

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

SMART, EFFICIENT, ATTRACTIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE CITY PLANNING

ONLINE COURSE



SESSION I

14 September -
17 October 2026



SESSION II

2 November -
4 December 2026



DURATION

10 weeks •
2 separate 5-week sessions



LANGUAGES

French • English



APPLICATION DEADLINE

9 September 2026



APPLY ONLINE

forms.gle/nittduTjjT5frM149

SMART CITY PLANNING, EFFICIENT, ATTRACTIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Call for applications

Course announcement	
Course type:	Online course
Field of activity:	Development planning
Session I dates:	14 September to 17 October 2026
Session II dates:	2 November to 4 December 2026
Duration:	10 weeks (in 2 separate sessions of 5 weeks)
Languages:	French and English
Application deadline:	9 September 2026

¹ The IDEP strongly encourages and supports the participation of suitably qualified female civil servants in its capacity-building and training programme.

RATIONALE

Africa is currently undergoing one of the most rapid and far-reaching urban transitions in contemporary history. Driven by a combination of strong population growth, rural-urban migration, the expansion of economic activities and increased trade, African cities are undergoing a profound transformation that is redefining territories, ways of life and systems of governance.

According to international projections, the continent's urban population is set to double by 2050, reaching nearly 1.4 billion people, making Africa one of the world's main centres of urban growth. This transformation represents both an exceptional opportunity and a major challenge. Cities are gradually becoming the main drivers of economic growth, innovation, job creation and social development.

However, this rapid urbanization is also placing significant pressure on infrastructure, transport networks, energy, water, sanitation, housing and public services. In many urban areas, urban growth is outstripping the planning and investment capacities of public authorities, leading to the expansion of informal settlements, network congestion, the deterioration of the urban environment and widening regional inequalities.

At the same time, African cities are evolving in a context marked by the growing effects of climate change, the risk of flooding, pressures on natural resources and the need to strengthen their resilience in the face of health, environmental and economic crises.

The urban challenge can therefore no longer be addressed solely from the perspective of physical planning; it now requires a comprehensive approach encompassing governance, sustainability, innovation and quality of life. Digital technologies, urban data and spatial information systems now offer new opportunities to improve city management. However, the smart city is based above all on an integrated vision that balances efficiency, attractiveness, resilience, inclusion and sustainability.

The course, which will take place over two sessions, offers an integrated approach centred on eight complementary dimensions: urbanization; the conceptual foundations of smart cities; urban governance; spatial data; digital transformation; urban attractiveness and efficiency; resilience and the green transition; and the development of smart city strategies.

OBJECTIVE

This course therefore aims to provide public decision-makers, local authorities, urban planners, development professionals and those involved in urban governance with the knowledge, tools and methods necessary to understand contemporary urban dynamics and devise strategies tailored to African realities.

The specific objectives of this training programme are:

- To understand contemporary dynamics of African urbanization and their territorial implications;
- To master the concepts of a smart, attractive, efficient, resilient and sustainable city;
- To analyze urban governance systems and mechanisms for coordinating stakeholders;
- To be able to utilize spatial data and digital tools in planning processes;
- To be able to assess the opportunities offered by digital transformation in urban services;
- Be able to design integrated urban development strategies tailored to African realities;
- Promote approaches that balance innovation, competitiveness, social inclusion and environmental sustainability;
- Be able to develop a strategic vision for a smart city capable of addressing the urban challenges of the 21st century.

CONTENT

The course will comprise eight modules spread across two phases:

- Phase I: Foundations for understanding and managing African urban transformation
- Phase II: Tools and strategies for building smart, attractive, resilient and sustainable cities

Module 8 (Developing a smart city strategy): will be the subject of a special, more in-depth training programme at the request of member states.

SKILLS TO BE ACQUIRED

By the end of the training, participants should be able to:

- Carry out a comprehensive assessment of an urban area;
- Identify the main challenges and opportunities for urban development in Africa;
- Use tools for territorial analysis and data-driven management;
- Design smart city projects and policies tailored to local contexts;
- Integrate the principles of participatory governance, resilience and sustainability into urban planning;
- Develop coherent strategies for territorial attractiveness and competitiveness;
- Formulate an operational roadmap for transforming a city into a smart city.

TEACHING APPROACH AND COURSE STRUCTURE

The course will be delivered in English and French in two phases, each lasting five weeks, with one week in each phase set aside for the final assessment. The course will be delivered asynchronously, and participants are required to contribute to the weekly discussions.

The course is designed so that learners are also able to self-assess their understanding through practical exercises in the form of quizzes, which will facilitate active learning. Additional resources such as bibliographies, web links and optional reading material are provided to participants who wish to deepen their knowledge of the course subject.

The teaching team will comprise a course director and resource persons with extensive knowledge of urbanisation, planning and spatial planning. The course will also be supported by webinars on specific topics related to the theme. The course will combine the acquisition of knowledge with the sharing of experiences amongst participants.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The training programme is primarily aimed at government officials, local authority executives, public decision-makers and professionals involved in the planning, management and transformation of African cities and territories.

In particular, it targets officials and managers working in the fields of urban planning and spatial planning, development planning, urban infrastructure and services, mobility and transport, water and sanitation, energy, waste management, the environment and sustainable development, digital transformation, spatial information systems, local economic development, and monitoring and evaluation.

The course is also open to urban planners, architects, engineers, geographers, GIS and spatial data specialists, researchers, teachers, consultants and professionals from development organizations whose work is directly linked to urban and spatial issues.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

Until the registration deadline, participants will be accepted onto the course following a selection process based on their responses to the questionnaire accompanying this announcement, subject to the availability of places allocated to this course.

The selection process will take into account, in particular, the relevance of the candidate's academic and professional background, their current role, their involvement in urban or regional issues, their motivation to undertake the course, and their ability to apply and disseminate the knowledge acquired within their professional environment.

Please refer to the paragraph below for details of the priority target group. Applications must be submitted exclusively via IDEP's online application platform, using the questionnaire accessible via the following link: <https://forms.gle/qNa2qME78yDoYRHr8>

TECHNICAL PREREQUISITES

Participation in the course relies primarily on internet access. To take this online course, you must have at least the hardware and software specified. Please consult your network administrator or IT manager to ensure you have the following:

- a computer running a recent version of Windows, macOS or Linux;
- a stable internet connection;
- a recent web browser (Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Firefox or equivalent);
- software capable of viewing PDF documents;
- an office suite such as Microsoft Office, LibreOffice or equivalent;
- a working email address;
- the ability to take part in online activities and webinars.

Participants must also have a basic level of digital literacy enabling them to download and upload documents, use an online learning platform and take part in distance learning activities.

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for submitting applications and requests: 6 September 2026

Dates for Session I: 14 September to 17 October 2026

Dates for Session II: 2 November to 4 December 2026

CONTACT

Training and Research Division:

Tel: +221 33 829 55 00 / Fax: +221 33 822 29 64

Email: catherine.lalyre@un.org with a copy to lou.zah@un.org and diaw4@un.org

N.B.: IDEP strongly encourages and supports the participation of suitably qualified female civil servants in its capacity-building and training programme.