TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE UNITED FOR SMART SUSTAINABLE CITIES (U4SSC) INITIATIVE

Background Information

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) have developed an internationally agreed definition for a smart sustainable city:[1]

> *"A smart sustainable city is an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects."*

- The United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative was launched on 18 May 2016 at the Forum on "Shaping smarter and more sustainable cities: Striving for Sustainable Development Goals".
- Since its inception, U4SSC has been functioning as a global platform for knowledge sharing on feasible smart city practices, guidelines and frameworks.
- U4SSC is a platform among agencies of the UN system, which is open for participation of other organizations and stakeholders.
- The U4SSC primarily advocates for public policies to encourage the use of innovative urban technologies and tools, including ICTs, to facilitate the transition to smart sustainable cities (SSC).
- The U4SSC developed and is promoting the implementation of a set of international key performance indicators (KPIs) for smart sustainable cities to achieve the sustainable development goals.

This document provides information on the U4SSC initiative and presents its terms of reference (ToR).

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[1] Definition endorsed by the Committee on Housing and Land Management in 2015 (ECE/HBP/184) and contained in ITU-T Recommendation Y.4903.

Partners of the U4SSC

The U4SSC **partners** are agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system. The following organizations are currently partners of the U4SSC: the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), , the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI), the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations University - Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

U4SSC Participants

The **Participants** of the U4SSC are experts representing interested national and local organizations and agencies, international organizations, cities and their associations, NGOs, private sector, academia and independent experts.

Management team

The U4SSC **Management Team** includes two **Co-Chairs** and two **Vice-Chairs** who are experts nominated by the Partners and approved by the **Partners Board.**

The work of the U4SSC is carried out by designated **Leaders of Thematic Groups** who organize work on specific topics and organize preparation of specific deliverables (reports, studies, etc.) as agreed during the U4SSC annual meeting. The Leaders are technical experts who are appointed by U4SSC Co-Chairs in consultation with U4SSC partners. The leaders are responsible for the development and implementation of the U4SSC Action Plan.

The Initiative has the following objectives, which are set in accordance with the mandate of the U4SSC Partners:

- To support the creation of legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks for SSC also through relevant U4SSC Partners' intergovernmental and institutional bodies;
- To provide practical guidance to decision makers and other key stakeholders on sustainable urban development;
- To foster discussions on the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and its applications, including, inter alia, Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain and artificial intelligence in facilitating the transition to SSC;
- To encourage cooperation among relevant smart city stakeholders;

- To provide an accessible and neutral platform for knowledge sharing on SSC related issues;
- To support the implementation of the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators for SSC and to harmonize methodologies and approaches to assess cities' performance;
- To develop a Global Smart Sustainable Cities Index to rank cities based on their smartness and sustainabilities.
- To encourage the development of master plans and other strategic documents for cities wishing to transition into smart sustainable cities;
- To encourage cities to incorporate smart and sustainable city elements into their current sustainable urban development strategies;
- To enhance discussions on SSC through the preparation of policy papers, recommendations and guidelines;
- To promote the organization of raising awareness campaigns on smart sustainable city-related topics;
- To help achieve and monitor progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 11 on cities and human settlements, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and other international commitments, including related ITU Resolutions, UNECE or U4SSC Partners initiatives.

Responsibilities of the U4SSC Partners Board:

The Partners Board comprises 16 UN agencies, funds and programmes (U4SSC partners).

The Partners Board of the U4SSC is responsible for the development of strategic directions of work of the Initiative. It will also:

- adopt the annual U4SSC Action Plan elaborated by the Chairs, Vice Chairs, Leaders with the support of the Secretariat;
- approve the revision of the ToR (when needed);
- approve the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs;
- actively contribute to the production of the deliverables and other activities conducted within the U4SSC;
- actively disseminate the products of the U4SSC through their networks and relevant events;
- ensure that the main objectives of the U4SSC are met;
- support the U4SSC Secretariat when required.

Responsibilities of Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the U4SSC:

- To oversee the overall functioning of the U4SSC;
- To develop a U4SSC Annual Action Plan which will help to monitor the progress of each deliverable and ensure its timely delivery with support from the Leaders and Secretariat;

- To provide guidance in case any dispute or overlap occurs between scopes of the deliverables;
- To promote the work of the U4SSC at the international and regional level;
- To encourage smart sustainable city stakeholders to join the U4SSC;
- To guide U4SSC participants in their work.

Responsibilities of Leaders of deliverables:

- To propose development of specific deliverable(s) linked to the subject areas of the U4SSC;
- To develop a work plan for his/her deliverable and inform the U4SSC Secretariat accordingly;
- To supervise the work related to his or her own deliverable;
- To develop a feasible schedule for the deliverable they are responsible for, including a realistic work plan and the calendar of e-meetings;
- To take the meeting minutes for each e-meeting held for their deliverable and upload them regularly to the Initiative web-based "SharePoint" site (https://extranet.itu.int/sites/itu-t/initiatives/U4SSC/SitePages/Home.aspx);
- To harmonize the inputs provided on each deliverable;
- To clearly define the titles, objectives and scope of each activity and deliverable proposed, including, but not limited to, policy papers, frameworks, issue papers, etc.;
- To promote cooperation with the U4SSC Co-Chairs and other Leaders, when possible, to find synergies and work together on common topics;
- To provide inputs to the Partners' Board based on the discussions conducted on the deliverable they are in charge of;
- To ensure that the smart sustainable city guidelines, policy recommendations, campaigns and smart city action plans are aligned with, inter alia, existing international standards, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the New Urban Agenda, Paris Agreement, Connect 2020 Agenda and the SDGs;
- To promote the U4SSC through events and campaigns and their organizations' network and events;
- To support and contribute to the overall objectives of U4SSC;
- To inform their respective organizations of their involvement in the U4SSC initiative.

Responsibilities of Participants

- To select the deliverable(s) they wish to contribute to and inform the U4SSC Secretariat and the leader(s) accordingly;

- To follow closely any global discussions on SSC which may be relevant to the work of the U4SSC and its deliverables;
- To bring their expertise on diverse subjects within the smart and sustainable urban development field to the discussions of the deliverable(s) they are working on;
- To participate in meetings or events of the U4SSC, as appropriate;
- To encourage smart city transitions through other events, conferences and trainings;
- To support bottom up initiatives on SSC that are ICT enabled;
- To collect relevant case studies and good practices on smart sustainable city related topics for the development of proposed deliverables.

Responsibilities of the U4SSC Secretariat:

The **Secretariat** of the Initiative, is responsible for coordinating its activities; it is open to the participation of other U4SSC Partners.

In order to join the Initiative, potential partners and other participants are invited to contact the Secretariat by email.

ITU (Telecommunication Standardization Bureau) and UNECE (Housing and Land Management Unit) jointly operate as the Secretariat of the U4SSC with their available resources and work programmes. The scope of the Initiative depends on the availability of resources to support the Secretariat and the work within the Initiative. The main responsibilities of the U4SSC Secretariat are:

- To assist with the organization of the work on the deliverables;
- To assist the consolidation of the deliverables, if required;
- To coordinate the official communications and press releases for the U4SSC;
- To organize the yearly meeting of the U4SSC where the mandates, Co-Chairs, Vice- Chairs and activities of the whole initiative are discussed and approved;
- To bring the results of work to attention and action, as appropriate, of relevant UNECE, ITU or other U4SSC partners' intergovernmental bodies.

Additional provisions:

- Participation in the U4SSC is free of charge.
- The travel medical insurance (if required), travel expenses, visa, accommodation and living expenses are responsibility of the individual or of his/her respective agency.
- Participation in the U4SSC is voluntary and not remunerated. It does not carry any expectation of employment with ITU, UNECE or any of the other participating UN agencies.
- The U4SSC Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Leaders' tenure is one year. Subsequent renewal or appointing of a new Chair, Vice-Chair or Leader is possible.

- All U4SSC partners are entitled to feature their official logos on the Initiative website, publications, issue papers, policy papers, guidelines and action plan prepared within U4SSC.

- The main website of the initiative is hosted at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/ssc/united/Pages/default.aspx. This website includes the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the U4SSC, U4SSC introduction booklet, the links to U4SSC events, deliverables and other results of work.

- An intranet site (SharePoint) has been created to facilitate the communication between Partners and other participants.

- The participants, Leaders, Vice-Chairs and Co-Chairs shall not use their participation in the U4SSC for their personal or corporate gain or benefit; shall respect confidentiality until the results of work are completed.

- All the material published based on the work of the U4SSC will be intellectual property of ITU, UNECE and other participating UN agencies, funds and programmes.

- All unpublished material within the U4SSC is the intellectual property of ITU, UNECE and other participating UN agencies, funds and programmes. They cannot be reproduced or published without the written consent of the U4SSC Secretariat.

- The logo of the U4SSC is also intellectual property of ITU, UNECE and other participating UN agencies, funds and programmes and can be used only after receiving the required approval of the U4SSC Secretariat.

- Chair, Vice Chair, Leaders and participants invited to speak on behalf of U4SSC in other events as well as interested in presenting the work of the U4SSC in fora, journals, conferences etc. should inform the U4SSC Secretariat in advance in order to ensure smooth coordination of work.

- The U4SSC Secretariat should be informed immediately of any shared or replicated work in other forums, publications or organizations, in order to avoid conflicts of interests or legal liabilities in the future.

- The U4SSC Partners and the U4SSC Management Team can speak on behalf of U4SSC and are encouraged to inform the U4SSC Secretariat on their relevant activities.

- Participants or other interested parties are encouraged to promote the work of U4SSC within their networks.

- Any fundraising activities that will take place under the umbrella of the U4SSC, will have to be approved in advance by ITU and UNECE, which serve as U4SSC Secretariat.

- Ms. Cristina Bueti (ITU) and Ms. Domenica Carriero (UNECE) are the points of contact for the U4SSC Secretariat.

- By participating in the U4SSC, it is implied that each participant, Leader, Vice Chair and Chair agree to the ToR in this document with no exceptions.

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