



A guide to setting up an urban observatory

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Guide book

Un - Habitat

In many parts of the world, lack of good quality, relevant, accessible and timely data on cities is a key element impeding progress in monitoring and reporting on global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The lack of sound urban data also affects the formulation of evidence- based policies and designing of programs that respond to urban dynamics and related challenges. Indeed, many countries are still in need of tools and capacities to improve their data collection, validation, and reporting practices, as well as the necessary connection to policies. As a result, many urban planners and decision-makers are operating in an environment of uncertainty, allocating resources to immediate and pressing issues (reactive processes) rather than investing in progressive change over the long term.