



Benchmarking Water Sensitive Cities

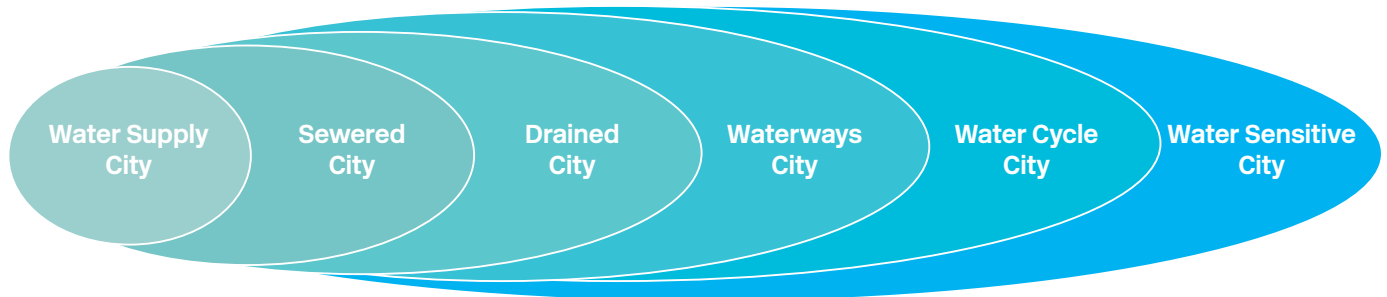
Industry Note
Program A: Society
Project A4.1

Supportive social and institutional frameworks are a key part of facilitating the transformation towards increased water sensitivity.

Three complementary qualitative benchmarking tools have been developed to assist urban water policy makers and strategists to identify current water management practice and future aspiration, as well as the institutional changes required to realise this vision. These results can inform the development of a strategic transition program towards water sensitivity.

Benchmarking Step 1: Identifying Current Water Management Practice and Aspiration

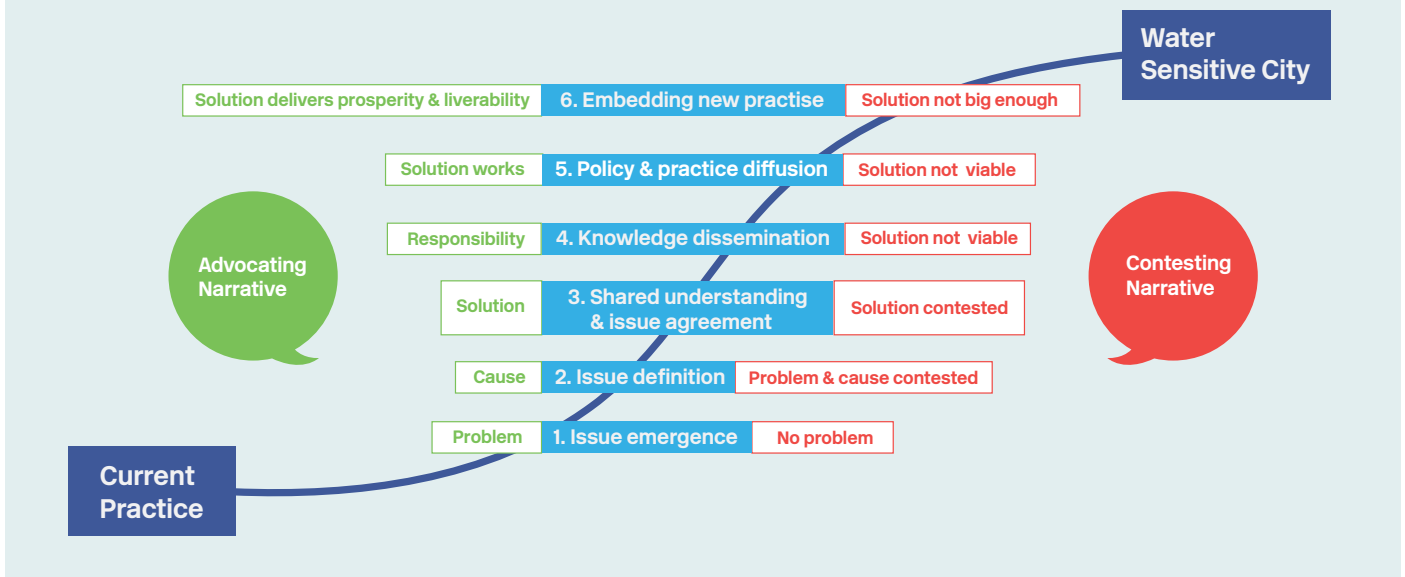
The Urban Water Management Transitions Framework identifies six distinct developmental 'states' that cities typically move through on their path towards increased water sensitivity. Using the Framework, cities are able to locate current water management practices and identify the capacity needs and institutional changes required for more sustainable water management. With this information, urban water strategists can then define both short and long term sustainability goals for their city.



Urban Water Transitions Framework

Benchmarking Step 2: Identifying Transition Phase Narratives

In moving from one water management 'state' to another, there are six distinct transition phases that a city goes through. During these changes, it is generally possible to observe a narrative in support of the new practice (advocating narrative), as well as a narrative that challenges the new practice or believes it is either unnecessary or inappropriate (contesting narrative). Considering 'which voices speak the loudest' is a useful way of identifying where your city is in its transition. A benchmarking tool has been developed to map these changing narratives over the six transition phases.



Six phases in the transition to a Water Sensitive City

Benchmarking Step 3: Identifying Transition Elements

There are five key domains of change (actors, bridging organisations, knowledge, projects and tools) that are critical to support a transition effort. Together, they provide the enabling social and institutional conditions for implementing and embedding new water sensitive practices. Indicators across each domain of change and transition phase have been developed and can be used to further identify what transition phase a city is in, as well as where to focus future efforts.

Building a Strategic Transition Program

The results of these benchmarking activities can be combined to inform the development of a bespoke strategic transition program. Steps 1 and 2 help identify what stage and phase your city is in, and Step 3 can provide insight into the types of social and institutional initiatives needed to support increased water sensitivity.

Together, they reveal priority areas for action and offer practical guidance to policy-makers and industry practitioners on how to create the social and institutional enabling conditions to realise their city’s aspired water future.

Domains of Change				
Actors Key networks of individuals	Bridges (Semi) Formalised organisations, structures & processes for coordination & alignment	Knowledge Research, science & contextualised knowledge	Projects Experiments, demonstrations & focus projects	Tools Legislative, policy, regulative & practice tools

About the research & further reading

Please refer to website for further details about Project A4.1: Cities as Water Supply Catchments: Society and institutions.

For more detail on the benchmarking process, please see publication “Moving towards Water Sensitive Cities: a Guidance Manual for Strategists and Policy Makers”.

Further information

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