

# COVID-19 MONITORS OF RELEVANCE TO URBAN AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Emergency Governance Initiative for Cities and Regions  
June 2020



## THE INITIATIVE

This Analytics Note is part of the Emergency Governance Initiative (EGI) led by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), World Association of the Major Metropolises (Metropolis) and LSE Cities at the London School of Economics and Political Science. **This Initiative investigates the institutional dimensions of rapid and radical action in response to global emergencies.**

The current COVID-19 epidemic has become the strongest indication so far that governance capacities at various levels of government fall short of delivering adequate responses to complex, global emergencies. This includes approaches to urban and regional governance that will have to change rapidly to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century. Place-based governance reforms are critical to accelerate the responses from subnational governments to the global health and climate crises, natural disasters, extreme and growing inequalities, unrest, socio-economic and political shocks, and a more fragile global economy.

As global and complex emergencies become more frequent, urgent questions arise regarding the extent to which urban and regional governments are equipped to take rapid and radical action where needed. The Initiative will monitor the **evolution of urban and regional governance in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak**, focusing on how city and regional governments are leading the transition into and out of emergency modes, and whether they are running into tension with other tiers of governance in doing so.

The Emergency Governance Initiative aims **to provide city and regional governments with actionable information, suitable frameworks, knowledge and resources to navigate the new demands of leading emergency responses.** In that respect, its goal is also to inform the governance of grand challenges that are increasingly framed as complex emergencies: above all, pandemics or climate change. In this context, governance is understood as the process by which public policy decisions are made and implemented. This includes the exercise of political and administrative authority to manage a jurisdiction's affairs. Key aspects range from issues of power, representation and democracy to legal and institutional frameworks, coordination, multi-level administration, finance and stakeholder

participation. Urban and territorial governance cuts across a variety of coordination models among different actors responsible for governing cities, metropolises, regions and wider territories.

This Initiative considers an emergency as a situation that poses an immediate and significant risk to health, life, property, or the environment. Emergencies require urgent action to prevent the worsening of the situation. Maximising the necessary resources and re-directing attention to address the emergency is part of this response.

## THE ANALYTICS NOTES

This Analytics Note is the first in a series of regular publications that will collate the most significant local and regional governance developments in the global response to the ongoing crisis, drawing attention to areas of lasting interest for leaders and policy makers managing not only this pandemic, but also diverse future emergencies.

These data-driven notes will be complemented by quarterly Policy Briefs. These, in turn, will highlight the most important general developments in greater detail while also expanding the analysis beyond the COVID-19 outbreak. Policy Briefs will also feature urban and regional governance innovations and concrete interventions that may become instrumental to respond to other grand challenges and emergencies.

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## INTRODUCING ANALYTICS NOTE #01

Just as the COVID-19 virus spread exponentially across the globe, so too has the data. Almost overnight, a huge number of trackers and monitors appeared online, keeping tabs not only on the infection, but also on the social and economic impacts, and policy responses. Many of these resources are incredibly valuable and could be of immense use to local and urban decision makers. However, without systematising this vast scattering of information, there is a risk that critical resources will get lost and not find their way to those organisations that may benefit from them the most.

The Emergency Governance Initiative has been compiling a **database of monitors of relevance to the local and urban leaders managing the pandemic**. This first Analytics Note reviews a list of 60 monitors developed by dozens of different organisations around the globe identified through desktop research. While it would be impossible to cover all relevant COVID-19 monitors in such a short period of time, an approach as coherent and pragmatic as possible was taken for the collection by focusing on international monitors with a subnational governance component. This is an evolving list of resources and more monitors are being added for future analysis. Additional COVID-19 monitors or other resources of relevance to urban and regional governance currently not featured in this publication can be registered [here](#).

### Main findings

Below follows a brief overview of the COVID-19 monitors collated to date, structured according to key features of these online resources. The main insights from this initial scan include the following points:

- Among the COVID-19 monitors identified here, there is a considerable **prominence of resources initiated by organisations with headquarters or secretariats in Europe and the United States**.
- The monitors cover a **diversity of themes** of relevance to regional and city governments; however, there is a **strong cross-cutting focus on health and economic development**.
- The type of content provided by the monitors set up so far is **mostly descriptive**. Statistical analysis, qualitative accounts of interventions and policy briefs are less common.
- In the context of the COVID-19 response, **information on governance and institutional arrangements is scarce**.
- While this overview focuses specifically on COVID-19 monitors of relevance to urban and regional governance, **the most prominent governance sphere that is addressed across these remains the national level**.
- Rather than primarily reflecting the global prevalence of cases and health impacts, **the geographic focus of the analysed monitors offers disproportionate insights on European countries**.
- Individual cities that are prominently featured across the analysed monitors are either **large and early hotspots of the virus or cities that are particularly well-connected within the monitoring organisations' networks**.

**Figure 1: Large cities around the globe and headquarters/secretariats of organisations monitoring COVID-19 developments**



## 1. COVID-19 MONITORING ORGANISATIONS

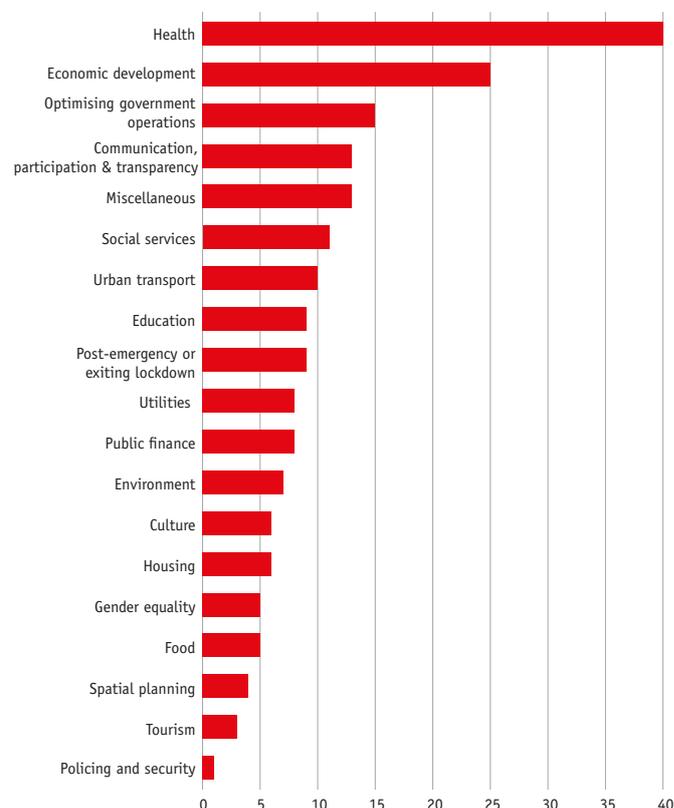
Figure 1 shows the **distribution of the organisations responsible for creating or curating COVID-19 monitors of relevance to urban and regional governance**. The cities dotted in shades of red are those in which these organisations are headquartered. The dominance of European organisations, followed by those based in US and East Africa becomes evident.

## 2. THEMATIC FOCUS: A DIVERSITY OF THEMES

The prominence and far-reaching consequences of COVID-19 for urban and local environments, and the daily lives of those who inhabit them, have generated extensive ad-hoc international exchanges on experiences, approaches and learnings. These cut across issues linked to quarantine and lockdown, access to essential services, to information, workplace behaviours, attitudes to transport and other key themes. The graph in Figure 2 illustrates the **diverse and wide array of themes that are covered by the monitors**. In keeping with the nature of the emergency, **health is the dominant issue, followed by a focus on the economy**, which has been critically affected by the radical prioritisation of public health concerns. Typical local government concerns such as social services, urban transport and utilities are well established focus areas but receive less attention. Other prevalent themes have a more direct link to institutional responses to the emergency and include a focus on optimising government operations and communicating with key stakeholders.

**Figure 2: Thematic focus of monitors**

Units: no. of monitors



### 3. GOVERNANCE: AN INFORMATION GAP

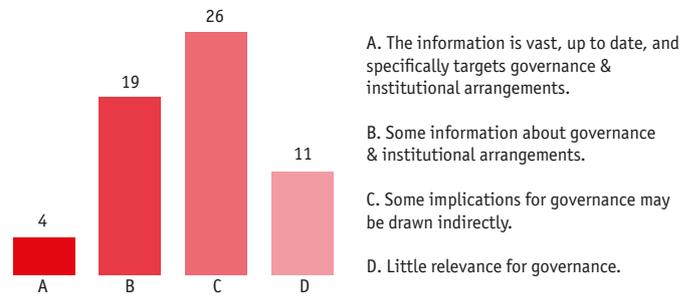
Existing governance systems and institutional arrangements are a key determining factor for effective emergency responses. The institutional responses that governments have taken, or failed to take, in the context of emergencies is the central concern of the Emergency Governance Initiative. In the context of the COVID-19 response and the analysed monitors, Figure 3 reveals that **there is an absence of information on governance and institutional arrangements** (e.g. gaps, overlaps in jurisdictional responsibilities, institutional coordination issues, financing mechanisms and budget impacts, transparency). For the majority of the monitors, some implications for governance may be drawn only indirectly.

### 4. TYPE OF CONTENT: DESCRIPTIVE COMMENTARY

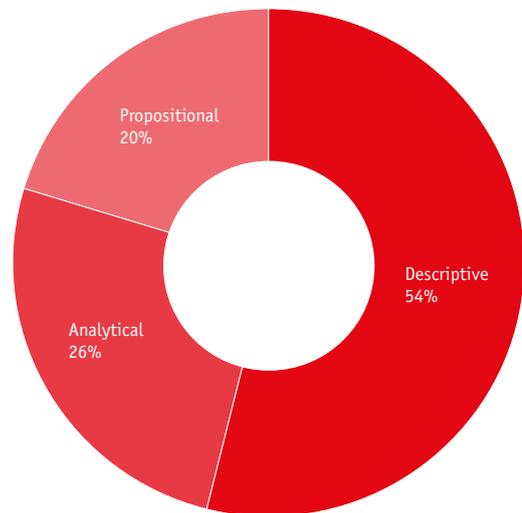
The analysed monitors provide access to a plethora of information that is currently being produced on the COVID-19 impacts and responses. This information cuts across baseline data, statistical analysis, qualitative accounts of interventions and policy briefs and **over half of the monitors focus on resources that are merely descriptive in nature** (Figure 4). In these cases, the resources consist of a simple collection of data or repository of information. Only 20% of the monitors include advice and suggestions on how decision makers should tackle this emergency. Figure 5 shows that the most prevalent type of information available is commentary, blogs or op-eds, followed closely by a list or collection of policy measures.

**Figure 3: Level of information on governance and institutions**

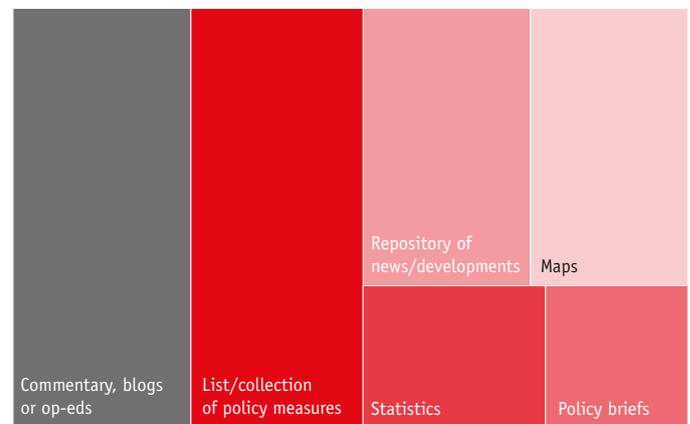
Units: no. of monitors



**Figure 4: Type of content**



**Figure 5: Type of data**



## 5. GOVERNANCE SPHERES: RECOGNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

To date, national- and state-level governments are leading the COVID-19 emergency responses in just about all countries. At the same time, local governments take on the roles as service providers, implementers and emergency operators on the ground. This important role is also reflected in **the 60 monitors reviewed here, which include a large share of city- and sub-city-level perspectives**. It should be noted, however, that this overview tried to target monitors with particular relevance to urban and regional governance. Despite this, **the national level remains the sphere of governance for which more information is available, as can be seen in Figure 6**.

## 6. WORLD REGIONS AND COUNTRIES: GLOBAL FOCUS WITH EUROPEAN DOMINANCE

The COVID-19 emergency response has closely followed the spread of the coronavirus from East Asia to Europe and other parts of the world. The presence of COVID-19 on a global scale is reflected in the diagram at the bottom of Figure 7 and shows that half of the monitors that were analysed have a global focus (i.e. include more than one global region). However, rather than reflecting the global prevalence of cases and health impacts (Figure 8), the geographic focus of the analysed monitors offers **disproportionate insights on European countries** (Figure 7). It should be noted, however, that language may have been a factor of bias: although the database of 60 monitors includes some resources in Spanish, French and a few other languages, the vast majority are in English (which was also the language used in the desktop research).

Figure 6: Governance spheres

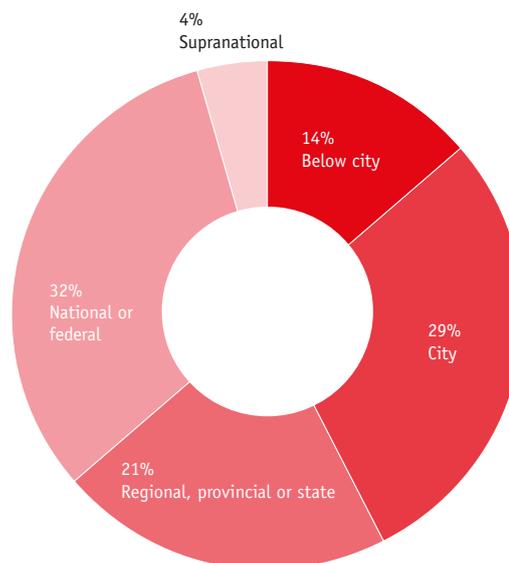


Figure 7: Focus countries

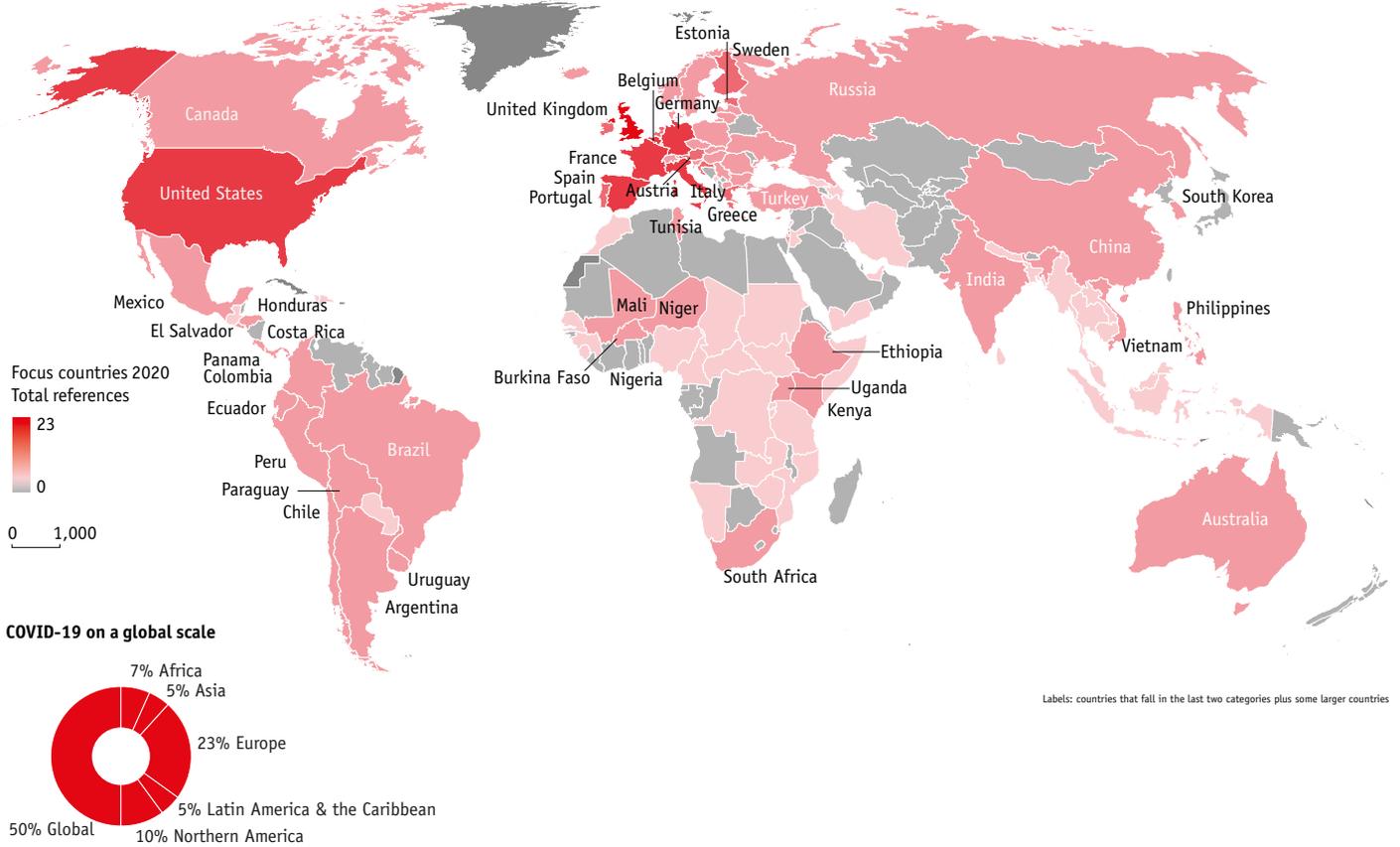


Figure 8: COVID-19 fatalities per 100,000 people

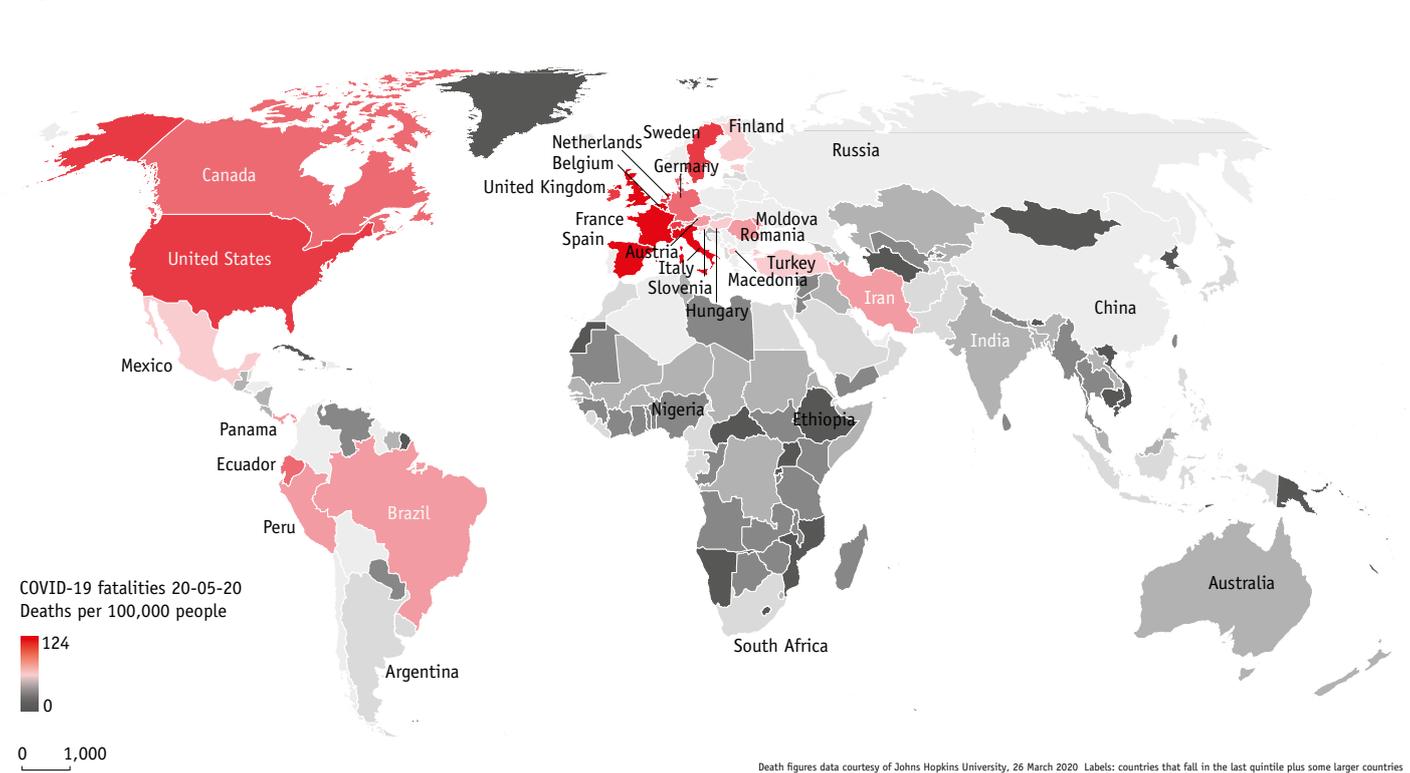
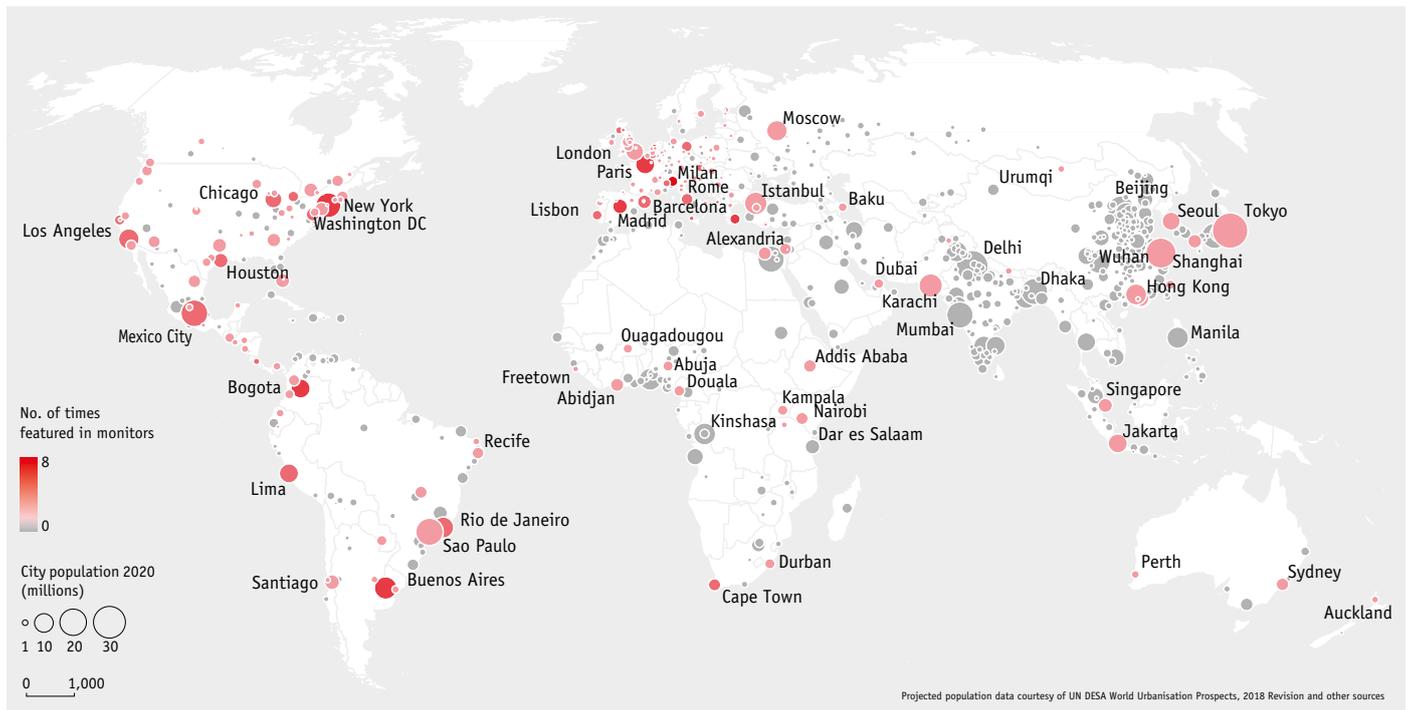


Figure 9: Focus cities



**7. FOCUS CITIES: EARLY WESTERN EPICENTRES AND NETWORKED CITIES**

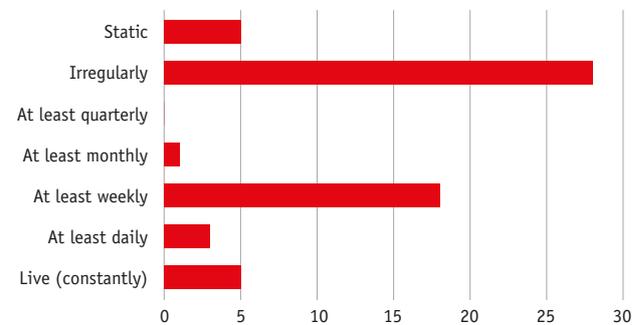
Cities have been at the centre of the COVID-19 crisis from the beginning. As shown in Figure 9, the list and prominence of cities that are featured by the analysed monitors reflects the same **over-representation of Western cases** as the national focus introduced above. Within Europe and the Americas, prominent cities were either **large and early hotspots of the virus** (e.g. Milan, Paris, Madrid and New York) or include **cities that are particularly well-connected within the monitoring organisations** (e.g. Bogota, Buenos Aires and Athens). Again, this focus may also be explained by the prominence of English-based resources in the list of 60 monitors collated for this Analytics Note.

**8. UPDATING: INFREQUENT**

The COVID-19 emergency is a constantly evolving and unprecedented situation, taking different forms and initiating varied responses across urban and regional governments. Given that most monitors were started only in April, it is difficult to obtain information on how frequently these are updated (and for how long). A preliminary perspective is offered in the graph in Figure 10, which indicates that **the frequency with which the monitors are updated is mostly irregular, with no consistent pattern over time identifiable**. It also reveals that there is a notable absence of monitors updating at least monthly and, so far, at least quarterly.

Figure 10: Frequency of update

Units: no. of monitors



## Appendix – The analysed COVID-19 monitors

All visualisations above are based on the monitors compiled for this Analytics Note. See below the name, lead organisation(s), headquarters or secretariat city, short description and hyperlink for each of these resources. There are many other online resources and this list will be updated regularly. The 60 monitors listed here were compiled through desktop research that focused on monitors with (direct or indirect) relevance to

subnational governance. In keeping with the central concern of the Emergency Governance Initiative, this list is structured according to the emphasis on governance (i.e. how rich are the resources in terms of information about governance reforms and institutional change as part of emergency responses).

### Resources with vast information about governance and institutional arrangements

Name of resource	Lead organisation	HQ or secretariat city	Description	Hyperlink
COVID-19 Public Sector Resources	Ash Center at Harvard Kennedy School	Cambridge, MA	Commentary and prescriptive policy analysis on local government responses to COVID-19 in the US	<a href="#">Link 1</a>
Coronavirus: Information for Councils	Local Government Association	London	Information and guidance for local governments in the UK managing the outbreak	<a href="#">Link 2</a>
Collecting Open Government Approaches to COVID-19	Open Government Partnership (OGP)	Washington DC	A live collection of open government responses implemented in response to the health crisis	<a href="#">Link 3</a>
Global Issue – COVID-19	World Economic Forum	Geneva	Repository of news articles and commentary pieces on various topics related to COVID-19, including government responses	<a href="#">Link 4</a>

### Resources with some information about governance and institutional arrangements

Name of resource	Lead organisation	HQ or secretariat city	Description	Hyperlink
COVID-19 Hub	AER (Assembly of European Regions)	Brussels	A collection of institutional responses, guidelines and statistics related to the pandemic in European regions	<a href="#">Link 5</a>
Informações coronavírus COVID-19	Belo Horizonte Municipality	Belo Horizonte	A list of health advice and policy measures taken by Belo Horizonte Municipality, Brazil	<a href="#">Link 6</a>
Coronavirus Government Response Tracker	Blavatnik School of Government	Oxford	An interactive map and analysis related to national government responses to the pandemic	<a href="#">Link 7</a>
Local Government and COVID-19	Commonwealth Local Government Forum	London	Best practice policy initiatives from local and regional governments in the Commonwealth	<a href="#">Link 8</a>
COVID-19 Exchange Platform	EU Committee of the Regions	Brussels	News, updates and practical guidance to support local and regional decision makers managing the emergency. The page includes an exchange platform to foster cooperation and mutual support across European regions	<a href="#">Link 9</a>
Live Updates COVID-19	Eurocities	Brussels	A regularly updated newsfeed showcasing how European cities are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic	<a href="#">Link 10</a>
ECML Covid	European Commission Joint Research Centre	Brussels	Subnational data on infections and death rates along with a list of containment measures adopted by national governments	<a href="#">Link 11</a>
Covid-19 Repository of Tools and Information for Cities and Local Governments	European Commission: City Science Initiative	Brussels	A collection of information and tools for cities and local governments to use in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. Resources go beyond European regions and have relevance to all global areas	<a href="#">Link 12</a>
Corona Crisis: Mayors Act Now	Global Parliament of Mayors	The Hague	An initiative designed to connect mayors, cities and local governments from across the world, providing an overview of mayoral initiatives for city leadership	<a href="#">Link 13</a>
COVID-19 Resources for Indian Country	Harvard Project and Johns Hopkins Centre for American Indian Health	Cambridge, MA & Baltimore, MD	Response and recovery policy briefs and best practice examples for tribal nations across Indian Country dealing with the health emergency	<a href="#">Link 14</a>
Cities for Global Health	Metropolis & AL-LAS, supported by UCLG	Barcelona	A repository of policy initiatives designed in response to health emergencies in cities, including, but not limited to, COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 15</a>
COVID-19: Local Action Tracker	National League of Cities and Bloomberg Philanthropies	New York	A US focused, comprehensive and well-systematised repository of policies and actions instituted by local leaders in response to the pandemic	<a href="#">Link 16</a>
Tackling Coronavirus (COVID-19): Contributing to a Global Effort	OECD	Paris	A compilation of national-level data, analysis and recommendations for countries dealing with the outbreak	<a href="#">Link 17</a>
COVID-19: Good City Practices	The 100 Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC)	Brussels	Case studies of technology-based actions that cities are implementing to protect their citizens and ecosystems in response to the COVID-19 epidemic	<a href="#">Link 18</a>

COVID-19: What Mayors Need to Know	The United States Conference of Mayors	Washington DC	A collection of resources for US city mayors focusing on institutional finances and accessing and maintaining supplies of health care equipment	<a href="#">Link 19</a>
Live Learning Experience: #beyondtheoutbreak	UCLG, Metropolis & UN-Habitat	Barcelona	A virtual and living community created to share experiences of crisis management and protection of the commons through a series of virtual exchanges	<a href="#">Link 20</a>
COVID-19 Response Plan	UN-Habitat	Nairobi	Resources for national- and local-level governments to help them prepare for, respond to and recover from the pandemic. Includes case study examples and COVID-19-related policy resources on the subjects of cities, informal settlements, housing, urban transport, water and sanitation, and gender	<a href="#">Link 21</a>
UNCDF Response to COVID-19	United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)	New York	Provides a list of digital policy innovations undertaken by local governments in response to the pandemic. Also provides support and guidance to local governments managing finances through the emergency	<a href="#">Link 22</a>
The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19	University of Manchester & Global Resilient Cities Network	Manchester	A weekly briefing bringing together international examples of cities working towards a resilient recovery from COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 23</a>

## Resources from which implications for governance may be drawn indirectly

Name of resource	Lead organisation	HQ or secretariat city	Description	Hyperlink
COVID-19 Monitor	Africa Practice	Dar es Salaam	Weekly blogposts related to the impact of COVID-19 across the African continent. Previous posts have focused on gender equality, political stability and food security	<a href="#">Link 24</a>
COVID-19 Resources for Public Servants	Apolitical	London	A list of resources for public servants and policy makers, focused on the science of the virus and its spread, the social implications, the policy responses and policy tracking tools	<a href="#">Link 25</a>
Municipal Waste Management and COVID-19	Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+)	Brussels	A list of policy measures taken in relation to municipal waste management during the COVID-19 emergency. Measures focus on European regions and the US	<a href="#">Link 26</a>
Le buone pratiche dei comuni Italiani	Associazione italiana per il Consiglio dei Comuni e delle Regioni d'Europa (AICCCE)	Rome	A repository of best practice examples from Italian municipalities in dealing with the pandemic	<a href="#">Link 27</a>
Cities and Coronavirus (COVID-19)	C40	London	A curated collection of media and resources on topics relevant to mayoral teams and departments that are C40 touch-points: waste, food, buildings, transportation, public engagement, and many more.	<a href="#">Link 28</a>
COVID-19	Centre for Policy Research	New Delhi	Analytical commentary on the COVID-19 pandemic and associated institutional responses across India	<a href="#">Link 29</a>
Southeast Asia Covid-19 Tracker	Centre for Strategic and International Studies	Washington DC	A monitor of the infection spread and death rates across Southeast Asia and a commentary analysis of international aid related to the pandemic, and its strategic implications	<a href="#">Link 30</a>
The Compendium in Times of COVID-19	Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends	Amsterdam	Provides a list of national-level actions being taken regarding COVID-19 and the cultural sector, a comparative overview of these measures, and a list of online responses related to the cultural field	<a href="#">Link 31</a>
COVID-19	Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)	Brussels	A repository of news and information resources related to COVID-19 and European municipalities and regions	<a href="#">Link 32</a>
COVID-19 Crisis – A Selection of Platforms to Support Cities and Towns	Covenant of Mayors – Europe Office	Brussels	A list of online resources and information tools designed to help city mayors manage the health emergency	<a href="#">Link 33</a>
Collecting Experiences and Evidence on Local and Regional Responses to COVID-19	ESPON	Luxembourg City	A collection of online resources for European local and regional leaders during dealing with COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 34</a>
#UtilitiesFightCOVID	Global Water Operators and Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)	Bonn	Commentary on how water and sanitation utilities across the globe are responding to COVID-19, and operational guidance for these utilities	<a href="#">Link 35</a>
COVID-19 – GRET is adapting its field projects and preparing future actions	GRET Professionals for Fair Development	Paris	A list of policy measures and other initiatives deployed across the globe that share best practice and raise awareness on preventing COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 36</a>
COVID-19 Pandemic	Humanitarian Data Exchange, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	New York	Live map tracking number of cases and deaths from COVID-19 and datasets containing information on various topics such as government measures	<a href="#">Link 37</a>
Pandemia: buen diagnóstico, mejores prácticas	Inn Context	Panama City	Commentary piece on strategies adopted by local and central government in the region of Latin America	<a href="#">Link 38</a>

Haciendo frente al coronavirus desde el campo de batalla: las ciudades	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	Washington DC	Commentary on the measures that cities in Latin America are taking in response to COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 39</a>
Policy Responses to COVID-19	International Monetary Fund	Washington DC	Comprehensive policy tracker of the key economic responses taken by governments globally to reduce the impacts of COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 40</a>
COVID-19: Transportation Response Center	NACTO	New York	Guidance and tools for city and agency staff responding to the pandemic, including a database recording actions taken by city and transit agencies globally	<a href="#">Link 41</a>
COVID-19 A Frontline Guide for Local Decision Makers	Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), the Center for Global Development and the Georgetown University Center for Global Health Science and Security	Washington DC	Interactive assessment tool to help local decision makers identify areas where action is needed and formulate phased re-opening strategies	<a href="#">Link 42</a>
COVID-19 Response Centre	Partnership for Healthy Cities	New York	Practical guidance and tools, including policy briefs, to support cities in the areas of surveillance and epidemiology, communications, public health and social measures, and legal and ethical considerations	<a href="#">Link 43</a>
COVID-19: Keeping Things Moving	POLIS	Brussels	A collection of commentary pieces and policy measures taken by cities and regions in Europe	<a href="#">Link 44</a>
Tracking the Global Response to COVID-19	Privacy International	London	A record of measures adopted by tech companies, government and international agencies since the outbreak, with a focus on topics including technology, data and privacy	<a href="#">Link 45</a>
Pandemics, Cities, Regions & Industry	Regional Studies Association (RSA)	London	A repository of resources and links on the measures that regions, cities and industry have deployed	<a href="#">Link 46</a>
COVID-19 Tunisia	République Tunisienne	Tunis	Outline of the latest developments of the situation in Tunisia and general guidance on how to prevent the spread of infection	<a href="#">Link 47</a>
COVID-19: Medidas implementadas por los países de la región SICA	Sistema de la integración Latinoamericana (SICA)	Panama City	A list of measures implemented by governments in Central America	<a href="#">Link 48</a>
URBACT City Responses to Covid 19	URBACT	New York	An interactive map that illustrates innovative city responses to the pandemic in Europe	<a href="#">Link 49</a>

## Resources with less relevance for governance

Name of resource	Lead organisation	HQ or secretariat city	Description	Hyperlink
Coronavirus Disease 2019	Africa CDC, Africa Union	Addis Ababa	A repository of information on COVID-19 in Africa including a dashboard with interactive maps and live statistics, guidance on infection control and summaries of the latest updates in scientific knowledge and public health policy	<a href="#">Link 50</a>
Data-Smart City Solutions	Ash Center at Harvard Kennedy School	Cambridge MA	A resource hub for civic leaders featuring a wide variety of interventions and initiatives in the US such as maps, data visualisations and dashboards	<a href="#">Link 51</a>
Digital Rights in Africa Amid Combat COVID-19 Pandemic	CIPESA	Kampala	A series of links and an interactive map containing information on digital rights in Africa in the context of COVID-19	<a href="#">Link 52</a>
Coronavirus	Human Rights Watch	New York	Commentary pieces and reports focusing on the human rights dimensions of interventions and initiatives across the globe	<a href="#">Link 53</a>
COVID-19 Resources	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)	Washington DC	COVID-19 estimation updates focused on the US that forecast information on daily infections and testing, daily and total deaths and hospital resource use	<a href="#">Link 54</a>
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information Hub	International Road Transport Union (IRU)	Geneva	A collection of documents providing transport-related recommendations and other related news and links	<a href="#">Link 55</a>
Resources on COVID-19 and Nature	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	Gland	A set of links detailing IUCN responses to COVID-19 and other resources that explore the relationship between nature and human health	<a href="#">Link 56</a>
Coronavirus Resource Centre	Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore	COVID-19 live dashboard that features interactive world and US-specific maps with statistics on cases and deaths, accompanied by written analyses of critical trends in the data	<a href="#">Link 57</a>
The OWHC in Times of COVID-19	Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC)	Québec City	A catalogue of information and content from initiatives of member cities that address the impacts of COVID-19 in their communities	<a href="#">Link 58</a>
Indian Urban Pandemic Preparedness and Response	SMARTNET	Delhi	A series of interactive maps offering a statistical overview of COVID-19 in Indian states and districts, and advisory documents on various topics such as infection prevention	<a href="#">Link 59</a>
COVID-19 Voluntary and Community Sector Support	Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS)	Sheffield	A space to communicate the latest government advice for voluntary and community organisations in responding to COVID-19 in Sheffield	<a href="#">Link 60</a>