information sources that can assist urban professionals in reaching their specific SDGs.

The overarching focus of the initiative itself is SDG 11, which aims to create sustainable cities and communities. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without transforming the way we manage our cities. This transformation runs across disciplines and sectors, ranging from creating employment through to affordable housing, providing public transport, and empowering urban communities.

## The 6 defining principles of CLOSER CITIES

### **C**onnect

On our open-access online platform, urban experts and practitioners connect with others by sharing their projects and experiences. The project is non-commercial; there are no costs involved for participants.

### **L**earn

Scientific research forms the basis of the initiative. While urban experts and practitioners learn from shareable features and insights into each other's projects, academics use the platform to study the various ways of sharing knowledge and reflect on the sharing process itself.

### **O**ptimise

Urban scholars across the world analyse the projects shared and lessons learned. Through their research, and aided by student projects rooted in interdisciplinary education, they provide tools and methods to optimise the shareability of urban practices.

### **S**hare

Through its open-access platform, CLOSER CITIES enables international cross-border collaboration. Urban experts and practitioners share projects, experiences and efforts on the platform. Scientists from various disciplines – i.e. social and behavioural sciences, technical sciences and economic sciences – share their insights on shareability.

### **E**nhance

Using the lessons learned from the platform, the community, and academic reflections, urban experts can enhance their practice. This in turn further increases the shareability of existing or new projects.

### **R**eiterate

The CLOSER CITIES platform aims to enable and provide continuous feedback on how to increase and optimise shareability over a ten-year period, in line with the running time of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. CLOSER CITIES believes that only the continuous optimisation of sharing abilities will enable cities to fully untap their sharing potential.

## 6. We welcome partners

CLOSER CITIES is an ambitious project, and we anticipate an exciting journey. The project can only reach its full potential through collaboration with various international partners. We therefore welcome the participation of organisations and individuals who are inspired by this common purpose of creating positive societal impact through sharing urban knowledge.

Urban professionals can benefit from and contribute to the initiative in various ways. The digital platform

provides inspiration and valuable content, making it possible to both pass on and pick up ideas. You can take part in events, share urban projects, and make use of the cases shared by others. The open-source platform is available for all to use, with no costs involved. We welcome all those who share our ambition of making progress in dealing with urban challenges through sharing. We welcome both small and large organisations. Partners include: governments (at all levels), academia, urban networks, private sector, civil society, and non-governmental organisations.

## 7. Contact info

**If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about the CLOSER CITIES project, please let us know. We are more than happy to give more information on the project and the possibilities for partners.**

**CLOSER CITIES Research Project, Erasmus University Rotterdam**

<b>Visiting address</b>	Burgemeester Oudlaan 50, Mandeville Building, 15th floor, 3062 PA Rotterdam
<b>Postal address</b>	PO Box 1738, Mandeville Building, 15-10, 3000 DR Rotterdam, the Netherlands
<b>Email</b>	info@closercities.org
<b>Phone</b>	+31 (0)6 52063688

**CLOSER CITIES is an initiative by:**

**Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam**



**NESSELAAR  
URBAN  
CONSULTANCY**



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands

