

[Urban indicators and the smart city agenda](#) [1]



[2]

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The use of urban indicators and benchmarking exercises by local governments has proliferated in the last few years, mainly owing to the sustainability agenda. These kinds of indicators aim at measuring, tracking, assessing and comparing cities' performance, with a view to guiding policy formulation and implementation. Diverse frameworks for sustainable development indicators have emerged, mostly produced by European and international organisations.

Recently, initiatives involving key performance indicators (KPIs) have been influenced by the smart city agenda and the digital revolution, in terms of content, data collection, analysis and dissemination processes. ICT, big data, open data, real-time information, data analytics, dashboards and operation centres are some of the main components of this movement. Taking into account the different KPI initiatives and their evolution, the POCACITO project defined a set of urban indicators oriented to assessing cities' performance and to analysing their transition towards a post-carbon future, comprising economic, environmental and social dimensions.

However, several methodological and policy limitations can be observed when urban indicators are used, notably in the development of benchmarking exercises among cities of different countries.

The recently published POCACITO Policy Brief "[Urban indicators and the smart city agenda](#)" [3] looks at ways to support trends towards standardisation, openness, interoperability, innovation and collaboration, which can inform data-driven policy-making at local/regional, national and European levels.

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