



GUIDE



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CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A REGIONAL GUIDE FOR INTEGRATING CLIMATE CHANGE
CONCERNS INTO URBAN-RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATIVE,
FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

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Background and Purpose of the Guide

Urbanization and Climate Change are two of the defining megatrends of our time. More than half of today's global population lives in urban areas, and urbanisation projections indicate that this trend is set to continue over the next decades. Cities in Asia and the Pacific are at the heart of that global urban growth. Today they are home to 2.1 billion people and in less than two decades they are estimated to grow by another one billion¹. Cities significantly contribute to and are greatly affected by climate change. While they occupy only three per cent of the earth's surface, they are responsible for 78 per cent of global energy consumption, and the production of 70 per cent of energy related greenhouse gas emissions². At the same time cities - especially those in the Asia Pacific region - are becoming increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change³. The continuous trend of rapid - and often unplanned - urbanization places enormous pressure on urban infrastructure, services, livelihoods and the environment with poor and disadvantaged communities most exposed to climate change impacts. In cities of Asia and the Pacific, appropriate governance and policy directions are yet to be put in place to effectively address the challenges and opportunities of the urbanisation and climate change nexus.

As enormous as the challenges are, they also present a historic opportunity to promote more sustainable and inclusive forms of urbanization with the aim of reducing urban vulnerabilities and building resilient and low-carbon cities. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Fifth Assessment Report highlighted, "the next two decades present a window of opportunity for [climate action] in urban areas, as a large portion of the world's urban areas will be developed during this period."⁴ However, cities cannot do this alone. Coordinated, nationwide urban development frameworks are needed, through which national governments - with input from the local and regional levels - can set the agenda for urbanization in their country.

Many climate actions for mitigation and adaptation need to be implemented "on the ground" - at the household, neighbourhood, town, city or metropolitan scale. However, the National Government also has important functions in creating an enabling environment for climate responsive urban development - including establishing national-level policies and plans, coupled with supportive legislation and financing mechanisms, and managing common goods. For example, access to a significant part of needed

resources and assistance in ensuring the local level has all needed capacities is influenced by national (and/or provincial) policies related to economic development, energy generation and distribution, health care, education and other services. Moreover, managing the territory of cities and their hinterlands is the joint responsibility of subnational and national governments. Climate action within countries therefore needs to include an emphasis on human settlements in national mitigation and adaptation strategies, linking local and national planning, and national government support for local adaptation.

The mainstreaming of climate change into National Urban Policies (NUPs), as well as into other national-level urban-related framework policies presents a good opportunity to systemically integrate sustainability, climate change and resilience into the national urbanisation agenda, and to harmonize the urbanization agenda with other national policies.

A new momentum for concerted, transformative change for the urbanisation and climate change nexus has also been created in 2015 and 2016 through the adoption of new international development frameworks, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁶, the Paris Agreement⁷ on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction⁸, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development⁹, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA)¹⁰ of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Aligning urban- and climate-related policy targets and indicators on the international and national levels and supporting efforts to tackle climate change issues in towns and cities through the guidance of national-level policy, represents a crucial input to achieving above-mentioned international frameworks.

One approach to a coordinated and overarching framework that is strongly advocated for in the New Urban Agenda is the development of a National Urban Policy (NUP)¹¹. Some countries in Asia and the Pacific are now explicitly embarking on the development of an NUP, while others are taking the route of strengthening coordination between various existing national-level urban-related framework policies. Both approaches present a good opportunity to systemically integrate sustainability and resilience concerns into national urban development agendas - including the opportunity to mainstream climate change issues.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA); and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (2017)

² UN-Habitat (2017b). This number focuses primarily on GHG emissions from energy use within the city boundary, through direct combustion (scope 1) or the consumption of grid-supplied electricity, heating and/or cooling (scope 2), as well as the GHG emissions from the treatment of waste. The vitality of cities, however, also gives rise to the production of significant quantities of GHG emissions outside their boundaries (scope 3). Meanwhile, C40 Cities (2018) estimated through an assessment of 79 of its member cities that the contribution of cities to GHG emissions was 60 percent higher when the 'consumption emissions' for the food, clothing, electronics, air travel, construction materials, and so on

consumed by residents but produced outside city limits are included.

³ Germanwatch (2018)

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2018)

⁵ United Nations (2015d)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2015)

⁸ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) (2014)

⁹ United Nations (2015b)

¹⁰ United Nations (2016)

¹¹ Ibid., p.17, Article 89.

This Guide has been developed as a call for action to mainstream climate change into national-level urban-related policy frameworks in Asia and the Pacific. Applying a flexible and non-prescriptive approach, national urban ministries and other urban stakeholders can apply suggested steps for mainstreaming based on their respective circumstances, under a Framework composed of “Phases” and “Elements” that serve as the building blocks of the mainstreaming process. The result of the mainstreaming process will be the formulation, adoption and implementation of a coherent policy framework with climate change concerns integrated into relevant urban policy elements (e.g. key principles, sectoral chapters, action areas etc.), depending

on each country’s unique context. The Guide has primarily been developed for national level government officers that aim to mainstream climate change issues into their existing National Urban Policy. However, it can also be used to develop a new, climate-responsive National Urban Policy (especially in conjunction with the UN-Habitat publication “National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework”). Governments may also find this Guide useful to mainstream climate change issues into other national-level urban-related policies, such as national spatial frameworks and sectoral policies etc., which collectively may provide a framework for integrated urban development, thereby implicitly serving the function of a National Urban Policy.

Using the Guide and Related Tools and References

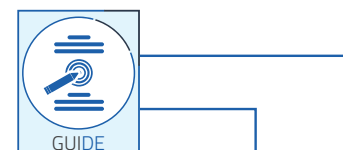
The Guide has two main sections. **Section 1** is an **Introduction** of the context, including urbanisation and climate change trends, mainstreaming, governance frameworks, and global development frameworks.

Section 2 presents the **Framework** for mainstreaming, which takes the form of a matrix with four mainstreaming **Phases** of A: Feasibility and Diagnostics, B: Formulation, C: Implementation, and D: Evaluation, and four mainstreaming **Elements** of 1) Substantive process, 2) Resource and capacity assessment and development, 3) Urban and climate related policy alignment, and 4) Institutions and stakeholders. The Framework can be seen at one glance in the **Overview Table** (Table 1), presented as a two-page spread in the middle of the Guide, while each Framework **Task** is individually introduced and explained in Section 2.

The Guide was conceptualised to be used in conjunction with a set of **Tools** and **References** (see **Figure 1**). These consist of additional information and training materials specifically prepared to accompany the guide or refer to existing resources so as not to repeat guidance provided elsewhere. The reader can pick and choose among the Tools and References as needed. The main Tool to be

to implement the various Tasks of the **Framework**. Tools further include ‘**Information**’ sheets with more detailed explanations on various aspects, such as for example ‘international development frameworks’ or ‘climate finance’ and which also include the country case studies from pilot countries under the project (see Box 2 below). The tools can be used for individual learning or for collective workshops to take place as part of mainstreaming processes. Throughout the Guide, the reader is directed towards specific tools as they link to the topics and steps discussed. A tool is indicated in the Guide with little icons like this: (which for digital versions of the Guide and Tools are hyperlinked). A short summary of each of the Tools is provided in Section 3 of this **Guide**.

• **References** refer to existing resources, such as **publications** and **web portals** of UN-Habitat, UN ESCAP and other organizations for which the Guide and the Tools provide the web links throughout.



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