



Spatial Planning Reimagined: Building a Secure and Resilient World

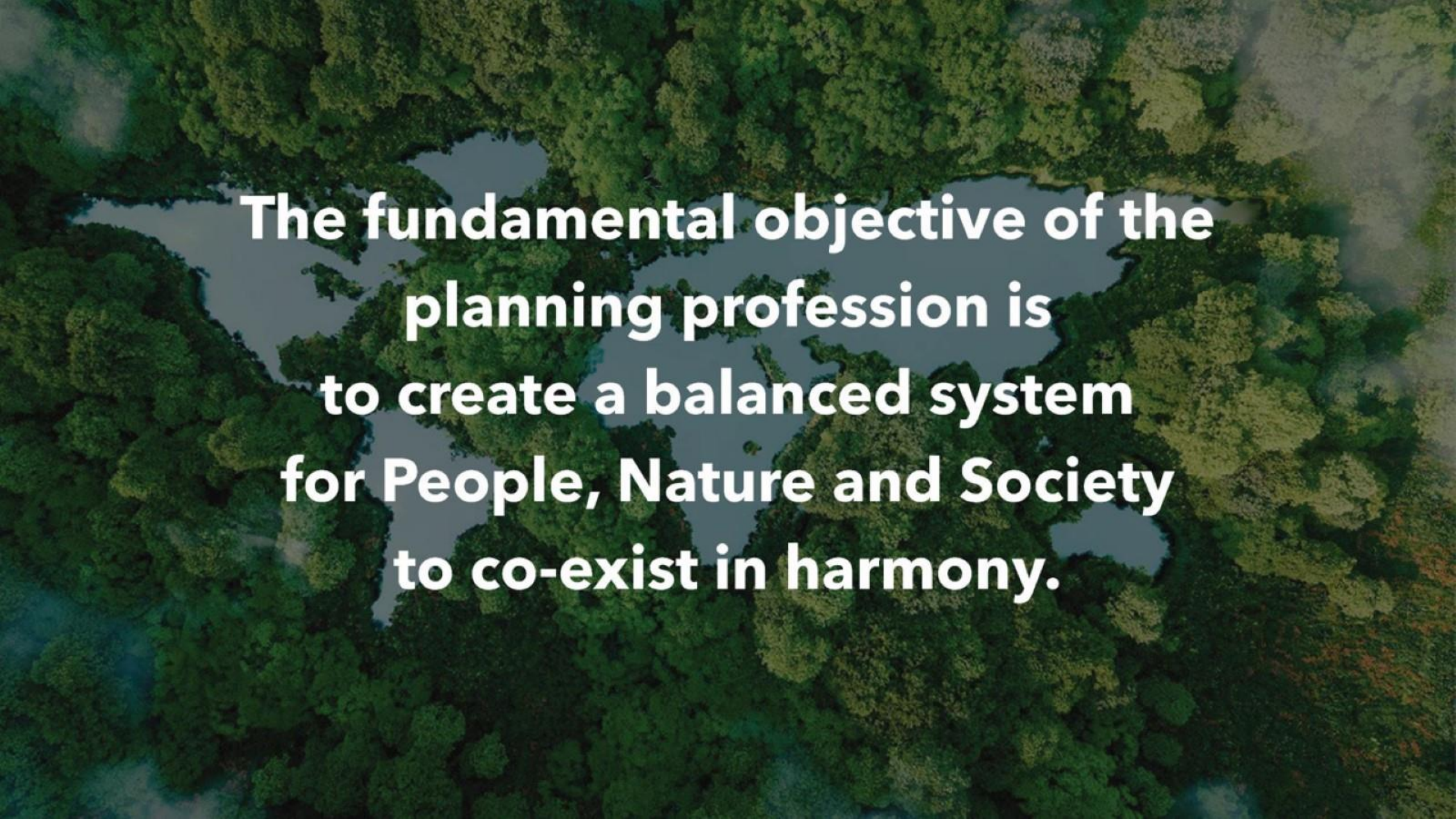
Dr Wei Yang

Co-Founder & CEO, Digital Task Force for Planning

Chairman, Wei Yang & Partners

DAFNI Conference 2023

12 Sep 2023

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest with a winding river or stream cutting through it. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**The fundamental objective of the
planning profession is
to create a balanced system
for People, Nature and Society
to co-exist in harmony.**

Our Survival - the Interaction between People and Nature

People living in land area of high conservation importance

These are a priority areas for nature conservation because they contain a high number of (endemic) species that occur nowhere else.

- Freshwater
- Terrestrial
- Both
- Other

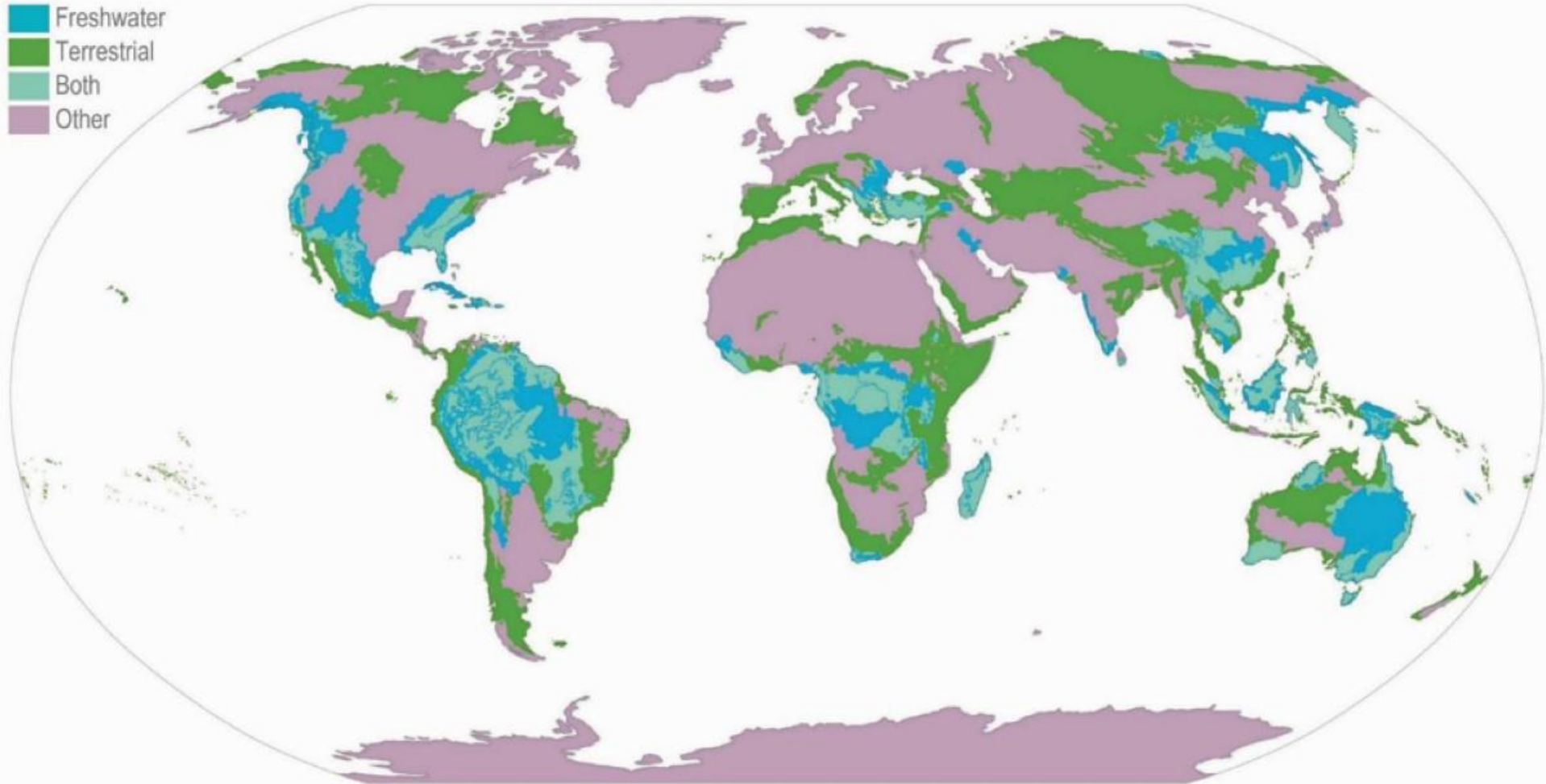
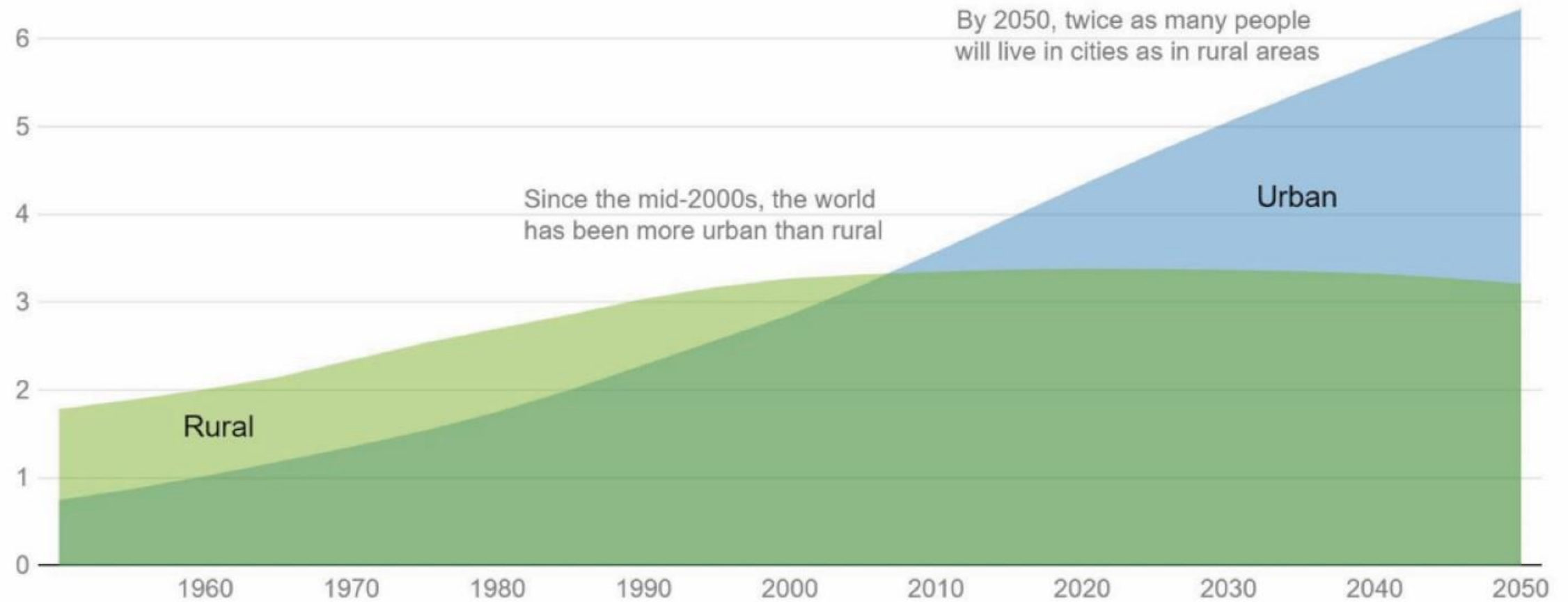


Image Source: IPCC, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. (H.-O. Pörtner, et al.)

The Unprecedented Speed of Population Growth & Global Urbanisation

Worldwide urban and rural population (billions)



Source: [UN World Urbanization Prospects](#)

Image source: www.worldbank.org

A Rapidly Closing Window of Opportunity to Secure a Liveable & Sustainable Future for All

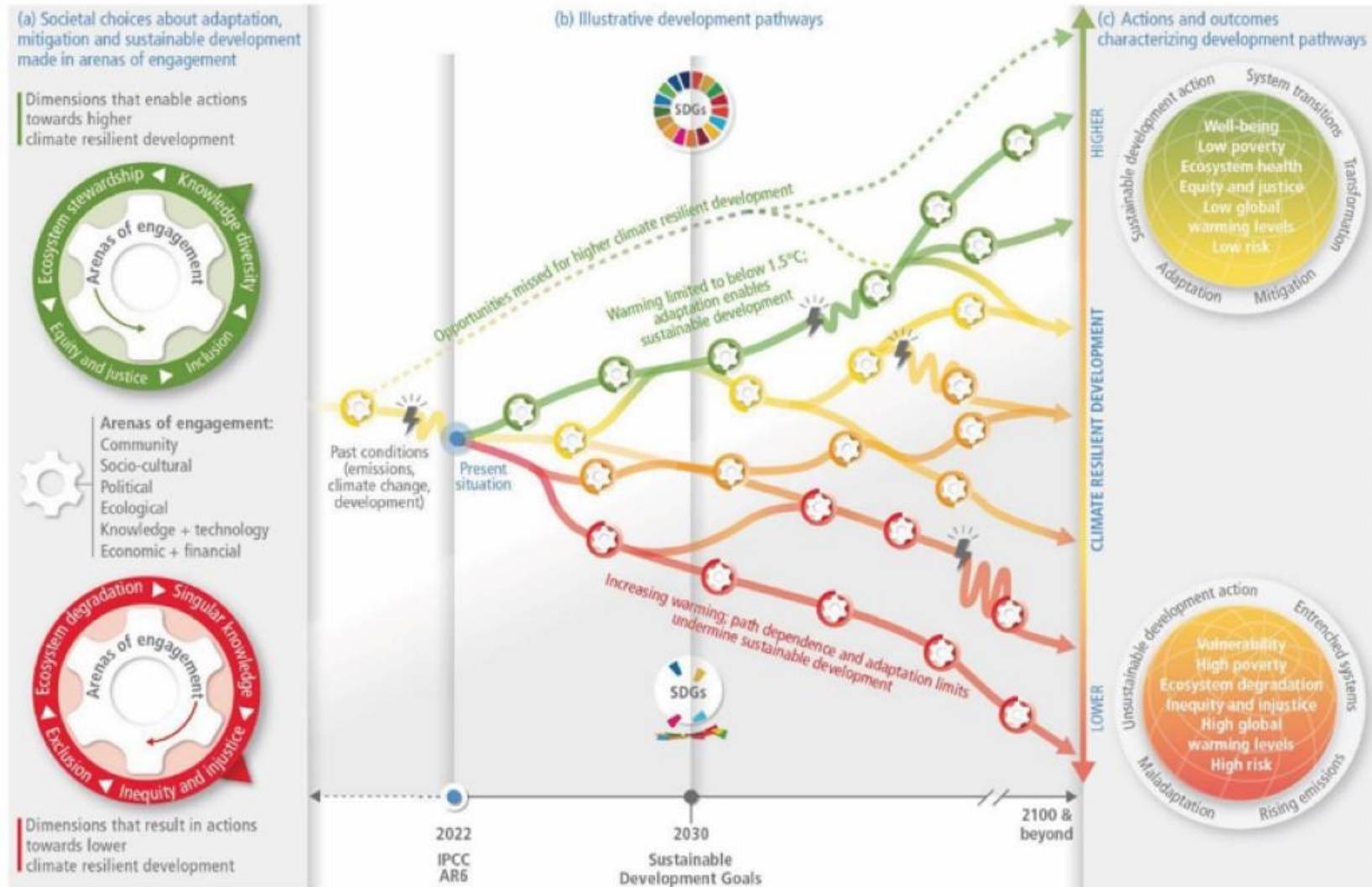
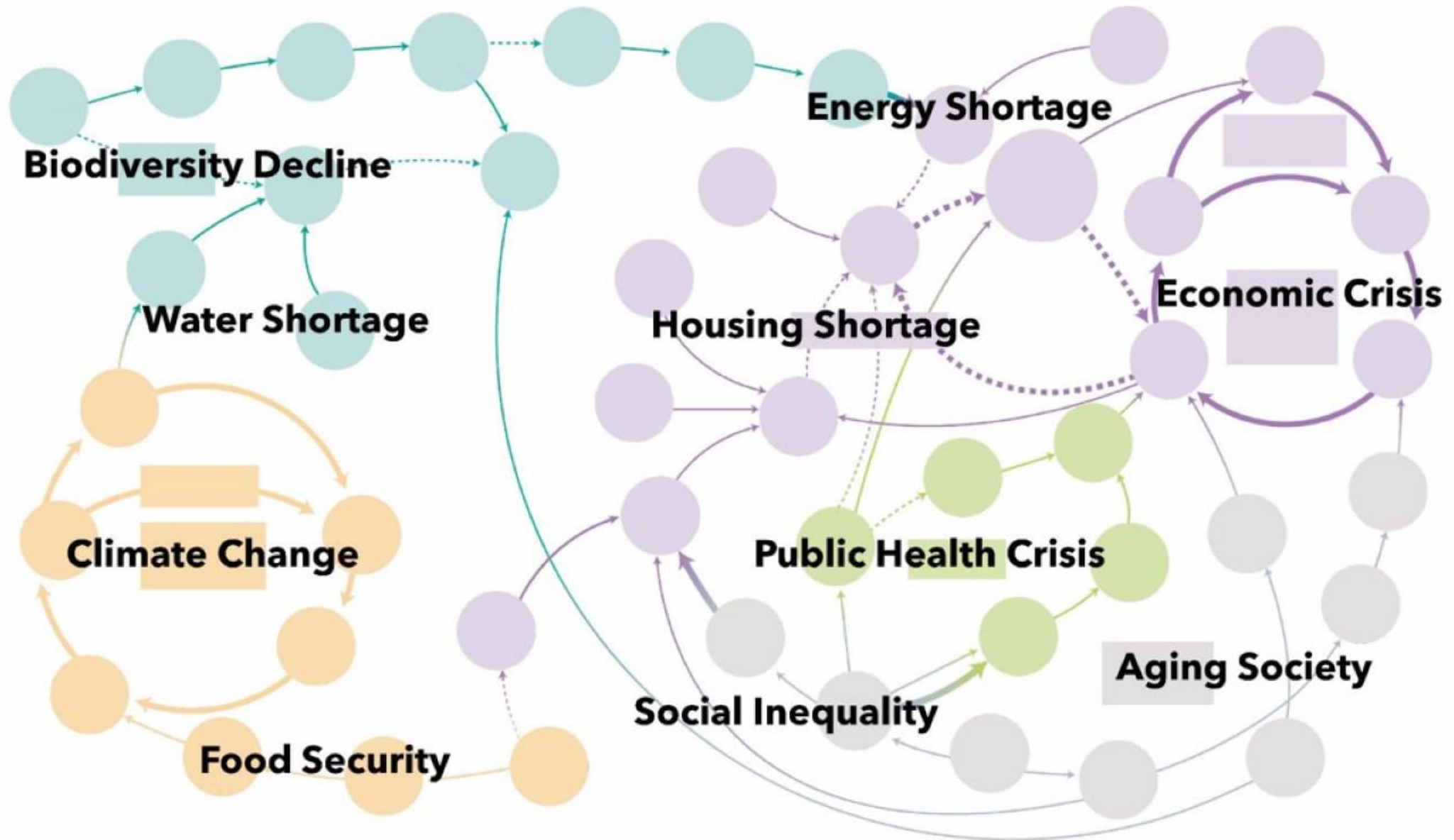


Image Source: IPCC, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. (H.-O. Pörtner, et al.)

Current Problems: Silos + Lack of Joined-up Actions



The image is a composite of two contrasting scenes. On the left, a firefighter in full gear is silhouetted against a bright, orange and yellow background of flames and smoke. On the right, a view of the Earth from space shows the blue oceans and white clouds of the planet. A vertical white line runs down the center, separating the two images. Overlaid on this background is a large, white, bold text message.

**We could miss the opportunity
to save ourselves
because we lose the ability
to plan for the FUTURE
collaboratively.**



A Systemic Transformation

Solutions: Re-building the Three Pillars of Spatial Planning

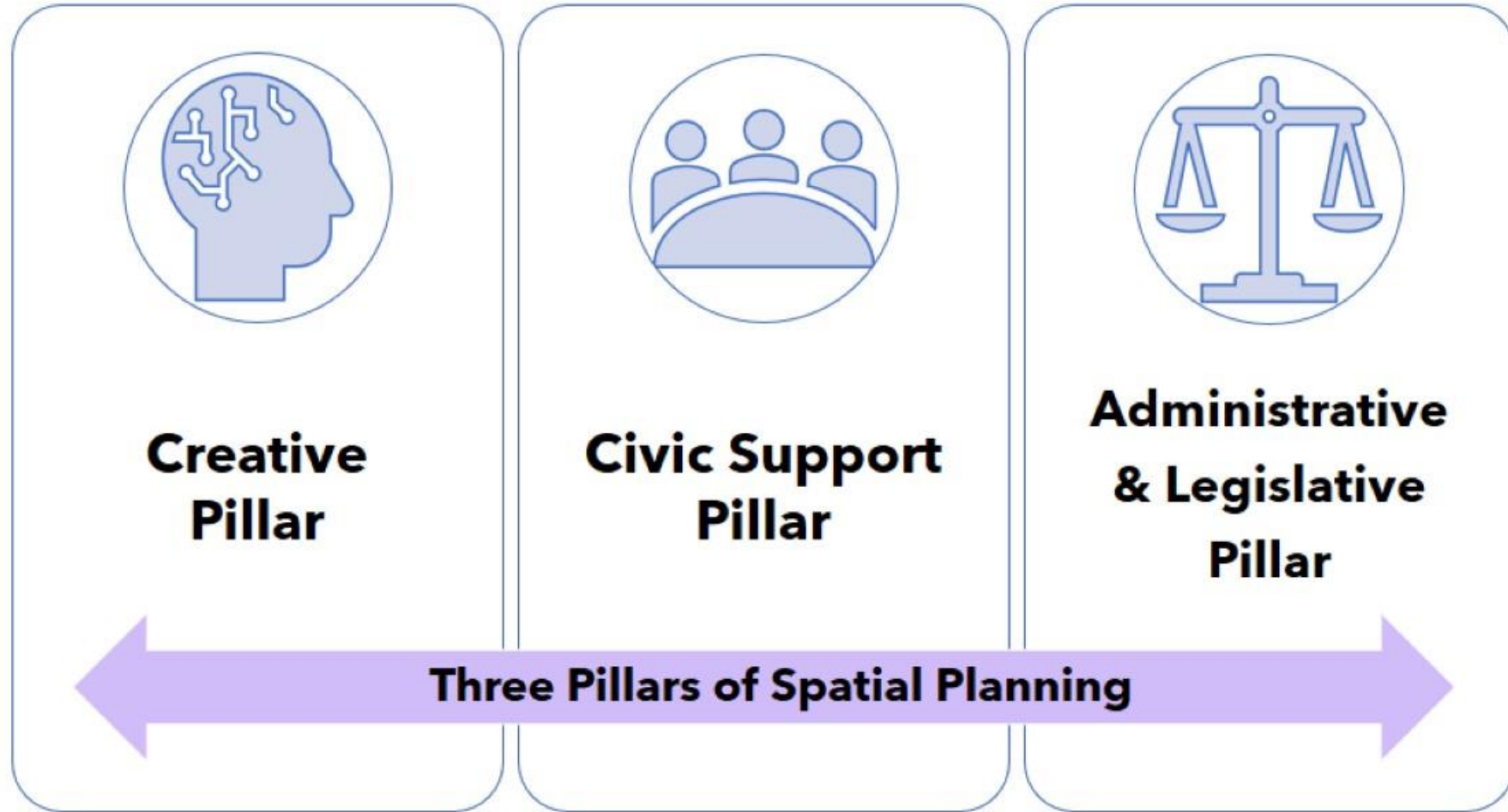


Image source: Wei Yang (2023), *Town Planning Review*

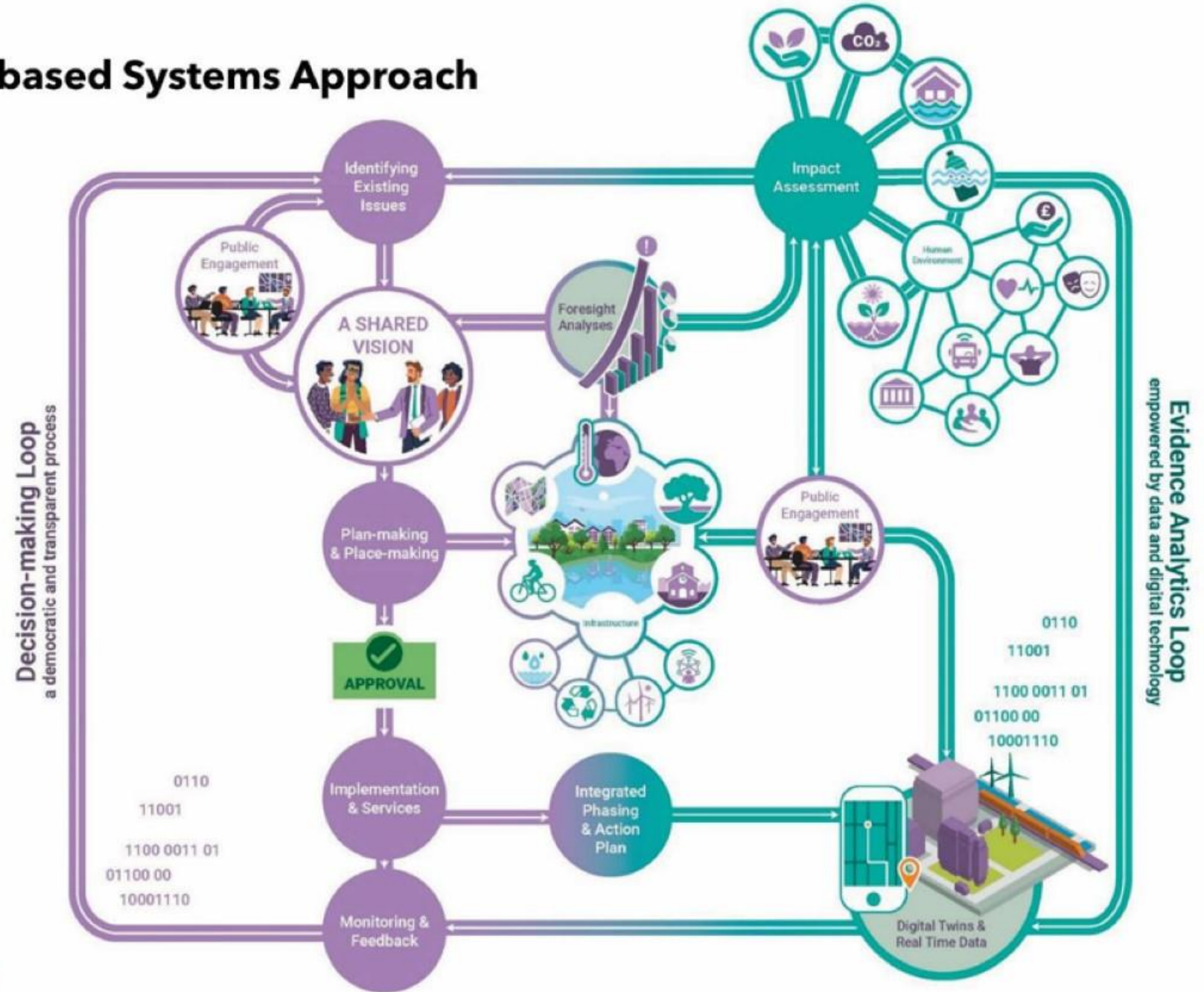


**A methodological change in Spatial Planning
empowered by digital technologies and big data**

**- to establish a digitally enabled
place-based systems approach to tackle the grand
challenges and create sustainable communities.**

A New Methodology

- A Digitally Enabled Place-based Systems Approach



The Task Force's First Stage work as an Independent Expert Panel (2021-2022)

The big question asked: ***“What should be done now to make our world a better place for our future generations through achieving a universal common good?”***

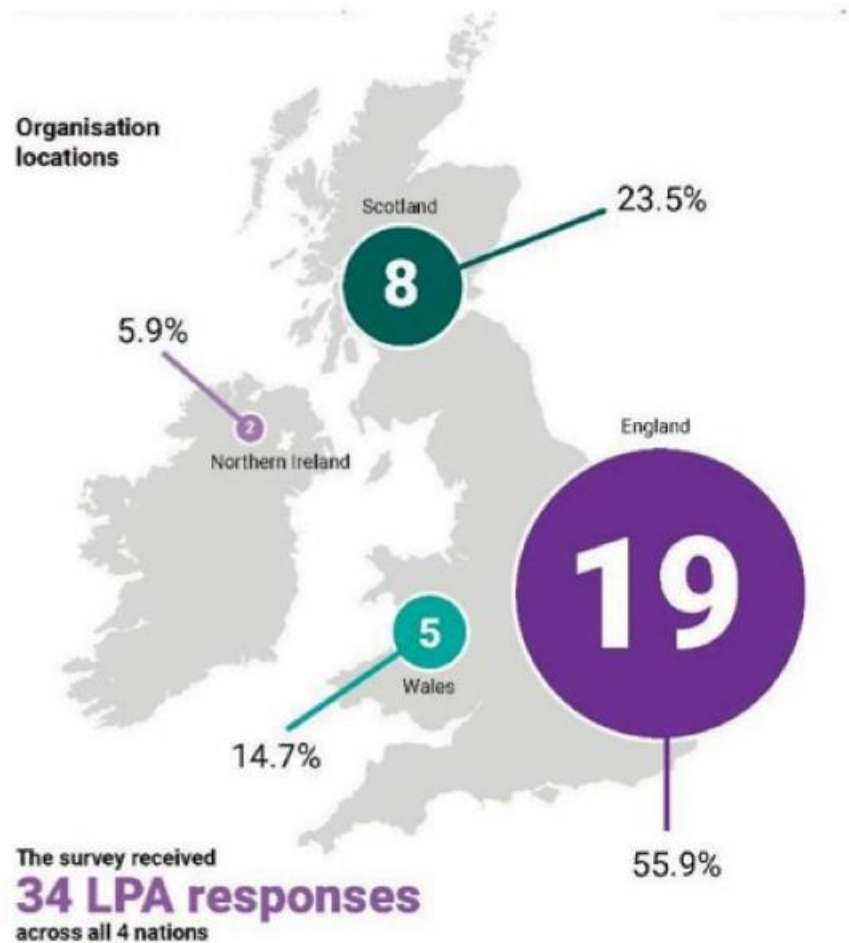
During 2021, the Task Force carried out a comprehensive cross-sector consultation programme, involving local and national government departments, agencies dealing with the natural and built environment, digital technology, public health, and higher education.

A Digital Future for Planning – Spatial Planning Reimagined (Batty & Yang, 2022)



<https://digital4planning.com/>

The Status of Digital Integration in Local Planning Authorities

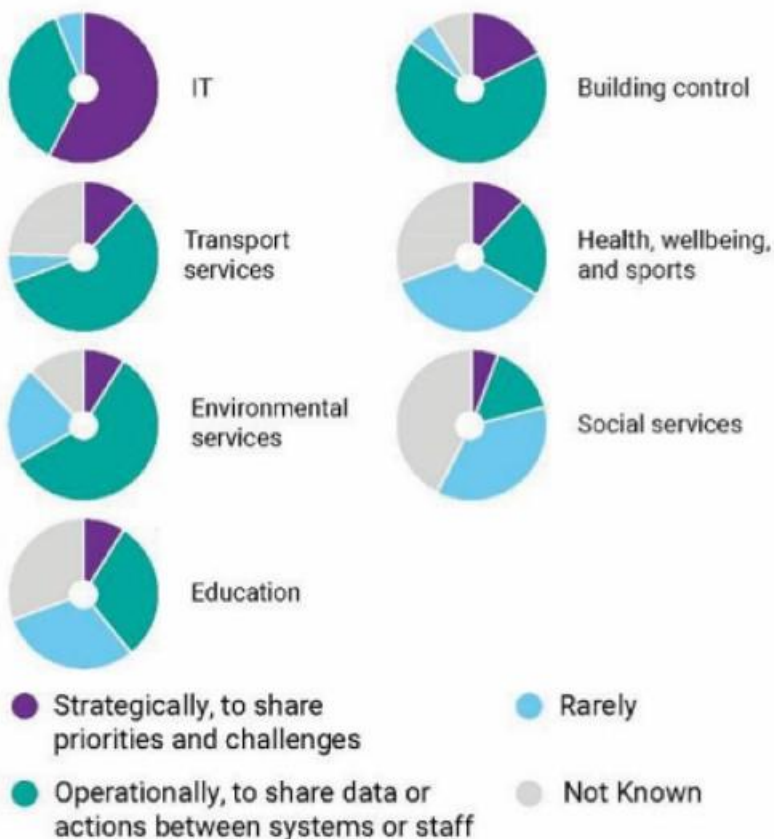


How are digital planning tools used within your organisation?

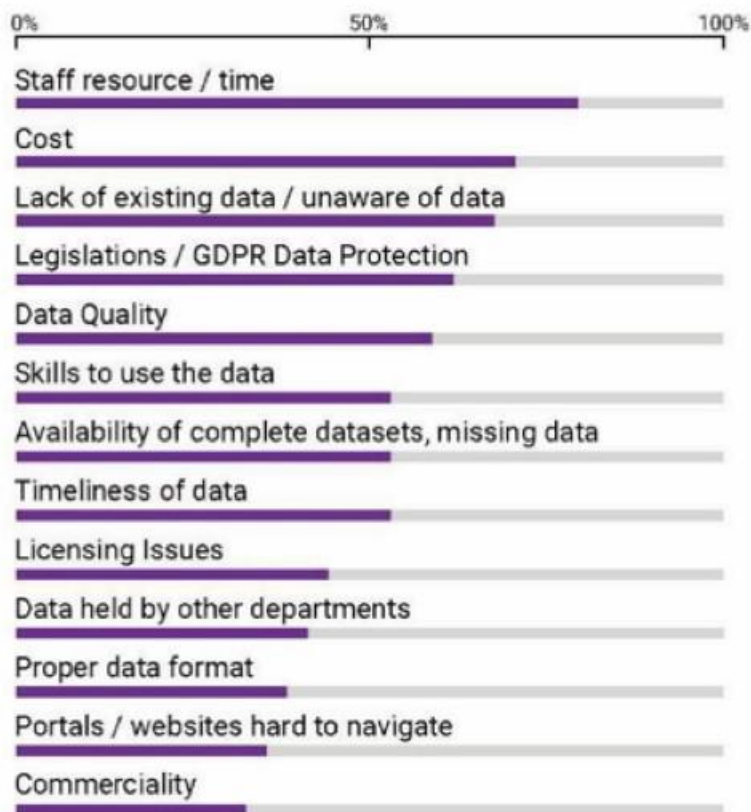


The Status of Digital Integration in Local Planning Authorities

To what extent do you interact with other divisions of the local authority specifically on digital issues or shared data?



What challenges do you face when acquiring data?



>50%

of the councils responded that they **do not** link planning application data with Local Development Plan preparation

Do you feel your organisation has sufficient staffing resource/capacity within the planning department to process current levels of applications and engage with existing service providers/suppliers?



Our Recommendations

1

Recognising the Vital Role of Spatial Planning as an Important Applied Science Discipline where Its Digital Transformation has the Potential to Tackle the Grand Challenges

To maximise the potentials of digital transformation by establishing the key links between the grand challenges, the planning profession as an applied science discipline, and the continued development of new technologies and data.

8

Developing a National Cross-Departmental Strategy for Digital Planning

To develop a national strategy to implement the digital transformation in planning enabled by a cross-departmental culture change. This should involve training in digital skills to support processes of levelling up and joining up across different planning agencies.

7

Investing in Digital Planning and Forging an Ecosystem between Planning Research, Practice, Education, and Lifelong Learning

To integrate and invest in new forms of digital training and education in spatial planning through research, professional education, practice and lifelong learning, engendering a culture change in planning profession.

2

Establishing a Chief Spatial Planning Officer Role in the Cabinet Office

To recognise the national significance of spatial planning for joined-up governance and to reinforce leadership in addressing the challenge of moving towards a more sustainable world.



6

Establishing a Chief Spatial Planning Officer Role in Every Local Authority

To build and restore stronger leadership in spatial planning at the local level and to develop integration between local authority services using a whole systems approach.

3

Implementing an Integrated Digitally Enabled Spatial Planning Methodology

To create a digitally enabled cyclic system in planning through connecting the decision-making loop and the evidence analytics loop.

4

Establishing a Central Resource and Delivery Body to Empower Cross-Sector Innovation, and to Develop and Implement Digital Planning

To form a central resource and delivery body to lead the implementation of digital planning methodology as part of the levelling up agenda. The organisation will be responsible for coordinating the development of core digital capacities by setting up a national network of 'regional data observatories', promoting digital tools and technologies being mobilised in planning.

5

Creating a Comprehensive Mapping System, a Common Spatial Data Environment, and a Basic Set of Analytic Functions Tailored to Plan-Making

To establish an open data platform which integrates national data sources, development data, comprehensive mapping and associated analytic tools; focused on 1) Identifying Baseline Data; 2) Defining Consistent Spatial Data Standards; 3) Data Licensing, Security, and Confidentiality; 4) Establishing Common Datasets and Improved Monitoring; and 5) Developing Analytics for Better Local and Strategic Planning.

Digital Task Force for Planning

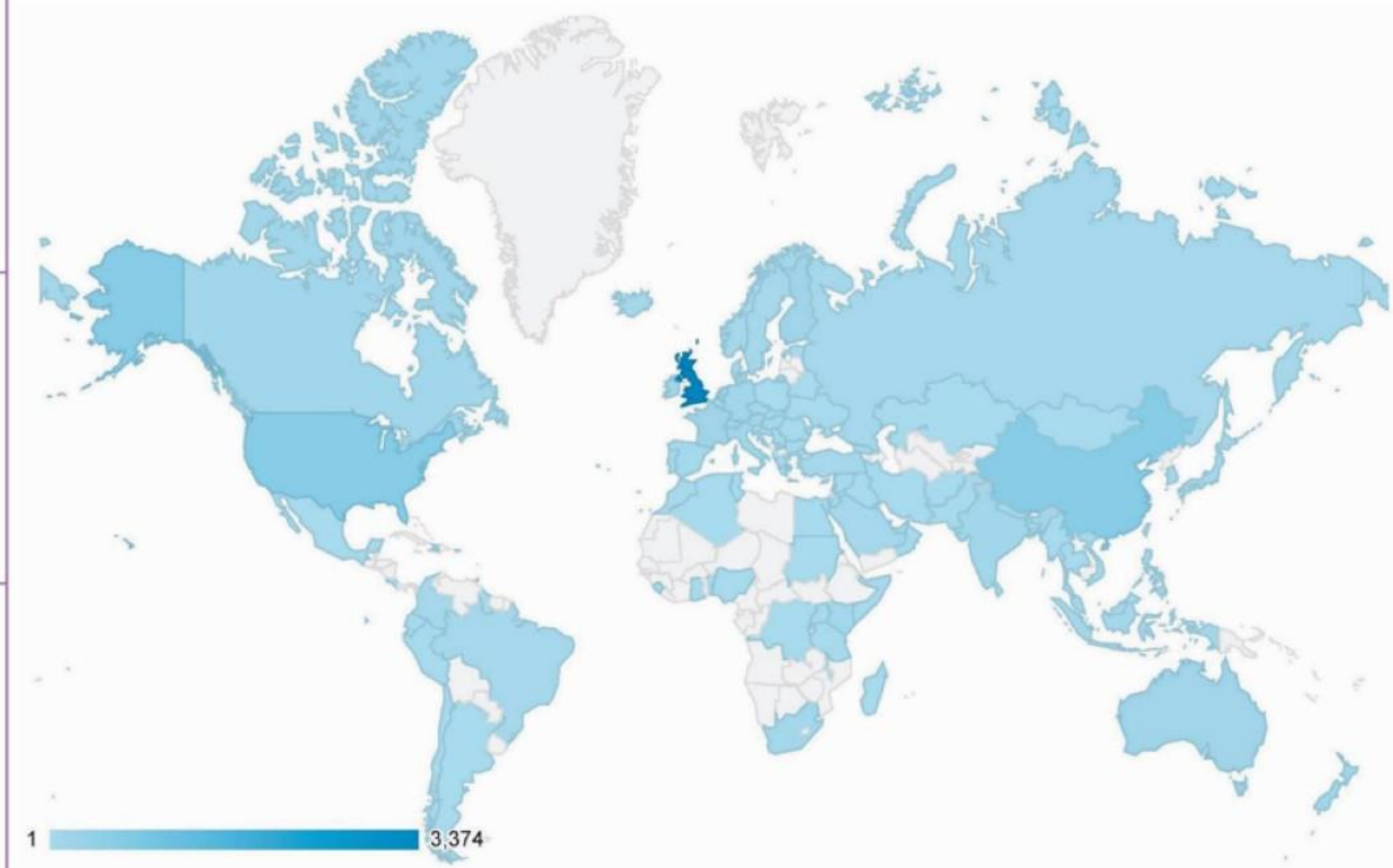
Impact of the Digital Task Force for Planning

Digital Task Force
for **Planning**

Over
14,000
website page views

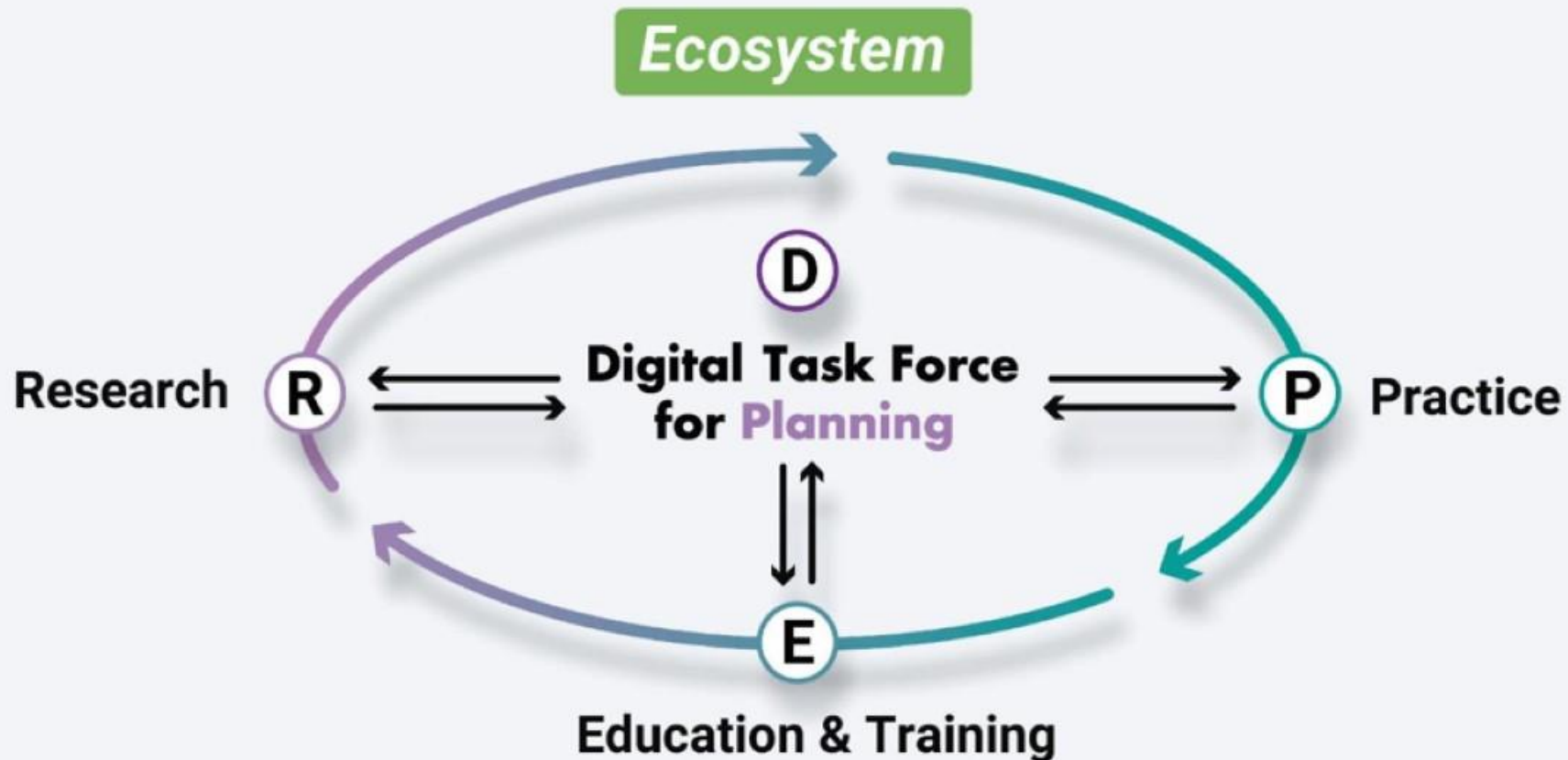
From
109
countries

Over
42,000
views of the Report



A New Venture of the Task Force - an Innovation-Led Social Enterprise

The Task Force focuses on the **Development part of R&D** - as a convenor, facilitator and enabler of digitalisation in mainstream planning practice & education to support the establishment of an integrated ecosystem for spatial planning innovation.




OUR VISION

Seize the rapidly closing window of opportunity to steer the world back onto the correct trajectory.



If not us, WHO?
If not now, WHEN?



**We invite you to be a part
of our journey as
we pioneer a way forward**

Please get in touch:

Email: info@digital4planning.com