

# Foresight for FAIR Cities

Exploring AI risks and mitigation strategies for fair, inclusive, responsible & sustainable cities



Soumaya Ben Dhaou, UNU-EGOV



UNU  
EGOV



## The FAIR Cities Journey So Far



- In 2025, the global assessment found that AI is increasingly used in cities to improve public services, urban management, and sustainability, but **governance has not kept pace**.
- Since then, the WG4 FAIR Cities Working Group (UNU-EGOV, ITU & U4SSC) has co-developed the FAIR Cities framework through expert group meetings and consultations.
- A Guide for Cities on FAIR AI now translates the framework into practical guidance across four dimensions: Responsible, Fair, Inclusive & Sustainable AI.
- Today we add a foresight lens, anticipating emerging AI risks and societal redlines so cities can act before, not after, harm occurs.

### FAIR CITIES WORKING GROUP OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

#### Guide for Cities on FAIR AI

A guideline built through a clear methodology:

- Defining the key concepts
- Mapping AI's challenges for cities,
- Identifying guiding principles

#### Repository of Best Practices

- Existing policy documents organized by the framework's structure,
- AI governance case studies reflecting real practices from cities worldwide.

#### Foresight Scenarios

- Future-oriented scenario work identifying emerging AI trends,
- Societal redlines and governance responses for cities to 2030 and beyond.

# Methodology: Anticipating Urban AI Futures

A structured, evidence-based process to explore AI risks and mitigation strategies for cities

## PROCESS

1

### Focus Groups & Literature Review

Engaging experts and grounding the process in existing research

2

### Data Analysis & Trend Mapping

Identifying emerging concerns, drivers of change and vulnerabilities

3

### Scenario Drafting & Validation

Building future scenarios and testing them with expert feedback

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

**Q1** What novel AI and technology trends are likely to transform cities by 2030?

**Q2** Which urban domains will face the greatest disruption in the next five years, and why?

**Q3** What societal redlines must AI never cross?

**Q4** What enforcement mechanisms can ensure AI is fair, inclusive, responsible and sustainable?

# What We Found: Trends, Risks & Governance Levers

1

## Disruptive Change

- Agentic AI & autonomous infrastructure
- “City Brains” & generative AI for planning
- Rising focus on energy-efficient, sustainable AI

2

## Uncertainties & Vulnerabilities

- Autonomous vehicles & Mobility-as-a-Service
- Decentralized, responsive public administration
- AI-driven optimization of resources & services

3

## Governance Potential

- Regulatory sandboxes to test AI safely
- Mandatory audits, transparency & citizen redress
- Technical standards for data & content protection

4

## Ethical & Legal Redlines

- Human-in-the-loop is non-negotiable
- No mass surveillance or social-credit systems
- No bias, discrimination or democratic manipulation

# Scenarios & Mitigation Strategies (Example on inclusive AI)

## The Urban AI Divide: AI-Resistant, AI-Excluded & AI-Driven Urban Life

### UNDESIRABLE SCENARIO

- Predictive AI misaligns with social priorities, exposing gaps in oversight
- Populations generating less digital data are inadvertently excluded
- Participation is perceived as a token gesture, not genuine influence

### DYSTOPIAN SCENARIO

- Coordination depends on opaque systems only a few actors understand
- Competing objectives create feedback loops that distort goals unnoticed
- Growing energy & water demand strains local infrastructure and resources

## MITIGATION STRATEGIES

1

### Human Oversight

Keep a human-in-the-loop and clear accountability by design

2

### Genuine Participation

Move beyond token consultation to real community co-design

3

### Transparency & Redress

Mandatory audits and channels for citizens to challenge decisions

4

### Sustainable Infrastructure

Plan for energy, water and resource impacts from the outset

# Thank you !

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