December 2020

UN-Habitat Publications Committee

Terms of Reference

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

The Publications Committee aims to monitor and ensure production of high quality, strategic external publications, issued by or for UN-Habitat to an external audience. The Committee will accept, accept with recommendations or reject proposals for major publications. Once a proposal is accepted, the commissioning office is responsible for ensuring the publications is produced in accordance with the Publication Guidelines.

The Publications Committee will take the following principles into consideration when deciding whether to approve a proposal:

- **Relevance and originality:** If a publication relates to the Strategic Plan, Flagship Programmes and other institutional and strategic communications goals, fills a gap in knowledge about a specific topic, positions UN-Habitat as a thought-leader in a specific field, is aligned to agency's theme or event and does not duplicate other reports
- **Quality:** Whether the proposal includes specific plans to ensure the publication is well-written, academically sound and technically accurate, includes plans for internal and external peer review and editing and incorporates design and layout plans.
- **Impact:** Originating offices will need to outline the intended impact, audience and dissemination plans and over time measure the actual impact following dissemination, including web analytics provided by the Communications Section.
- **Funding/cost-effectiveness:** If the originating office has a total estimated budget, whether the publication is resourced including staff capacities and if it will be a digital publications or printed in hard copy.

Proposed publications to be approved by the Committee

Proposals for UN-Habitat's major publications to be considered by the Committee will include:

- Flagships such as the World's Cities Report
- Regional urbanization synthesis reports such as the State of African Cities Report
- Technical reports (specialized, in-depth studies on a range of different subjects, particularly on new and emerging topics where internal normative guidance is still evolving (e.g. smart cities, sustainable urban development finance, migration, etc)
- Policy oriented reports prepared with major external partners (e.g. UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, WRI, OECD) where alignment of messages is critical

The Publications Committee is not required to consider proposals for publications listed below. The issuing office is responsible for ensuring the above principles are considered and that the publications follow the Publication Guidelines (Annex 1).

- Handbooks, Guidelines, Manuals and Toolkits (reviewed and approved by branch head)
- Working Papers (a special category presenting the findings/analyses of an ongoing research, and/or are titles with a very limited audience.)
- Internal communication (bulletins, instructions or circulars for staff)
- Preparatory documentation, project documents and conference papers
- Technical reports intended as technical advisory documents or to fulfil project
- accountability requirements
- Donor reports, evaluation reports, annual and biennial reports
- Policy briefs, strategies, position papers, discussion papers, policy statements and fact sheets
- Marketing materials

Publications Committee scope of work

The Publications Committee will:

- Approve an organization-wide, annual publication work plan based on proposals available at the start of the year which will be updated with revelant approved proposals which come in throughout the year
- Monitor the progress of implementing the annual publications work plan to check on timely publication of approved material
- Review, provide feedback on and accept or reject proposals at the conceptualization stage.
- Identify publications with potential news value including original data which warrant extra promotion or a launch
- Advise on production
- Provide guidance on publication strategies

Composition and working modality

The Committee will be chaired by the Deputy Executive Director deputised by the Directors of the External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division or the Global Solutions Division. The following divisions will nominate members, considering gender and thematic coverage, to serve for two years:

- Global Solutions Division
- External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division (including Communications and Media, Data and Analystics)
- Regional Programmes Division

Members who are unable to attend will be required to delegate their responsibilities. Originating branches/ sections will identify publication focal points to help ensure compliance.

Frequency

The Publications Committee will meet quarterly as following the schedule below,

1. Early February – to agree on proposals to include in the annual publications plan. Proposed publications to be submitted via branch/section two weeks before the meeting.
2. May – the deadline to submit concept notes will be the end of April.
3. Early September - the deadline to submit concept notes will be August.
4. Early December – to review the implementatio of the annual publications plan and impact. The deadline to submit concept notes will be the end of October.

Depending on volume of proposals or the urgency of a request, email reviews may also take place.

Meetings will be announced via email one month prior to the meeting date. Minutes will be shared on email a week after each meeting.

Timetable

	TASK	RESPONSIBLE	ACTION & DELIVERABLE
1	Submit Publication Proposal Form and concept note 2 weeks before meeting	Originating unit	Publications Proposal delivered to the Publications Committee
2	Proposal review	Publications Committee	Review and approve, deny or suggest revisions or modifications to proposal
3	Revisions if required	Originating unit	Revise proposal
4	Final review if required	Publications Committee	Final review and clearance of revised proposal (can be by email)
5	Once publication finalized and before publishing, an email to the Publications Committee from division director or branch coordinator confirming publication's conformity with guidelines and info about the Report, launch date etc	Originating Unit	Division director or branch coordinator sign off publication before publishing and provide a summary of key findings
6	Editing, Production and publishing	Communications Section (if requested)	Edit, design, assign ISBN if required and publish document
8	Promotion and launch	Originating Section/ Communications Section	Promote findings through press releases, stories, launch event(s), email blasts and social media

9	Publish and archive publication	Communications Section/ Knowledge Management Unit	Publish on the online repository; archive print copies
10	Impact assessment	Origination office/ Communications and Media Section	Document impact and report back to Committee at the end of the year

Responsibilities

Originating Branches

- Submit annual publication plans and concept notes to the Publications Committee.
- Undertake requested revisions from Committee.
- Secure budget for production, promotion and dissemination.
- Prepare content, including selecting, briefing and managing authors, providing photos, illustrations and maps.
- Substantive editing and peer review to ensure quality and relevance of manuscripts
- Ensure the integrity and accuracy of data, references, citations and verified sources.
- Ensure copyright compliance for non-UN-Habitat content.
- Provide email from branch/office giving final clearance before publication with key findings.
- Send requests for design, printing, and distribution of approved publications to ERSKI.
- Document and report on the impact and audience at the last meeting of the year.

Communications and Media Section, ERSKI

- Act as the Secretariat to the Publications Committee.
- Advise on format or medium.
- Provide copy editing, design and publishing services at a cost.
- Identify news and other visibility opportunities.
- Verify publications adhere to publishing guidelines and branding.
- Coordinate printing, distribution and promotion of publications.
- Advise on copyright, licensing and co-publishing arrangements with the Legal Unit.
- Assign ISBN numbers for approved publications.

Knowledge and Innovation Section, ERSKI

- Provide guidelines and advice on citation and referencing.

Legal Unit, Office of the Executive Director

- Review and approve all co-publishing agreements.

ANNEX 1 – Guidelines for Publications

Planning and Budgeting

Every branch/office should submit key publication proposals available at the beginning of the year for review and approval to enable the Committee to have an overview of the annual publications plan. Proposals which require approval during the year can be cleared at subsequent meetings.

Content

Standard procedures must be followed as the best layout, graphic design and proofreading cannot compensate for poor content. Poor-quality material, which is factually inaccurate, lacking originality, poorly structured, plagiarised or grammatically incorrect should not be approved for publication by the division/office director or branch coordinator.

When the proposed content warrants publication but the audience is too limited to justify the cost and/or funding is not available, the Committee can suggest it is published as a Working Paper.

Authorship

Most UN-Habitat publications are drafted by staff members. When originating Branches/Offices select external authors, contributors, or consultants, proven writing skills are as essential.

Staff members and consultants paid to prepare content are not recognized as authors, their contribution may be recognised on the acknowledgements page. Where a government has been involved or is jointly responsible with UN-Habitat for preparation of a paper or a publication, the phrase below may be used on the cover and the title page: *"Prepared in cooperation with [the Ministry of ... of the Government of ...] [the name of the foundation] [name of the entity]"*

Editing

UN-Habitat's editorial style is based on the ***United Nations Editorial Manual Online.*** Substantive editing should be contracted out to professional editors, unless staff members with specialized skills are available.

Co-publishing

An external partner qualifies as a co-publisher if it is a trade publisher or a major international organization and/ or a research institute with a relevant publishing programme. In all other cases, the external partner contributing text or funds to a UN-Habitat publication is acknowledged as an author or as a donor.

All co-publications require a co-publication contract or agreement prepared by the lead publisher before any substantive work begins on the publication. At the planning stage of the project, Branches/Offices need to determine:

- The lead publisher
- What each partner contributes to the publication (i.e. research, drafting, prepress, translation, printing, distribution)
- The language (s) and publishing format(s), including print quantities based on a mailing list
- The sales potential of the publication (if a trade publisher is involved)
- Who pays for each of the costs associated with creating and producing a publication (cost sharing is an important element in a co-publication).

This information will be included in the contract that will therefore outline the contribution(s) and obligations of each partner and must be approved by the Legal Office.

Translation

UN-Habitat publications are mainly available in English and translation should be considered when the intended readership merits it and plans and costs included in the concept note. UN-Habitat welcomes translatations of global, regional and annual reports into official UN languages. For global reports, translation of executive summaries to official UN languages should be budgeted for. Regional and country specific titles should be published in the main local language of the target audience. Anything likely to be widely translated should have an English version. UN-Habitat can give permission for other organizations to translate its Reports but these should then include a disclaimer.

Copyright

Copyright is a legal concept giving the author of an original work exclusive rights to it for a limited period. UN-Habitat publications are prepared by an employee and/or a consultant within the scope of his/her employment. As such, the employer (UN-Habitat) and not the employee/consultant is the author and, therefore, the copyright owner.

In co-editions with external partners, UN-Habitat is the lead because it holds the copyright, provides most of the content, and handles subsidiary rights. Because of the United Nations' privileges and immunities, joint copyright between the United Nations and external partners (trade publishers or major international organizations and/or research institutes) is

usually not allowed. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis by OLA in New York.

Joint copyright is allowed between the UN entities) if all parties sign a co-publishing contract outlining the contribution(s) and obligations of each partner.

Assertion of copyright does not limit the dissemination of publications because the United Nations has adopted a Creative Common license developed specifically for IGOs that facilitates the reuse of non-sales publications (see details on: ***http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/***).

Use of copyrighted material

Originating units must ensure that complete references and acknowledgements for material obtained from other sources are made, whether the material is quoted directly, paraphrased, or modified. Written permission to use and/or modify a copyrighted material must be obtained.

Forewords

A foreword is a short text at the beginning of a publication written by someone other than the author such as an eminent personality, is always signed and places the publication in a broader context. Forewords of UN-Habitat titles will only be signed by the Secretary-General (Global/Flagship Reports) and the Executive Director. Forewords by the Executive Director must be approved by the Office of the Executive Director.

Co-publications with other UN entities and organizations may have forewords by the UN-Habitat Executive Director and the Head of the partner organization.

Prefaces

A preface is usually written by the author and explains how the book came about. A preface is not usually signed.

Mention of commercial firms

The names of commercial firms, other than research organizations and government-operated undertakings should not be mentioned in UN-Habitat publications except where:

- The author of a paper or article is affiliated with a firm – in which case this should be mentioned on the legal page.
- Credit needs to be given for a photograph or figure – used with permission from the firm.
- A study on a specific question must by its nature involve reference to specific firms.
- When a consultant is engaged to draft a report or other publication, authorship is not attributed to the consultant. A reference may be made on the acknowledgement page
- External firms have sponsored publications, or translations, or contributed to the publications process e.g. design and co-publications.

When the name of a firm is given in a publication, the originating branch/office will weigh the need to include a disclaimer stating that mention of any firm or licensed process does not imply endorsement by the United Nations.

ISBN Numbers

Flagship reports and technical reports will be assigned an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) or, for serials and periodicals, an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). Technical reports with less than 100 pages, evaluation reports, working papers, booklets and meeting proceedings will not be assigned ISBN number. ISBN numbers will only be issued for publications authored UN-Habitat.

Photos

Photographs must be relevant and follow UN ethical standards with appropriate captions and credit.

Maps

Maps should be obtained from the ***United Nations Cartographic Section***. If not, they must be checked and in conformity with UN maps and include a disclaimer indicating that the boundaries shown in the maps do not imply official endorsement by the United Nations.

Disclaimers

UN-Habitat publications must bear the standard disclaimer below on the copyright page.

> ***Disclaimer***
> *The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers of boundaries. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme or its Member States. This work is available open access by complying with the Creative Common license created for inter-governmental organizations, available at:* ***http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/***

When the translation included in a publication is not an official UN translation, the text below should be added to the disclaimer:

> *The [language] translation was funded by [name of entity/ Member State]. The text was translated by [name of translator]. Any queries will be handled by the translator who accepts responsibility for the accuracy of the translation.*

Production

The ***Brand Manual*** provides guidelines and templates on the look and feel for all publications for consistency and professionalism. Copy-editing, design and layout as well as proofreading are all essential parts of the production process and offices should contact the Communications Section to coordinate the provision of these services and with a time schedule for publication.

Formats and distribution Branches/Offices should prioritize digital formats and print-on-demand to minimize printing and shipping costs. Distribution plans for titles with limited target audiences should be developed at the planning stage and generally limited to launch events, workshops, EGMs and conferences etc

In addition to the online repository, two copies of each printed publication should be archived as official records.

Promotion

Reports with significant new findings can be marketed through media launches, press releases, email blasts, social media and opinion pieces. The Communications Section will coordinate the launch of strategic publications.

Flagship and major publication launches should coincide with major events e.g. WUF, WHD, WCD or UN days etc. Country documents should be launched jointly with relevant government authorities with media coverage. Local United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) and United Nations Communication Teams (UNCTs) can support launches and dissemination.

Evaluation

Expected outcomes (such as awareness raising, capacity building), performance indicators, benchmarks and means of verification must be defined at the planning and approval stage. Results may be assessed through post-publication quantitative and qualitative methods, including monitoring media coverage, citations, readers' surveys, web analytics and social media tracking.

For global and regional reports of strategic importance, evaluations conducted and managed by the Evaluation Unit should be budgeted for. Projects of USD 1 million and above are required, according to the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy (2013) and Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework (2016), to conduct an evaluation by external evaluator at the end of the project.

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