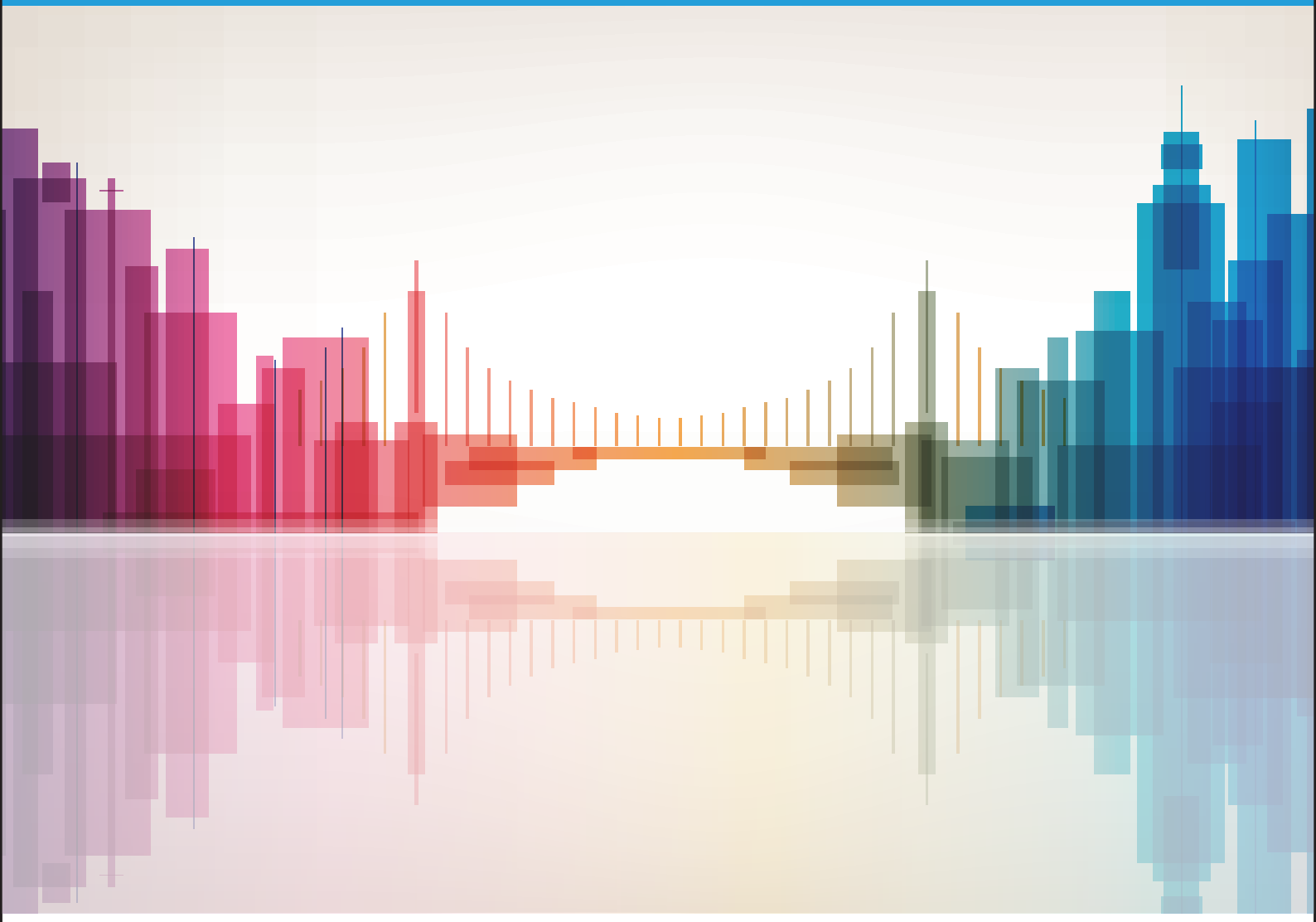
United 4 Smart Sustainable Cities

Key performance indicators: A key element for cities wishing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

United 4 Smart Sustainable Cities

Key performance indicators: A key element for cities wishing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

May 2021

Foreword

This publication has been developed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) within the framework of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative.

Overview

This publication provides information on the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) project. The U4SSC serves as the global platform to advocate for public policy and to encourage the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital technologies to facilitate the transition to smart sustainable cities.

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The U4SSC Key Performance Indicators: A key element for cities wishing to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals

About United for Smart Sustainable Cities

United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) is a United Nations initiative coordinated by ITU, UNECE and UN-Habitat, and supported by CBD, ECLAC, FAO, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNEP, UNEP-FI, UNFCCC, UNIDO, UNOP, UNU-EGOV, UN-Women and WMO to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

U4SSC serves as the global platform to advocate for public policy and to encourage the use of ICTs to facilitate the transition to smart sustainable cities. Find out more…

Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals

U4SSC has developed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for smart sustainable cities to support cities and communities worldwide in evaluating the role and contribution of ICTs and digital technologies in enabling smartness and sustainability, and to provide cities with the tools for self-assessment with the objective of achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

What is a Smart Sustainable City?

"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."

Source: Recommendation ITU-T Y.4900/L.1600 "*Overview of key performance indicators in smart sustainable cities*".

The U4SSC Key Performance Indicators Project

A consistent and standardized method for cities to collect the necessary data to measure performance and progress

The U4SSC KPIs are developed based on Recommendation ITU-T Y.4903/L.1603 "Key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities to assess the achievement of sustainable development goals".

These indicators have been formulated to provide cities and communities with a consistent and standardized method to collect and report the data needed to quantify, measure, report and monitor performance and progress towards:

- achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- becoming a smarter city; and
- becoming a more sustainable city.

How do the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators work?

An innovative approach

There are 91 KPIs that cities can measure and report. Each KPI falls under one of three dimensions of smartness and sustainability in a city: **Economy**, **Environment** and **Society and Culture**. Each of these dimensions provides a separate view of progress in its area, and when reported together, the dimensions provide a holistic yet comprehensive view of a smart sustainable city.

The dimensions are each further broken into a set of sub-dimensions, as well as categories. The sub-dimensions focus on more specific areas of performance and progress, whereas the categories organize the underlying KPIs.

The KPIs can be used to baseline and benchmark a city's performance to help:

- track its year-over-year progress;
- perform longer term trend analysis;
- benchmark its performance to strategic goals.

Find out more…

Send us your questions!

The list of all the U4SSC KPIs along with the recommended standardized collection and reporting approach are contained in the:

"Collection Methodology for Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities".

Over 100 cities worldwide are already implementing the U4SSC KPIs, including Dubai, Singapore, Riyadh, Santa Fe, Moscow, Valencia, Pully, Ålesund, Kristiansand and Bizerte, with many more aspiring smart cities interested in the initiative.

Contact the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat today to see what U4SSC can do for your city!

How can a city participate in the U4SSC KPIs project?

The first step to smartness and sustainability

To initiate the U4SSC KPIs project, the prospective city submits a Letter of Interest to the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat[1]. A simple template of the letter of interest can be found in **Annex 2** to this concept note. The Terms and Conditions that apply to the prospective city can be found earlier in **Annex 1**.

[1] The ITU-U4SSC Secretariat provides process guidance to cities during their U4SSC KPIs project.

The second step: Assessment and verification towards becoming a smart sustainable city

Once the city has been accepted and welcomed into U4SSC, and has paid the U4SSC KPI project's verification fees, the following takes place:

- The ITU-U4SSC Secretariat provides the city with an Excel template that contains all the KPIs to be collected, reported and assessed.
- The city fills in the template with the data and source information received from the various entities in their city.
- Once the data and sources have been reported, the verifier verifies the data and sources.
- Once the verification process has been completed, the verifier provides a Verification Report (in addition to other reports on the city's implementation of the KPIs), which includes the following information:
    - verification results;
    - high-level policy recommendations; and
    - high-level suggestions for improvement opportunities.

In case the city requires assistance during the data collection process, the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat and the verifier provide clarification on the KPIs through emails and conference calls.

To ensure transparency in the process, the verifier hired to perform the verification is independent and external to the ITU.

For more information on verification, please see the "ITU's implementation of the U4SSC KPIs Verification Process".

To learn more about the associated costs and expenses of the U4SSC KPIs project, please contact the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat at: u4ssc@itu.int.

Development of reports on ITU's implementation of the U4SSC KPIs

Please see the publications on ITU's implementation of the U4SSC KPIs in various cities here. These publications include the City Snapshot, Verification Report, optional Factsheet and optional Case Study.

Cities can request the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat's assistance to develop a City Factsheet or Case Study, which contain the detailed outcomes and achievements from implementing the U4SSC KPIs in the participating city. These reports highlight the city's smartness and sustainability initiatives and how they have helped the city in achieving applicable SDG targets. They are the ideal tool to promote the city's smart strategy and to demonstrate its progress in reaching the SDGs.

While the recommended City Factsheet or Case Study are optional, each participating city will receive its Verification Report and a City Snapshot. The Snapshot provides a visual overview of the city's performance based on global benchmarks.

To learn more about the costs and expenses associated with the development of the City Factsheet or Case Study and to learn more about the Verification Report and Snapshot, please contact the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat at: u4ssc@itu.int.

U4SSC certificate of implementation of the U4SSC KPIs

Each participating city will receive an attestation from ITU upon completion of their U4SSC KPIs project, stating that they were successfully evaluated based on a UN standard.

Annex 1: Terms and Conditions that apply to the participating city

Qualifying attributes of the participating city

- The concerned city should have a keen interest in transitioning into a smart sustainable city.

Responsibilities of the participating city

- The participating city is required to collect and record the required information in the Excel template provided by the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat and to initiate the verification process with the verifier. Each city will be given 3-6 months to gather its data, including, if necessary, with the assistance of a qualified third-party consultant whom the city may choose to engage. The final date for submission of the data will be decided in agreement with the city, ITU and the verifier.
- Each city may decide whether it wishes to have the verification conducted onsite or remotely.
- Participation in the U4SSC KPIs project is funded by the city.
- The participating city is required to provide the travel and accommodation expenses for the mission to the site for one verifier (who shall be designated by the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat). These expenses are not included in the overall cost of the project for the city.
- During the ongoing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, all verifications are being conducted remotely by default.

Responsibilities assumed by the ITU U4SSC Secretariat

- The ITU-U4SSC Secretariat is tasked with ensuring that each participating city is well informed about the processes conducted during the project.
- The ITU-U4SSC Secretariat is responsible for appointing a competent and accomplished verifier who can carry out the verification process.
- The ITU-U4SSC Secretariat is responsible for deciding on a suitable UN body staff member who can supervise the verification work carried out by the verifier.

Associated cost(s)

- To ensure transparency in the process, the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat will designate an independent and external verifier.
- To learn more about the associated costs and expenses of this project, please contact the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat at: u4ssc@itu.int.
- As part of the verification process, the verifier will conduct a series of interviews and will produce a final Verification Report for the city.

Additional information

- The Verification Report will only be published at the discretion of the participating city.
- Verifiers and the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat personnel involved in the city's U4SSC KPIs project are required to keep all the information associated with the project confidential.
- All the material published based on the city's U4SSC KPIs project will be the intellectual property of the participating city and the ITU.

Annex 2: Letter template to request participation in the U4SSC KPIs project

Subject: Participation in the U4SSC Key performance indicators (KPIs) project

Dear ITU-U4SSC Secretariat,

It is our pleasure to inform you that (CITY NAME) is interested in participating in the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) KPIs project.

(Please include a short paragraph on the city's vision of/current work on smart sustainable cities.)

We have carefully reviewed the U4SSC objectives and the collection methodology of the project. We are ready to collect data in accordance with the requirements of the U4SSC KPIs, undergo a verification of our data with an U4SSC approved verifier and submit the data to the ITU-U4SSC Secretariat.

We are pleased to inform you that the focal point for this activity is Mr./Ms. XXXX. We look forward to our participation in the project.

Kind regards,

(Name and signature of city leader / representative)

Validate
KPI
Key Performance Indicators
Goal
City
Measure
Success
Vision

For more information,
please contact: u4ssc@itu.int
Website: itu.int/go/u4SSC

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