



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Evaluation of the role of the UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management from 1996 to 2015

Management Response

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of the role of the UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management from 1996 to 2015		
Period of Review:	1996-2015		
Date of Evaluation Report:	31 July 2016		
Approved by:	Director, Programme Management Unit	Date <i>15.08.2016</i>	Signature <i>[Signature]</i>
Cleared by:	Florian Steierer, OiC, Forests, Land and Housing (FLH) Division	8 August 2016	<i>[Signature]</i>
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Recommendation 1:

Improve the funding and in-kind contributions by pursuing a stronger and more sustainable financial commitment by the MSs to the CP programme. Attract new funding opportunities by promoting a participatory approach among the UNECE MSs and extending networks and partnerships with organizations that support development in the housing, urban development and land management sectors in the UNECE region and beyond.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, noting that fundraising for financial and in-kind contributions to the preparation of Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management (further: Country Profiles) is already organised on regular basis. However, extrabudgetary funds received so far are lower than requested and do not cover all the costs associated with the preparation of the Country Profiles. In-kind expertise and level of qualification do not always match the needs.

The UNECE will establish Country Profiles as projects implemented through multi-agency partnerships, which include other UN agencies, such as, for instance, UNDP offices in recipient countries, UN-Habitat; other international organisations, such as, for instance, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This approach was already piloted during the preparation of the Country Profiles of Uzbekistan (2014) and Armenia (2015) for which interagency partnerships were developed with UNDP national offices. Templates

of letters to prospective partner organisations and of Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) to be signed with partner organisations were prepared; the templates can be used also for future Country Profiles.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Housing and Land Management Unit will update by June 2017 the guidelines for the preparation of Country Profiles by adding to the procedure of their preparation an option for the establishment, when appropriate, of an interagency partnership for the production of the Country Profiles and a requirement for fundraising for extrabudgetary funds and in-kind support.

The Housing and Land Management Unit will submit in October 2016 and on regular basis thereon requests for financial and in-kind expert support to member States.

Recommendation 2:

Utilize internal UNECE resources and broaden existing partnerships with experts and interested parties. Promote more efficient online communications, and peer-review mechanisms, for the sustainable production of the CP analytical studies, broadening the networks and partnerships to attract additional experts, volunteers and pro-bono contributors.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, noting that while attempts will be made to involve other UNECE divisions to cooperate on the production of Country Profiles through the provision of experts for the preparation of sub-chapters of Country Profiles, this involvement may not be always possible due to the high work load of experts in UNECE divisions.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Forests, Land and Housing Division will send (in December 2016) a communication to UNECE divisions with information on the Country Profile programme and an invitation to cooperate on the production of Country Profiles through the provision of the expertise to the Country Profile planned for 2017-2018 (Kazakhstan and Second Country Profile of Belarus).

The Housing and Land Management Unit will update the guidelines for the preparation of Country Profiles by June 2017 by adding to the procedure for their preparation the use of innovative communication technologies: video conferences with participation of experts drafting Country Profiles' chapters and online document storage for information exchange, including relevant background documents and Country Profiles draft chapters. The revised guidelines will be presented at the 78th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management as an official document for the Committee's decision.

Recommendation 3:

Discuss the relevance and benefits of aligning the goals and objectives of the CP programme with SDGs, the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management, and other important international agreements and frameworks. By doing so (most importantly with SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda), and supporting their implementation, the CP exercise will emphasize cross-sectoral linkages, including those related to the environment, climate change, natural and human-made disaster risks, urban transport, ageing, and other topics. Incorporating the Monitoring Framework to measure the progress towards the fulfilment of SDGs would increase the chances of the programme attracting additional donor funding and in-kind contributions.

Management Response:

The UNECE accepts this recommendation and will update the guidelines for the preparation of Country Profiles by revising the Country Profiles publication structure.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Housing and Land Management Unit will update the guidelines for the preparation of Country Profiles by June 2017 by revising the Country Profiles publication structure to ensure the publication addresses issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, especially the Urban SDG 11; the draft New Habitat Agenda, Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, Global Housing Strategy, the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management 2014-2020, and other important international agreements and frameworks as listed in the evaluation report text. The revised guidelines will be presented to the 78th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management as an official document for the Committee's decision.

Recommendation 4:

Embed the CP programme with the necessary impact indicators, and follow-up and monitoring mechanisms. Upgrade project documentation in light of SDG 11 framework indicators. Develop closer partnerships with UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Initiative, the OECD Territorial Reviews, and other similar programmes for the establishment of common benchmarks for local, national and global monitoring, which would be crucial for the creation of an integrated monitoring mechanism in the housing, urban planning and land management sectors.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, while noting that the development of a global set of indicators for the monitoring and review of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is being elaborated by the UN in a coordinated manner.¹

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Housing and Land Management Unit will include the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda indicators for urban related SDGs for monitoring the progress towards achieving the SDGs in October 2019 into the guidance document for the preparation of the Country Profiles to ensure all the efforts by all the UN agencies are taken into account.

UNECE will establish closer partnerships with UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Initiative, the OECD Territorial Reviews, the UNECE/ITU Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities and other similar programmes by June 2017 through exchange of letters and will work on regular basis with the partners on the development of a common framework for monitoring the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda at local, national and global levels.

Recommendation 5:

The CPs should guide individual MSs towards the fulfilment of "equal treatment and non-discrimination, especially for women", by the **broader application and monitoring of gender issues** in the CP analytical studies and subsequent recommendations in accordance with the programme objectives and broader UN rules and regulations.

Management Response:

UNECE agrees with this recommendation and will update the guidelines for the preparation of Country Profiles to ensure the broader and more extensive discussion of gender issues in the future Country Profiles reflecting relevant UN rules and regulations.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/indicators>

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Housing and Land Management Unit will update by June 2017 the guidelines for the preparation of Country Profiles by including a separate chapter with a more detailed explanation on how the gender issues must be addressed in Country Profiles to reflect relevant UN rules and regulations. The revised guidelines will be presented at the 78th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management as an official document for the Committee's decision.

Recommendation 6:

Update the guidelines for producing the CP reports by: a) eliminating inefficient procedures regarding the formal approval of the draft CP report by the CHLM prior to its printing and publication; b) limiting the HLM Unit's involvement in preliminary and research missions, and limiting the number of international experts taking part in CP research missions; c) formalizing the fundraising activities by setting up effective and sustainable measures for the funding of the CP programme; d) if relevant, including more detailed information on construction standards, energy efficiency, resilience to natural disasters, spatial and urban planning for housing, new and available technologies, and building-up and development of BIM.

Management Response:

UNECE partially agrees with the recommendation, noting that it would not be appropriate to regulate in the guidelines the number of *HLM Unit staff and international experts participating in preliminary and research missions*. A number of experts involved in each Country Profile reflect specific technical topics to be addressed which require technical knowledge. Some staff members are also authors of chapters so they participate as experts in missions. There are also sometimes political sensitivities in discussions of some topics with governments which require the presence of a division director or otherwise head of unit at the negotiations on the content of the publication during preliminary missions.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Housing and Land Management Unit will update guidelines for the development of Country Profiles by June 2017 by (a) eliminating inefficient procedures regarding the formal approval of the draft CP report by the CHLM prior to its printing and publication; (b) including a provision for fundraising activities; (c) including a recommendation for more detailed information on construction standards, energy efficiency, resilience to natural disasters, spatial and urban planning for housing, new and available technologies, and building-up and development of BIM. The revised guidelines will be presented at the 78th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management as an official document for the Committee's decision.

Recommendation 7:

Creation of a web-tool (portal, forum, cloud or database) **for the exchange and sharing of information and best practice examples** of legislation, policies, plans and strategies that were developed based on CP recommendations.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, noting that the online web portal protected by a password already exists. It is maintained by the Housing and Land Management Unit and is used by experts involved in the production of Country Profiles for sharing background information and draft chapters of the publication.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The Housing and Land Management Unit will establish by October 2017 a webpage open to public at the HLM website with online information on best practice examples of legislation, policies, plans and strategies that were developed based on CP recommendations and the status of the implementation of Country Profiles' recommendations.