

# INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES ON URBAN AND TERRITORIAL PLANNING

## A SYNOPSIS

**11**  
languages  
**12**  
principles  
**114**  
recommendations  
**100,000+**  
downloads

INTERNATIONAL  
GUIDELINES ON  
URBAN AND  
TERRITORIAL  
PLANNING

UN HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## Background

By the year 2050, the world urban population is expected to nearly double, posing massive sustainability challenges in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, and jobs among others. There is a need to address the way cities and human settlements are planned, developed, governed and managed.

Anticipating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) of the United Nations, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat approved the International Guidelines on

Urban and Territorial Planning (the Guidelines) as a non-binding universal urban and territorial planning framework (Resolution 25/6 of 23 April 2015).

Moreover, this Resolution calls upon “International financial institutions, development agencies and UN-Habitat to assist member States in using and adapting the Guidelines to their territorial and national contexts, where appropriate, and further developing tools and monitoring indicators”.

# A Global Framework

In response to the ongoing rapid urbanization and related economic, social and environmental impacts, the Guidelines are intended to be a global framework with simple and universally agreed principles to guide decision makers for improving and integrating policies, plans, designs and implementation processes leading to **more compact, socially inclusive, institutionally integrated, better connected** cities that foster sustainable territorial development and are **resilient to climate change**.

The Guidelines target to **review and reform urban and territorial planning systems** as a decision-making process aimed at realizing economic, social, cultural and environmental goals through the development of spatial visions, strategies and plans and the application of a set of policy principles, tools, institutional, participatory and financial mechanisms, and regulatory procedures.

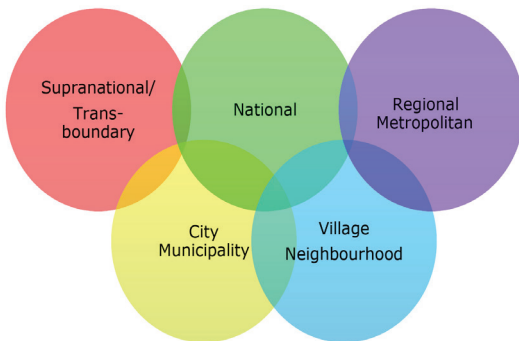
## 3 Enabling Components

To foster and achieve a more sustainable urban and territorial development, the Guidelines equally focus on 3 basic enabling components:



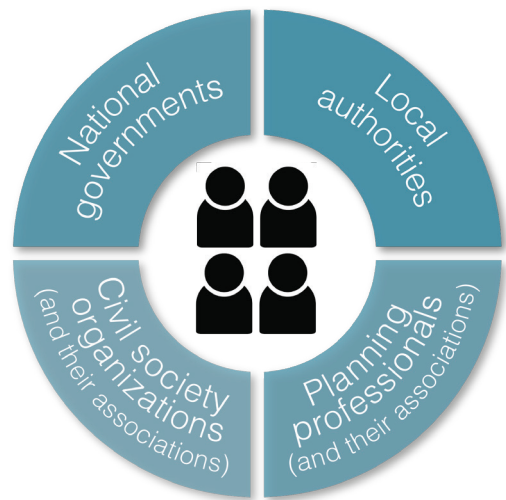
# Spatial and Territorial Planning at all levels

Taking into account the subsidiary principle – decision-making and implementation at the right level – the Guidelines are to be used through a multi-scale continuum of spatial and territorial planning:



1. At supranational level and transboundary level (transboundary system of cities and ecosystems, macro-regional and continental planning)
2. National level (including system of cities, eco-systems and rural areas)
3. City-Region and Metropolitan level (with an urban-rural continuum)
4. City and Municipal level (including rural towns)
5. Neighbourhood and Community level (including rural villages).

The Guidelines furthermore promote the development of urban and territorial policies, plans and design by targeting a continuous dialogue and partnership between four key stakeholder groups:



1. National Governments.
2. Local Authorities (including subnational governments at provincial, metropolitan, city level).
3. Civil Society organizations and their associations (including business community).
4. Planning Professionals and their associations.

# The Guidelines:

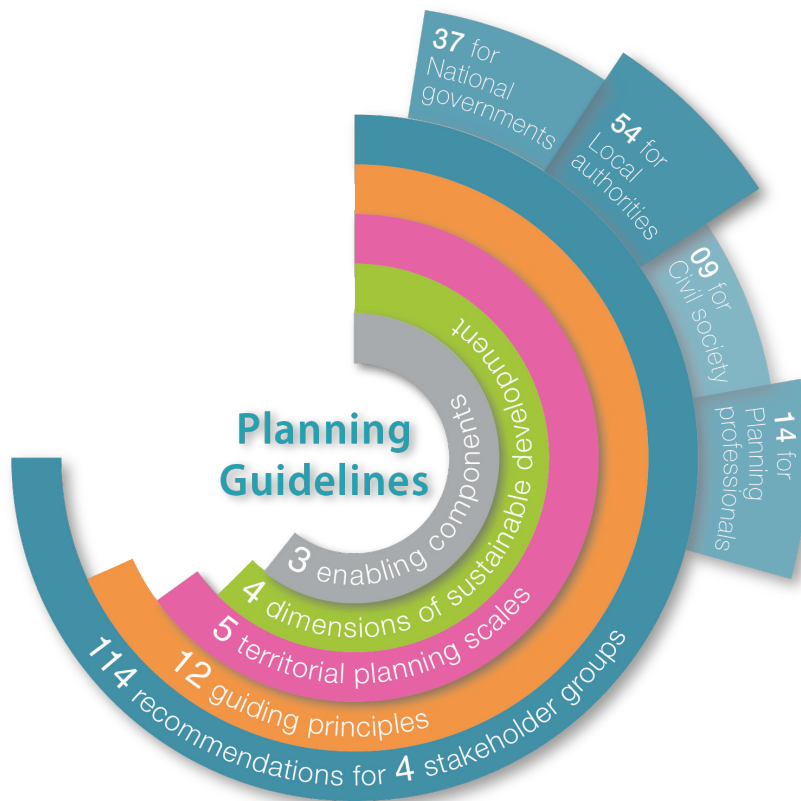
## 12 Key Planning Principles with 114 Recommendations

To orient and guide decision-makers in developing or reviewing urban and territorial policies, plans and designs through an integrated planning approach, the Guidelines are structured along [12 key planning principles](#) and [114 recommendations](#) in 5 main sections and addressed to the 4 stakeholder groups. An abridged version of the 12 guiding principles can be found below:

	<b>URBAN POLICY AND GOVERNANCE</b>
1	Urban and Territorial Planning is an integrative and participatory decision-making process that addresses competing interests and is linked to a shared vision, an overall development strategy and national, regional and local urban policies.
2	Urban and Territorial Planning promotes local democracy, participation and inclusion, transparency and accountability.
	<b>URBAN AND TERRITORIAL PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>
	<b>Urban and Territorial Planning and Social Development</b>
3	Urban and Territorial Planning primarily aims to realize adequate standards of living and working conditions for all through social inclusion and cohesion, recognizing the distinct needs of various groups.
4	Urban and Territorial Planning is a precondition for a better quality of life and successful globalization processes that respect cultural heritages and cultural diversity.
	<b>Urban and Territorial Planning and Sustained Economic Growth</b>
5	Urban and Territorial Planning provides an enabling framework for new economic opportunities, regulation of land and housing markets and timely provision of adequate infrastructure and basic services.
6	Urban and Territorial Planning provides a mechanism to ensure that sustained economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability go hand in hand to promote better connectivity at all territorial levels.
	<b>Urban and Territorial Planning and the Environment</b>
7	Urban and Territorial Planning provides a spatial framework to protect and manage the natural and built environment of cities and territories, including their biodiversity, land and natural resources.
8	Urban and Territorial Planning contributes to increased human security by strengthening environmental and socioeconomic resilience, enhancing mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
	<b>URBAN AND TERRITORIAL PLANNING COMPONENTS</b>
9	Urban and Territorial Planning is a continuous and iterative process, grounded in enforceable regulations, that aims to promote more compact cities and synergies between territories.
10	Urban and Territorial Planning aims to facilitate and articulate political decisions based on different scenarios. It translates those decisions into actions that will transform the physical and social space and will support the development of integrated cities and territories.
	<b>IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING URBAN AND TERRITORIAL PLANNING</b>
11	Implementation of spatial policies and plans requires political leadership, appropriate legal and institutional frameworks, efficient urban management, and improved coordination, consensus-building approaches to respond coherently and effectively to current and future challenges.
12	Effective implementation and evaluation of Urban and Territorial planning requires continuous monitoring, periodic adjustments and sufficient capacities at all levels, as well as sustainable financial mechanisms and technologies.

# IG-UTP New Approach

- 3 enabling components  
(Urban Rules and Regulations; Urban Planning and Design; Municipal Finance)
- 4 dimensions  
(Governance; Social; Economic; Environment)
- 4 stakeholder groups  
(National governments, Local authorities, Planning professionals, Civil society organizations)
- 5 levels  
(Supranational/Trans-boundary; National; City-Region; City Municipality; Neighbourhood)
- 12 guiding principles
- 114 recommendations



## Drafting and Validation Process

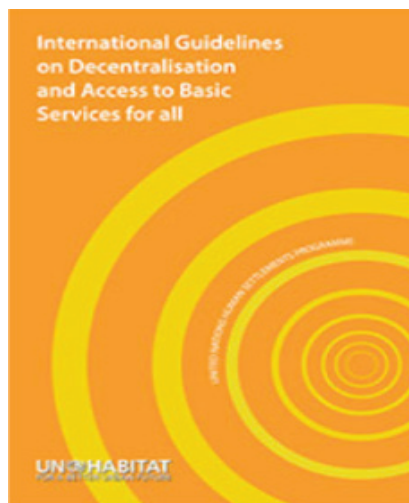
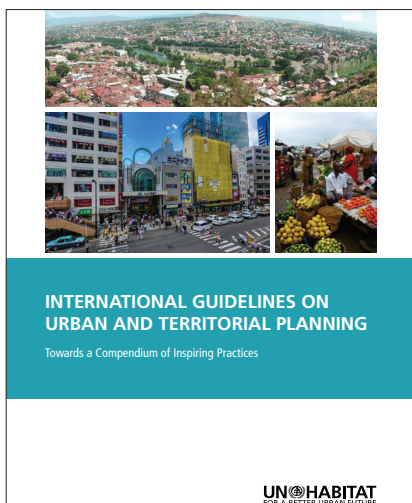
The drafting of the Guidelines was supported by a group of 35 high-level experts over two years through a broad-based consultative and participatory process and based on evidence, good practices and lessons learnt from different contexts and at different planning scales. The experts were nominated by their respective national governments, associations of local authorities, associations of professional planners and international institutions, representing experience and practice from Africa, Asia, Europe and America to ensure the Guidelines are globally relevant.

UN agencies and members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at UN-Habitat were also consulted and briefed throughout the process of developing the Guidelines. The process of drafting the Guidelines had benefited from the financial contribution and support of the Governments of Japan, France, Norway, South Africa and Sweden.

The Guidelines complement the [International Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening](#)

[of Local Authorities](#) (2007) and the [International Guidelines on Access to Basic Services for all](#) (2009), which were also adopted by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and which have been used as a reference in a number of countries to catalyze policy and institutional reforms and to leverage partnerships.

The Guidelines are based on strong evidence, inspiring practices and lessons learnt from various regions and contexts. A Compendium of Inspiring Practices, available online, has been developed to support and illustrate the Guidelines. It consists of a sample of [26 international experiences in urban and territorial planning](#) that have been developed by the Expert Group and its associated networks, supporting the drafting process of the Guidelines. It provides a cross-section of inventive, ambitious and unique cases that address common issues of urban and territorial development and highlight successful examples of how urban and territorial planning can reshape countries and regions towards more sustainable development.



# Toolkit to Localize and Implement the Guidelines

In order to support the process of advancing the operationalization and localization of the principles and recommendations provided in the Guidelines, UN-Habitat and partners are mapping existing tools to ease the implementation. Some of these existing tools include toolkits for public space, Urban Planning and Design Labs, the National Urban Policy toolkit, and the City Prosperity Initiative. New tools to support the effective implementation of the Guidelines have also been developed including the collection of inspiring practices, sets of indicators, the learning and training package and the Handbook and the planning system self-assessment tool.

One of the flagship tools tailored for the immediate implementation of the Guidelines is the Handbook, which is at an advanced stage of completion. The Handbook will include, amongst others, a methodology for an assessment of the planning system to be done in partnership by all four key stakeholder groups, while also providing with a set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating this process, inter-related to the indicators being developed for reporting on the SDGs and NUA.

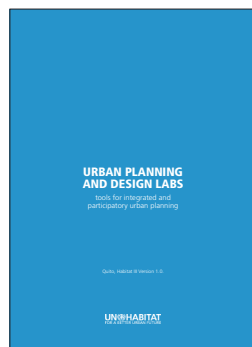
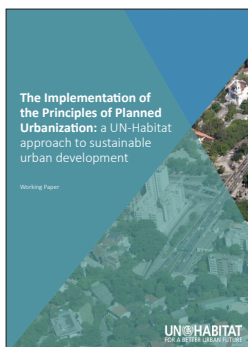
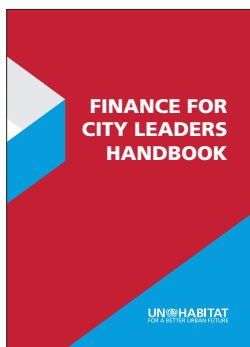
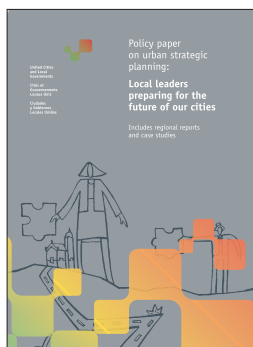
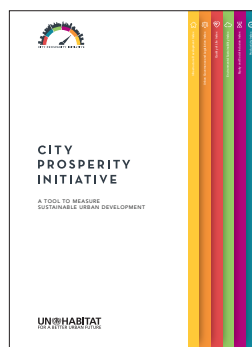
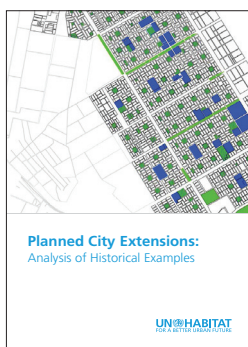
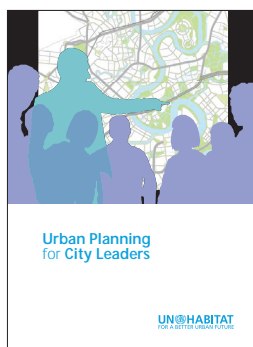
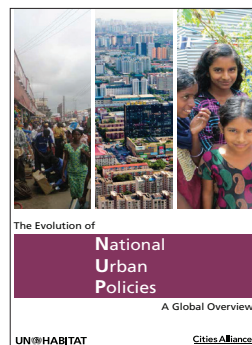
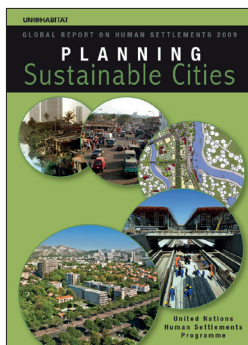
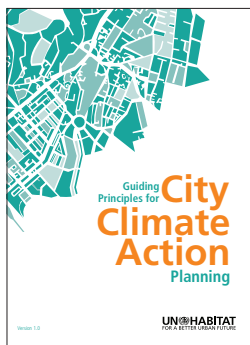
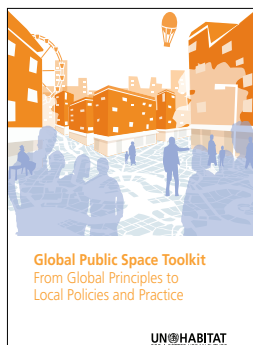
The Guidelines have been designed in parallel to support the implementation of the [Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals \(SDGs\)](#), as well as the [New Urban Agenda](#) of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban development (Habitat III) in October 2016. Their specific contribution to the New Urban Agenda is evident in Habitat III Issue papers No. 8 (Urban Planning and Design) and No. 10 (Urban-Rural Linkages). Policy Papers 3 and 6 on National Urban Policies and Urban Spatial Strategies: Land Market and Segregation have also specially drawn on the Guidelines. The Habitat III Adopted Draft of the New Urban Agenda agreed upon on 20 October 2016 makes an explicit reference to the principles and strategies agreed in the Guidelines.

The Guidelines are available in 11 languages: Arabic | Bahasa | Chinese | English | French | Japanese | Persian | Portuguese | Russian | Spanish | Vietnamese

The Guidelines can be downloaded at:  
<http://unhabitat.org/books/international-guidelines-on-urban-and-territorial-planning/>



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Contact us

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)  
P.O. Box 30030, GPO Nairobi, 00100, Kenya  
Telephone: +254 20 762 3477  
rmpu@unhabitat.org



www.unhabitat.org