

A Guide to Setting up an Urban Observatory

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Introduction

More than half of the world population is living in cities and the number is growing everywhere. Cities are suffering from an acute crisis that hinders their capacity to develop sound policy and provide much-needed services to their residents: a crisis of accurate, useful information. Lacking detailed knowledge and information on the demographic, economic, cultural, physical and environmental dynamics in their cities, many planners and decision-makers are operating in an environment of uncertainty, allocating resources to immediate and pressing issues rather than investing in progressive change over the long term.

Reliable, up-to-date information on a meaningful set of *indicators* – measurable attributes of local conditions, such as proportions of the population with access to basic services or the cost of housing in different parts of the city – and the means to turn collected information into good policies and urban plans are the antidote to the information crisis. Local authorities and organizations, however, have been hindered by a lack of capacity, particularly in developing countries, for the collection and assessment of data, for its transformation into useful information and for its broad dissemination. Many cities in both the developing and developed world also lack reliable, accurate and timely information collection mechanism for credible and consistent system of urban data collection.

Data are essential for city, country, region and global policy direction despite of other political dynamism of local to global policy planning and decision making process. Most of the cases data are used as:

1. Inappropriate scale of data aggregation for local relevance (e.g., gross domestic product);
2. Frequency of data release to inform timely decision-making (e.g., national censuses);
3. Inadequate data for specific policy need even at city level (e.g. youth employment)

National government's initiatives toward increased decentralization and localized decision-making, disaggregating urban data and understanding the dynamics within cities and it's overwhelming situation of ensuring the viability of urban areas, living condition vise e vie the health and progress of their populations.

Information is knowledge and knowledge is the key for any development as well as policy formulation. Informed policy is crucial for any city or country as it make the city more livable for the dwellers. It is important to have a mechanism to develop and collect data on locally relevant indicators, citizens and decision-makers acquire the knowledge they need to effect positive change. Doing so requires a concerted effort to institutionalize urban development monitoring systems. This guide describes the **urban observatory** model for urban data collection and analysis, developed by UN-HABITAT's Global Urban Observatory in partnership with cities around the world, and provides systematic guidance on set up an Urban Observatory, proactive coordination and effective urban monitoring system.

Chapter 1: The New Urban Agenda (HA) and Global urban Observatory (GUO)

1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), in Istanbul, Turkey. The New Urban Agenda indicators provide data on specific aspects of shelter, social development and eradication of poverty, environmental management, economic development and governance, with the aim of global monitoring for informed policy.

In 1997, UNHABITAT established the Global Urban Observatory (GUO) to help find scientific solution to the urban information crisis. Charged with generating “Better information for better cities”, the GUO initiated it’s partnership with local and national authorities in selected countries to develop system for urban data collection with a framework of local relevant as well as globally linked data.

With the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000, UN-HABITAT also began reporting on Member States’ progress toward Goal 7, target 7D: by 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. UNHABITAT requires reliable and up to date (time-bound) urban information that provides insights into differences in access to housing and basic services in the cities. Global Urban Observatory in partnership with cities around the world, and provides tips on how to set up and coordinate proactive, cooperative urban monitoring systems.

1.1: The MDG’s and the New Urban Agenda

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) adopted by the UN member states in the year 2000 are broad goals for the entire world. They address essential dimensions of poverty and their effects on people’s lives attacking pressing issues related to poverty reduction, health, gender equality, education and environmental sustainability. By accepting these goals, the international community has made a commitment to the worlds poor, the most vulnerable, in precise terms, established in quantitative targets.

In order to assist Member States realize the eight goals of the Millennium Declaration, the United Nations System has set numerical targets for each goal. Further, it has selected appropriate indicators to monitor progress on the goals and attain corresponding targets. List of 18 target and more than 40 indicator corresponding to these goals ensure a common assessment and appreciation of the status of MDGs at global, national and local levels.

The United Nations System assigned UN-HABITAT the responsibility to assist Members States monitor and gradually attain the “Cities without Slum” Target, also known as “Target 11.” One of the three targets of Goal 7 “Ensure Environmental Sustainability,” Target 11 is: *“By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 millions slum dwellers”*.

1.2: Global Urban Observatory

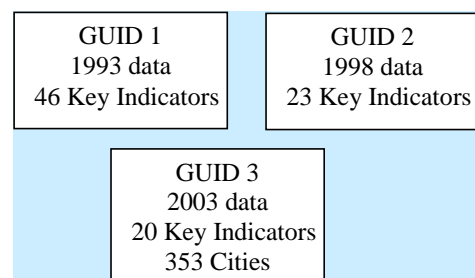
The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) addresses the urgent need to improve the world-wide base of urban knowledge by supporting Governments, local authorities and organizations of the civil society develop and apply policy-oriented urban indicators, statistics and other urban information. The GUO was established by UN-HABITAT in response to a decision of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements, which called for a mechanism to monitor global progress in implementing the New Urban Agenda and to monitor the global urban conditions and trends. The GUO works closely with all areas of UNHABITAT as well as national to local authorities to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The GUO programmes operate under the Research and Capacity Building Branch of UNHABITAT, which has the overall mandate to monitor progress on the New Urban Agenda and the Millenium Development Goals.

1.3: The Global Monitoring System

i. Urban Indicator Programme (UIP)

UN-HABITAT has been a pioneer organization in the collection of urban indicators. In 1991, it initiated the Housing Indicators Programme, focusing on monitoring shelter performances. It then became Urban Indicators Programme in 1993 in order to focus on a larger range of urban issues. The programme produced two main databases in 1996 and 2001 (Global Urban Indicators Databases I and II), presented at the Habitat II Conference and the Istanbul +5 which helped establishing regional trends in key urban issues. In the New Urban Agenda (result of the 1996 Habitat II Conference), Member States and the New Urban Agenda Partners have requested that UN-HABITAT continue monitoring urban conditions worldwide. They have also committed themselves to monitor their own urban conditions overtime and report on their trends regularly. The next Global Urban Indicators Database (III) will continue to address the New Urban Agenda key issues, with a specific focus on the Millennium Development Goals, particularly, its Target 11 on the improvement of slum dwellers.

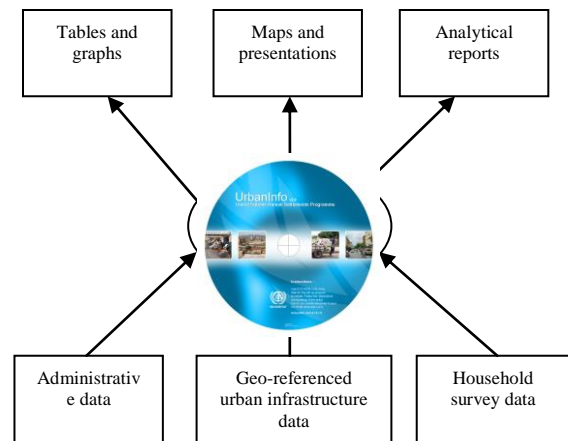
Since 2003, The Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID) has been updated yearly based on a more sustainable process of data collection by strengthening the capacities of countries to produce city and country aggregated data on urban indicators on a more consistent and permanent basis based country own census and household survey data. For this new phase, data will be collected through different mechanisms. For the Africa Region, workshops will be held in order to gather experts to agree on key results for the region using a sample of urban agglomerations. Data experts will be selected from National Statistics Offices, Ministries responsible for urban issues at the National level, Municipal and Metropolitan authorities representing urban agglomerations.



ii. Urban Info System

An *alternative approach* is to use a corporate or process database, which allows an urban observatory to systematize ongoing data collection, storage and reporting efforts. A process database is a dynamic environment that can produce a variety of information-product outputs for the use of planners and urban decision-makers. Data is collected on a continuous basis for a variety of projects and is stored, synthesized, analyzed and disseminated in different ways to meet the needs of different data users.

Urban-Info is a systematic database that allows the user in quick and easy retrieval and reporting of information in user-friendly formats. Urban-Info stores geographic and quantitative data on indicators selected by user analyzes information according to chosen attributes and produces tables, graphs and maps in personalized presentations and analytical reports. The software is compatible with most of the relational database systems. Urban observatories that adopt this tool can benefit from the global statistical information that is provided with the software, collected and analyzed by GUO. The information can help observatories to associate or correlate indicators or to undertake comparisons with data from other cities and countries around the world. Urban-Info is easy to adapt to the needs of an urban observatory at the national or local level, using locally relevant indicators.



In response to demands from data users, The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) of UN-HABITAT initiated the **UrbanInfo** software in 2004, a user-friendly tool prepared on the Windows platform. **UrbanInfo** helps to store, present and analyze urban indicators through a variety of presentation tools, such as tables, graphs and maps. The first version of **UrbanInfo**, published in 2006, contains information on several topics, such as housing, demography, communication, energy, economy, education, health, nutrition and gender. The second version of UrbanInfo provides updated information on these topics and also covers new topics, such as disaster, crime, migration, income inequalities and transport.

The second version of UrbanInfo is designed by UN-HABITAT in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), with financial support from the World Bank and other partners.

iii. 1000 cities GIS programme

The ability of GIS to combine both spatial and socio-economic data helps to generate meaningful information in a shorter time. GIS tools have much advantage to offer, the most powerful are:

- Visualizing planning scenarios and their impacts on the local population
- Fast retrieval of information and translation into easily understandable maps
- Excellent tool for spatial statistical analysis

Other application for GIS and remote-sensing tools include:

- Slum Identification and upgrading
- Infrastructure and utility mapping
- Hazard mapping
- Site and terrain analysis
- Land Information system
- Environmental and land use planning
- Participatory planning
- Revenue generation system

Good Urban Policy and planning requires accurate information on the situation; UN-HABITAT supports the local and national authorities to use spatial and socio-economic data to produce vital information for decision making in the cities.

Bringing the use of Geo-spatial technology into the mainstream for improving urban governance and planning in the cities of developing and transitional countries, the GUO initiated the “1000 cities GIS programme” in partnership with ESRI and distribute the GIS software package with online training programme to the city authorities in developing and transitional countries.

Who Can Apply for the Software Grant?

- Institution or organizations collecting or analyzing urban information
- Should have proper data sharing protocol with GUO and ESRI
- Can not be current or former ESRI product user
- Need to have necessary hardware to have GIS operation

By Providing Decision Maker with reliable and accurate information, GIS Programme will enable cities to prioritize issues and channel attention to those parts of urban areas that are most neglected. This will complement other initiatives within cities that aim at improving city planning, governance, environmental management and climate change.

iv. Urban Inequality survey (UIS)

1.4: New Urban Agenda Indicator & MDG Indicator

UN-HABITAT has adopted a more holistic approach by integrating the New Urban Agenda (HA) indicators in the overall MDG framework (Annex B. List of MDG and HA indicators). The New Urban Agenda indicators have been developed on the basis of the New Urban Agenda and on Resolutions 15/6 and 17/1 of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements. They comprise of 20 key indicators, 8 check-lists and 16 extensive indicators which measure performances and trends in selected key areas of the New Urban Agenda (the list of indicators is provided in Table 1, Section 7). Together, they should provide a quantitative, comparative base for the condition of cities, and show progress towards achieving the New Urban Agenda.

| Goals and Targets The Millennium Declaration | MDG Indicators for monitoring progress (National level) | The New Urban Agenda Indicators (Urban agglomeration level) |
|---|--|--|
| Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger | | |
| Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day 2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty] 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption | <u>indicator 9</u> : poor households |
| Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education | | |
| Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 5. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 6. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds | <u>indicator 10</u> : literacy rates, 15 years and above <u>extensive indicator 6</u> : school enrollment rates |
| Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women | | |
| Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 8. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year-olds 9. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 10. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament | <u>extensive indicator 7</u> : women councilors |
| Goal 4: Reduce child mortality | | |
| Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Under-five mortality rate 12. Infant mortality rate 13. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles | <u>indicator 7</u> : under-five mortality |
| Goal 5: Improve maternal health | | |
| Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Maternal mortality ratio 15. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel | |

| Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases | | |
|---|--|--|
| Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS | 16. HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women 17. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate 18. Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS | <u>extensive indicator 5:</u> HIV prevalence, 15-24 years old women |
| Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability | | |
| Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources | 19. Proportion of land area covered by forest 20. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area 21. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP) 22. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) 23. Proportion of population using solid fuels | <u>indicator 11:</u> urban population growth <u>indicator 12:</u> planned settlements <u>indicator 14:</u> wastewater treated |
| Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water | 24. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural | <u>indicator 4:</u> access to safe water <u>indicator 13:</u> price of water |
| Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers | 25. Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation 26. Proportion of households with secure tenure | <u>indicator 1:</u> durable structures <u>indicator 2:</u> overcrowding <u>indicator 3:</u> secure tenure <u>indicator 5:</u> access to improved sanitation <u>indicator 6:</u> connection to services <u>check-list 2:</u> housing finance <u>indicator 8:</u> homicides <u>indicator 16:</u> travel time <u>indicator 20:</u> local government revenue |
| Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development | | |
| Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth | 27. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year-olds, each sex and total | <u>Key indicator 19:</u> Unemployment rate (15-24 years) <u>Key indicator 17:</u> informal employment (15-24 years) |
| Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries | 28. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis | |
| Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications | 29. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population 30. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population | |

1.5: GUO Support in establishment of Urban Observatory

A powerful principle of sustainable urban development – development that meets the needs of today’s citizens without impacting the ability of others to meet their own needs in the future – is active cooperation among actors with diverse and varied interests to ensure the sharing of resources and the development of mutually beneficial plans of action. Local partners may establish an urban observatory for a variety of reasons that contribute to overall urban sustainability. These include:

1. **generating value-based urban data and distributing information** by coordinating various sectors and partners within the city or country;

2. **facilitating the participation** of communities and public and private stakeholders in the development process of their neighborhoods by producing urban data at the appropriate scale;
3. **supporting decision-making processes** and enhancing governance within the urban sector by producing local knowledge-based information.

1. Generating value-based urban data and distributing information

Data on the key priorities of a city, region or country is not always available. Urban observatories provide a framework for coordination among and within local organizations for the production of urban data aggregated at the appropriate scale so that information can be put to productive use. They assist the generation and distribution of information in other ways, as well, by:

- developing an information repository that can gather, collate, package and distribute locally relevant information;
- empowering local authorities with information in an analytical but easily accessible format supported by geographical information systems (GIS) tools;
- creating conditions to decentralize the use of the information;
- developing a strategy to communicate the information to decision-makers, providing them with a set of comparable data that enables informed planning over the long term.

Information plays a vital role in creating public awareness of urban issues and improving accountability of decision-makers. Reliable and timely information stimulates dialogue and actions to reverse negative trends and to understand positive trends for possible replication. The establishment of urban observatories enables local authorities and other stakeholders to generate information on shortfalls or problems confronted by different parts of the community or city, helping to define causes of identified issues, develop strategies for tracking and addressing problems, and formulate policies to help improve the existing situation.

2. Facilitating participation

Local and national urban observatories promote a participatory approach to developing urban indicators, collecting and disseminating data and using the information for urban development that meets citizens' needs and aspirations. Facilitating participation serves several aims:

- to build the capacity of civil society groups and engage them in the decision-making process using accurate, up-to-date and timely urban information;
- to inform communities, policy makers and other development agents about city- and neighborhood-related information on key measures for the city's top priority issues;
- to increase flow of information from one level of decision-making to another.

In many cases, the users and producers of urban data neither know each other nor understand each others' needs and methods. Urban observatories offer the possibility of greater data flow among actors, provided that they integrate multi-sectoral information and the resulting data sets are broadly accessible. A participatory approach seeks to meet the needs of all key players for cooperative collection, management and use of indicator data.

3. Supporting decision-making

An urban observatory is not a policy think tank or an isolated academic research centre, but is instead a coordinated knowledge- and decision-making body that serves to generate high-quality data on specific indicators that inform urban planning, resource allocation and development. Governments, as urban managers and policymakers, must be fully engaged in data production and analysis in order to ensure that the information is put to work for the good of citizens. Urban data that is transformed into good-quality information has the capacity to stimulate dialogue and promote its integration into policy.

Urban observatories around the world are using the information they have generated to support decision-making and enhance governance at the local level. The local urban observatory in Ahmedabad, India, for example, has provided the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation with data and maps for 47 slums (7,065 households) that are part of the corporation's Slum Upgrading Programme. This information is being used by the corporation to target resources more effectively and to monitor changes in slum conditions as a result of the programme's activities. The local urban observatory has also trained stakeholders in the use of GIS and has collected citizen feedback through a survey, the results of which led the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation to revise its budget allocations.

The ultimate goal of a local urban observatory is to bring together people and institutions to work collaboratively on a common vision for their community aimed at providing high-quality information for decision-making. Transparency and accountability in good local governance are facilitated by accurate information on locally relevant indicators, and urban observatories serve to provide that information. Urban observatories, therefore, provide a framework for accountability.

Chapter 2: Setting up Urban Observatory

Setting up urban observatory is based on the development of an integrated network of National and Local Urban Observatories. The beneficiaries are policy-makers at all levels and organizations of the civil society participating in sustainable urban development. The three main areas of work include assistance to governments, local authorities and organizations of local civil society to amplify their ability to collect, manage and maintain and use information on urban development; enhance the use of knowledge and urban indicators for policy formulation, planning and urban management through participatory process; and collection and dissemination of results of global, national and

city level monitoring activities, as well as disseminating good practices in the use of urban information world-wide.

Purposes

Urban observatories can take many forms, but they share common aims:

- to create *sustainable* urban monitoring systems in support of local planning and management processes, linking data to policy;
- to strengthen local *capacity* for the development and use of urban indicators that facilitate the collection of disaggregated data at city and sub-city levels;
- to promote local *ownership* of urban indicator systems and a culture of monitoring and assessment in the urban sector.

At every level, urban observatories strive to provide high-quality, up-to-date and timely city information, first and foremost. They are driven by the need for improved coordination in the measurement and monitoring of urban indicators in key areas, such as demography, socio-economic development, urban development and environmental issues, among others. Urban observatories are also driven by the desire to develop a knowledge-based information system that can ultimately be used to support better-informed urban programmes and policies.

Activities

To achieve their aims, urban observatories typically work with partner groups to develop and apply appropriate indicators, indices and evaluation mechanisms. They maintain information systems and undertake evaluations and impact analyses at the request of local authorities and partner groups; they build capacity for the generation, management, analysis and dissemination of urban information on a regular and consistent basis. Urban observatories produce various knowledge products – including reports, empirical studies, CDs, DVDs, websites, online forums and email listservs – that stimulate dialogue among stakeholders around priority issues. This information is distributed in locally appropriate ways to support decision-making and the development of better-informed policies.

Urban observatories strengthen the community-wide base of urban knowledge. Increased knowledge can contribute to better use of the information produced by the observatories in the development of local plans of action and in harmonizing sectoral policies and strategies. Urban observatories cooperate with others in the global network to share resources, exchange substantive and methodological knowledge and to disseminate information to the national, regional and global levels. As part of their reporting structure, urban observatories may maintain a web site or newsletter for providing citizens with information on their cities, and may produce a biennial “state of the city” report that includes comparative analysis of indicators and presents best practices.

Composition

Local urban observatories are comprised of a consortium of local stakeholders coordinated by a municipal government office, university research centre, community-

based organization or private entity designated as the “workshop” in which urban indicators are adapted from the global monitoring framework, further developed, tested and made operational in the data collection process. Several local urban observatories with different objectives may work simultaneously within a city; those concerned with similar issues in different parts of a city may link up for mutual assistance and information exchange. Rather than replicate efforts, however, GUO recommends that groups with complementary interests in one city partner on one observatory.

Several municipalities in a city-region may coordinate their efforts to develop urban indicators, data and planning strategies for the benefit of all. The city of Curitiba, Brazil, for example, consists of 22 municipalities, 12 of which are working together in a “metropolitan observatory” under the leadership of the city’s Chamber of Industries and an environmental university research centre. Similarly, the Regional Vancouver Urban Observatory in British Columbia, Canada, serves to coordinate the environmental and social sustainability efforts of the 21 municipalities in the Greater Vancouver Regional District; it is administered by a university department with the support of local government.

In some countries, networks of local urban observatories are facilitated by a national-level partner that coordinates capacity-building assistance and compiles and analyzes urban indicator data to assess national trends and needs. In Mexico, for instance, the Ministry of Social Development coordinates around 30 local urban observatories that produce data on various urban poverty related issues. Some national urban observatories are not linked to local partners, but instead take on the responsibility of collecting, analyzing and disseminating all urban data for the country. A national urban observatory may be housed in a central government agency, a national university, a prestigious private research centre, a non-governmental organization, or other institution.

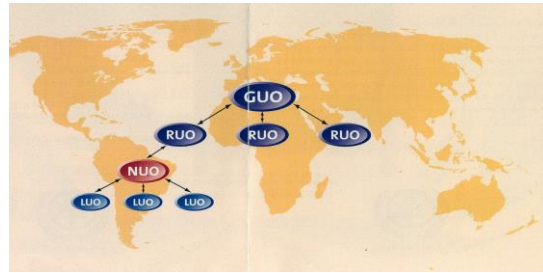
2.1: Urban observatory

Local and National Urban Observatories are governmental agencies, research centres or educational institutions that are designated as the “workshops” where monitoring tools are developed and used for policy-making through consultative processes. A Local Urban Observatory for a city or town is the focal point for urban policy development and planning where collaboration among policy makers, technical experts and representatives of partners groups is fostered. Networks of Local Urban Observatories are facilitated by National Urban Observatories where necessary. National Urban Observatories coordinate capacity building assistance and compile and analyze urban data for national policy development.

An urban observatory is a local network of stakeholders responsible for producing, analyzing and disseminating data on a meaningful set of indicators that reflect collectively prioritized issues on sustainable development. Data and information resources produced by the local network are used to support decision-making and the formulation of better-informed policies. An urban observatory is therefore a **focal point for urban monitoring** at the local or national scale.

2.2: Level of Urban Observatory

The Urban Observatories are mainly in three levels; (i) Local Urban Observatory [LUO] (ii) National Urban Observatory [NUO] (iii) Regional Urban Observatory [RUO]



i. Local (LUO)

Local urban observatories are typically housed in an existing city department, non-governmental organization or university. They serve to produce, manage and analyze data on the performance of a city on key urban indicators and other thematic issues relevant to both local decision-making and global monitoring.

Success or failure of urban policy is determined mainly by its responsiveness to local priorities. The GUO therefore encourages the designation of Local Urban Observatories (LUOs) as city-level institutions:

1. To involve local policy-makers and organizations of civil society in dialogue
2. To generate information on local themes and problems
3. To encourage policy responses to locally felt needs and priorities

As a local platform for policy information, an LUO will typically:

- Work with partner groups to develop and apply appropriate indicators, indices and evaluation mechanisms for the urban area and its communities
- Maintain management information systems and undertake evaluations and impact analyses at the request of local authorities and partners groups
- Build capacity for the generation, management, analysis and dissemination of urban information, including empirical information, on a regular and consistent basis and to apply the information in decision-making
- Identify conditions, trends and priority issues through research and consultative processes involving local officials and organizations of civil society
- Propose options for harmonizing sectoral policies and strategies in the context of the local plan of action
- Cooperate with other Local Urban Observatories in sharing resources, exchanging substantive and methodological knowledge and disseminating information to the national, regional and global levels
- Assist other local urban observatories in developing their capacity to collect and use urban indicators
- Analyze and share lessons learned from ongoing experiences and good practices with other Local Urban Observatories
- Maintain a local Internet homepage and a newsletter for providing civic society with information on the city and for reporting on activities of the LUO and its partner groups

- Produce a biennial *State of the City* report, including comparative analysis of indicators and presentation of best practices

ii. National (NUO)

National urban observatories coordinate and consolidate data collection at the national level using the results for evidence-based policy-making. They can either coordinate the activities of local urban observatories in the country or produce their own data and information resources at the national, regional or local level.

The GUO encourages the establishment of National Urban Observatories (NUOs) to monitor national trends and conditions and to inform national level policy and decision-making. NUOs could take many forms: as part of an existing national consultative structure or agency; as a national coordinating body for LUOs; as secretariat to the National Habitat Committee (NHC), established in most countries in preparation for the Habitat II Conference; as part of an academic or research institution, NGO or professional association. NUOs serve as consultative bodies on national policy. The first goal of the NUO will be the formulation of a national urban policy framework, if that does not already exist.

To these ends, it is recommended that NUOs:

- Conduct broad-based consultations to review or to formulate the National Plan of Action (NPA) in light of the commitments and recommendations of the *New Urban Agenda* and priorities expressed through consultative processes
- Propose a national urban policy framework to guide the implementation of the NPA and the formulation and implementation of Local Plans of Action (LPAs)
- Propose options for harmonizing sectoral objectives, based on urban indicators and best practices analysis
- Provide a coordinating framework for the collection, analysis and application of urban indicators at the national and local levels
- Organize, in conjunction with other partners, national best practice competitions and exhibitions
- Organize training programmes, for policy makers and technicians at the national and local levels, on the generation and use of empirical information
- Maintain an indicators programme to monitor implementation of the NPA
- Coordinate the assessment and provision of capacity-building resources for the implementing, monitoring and evaluating NPA and of LPAs
- Organize, with relevant partners at all levels, networks for training and peer-to-peer learning among agencies, local authorities and civic organizations engaged in improving the living environment
- Maintain an Internet homepage for providing civic society with information on the national urban policy and for reporting on activities of the NUO and its partner groups

- Produce a biennial *State of the Nation's Cities* report, including comparative analysis of indicators and presentation of best practices

iii. Regional (RUO)

Regional Urban observatories are hosted in regional organizations or academic institutions to provide technical assistance to the NUO and LUO through localizing monitoring tools, capacity building and also in policy guidance using evidence based knowledge. RUO can also support the local and national bodied in standardization of Indicator, data and information not only to enhance the local policy planning mechanism but also to enhance the regional harmony (through gap analysis). The RUO's are the technical hand of GUO at regional level to support the LUO and NUO's.

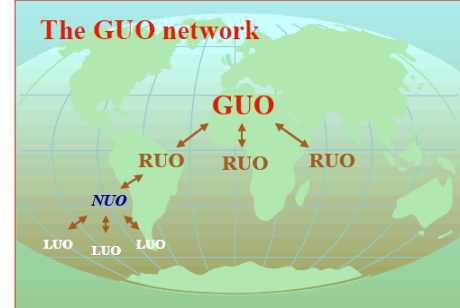
Regional (international) organizations, including the regional offices and commissions of the United Nations system, international umbrella NGOs, networks of research and training institutions and others are encouraged to organize urban observatory functions on a regional basis. Regional Urban Observatories (RUOs) can be organized on a strictly geographical basis, on the grounds of a shared eco-system, or other common social, cultural, administrative, political, environmental concern.

RUOs are set up to:

- Hold regional consultations on common issues, including Tran boundary issues and issues derived from shared ecological, administrative or cultural systems
- Sponsor regional workshops on the development and adaptation of region-specific tools, guidelines, methods and indicators
- Organize, in conjunction with other partners, national best practice competitions and exhibitions
- Contribute to development and dissemination of training materials in languages of the region
- Coordinate training for trainers in national and local capacity-building institutions
- Assist NUOs and partners in the region with the collection, compilation and analysis of indicators data and best practices
- Facilitate the sharing and exchange of lessons learned among countries and cities of the region
- Coordinate regional urban research programmes
- Identify regional correspondents and focal points for technical cooperation and research
- Report on new development, opportunities and constraints to the GUO for the inclusion of region-specific issues and priorities in inter-governmental processes
- Produce a biennial *State of the Region's Cities* report, including comparative analysis of indicators and presentation of best practices

2.3 The GUO-Net

Global Urban Observatory Network (GUO-Net) is a worldwide information and capacity-building network established by the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT) to help implement the [*New Urban Agenda*](#) at the national and local levels.



The purpose of GUO-Net is to support governments, local authorities and civil society:

- To improve the collection, management, analysis and use of information in formulating more effective urban policies;
- To improve information flows between all levels for better urban decision-making;
- To stimulate broad-based consultative processes to help identify and integrate urban information needs;
- To provide information and analyses to all stakeholders for more effective participation in urban decision-making;
- To share information, knowledge and expertise using modern information and communication technology (ICT);
- To create a global network of local, national and regional platforms for sharing information about the implementation of the *New Urban Agenda*.

Some tools and benefits provided by the GUO network:

- Training on using the urban indicator toolkit for data collection and analysis
- Training on GIS software and provision of GIS software (to a limited extent, upon special agreement)
- Training on how to use the results of the urban indicators data for fund raising activities
- Conferences of the network members for information exchange and city-to-city networking
- Access to internet resources available at UN-Habitat's website including urban indicators databases and Urban Info system
- Your data will be used for evaluations done for the global reports published biannually by UN-Habitat (Global Report on Human Settlements, State of the World Cities Report)

UN-HABITAT achieves these objectives through a global network of Local, National and Regional Urban Observatories and through partner institutions that provide training and other capacity building expertise.

- 2.4: Framework of Urban Observatory
 - i. Institutionalization of Urban Observatory
 - ii. Steering committee
 - iii. Members of Steering committee

- 2.5: Dissemination tools
 - i. Indicator Pocket book
 - ii. Cities report
 - vi. LUO web site
 - vii. Periodic publications
 - viii. Urban Info System

Chapter 3: Translating knowledge into policy and inform decision-making

Chapter 4: Problems to avoid in setting up an urban observatory

- Annex 1: The Global Urban Observatory's local capacity-building strategy
- Annex 2: Indicator definitions & List of GUO Indicators (Core and Specific)
- Annex 3: UO Questionnaire