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**Sustainable cities and communities — Urban settlements —  
Guidance for a flexible approach to phased implementation of ISO  
37101**

FDIS stage

ISO/FDIS 37111

A model manuscript of a draft International Standard (known as "The Rice Model") is available at  
<https://www.iso.org/iso/model-document-rice-model.pdf>

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 268, *Sustainable cities and communities*.

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## Introduction

ISO 37101 establishes a management system for the sustainable development of cities and communities. ~~It is applicable to urban settlements of any size and characteristics. It aims to be applicable to all urban settlements of any size and characteristics. However, it is considered that the context, size and characteristics of certain urban settlements is sufficiently different for there to be a need for additional guidance to facilitate a more flexible and appropriate implementation of ISO 37101. This document provides relevant guidance, tools and methodologies to allow for these specific circumstances and, more generally, to also facilitate the initial stages of sustainable development, or a planned phased implementation, of ISO 37101, where this is needed.~~

~~However, it is perceived that the context of urban settlements has specificities and characteristics for which it is useful to provide additional guidance for their implementation. In this way, this document provides guidance, tools and methods to carry out specific activities and therefore facilitate the implementation of a management system for sustainable development according to ISO 37101.~~

The definition of “urban settlements” is not simple, as it depends on ~~several~~many interdependent factors. Some of them relate, ~~for example, to, such as~~ the relative size of the settlement’s population in relation to a region, region’s wider geography, or how the administrative ~~setup as to fit the units are organised in a local or national context of each country and. The term also~~ has severalvarying designations in severaldifferent languages, ~~that are~~ not always equivalent. ~~Even the dimension reference is relative, depending on the national or regional context.~~

~~By considering~~For the purposes of this document, we will mainly be referring to urban settlements that are relatively small in size compared to big cities or metropolitan areas. We will also include subdivisions of a city, such as neighbourhoods, boroughs or urban districts. Specialised urban settlements, which imply in having some level of administrative status and a certain degree of autonomy in decision- ~~can, for example, include~~ urban settlements based around ports or harbours, railway junctions, market towns, a single specialised industry such as mining or steel-making, including own management of resources, such as having a budget, tourism centres, administrative, ecclesiastical or educational (e.g. university) centres. These often do not have the full range of functions and services normally associated with a large city.

~~Meanwhile,~~The specialised or smaller urban settlements we are considering will typically still have a certain level of administrative autonomy in decision-making. This includes the ability to independently manage resources, such as having control over a budget.

In spite of ~~their great~~the diversity of characteristics of urban settlements, the dimensionrange of the problems and aspects that affect Sustainable Development tends to be comparatively smaller than in the case of larger cities. On the other hand, if the relation to sustainability can be similar to those affecting large urban developments. However, the scale and intensity of ~~the~~those problems and impacts tends to be smaller, small cities and communities often have ~~might be less or be more focused, while the administrative or organisational unit will often have access to~~ proportionately more limited resourcesless resource.

Given the complexity of sustainable-~~Development related issues,~~ development, the technical knowledge and related skills ~~on required to understand~~ the complexwide array of subjects that encompass the concept of sustainable development are ~~involved should~~ not always be available in smaller or more specialised urban settlements, including in public administration ~~with responsibilities.~~ This is ~~sometimes~~can be one of the biggest difficultiesmost significant challenges faced by specialised or smaller urban settlements when engaging in the promotion of sustainable development and the implementation of ~~the~~ full management system.

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This document ~~allows~~ gives guidance for a variety of different types of urban settlements, some with specific functions, ~~others~~ at different stages of sustainable development, ~~and so can~~ to implement ISO 37101 flexibly. ~~It means that their history and manageably. Different histories,~~ demographics, ~~specific production~~ local industries, geographic ~~location~~ locations, innovation skills and other distinctive characteristics can be considered on a case-by-case basis, ~~allowing~~ recognising that each type of urban settlement ~~needs~~ to develop in a way that reflects and enhances their ~~specializations~~ unique characteristics and experiences. Their distinguishing features, which underpin their attractiveness, quality of life, and social cohesion, will ~~also~~ generate specific cross-cutting issues and encourage diversity.

~~It should also be mentioned that, given the nature of [in a specialised or smaller urban settlements],~~ solutions and initiatives that promote sustainable development ~~can~~ need to be comparatively simpler ~~more~~ focused and ~~they~~ eventually demand smaller investments. ~~In fact, there are sometimes~~ but carefully targeted investment. ~~These smaller or specialised urban settlements can make a start and take small steps in sustainable development through being~~ creative, ~~and using~~ simple ~~and~~ but accessible solutions, making more use of SMART processes and methods of ~~doing things~~ (software) and ~~relying on local~~ people's knowledge and education (~~humanware~~) rather than ~~the need of~~ more expensive infrastructure (~~and hardware~~), ~~that enable urban settlements to promote Sustainable Development without the need for large investments.~~

This document ~~provides~~ is a flexible approach, ~~aiming~~ giving guidance to ~~proactively~~ urban settlements that ~~have limited resources and could only~~ meet the full ISO 37101 requirements ~~with limited resources~~ through small, phased steps and gradual improvements, ~~which enables urban settlements to rapidly initiate actions to meet the requirements of ISO 37101 whilst acknowledging that they can have insufficient resources to even set forth on the journey to achieve the complete purposes in ISO 37101 immediately.~~

This document provides several tools and methods that are useful to implement the requirements of ISO 37101, including that ~~eventually build maturity (see the maturity model provided in Annex D, which helps identifying the current maturity level. Urban settlements can start from maturity level 0, or from any defined status of maturity level 1, 2, 3, and 4, whilst by focusing on considering the 6 purposes as provided in ISO 37101.~~

~~Annex D).~~ The tools and methods ~~included~~ allow ~~administrative units or~~ organizations to monitor and measure the progress of improving sustainable development outcomes ~~to~~ at successively higher ~~level~~ levels of maturity, and ~~as they develop~~ to dynamically adjust their results and expectations ~~in order to~~ ~~be~~ remain aligned with ~~specific~~ the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There are some characteristics that foster ~~a~~ successful journey towards sustainable development for ~~smaller or more specialised~~ urban settlements ~~in particular, which include the following, including:~~

- ~~Creative~~ Creativity: Being creative can contribute significantly to the sustainable growth of ~~smaller or more specialised~~ urban settlements. As an example, new technologies can be pioneered at a ~~much~~ smaller scale, ~~which are because it is~~ easier to pilot ~~smaller or niche~~ sustainable schemes, ~~benefited from~~ (e.g. local currencies for tourist towns or car-sharing in more ruralised, dispersed communities) ~~due to~~ lower operational costs locally, ~~thus can grow in a more natural and cost-effective manner, such as piloting lower carbon emissions and shared lifestyle. These convenience. These conveniences~~ and advantages ~~will~~ can improve quality of life locally and ~~so~~ help to attract more residents, visitors, and investors.
- ~~Characteristic of~~ Local context: Being distinctive can help ~~The unique distinction that a local context has can be utilized~~ to avoid homogenized competition with ~~others solutions~~. Therefore, it is critical to identify potential opportunities ~~and risks~~ for local improvement. For example, it can be relevant to consider intergenerational inequity issues such as providing facilities or infrastructure that serves ~~citizens~~ a range of ~~different~~ ages especially ~~kids~~ children and aging people.

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- **CooperativeCooperation:** Active collaboration in various forms, such as intercity, inter-regional, and international collaboration, ~~will assist~~assists urban settlements to make ~~the~~ best use of resources at the lowest possible cost, to ~~resist~~counteract risks together, and become more resilient, ~~e.g. collective energy purchase~~. Furthermore, ~~in regarding~~issues such as ~~lower~~lowering carbon emission, ~~which emissions rely heavily~~ rely on the cross-sectoral synergy of ~~the~~ energy supply, mobility, buildings and materials, ~~behaviours, among others, therefore the agreements and behaviour. Therefore cooperation~~ between ~~governments~~administrative units or local organisations at different levels ~~are~~is important, so that joint efforts can be made to achieve the overall goal.
- **ConnectedConnection:** Accessibility is vital for sustainable development. ~~In fact,~~Urban settlements are interconnected with adjacent regions, ~~and~~ cities, and ~~others in many aspects, and~~ better connections ~~with~~within megacities can improve public services and transportation conditions, ~~whilst~~while investment in improving infrastructure (particularly large infrastructure) is typically unaffordable for smaller ~~urban~~ settlements ~~alone on their own~~. Moreover, ecological corridors can greatly improve the environmental impact of the entire region.
- **CompetitiveCompetition:** It is important to maintain a good business environment, ~~such as~~e. simplifying the ~~startup~~start-up process, protecting minority investors, and providing good-quality public services. Meanwhile, ~~they should explore~~opportunities ~~for mutuality should be explored~~ in new emerging areas such as e-business, smart cities, cyber technologies, artificial intelligence, ~~meta-verse, the Metaverse and the~~ digital economy ~~in order to be more sustainable and competitive~~increase sustainability and competition.
- **CompetentCompetence:** ~~Smaller~~ urban settlements ~~can be~~ increasingly ~~aspiring in terms of~~ attractingattract and ~~retaining talents~~retain talent due to a relatively superior quality of life. They can also promote the formation of industry clusters that bring together businesses from similar sectors, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among ~~business~~businesses. For ~~instance~~example, by focusing on knowledge-based industries, ~~smaller~~ urban settlements ~~will~~can attract a diverse range of businesses and entrepreneurs, which ~~creates~~create a culture of continuous learning and professional development.

~~About the structure of the whole~~This document, ~~there are scope (Clause 1), contains a Scope (Clause 1),~~ normative references ~~(Clause 2), (Clause 2),~~ terms and definitions ~~(Clause 3), (Clause 3),~~ and aspects and characteristics of urban settlements ~~(Clause 4), (Clause 5), (Clause 4), (Clause 5)~~ elaborates on the context of the organization. ~~Clause 6~~Clause 6 provides ten tools and methods. ~~Figure 1~~Figure 1 illustrates an overview of the main components in this document.

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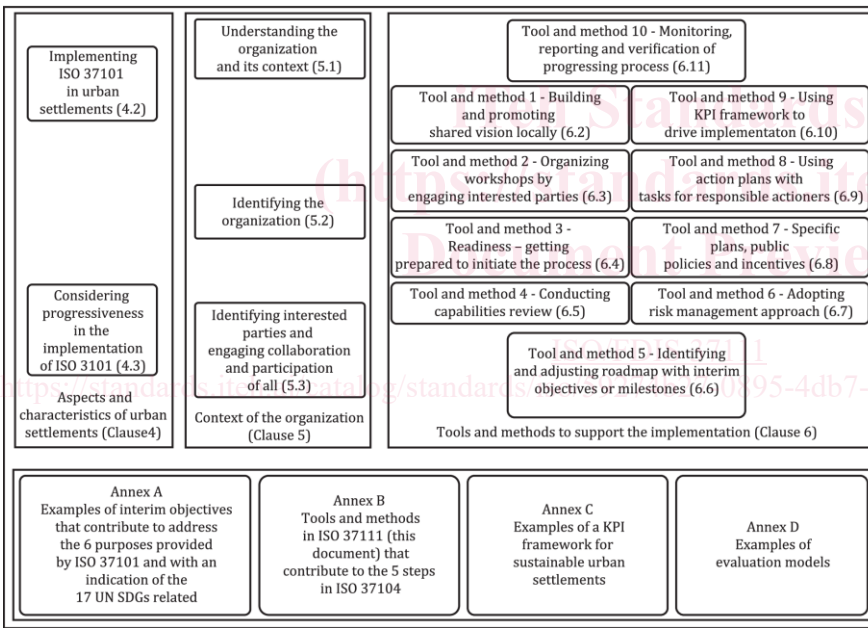
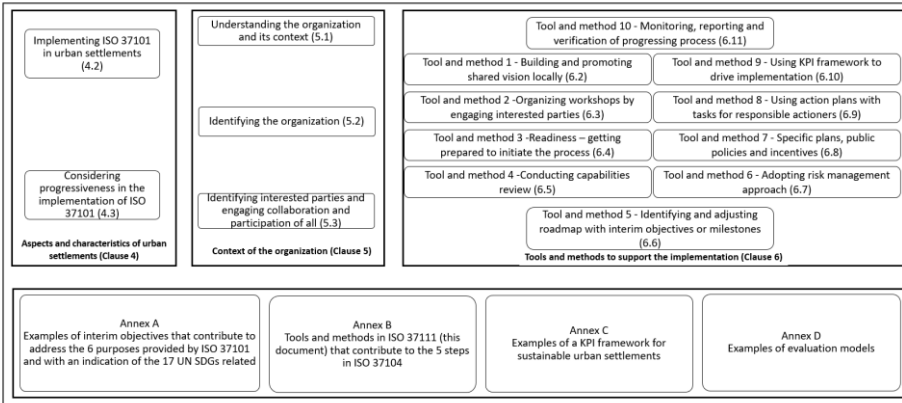


Figure 1 — Overview of the main components in ISO 37111 (this document)

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# Sustainable cities and communities – Urban settlements – Guidance for a flexible approach to phased implementation of ISO 37101

## 1 Scope

This document provides guidance for ~~the~~ more flexible implementation of ISO 37101 ~~when. This can be appropriate for smaller~~ urban settlements ~~start or those dominated by a specialised function. Others can be starting on their journey of maturing sustainability~~ from ~~zero or a~~ very low-level ~~status, aiming base, or aim~~ to explore sustainable development ~~and in a gradual, phased way due to limited resources. Some will want to rapidly initiate~~ actions with action that will have an immediate ~~impacts~~ impact to demonstrate value and stimulate wider support. It provides practical toolkits to achieve implementation (e.g. ~~supportive~~ policies and economic incentives, technical tools, and self-assessment checklists). ~~This document supports sustainable development in a first step towards implementing ISO 37101.~~

This document applies to urban settlements of any composition and type.

NOTE ISO 37104 is the guidance document of ISO 37101, and this document is a bridge to ISO 37104.

## 2 Normative references

The documents listed below are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content meets the requirements of this document. Only the edition cited applies to dated references. In the case of undated references, the most recent edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) is used.

ISO 37100, *Sustainable cities and communities — Vocabulary*

ISO 37101, *Sustainable development in communities — Management system for sustainable development — Requirements with guidance for use*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ~~in~~ ISO 37100, ISO 37101 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

— IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1 urban settlement

~~a~~ built-up area with a residential population and infrastructure for the built environment that encompasses various functions within a community, including administrative, cultural, economic, residential, and religious aspects

Note 1 to entry: In this document, an urban settlements settlement can include cities and their surroundings, rural-urban fringes or areas separate from a large city or distinctive areas within a large city, such as urban districts, boroughs, towns, counties, zones and parts of a city, such as neighbourhoods.

Note 2 to entry: There is no universally recognised definition of population scale classification for urban settlements, and different regions and countries have their own standards; therefore, this document takes the approach of describing the features of urban settlements rather than offering a definition based on scale.

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**3.2  
capability**

ability to perform or support a function

Note 1 to entry: In the context of an urban settlement, ~~there can be~~ several aspects ~~relating~~~~relate~~ to ~~capabilities~~~~capability~~, such as carbon emissions, energy, water resources, natural environment, culture, public facilities, and economic development.

[SOURCE: ISO 6707-1:2020, 3.7.1.9, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

**3.3  
intergenerational equity**

fairness in the differences (e.g. in terms of living standards, quality of life, financial opportunities) between one generation and the next

**3.4  
readiness**

state of having the knowledge, skills, processes and technologies needed to address a particular issue or challenge

Note 1 to entry: Considerations of readiness can include diagnosis of the local status quo, in order to understand the level of major sustainability ~~aspects~~~~considerations~~, e.g. maturity, digitalization, citizen's understanding, competency, and skills of experts.

Note 2 to entry: Adapted from ISO/IEC 27050-4:2021, 3.2, ~~technical readiness~~.

**3.5  
statistical system**

~~a consistent process~~~~comprehensive processes~~ across organizations to connect producers of statistics ~~and with~~ other producers and users in a consistent way that ensures transparency, openness, clarity and ready accessibility in the release and use of data, statistics and wider analysis

**3.6  
indicator**

quantitative, qualitative or descriptive measure

[SOURCE: ISO 15392:~~2008~~2019, 3.4.18]

**3.7  
KPI framework**

~~a key performance indicator framework~~

essential management tool that comprises a selection of ~~Key Performance Indicators~~~~KPIs~~, identified as critical to assess progress towards an intended result, providing a focus for strategic and operational improvement, allowing for effective value demonstration and resource management

Note 1 to entry: The ~~Key Performance Indicators~~~~KPIs~~ are typically quantifiable and time-bound and, can be used by an organization or individual.

**3.8  
cross-sectoral cooperation**

planning (combined with monitoring and evaluation) at a strategic-level, within ~~organisations~~~~an organisation~~, between similar organisations, or across entire or different linked sectors, to maximize the benefits in a cost-efficient way, and to avoid siloed decision-making

## 4 Aspects and characteristics of urban settlements

### 4.1 General

Urban settlements usually have some degree of autonomy, they have their own identity and can be described as small cities ~~and urban districts or~~ communities. This description includes the concept of neighbourhoods, which are part of a city.

In general terms, they have ~~all many of the elements characteristics~~ of a city, but compared with ~~the main major~~ cities, their scale and size are smaller, which frequently implies that the challenges and the issues referred to in ISO 37101 as sustainability issues are relatively and comparatively of a smaller scale (although in some circumstances still complex).

Another characteristic of urban settlements is that ~~their they have fewer~~ resources ~~are smaller~~, in particular ~~those related in relation~~ to the knowledge and expertise ~~about the complexity of the on~~ sustainability issues and the major challenges of sustainable development.

~~On the other hand in contrast~~, due to the size and scale, it is possible that the measures and solutions to deal with these challenges ~~could can~~ be simpler and ~~does do~~ not ~~request require~~ extremely sophisticated measures.

Nonetheless, the ~~journey to goals of~~ sustainable development ~~is are~~ achievable ~~and a through the~~ management system for sustainable development ~~as the one~~ established in ISO 37101 ~~is suitable and appropriate to guide and drive that journey. The management system for sustainable development established when it is used flexibly in ISO 37101 is and~~ applicable to cities and communities of all sizes and types ~~and is flexible~~.

### 4.2 Implementing ISO 37101 in urban settlements

The implementation of ISO 37101 in an urban settlement should be conceived in a way that takes into account ~~its the~~ context ~~of that area~~ and ~~it should~~ adopt ~~solutions that are~~ as simple as possible ~~solutions and approaches as it attempts~~ to tackle the main challenges, ~~complying (in accordance~~ with the requirements of ISO 37101) in a pragmatic, effective and efficient way.

By doing this, the following benefits can be achieved:

- meeting various interested parties' practical needs and periodical expectations, including demonstrating legal compliance and improving relations with ~~small-scale, intimate, inter-dependent~~ local communities
- delivering cost savings (e.g. lowering the cost of research and development on tools and methods or experiential learning);
- improving the recognition of the commitment to sustainable development by an organization, by demonstrating clear and pre-defined interim achievements;
- enabling all interested parties to engage in a management system for sustainable development;
- improving coordination and facility sharing with other nearby cities or communities that are also outside stakeholders;
- raising awareness about sustainability in various ~~maturity levels and~~ phases;
- focusing more on "software" and "human resources" instead of "hardware" only.

### 4.3 Considering ~~progressiveness in the~~ progressive implementation of ISO 37101

When planning the implementation of a management system for sustainable development of an urban settlement, it ~~could~~can be useful to consider ~~progressiveness~~a progressive phased implementation as ~~elaborated~~described in clause 5.1.5.1. The adoption of considering ~~progressiveness to implement a progressive implementation of~~ ISO 37101 offers several additional benefits for urban settlements, particularly for those with limited available resources, by allowing an organization to:

- develop a management system at its own pace;
- define the scope when implementing ISO 37101 and tailor this to fit the local resources available;
- decide how many phases, it wishes to go through and what level of maturity it ~~visions~~envisions its management system to reach in each phase;
- decide on issues or other aspects to be considered, such as a distinctive local culture, or emerging industry that distinguishes them from the competition ~~or surrounding urban areas~~;
- start with the area's greatest potential for long-term improvement and achieve optimum benefits;
- mobilize quickly to implement ISO 37101, and ultimately achieving the UN SDGs;
- identify interim objectives and suitable indicators, select toolkits, perform task decomposition, and assign tasks to entities in charge;
- dynamically adjust implementation for performance improvement, e.g. interim objectives, indicators and tasks;
- stimulate a positive culture ~~and attitude~~ towards sustainable management.

## 5 Context of the organization

### 5.1 Understanding the organization and its context

Urban settlements can be of any size. Therefore, they can include "small" human communities or neighbourhoods within a city, or part of a multi-nuclear city, or autonomous communities within the urban-rural fringe or separate from a large city. In order to define urban settlements when applying this document, some of the following aspects should be considered:

- They are areas with relatively independent and stable communities and populations, with physical ~~or latent~~, political or ~~historical~~-cultural boundaries that can be distinguished from ~~the~~ other human settlements; they have a relatively small or medium population and built-up area compared to other cities in the same country and region, as defined by each country's criteria.
- Locally, there are usually a plethora of ~~administrative tasks~~normal daily office duties. Staff can lack sustainability expertise and find it difficult to secure financing and to manage complex projects such as lower-carbon emissions ~~scheme, but on the other hand~~schemes, however, the proximity to ~~other~~ citizens ~~with some knowledge or sustainability experience~~, due to ~~the~~ smaller scale, can engage more active participation.
- They are typically not ~~centres of~~ authority ~~centers~~ ~~nor~~ economic hubs of first-level administrative divisions, ~~accounting for~~because a small or medium proportion of the economy ~~is~~ in ~~bigger~~larger urban regions. For example, some are called a "satellite city", a district of ~~megacities~~a megacity, or a ~~member~~part of an urban agglomeration located near the most important economic activity hubs. Most of them are