Aligning Habitat Country Programme Documents
With UN-Strategic Plan and Work Programme

Proposed New Template

1. Background

1.1. MTSIP : 2007/2013

In April 2007, the Governing Council through resolution 21/2 approved UN-Habitat’s Medium Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (2007/2013), providing a framework for securing greater alignment of UN-Habitat’s normative and operational activities at the country level. In that connection, Habitat Country Programme Documents (HCPDs) were considered crucial tools among other “quick-wins” to be achieved under the overall umbrella of the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework (ENOF) of the MTSIP. ENOF coordinated by the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division (RTCD) was meant to facilitate improved national policies on housing and urban development in line with the UN-Habitat’s global norms; increased knowledge on sustainable urbanization; enhanced regional, national and local capacities to implement human settlements policies; and improved coherence and integration of sustainable urbanization into UNDAF and national development strategies and plans, including PRSPs.

1.2. SP : 2014/2019

In its resolution 24/15 adopting a new strategic plan (SP 2014/2019) for UN-Habitat in 2013, the Governing Council recognised HCPDs as key elements of the implementation plan of the SP following up on the momentum achieved within ENOF in support of UN-Habitat’s programme integration. UN-Habitat was therefore requested to intensify efforts to maximise the production of this key output in a consultative and inclusive process involving various partners at the national level. UN-Habitat’s regional offices as the interface between mandated with the first responsibility to work with thematic branches under the coordination of the Programme Division ensuring that HCPDs should continue to be aligned with key pillars of UN-Habitat’s strategic policies as well as harmonised with the global UN reform process as reflected in the Delivering as ONE (DaO) approach.

2. Main objectives of HCPDs

Initially, HCPDs were meant to: (i) articulate the key challenges in urban development in countries where UN-Habitat is present, and allow for exchange of experiences at the regional level (advocacy); (ii) provide an overview of national urban policies and governance challenges (planning and management); (iii) highlight the needs and priorities in the housing sector (pro-
poor land and housing, and finance); (iv) promote basic service delivery and urban environmental improvements (environmentally sound basic infrastructure and services); (v) mobilize public, private and non-governmental partners and feed into “Delivering as ONE”.

Under the ENOF umbrella (2007/2013), over fifty (50) HCPDs were developed by UN-Habitat working closely with local and national partners in various interested countries. The ENOF supported HCPDs were produced in two (2) generations, and funded – in most cases by UN-Habitat using non-earmarked resources allocated to support the implementation of the MTSIP. Building on the momentum created by the previous generations, and following up on the provisions of the newly adopted SP, the present new template has been proposed to initiate the third generation of HCPDs. The leading principle of this new initiative requires that the third generation of HCPDs be prepared in an integrated approach, better coordinated by the central hub, and well-articulated with the SP and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) within the broader context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the SDG 11 and other relevant urban targets.

In that connection, the provisions of the new HCPDs should go beyond their initial planning purpose. They should be designed in a way to serve as useful tools for strategy identification, programme coordination and monitoring to allow for establishment of a coherent mechanism for policy review and strategy development aligned with the SP. New HCPDs should clearly provide a framework for UN-Habitat’s engagement with national governments in line with the SP and in support of the NUA. In short, they should open a window of opportunities for alignment of country-level activities with UN-Habitat’s strategic areas establishing links with National Development Plans, UNDAF within the “One UN” Framework. Their value added to UN-Habitat’s work should be to contribute to enhancing the Agency’s visibility at country level, and facilitating the inclusion of UN-Habitat’s developed urban development policies into the national strategic plans.

3. Methodology of Work

Within the framework of the on-going internal reform and the new thematic areas as defined by the SP, the Regional Offices (ROs) have been placed at the fore-front of the production of the new HCPDs. ROs will take charge of the initial steps in the preparations of HCPDs, including consultations with partners at the field level based on the present template proposed by the Programme Division (PD) acting as the coordinating hub for programme integration.

Beyond the evident need for internal coordination required in the inception phase associating relevant divisions and programmes of UN-Habitat on key substantive issues, the present new template focuses on the following criteria to succeed: (i) increased consultations at the country level to take advantage of the momentum of the NUA, and maximize networking with national governments; (ii) strengthened linkage with the SP thematic areas; (iii) new priorities based on national needs assessment; (iv) increased collaboration with local authorities and other key stakeholders such as the private sector; (v) alignment with the “One UN” priorities within the UNDAF frameworks.
In light of the above, the following principles building on lessons learned from the previous generations will apply to the design of the new HCPDs:

a. The new HCPDs will be built around the following new thematic areas and policy areas as directed by the SP: (i) urban land, legislation and governance, (ii) urban planning and design, (iii) urban economy, (iv) urban basic services, (v) housing and slum upgrading, (vi) risk reduction and rehabilitation, (vii) research and capacity development;

b. The HCPDs should be designed as essential tools (“quick wins”) in support of the SP and Vision 2030 for the purpose of promoting a sustainable urban development whereby the linkage between UN-Habitat’s strategic vision, national priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 11, must be tangible in the planning and means of implementation;

c. The content of the new HCPDs should benefit from inputs from thematic branches with clear references to a number of key policy documents on normative issues and on global and regional reports produced in recent years by UN-Habitat or partners agencies;

d. The new HCPDs require a harmonized structure and a uniform layout which, at the same time, should allow for flexibility of priorities and strategies, in order to reflect the specific country issues and concerns, so that the final output is also “owned” by the country authorities concerned;

e. The new HCPDs should also include in an annex a list of ongoing and future projects, which should not be limited to operational projects, but include all UN-Habitat supported activities under advocacy and information, data collection, capacity building, and global programmes;

f. The HCPDs as key outputs reflecting the Agency collaboration with national authorities must reflect the country priorities and confirm the commitment of the respective national authorities to act upon their realization;

g. In any case, the next HCPD must comply with the principles of the “DaO” taking into account the planning and implementation of the UNDAFs in the participating country;

4. Way forward

When preparing the new HCPDs, the Programme Division providing a coordination mechanism for clear guidance, harmony and cohesion of all outputs, should monitor the entire production process. PD should ensure that the final outputs are aligned with the SP and the NUA under the Vision 2030, and as comprehensive as possible to cover the full scale of UN-Habitat country activities, involving all new virtual branches around the new thematic and policy areas, as well as regional offices and partners at national and local level.

The design of new HCPDs shall become an essential part of the programme implementation clearly demonstrating the required alignment of normative and operational activities at country level and increasing UN-Habitat’s visibility within the DaO and UNDAF processes.

In light of the above, the need for strengthening the coordination mechanism at HQ with financial and human resources becomes self-evident.
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1. General trends
   1.1. Urban opportunities and challenges (Reflecting the Situation Analysis)
   1.2. General Context: Key National Urban Policies
       • Outlining the main issues which determine human settlements conditions and trends, focusing on summarizing key parameters;
       • Explaining the institutional responsibilities for the human settlements sector at national and local level.
   1.3. Boxes
       • Basic human settlements data;
       • Statistics;
       • Indicators.

> Shared responsibilities and sources: national consultations, HPM assessments, regional reports, national institutes of statistics, local authorities data etc.

2. Urban Land, Legislation and Governance
   • Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
   • 2 to 3 sub-chapters with sub-headings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
     - advocacy for and public awareness of human settlements issues;
     - monitoring of trends and data collection analysis;
     - partnerships with civil society;
     - other aspects (as identified by HPMs and national consultations).

> Shared responsibilities and sources: UN-Habitat policy papers, national policy papers, HPM assessments, GUO/LUO data, national consultations feedback, local authorities data, regional offices verification etc.

3. Urban Planning and Design
   • Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
   • 2 to 3 sub-chapters with sub-headings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
     - urban planning and management;
     - national and regional urban development policies;
     - climate change;
     - other aspects (as identified by HPMs and national consultations).

> Shared responsibilities and sources: UN-Habitat policy papers, national policy papers, HPM assessments, GUO/LUO data, national consultations feedback, local authorities data, regional offices verification etc.
4. **Urban Economy**
   - Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
   - 2 to 3 sub-chapters with sub-headings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
     - urban economy and employment
     - role of the youth and women in urban development
     - financing urban infrastructure and services
     - other aspects as identified by HPM and national consultations, e.g. post disaster/conflict reconstruction and recovery.

> **Sources and responsibilities:** policy paper on relevant focus area, Global Land Tool Network, regional offices, relevant global programmes, HPM assessment, national consultations.

5. **Urban Basic Services**
   - 2 paragraphs on documented UN-Habitat policies to introduce the subject in global terms;
   - several sub-chapters with sub-headings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on components of the focus area, like water and sanitation, access to basic services, urban transport, solid waste management, Local Agenda 21, effects of climate change on urban areas, post disaster reconstruction. Given the wide scope of this focus area, the setting of priorities depends largely on the result of national consultations.

> **Sources and responsibilities:** policy paper on focus area, Guidelines on Access to Basic Services for All, Water and Sanitation Branch, UN-Habitat publications and strategy papers on water and sanitation, solid waste management, climate change, urban transport and sustainable cities/ Local Agenda 21, relevant global programmes, regional offices, HPM assessments, national consultations.

6. **Housing and Slum Upgrading**
   - Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
   - 2 to 3 sub-chapters with sub-headings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
     - land for housing
     - social housing programmes
     - informal settlements and slum upgrading
     - other aspects as identified by HPM and national consultations, e.g. post disaster/conflict reconstruction and recovery.

> **Shared responsibilities and sources:** UN-Habitat policy papers, national policies, Global Land Tool Network, Slum Upgrading Facility, regional offices, relevant global programmes, HPM assessment, national consultations.

7. **Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation**
   - Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
   - 2 to 3 sub-chapters with sub-headings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
- disaster prevention;
- disaster emergency response;
- post-disaster reconstruction.

*(Depending on the country situation and needs)*

8. Research and Capacity Development
*(Depending on the country situation and needs)*

General Conclusion