



Webinar: Informal Settlements: Formalization and Build Back Better Projects?

Date: 14 June 2024

Time: 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and 2-3.30 p.m. CET

Online (via Microsoft Teams)

Background

Over the past 35 years, informal housing development has become an urgent issue in the UNECE region, with more than 50 million people living in informal settlements by 2019¹, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe. These settlements most often suffer from limited services, inadequate housing, insecure tenure, and low incomes, affecting some of “societies” most vulnerable populations.

UNECE, in collaboration with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), initiated research to address this issue, which led to significant publications such as "[Self-Made Cities](#)" in 2009 and "[Formalizing the Informal](#)" in 2015. The issue aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing the need for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban settlements.

In 2019, UNECE published the "[Guidelines for the Formalization of Informal Constructions](#)". In 2022, the "[COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region](#)" was released to address both pandemic-related and pre-existing challenges.

This webinar will gather experts to:

- Share experiences
- Review progress made in formalization and build-back-better initiatives
- Explore ways to overcome remaining challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, with particular focus on SDG 11 (on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

We invite experts in land and informal settlement management to join the discussions on the challenges and the solutions put forward to overcome them (benefits, opportunities and longer-term implications).

¹ UNECE, "Guidelines for the Formalization of Informal Constructions", 2019.

Programme

The webinar will kick off with introductory presentations by Dr. Chryssy Potsiou, a Professor at the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA); Paola Deda, the Director of UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division; and Steven Nystrom, Principal at NewStream Companies.

The webinar is divided into two parts. The first part will showcase case studies from Albania and Greece. The second part will present case studies from Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Each part will include a Q&A session and open discussions, providing an interactive platform for participants.

The webinar will be moderated by Alexander Hedjazi, a Deputy Director at the International Affairs of the University of Geneva.

Part 1: 10am - 12pm

Time CET	Contribution title	Speaker
15 min	Opening remarks	Chryssy Potsiou, Professor at NTUA, Honorary President, International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), WPLA Bureau member
15 min	UNECE's relevant activities	Tea Aulavuo, Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in UNECE
15 min	WPLA and the study on ecosystem and security in land administration	Pilar Verdejo Garcia, Registrar of the Property of Paterna (Valencia), WPLA Vice-Chair
15 min	Introduction to relevant reports and guidelines	Steven Nystrom, Principal NewStream Companies, USA
5 min	Introduction by Moderator	Matteo Tarantino, Assistant Professor at the Università Cattolica di Milano and lecturer at the University of Geneva, Switzerland
15 min	Albania	Doris Andoni, Independent housing consultant
15 min	Greece	Chryssy Potsiou
10 min	Discussion and closing	Speakers and participants

Part 2: 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Time CET	Contribution title	Speaker
5 min	Introduction by Moderator	Alexandre Hedjazi, Deputy Director, International Affairs; and Senior Lecturer, Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva
15 min	Kyrgyzstan	Bakytbek Djusupbekov. Deputy Chairman at the State Registration Service
15 min	Montenegro	Radmila Lainovic, Director General of Housing Ministry of Spatial Planning, Urbanism and State Property
15min	North Macedonia	Sonja Dimova, State Advisor for geomatics at the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre
15 min	Serbia	Darko Vucetic, Director for development and innovation, Republic geodetic authority
10 min	Discussion and closing	Speakers and participants