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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

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Item 7(a) of the provisional agenda

#### Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2020 and 2021

#### Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative

## United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Terms of References

### Note by the Bureau of the Committee

#### *Summary*

The ECE is one of the 16 United Nations agencies who are members of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC), an initiative coordinated by ITU, ECE, and UN-Habitat, to achieve SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) 11. ECE activities within the U4SSC initiative are implemented as part of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management programmes of work. U4SSC members update the Initiative Terms of References when necessary.

This document contains the updated draft Terms of References of the U4SSC.

The Committee is invited to endorse the updated draft Terms of References of the U4SSC.



## I. Background

1. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) have developed an internationally agreed definition for a smart, sustainable city: “A smart, sustainable city is an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, the efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects”.
2. The United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Initiative was launched on 18 May 2016 at the Forum on “Shaping Smarter and More Sustainable Cities: Striving for Sustainable Development Goals”.
3. The U4SSC comprises UN agencies, entities, and programmes (hereon called “the Partners”) and has been functioning since its inception as a global platform for knowledge-sharing on smart city practices, guidelines, and frameworks.
4. The U4SSC is also open for participation to experts, including policymakers, city representatives, industry, standards, and academia, supporting the development and implementation of studies, publications, and projects within the U4SSC.
5. The U4SSC advocates for public policies to encourage the responsible use of innovative urban technologies and tools, including ICTs and digital technologies, to facilitate the transition to smart, sustainable cities (SSCs).
6. The U4SSC developed a set of international key performance indicators (KPIs) for smart, sustainable cities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and is promoting its implementation at the global level.
7. The U4SSC Implementation Programme (U4SSC-IP) contributes to the dissemination of information on activities of the U4SSC, including the U4SSC KPIs. The U4SSC-IP is managed by an IP Leader, who coordinates the work with the view to build partnerships for smarter and more sustainable cities worldwide. The Leader of U4SSC-IP may contribute to the development and implementation of the U4SSC Action Plan. Detailed information on the U4SSC-IP is available in Annex I to this Terms of References.
8. The U4SSC meetings (including annual meetings) are open to all interested participants.
9. The U4SSC Terms of References are proposed by the Secretariat<sup>1</sup> and approved by the Partners.
10. The U4SSC workplan is:
  - (a) Compiled by the secretariat based on inputs by the Partners, the Leaders of the Thematic Groups, and the IP Leader;
  - (b) Further reviewed by the Management Team<sup>2</sup>;
  - (c) Presented and discussed at the Annual Meeting; and
  - (d) Agreed to by the Partners at the Annual Meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Responsibilities of the U4SSC Secretariat are defined in Section G of this document; the list of the Secretariat members is in Annex III.

<sup>2</sup> Responsibilities of the U4SSC Management Team are defined in Section D of this document.

## II. U4SSC Objectives and Activities

11. The U4SSC Initiative has the following objectives set in accordance with the mandate of the U4SSC Partners:

- (a) To develop practical guidance for decision-makers and other key stakeholders on smart, sustainable cities;
- (b) To discuss the role of digital technologies, including information and communication technologies (ICTs) and new emerging technologies, such as Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and artificial intelligence in facilitating the transition to SSCs;
- (c) To encourage cooperation and collaboration among relevant smart city stakeholders;
- (d) To provide an accessible and neutral platform for knowledge-sharing on SSC-related issues;
- (e) To support the ongoing development and implementation of the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators for SSCs and to harmonize methodologies and approaches to assess cities' performance. It is expected that the U4SSC KPIs may be refined in keeping with urban development needs and other UN system-wide initiatives (e.g. Urban Monitoring Framework);
- (f) To stimulate the development of master plans and other strategic documents for cities wishing to transition to SSCs;
- (g) To encourage cities to incorporate smart and sustainable city elements into their sustainable urban development strategies;
- (h) To develop policy papers, recommendations, and guidelines on SSCs;
- (i) To organize awareness-raising campaigns on smart, sustainable city-related topics;
- (j) To help achieve and monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 11 on cities and human settlements, as well as the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, and other international commitments, including related ITU Resolutions, UNECE or U4SSC Partners initiatives as well as the UN system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development;
- (k) To develop and implement projects and programmes to support cities to become smarter and more sustainable;
- (l) To fundraise and mobilize resources to support the activities of U4SSC and its Implementation Programme; and
- (m) To raise awareness to promote the U4SSC and its activities.

## III. Partners of the U4SSC and their responsibilities

12. All agencies, entities, and programmes of the United Nations system are eligible to become Partners of the U4SSC upon expressing their intent. The Secretariat maintains a list of current Partners which is attached to this Terms of References as Annex II.

13. The U4SSC Partners form the U4SSC Partners Board. The Partners Board of the U4SSC is responsible for:

- (a) Proposing candidates for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the U4SSC and appointing them;

(b) Revising the Terms of References (when needed) in collaboration with U4SSC Management Team and approving it. The Partners Board can also provide its approval of decisions electronically in between U4SSC Annual meetings, which can be organized virtually or physically; and

(c) Ensuring that the objectives of the U4SSC are met.

14. Individual Partners are encouraged to:

(a) Conduct KPI evaluations for cities and prepare smart, sustainable cities evaluation reports, cities profiles, factsheets, snapshots, and case studies, also in collaboration with other stakeholders;

(b) Actively contribute to the development of U4SSC deliverables, implement the workplan, and encourage their dissemination through relevant events/webinars; and

(c) Support the U4SSC secretariat when required.

#### **IV. Management Team and its responsibilities**

15. The U4SSC Management Team includes the Chairman and Vice-Chairs who are experts nominated by the Partners and appointed by the Partners Board.

16. The Chairman is responsible for:

(a) Framing the agenda for the U4SSC Annual meetings in consultation with the U4SSC Secretariat; and

(b) Collaborating with the Partners Board and U4SSC Secretariat for identification of future areas of work and underscoring any major issues for discussion (if any).

17. The Chairman in collaboration with the Vice-Chairs:

(a) Oversees the overall functioning of the U4SSC;

(b) Contributes to the development of the U4SSC workplan together with U4SSC Thematic Group Leaders, Partners and U4SSC Secretariat. The U4SSC Action Plan is submitted for approval to the U4SSC Partners at the annual meetings;

(c) Provides guidance to U4SSC participants and Thematic Groups Leaders, including in the case of any dispute or overlap between scopes of the deliverables;

(d) Promotes the work of the U4SSC at the international and regional level; and

(e) Encourages smart, sustainable city stakeholders to join the U4SSC.

18. The main function of the Vice-Chairs will be to support the Chair in matters relating to the work of the U4SSC in case if the Chair is in his/her absence at meetings.

#### **V. Leaders of the U4SSC and their responsibilities**

19. The work of the U4SSC is carried out by designated Leaders of Thematic Groups who organize work on specific topics and organize the preparation of specific deliverables (reports, studies, etc.) as agreed during the U4SSC annual meeting or as approved electronically by the Partners Board. The Leaders are technical experts who are appointed by U4SSC Co-Chairman in consultation with U4SSC Secretariat.

20. The responsibilities of the Leaders are:

(a) To propose the development of specific deliverable(s) linked to the subject areas of the U4SSC;

- (b) To contribute to the U4SSC work plan, to develop a timeline of the deliverables, to coordinate its implementation, and to inform the U4SSC Secretariat accordingly;
- (c) To select experts and compose a working team for preparing the deliverable(s). The experts will be identified through calls for experts and vetted by the U4SSC Secretariat together with the Management Team. The U4SSC participants will be invited to provide their inputs in the deliverables before their approval;
- (d) To develop a feasible schedule for the deliverable(s) they are responsible for, including a realistic work plan and the calendar of e-meetings;
- (e) To take the meeting minutes for each e-meeting held for their deliverable(s) and upload them regularly to the Initiative web-based “SharePoint” site (<https://extranet.itu.int/sites/itu-t/initiatives/U4SSC/SitePages/Home.aspx>);
- (f) To harmonize the inputs provided on each deliverable;
- (g) To clearly define the titles, objectives, and scope of each activity and deliverable proposed, including, but not limited to, policy papers, frameworks, issue papers, etc.;
- (h) To promote cooperation with the U4SSC Chairman and other Leaders, when possible, to find synergies and work together on common topics;
- (i) To provide inputs to the Partners Board based on the discussions conducted on the deliverable(s) they are in charge of;
- (j) To ensure that the smart, sustainable city guidelines, policy recommendations, campaigns, and smart city action plans are aligned with, inter alia, existing international standards, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the New Urban Agenda, the Urban Monitoring Framework, the Paris Agreement, Connect 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and the UN system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development;
- (k) To promote the U4SSC through events and campaigns and their organizations’ networks and events;
- (l) To support and contribute to the overall objectives of U4SSC; and
- (m) To inform their respective organizations of their involvement in the U4SSC initiative.

## **VI. U4SSC Participants and their responsibilities**

21. The Participants in the U4SSC are experts representing interested national and local organizations and agencies, international organizations, cities and their associations, NGOs, private sector, academia and independent experts.

22. The responsibilities of the participants are:

- (a) To select the deliverable(s) they wish to contribute to and inform the U4SSC Secretariat and the leader(s) accordingly;
- (b) To follow closely any global discussions on SSCs which may be relevant to the work of the U4SSC and its deliverables;
- (c) To bring their expertise on diverse subjects within the smart and sustainable urban development field to the discussions of the deliverable(s) they are working on;
- (d) To participate in meetings or events of the U4SSC, as appropriate;
- (e) To encourage smart city transitions through other events, conferences, and training;

- (f) To support bottom-up initiatives on SSCs that are ICT enabled; and
- (g) To collect relevant case studies and good practices on smart, sustainable city-related topics for the development of proposed deliverables.

## **VII. Responsibilities of the U4SSC Secretariat**

23. ITU (Telecommunication Standardization Bureau), UNECE (Housing and Land Management Unit) and UN-HABITAT jointly operate as the Secretariat of the U4SSC with their available resources and work programmes. The allocation of responsibilities within the U4SSC Secretariat is expected to be evenly distributed. The scope of the Initiative depends on the availability of resources to support the Secretariat and the work within the Initiative. The main responsibilities of the U4SSC Secretariat are to:

- (a) Coordinate U4SSC activities;
- (b) Assist with the organization of the work on the deliverables and the U4SSC-IP;
- (c) Assist the consolidation and publication of the deliverables, if required;
- (d) Review the official communications and press releases for the U4SSC;
- (e) Support the organization of the annual meeting of the U4SSC, where the mandate, Chairman, and Vice-Chairs are presented, and activities of the whole initiative are discussed and approved. Annual meetings of the U4SSC are expected to be open to all interested stakeholders; and
- (f) Bring the results of work to attention and action, as appropriate, of relevant UNECE, ITU, UN-Habitat or other U4SSC partners' intergovernmental bodies.

24. In order to join the Initiative, potential partners and other participants are invited to contact the Secretariat by email.

## **VIII. Additional provisions**

25. Participation in the U4SSC is free of charge.

26. The travel medical insurance (if required), travel expenses, visa, accommodation, and living expenses are the responsibility of the individual or his/her respective agency.

27. Participation in the U4SSC is voluntary and not remunerated. It does not carry any expectation of employment with ITU, UNECE, UN-Habitat, or any of the other participating U4SSC Partners.

28. The U4SSC Chairman, Vice-Chairs, and Leaders' tenure is two years. Subsequent renewal or appointing of a new Chairman, Vice-Chairs, or Leader is possible.

29. All U4SSC Partners are entitled to feature their official logos on the Initiative website, publications, issue papers, policy papers, guidelines, and action plan prepared within U4SSC.

30. The U4SSC Partners will also consider and approve requests for the establishment of U4SCC (Country/City) Hubs. Such Hubs will work in collaboration with one of the U4SCC Partners. The U4SCC (Country/City) Hub will connect the private sector ranging from start-ups to multi-nationals as well as universities and research institutions. The U4SCC (Country/City) Hub provides a unique platform to disseminate and promote the deliverables developed by U4SSC including the U4SSC KPIs; and to accelerate cooperation between the public and private sector through concrete areas of knowledge transfer and projects in cities. The objective of the U4SCC (Country/City) Hub is to facilitate the digital transformation in

cities and communities, while enabling technology and knowledge transfer. Each Hub is expected to develop an annual report reporting on the activities carried out annually.

31. The main website of the initiative is hosted at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/ssc/united/Pages/default.aspx>. This website includes the Terms of References of the U4SSC, U4SSC introduction booklet, the links to U4SSC events, deliverables, and other results of work.

32. An intranet site (SharePoint) has been created by ITU to facilitate the communication between Partners and other participants.

33. The participants, Leaders, Vice-Chairs, and Chairman shall not use their participation in the U4SSC for their personal or corporate gain or benefit and shall respect confidentiality until the results of work are completed.

34. All the material published based on the work of the U4SSC will be the intellectual property of ITU, UNECE, UN-Habitat, and other participating UN agencies, funds, and programmes.

35. All unpublished material within the U4SSC is the intellectual property of ITU, UNECE, UN-Habitat, and other participating UN agencies, funds and programmes. They cannot be reproduced or published without the written consent of the U4SSC Secretariat.

36. The logo of the U4SSC is also intellectual property of ITU, UNECE, UN-Habitat, and other participating UN agencies, funds, and programmes. It can be used only after receiving the required approval of the U4SSC Secretariat.

37. Leaders and participants invited to contribute on behalf of U4SSC in other events and/or present U4SSC work in fora, journals, conferences, etc. should inform the U4SSC Secretariat in advance to ensure smooth coordination of work.

38. The U4SSC Secretariat should be informed immediately of any shared or replicated work in other forums, publications, or organizations, to avoid conflicts of interests or legal liabilities in the future.

39. The U4SSC Partners and the U4SSC Management Team can speak on behalf of U4SSC and are encouraged to inform the U4SSC Secretariat on their relevant activities.

40. Participants or other interested parties are encouraged to promote the work of U4SSC within their networks.

41. Any fundraising activities that will be coordinated by the U4SSC Implementation Programme will have to be carried out together with the U4SSC Secretariat.

42. The Partners nominate representatives to the Secretariat. Names of focal points in the U4SSC are in Annex III.

43. By participating in the U4SSC, it is implied that each participant, Leader, Vice-Chairs, and Chairs agree to the Terms of References in this document with no exceptions.

## Annex I

### U4SSC Implementation Programme

1. The U4SSC Implementation Programme (U4SSC-IP) supports the implementation of projects and builds partnerships, which aim to build smarter and more sustainable cities worldwide.
2. The IP Leader is bound by the responsibilities listed in the U4SSC Terms of References (ToR). According to the ToR, the U4SSC Implementation Programme supports the promotion of the implementation of the U4SSC, i.e., it helps to disseminate information on activities of the U4SSC Partners and it does not coordinate, in any way, activities of these members who implement their own projects and activities under the Initiative. The IP Leader has no role in the coordination of UN U4SSC related projects, which remain under the direct responsibility of UN staff.
3. Election and Representation:
  - The IP leader is elected on a personal basis at the U4SSC annual meetings; the organization it represents has no role in the leadership;
  - As for all other leaders, the IP Leader is expected to change on a regular basis, at least biennial, to allow participation of other Partners.
4. Relationship with the U4SSC Secretariat and other UN organizations:
  - The IP Leader cannot represent any of the U4SSC Partners in any meetings or events;
  - The IP Leader cannot use the logo of the U4SSC Partners in any publications or events he/she is responsible for without the prior consultation and written agreement of the U4SSC Secretariat;
  - The IP Leader cannot appoint any individual to any U4SSC-related role and activity, without the prior consultation and consent of the U4SSC Partners;
  - Any event to be organized by the IP Leader should be prepared and co-organized with at least one of the U4SSC Partners.
5. Additional roles and responsibilities
  - The IP Leader should fundraise for and support activities he/she is responsible for;
  - The IP Leader should regularly report to the U4SSC Secretariat on achievements and implementation of the programme;
  - He/she should convene at least quarterly e-meetings with the Secretariat to keep them updated on the fundraising and implementation of activities.

## Annex II

### U4SSC Partners

The following organizations are currently partners of the U4SSC:

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU);
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE);
- The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);
- The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);
- The United Nations Commission for Africa (UNECA);
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC);
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat);
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
- The United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI)
- The Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
- The United Nations University - Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV);
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP).

## **Annex III**

### **U4SSC Partners**

Ms. Cristina Bueti, ITU; Mr. Robert Lewis-Lettington, UN-Habitat; and Ms. Gulnara Roll, UNECE, are the points of contact for the U4SSC Secretariat.

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