



UN-HABITAT

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESS RELEASE

Global experts start work on UN guidelines on people-centred smart cities

Strasbourg, France, 19 April 2024 — UN-Habitat convened a two-day experts working group meeting to begin drafting the first international guidelines on people-centred smart cities. Endorsed by all 193 Member States of the United Nations, the guidelines seek to fill global normative gaps in the domain of smart cities and digitalization.

The meeting was organized with the support of the French Government, Grand Est Council and Eurométropole de Strasbourg. The guidelines aim to inform the development of national and local smart city regulations, plans, and strategies, ensuring that digital urban infrastructure and data contribute to the sustainability, inclusivity, and prosperity of cities and human settlements while upholding human rights.

“Coming after the Global Digital Compact expected to emerge from the UN Summit of the Future, the guidelines will define how to achieve an open, free and secure digital future of all in the context of cities,” said Edlam Abera Yemeru, Acting Director of the External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division of UN-Habitat. “The guidelines provide a common language and reference point for what it means for smart city development to be people-centred, and the conditions and actors needed to ensure this,” she added.

UN-Habitat was mandated to develop international guidelines on people-centred smart cities through a resolution adopted at the second United Nations Habitat Assembly in June 2023. To steer the consultations and development of these guidelines, UN-Habitat assembled a global experts working group comprised of 31 experts nominated by Member States and approved by the UN-Habitat Executive Director.

“Hosting the first global experts group meeting for two days in the heart of the European Parliament was an incredible experience,” said Caroline Zorn, Vice-President of Eurométropole de Strasbourg. “Strasbourg has been proud to welcome brilliant and motivated people from different backgrounds for the sessions. With a strong and rich basis, we are ready to develop these guidelines on people-centred smart cities.”

The outcome of the first meeting will lay the foundation for further consultations and refinement with a wide range of partners including Member States, members of United Nations specialized agencies, national and international associations and organizations of local and regional governments authorities, international finance institutions, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector and

other stakeholders, which is expected to lead to the development of comprehensive and inclusive international guidelines shaping the future of smart cities worldwide.

For more information on the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities and UN-Habitat's initiatives, visit [UN-Habitat's website](#).

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About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit unhabitat.org or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

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