

The logo for Ramboll, featuring the word "RAMBOLL" in a bold, sans-serif font with a stylized circular icon to the right.

Bright ideas.  
Sustainable Change.

# Social Sustainability

Delivering social impacts

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Capability statement



# What is Social Sustainability?

Social sustainability is about taking action to improve the well-being for all, while staying within the planetary boundaries and protecting human rights. Essentially working to have people and nature flourish.

It is also a commitment to creating safe, healthy and inclusive organisations, institutions and communities that enable and empower all citizens to reach their full potential - without compromising living and future generations.

Building socially sustainable communities and institutions requires that public and private decision-makers make sure to integrate equity, diversity, human rights and social cohesion into both decision-making processes and value chains.

Not to add to complexity. But to ensure that people can live safe and good lives, leaving no one behind.



# The Pillars of Social Sustainability

Social sustainability can be defined by five pillars, which are mutually dependent and reinforcing.

**Quality of Life, Equity, and Diversity & Inclusion** are all core components of any socially sustainable entity. Be it a city, a supply chain, welfare infrastructure or a manufacturer, all three components are central.

Quality of life, Equity, and Diversity and Inclusion are anchored in **Engagement and Governance**, which consist of processes for making voices heard and ensuring transparency in decision-making and implementation of relevant policies and regulation.

When each of the first four pillars are in place, **Social Cohesion** can be reached, contributing to a wide number of socially positive outcomes. Thus challenges to any of these elements will also challenge the social cohesion of the system.





# Key drivers for Social Sustainability action

Global challenges and regulation call for social sustainability action that recognises the balancing of planetary boundaries and social needs in the development of societies, communities and organisations.

## Climate change, climate justice and the green transition

As climate change accelerates and requirements for mitigation increase, the likelihood of greater negative impacts on society in general, and vulnerable groups in particular, will rise. This generates a need to assess and redistribute risk to avoid leaving workers, their communities, and downstream suppliers behind.

## Polarisation and distrust

Income inequality and political polarisation are rising across the world. People from different population groups are increasingly segregated in separate worlds, not sharing and exchanging views. Many of them are losing trust in public institutions and political parties, increasing the risk of radicalisation and extremism, and in turn of social, economic and political instability.

## Discrimination and marginalisation

Globally, we are facing challenges of persistent inequality and racial discrimination which come at a high cost to both people and the economy. Globally, gender inequalities are estimated to cost \$160.2 trillion in human capital wealth.

## Policy & Regulation

Internationally, sustainability regulation is not only focusing on environmental sustainability but also social sustainability – with increasing demand for transparency in reporting the social impact of business and operations on workers, customers and local communities.

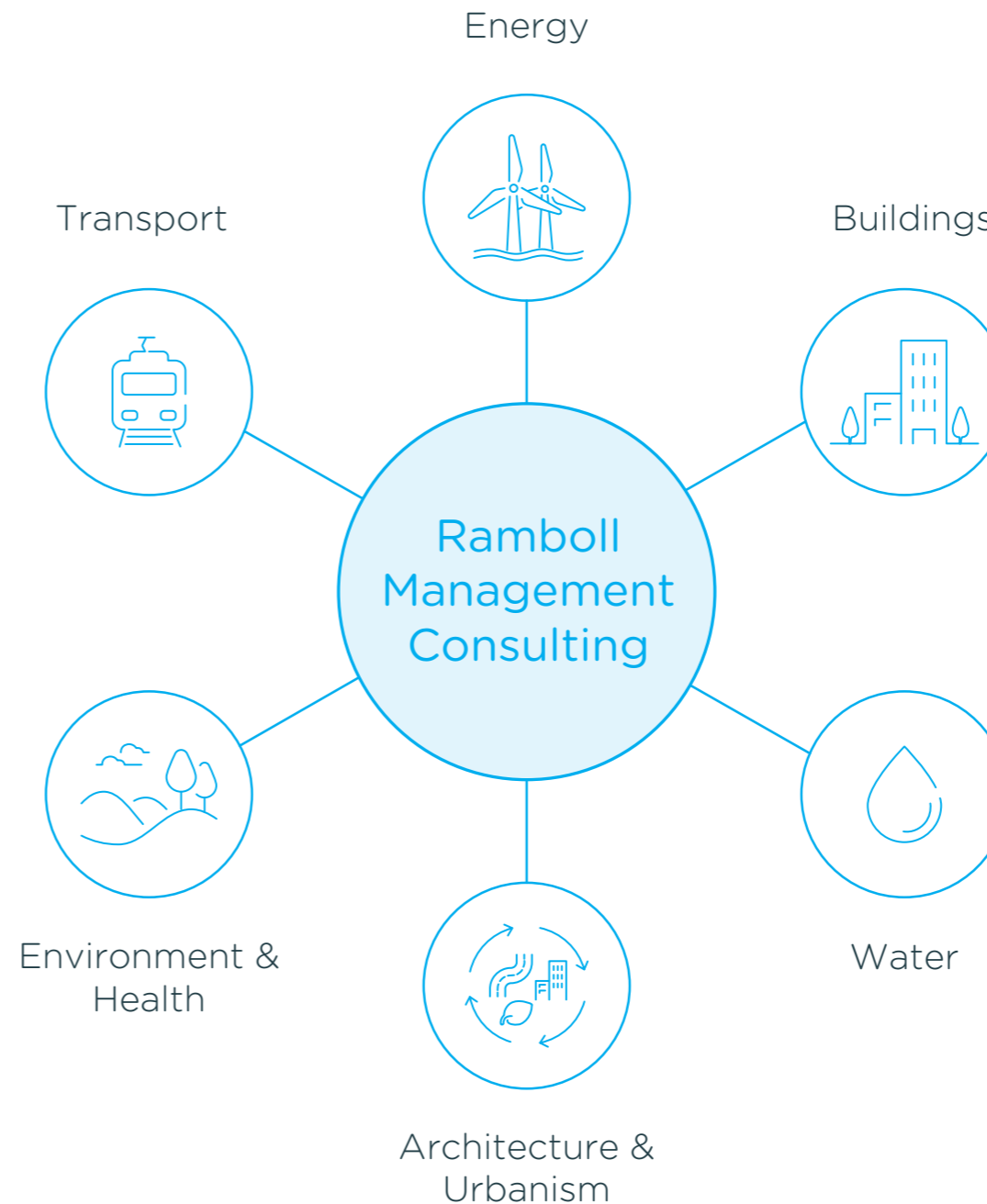
# Ramboll is navigating social sustainability across sectors

We deliver strategic advisory empowering public and private sector clients to improve social impact and proactively drive social change.

We combine strong expertise within social and organisational science and business consulting with specialised knowledge on human rights and sustainable finance and economics. We apply these together with sectoral insights into public policy, urban development and infrastructure, industry and manufacturing, as well as energy and utilities.

Our social sustainability expertise is built on a 75-year legacy of serving as trusted advisors to our clients.

Our teams of management consultants are supported by colleagues from Ramboll's six additional divisions allowing for sector-specific solutions and insights.



# We place a special focus on social impact

In order to drive social change, organisations must be able to understand the impact of their operations, products, programmes and policies.

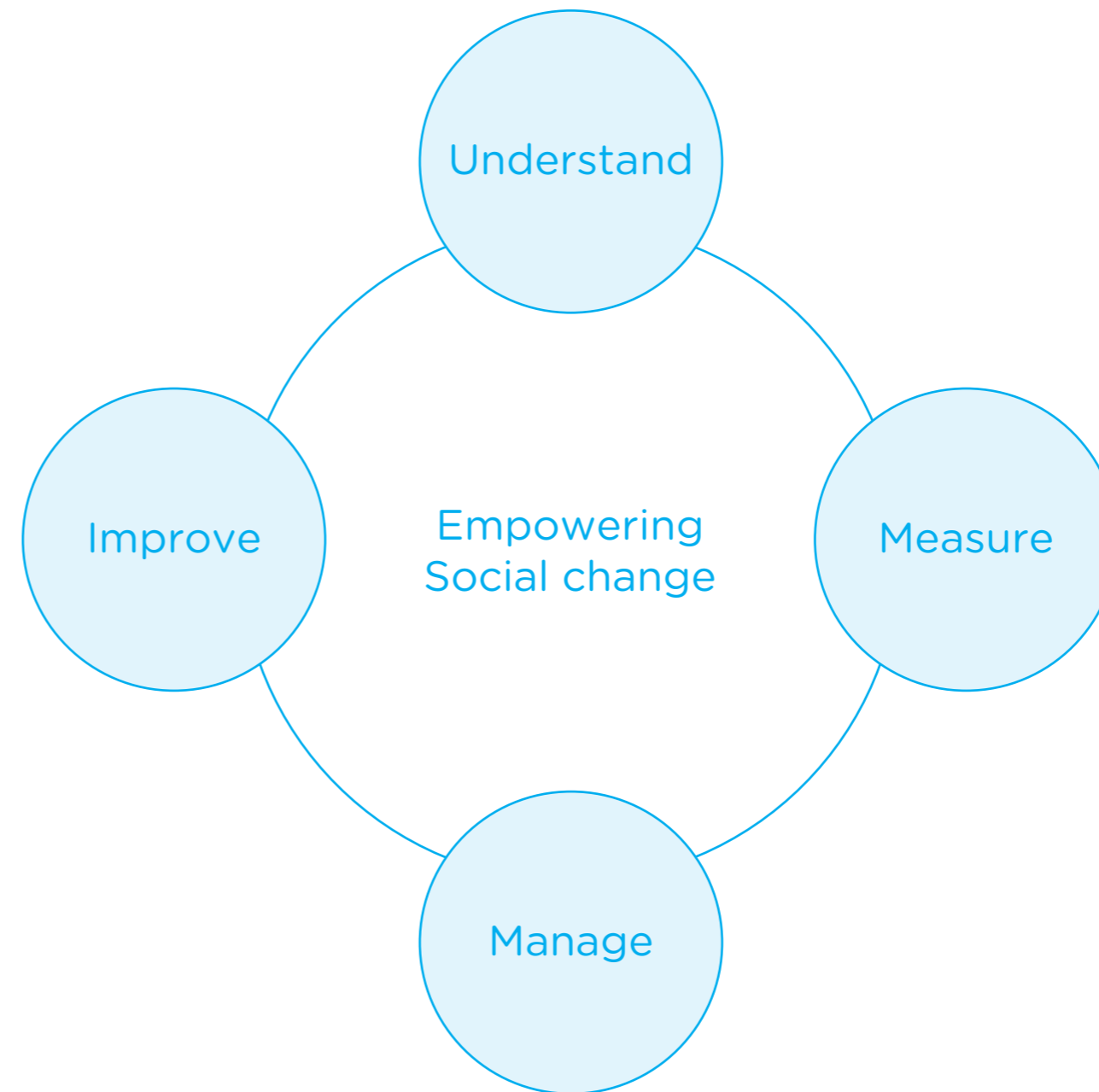
Empowering organisations to understand, improve and manage the positive and negative impact of our actions is a key component of our social sustainability advisory.

Our approach to understanding, managing and improving social impact is:

**Stakeholder-oriented:** engaging stakeholders is key for creating buy-in and establishing partnerships for driving significant and lasting societal impact

**Context-specific:** identifying and prioritising the potential positive and negative impacts in a given specific context

**Data-driven:** using the best available data and state of art methodologies for assessing and valuing social impact to enable and empower decision-making.



# And help improve social impact in...

We strengthen and protect social equity and structures through our engagement with forward-leaning actors across sectors.

We recognise that social impact is created through collective commitment, partnerships and investments across sectors.

We facilitate that social inclusion and value are integrated into investments, design and implementation of all major systems, infrastructure and business practices.

We empower public and private sector clients to deliver greater social impact through strategic advisory – designing and implementing social impact investments and programmes, and assessing the resulting social impact.

## POLICY

Policy is a means for delivering large-scale social impact. For policy-makers, social sustainability means designing policies, programmes and interventions that take account of social impacts and aim at reducing or mitigating possible inequalities.

## CITIES

For the local governments and construction-sector companies that design and build our cities and infrastructure, social sustainability brings a stronger focus on urban liveability, social interaction and inclusiveness.

## BUSINESS

All businesses have a social impact. It is the impact their operations and market activities already have on people: towards their own employees, through their value chains and in the communities where businesses are operating.

## INVESTMENTS

Investments are key to driving social impact. For financial institutions and investors, social sustainability means valuing social impact and understanding the social return of investments.



# How to design policy for social impact

With climate change, environmental hazards and energy shortages, it has become increasingly clear that the responsibility to ensure social cohesion is not limited to areas of 'traditional' welfare policy, but is also a responsibility within other policy domains, including the climate and the environment.

National governments and agencies need to design and implement policies, regulatory frameworks and programmes to build resilience and ensure a just transition to a green recovery and inclusive growth.

Holistic and efficient governance structures, regulatory frameworks and programmes are crucial for creating the right conditions for businesses, citizens, communities and society at large to embrace and engage with needed changes and to prosper through the transition.

## Anchoring policies and investments in evidence on what works

To design policies, programmes and interventions for social impact, policy-makers need to draw on empirical evidence on what effects the green transition are likely to have on society and on what actions have been proven to mitigate these effects. We help assess existing evidence to ensure that policy-makers are equipped to design policies, programmes and interventions that will ensure a just transition.

## Engaging stakeholders and rights-holders in policy processes

Policies, regulation and programmes need to address the most pressing needs, particularly of those involved in and affected by the transition to a greener economy. We make these perspectives and needs visible through public consultation and facilitating dialogue with and among the most relevant stakeholders. This ensures that everyone's voice is heard, and that decision-makers can make informed policy decisions.

## Ensuring effective prioritisation and distribution of funds

It is imperative that funding is utilised to bring maximum social impact. We guide policy-makers in allocation, management, distribution, monitoring and impact assessment, and we provide clear recommendations on how to ensure that money is being channelled to those regions, sectors and members of society who are most affected by the transition to a greener economy.

# How to manage the social impact of doing business

Investors, consumers, financial institutions and governments are increasingly becoming interested in public and private companies' influence on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues, including the protection of human rights.

Hence, companies are navigating in a complex landscape relating to social impact. They need to act and operate in a way that promotes the health, safety and well-being of key stakeholders.

The EU Taxonomy distinguishes between three objectives, which companies need to adhere to:

- Decent work
- Adequate living standards and well-being
- Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies

By understanding the positive and negative social impact of doing business, companies can take actions to improve social impact – reducing the financial and reputational risk of doing business while also strengthening brand and corporate attractiveness.

## Empowering responsible business conduct

Companies need to ensure respect for human rights and the environment within their business and value chains. We help companies to conduct human rights due diligence and assess the social risk of doing business and to implement minimum safeguards principles in their policies, training, and reporting.

## Creating safe, inclusive and engaging workplaces

Companies need to create and strengthen organisations that welcome, fully include and promote equality for people of all genders, backgrounds, and identities. We help companies with diversity & inclusion strategy, target-setting, surveys, analysis of talent acquisition and development data, and diversity & inclusion training.

## Delivering substantial social contributions in local communities

Companies are increasingly implementing programmes focusing on giving back to local communities where they have their operations. We help companies design, implement and track their vision for positive impact on people and planet in their local communities and beyond.

# How to create cities for social impact

Socially sustainable cities consider the conditions required for their inhabitants to live a decent life and experience positive physical and mental well-being - while balancing the needs of the individual, the community and the broader society.

Changes to the built environment have the power to catalyse social changes. Social impact in cities is delivered through:

- Affordable housing and liveable buildings
- Inclusive public spaces and institutions
- Connected neighbourhoods and cities.

Social value in the built environment has become increasingly important in recent years as a response to rising environmental concerns and the erosion of social cohesion.

To manage social value within cities, we need to understand and address positive and negative social impact. This should be an integral part of the megatrend of transforming urban areas and urban lifestyles to more sustainable ways of living.

## Engaging citizens for inclusive city planning

Engaging decision-makers, stakeholders and local communities, especially underserved communities, is essential for planning and designing places, communities and cities for diversity and inclusion. A deep understanding of the needs and perspectives of the local communities is fundamental to driving positive social change. To ensure this, we help design and facilitate inclusive processes for engaging different stakeholders and communities.

## Defining and aligning on shared social value

Creating cities for social impact involves partnerships across local governments, investors and communities. Planning for social impact and delivering social value involve strategic alignment of ambition. We deliver insights and metrics into the strategic alignment, and help facilitate scenario building and testing towards a shared vision and ambition for social impact for individuals, communities, and the broader city.

## Partnering for collective impact

Achieving social impact requires structured and reinforced initiatives, supporting a shared vision for social impact across actors within the city or communities undergoing changes. We help establish the foundation for collective impact - facilitating the ongoing learning, alignment and integration of action within the partnership.

# How to invest for social impact

The financial sector plays a crucial role in our society's ability to cope with growing stress on social cohesion through investment in social infrastructure. Social impact investment is one way of channelling more capital toward actions for social change.

With social impact investment, institutional investors are providing financing to organisations addressing social needs with the explicit expectation of a measurable social, as well as financial, return.

International sustainability regulation forms an enabling environment for social impact investing, with institutional investors and foundations facing increased pressure to incorporate ESG factors into their investment decisions.

Social bonds, social impact partnerships and grants are different ways of investing for social impact, forming public and private partnerships for funding innovation and for scaling innovative solutions.

## Catalysing and scaling social innovation

Not all social interventions are proper cases for social investments. The problem, the target group, the intended intervention, and the expected impact need to be clearly defined for the organisation to be prone to social investment. We help investors and foundations to define investment strategies and to screen possible investments based on thorough needs assessments and feasibility studies.

## Navigating social impact partnerships

Entering social impact partnerships requires clear and aligned ambitions, targets, roles and responsibilities – as well as mutual trust and a legal and financial framework. We work as intermediators in social impact partnerships, working together with both investors and investees to align on targets and contractual terms.

## Valuing and monetising social impact

A key challenge in social impact investing is capturing the social return on investment and attributing monetary value to social impact. We help investors and investees monitor and assess social impact and monetise social value based on existing metrics and econometric modelling.

# Delivering impact for clients - examples of work



## 'Social' climate action plans

Together with CONCITO and C40, Ramboll developed a package of tools and materials to address the social dimension of climate action plans, which are easily applicable for local authorities in their efforts going forwards.

The package will be spread as an integrated part of the municipal DK2020 for local climate action.



## A foundation of just transition

Ramboll helped Laudes Foundation build a deeper understanding of the issues of gender and social equity following from the decarbonisation within the built environment in Europe. This insight will serve as a platform for investment into systemic changes to foster social equity, health and well-being.



## The monetary value of social

Ramboll was assigned by the city of Stockholm to assess the financial value of 14 social efforts of early interventions funded by the city's social investment fund.

By assessing the value of these interventions the aim is to show the return of early intervention to invest the municipality's resources as sensibly as possible.



## Big social impact programme

Ramboll helped a globally leading brand develop a strategy for a global social impact program. Ramboll facilitated a process to focus the program on specific target groups and to define key intended outcomes and impacts for children, educators, local communities, partner organisations, and the company itself.

# Who we are

Ramboll employs 17,000 people globally delivering bright ideas for sustainable change.

We are present in 35 countries and combine local experience with a global knowledge-base, constantly striving to achieve inspiring and exacting solutions that make a genuine difference to our clients, end-users, and society at large.

We work across the following markets: Buildings, Transport, Water, Environment & Health, Energy, Architecture & Landscape and Management Consulting.

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