UN-HABITAT

Terms of Reference for the Experts joining

The Regional Consultations on People-Centred Smart Cities

1. Background

The Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly passed the **Resolution HSP/HA.2/L.4 on international guidelines on people-centered smart cities[1]**, requesting the UN-Habitat Executive Director to:

"...initiate the development of international guidelines on people-centered smart cities as a non-binding framework for developing national and local smart city regulations, plans and strategies, which would ensure that digital urban infrastructure and data contribute to making cities and human settlements sustainable, inclusive and prosperous and respectful of human rights, and to present them for consideration and possible approval by the United Nations Assembly at its resumed second session"

and

"...ensure an inclusive consultation, including through the existing regional and country offices of UN-Habitat, with Member States and members of United Nations specialized agencies, national and international associations and organizations of local authorities recognized by the United Nations, relevant United Nations organizations, international finance institutions, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, civil-society organizations, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, taking into account traditional knowledge, in order to inform the drafting process with best practices, guidelines and lessons learned from different contexts and at different scales."

2. Objective of the Regional Experts

The objective of the Regional Experts is to provide technical inputs to UN-Habitat ensuring a regional perspective is included in the development of the guidelines, with the ultimate goal of:

(a) Ensuring the equitable involvement and values of people, including women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and persons in vulnerable situations, and ensuring that digital and other new technologies help reduce spatial, economic, social and digital inequalities, overcome economic and social development challenges, and support respect for human rights for inclusive cities.

(b) Ensuring that urban digital infrastructure contributes to reducing the environmental impact of cities and minimizing the pollution and the consumption of natural resources caused by digitalization itself.

(c) Building the appropriate capacity and skills for people-centered smart cities, including by promoting digital literacy, education, and the training of the officials and technical staff of national, regional, and local authorities and governments in digital transformation, digital accessibility, data governance, smart city planning and digital public participation, among others, leaving no one behind.

(d) Facilitating appropriate multilevel digital governance to guide the development of people-centered smart cities, including data governance, management and use, system and data interoperability,

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[1] https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/06/2310561e.pdf

ethical considerations regarding technologies such as artificial intelligence, the privacy and human rights of individuals and communities, and appropriate collaboration frameworks between governments, the private sector, academia and civil society.

(e) Creating economic opportunities and an enabling environment through innovation and smart technologies, including reducing socioeconomic inequalities and fostering cities' shared prosperity.

(f) Centering smart city activities on people's needs by maximizing transparency as well as community participation, representation, and control.

(g) Safeguarding public trust by putting cybersecurity measures in place that protect data and infrastructure, including trusted, secure, and resilient digital infrastructure.

Following the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, UN-Habitat is calling upon Member States to collaborate and contribute with their national, regional, and local competencies to the development of the international guidelines. **Therefore, UN-Habitat has invited Member States to nominate one expert per country for each of the five regions[2].** The five consultations, one for each region, will take place in virtual modality on 19, 21, 26, 28 November and 5 December with additional in-person meetings based on budget availability and host.

3. Scope of work

The regional expert is officially nominated by a national government or a local government (in accordance and consultation with the national government) of the region at stake. He/she is expected to provide technical inputs on the key aspects related to smart cities specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities pertaining to the regional context. He/she will be involved in the review of the draft guidelines on people-centred smart cities. This involves examining the guidelines, participating in the online Regional Consultation Meeting, offering feedback and recommendations.

4. Required qualifications and expertise

The nomination of the regional expert will consider the following non-exhaustive areas of expertise, constituencies and criteria:

The nominated are representatives of:

(a) National, regional and local government representatives
(b) Representatives of relevant stakeholders' groups:
- Civil Society Organizations
- Business and Industry
- Foundations and Philanthropists
- Non-governmental organizations
- International organizations (including United Nations and international financial institutions)
- Scientific and Technological community

The nominated representatives would have expertise in digital urban transformation and smart cities, including the below areas of expertise, as appropriate:

- Capacity development and digital literacy
- Community engagement and participation through digital means
- Digital governance, standards and interoperability
- Digital transformation

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[2] Regions follow the United Nations' classification https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups

- Economic development and shared prosperity
- Smart cities
- Digital inclusion, equity and human rights
- Sustainable digital transformation and environmental sustainability

An illustrative list of areas of expertise and related rationale can be found in Annex I.

Finally, experts need to fulfill the following additional criteria:

(a) Hold an advanced university degree (master's or equivalent) in Business Administration (MBA), Finance, Economics, Electronic Engineering, Political Studies, Law, or any related field is required. A first-level university degree in combination with an additional two years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.
(b) Be nominated by a national or local government (in accordance and consultation with the national government)
(c) Proven track records in coordinating and managing projects, research, and initiatives.
(d) Working knowledge of English and good drafting skills

5. Roles and responsibilities

A key function of the Experts is to assist and advise UN-Habitat in:

(a) Providing feedback to the latest draft of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities
(b) Identifying relevant regional trends, challenges, and opportunities in making cities inclusive, sustainable, prosperous, and respectful of human rights leveraging digital technologies.
(c) Exchanging knowledge, lessons learnt, data, and information on policy development, projects' implementation, or other activities enabling people-centred smart cities approaches at regional levels.
(d) Advising on recent scientific research, digital technologies, participatory mechanisms, institutional frameworks, educational programmes, and standards, amongst others, for people-centred smart city solutions
(e) Providing guidance, technical comments, and recommendations to be considered in the global assessment titled "World Smart Cities Outlook" in the regional consultation

6. Terms of engagement

Participation in the regional consultation is voluntary and does not include remuneration.

11. Annex I

The table below provides an illustrative and non-exhaustive list of the areas of expertise the UN-Habitat Secretariat is looking for to develop international guidelines on people-centred smart cities. For each area, a list of sub-areas is provided as an example. Expertise in these areas and related sub-areas is necessary to develop guidelines that will address the considerations outlined in the Resolution HSP/HA.2/L.4

Cross-cutting themes	Sub-themes	Rationale
• **Digital transformation** • **Smart Cities**	- Digital infrastructures - Cybersecurity and ICT infrastructures protection - Data and privacy - Change management & digital transformation - Smart cities solutions - Financing to foster innovation - Safe and trustworthy deployment of digital technologies - Public procurement for innovation	- Ensuring that innovation and digital technologies are used to help cities and human settlements achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda through approaches which are respectful of Human Rights principles and aim to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda
• **Community engagement and participation through digital means Digital inclusion, equity and human rights** • **Economic development and shared prosperity**	- E-participation and digital services - Community engagement and participation - Digital solutions to reduce inequalities (targeting vulnerable and marginalized groups) - Digital economy and inclusive socio-economic opportunities - Inclusion and human rights	- Ensuring that digital technologies help reduce spatial, economic, social and digital inequalities and respect human rights; - Creating economic opportunities and an enabling environment through innovation and smart technologies; - Centering smart city activities on people's needs by maximizing transparency as well as community participation, representation and control;
Capacity development and digital literacy	- Digital skills development and literacy - Institutional strengthening: digital skills for public officials - Education and training - Knowledge sharing and collaboration - Research and Innovation in public and private sectors	- Building the appropriate capacity and skills for people-centered smart cities;
Sectoral themes	**Sub-themes**	**Rationale**

Sustainable digital transformation and environmental sustainability	- Climate change mitigation - Waste management - Water resources management - e-mobility - Land degradation and natural resources exploitation - Biodiversity conservation - Standards for sustainable digital transformation	- Ensuring that urban digital infrastructure contributes to reducing the environmental impact of cities;
Digital governance, standards and interoperability	- E-government architecture - E-government coordination and policy-making - Multilevel digital governance: interoperability, exchange, protection and cybersecurity - The regulatory ecosystem: strategies, rules and regulations - Transparency enhancing and governmental mechanisms optimization	- Facilitating appropriate multilevel digital governance to guide the development of people-centered smart cities, - Safeguarding public trust by putting cybersecurity measures in place that protect data and infrastructure;