

Call for Abstracts

Special Issue on 2025 Urban 20 focused on *Urban Governance:* *The Evolving Agenda of Urban20 Cities*

Development Southern Africa Journal (Taylor & Francis)

The Editorial Board of Development Southern Africa (DSA) Journal, in collaboration with the 2025 Urban20 Co-hosts – the City of Tshwane and City of Johannesburg, invites scholars, researchers, policymakers, and urban practitioners to submit abstracts for a Special Issue on Urban20. This Special Issue **encourages research articles from emerging authors (including government employees) either as sole authors or as collaborators on co-authored articles between academic researchers and government employees.** This issue seeks to advance knowledge and evidence-based policy solutions relevant to the evolving Urban20 (U20) agenda, focusing on urban governance.

Main Theme: *Urban Governance – The Evolving Urban Agenda of U20 Cities*

This Special Issue will explore governance approaches, urban policy frameworks, and transformative strategies shaping Urban20 cities across the globe. With contributions from academics, policymakers, civil society, and government officials, the issue will foster critical discussions on equity, resilience, digital transformation, financing mechanisms, and climate action. The Special Issue aims to bridge research, policy, and practice within urban governance contexts, particularly aligning with the Urban20 (U20) governance agenda. Furthermore, its intention is to encourage practitioners to collaborate with academics on joint writing projects, with emphasis on multi-disciplinary research to create a body of knowledge to assist decision-making and service delivery in local government.

Sub-Themes and Focus Areas

Submissions should align with the overarching theme and have a comparative approach across Urban20 cities, covering relevant thematic issues, which have primarily been framed in terms of:

Thematic Issue	Focus Areas include:
Comparative Urban Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies comparing governance approaches across Urban20 cities Multi-level governance and city diplomacy within Urban20 contexts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-private partnerships for urban service delivery • Collaborative decision-making for sustainable urban development
Policy Coordination and Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional arrangements enabling effective governance • Mechanisms for intergovernmental collaboration • Aligning local policies with global goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate agreements. • Best practices and policy recommendations for Urban20 city leadership
Stakeholder Engagement and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of citizens, businesses, and civil society in shaping urban governance. • Strengthening participatory governance and citizen-led urban initiatives • Inclusive policy frameworks for vulnerable and marginalized communities • Community-driven responses to urban challenges • Ensuring marginalized communities have a voice in urban decision-making processes
Digital Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging technology (e.g., e-governance, data analytics) for transparency, accountability, and efficiency. • The role of digital technologies in urban governance, service delivery and democratic processes • Urban data management and AI-driven policymaking
Resilience and Crisis Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance strategies, best practices and lessons learned for managing urban crises, such as health pandemics, natural disasters, and economic downturns. • Innovations in financing urban resilience and adaptive infrastructure

The types of articles invited, and journal guidelines can be found here: DSA [Instructions for Authors](#).

Selection of Papers

Selection of papers will be on the basis of: Thematic Alignment and Relevance, Originality and Innovation, Academic Rigor and Clarity, Policy and Practical Implications; and Contextual Sensitivity.

Abstract Submission Requirements – Urban20 Special Issue

To ensure high-quality and thematically aligned submissions, abstracts must meet the following criteria:

- Topical relevance: must clearly address the main theme and at least one sub-theme outlined in the call.

- Urban African focus: at least part of the analysis must focus on urban governance in Africa or offer comparative insights relevant to African U20 cities.
- Clarity and contribution: clearly state the research question, urban challenge, and expected contribution to knowledge or policy. Indicate relevance to U20 city priorities.
- Analytical and policy value: briefly mention the methodological approach and potential policy insights or innovations.
- Format

Abstracts will be rejected if:

- Off-topic or too generic
- Lacking analytical focus or policy relevance
- Poor language or formatting

Submission Guidelines for Authors

Abstract submissions should include the following information:

- Topic/Title
- Author(s) Full Names, Affiliation, Email Address(es)
- Abstract Content and Length: should contain an abstract of 150 words
- Keywords: Each abstract should contain between 3 and 6 keywords
- File Format: Submit abstracts in MS Word format
- Language: Abstracts must be written in English

Important Dates

	ITEM	TIMELINES
1	Call for Abstracts Opens	6 June 2025
2	Submission of Abstracts Deadline	30 June 2025
3	Notification of Acceptance	31 July 2025
4	Submission of Full Paper/Manuscript	31 December 2025
5	Review of Full Paper/Manuscript	30 June 2026
6	Final Publication (and Launch)	November 2026 (aligned with the Urban20 Summit)

Submission Process

Submit abstracts via tayarisha.wsg@wits.ac.za using the subject line *"Abstract Submission – Urban 20 Special Issue"*. All submissions will undergo a rigorous peer review by expert scholars and practitioners.

Guest Editors for this Special Issue are:

- Prof Geci Karuri-Sebina, Director: [Tayarisha Centre](#) at the Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- Prof Nara Monkam, Head of the [Public Policy Hub](#), Chair in Municipal Finance, University of Pretoria.

- Dr Paul Plantinga, Senior Research Manager at the [Human Sciences Research Council](#), Pretoria.

This Special Issue presents an exciting opportunity to contribute to shaping urban policy dialogues within the Urban20 framework. We look forward to receiving your submissions.