

## Better Planning Systems for Cooler Countries and Cities

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In this paper, the author presents an indicative Questionnaire to Self-Assess the current planning approach or planning system in each country or city around the warming globe. The Questionnaire is rooted in the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, which was acknowledged as a tool to implement the New Urban Agenda and SDG11. The aim is to reform planning systems to effectively enable more compact and inclusive, better integrated and connected, and more climate resilient cities and other territories. Currently, most planning systems tend to result in just the opposite, making it a daunting task to achieve on the key qualifiers of sustainable planning. The paper is based on the author's contribution to UN-Habitat's Handbook to apply the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (UN-HABITAT, 2018).

### What are planning systems?

A 'system' can be defined as (1) A set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network; a complex whole – e.g. 'the state railway system', with synonyms such as structure, organisation, order, arrangement, complex, apparatus and network; (2) A set of principles or procedures according to which something is done; an organised scheme or method e.g. 'a multiparty system of government', with synonyms such as: method, methodology, technique, process, procedure, approach, practice, line of action, means, way, manner, mode, framework or *modus operandi*.

Both elements are useful to define urban and territorial or spatial planning systems in general terms: (1) A set of spatial components working together as parts of a mechanism or a complex whole, with components such as spatial structure, spatial organisation, spatial order, spatial arrangement, spatial complex, spatial apparatus and spatial network; (2) A set of spatial principles or procedures according to which spatial planning is done; an organised scheme or method with components such as: planning methodology, planning technique, planning process and procedure, planning approach, planning practice, planning means, planning manner, planning mode and planning framework.

As a matter of fact, the second part is needed to achieve the first part: to achieve a complementary national system of cities, tailor-made planning processes and procedures will be mandatory.

Although 'planning system' is usually associated with the public and governmental sector in a given national context, the above definition does not rule out the way the private sector and people in general shape and make use of the planning regulations, nor that planning systems are confined to more than only national governments and governance – leaving room for subnational and city-specific planning systems or sub-systems. Overall, planning systems can be viewed as the methods and approaches used by the public and private sector to influence the distribution of people and activities in spaces of various scales in a given country or territory.

A recently concluded authoritative ESPON study defines 'spatial planning systems' as "the ensemble of institutions that are used to mediate competition over the use of land and property, to allocate rights of development, to regulate change and to promote preferred spatial and urban form" (ESPON COMPASS, 2018). This is linked with the notion of 'Territorial governance' which comprises the institutions that assist in active cooperation across government, market and civil society actors to coordinate decision-making and

actions that have an impact on the quality of places and their development<sup>1</sup>. Formal planning systems thus consist of bundles of public and private development and building rights, agency authority, coordination mechanisms and procedural protocols that are defined by formal political and legal authorities. This, however, is not to suggest that informal planning systems do not exist.

Numerous planning systems exist around the world. While the activity of spatial planning is recognised and practised in most parts of the world, the contexts within which it operates vary greatly. Different urban and territorial issues, different political, economic and institutional systems, and different cultures and value systems all shape the planning system in different ways. Therefore, designing a planning system cannot be readily approached with an ideal template. This is well illustrated by the ground-breaking International Manual of Planning Practice (ISOCARP, 2015). In this manual, planning systems are assessed by planning practitioners on seven components: (1) Where lies the administrative competence for planning? (2) What is the main planning legislation? (3) What are the key planning and implementation instruments? (4) Who is doing development control? (5) How is planning related to sustainability policies? (6) What kind of governance system is applied in planning? (7) How does the planning system work in practice?

This work builds on earlier findings stemming from the 2009 Global Report on Human Settlements: 'Planning for Sustainable Cities' (UN-HABITAT, 2009). While we will further elaborate on the outcomes of these three authoritative publications in the next section, the approach taken here is to suggest an entirely new list of normative principles against which all planning systems can be assessed, reviewed, improved, adjusted or reformed. Planning systems in different parts of the world may meet these principles in different ways, using different institutional structures and processes.

Physical and cultural differences and contexts matter a lot – rendering a one-size-fits all global planning system senseless. Yet, as I will argue, the International Guidelines on Urban Planning (IG-UTP) – underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda (NUA), provide a coherent set of principles to readjust the locally applied systems to these universal principles. Therefore, a universal approach of what a planning system should contain to better enable sustainable urban and territorial development is worth further exploration. Framing this new planning system approach within the 'Theory of Change' model could be depicted as suggested below in Figure 1.

In this view, planning systems are part of the resources needed to achieve the desired sustainable urban and territorial development goals. They highly depend on national normative, legal and financial frameworks and development policies, but by including all planning actors, planning systems will become more bottom-up and people-oriented, considering all the planning scales, including the transnational and trans-boundary level. A planning system should include the three-pronged approach to planning (plans, legislation and finance), combined with the institutional and human resources and skills needed to operationalise the system through the application of appropriate processes and phases of the planning cycle, to produce outputs, outcomes and desired impacts as results.

Acknowledging the risk that (re)designing such a *multiplex planning system* approach could have a discouraging or even intimidating impact on actors of change, any entry points of discussion, minor or major, large or small scale is meaningful if the environment is conducive to address and redress the issue in an integrated way, by making smart links with other components of the planning system in a given territory.

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<sup>1</sup> See unpublished Input paper for the ESPON COMPASS workshop on Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe, Brussels, 20 March 2018

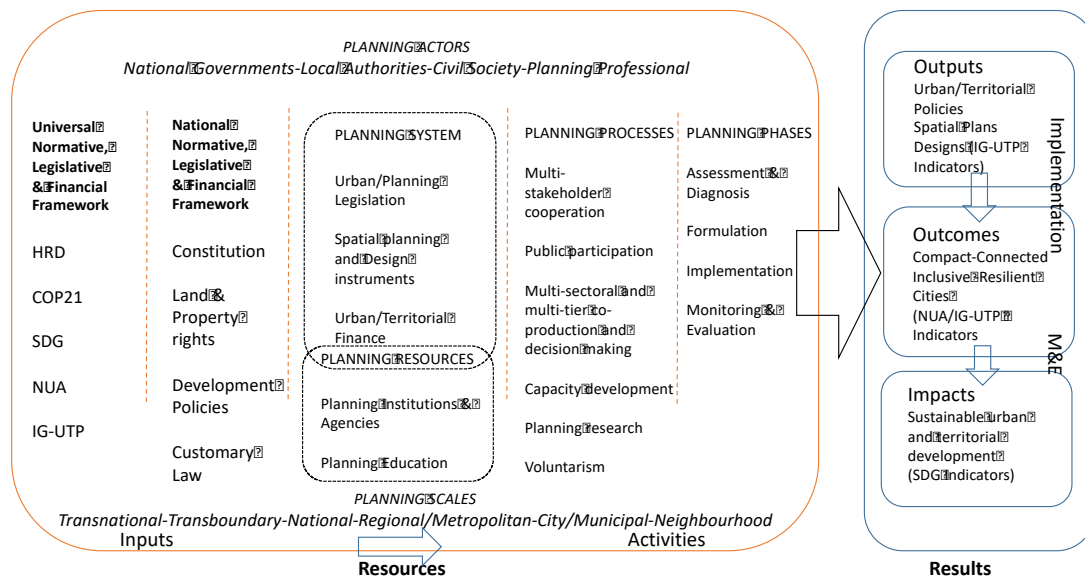


Figure 1 – New planning system approach as part of 'theory of change'

This new planning approach integrates all key elements of NUA/IG-UTP and will provide a reference model to review and redesign planning system anywhere in the world.

### What is the problem with planning systems?

The combined conclusion of the three authoritative studies referred to in previous section is clearly that most if not all planning systems are a) outdated, b) not (sufficiently) addressing emerging territorial issues such as climate change and social inequality, c) are no longer synced with decentralisation and new governance arrangements and – last but not least – display a growing mismatch between theory (law) and praxis.

The earlier cited International Manual of Planning Practice (IMPP) draws some critical conclusions on the state of planning systems in the 135 countries included in the 2015 compendium - as experienced by its member-planning practitioners:

- All countries have a physical planning system, only few since recent times. The main aim of planning is to regulate land-use; the most widespread being for the common good, to safeguard property rights, to create harmonious communities, and to protect the environment. Yet, market mechanisms are at work in all IMPP countries. Some are treating land and real-estate as pure commodity, even where all land remains state-owned;
- Planning focuses predominantly on cities while mostly ignoring rural settlements, eco-systems and climate. Attempts at more balanced 'regionalisation' floundered at the weakness of intermediary levels between the state and the local level. Regional planning is weak or non-existent, even in more or less autonomous entities of federal countries. Innovative voluntary regional agreements to tackle polarisation, excess gentrification, as well as shrinking cities lack institutional anchorage in existing power bases to sustain their momentum in the longer term;
- There remains a gap between often complex and bureaucratic planning systems and their effectiveness in the real world. Informal settlements are rife not only in the developing world where they constitute up to 80% of the built fabric; usually in the poorest countries. Often IMPP contributors state that planning systems are not working in practice and that planning seems to be in crisis in many places;

- Popular demand for decentralisation and more local autonomy is a prime contributor to changing governance. Decentralisation remains an illusion as long as the centre retains fiscal powers and planning is subjected to the *ultra vires* principle. For many countries, governance means greater involvement of the private sector, not only in the development process but in the plan making itself;
- While public participation has been incorporated into most planning systems it is ineffective in practice, and often practiced only at the end of a plan making process. Despite rising preoccupation with the environment, due to the debate on climate change and the incorporation of 'sustainability' in the planning system, its meaning and operational competence have to be much more clearly defined to be of use to planning;
- Concrete reasons given for the difficulties with implementation are the lack of planning skills and education, lack of professional planners as well lack of resources attributed to planning. The greatest obstacles of planning when seen as a tool of spatial and social justice are market driven development processes on the one hand and persistent adverse existential conditions, poverty above all, on the other hand.

Enriched by personal planning system experiences in a variety of countries and continents (Europe, Balkan, Middle-East, Asia and Caribbean), I can draw at least five compelling reasons why countries, cities and their citizens should jointly review the way urban and territorial planning and development is organised, managed and practiced to implement the NUA and attaining to the SDGs:

- The legal basis of national or devolved planning systems are often designed and developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and no longer fit for purpose in the fast urbanising and environmentally deteriorating 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- The planning system might be rooted in colonial times and not designed or developed according to the local context and specific challenges and opportunities of communities and territories;
- The planning system might be designed and developed under a different socio-ideological framework that no longer (should) exist;
- The planning system is only addressing the formal planning while much if not most of the recent and ongoing urbanisation and territorial innovation occurs outside the formal planning system;
- The planning system in place might simply not be up to task to deliver on the SDGs (Goal 11 in particular) and the NUA – think of climate change as one of the most pressing matters!

The bottom line is that any country, city or community taking the effort of having a serious look at the conditions for sustainable urban and territorial planning and development, as laid down in the NUA/IG-UTP, will most likely come to the conclusion – through an open and multi-stakeholder reflective process – that the planning approach and system - with its distinct set of planning instruments, legal rules and regulation, human, financial and technical resources, and its distinct planning practices – will require some sort of adjustment, if not a more fundamental reform in case the initial objectives and ground rules of planning do not longer align with the reformulated objectives and goals to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Where there is no coherent or very limited planning system in place, countries and cities can leapfrog towards better designed systems by learning from the hard lessons learnt by older planning systems – see also the ESPON COMPASS study.

### **What are the international benchmarks for cooler planning systems?**

The International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) serve both as a source of inspiration and a compass for decision makers and urban professionals when

reviewing urban and territorial planning systems. The Guidelines provide national governments, local authorities, civil society organisations and planning professionals with a global reference framework that promotes more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities and territories that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change. Because normative frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda (NUA) as well the IG-UTP are by default of a global and universal nature, they do not explicitly address national and subnational planning systems as such. This paper explores the role of national and subnational planning systems as the contextual tissue to connect all the dots and lines sketched out by the emerging global normative planning frameworks – the first column of the new planning approach as sketched out in Figure 1.

On the pressing issues related to climate change, the IG-UTP promotes climate resilience as one of its five qualifiers for a more sustainable territorial development, while the four other qualifiers also need to contribute to climate resilience (through integrated planning and more compact and better connected cities that are socially inclusive).

The IG-UPT is structured around 12 guiding principles including principle 8 on planning for climate resilience: *“Urban and Territorial Planning contributes to increase human security by strengthening environmental and socioeconomic resilience, enhancing mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and improving the management of natural and environmental hazards and risks.”*

Therefore, any policies, plans and designs that promote resilience to climate change should specify the expected climate change effects, based on the available climate change science and other data, on the spatial scale of policies, plans and designs, i.e. climate change effects on the national urban system – regional and metropolitans scale, on the city as a whole and down to the neighborhood level. They should also include adaptive measures for the expected negative effects of climate change, include mitigation measures for reducing the contributing factors, especially GHG emissions, for climate change; and support, where possible, the development, application and scaling of climate friendly and resilience technology, including eco-system-based adaptation etc.

Sustainable Development Goal 13 commits to *“Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”*, by – *inter alia* – integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, implementing the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and promoting mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing states. Also, SDG 11 contains climate change related engagements, linked with risk and disaster management:

*“By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels”* (SDG 11.b) – as well *“Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilising local materials”* (SDG 11.c).

Building resilience demands a whole-of-society approach, especially in cities, where the key sectors of local government must be fully engaged and coordinated. Private sector, the scientific and technical community and community actors (including women, youth and persons with disabilities among others) are increasingly involved in building urban resilience. Efforts to pro-actively engage expertise in issues of economics, environment, health and related areas will help to ensure that resilience building efforts are holistic.

The New Urban Agenda and Guidelines provide guidance on how to operationalise a resilience agenda by providing a positive role for urbanisation - one that connects the physical, social, environmental and economic elements of cities and other territories.

While the international community is still working out the indicators for monitoring the SDGs, NUA and IG-UTP, we could think of specific territorial indicators such as:

- Spatial policies and plans include climate and hazard resilience assessment;
- Spatial plans include climate and hazard resilience indicators/incentives;
- Spatial plans and designs include low carbon and renewable energy indicators/incentives;
- Spatial plans and designs include green building indicators/incentives.

Inspiring practices are part of the international benchmarking and have informed the redaction of the 12 guiding principles and 114 recommendations of the IG-UTP – see for instance the case of Norway in Box 1.

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### **Box 1: Norway – Cities of the Future Integrating Climate Change Adaption**



Norway is a Scandinavian country positioned in Northern Europe, with a population of just over 5 million inhabitants. Its economy has been dominated by oil and gas exports, positioning it as one of the top 20 countries with the highest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. According to forecasts made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Norway's annual mean temperature is expected to rise by 3.4 degrees Celsius this century and precipitation has already increased by 20% since 1900. Acknowledging the vital role cities play in mitigating climate risk, Norway has

adopted a multifaceted urban policy approach. In particular, municipalities were identified as having significant responsibility in influencing the urban environment at a local level and in turn influencing constituent attitudes to energy consumption. The 'Cities of the Future Programme' invited thirteen of Norway's largest cities to take part in a collaborative project to reduce emissions and make cities more liveable. Integral to this was the concept of compact cities, those which favour walking and cycling and promote dense, liveable urban forms. The value added to the programme through integration of urban planning and sectorial policies has improved Norway's resilience to climate change and created an ongoing dialogue between key actors, an important asset in urban management for the future.

*Source case: UN-HABITAT, 2015 – Source picture: <http://www.uib.no/>*

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Among many other planning issues, the climate resilience policy aims indicate the need to assess the current planning systems on its effectiveness and efficiency to address climate change and other natural and man-made disasters.

### **A Questionnaire to review planning systems**

Basically, planning systems are to be re-defined as the localised 'multi-tier and multi-partner governance framework for improving urban and territorial policies, plans, designs and implementation processes, aimed at more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities and territories that foster sustainable development and are resilient to climate change'. Hence, a planning system should also be considered as the combined performance of 'planning in theory' and 'planning in practice'. This section explores an indicative Questionnaire to Self-Assess the current planning approach or planning system in

any given country or city, after elaborating on the reasons to review, what to review exactly, who should review and how planning can be reviewed in an organised way. Questions are formulated as positive statements, to allow a scoring along the scale of Likert from 1-5, with an indicative set of indicators on a scale of 0-1.

Although a comprehensive Self-Assessment Questionnaire need to address all issues, Box 2 presents a sample of questions related to climate change and the broader issue of urban and territorial resilience.

## Box 2: Self-Assessment of Planning Systems

<b>Self-Assessment for Planning Approach/System in general</b>	
<b>Statements (Score 1-5)</b>	<b>Suggested indicators (Score 0/1)</b>
1. The planning approach/system in general aligns with the universal definition of spatial planning as a decision-making framework for improving policies, plans, designs and implementation processes and projects that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Better integrated and aiming at a multi-sectoral approach;</li> <li>b. Participatory and aiming at informed and engaged citizens;</li> <li>c. Socially inclusive and aiming at improving the lives of poor and vulnerable people (including slums) through territorial cohesion;</li> <li>d. Environmentally sustainable and aiming at protecting eco-systems and bio-diversity;</li> <li>e. Resilient to climate change and other natural and man-made disasters;</li> <li>f. Human rights based and aiming at realising development rights for all, with focus on youth, women and minorities.</li> </ul>	
	<i>An inter-ministerial territorial coordination is in place</i>
	<i>There is a culture of public participation in place</i>
	<i>Plans include Social Impact Assessments</i>
	<i>Plans include Environmental Impact Assessments</i>
	<i>Policies/Plans include Climate/Hazard Resilience Assessment</i>
2. The planning practice is in general in line with the 'planning theory' as enshrined in the legal and customary framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Territorial developments and projects are mostly compliant with plans and rules;</li> <li>b. The planning rules and regulations are mostly enforced;</li> <li>c. Laws, policies and plans are regularly reviewed through a permanent monitoring and regular evaluation.</li> </ul>	<i>Policies/Plans include Human Rights markers</i>
	<i>A plan-compliance check is in place for projects</i>
	<i>Inspection of constructions is a common practice</i>
3. The planning approach/system recognise and foster a multi-stakeholder participatory approach including partnership with and between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Local and other sub-national planning authorities and institutions;</li> <li>b. Civil society (including vulnerable groups such as children, women, youth, elder, disabled and ethnic minorities);</li> </ul>	<i>A parliamentary commission on land-use and spatial planning is in place</i>
	<i>A National Urban Commission/Forum is in place</i>
	<i>Local Authorities takes part in the National Urban Commission/Forum</i>
	<i>A national association of local authorities is in place</i>
	<i>Civil Society takes part in the National Urban Commission/Forum</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Private sector and business community associations;</li> <li>d. Planning professionals and their associations;</li> <li>e. Planning schools and their teachers and students.</li> </ul>	<i>Granting schemes for civil society incentives are in place</i>
	<i>Private sector and business community takes part in the National Urban Commission/Forum</i>
	<i>Planning professionals takes part in the National Urban Commission/Forum</i>
	<i>Planning school/academia take part in the National Urban Commission/Forum</i>
4. The planning approach/system or components of it explicitly refer to global or continental policies on sustainable urban and territorial development, climate change or resilience against natural and man-made disasters.	<i>Your country was involved in drafting one or more of those international policies and guidelines</i>
5. Overall, there is a planning approach/system in place consisting of three inter-related enabling components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sound and flexible spatial planning and design framework at multiple scales (see question 2);</li> <li>b. Enforceable and transparent legal framework;</li> <li>c. Financial framework to diagnose, formulate, implement and monitor spatial planning.</li> </ul>	<i>The planning system is generally highly repudiated and respected</i>
<b>Self-Assessment for Resilient City Planning in particular</b>	
6. The local authority promotes the construction, retrofitting and management of "green buildings" through incentives and disincentives, and monitor their economic impacts.	<i>Plans and designs contain 'green building' indicators/incentives</i>
7. The local authority uses urban and territorial planning as a tool to improve access to water and sanitation services and reduce air pollution and the amount of water wasted.	<i>Plans and designs contain access to water/sanitation indicators/incentives</i>
8. The local authority formulates urban plans as a mitigation and adaptation framework in response to climate change and for increasing the resilience of human settlements, especially those located in vulnerable and informal areas.	<i>Plans contain area/community-sensitive climate mitigation indicators/incentives</i>
9. The local authority locates essential urban services, infrastructure and residential developments in low-risk areas and resettle, in a participatory and voluntary way people living in high-risk areas to more appropriate locations.	<i>Plans contain risk-avoidance/mitigation indicators/incentives</i>
10. The local authority assesses the implications and potential impacts of climate change and prepare for the continuity of key urban functions during disasters or crises.	<i>Special climate and disaster resilience plans are in place</i>



<b>Self-Assessment for the climate resilience qualifier on different scales of planning (1-5)</b>		
National/Regional	Metropolitan/City-wide/Municipal	Neighbourhood
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the policy/plan/strategy assert the role of cities as major contributors to climate change through their increased CO2 emissions and the vulnerability of urban populations and infrastructures to climate change?</li> <li>2. Does the national policy, plan or strategy address the local impacts of climate change (e.g., sea-level rise, urban heat wave, etc.) and promote cooperation between national and sub-national governments/groups/organizations?</li> <li>3. Does the policy, plan or strategy promote low-emissions development (LED) and/or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below a specific baseline?</li> <li>4. To what extent does the policy/plan/strategy place adequate emphasis on the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Climate change adaptation</li> <li>b) Mitigation of emissions</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the policy, plan or strategy address the metropolitan impacts of climate change (e.g. sea-level rise, urban heat wave, etc.)?</li> <li>2. Does the policy, plan or strategy incorporate an urban resilience profile?</li> <li>3. Does the policy, plan or strategy promote low-emissions development (LED) and/or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below a specific baseline?</li> <li>4. Does the policy, plan or strategy include a metropolitan-wide or city-wide emissions inventory?</li> <li>5. Does the policy, plan or strategy reflect commitments or agreements to meet metropolitan emissions reductions targets?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the policy, plan or strategy address the local impacts of climate change (e.g., sea-level rise, urban heat wave, etc.) through adaptation strategies (e.g. floodplain avoidance, emergency preparedness, etc.)?</li> <li>2. Does the policy, plan or strategy promote low-emissions neighbourhood development strategies (LEDS) (e.g., compact development, mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, etc.)?</li> </ol>

This indicative Self-Assessment Questionnaire sample need to be tested and further refined. While customising the statements and indicators to the local context might be required for meaningful response, using a common set of questions will allow exchange, comparative analysis and world-wide monitoring and evaluation – essential for monitoring the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

This Questionnaire can be combined with a more specific assessment framework targeting the urban and territorial legal frameworks. The Planning Law Assessment Framework (UN-HABITAT 2018b) is a self-assessment tool to be used during focus groups to identify strengths and weakness of all the laws, regulations, and decrees applicable in a city or any other given territory, enacted at different levels.

## Reviewing to reform planning systems

### *Planning System Review methodology*

While there can be good reasons to be pragmatic and look at ad-hoc ways to improve the planning system, it is however more effective to follow the classic planning cycle from



diagnosis to implementation and evaluation, at all planning scales, involving all stakeholder groups, including urban/territorial legislation and supported by adequate human, technical and financial resources. In other words, moving from an ad-hoc towards a more 'planned' adjustment and reform of the planning system in place. Figure 2 illustrates this 'planned review and adjustment of a planning system on the three-pronged-components, starting with a diagnosis, e.g. by using the self-assessment questionnaire (see above), by prioritising the most pressing issues and formulating

actions for further review and eventual adjustment or reform, followed by the implementation combined with permanent monitoring and evaluation, which can lead to further review and adjustment.

*Figure 2 – Planning system review cycle*

In addition, the review also need to look into the other resources as well the capacities needed to plan, implement and manage urban and territorial development:

- Institutional review: assessment of the institutional resources and their capacities in place for spatial planning and management – not only the governmental structures at national and sub-national levels; also the para- or non-governmental planning agencies, as well planning professional organisations, related civil society and business community organisations, including the domestic private planning consultancies;
- Educational review: assessment of the national and sub-national educational sector, both public and private, contributing to planning capacity development for all ages and gender, from primary schools to universities. Special attention is needed to review R&D capacities to support evidence-based spatial planning.

Planning legislation and overall planning systems are most commonly established at country level but obviously affect all the other territorial levels, from supra-national to local and neighbourhood level. The Guidelines advocates a subsidiary co-productive governance approach with planning and implementation mechanisms at the appropriate level, driven by partnerships and co-production of policies, plans and designs at all planning levels. Hence, the assessment of a planning system should also consider this territorial urban-rural continuum throughout the different scales and levels of planning and governance. This entails:

- Urban-Rural planning review: assessment of policies, plans and designs for both urban and rural areas, including the hybrid territories where urban-rural linkages or the lack thereof can make or break food-security and resilience to natural hazards and climate change. 'Rural' in this case also comprises entirely natural and non-cultivated or inhibited areas;
- Multi-scale planning review: assessment of the national planning scale - including the national land- and planning-relevant legislation – should be complemented by

reviewing planning approaches and instruments – or the lack thereof – at sub-national planning scales, including metropolitan and city-wide planning. Anticipating exponential growth and share of metropolitan urban regions all over the world, tailor-made 'metropolitan planning systems' will be required to meet the specific challenges of each metropolis, with its own set of urban legislation, institutions and resources. But also planning at transnational and transboundary scales need to be reviewed, as well the bottom-up approaches and participatory planning instruments at hand for urban and rural communities.

In the spirit of the NUA/IG-UTP, it is strongly recommended that respondents from all four key stakeholder groups are involved in the Self-Assessment: National Governments, Local Authorities, Civil Society and Planning Professionals. The mobilisation and selection of respondents for the Self-Assessment and the planning review is primarily a local matter. However, some suggestions can be made regarding the four key respondent groups, while keeping in mind that any stakeholder group at any time can address any planning issue to review as a starting point or led by a sense of urgency. The sections below however suggest possible ways to undertake a more comprehensive assessment of the entire planning system or approach. Each country or city can organize the Self-Assessment according to local best practices, inspired by international best practices. The methodological approach as suggested below is therefore indicative. Although it is possible for individual and associated respondents to answer the Questions independently and without further exchange, the preferred situation would be an established Multi-Stakeholder Planning Review Task Force to organize and coordinate the activities related to the Assessment. In the absence of a consensus among the four key stakeholders group to undertake a joint evaluation of the planning system, the partial Self-Assessment can still contribute to raise awareness, provide arguments for advocacy and feed a public debate on review and reform of the planning system in place. The Self-Assessment Task Force will establish a roadmap and workplan according to human and financial resources that are available or can be mobilised – see Figure 3 for an indicative Planning Review roadmap.

### *Planning System Reform methodology*

With respect to ensuring use, the key is found in securing a commitment to the Self-Assessment as a learning and change process - both within and external to the affected stakeholder organisations. Ensuring buy-in on a clearly defined purpose, a credible process that stays focussed on the relevant issues. Findings that are universally understood and meaningful and practical to their users will encourage the adaption and application of the assessment findings. The tools and principles presented in previous section are also readily adaptable to periodic follow-up and monitoring to gauge progress and document changes.

The second element for maximising the benefits of the Planning Self-Assessment lies in building a greater body of knowledge around conducting and using self-assessments. To extend the benefits beyond the primary organisations related to the design and operation of the planning systems, we need to make our experiences accessible, to be shared and built on by others. The resulting synergies and learning can then deepen our understanding of the complexities of planning self-assessment and expand the number of stakeholders and organisations conducting them and learning from them

Linking the Planning Self-Assessment with the Theory of Change, a number of specific steps could be considered to maximise the use of the planning review – see Figure 3.

With Step 1 and Step 2 addressed in the previous section, this section will concentrate on the 'resulting' Steps 3-5. Having designed a self-assessment process and methods consistent with the clearly-defined purpose, established buy-in across the stakeholder-organisations, and secured the participation of ethical, credible evaluators, the exercise then needs to be pursued with rigour. Stakes can be high in changing deep-rooted planning rules

and the information on which the changes are based needs to be reliable and complete. Using the technical expertise available to it, the assessment team ensures this by monitoring the design, methods and outputs throughout the process. Quality control to maintain the reliability of the data analysis and interpretation ensures that both the spirit behind the assessment and the methods chosen for its overall design are adhered to. At the analysis and reporting stages, a willingness to rigorously verify the findings with stakeholders strengthens the basis on which the recommended actions are built.

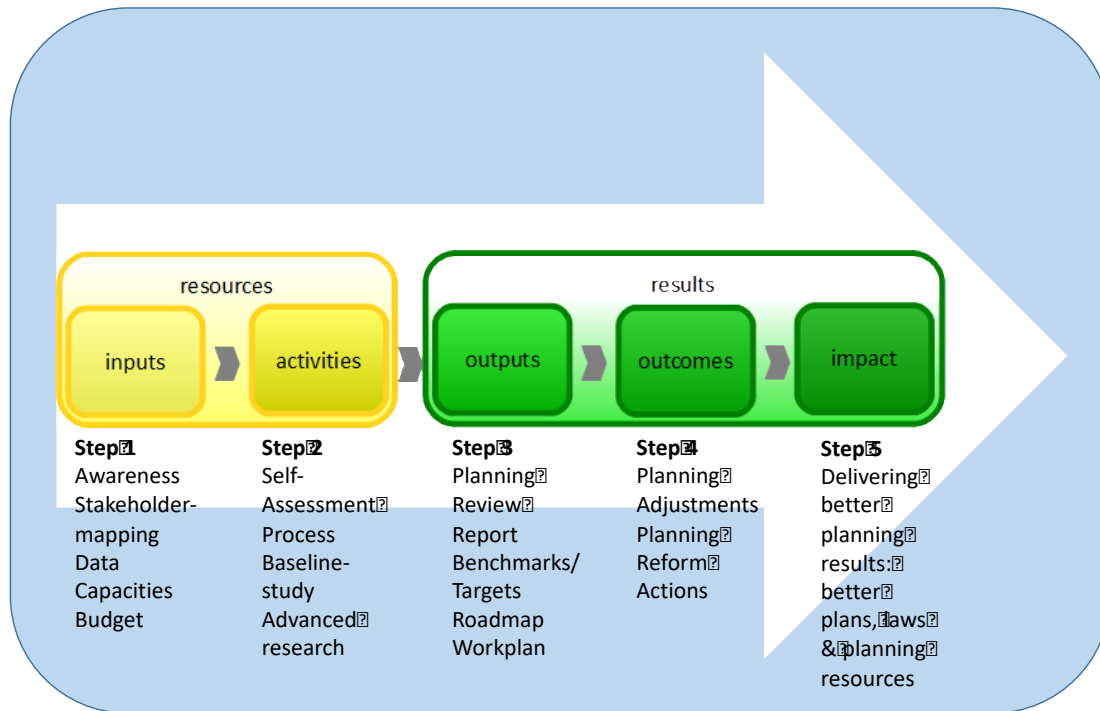


Figure 3 – Step-by-step planning system review and reform process

Step 3 starts with completing and endorsing the Planning Review Report. The modes selected for reporting and disseminating the results need to be tailored to the users and relevant to the organisational environment. Reporting starts early in the assessment process in order to verify accuracy, to increase the volume of the data and to establish a reporting pattern which is comfortable and effective for stakeholders. Depending on the feedback, adjustments can then be made to the way the data is packaged and/or the modes of reporting. Gradually building up knowledge across the stakeholder organisations about the assessment's findings, means that they can be verified and gradually understood and accepted. In the final reporting, the assessment team can then move directly into **action planning** because the stage has been set for the team to move stakeholders to respond to the findings by committing to and scheduling actions. The bridge from reporting to action planning is the **prioritisation of planning issues** to be redressed through adjusting or reforming the current planning approach/system, while also including new topics to be addressed in a planning reform process.

Steps 4 and 5 is about reaping the incremental benefits of the planned planning review. While Step 5 is only measurable on the longer term – the desired change in urban and territorial deliverables such as more compact-walkable, socially-diverse and healthy neighbourhoods, cities, towns and villages – Step 4 is the real implementation phase of fixing as much as possible and developing new planning tools and instruments as required by the Planning Reform Action Plan. While 'friction' in planning-led urban and territorial development can not and should not be entirely eliminated – effective sustainable societies

are usually characterised by planning systems with a set of well-thought publicly controlled and enforceable rules and regulations – adjusted, reformed or entirely planning systems should be primarily designed to enable sustainable development, through multi-stakeholder and participatory co-production of planning outputs and planning outcomes. Co-productive tools and instruments such as multi-stakeholder 'urban forums' and 'urban pacts' should become key components of improved planning approaches and systems.

### **Making the change happen**

Spatial planning needs to change because the world has changed and keeps changing – a world of 10 billion is a different planetary proposition from one of 5 billion, as much as a world heating up with another 2-4 degrees Celsius will require adaptive territorial responses. "One reason why planning in many countries has not kept abreast of these deep changes is that it has been too parochial. Because legislation, procedures, institutions and policies have been shaped at national or, in federal states at provincial level, planning practice has been locked into the specifics of those systems." (UN-HABITAT/SALGA, 2018). While climate change has created a global awareness among planners and decision makers, the SDGs, NUA and IG-UTP provide the markers for reviewing and reforming outdated or dis-functional planning systems. While there is no ideal template for better performing planning systems, all relevant territorial stakeholders need to partner to review and reform defunct planning systems against the international benchmarks for a more sustainable territorial development. Planning systems in different parts of the world may meet these principles in different ways, using different institutional structures and processes, and different methodologies and outcomes, but using common tools such as the suggested Self-Assessment Questionnaire, can largely enhance communication, peer-to-peer learning and convergence on the planetary development goals. Planners and their professional associations such as ISOCARP must champion this change for cooler planning systems.

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