Guiding Principles for Urban-Rural Linkages to Advance Integrated Territorial Development

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the New Urban Agenda, Member States agreed to normative policies supporting integrated urban and territorial planning and development, effectively calling for new, inclusive approaches and enhanced synergies between urban and rural communities and spaces. These draft “Guiding Principles and Thematic Pathways” are aimed at different levels of government, intergovernmental organizations, development partners and stakeholders from academia, research, civil society and private sector and are meant to be applied flexibly in different local contexts. The goal is to offer overarching guiding principles with a pragmatic set of strategies -- that build upon correspondences between global frameworks, national policy and governance and local governance and include experiences in a wide variety of contexts and geographies for making them globally applicable and actionable. The necessity to include different levels of governance while recognizing unique contexts and multiple pathways may be helped by the identification of some guiding principles. As a body of practice on integrated and sustainable territorial development builds, and with subsequent evaluation, these principles will undoubtedly evolve.

Cross-cutting Guiding Principles ¹ to strengthen urban-rural linkages for integrated territorial development:

1. **Translate normative policy** in national and subnational commitments to actions through mainstreaming urban-rural linkages as key to implementing both the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs,
2. **Strengthen governance mechanisms** for the urban-rural nexus including multi-sectoral, multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance integration;
3. **Apply human rights principles** and standards including identifying duty-bearers and right-holders in both rural and urban settings;
4. **Promote integrative approaches to urban and territorial planning** that includes different sizes of urban and rural settlements from small towns to large cities and metropolitan areas as well as the interactions between them and their physical environment and inclusion of all relevant actors;
5. **Anticipate tools for action** at territorial levels when designing policy and planning strategies -- that should be flexibly and sensitively adapted to individual country contexts -- as well as accessible and useful to a wide variety of actors;
6. **Prioritize funding** for integrated rural and urban economic, environmental and social development (including public, private and other forms of investment and financial flows);
7. **Empower people** by building up capacity for active engagement in urban and rural communities, especially women, Indigenous Peoples, children, youth, elders, migrants, and others at risk of being left behind based on participatory analysis of gaps in capacity for active engagement;
8. **Protect and promote health and well-being** of both urban and rural populations in initiatives, policies and programmes and service provision;
9. **Foster partnerships, alliances and networks** that enhance synergies across urban and rural actors, through inclusive and participatory processes for full engagement;
10. **Establish or improve information systems** integrating urban and rural data, monitoring performance and evaluation, making information accessible, transparent and interactive for all.

¹ The Guiding Principles and Thematic Pathways are drawn from multiple sources including policy decisions and reports from UN agencies, government and academic research, multistakeholder expert meetings, policy papers for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda and inputs from city networks, academic and civil society experts.
Thematic Pathways to operationalize Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are not simply an extension of global normative policy, but are intended to help make a new global narrative operational, and aim to bridge gaps between rural and urban domains. The Guiding Principles will bring an integrated urban-rural perspective to other relevant Member State approved guidelines and can provide a reference for revising national policy frameworks as well as local strategies. The desired outcome is to promote and advocate for inclusive and integrated urban and territorial development as called for in the New Urban Agenda and to inform urban-rural linkages called for in the SDGs. These non-binding principles should inform fields of action from different entry points, and are intended to help spatially link urban and rural actors, bring different government levels to share perspectives on integrated urban and territorial development, and thereby enhance synergies from flows of people, products, services, and information with the goal to foster economic, social and environmental sustainability across the urban-rural continuum. Entry points and fields of action here called “thematic pathways”, are informed by the Guiding Principles for Urban-Rural Linkages listed above, and are grounded in case studies, research and examples. These examples will be referenced in a longer report and annexes (to be published in mid-2018).

A. Governance, Legislation and Capacity Building

1. Promote “whole-of-government”\(^2\), rights-based approaches and multi-actor, multi-sectoral and multi-level governance mechanisms linking local, territorial and national governmental bodies through review and promulgation of executive and legislated initiatives, regulations, procedures and interventions. Such interventions may include revision of governance structures that have led to unproductive administrative separation and/or parallel competencies found in both urban and territorial authorities.

2. Conduct ongoing knowledge exchange between actors from technical and scientific backgrounds, development partners and nongovernmental actors on topics related to strengthening urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial development.

3. As land is so central to economic, social and environmental conflicts between urban and rural areas, transparent and balanced approaches to the issues of secure access and tenure of land should be a central part of the governance systems related to integrated territorial development, for example applying the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) in the context of urban rural linkages.

4. Support inclusion of affected populations in planning, decision making and in design of programmes to ensure holistic understanding of issues, participatory governance, and to increase accountability and ownership of solutions.

B. Regional and Territorial Planning

1. Support integrated territorial planning goals by reviewing, adapting and using locally relevant legal and legislative instruments and methods.

2. Adapt and adopt multi-level, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches to integrated planning for example as proposed in the International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP), linking national planning for sustainable development to integrated territorial development with an emphasis on the participation of civil society, and other relevant actors, specifically marginalized groups in both local and national planning and management.

3. Raise awareness to address urban-rural linkages more coherently through existing and new networks and associations of professional planners and planning departments or agencies from urban and territorial jurisdictions and sectoral planners at national levels to, exchange knowledge and build capacity.

4. Institute mechanisms to bring together government authorities from different levels and sectors,\(^2\) “Whole of government” refers to high level political leadership that enables government agencies departments, divisions and other units to work more effectively together on policy, planning, programme management and evaluation.
drawing special attention to the financial, human and institutional needs of small towns and intermediate cities and strengthen local capacities for integrated territorial development.

5. Formalize networks of jurisdictions at territorial and regional levels to build capacity and synergies to jointly define a vision and develop action plans for sustainable economic, social and environmental development at regional levels.

C. Promotion of (Local) Urban-Rural Partnerships

1. Building on local context and past accomplishments of urban rural actors and associations, identify and support various types of inclusive multi-actor partnerships to create synergies and advance solutions that empower communities, inclusive planning and that build on the relative strengths, assets and capacities in both urban and rural areas.

2. Design and convene both formal and informal partnerships that address inequalities and power imbalances between urban and rural actors with an territorial approach, including private sector and civil society actors in both rural and urban areas, and between larger and smaller cities and towns (including regional cross-border or trans-jurisdiction boundaries).

D. Inclusive Investment and Finance

1. Institute measures and practices to improve public and private finance instruments to address credit and finance barriers across the urban-rural continuum. At the public finance level this includes coordinated municipal finance and rural development assistance, tax policy and transfers of funds to local governments as well as the development of frameworks to foster local fiscal systems and apply innovative financial mechanisms at the local level.

2. Private banks and intermediaries together with public finance agencies should promote responsible and sustainable investment practices, fund urban-rural partnerships and support relevant actors (including small towns and intermediate cities) through banking activities, credit access and supply, financial intermediaries, donor governments and organizations.

3. Convene capacity building and educational opportunities to help equalize investment and finance opportunities for urban and rural actors and provide incentives for joint activities. Learn from innovations in participatory credit and finance schemes in order to enable access to financial services for all, particularly women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other groups facing difficulties accessing finance for their development needs such as financing for small and medium scale enterprises.

E. Spatial Flows of People, Products, Services and Information

1. Assess the complexity and interplay of flows between urban and rural communities to identify synergies, opportunities, gaps and challenges and support mobility for sustainable livelihoods and local development using improved territorial data collection and processing, including observatories and GIS-based monitoring systems applied to the appropriate subnational or territorial scale.

2. Analyze and plan for peoples’ migration (urban-rural as well as rural-urban) in the context of integrated territorial development, including considerations of impact for both originating and hosting communities of migrating peoples. Such participatory analysis can be a foundation for comprehensive and integrated approaches, identifying potential solutions and opportunities for rural-to-urban and urban-to-rural migrant workers and rural and urban multi-spatial families.

3. Through participatory discovery and dialogue, identify conflicts and enable priorities to emerge for coordinating urban and rural services to enhance synergies and positive benefits from flows of people, products, services, resources and information.

4. Conduct integrated urban-rural transport systems analysis to identify respective population needs and challenges and planning to address challenges through participatory processes bridging sectors and including the most mobility-challenged populations to work towards sustainable and more resilient transport systems and infrastructure for people and goods.
F. Urban-Rural Continuum in the Face of Conflict and Disaster

1. Assess disaster and conflict related risks and gaps in preparedness and response to economic or environmental and/or communicable disease outbreak hazards in both urban and rural areas, focusing on at-risk territories to develop joint early warning systems for urban and rural communities.
2. Institute pre-disaster and post-disaster/conflict mitigation efforts linking urban and rural transport, energy, information, food, water and other ecosystem services to improve resilience in both rehabilitation and preparedness contexts.
3. Ensure that humanitarian programmes, policies and projects are designed and executed to contribute to more effective urban--rural linkages.

G. Natural resources management and Food Security

1. Utilize the food system as a unifying framework and or driver for strengthening rural and urban synergies through social and market relations between food producers at all scales, food chain actors and food consumers, integrating issues of migration, resilience to climate change and protection of natural resources, waste reduction, biodiversity etc.
2. Assess the quality and performance of city region food system approaches for food security and improved diets, including integration of social protection systems for the urban and rural poor with a focus on rural, peri-urban and urban smallholder farmers, local food chain actors and consumers to improve the diversity and safety of the food supply.
3. Adapt frameworks for action such as those developed by city networks, national governments, UN agencies, and other partners to learn from and apply innovations to strengthen urban and territorial food systems, addressing the importance of secure tenure of land for rural and urban smallholders.
4. Integrate territorial development with Integrated landscape management to protect natural resources and biodiversity, reduce waste and support the primary producers and smallholders who are the stewards of ecosystem services.

H. An integrated territorial approach to advance health

1. Identify population needs and opportunities where strengthened urban-rural linkages can impact a more spatially and socially equitable service provision to reduce barriers to health services, address inequities, and support multi-sectoral engagement and action.
2. Identify disaster and health security risks in particular urban-rural interface settings leading to better preparedness, prevention, response, and resilience.
3. Support communities to develop and plan for a healthy living environment, to contribute to attaining health coverage, reduce spatial and social inequities in service provision, in order to ensure that both urban and rural populations are healthy and economically productive.
4. Mainstream health considerations throughout all thematic pathways.

I. Reducing Environmental Impact in Urban-Rural Convergences

1. Conduct participatory multi-stakeholder assessments and monitoring systems to identify environmental impacts of urbanization and land use across the urban-rural continuum, to reduce risks and burdens and promote ecosystem based approaches to planning and financing, while developing finance mechanisms and incentives for equitable compensation for provision of ecosystem services between rural and urban areas.
2. Use systems approaches to link and prioritise interventions that integrate resilience to climate change, promote biodiversity and protect ecosystem functions and natural resources at the landscape level (including soil, water, plant and animal habitat), while addressing impacts of waste
and energy use.
3. Ensure transparent and comprehensive decision-making process for investments with direct or indirect environmental impact for both rural and urban areas in the context of climate change, mitigation of disaster in balance with economic and social needs.