



Evaluation of the role of the UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management



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Background:

An evaluation was proposed in order to develop the most efficient and effective way to respond to the requests of member States to develop Country Profiles (CPs).

Purpose:

To assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the CPs for the development and implementation of national legislation, policies and programmes on housing and urban development.

Objectives:

Use results to (1) improve the content of future CPs; (2) increase efficiency of work on CPs, promote long-term sustainability of the instrument and better coordinate work on CPs with other areas of work of the Committee; and (3) formulate possible future activities related to implementation of CP recommendations.

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Scope:

CPs published from 1996-2015.

Methodology:

An independent consultant was engaged for the evaluation.

- Detailed review of relevant documents, including the CP Guidelines and UNECE review mechanisms like EPRs and IPRs
- Online survey
- In-depth interview
- Interview with relevant UNECE staff

Some limitations:

- Difficulty in arranging interviews.
- Difficulty getting responses from the online survey.
- CP focal points and experts were not available as evaluation was conducted during a busy period.

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Main findings:

- Governments of member States highly value the CPs as instrument for analysis of countries' housing, urban development, and land management policies; supports the governments' efforts in developing, reforming and advancing national legislation, strategies, plans and institutional frameworks on areas mentioned.
- The CP Guidelines allow a great degree of flexibility in adapting its content and structure to changing political, social and economic contexts.
- The CP exercise creates a unique opportunity for different branches of the national governments to consolidate their work, engage in interministerial committees, and cooperate on issues of housing, urban planning and land management.

Main conclusion:

The CP programme is relevant, and is effective in achieving its objectives. However, the absence of programme impact indicators and monitoring mechanisms, a number of inefficient and bureaucratic procedures, and a lack of sustainable funding negatively affect its effectiveness.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

1) Improve funding and in-kind contributions by pursuing a stronger and more sustainable financial commitment by the member States. Attract new funding opportunities by promoting a participatory approach among the UNECE member States and extending networks and partnerships with organizations that support development in the housing, urban development and land management sectors in the UNECE region and beyond.

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, noting that fundraising for financial and in-kind contributions to the preparation of CPs is already organised on regular basis. However, extrabudgetary funds received so far are lower than requested and do not cover all the costs associated with the preparation of the CPs. In-kind expertise and level of qualification do not always match the needs.

The UNECE will establish CPs as projects implemented through multi-agency partnerships, which include other UN agencies.

The HLM Unit will update the CP preparation guidelines by adding a procedure on the establishment, when appropriate, of an interagency partnership and a requirement for fundraising for extrabudgetary funds and in-kind support. The revised guidelines will be presented at the 78th session of CHLM as an official document for the Committee's decision.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

2) Utilize internal UNECE resources and broaden existing partnerships with experts and interested parties. Promote more efficient online communications, and peer-review mechanisms, for the sustainable production of the CP analytical studies, broadening the networks and partnerships to attract additional experts, volunteers and pro-bono contributors.

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, noting that while attempts will be made to involve other UNECE divisions to cooperate on the production of CPs through the provision of experts for the preparation of sub-chapters, this involvement may not be always possible due to the high work load of experts in UNECE divisions.

FLH Division will send communication to UNECE divisions with information on the Country Profile programme and an invitation to cooperate on the production of CPs through the provision of the expertise to CPs planned for 2017-2018 (Kazakhstan and Second Country Profile of Belarus).

HLM Unit will update the CP preparation guidelines by adding a procedure on the use of innovative communication technologies: video conferences with participation of experts drafting CP chapters and online document storage for information exchange, including relevant background documents and CP draft chapters.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

3) Align the goals and objectives of the CP programme with SDGs, the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management, and other important international agreements and frameworks. By doing so (most importantly with SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda) and supporting their implementation, the CP exercise will emphasize cross-sectoral linkages, including those related to the environment, climate change, natural and human-made disaster risks, urban transport, ageing, and other topics.

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

HLM Unit will update the CP preparation guidelines by revising the CP structure to ensure that the publication addresses relevant issues as per recommendation.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

4) Embed the CP programme with the necessary impact indicators, and follow-up and monitoring mechanisms. Upgrade project documentation in light of SDG 11 framework indicators.

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, while noting that the development of a global set of indicators for the monitoring and review of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is being elaborated by the UN in a coordinated manner.

The HLM Unit will include the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda indicators for urban related SDGs for monitoring the progress towards achieving the SDGs in October 2019 into the CP preparation guidelines to ensure all efforts of all UN agencies are taken into account.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

5) Broaden application and monitoring of gender issues in the CP analytical studies and subsequent recommendations in accordance with the programme objectives and broader UN rules and regulations.

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

The HLM Unit will update the CP preparation guidelines by including a separate section with a more detailed explanation on how the gender issues must be addressed in CPs to reflect relevant UN rules and regulations.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

6) Update the CP preparation guidelines by: a) eliminating inefficient procedures regarding the formal approval of the draft CP report by the CHLM prior to its printing and publication; b) limiting the HLM Unit's involvement in preliminary and research missions, and limiting the number of international experts taking part in CP research missions; c) formalizing the fundraising activities by setting up effective and sustainable measures for the funding of the CP programme; d) if relevant, including more detailed information on construction standards, energy efficiency, resilience to natural disasters, spatial and urban planning for housing, new and available technologies, and building-up and development of BIM.

UNECE partially agrees with the recommendation, noting that it would not be appropriate to regulate in the guidelines the number of HLM Unit staff and international experts participating in preliminary and research missions.

The HLM Unit will update the CP preparation guidelines taking into account the recommendation.

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Key recommendations, management response and follow up actions:

7) Creation of a web-tool (portal, forum, cloud or database) for the exchange and sharing of information and best practice examples of legislation, policies, plans and strategies that were developed based on CP recommendations.

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, noting that an online web portal protected by a password already exists. It is maintained by the Unit and is used by experts involved in the production of CPs for sharing background information and draft chapters of the publication.

The HLM Unit will establish a web page open to public at the HLM website with online information on best practice examples of legislation, policies, plans and strategies that were developed based on CP recommendations and the status of the implementation of CP recommendations.

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18
Country Profiles



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Thank you for your attention!

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