



Smart Cities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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What is Smart City?

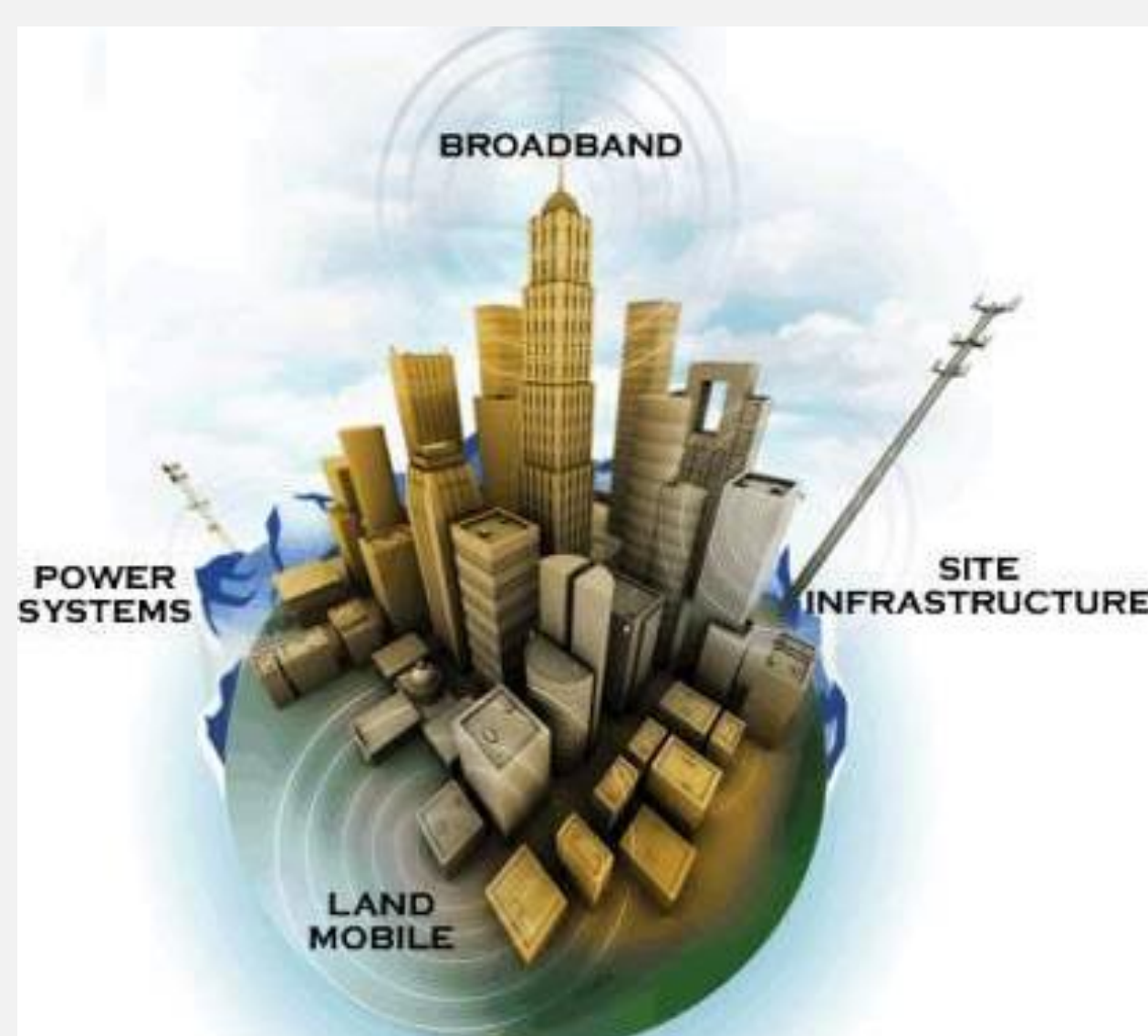
There is no universally agreed definition of what constitutes a smart city and many definitions of smart cities exist (Coletta et al., 2019).

On the one hand, the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to stimulate economic development and, on the other, the extensive embedding of software enabled technologies into the fabric of cities to augment urban management (Kitchin, 2014).

A smart city is one whose economy and governance are being driven by innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, enacted by smart people. (Coletta et al., 2019).

Smart cities can be identified along six main axes or dimensions

- Smart Economy
- Smart Mobility
- Smart Environment
- Smart People
- Smart Living
- Smart Government



Smart City in China

China has the largest number of smart cities in the world to manage its cities and public spaces. China's leadership has signaled the importance of smart-city development, elevating it to a national strategy, and has poured government resources into its growth. China reportedly has nearly 800 smart cities pilot programs underway or in planning, which would be more than half of all smart cities around the world. Since 2015, AI has seen rapid development in China, and the Chinese government has introduced a series of policies to support the development of AI, thereby pushing Chinese AI to enter a new phase. AI has been continually mentioned in government reports for three years in a row, and it has risen rapidly from a national level to a strategic height. This explains why China's AI industry has already gone past the germination stage, and it is now entering the development phase, with greater attention to bringing applications to fruition.

Smart City and SDG

Smart Cities are often promoted as green cities, facilitating the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fostering ecological mobility and using Smart Grids, Big Data, the Internet of Things (IoT), algorithms, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) embedded in a resilient infrastructure to optimize energy efficiency, water safety, and food safety, thus offering citizens a clean, safe, friendly, and pluralistic social environment. According to critics, however, Smart Cities involve the danger of a global surveillance society. Furthermore, the density of smart megacities might make city dwellers easy targets for covert cyberwar or terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The aggressive push for Smart Cities also enhances the rural exodus, adds to soil sealing, and increases the scarcity of essential resources due to an increasing demand for energy and materials to keep smart cities running, coupled with an enormous ecological backpack due to a dramatic increase of construction projects. Finally, it will depend on the actual implementation of Smart Cities, the availability of alternative lifestyles for those who prefer life in the countryside, and the responsibility of political leaders on the local, the regional, and the global level whether Smart Cities will facilitate or hamper the realization of the SDGs.

