HAMBURG UNITAC

Co-Creating a People Centered Smart City Strategy

Lessons from Windhoek

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UN-HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

hcu HafenCity Universität Hamburg



UNITAC Hamburg – Goal and Objectives



Strategy

Analyse and provide technical expertise on urban digital transformation.

- ➔ Digital transformation readiness assessment
- ➔ Strategic advice on urban digital transformation
- ➔ Development of smart city, data and digital transformation strategies, frameworks and policies



Tools

Develop **innovative digital tools** on public participation, spatial mapping and analysis.

- ➔ Urban data visualization, analysis and scenario planning platform for integrated planning
- ➔ Citizen science, crowdsourcing and participatory data collection
- ➔ Digital public participation toolbox
- ➔ Digitally-enhanced service provision



Capacity

Provide **practical training, knowledge exchange and technical advice** to local actors.

- ➔ Expert and peer-to-peer exchange
- ➔ Training for city leaders and technical practitioners
- ➔ Technical advice service on digital platforms, tools and approaches

Windhoek’s Urban Context

486,000

Residents

Within municipal boundaries; Namibia's largest city

528,000

Metropolitan population

Estimated for the wider metro area in 2026

USD 13.37bn

National economy (2024)

Windhoek is the hub for governance, commerce and services

150 of 419

Informal settlements

Of Namibia's informal settlements are in the Khomas Region

44.8%

Improvised housing

Of Windhoek's urban household population

THE CHALLENGE

Rapid urban growth, structural inequality and informality are raising demand for efficient, accessible and inclusive services.

Elements of Windhoek's Smart City Strategy

PURPOSE

Guide Windhoek's people-centred digital and institutional transformation to improve quality of life, service delivery, inclusion, resilience, and trust between residents and the City.

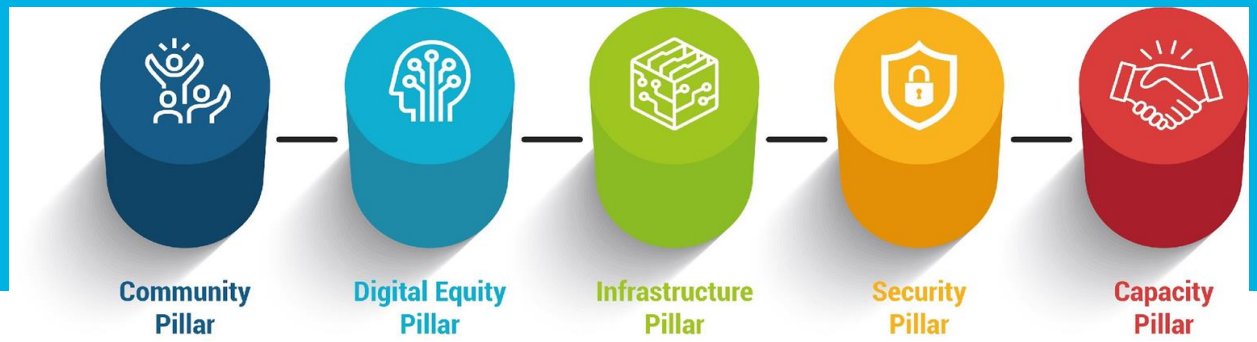
VISION

An inclusive, resilient, sustainable, and digitally enabled city where all residents benefit from safe, accessible, and responsive public services and shared prosperity.

Guiding Principles



Strategic Pillars



Elements of Windhoek's Smart City Strategy



Five-Phase Framework

1. Preparation & governance	*Leadership, coordination, safeguards*
2. Diagnosis & baseline	*Readiness assessments, evidence base*
3. Vision & strategic design	*Priorities aligned to city needs*
4. Implementation & investment	*Phased delivery, pilots to scale*
5. Monitoring & learning	*Monitoring and continuous improvement*

Elements of Windhoek's Smart City Strategy

Implementation enablers

Human rights impact assessments as a prerequisite

Clear monitoring and public reporting

City-wide governance: CEO oversight, Task Force and PMO



Smart city use cases

Blended financing (public funds, partners, PPPs)

Policy landscape

Integrated digital platforms and data governance

Process & Methodology



1. Desktop research and policy analysis
2. Inception workshop: scope, principles and Task Force
3. Three readiness assessments, internal and external (incl. CRAN)
4. Visioning workshop with senior officials
5. Validation with staff and leadership
6. Launch and handover to the City

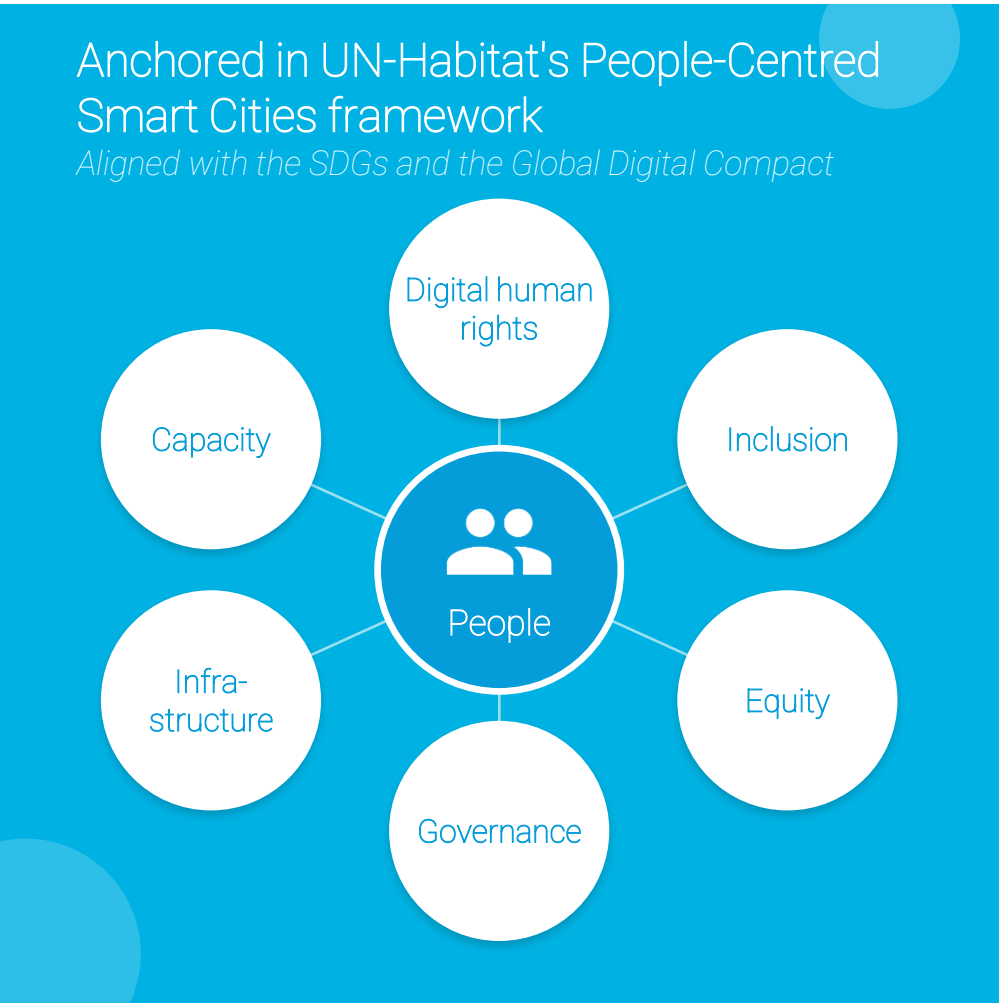
Smart City Task Force · 17 members
Appointed via the Management Council across planning, infrastructure, ICT, finance, housing, service delivery, City Police and emergency services

Process Timeline

Sequenced from diagnosis, to shared understanding, to prioritisation



Practical Lessons for Cities



1 **Mandate ownership early**
Have senior management appoint a cross-departmental task force first

2 **Assess at two levels**
Survey leadership and operational staff separately; their gaps differ

3 **Bring in the ecosystem**
Include the ICT regulator, academia, private sector and civil society

4 **Triangulate first**
Cross-check surveys, desk review and workshops to separate real gaps from visibility gaps

5 **Validate twice**
Test findings with technical staff, then with political leadership

6 **Use low-cost digital tools**
Survey data collected digitally with KoboToolbox: open-source and easy to replicate

Thank you

UNITAC HAMBURG

United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities

UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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