




MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of UNECE Forum of Mayors		
Period of Review:	2019 - 2022		
Date of Evaluation Report:	01/07/2022		
		Date	Signature
Approved by	Chief, a.i., PMU Nicolas Dath-Baron	15.02.2023	
Cleared by:	Director of Division Paola Deda	09.02.2023	
Prepared by:	Director of Division Paola Deda	09.02.2023	

Recommendation 1:

Formally establish the Forum of Mayors. It represents an innovative initiative that (i) responds to the role of mayors and cities as a positive and growing force on the global stage; and (ii) ensures the relevance and effectiveness of UNECE.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM established the Forum of Mayors (FoM) as a Team of Specialists under the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM). The next FoM is expected to be held in Geneva in October 2023.

Responsibility: Housing Unit (HU), Forests, Land and Housing Division (FLHD) of UNECE

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 2:

Further strengthen the connection of the Forum with the work of CUDHLM by attaching it to the annual sessions of the Committee and finding a complementary narrative but keeping the Forum's own programme and agenda.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM decided that the FoM will be convened annually in Geneva immediately prior to the session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM).

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 3:

Keeping the tradition of providing a report to inform the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) is a good practice and could be maintained.

Management Response:

UNECE does not accept the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

The CUDHLM and EXCOM considered this option but then decided against it.

Responsibility: N/A

Timeline: N/A

Recommendation 4:

Have informal meetings with the representatives of municipalities to define the theme of the Forum's meetings. Consider organizing the presentations specifically around progress towards the SDGs.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM decided to establish a bureau of the FoM to guide the work of the Forum, including deciding on the theme. Consultations with a group of experts will be organized in any case by the secretariat to explore options, if the chairpersons agree.

Responsibility: HU, CUDHLM

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 5:

Provide more information at the Forum on impact measurement to strengthen the role of the Forum as a crucial instrument to keep mayors and cities focused on the 2030 Agenda by, for example, presenting existing UNECE tools for sustainable urban development, measuring progress toward smart sustainable cities, developing urban SDG strategies, trade-offs, implementation, monitoring, participation, etc.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM approved the objectives and scope of the FoM as described in the draft decision contained in ECE/EX/2023/L.4¹

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The FoM agenda/programme will be agreed by July 2023 and will reflect the decision taken by EXCOM as described above.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: 31 December 2023

¹ The draft decision is available at https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/item%206c_ECE_EX_2023_L.4_ENG.pdf

Recommendation 6:

Consider hiring one dedicated staff to strengthen the secretariat. In this respect, the Government of Italy has recently provided support through a JPO at the P2 level to help with the Forum. If the experience proves successful, it should be considered to make this position a regular budget one.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

A staff at the P2 level was recruited in October 2022 as part of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme with funding from Italy. If the experience proves successful, the division will try to keep this position irrespective of the funding source.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 7:

Strengthen the connection with the work of other UNECE subprogrammes and divisions. The above-mentioned JPO position, together with the recently established fully dedicated Regional Adviser position, should contribute to improving cross-collaboration with other divisions and the quality of UNECE services.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM made no recommendation or decision in this regard. The JPO and the Regional Adviser will in any case continue to promote cross-divisional cooperation on matters related to cities.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: Closed and implemented as of 13 January 2023

Recommendation 8:

Develop terms of reference that clearly define the role and mandate of the Steering Committee as a crucial instrument for providing an “institutional structure” for the Forum and guiding its activities. The terms of reference would also further clarify the relationship of the Forum with both member States and the secretariat.

Management Response:

UNECE does not accept the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM established the FoM as a Team of Specialists, hence with its own Bureau. In accordance with ECE/EX/2/Rev.1 (“Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE”), the Forum of Mayors will be supported by one Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons.

Responsibility: N/A

Timeline: N/A

Recommendation 9:

Strengthen the current city selection system that fully corresponds with the intergovernmental nature of UNECE. Further develop objective selection criteria to ensure alignment with the work of CUDHLM and maximize impact. The limit of one city per country is a pragmatic approach. In the future, an increased number could be considered if sufficient resources are available. In any case, the selection should allow to mix new with previous participants.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM established specific selection criteria and selection process. The selection is expected to be completed by May 2023.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: 30 June 2023

Recommendation 10:

Organize the Forum on an annual basis, at least until it becomes a well-known event and frequency could be then reconsidered. The Forum is a work in progress with immense opportunities to build up a record of action beyond sharing experiences. A yearly event would allow the Forum to “keep the momentum” and provide a response to a quickly evolving context by offering a neutral platform to bring stakeholders together.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

In line with ECE/EX/2/Rev.1 (“*Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE*”), at its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM decided to hold the FoM in 2023 and 2024. It also decided that a review will be undertaken before recommending extension.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: Closed and implemented as of 13 January 2023

Recommendation 11:

Organize the Forum two or three times in Geneva and then consider alternating every other year. This would minimize any selection problems, facilitate participation, ensure economies of scale, strengthen the Forum’s character and connection with United Nations processes and stress mayors as another layer of diplomacy.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM decided the first two sessions will be organized in Geneva, as per draft decision contained in ECE/EX/2023/L.4.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: Closed and implemented as of 13 January 2023

Recommendation 12:

Allow space to discuss political matters that could happen on the sides of the Forum (e.g., non-official declarations or discussions, side events, etc.), but with consideration to include more political discussions and outcome in the formal session (together with the presentations with images). It is necessary to keep the relevance of the initiative by providing a venue for mayors' deliberations and initiatives. This will also strengthen ownership and visibility.

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

No decision was made by EXCOM at its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 in this regard. Political matters will continue to be addressed during side events to the Forum, as in the past edition.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 13:

Consider including a "global segment" in the Forum's future sessions so as to contribute to the global vision of the future of cities. The selection of participants should be based on clear criteria to ensure that their engagement benefits all parties, including the other Regional Commissions of the United Nations.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

At its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM invited Regional Commissions to organize an "interregional segment" back-to-back with the Forum to include mayors from all the regions, to exchange good practices among peers and with other interested stakeholders. Details of the interregional segment should be discussed with all interested stakeholders and should be shared well ahead of the Forum with all UNECE member States.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: 30 June 2023

Recommendation 14:

Consider formalizing the position of "Patron" of the Forum to increase its visibility and the participation of urban stakeholders beyond the usual UNECE constituency.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

With a view to promoting awareness and harnessing support for the Forum of Mayors, at its 126th meeting on 13 January 2023 EXCOM decided that the Chairperson and the two Vice-Chairpersons, in consultation with the secretariat, should designate an "Advocate of the Forum" for each Forum. Such person shall not be a mayor and shall have a distinguished record of exemplary support for the objectives of the Forum of Mayors and the CUDHLM. Gender and geographic diversity in the designation of the "Advocate of the Forum" should be ensured. The "Advocate of the Forum" should be invited to give a statement during the Forum.

Architect Norman Foster was appointed "Advocate of the Forum" for 2023, as per draft decision contained in ECE/EX/2023/L.4.

Responsibility: HU, FLHD

Timeline: Closed and implemented as of 13 January 2023

