

SUMMARY

SOCIAL ESG in URBAN PLANNING

The Social (S) dimension of ESG in urban planning shifts the focus from purely physical infrastructure to human welfare, inclusivity, and resilience. It aims to create equitable access to essential services while preventing social issues such as displacement and social exclusion.

Core Principles and Focus Areas

The sources outline several fundamental pillars for integrating social sustainability into city development:

- **Social Equity and Inclusion:** This involves ensuring fair access to opportunities, services, and resources for all residents, regardless of background. It prioritizes giving people what they need to thrive rather than treating everyone identically.
- **Community Engagement:** Strengthening participatory planning is essential to empower residents and ensure diverse community voices are heard during decision-making.
- **Health and Well-being:** Urban environments are designed to be safe and healthy, supporting both the physical and mental well-being of all residents.
- **Safety and Security:** This focuses on creating secure environments where people feel confident to live and work, including crime prevention through design.

Practical Applications in Urban Planning

To translate these principles into reality, planners focus on specific urban elements:

- **Affordable and Diverse Housing:** Developing a mix of housing types ensures that all residents, including low-income households, have access to safe and stable shelter.
- **Universal Accessibility:** Designing barrier-free public spaces, sidewalks, and transport systems ensures that the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities can move independently.

- **Quality Public Spaces:** Enhancing urban life through accessible green spaces, community gardens, and recreational areas promotes social interaction and cohesion.
- **Gender Planning:** This involves the systematic integration of gender analysis into policies to ensure equal access and benefits for all genders.

The Malaysian Regulatory Landscape

In Malaysia, social ESG is heavily influenced by local regulations and frameworks:

- **Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172):** This is the primary act governing land use in Peninsular Malaysia, establishing public participation as a cornerstone of the planning process.
- **Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2022 (ASHA):** A significant recent development that bolsters workplace protection and employee well-being.
- **National Policies:** Strategies often align with national agendas like Malaysia Madani, the 12th Malaysia Plan, and the National Physical Plan.

Measurement, Challenges, and Opportunities

Effective social ESG integration requires accountability through data-driven decision-making.

- **Metrics:** Planners use social indicators such as housing affordability ratios, Gini coefficients, and safety statistics to track progress.
- **Materiality Assessments:** These tools help prioritize high-impact issues like worker safety and affordable housing that matter most to stakeholders.
- **Challenges:** The primary obstacles include data gaps that hinder standard outcomes and short-term profit pressures that can conflict with long-term social benefits.
- **Opportunities:** Successfully implementing ESG frameworks can unlock new funding sources, attract top talent, and build more resilient, future-ready cities