



# Cities & regions let's get started

Version 1  
2023

Nine pathways

for local and regional governments

to engage with Doughnut Economics

as a tool for transformative action



**Cities  
& regions**

**let's get  
started**

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### [Doughnut Economics Action Lab \(DEAL\)](#)

is an organisation co-founded by Doughnut Economics author Kate Raworth, existing to support changemakers worldwide - in communities, education, cities and regions, business, government, and more - who are turning the ideas of Doughnut Economics into transformative action and aiming to bring about systemic change.



## About this guide

This guide is for anyone working within or alongside local or regional government who is inspired by the concepts and tools of Doughnut Economics and wants to better understand how to start putting them into practice in their own place. It collects real-world approaches and examples that can be applied and adapted worldwide and at many scales - whether for a city or town, a rural village or district, or a county or state. It is intended as a starting point for those new to Doughnut Economics, as well as those already familiar and engaging with it.

Doughnut Economics brings together insights from many economic perspectives to set out a vision of economies - local to global - that meet the needs of all people within the means of the living planet. Ever since the Doughnut was first published in 2012, cities, regions and communities around the world have been interested in exploring what it would mean to turn that vision into reality. At Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL) we have been learning with and from the emerging practice of these places, evolving a shared understanding of what it means for local governments to turn the principles of Doughnut Economics into practice.

Drawing from the principles of Doughnut Economics, from DEAL's tools and methodologies, and from the experiences of cities and regions, this guide brings together our most current understanding of how Doughnut Economics is being put into practice by local and regional governments, along with examples from places already in action. It lays out nine pathways for engaging with Doughnut Economics - from learning and testing, to developing metrics and strategy, to using the Doughnut as a unifying framework for policy-making.

Each pathway sets out a series of potential actions, examples from local and regional governments worldwide, and key available tools and resources. These pathways are not a step-by-step approach, but rather a catalogue of possibilities - a library of options - allowing each mayor, councillor, department head and ambitious civil servant to identify the possibilities and opportunities in their own place. Most places will be exploring more than one pathway at the same time, the most ambitious ones may aim to engage with all of them.

These nine pathways are in no way a definite and prescriptive list. There may be more, fewer, or quite different ones in a few years' time - we invite all cities and regions to join us on our learning journey to find and share entry points for local adaptation and transformative action. As we all continue to innovate and experiment together, DEAL will continue to update this guide with new learning, insights and case studies.



**Leonora Grcheva**  
Cities and Regions Lead  
Doughnut Economics Action Lab



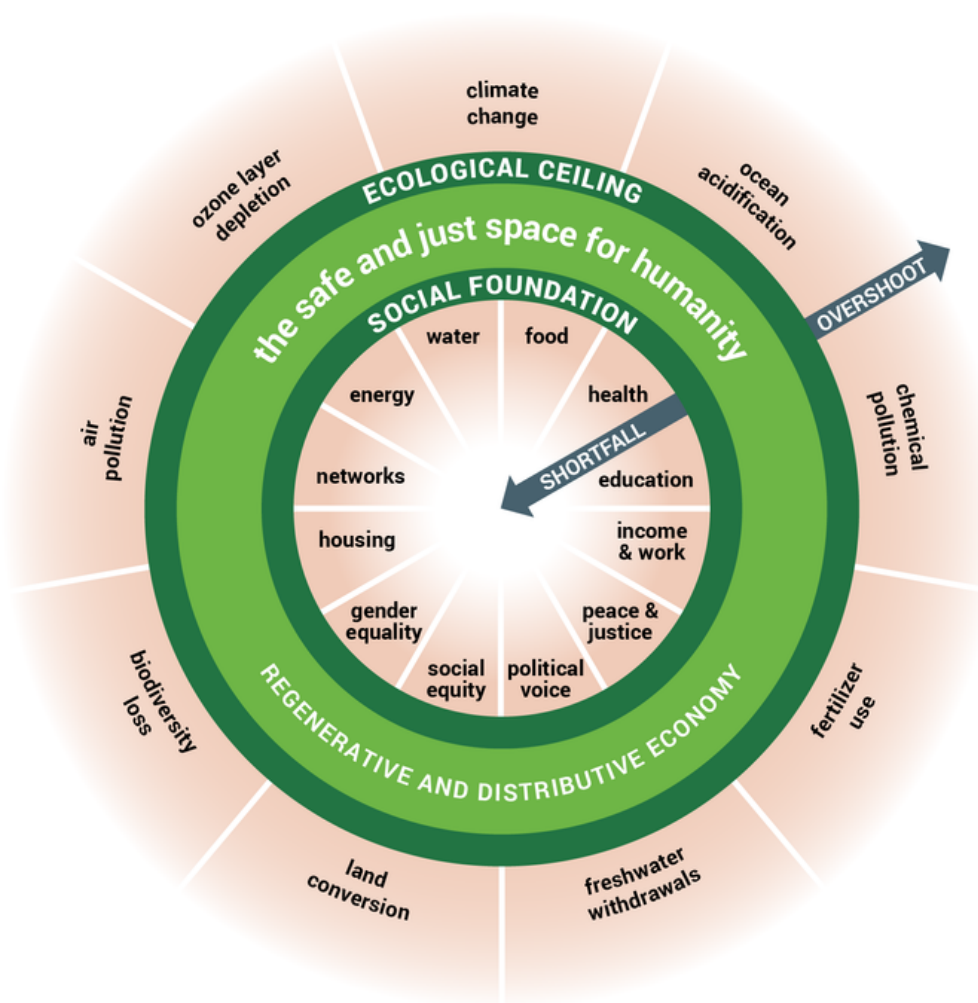
**Online version with case studies and tools**  
[doughnuteconomics.org/tools/210](https://doughnuteconomics.org/tools/210)

# 1 About Doughnut Economics

The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries offers a vision of what it means for humanity to thrive in the 21st century - and Doughnut Economics proposes a mindset and many ways of thinking needed to get us there. Kate Raworth's 2017 book, *Doughnut Economics: seven ways to think like a 21st*

*century economist*, explored the economic thinking needed to bring humanity into the Doughnut, aiming to draw together insights from diverse economic perspectives in a way that everyone can understand.

The Doughnut is a compass for human prosperity in the 21st century, with the aim of meeting the needs of all people within the means of the living planet. It consists of two concentric rings: a social foundation, to ensure that no one is left falling short on life's essentials, and an ecological ceiling, to ensure that humanity does not collectively overshoot the planetary boundaries that protect Earth's life-supporting systems. Between these two



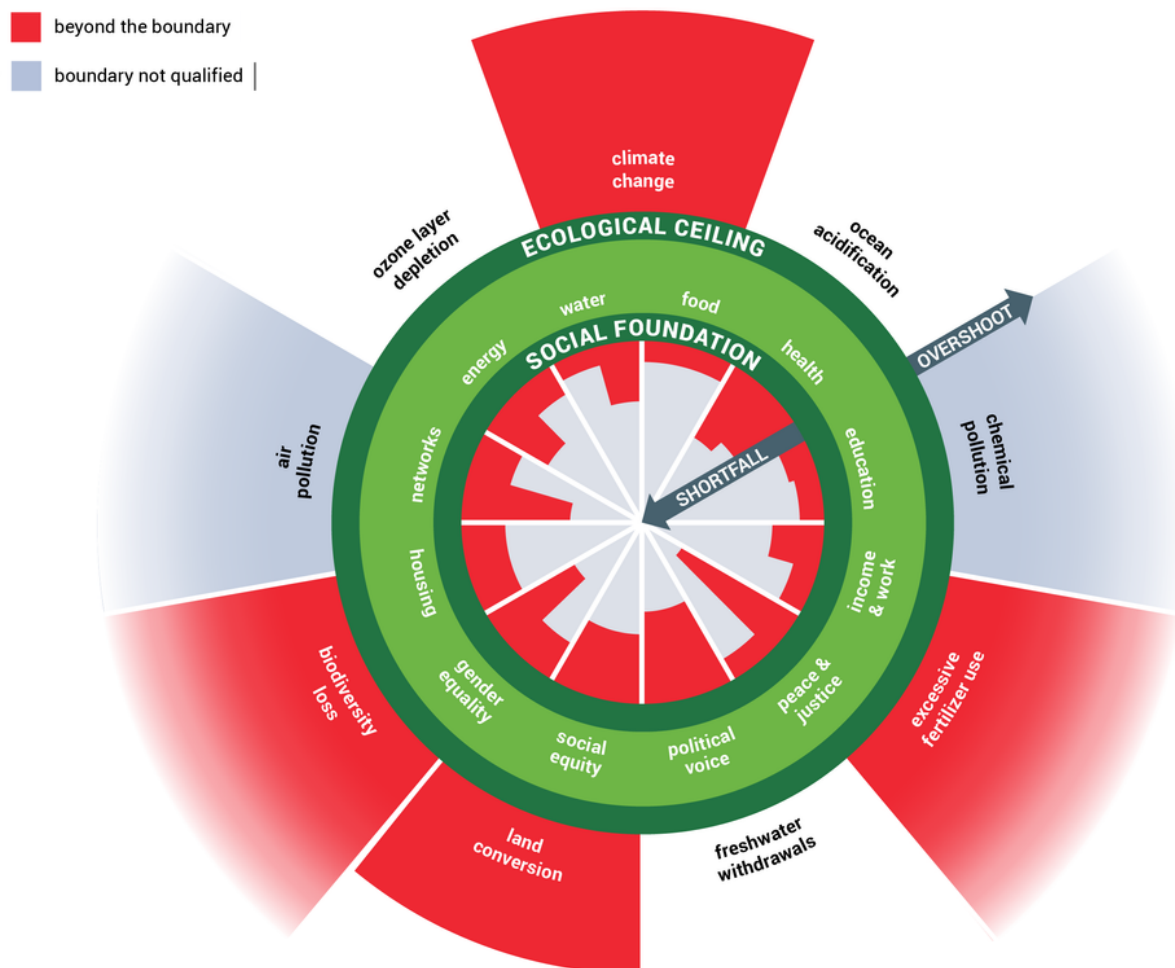
The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries.

sets of boundaries lies a doughnut-shaped space that is both ecologically safe and socially just: a space in which humanity can thrive. If the 21st century goal is to get into the safe and just space of the Doughnut - then how can humanity get there? Not with last century's economic thinking.

Doughnut Economics proposes an economic mindset that's fit for our times. It's not a set of policies and institutions, but rather a way of thinking to bring about the regenerative and distributive dynamics that this century calls for. Drawing on insights from diverse schools of economic thought - including ecological,

feminist, institutional, behavioural and complexity economics - it sets out seven ways to think like a 21st century economist in order to transform economies, local to global.

The starting point of Doughnut Economics is to change the goal from endless GDP growth to thriving in the Doughnut. At the same time, see the big picture by recognising that the economy is embedded within, and dependent upon, society and the rest of the living world. Doughnut Economics recognises that human behaviour can be nurtured to be cooperative and caring, just as it can be competitive and individualistic.



Transgressing both sides of the Doughnut's boundaries (2017).

Doughnut Economics also recognises that economies, societies, and the living world are complex, interdependent systems that are best understood through the lens of systems thinking. And it calls for turning today's degenerative economies into regenerative ones, and divisive economies into far more distributive ones. Lastly, Doughnut Economics recognises that growth may be a healthy phase of life, but nothing grows forever: things that succeed do so by growing until it is time to stop growing and learn to thrive instead.

The Doughnut's holistic scope and visual simplicity, coupled with its scientific grounding, have turned it into a convening space for big conversations about reimagining and remaking the future. It is now being discussed, debated and put into practice in education and in communities, in business and in government, in towns, cities and nations worldwide.

In particular, DEAL has seen local governments demonstrating ambitious leadership in engaging with Doughnut Economics as they seek to manage and emerge from 21st century crises - including climate breakdown, a global health pandemic, and economic crises - to make the transformations needed for societies and economies to become far more socially just and ecologically safe.

Learn more about Doughnut Economics on the [DEAL Community Platform](#), where you can also dive deeper into the seven ways to think like a 21st century economist with our series of [90-second animations](#).



# 2

## Cities, regions and the Doughnut

Cities and regions aiming for the Doughnut - what does this mean and what would it take?

The journey for any city or region aiming to live within the Doughnut starts with the ambition of this question:

*How can our region/city/municipality be a home to thriving people, in a thriving place, while respecting the wellbeing of all people, and the health of the whole planet?*

This question invites every place to explore its local aspirations in the context of its global responsibilities, recognising that every place is connected to people and the planet worldwide.

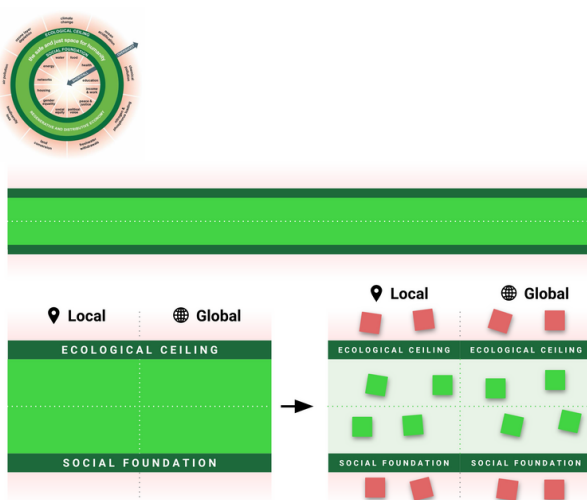
What's the vision of a city or region that lives within the Doughnut? It's a place that meets the essential needs of every person - from food, education and housing to social equity and political voice - so that every resident can lead a life of dignity, opportunity and community. It's a place whose buildings and infrastructures are as generous as the living world, managing water, storing carbon, and housing wildlife just like the surrounding natural habitat. It's a place that respects the rights of people whose lives it affects worldwide, from workers in global supply chains to refugees seeking safety. And it's a place that lives within planetary boundaries, by running on renewable energy, repairing and reusing its materials, and regenerating nature.

DEAL has created a set of five 'Doughnut Unrolled' tools that explore this question using different approaches, including explainers, data-led methods, and various participatory workshop activities.

### Four lenses

How can a place help bring humanity into the Doughnut? If we unroll it, we can create a space for exploring the possible futures we want, through four lenses.

The four lenses address both social and ecological issues while combining the local aspirations of a place with its global responsibilities.





Getting into the Doughnut calls for transforming the dynamics that shape economies, local to global. How can cities and regions shift from being degenerative to becoming regenerative of the living world? How can they shift from being socially divisive to becoming distributive of opportunity and value to all?

Many indigenous societies have learned to live and thrive this way, but today there are – as far as is known – no towns, cities, regions or nations that succeed in doing so. Some are starting out now on a journey towards this vision, recognising that the ambition is clear but complex, that the journey is urgent but it takes time, and that it demands taking action here, even in the face of wider constraints.

While all places can share the ambition to ‘thrive within the Doughnut’, the journey to get there will look different for each place, based on its geographical, cultural, and socio-political context, and on its unique challenges and opportunities. For most places, moving towards the Doughnut will mean both continuing, spreading and amplifying what is currently going in the right direction, stopping and letting go of old degenerative practices,

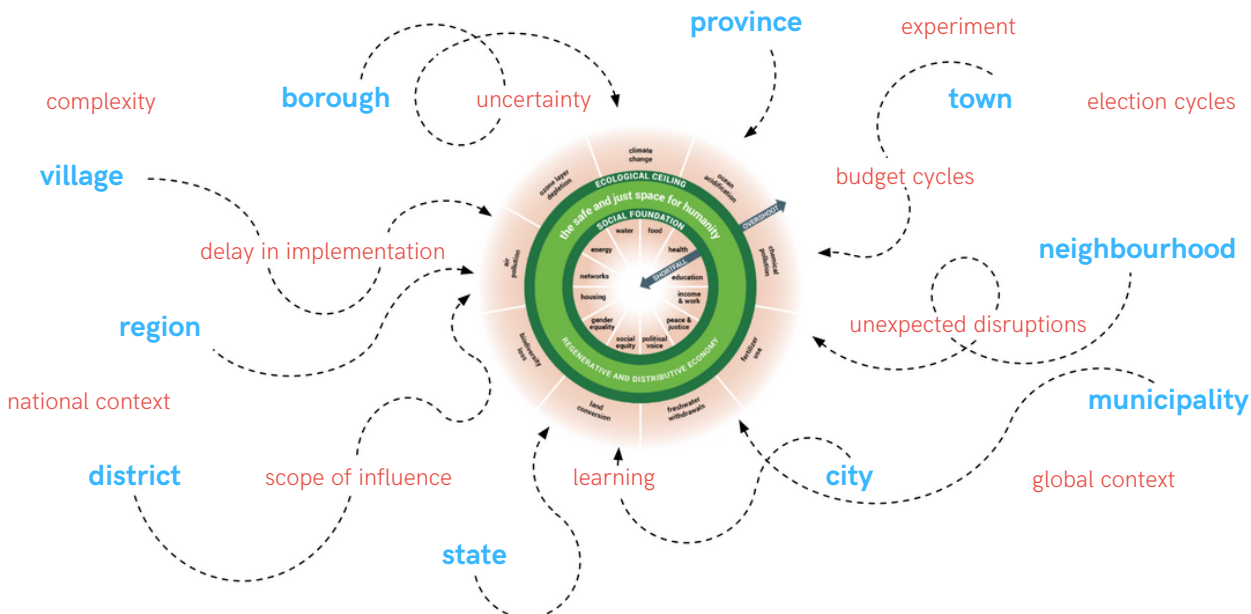
as well as adopting completely new approaches and changing how we plan and organise in our places, to meet people’s needs and care for our planetary home.

Every place will have its own unique journey of how it moves towards a safe and just future. So local and regional governments – enabled or held back by their own organisational structure and remits, policies and budgets, by political will or inertia – will get started in different ways, sometimes big, sometimes small, and sometimes in many different ways at once.

So far, local and regional governments in over 70 localities around the world – from Amsterdam to Ipoh, from Mexico City to Brussels, and from Copenhagen to Portland – have been finding a wide range of ways to work with the concepts and tools of Doughnut Economics. This guide offers a synthesis of opportunities for action by identifying nine possible pathways for local and regional governments to engage with Doughnut Economics. The overall aim is to share approaches and examples arising in different contexts, and tools to inspire further action and possibilities for everyone to get started.

Every place will have its own unique journey of moving towards living in the safe and just space of the Doughnut.

## Aiming for the Doughnut



# 3

## Nine pathways

This is an overview of nine possible pathways for local and regional governments to use Doughnut Economics for transformative action.

These nine pathways, divided into three clusters, are just a rough guide and are not intended to be followed in any order. Some places start with quick experiments, others with plans for a journey, and others still start with long-term and official commitments. However you get started, it's clear that even the smallest first steps may open doors to transformative change.

**Taking steps** - Initiatives that can be done with few resources and can work as short-term commitments or one-off experiments without high-level approval.

**On a journey** - Initiatives that take more resources, require a commitment to work over at least a given period of time and lead to visible outcomes in either policies or projects.

**Committing long-term** - Initiatives that require a high level of political will and organisation-wide commitment, and are aimed at long-term processes of transformative change.

## Taking steps



#1 Page 12 | [engage](#)

### Starting conversations and internal learning

Learning about the concepts and tools of Doughnut Economics internally across leadership and departments, and exploring possibilities to take action in your own place.



#2 Page 14 | [experiment](#)

### Testing the Doughnut on ongoing projects

Finding strategic opportunities, within already approved projects and processes, to bring in Doughnut Economics thinking, ambitions and tools.



#3 Page 16 | [empower](#)

### Empowering local change-makers

Using the concepts and tools of Doughnut Economics to empower diverse actors in your city or region through collaboration and support, enabling mutual learning and creating spaces for action.



## On a journey



#4 Page 18 | quantify

### Data, measuring and monitoring

Using DEAL's Data Portrait of a Place tool to create a holistic data snapshot of your place, as a starting point for a range of activities - from identifying data gaps to steering policy decisions to monitoring progress over time.



#5 Page 20 | strategise

### Plans and strategies

Bringing Doughnut Economics into all stages of place-based plans or thematic strategies - as a guide for visioning, collaborating, prioritising or monitoring, based on the social and ecological indicators of the Doughnut.



#6 Page 22 | demonstrate

### Demonstrator projects

Initiating, funding or supporting the design and development of projects aiming to be transformative through the lens of the Doughnut, or prioritising projects based on Doughnut-related criteria.

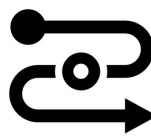
## Committing long-term



#7 Page 24 | guide

### Doughnut Economics as a strategic compass

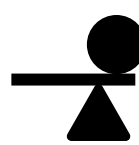
A high-level and high-ambition commitment, at a council or mayoral level, to a mindset and culture shift, bringing Doughnut Economics as a unifying framework for policy, strategy, management, and planning.



#8 Page 26 | inform

### Decision-making and project assessment

Using the Doughnut as a basis for designing outcome-led decision-making and assessment processes so that projects, policies, and investments are steered by their potential impact on social and ecological outcomes.



#9 Page 28 | transform

### Identifying levers of transformative change

Using the tools of Doughnut Economics to identify levers of transformative change, helping to address the systemic and structural barriers embedded in inherited institutions, policies and ways of working.



#1 | engage

## Starting conversations and internal learning

Local and regional governments can learn and hold discussions about the concepts, tools, practical applications and possibilities of Doughnut Economics internally across leadership and departments. Learning could be done at the beginning of a local government's journey, exploring how it relates to different areas of work and possibilities to move forward. Equally, it's crucial to keep the learning going throughout and simultaneously with deeper work - as part of a continuous organisational change process.

### Why local governments are doing this

- Learning about and exploring new models and frameworks enables them to make informed decisions on whether these could be brought in in a deeper way.
- Responding to internal and external interest, as awareness of Doughnut Economics grows.
- Following the adoption of Doughnut Economics as a strategic compass, as part of a process of building understanding, capacities and buy-in across leadership and departments, so that the concepts are meaningfully put into practice across all streams of work.
- There is interest and a need to explore tools that will help open new holistic conversations across different departments and siloed sectors.

### What actions could look like

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#### Organise learning and discussion

**opportunities** - presentations from other cities, practitioners, communities, and researchers that have worked with Doughnut Economics, watching online talks, and sharing between in-house departments that have knowledge or experience.

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Explore how different silos, sectors and strategies relate to the Doughnut and to one another through **cross-departmental learning and exchange workshops**.

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Attend events, create peer exchanges, participate in networks, join forces with others and visit cities enabling you to **learn directly from the practice and experience of peers around the world**.

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Explore and learn from the many **stories of action on DEAL's platform**.

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Explore **how Doughnut Economics relates to other frameworks** you may have been using (such as the SDGs, or wellbeing economy).

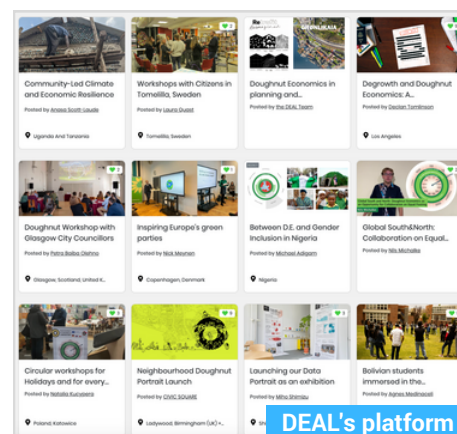
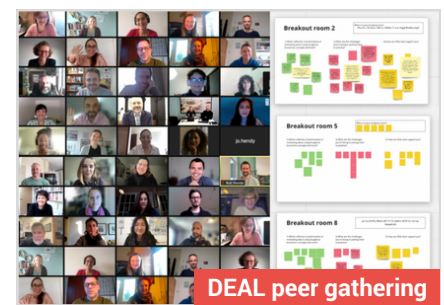
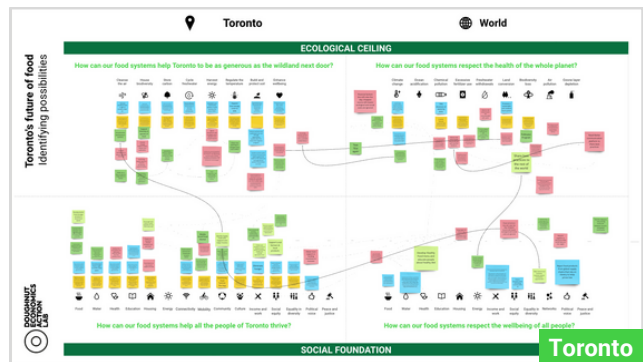
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### Useful tools and resources

- [Doughnut Unrolled set of tools](#).
- [Powers to Act: Deep Design of Cities and Places workshop tool](#).
- [Quick Start Tools, Workshops & activities](#) on DEAL's Communities & Art page.
- [The latest on Cities&Regions](#) on DEAL's thematic page.
- [Shared Ingredients for a Wellbeing Economy](#) - discussion paper outlining similarities and differences between several 'wellbeing economy' models, including Doughnut Economics.

## Examples in action

- Many places have organised online events open to all staff, senior leadership or targeted departments as a way to begin a learning journey.
- In some places, change-makers from departments that lead the work with Doughnut Economics have been the ones to hold presentations, workshops and discussions for other departments - e.g. the Innovation, Sustainability & Climate team in **Bad Nauheim (Germany)** the Climate & Environmental Sustainability team in **Bath & North East Somerset (England)**.
- In **Toronto (Canada)** a series of online workshops (using Doughnut Unrolled and Powers to Act tools) were held with elected officials and city staff from different departments, to explore how a Doughnut Economics approach could help them reimagine how city government functions.
- In **Ipoh (Malaysia)** and **Amsterdam (Netherlands)**, the process of working with Doughnut Economics started with cross-departmental workshops.
- Many cities embarking on their journey with Doughnut Economics have reached out for conversations or gone for study visits to other places as part of their learning, e.g. officials from **Grenoble (France)** visited **Amsterdam** to learn about their approaches to circularity and Donut Deals; **Tomelilla (Sweden)** reached out to **Bad Nauheim** since they shared small-city challenges; the **Ipoh (Malaysia)** team visited **Brussels (Belgium)** and community-led work in **Birmingham (England)**.
- Many officials and leaders have attended and learned at various events and lectures held by the DEAL team, DEAL community and other cities.
- Many officials have participated in DEAL-led peer-to-peer online gatherings, open to all cities and regions actively working with Doughnut Economics
- Cities have joined forces to apply for funding, like in **Sweden**, where the Research Institute of Sweden (RISE) will work with three towns (**Tomelilla, Vadstena and Kalix**) to test different uses of Doughnut Economics in municipal planning processes.
- Amsterdam included the Doughnut as a 'compass for localising the SDGs' in its Voluntary Local Review 2022





#2 | experiment

## Testing the Doughnut on ongoing projects

Local and regional governments can look for strategic opportunities amongst already approved initiatives and resourced projects, to experiment and play with the worldview and tools of Doughnut Economics. This could entail anything from bringing in some tools into workshops, discussions and participatory processes, to trying out Doughnut Economics as a lens through which an ongoing project can be reviewed.

### Why local governments are doing this

- Exploring the potential value of Doughnut Economics tools and concepts, without long processes of decision-making, or the need for additional resources, before making any longer-term investments or commitments.
- Learning-by-doing types of experiments help establish a more practical understanding of how the tools could be used.
- Practical demonstration helps spread awareness, shift mindsets, and build interest internally.

### What actions could look like

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Hold workshops to review, discuss and potentially enrich **draft policies, strategies and processes**.

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Hold workshops to review, discuss and potentially enrich **ongoing built environment projects**.

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Use Doughnut Economics tools to gather ideas and trigger holistic discussion, as part of **visioning exercises or community engagement**.

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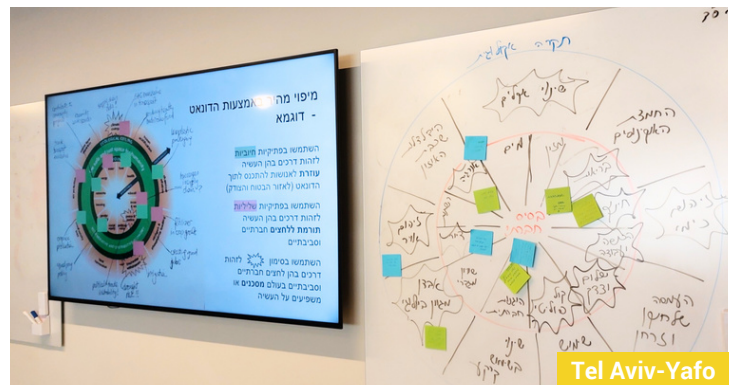
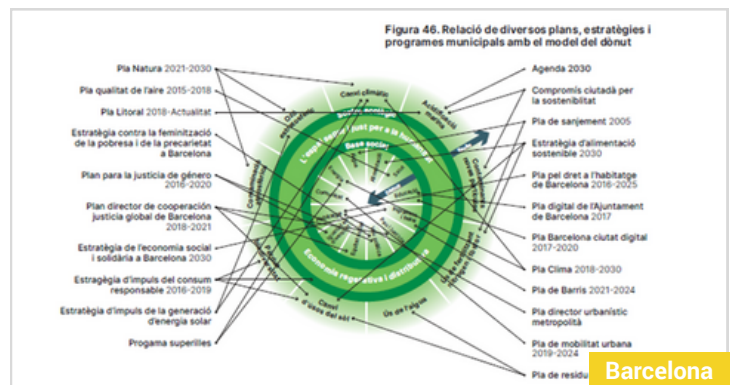
### Useful tools and resources

- [Doughnut Unrolled: Exploring a Topic](#) tool.



## Examples in action

- **Barcelona (Spain) and Glasgow (Scotland)** did exercises mapping the plans and strategies already in place against the social and ecological dimensions of the Doughnut, helping to identify interconnections and gaps in existing strategies.
- In **Tel Aviv-Yafo (Israel)**, the Israel Doughnut Coalition facilitated a workshop for the Environment and Sustainability Authority of the Tel-Aviv-Yafo municipality, where they explored and assessed different ongoing projects through Rapid Doughnut mapping, and also used the four lenses to begin brainstorming about possible gaps and connections, as part of a general training conducted within the Authority on climate change preparation and adaptation.
- The **Brussels Donut team (Belgium)** will run a workshop for the Administration for Territorial Development to help them delve into the question of giving space to nature in an urban context with an increasing demand for housing.
- The Brussels Donut team has been leading co-enquiries on a series of ongoing architectural and urban projects in the city, entering a dialogue with the key stakeholders over a series of workshops to understand how they are already contributing to a Doughnut economy, how they can be even more ambitious, and what obstacles they may be facing.
- In **Tomelilla**, using Doughnut Economics as a workshop tool and as a decision support in the early planning stages for building a sustainable new school has been included as part of the leadership's 2023-26 political programme.





#3 | empower

## Empowering local change-makers

Local and regional governments can use the concepts and tools of Doughnut Economics to empower diverse actors in a city in many ways - from working with and supporting existing networks to connect and convene people around the ideas of Doughnut Economics, to amplifying existing activities that are already demonstrating an ambitious and Doughnut-aligned vision, to supporting the transformation and transition of economic activities that need to change. It could also entail a local government strongly sharing the scale of ambition and the level of commitment the city is giving this work, thereby giving actors in the city permission, space and opportunity to be bold in their own ambition.

### Why local governments are doing this

- Local governments alone cannot 'solve' complex 21st century challenges, as these require a collective effort involving many economic actors in a place.
- The idea of the Doughnut - and the inviting language of Doughnut Economics - has shown to resonate with people across different cultures and sectors, whether as residents, community members, businesses, industries, schools, academia, civil society organisations and civic institutions.
- The holistic nature of the Doughnut has shown the potential of connecting actors who are focused on different parts of the Doughnut (local or global, social or ecological) around shared challenges and opportunities, catalysing collective action.

### What actions could look like

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**Support the networks convening people around the ideas of Doughnut Economics** by: funding the time of organisers, providing access to spaces for gatherings, participating in events, being an active contributor to the collective conversation and acting on emerging ideas. See if there's a network in your place [here](#).

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**Form, support or fund non-hierarchical collaborative partnerships** for collective action with multiple actors anchored in the ideas and tools of Doughnut Economics.

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**Support and amplify existing activities** that are already demonstrating a shared vision for your city or region.

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**Support with funding or resourcing of initiatives that are attempting to transform businesses** so they can most ambitiously serve to bring humanity into the Doughnut.

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If the city has committed to a high ambition of working with Doughnut Economics, **give a loud message of the scale and boldness of the ambition, and invite and enable other actors to join in that ambition** - by sharing knowledge and capacity, organising events, raising resources, bringing the tools and concepts of Doughnut Economics into existing forums, partnerships, and participatory processes, and socialise the concepts by bringing them to partnership organisations and different conversations.

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### Useful tools and resources

- [Communities & Arts thematic page on DEAL's platform](#) - an introductory page for all community-led work, including a selection of tools and resources.
- [DEAL's Doughnut Design for Business tool](#) and shorter [taster tool](#).
- [DEAL's Public Policies to foster regenerative businesses tool](#).



## Examples in action

- The City of **Amsterdam (Netherlands)** has co-funded the Amsterdam Donut Coalition's annual festival in 2021 and 2022. Officials and administrators participate in these festivals, as well as in regular meetups and special events. The City is also funding a project to design the Amsterdam Donut Coalition 2.0 (phase 2023 - 2025).
- The municipality of **Tomelilla (Sweden)** shared insights from their work at the [Doughnut Economics festival](#) in **Norway** organised by the **Tønsberg** Doughnut Economics group, [Smultring Tønsberg](#).
- A [community hub in Amsterdam](#) started facilitating 'Donut Deals' - agreements made between two or more partners to jointly work on issues from both the inside and the outside of the Doughnut. The City of Amsterdam has now partnered in some of these Donut Deals, and **Grenoble Metropole (France)** is looking into developing its own.
- The Future Workshop in **Bad Nauheim (Germany)** invited 100 randomly selected local residents to propose, select and develop priority measures for the city council to deliver, in order to help Bad Nauheim move inside the Doughnut.
- [Impact Hub Basel \(Switzerland\)](#) will be running [workshops for businesses](#), using DEAL's Design for Business tool that supports businesses to start their own journey to help humanity into the Doughnut.
- [Brussels Donut project, based in the Brussels Region \(Belgium\)](#), [offers support to both municipalities and public operators](#), as well as private companies to learn about and implement the principles and tools of Doughnut Economics - providing brief information sessions, full-day workshops, and training and piloting programmes.
- Since committing to work with Doughnut Economics and starting to develop their City Portrait, **Barcelona (Spain)** has been bringing the debate on [eco-social transition and growth limits to the streets of Barcelona](#) and has invited residents and stakeholders to join the process, by organising [public conferences, discussions and workshops](#), and by bringing the Donut into the work of the Barcelona+Sustainable network of 1,900 organisations and their process of developing [their priorities and commitments for the next decade](#).





#4 | quantify

## Data, measuring and monitoring

The starting point for downscaling the Doughnut data approach to a city or regional scale is using DEAL's Data Portrait of Place tool. This is a handbook for creating a holistic data snapshot of how well a place is currently doing, measured against its own targets, across both social and ecological dimensions. It provides approaches for gathering targets and indicators in a place, across each of the four lenses (local-social, global-social, local-ecological and global-ecological), to create a 'portrait' of the place's current performance. The Data Portrait can be used as a starting point for a range of different activities - from identifying data gaps, to setting new policy targets, to identifying priority areas for action or collaboration between sectors. It could also become the basis of a city-wide tool for monitoring and reporting on progress, or a common reference point for different policies and strategies.

### Why local governments are doing this

- There is a need for a holistic approach to measure and monitor the current state, progress, and trajectory of their place.
- Many places have a lot of disjointed data and/or monitors, and are lacking an accessible, comprehensive overview.
- City visions and strategies have set goals but no indicators to measure whether or not they are achieving them.
- There is interest to move towards impact-oriented policy-making.

### What actions could look like

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Produce a **Data Portrait of Place**, either through desktop research and internal cross-departmental workshops or in combination with participatory processes involving local residents and external stakeholders.

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Develop a **monitoring and reporting process on the state and progress** of places based on the Portrait.

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Use the Data Portrait as a **basis for new strategies, policies and decision-making processes** - as seen in other pathways in this guide.

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### Useful tools and resources

- [Doughnut Unrolled: Data Portrait of Place - a methodological guide.](#)
- [Downscaling the Doughnut - Data Portraits in action - a collection of examples and stories from different places.](#)



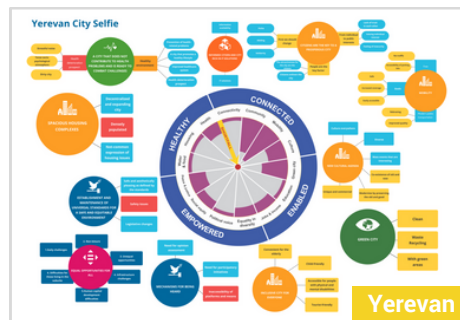
## Examples in action

- The first City Portrait was done in **Amsterdam (Netherlands)** in 2020, as part of the Thriving Cities Initiative, a collaboration between Biomimicry 3.8, C40 Cities, Circle Economy and DEAL.
- **Glasgow (Scotland)** partnered with a university research team to develop a first Data Portrait, which was then evolved through workshops with councillors, city officials, and stakeholder and local resident engagement.
- **Barcelona (Spain)** has been working with Barcelona Regional (the city's urban development public agency) to develop its Data Portrait, which has been validated by academic and technical city experts, and in parallel has been developing a Community Portrait informed by participatory workshops with organisations, companies and local residents.
- In **Yerevan (Armenia)**, they complemented the City Portrait with a City Selfie, based on a city-wide representative sample survey of people's opinions about the future of Yerevan.
- In **El Monte (Chile)**, a Data Portrait was developed informed by a series of three participatory workshops with community leaders.
- **Bad Nauheim (Germany)** selected the domains and indicators relevant to the local context that the municipality has influence over through a series of workshops with department representatives, that also linked the themes with existing policies, goals and objectives across departments.
- In **Leeds and London (England)**, community-led initiatives developed Data Portraits as a starting point for action and discussion between different stakeholders.
- In **Birmingham (England)**, CIVIC SQUARE led the development of a Neighbourhood Doughnut, including a Data Portrait, Community Portrait, and explorations in Re-rolling the Doughnut.
- A few cities, including **Brussels (Belgium)** and **Glasgow (Scotland)**, have started exploring how to develop a live digital dashboard version of their Data Portrait, meant to be an accessible source of data for local residents and policymakers alike.

- **Copenhagen City Council** voted to produce an annual status report on Copenhagen with the Donut model, to give politicians an overview of how the city performs on selected indicators. The status report is to be presented to all subject committees to inform their work each year, helping to identify areas in which action is needed, based on the indicators, and to help politicians prioritise projects.



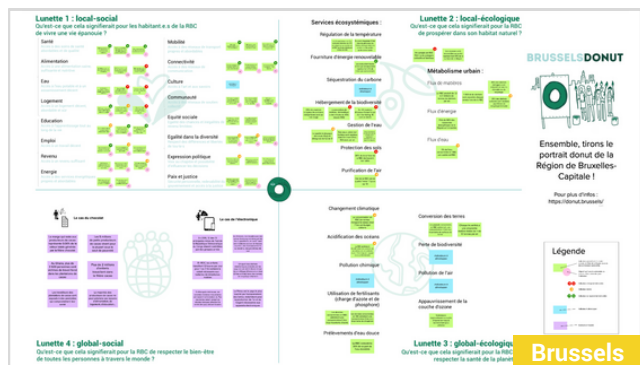
Glasgow



Yerevan



Birmingham



Brussels



#5 | strategise

## Plans and strategies

Local and regional governments can bring the ambitions and metrics of Doughnut Economics into the design, review, monitoring and evaluation of plans or thematic strategies. This could range from shaping a 20-year city vision to a transport strategy, from a net-zero policy to a public health agenda. There are many ways to bring Doughnut Economics into plans and strategies: as a guide for setting an ambitious vision, as a tool for collaborative processes, as a tool to identify key themes, objectives and priorities, or as a tool for designing a monitoring framework with social and ecological indicators based on the Doughnut.

### Why local governments are doing this

- The holistic nature of the Doughnut lends itself as an effective framework for setting guiding principles and steering visions.
- There is interest to add measurement and monitoring to strategic goals, addressing both ecological and social objectives.
- There is a need for new approaches that widen civic conversations and stakeholder engagement that help bridge the citizen/government gap, and get people excited about shaping their place's future.
- To bring stakeholders from different areas to work and collaborate together.
- To explore and help identify new types of implementation partnerships.

### What actions could look like

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**A new plan or thematic strategy** using Doughnut Economics as a guide for setting regenerative and distributive ambitions and priorities.

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**A measuring and monitoring system** as part of a strategy - linking it, where possible, to the social and ecological indicators from an existing Data Portrait of Place.

---

**A participatory process** informing a city-wide vision, using the Doughnut Unrolled and its four lenses as a tool for conversations, identifying challenges, opportunities, and priority areas - internally between various departments, or externally, with stakeholders and communities.

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Using the Doughnut and its four lenses as **a framework for reviewing and revising existing plans and strategies**.

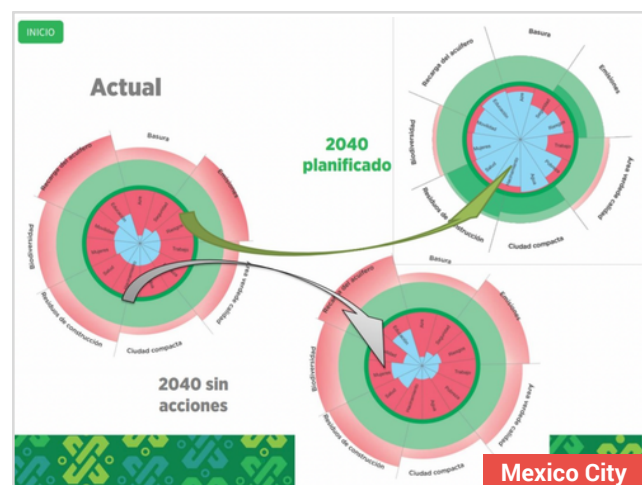
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### Useful tools and resources

- [Doughnut Unrolled: Exploring a Topic](#) tool.
- [Doughnut Unrolled: Community Portrait of Place](#) tool.

## Examples in action

- **Amsterdam (Netherlands)** used Doughnut Economics to shape their Circular Strategy, bringing in a holistic view and a stronger focus on social outcomes.
- **Curaçao's Economic development strategy** uses the Doughnut as a compass for 'economic prosperity', and was informed by a series of neighbourhood workshops identifying existing initiatives through the lens of Doughnut Economics.
- **Thimphu (Bhutan)** is developing a Regional Strategy and Spatial Plan with Doughnut Economics driving the vision, alongside Gross National Happiness.
- **Portland's (Oregon, USA) Sustainable Consumption and Production Workplan** is underpinned by Doughnut Economics.
- Circle Economy supported the British Fashion Institute to develop a strategy for city-wide circular fashion ecosystems in **London** and **Leeds (England)**, using Doughnut Economics as one of the guiding principles.
- In **Santiago de Cali (Colombia)**, city staff used the Doughnut's social and ecological indicators as a monitoring tool in their Municipal Development Plan 2020-2023.
- The **Cornwall Plan 2020-2050** (England) includes an outcomes framework to measure progress towards social and ecological outcomes, based on the Doughnut.
- **Perak (Malaysia)** has adopted the Doughnut Economics model as the monitoring framework for the state blueprint, informing the direction and impact measurement of all of the state's projects for the next 10 years. This begins with creating a City Portrait in Ipoh, Perak.
- **Mexico City (Mexico)** used a contextualised Doughnut as a tool for discussion and resident engagement in their 20-year Development Plan, visualising where the city currently is and where they want to move towards in the long term.
- **Bad Nauheim (Germany)** is developing its Sustainability Strategy based on Doughnut Economics, its adapted City Doughnut, and on a wide-scale civic-participation process.
- In **Pontypridd (Wales)**, Friends of the Earth used the Doughnut's four lenses to frame a community response to the draft Pontypridd Place Plan.





#6 | demonstrate

## Demonstrator projects

Local and regional governments can support or fund the design and development of projects aiming to be distributive and regenerative by design, using the tools of Doughnut Economics to achieve this. These demonstrator projects might be designed to have a positive impact across all four lenses of the Doughnut, set best-practice precedents, demonstrate potential co-benefits, test what is achievable, viable, and scalable, or start conversations and debates. Equally, Doughnut-related criteria could be developed to select and prioritise projects or investments.

### Why local governments are doing this

- Projects are seen as opportunities to demonstrate proof of concept.
- Local government processes can be slow, and small-scale projects are more likely to get things moving faster.
- Projects are opportunities to trial and test, learn by doing, demonstrate which types of processes, outcomes, and partnerships new ways of thinking can bring about, and trigger wider debates.

### What actions could look like

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**Develop new projects - or transform already approved projects while in inception** - that would demonstrate holistic thinking and positive impact across multiple social and ecological indicators in order to test possibilities and outcomes, set precedents, or pilot projects that could be scaled up.

Use a Data Portrait of Place, a pre-determined set of Doughnut-based criteria, or other aligned participatory processes as **a basis for choosing priority projects to pursue or invest in.**

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**Develop criteria for new transformative projects** underpinned by the principles and ambitions of Doughnut Economics - designing projects that are regenerative and distributive by design.

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Use Doughnut-led participatory processes to identify and **develop new Public-Commons or Public-Private partnerships** needed to enable transformative projects.

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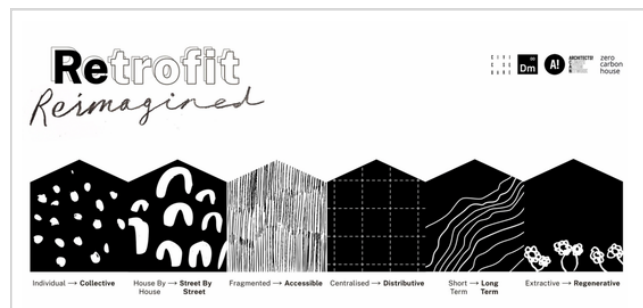
### Useful tools and resources

- [Doughnut Unrolled: Exploring a Topic](#) tool.

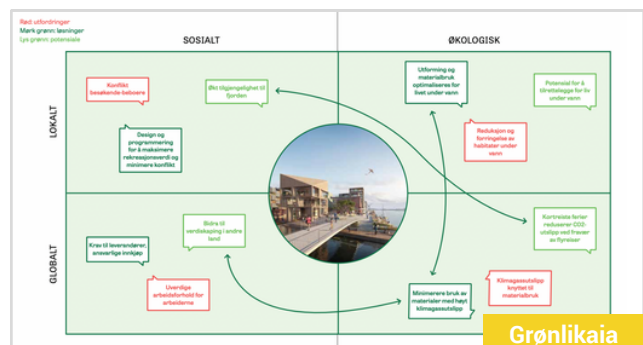
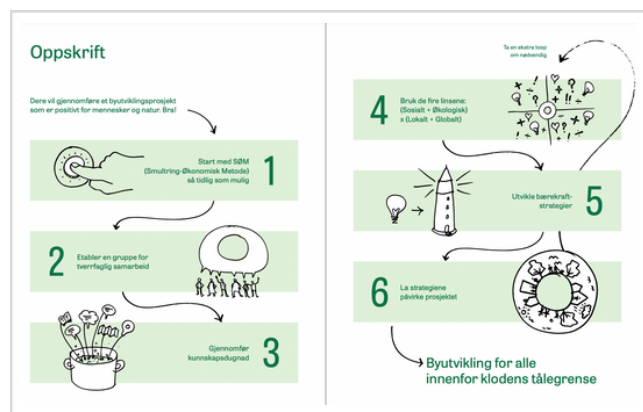


## Examples in action

- In **Amsterdam**, as part of their Circular Economy Programme, a range of circular projects embedding Doughnut Economics principles are being delivered, from food to construction to housing ([Circular Economy Lessons & Recommendations](#)).
- Neighbourhood lab CIVIC SQUARE anchors their 'Street demonstrator' in the core principles of Doughnut Economics, as they attempt to develop a street-scale deep retrofit approach on one street in Birmingham (England).
- In **Grønlikaia**, a new fjord district in **Oslo (Norway)**, Oslo Port's development company has been using the four lenses of a Doughnut to bring diverse experts together, identify opportunities, gaps and solutions for the future neighbourhood, and they have developed a 'Recipe' for using the Doughnut in urban development (in Norwegian).
- In **Santiago de Cali**, Doughnut Economics was used as an inspiration, helping the city set aims to improve both ecological and social outcomes through their public space interventions policy Cali EcoCrea.
- In **Barcelona**, city staff held two participatory workshops with members of the Barcelona+Sustainable network to help them define the projects to be included in the next 10-year commitment of the network, based on the findings from the Barcelona City Portrait, especially the areas in which the city was performing poorly.
- In **Bad Nauheim**, they used a Donut assessment tool which cross-links holistic impact assessment with financial feasibility and a level of influence assessment to rate and prioritise project ideas crowdsourced through a citizens' assembly and public participation process.
- Led and facilitated by the Green Hub in **Amsterdam**, the first International Donut Deal was signed between a range of partners, including the Municipality of Amsterdam, **Grenoble Alpes Metropole**, universities, recycling and waste organisations and others, focusing on jointly developing and trialling, in both places, different types of biogas digesters and/or composters.



Birmingham



Grønlikaia



Amsterdam and Grenoble



#7 | guide

## Doughnut Economics as a strategic compass

Local and regional governments can adopt Doughnut Economics as a strategic compass or a guiding framework in their transformative journey. This high-level and high-ambition political commitment could take the shape of a council or mayoral decision setting a commitment to a process or a vision. There is no single approach to using the Doughnut as a compass, but generally, it requires embracing a mindset and culture shift (or aligning to an already ongoing ambitious shift) and making Doughnut Economics a common guide and reference for many streams of work and action, like planning, strategy, decision making, engagement or budgeting.

### Why local governments are doing this

- There is an ambition to transform the future of places with new economic thinking.
- There is the political will to shift towards outcomes-based policymaking, focused on social and ecological outcomes.
- Much work is siloed, and a common framework is needed with the capacity to bring different sectors from both social and ecological domains together.
- The Doughnut has resonated with communities locally and more widely, presenting an opportunity to galvanise engagement and new partnerships, and bring different actors together.

### What actions could look like

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#### Form a task force or working group

identifying potential pathways for action across all streams of work, and what deep commitment could look like in your place.

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**Adopt an official commitment** and approach, and a matching budget for the work.

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#### Develop a vision and action plan

to use Doughnut Economics as a strategic compass, through collaborative, cross-departmental processes, linking the Doughnut to different sectors in a way that works for everyone.

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**Bring the Doughnut as a strategic compass into different areas of work**, at many levels and through many pathways - while diving into many other pathways in this guide.

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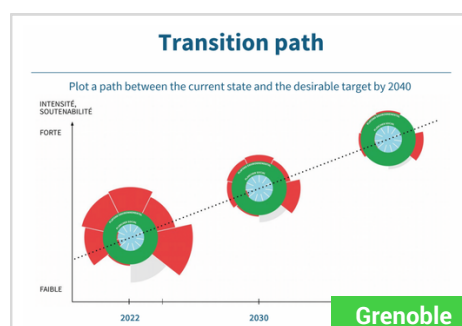
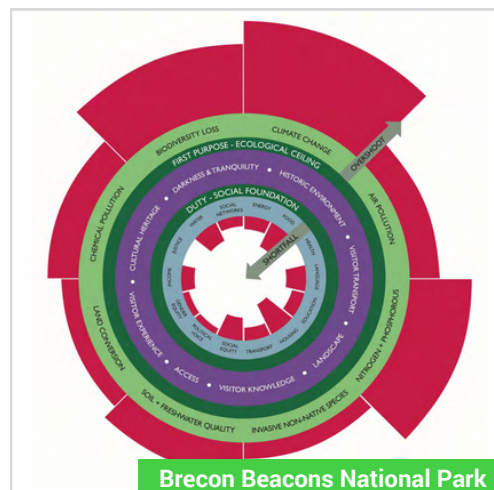
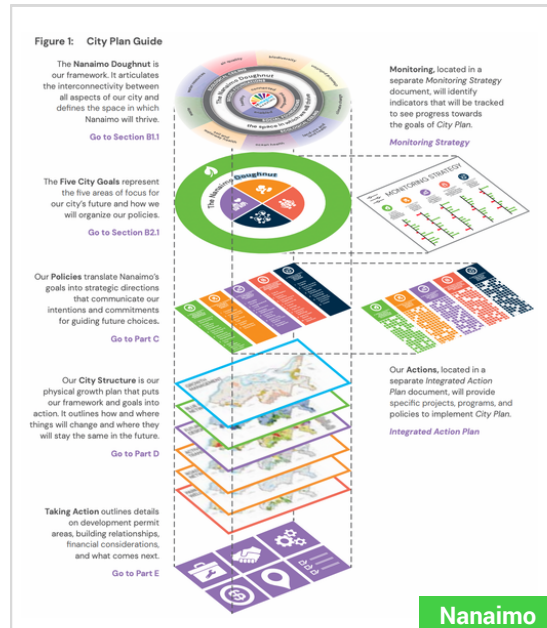
### Useful tools and resources

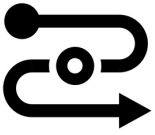
- [Doughnut Economics as a Strategic Compass: How municipal strategists can use Doughnut Economics for impact-oriented transformation](#) - a publication including detailed case studies and insights from Nanaimo, Copenhagen, Cornwall, Amsterdam and Portland (in English and German).
- [Finnish Doughnut Economics Toolbox](#) (in Finnish)
- [Donut Toolbox](#) (in German)

## Examples in action

- **Tomelilla (Sweden)** partnered with a research institute to produce a [study exploring the potential to use Doughnut Economics in their planning](#), and this included a review of other cities' experiences and an analysis of the municipality's own financial and organisational conditions.
- In **Cornwall (England)**, a staff member was given two months to study and propose how best to adapt the model to their county.
- [Following a Council vote](#), in **Copenhagen (Denmark)** a task force consisting of the 7 administrative branches of the municipality was tasked with developing a proposal, identifying the various ways in which Doughnut parameters relate to their work and performance management system.
- **Nanaimo (Canada)** [voted through a council motion](#) to 'adopt the Doughnut Economic Model as a cohesive vision for all City initiatives and planning processes', blended with the [Reimagine Nanaimo process](#) and committing to develop a Data Portrait with measurable targets and indicators.
- **Copenhagen** voted through a council motion to "use the Doughnut as an overall management tool for the municipality's finances and development", and in the [2023 bi-annual budget](#) allocated dedicated funding, including for new employees.
- **Brecon Beacons National Park (Wales)** has put the [Doughnut at the core of their Management Plan](#), as a framework defining future action, with the targets/indicators set in the '[Park Doughnut](#)' helping monitor change and progress.
- **Grenoble (France)** adopted the "[Grenoble 2040](#)" approach, which is underpinned by Doughnut Economics and includes developing a Data Portrait of Place.
- In **Bad Nauheim (Germany)**, work was led by the Innovation, Sustainability and Climate Department, which held three strategy workshops - with relevant actors from all city departments and the city's affiliated organisations - to set the key conceptual foundations for the approach.

- In **Bath & North East Somerset (England)**, in a workshop with senior representatives from all departments to discuss using Doughnut Economics as a strategic framework for the council's next corporate strategy, potential pathways for action and priorities were explored through the guiding question "Imagine we won a £100 million grant to address shortfalls in the social foundation and overshoots in the ecological ceiling in B&NES by working with Doughnut Economics - what would we do with it?"





#8 | guide

## Decision-making and project assessment

Local and regional governments can develop tools and criteria through which potential projects, policies or investments can be assessed and decisions informed and steered based on their social and ecological impacts across the dimensions of the Doughnut, as well as management processes and practices to put these into practice. These decision-making tools and processes could be implemented at different levels and be made either obligatory or advisory.

### Why local governments are doing this

- To bring visions created with Doughnut Economics-led ambition into to the day-to-day decision-making that shapes long-term outcomes
- Decision-making processes are outdated, disconnected from longer-term goals and visions, or too heavily led by financial viability or a limited set of evaluation criteria.
- Budgets are not informed by evidence, and there is no clear link between projects and outcomes.

### What actions could look like

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**Design impact-assessment tools** that support decision-making processes using the concepts and tools of Doughnut Economics, focusing on the social and ecological outcome.

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Use the four lenses of Doughnut Unrolled as **a project assessment tool**, informing decision-making discussions.

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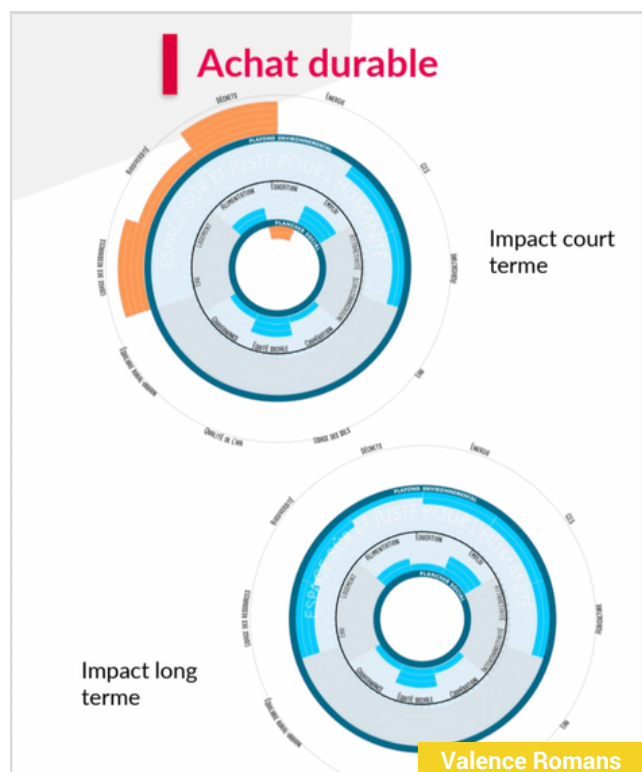
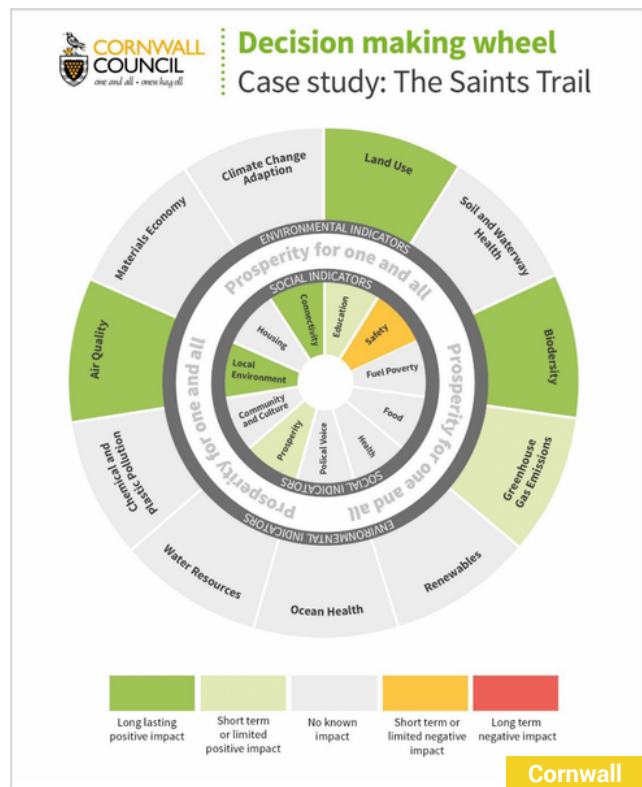
### Useful tools and resources

- [Doughnut Unrolled: Exploring a Topic](#) tool.



## Examples in action

- In **Cornwall (England)**, the council has introduced the Cornwall Development and Decision Wheel (CDDW) for cabinet-level decisions, illustrating the positive and negative impacts of proposed decisions in a visualisation that focuses decision-makers on issues that may require further debate, mitigation or cancellation. CDDW is an accessible-to-all-staff, interactive, digital platform, where users can fill in a questionnaire on any project or initiative across social and ecological themes and, based on the quantitative answers, scores are assigned to each 'wedge' and a Doughnut-shaped visual is produced demonstrating the potential impact of the project (long-term negative, short-term negative, neutral, short-term positive, long-term positive). They also created a training programme and guidance for key decision-makers, including workshops for the new administration.
- In **Valence Romans (France)**, they have developed a Doughnut project-assessment tool specifically for measuring and tracking the impact of 20 projects that are part of the 5-year municipal programme; improvements are identified, adjustments and changes are made, based on the assessment.
- In **Cornwall**, they used the Doughnut Economics framework to assess applications to an internal fund (the Community Infrastructure Levy) so applicants had to indicate how their proposed project would impact each dimension of the Doughnut.
- In **Bad Nauheim (Germany)** they developed a contextualised Bad Nauheim Donut - an Excel sheet data set with social and ecological themes, targets, and indicators, aligned to different goals and strategies across the city. This was used as the basis for an experimental discussion-based 'Donut assessment tool' - 'filtering' different projects and initiatives through the data set, through discussions and workshops, in order to assess their potential impact on a scale (strong-negative, slight-negative, neutral, slight-positive, strong-positive).





#9 | transform

## Identifying levers of transformative change

**Rather than being a further set of actions, the need to 'identify key levers of transformative change' underpins all other pathways. This pathway is a call to action - inviting all cities and regions seeking to live within the Doughnut to recognise and act on the systemic barriers that may hold them back.**

Most places aiming to do transformative work hit obstacles that are deeply ingrained into local institutions' ways of working, path dependencies and other patterns inherited from the past. Often hidden beneath the apparent banality of day-to-day operations and business-as-usual planning, lie structures that can enable or block transformative change (e.g. decision-making mechanisms,

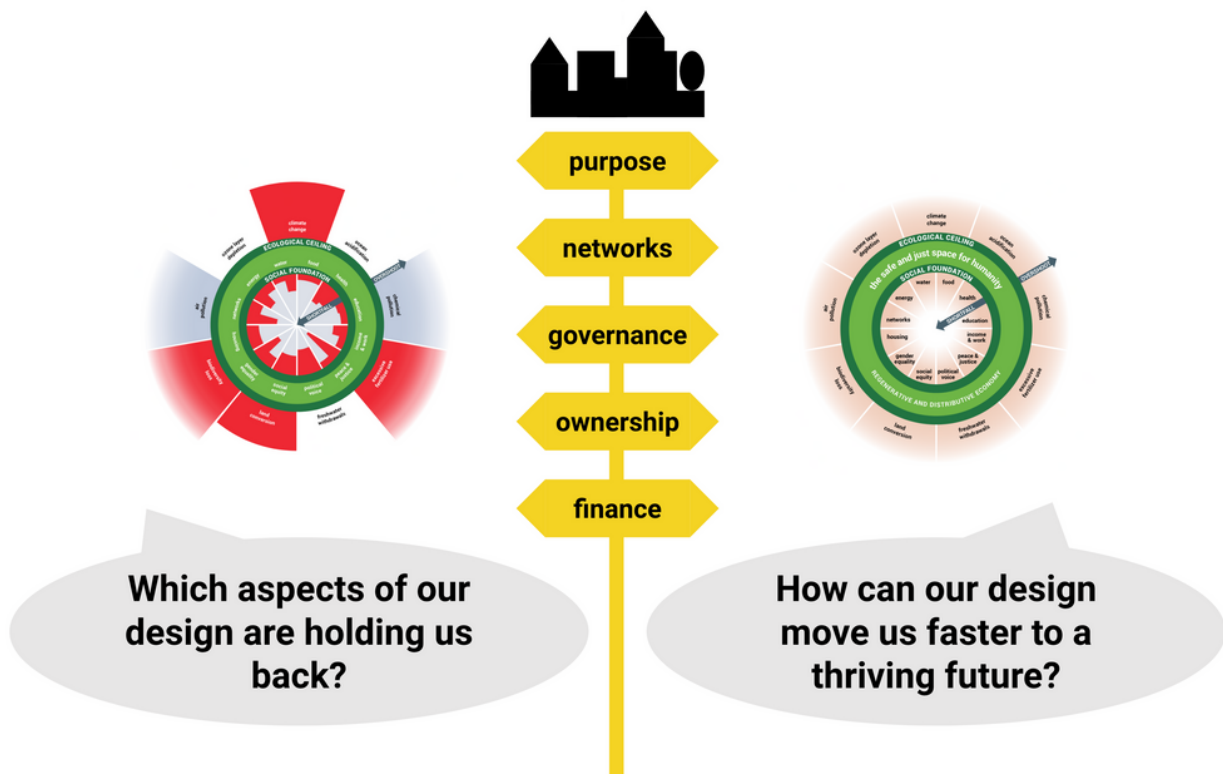
land ownership, finance). This final pathway invites places to acknowledge and confront structural barriers, and boldly identify leverage points for overcoming them.

An entry point for doing this is to start the process by asking the question: in our town, city or region, which are the most effective leverage points enabling action at the scale and speed needed to meet 21st century challenges? A key part of the long-term work towards a safe and just future inside the Doughnut lies here. We still don't have all the answers, but we know we need to act.

This pathway has no case studies to point to - for now - but we hope the next version of this guide will do, showcasing creative innovations from the DEAL community of practice, as we continue to learn from one another.

We offer our [Powers to Act: Deep Design of Cities and Places](#) framework and workshop tool, already used by some places, as an avenue to starting conversations around these issues, and we welcome other approaches, tools and frameworks that help places explore systemic barriers.

### Deep Design of Cities and Places



## Powers To Act: Deep design of cities and places

The table below offers a summary of the questions our tool asks.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>What end does this organisation serve in the world, and is its vision shared by all involved?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the local government’s vision for your city or place?</li> <li>• Do local residents, organisations and businesses know and identify with it, does it reflect diverse voices?</li> <li>• Does that vision guide senior leadership and policy-making?</li> </ul>
<b>Networks</b>	<b>What relationships does local government hold, and how does it bring its purpose and values to life through them?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does local government engage and collaborate with communities, civic networks, businesses, institutions and other public agencies?</li> <li>• How are knowledge, resources, experience, and assets shared between local government and different stakeholder groups?</li> <li>• How does local government engage in wider international networks?</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<b>What are the hard rules, and the unwritten culture, of how things get done? What are the metrics of success?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who makes tough decisions, based on what criteria?</li> <li>• What governance and decision-making powers are shared or devolved through partnerships, and participatory and deliberative mechanisms?</li> <li>• Are sectoral strategies working towards the same long-term vision?</li> <li>• How is success measured - with what metrics, informed by who?</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership</b>	<b>What are the sources of wealth creation in this place, and who benefits from how they are owned?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who owns the built and unbuilt land and what are the implications for affordability and equity?</li> <li>• Who owns the key utilities (energy, water, digital) and key services (transport, education, healthcare) and with what consequences?</li> <li>• How are distributive models of ownership encouraged?</li> </ul>
<b>Finance</b>	<b>What are the sources of finance here - and what does that finance expect and demand?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does local government raise taxes, and what does it invest in?</li> <li>• How is the budget distributed and why?</li> <li>• How are the powers of procurement and purchasing used to promote regenerative and distributive local design?</li> <li>• How ethical are local funds, investments, and pensions?</li> </ul>



Barcelona

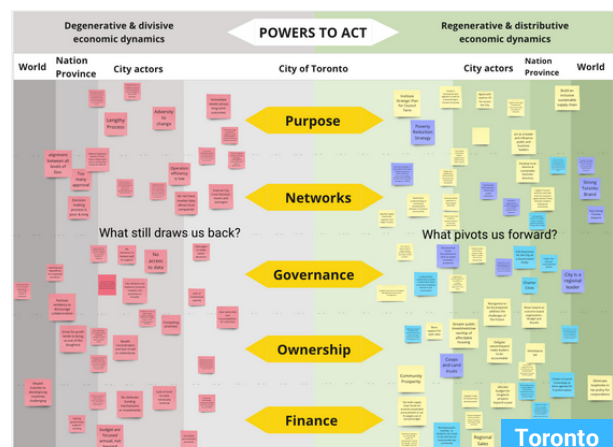


Amsterdam

Different cities and stakeholders doing the Powers to Act workshop.



Ipoh



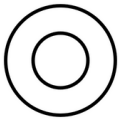
# 4

## Working with integrity

DEAL is making many concepts, tools and resources freely available for change-makers to use to put the ideas of Doughnut Economics into practice. In return, and to ensure the integrity of these concepts, tools and resources when put into practice, we ask that you follow the guidelines set out below. These include DEAL's Doughnut Principles of Practice, and DEAL's Dos and Don'ts for local and regional governments.

### Doughnut Principles of Practice

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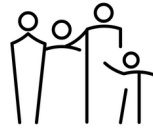
#### Embrace the 21st century goal

Aim to meet the needs of all people within the means of the planet. Seek to align your organisation's purpose, networks, ownership and finance with this goal.



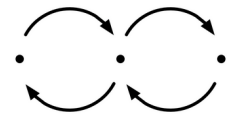
#### See the big picture

Recognise the potential roles of the household, the commons, the market and the state – and their many synergies – in transforming economies. Ensure that finance serves the work rather than drives it.



#### Nurture human nature

Promote diversity, participation, collaboration and reciprocity. Strengthen community networks and work with a spirit of high trust. Care for the wellbeing of the team.



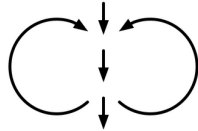
#### Think in systems

Experiment, learn, adapt, evolve and aim for continuous improvement. Be alert to dynamic effects, feedback loops and tipping points.



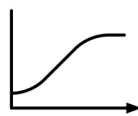
#### Be distributive

Work in the spirit of open design and share the value created with all who co-created it. Be aware of power and seek to redistribute it to improve equity amongst stakeholders.



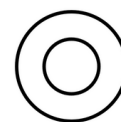
#### Be regenerative

Aim to work with and within the cycles of the living world. Be a sharer, repairer, regenerator, steward. Reduce travel, minimize flights, be climate and energy smart.



#### Aim to thrive rather than to grow

Don't let growth become a goal in itself. Know when to let the work spread out via others rather than scale up in size.



#### Be strategic in practice

Go where the energy is – but always ask whose voice is left out. Balance openness with integrity, so that the work spreads without capture. Share back learning and innovation to unleash the power of peer-to-peer inspiration.

## Dos and don'ts for local governments

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Engage with all four lenses of the Doughnut Unrolled.



Work with local residents and stakeholders to put the tools into practice in your own context.



Feel free to bring complementary tools that are conceptually aligned with Doughnut Economics.

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Share back your adaptations and learning with the DEAL community.



Follow [DEAL's Principles & Guidelines](#), including the Doughnut Principles of Practice.



Follow [DEAL's Policy for consultancies & organisations](#) if you are using these tools as a consultant.

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Don't use the Doughnut simply for branding.



Don't use the Doughnut as an add-on to traditional growth-focused strategies.



Don't refer to your city or place as a 'Doughnut City', instead communicate your ambitions and commitments (e.g. 'We aim to bring our place into the Doughnut', 'We are using the Doughnut as a guiding framework').

---

We ask that you visit our [Principles & Guidelines Page](#) for all our guidelines, including specific policies like our [Policy for consultancies and organisations](#) - which asks every organisation intending to use Doughnut Economics concepts and tools in the professional advisory services they offer to cities, regions and others to first affirm that their vision, values, and ways of working are aligned with those of Doughnut Economics, by completing and sharing a public declaration that will remain publicly accessible on the DEAL Community Platform.



# 5

## Taking the next steps

If you are an elected official or staff working in local or regional government, and you are new to the concepts of Doughnut Economics and interested to get started, or if you've already started working with the Doughnut - [do contact us](#), selecting the Cities & Regions theme and Leonora Grcheva, DEAL's Cities & Regions Lead, will be in touch.

The latest work by local governments with Doughnut Economics will be shared on the Cities & Regions thematic page on the DEAL Community Platform - do [subscribe to DEAL's newsletter](#) for any relevant updates.

As a small team, we focus on supporting places by:

- Creating open access tools and resources.
- Based on capacity, engaging one-to-one with local governments in an advisory capacity, offering strategic guidance, connections to other places and learning opportunities.
- Hosting peer-to-peer learning events.
- Amplifying shared learning through public events.

In addition, there are value-aligned consultants and organisations that can also support you in this work - you can find a list of these on our [Organisations in Action page](#) (all consultants that submit a public declaration following our Policy for Consultancies and Organisations become visible here).

### Sharing back

So much of the work and innovation happening in local governments has been motivated, inspired or guided by the precedents set by peers in other places who have shared back their learnings, insights, obstacles and innovations.

We hope that this guide will help you in your journey, and help you learn from those in action.

In the spirit of sharing and reciprocity, we ask that you share back your work with the DEAL community by [writing stories on our platform](#), and participating in peer-to-peer learning and other events, so that these can, in turn, inspire like-minded change-makers.

## **Acknowledgements**

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We are very grateful for the comprehensive review and contributions to Michele Vianello and Ellie Cosgrave.

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Finally, we would like to thank all change-makers in local and regional government innovating with Doughnut Economics and sharing their learnings, insights and challenges with others - this guide only exist because of your hard and inspiring work.

All images and photographs used are from city and regional documents and reports, shared with us with approval to use by city teams, or taken directly by the DEAL team. We thank Iconmonstr for the icons used.



**DOUGHNUT  
ECONOMICS  
ACTION  
LAB**