



REDUCING
HOUSING
INEQUALITIES

Contextualized pathways to **Reduce Housing Inequalities** in
the green transition

Housing inequalities in the green transition. Preliminary findings

Roberta Cucca - NMBU (Norwegian University of Life Sciences)



Co-funded by
the European Union



UK Research
and Innovation



State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI

The ReHousIn project is co-funded by the European Union. The UCL's work on this project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee. The ETH work on this project is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under the Swiss government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee. Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, European Research Executive Agency (REA) and other granting authorities. Neither the European Union nor the granting authorities can be held responsible for them.



REDUCING HOUSING INEQUALITIES





REDUCING
HOUSING
INEQUALITIES

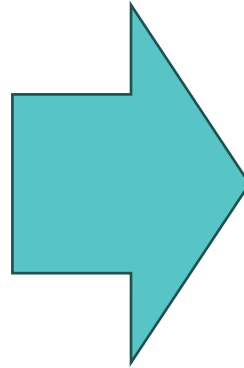
Nature-Based Solutions



Energy retrofitting

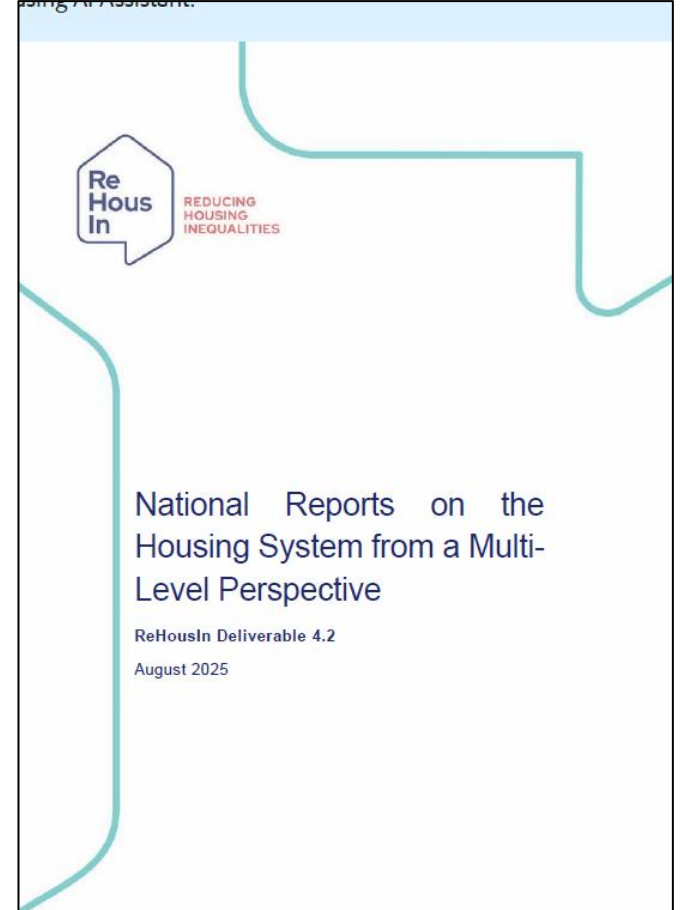
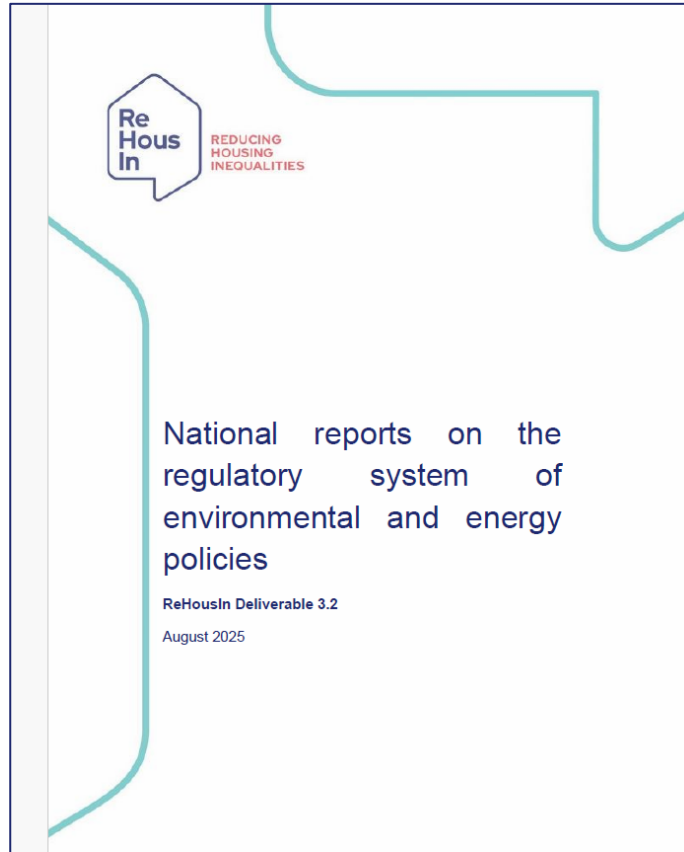


Urban Densification



Housing Inequality:

Housing and neighbourhood quality
Housing accessibility and affordability
Displacement



Housing Inequalities and Green transition:

● Opportunities

- **Energy efficiency:** Retrofitting can lower energy expenses and improve living comfort, especially for low-income households.
- **Sustainable urban form:** Densification and NBS promote access to infrastructures and climate-adapted cities.
- **Improved quality of life:** Greener, more walkable environments enhance health, well-being, and social cohesion.
- **Potential for inclusivity:** If well-regulated, these policies can expand affordable housing, prevent sprawl, and support equitable energy transitions.

Housing Inequalities and Green Transition:

● Challenges

- **Affordability and access to energy retrofitting:** Funding schemes and market-driven developments often exclude low-income groups.
- **Displacement risks:** Retrofitting, densification, and green amenities can trigger rent increases and gentrification (Renoviction)
- **Uneven benefits:** Limited standards or poorly targeted measures reduce social and environmental impact.
- **Trade-offs in land use:** Space competition between NBS, housing, and infrastructure can constrain affordability and urban quality.
- **Maintenance and implementation cost transfer:** Higher costs of green and energy-efficient solutions are often passed on to residents.

Context matters!

Impacts are context-specific (policies, housing regimes, climate strategies, etc), and depending –among others– on cities' size, attractiveness and location.

In each country we are examining these questions in a large, a medium and a small city.



Reduce Housing Inequalities



1. Socio-economic demand structures

- Degree of **Housing Commodification**
- **Housing Pressure**
- **Tenure Structure**

Shape who can access green housing benefits, with **highly commodified housing systems and high-demand urban markets amplifying unequal access** to environmental benefits and affordable housing



2. Spatial environmental configuration

- Green Infrastructure Distribution
- Geography of Climate Adaptation Investments
- Pre-existing Environmental Inequalities

Unevenly distributed green infrastructures or green upgrading across urban areas often **reinforce** existing socio-spatial **inequalities** or **drives gentrification dynamics**



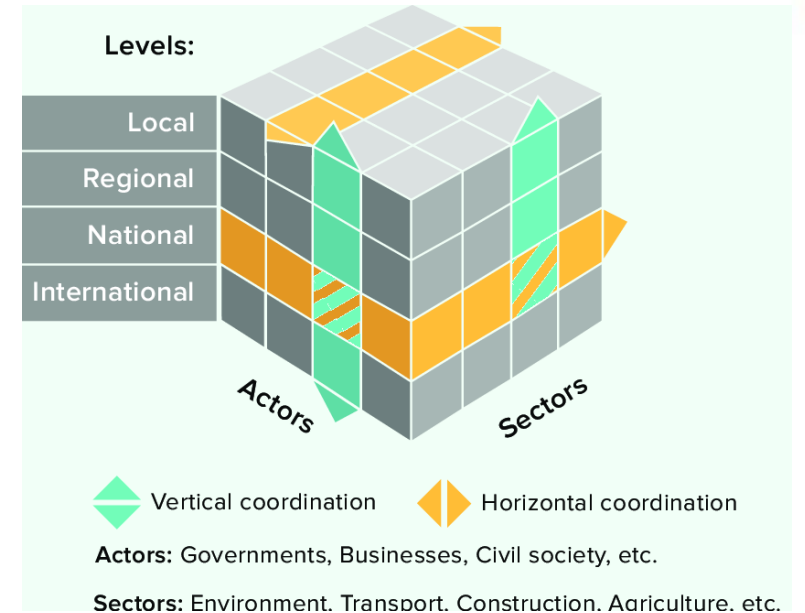
Oslo

3. Policy and Multilevel governance

- **Policy Integration** Across Sectors
- Redistributive **Housing Strategies**
- **Multi-level** Governance Capacity

Across countries:

- climate and environmental policies tend to be designed at national or supra-national level, while housing governance remains strongly segmented and often locally implemented
- **coordination** between **levels** of governance is **uneven (Silos)**
- **green targets** are rarely translated into redistributive housing strategies.

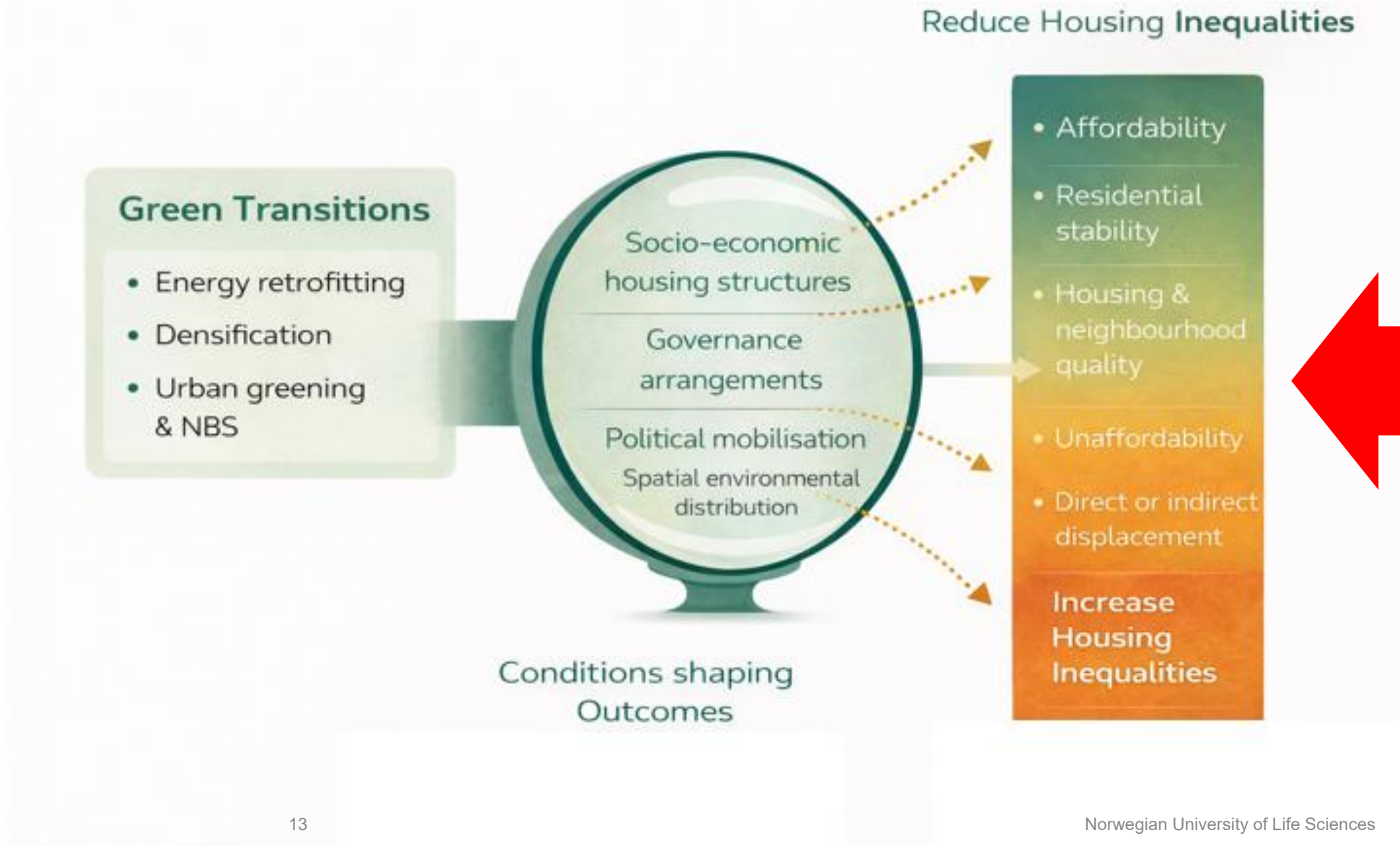


4. Local Politics– awareness and decision-making process

- Strength of Civil Society Mobilisation
- Local Policy Innovation Capacity
- Participatory Governance Mechanisms



Across cases, the social effects of green housing policies are **shaped by** the degree of political mobilization, awareness and **civic engagement** surrounding housing and environmental justice



Housing Inequality - Dimensions

Affordability

★ Opportunities	⚠ Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy-efficient housing reduces long-term housing costs• Publicly subsidised retrofitting can support low-income households• Non-market housing provision in densified areas can buffer housing cost increases• Densification can reduce mobility poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upfront retrofit costs transferred to tenants or buyers• Increased property values following environmental upgrading• Densification driven by high-end development• Unequal access to subsidies and green incentives for energy retrofitting• Decrease social housing following densification or energy retrofitting

Housing Inequality - Dimensions

Displacement (Direct and indirect)

★ Opportunities	⚠ Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental upgrading can improve living conditions and housing stability in vulnerable neighbourhoods• Inclusive densification (social housing) can expand access to central locations• Anti-displacement policies linked to green strategies can protect existing residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renovictions and retrofit-induced rent increases• Green gentrification linked to urban greening and NBS• Indirect displacement through neighbourhood revalorization through densification

Different Housing Inequality Vulnerability

Neighbourhood and Housing Quality

★ Opportunities	⚠ Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved housing comfort and energy performance• Enhanced environmental quality and climate resilience• Increased access to green and blue infrastructure• Better urban liveability, accessibility and health outcomes• Upgrading of ageing housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uneven spatial distribution of environmental improvements• New quality gaps between renovated and non-renovated housing• Small apartments, overcrowded conditions and loss of green in densified areas• Low –quality energy retrofitting

Take-home messages

1. **Integrate housing and climate policies from the start.** Green transition strategies must be coordinated with housing policies to avoid unintended inequality effects.
2. **Protect affordability and residential stability.** Environmental upgrading should be accompanied by rent regulation, social housing provision, and anti-displacement measures.
3. **Consider local housing systems and contexts.** The social outcomes of green policies depend on housing regimes, governance structures, and local socio-economic conditions.
4. **Ensure that environmental benefits are socially distributed.** Green investments should improve living conditions for vulnerable households, not only increase property values.



REDUCING
HOUSING
INEQUALITIES

Thank you!



Co-funded by
the European Union

Learn more:

www.ReHousIn.eu



[ReHousIn - Reducing Housing Inequalities](#)



Norwegian
University of
Life Sciences