

Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for Smart Cities

People-Environment-Technology Nexus

**International Training Workshop on Smart Cities in Asia
and the Pacific**

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Reimagining Urban Futures: Why Smart Cities, Why Now?

From Rapid Growth to Resilient Transformation: The Smart City Opportunity

- **Asia-Pacific is urbanizing and advancing technologically at a rapid speed** — but growth is outpacing sustainability, inclusion, and resilience.
- **If done right, Smart cities are strategic enablers of the SDGs**, offering integrated pathways to deliver inclusive services, climate action, & sustainable development
- **The next generation of smart cities must go beyond tech** — must be inclusive by design, climate-resilient, digitally empowered & collaborative



70 % of SDGs
could be
advanced
through smart
city
applications



**Urban Planning,
Infrastructure & Governance**



**Health, Well-being
& society**



**Environmental
Sustainability**



Governance



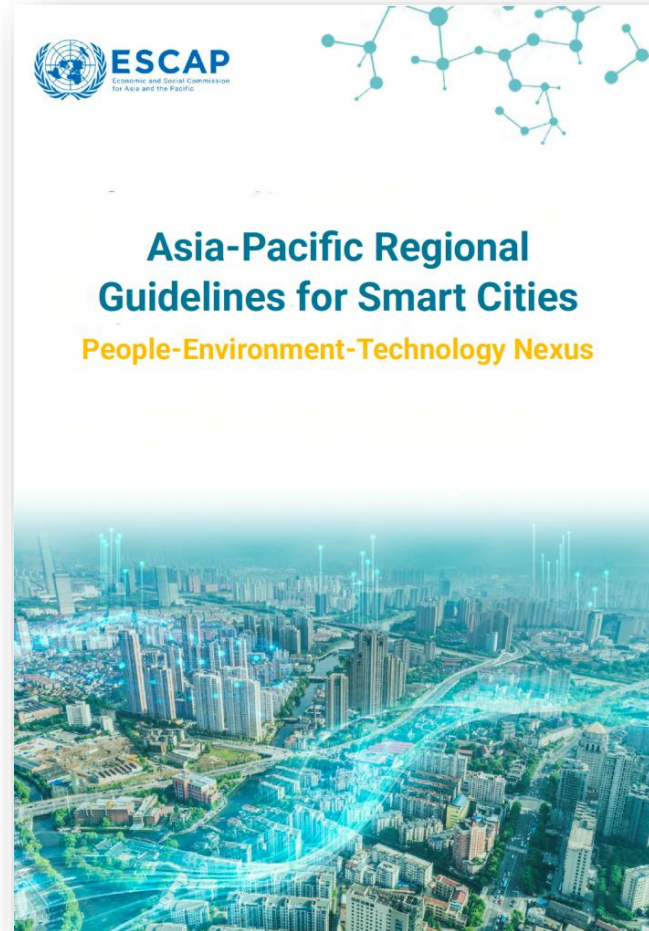
Economy

“Now is the time to reimagine our urban futures, where smart cities serve as catalysts for resilience, sustainability, & shared prosperity in an increasingly complex world”

Introducing the Regional Guidelines

A high-level overview:

- Developed by ESCAP in collaboration with member States and experts through inclusive regional consultations.
- Anchored in the **People-Environment-Technology Nexus**, promoting a balanced approach to innovation and inclusion.
- Provides a **practical, adaptable framework** for smart city development tailored to the diverse contexts of the Asia-Pacific region.



“To fully unlock the potential of smart cities, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach, ensuring that urban planning, governance, environmental sustainability, economic development, and social inclusion function together within a cohesive framework.”

High-Level Overview

A Practical Framework for Inclusive, Resilient & Future-Ready Cities

Purpose

Guide national and local governments to design smart city development aligned with resilient & sustainable development

Core Concept

People-Environment-Technology Nexus — balancing innovation, sustainability, and inclusion

Key Features

- 6 Principles: Inclusive, Sustainable, Safe, Scalable, Collaborative, Adaptive
- 5 Domains: Planning, Environment, Society, Governance, Economy
- Dual-Level Guidance: National & Local implementation pathways
- Tools: Readiness framework, KPIs, dashboards, case studies

Regional Value

Drives peer learning, builds regional cooperation, aligns with SDGs and supports localization.



What's Unique and New About These Guidelines?

Action-Oriented, Regionally Grounded, Practically Usable

- Introduce the **People–Environment–Technology Nexus**—a first for the region—promoting a balanced, people-centered approach that goes beyond just tech.
- **Comprehensive Approach** - defines Smart Cities, provides six core Smart City Principles and five key Urban Domains
- **Offer dual-level guidance**—supporting both national strategy development and local implementation, making them practical and adaptable.
- **Provide a Smart City Readiness Framework**, policy tools, and real-world case studies, helping governments move from vision to action.
- **Rooted in Asia-Pacific realities**—they're shaped by regional consultations, tested through pilot initiatives, capture best practices and designed to scale solutions across diverse urban contexts.

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ESCAP member States have a NSCS

ENEA	SEA	NCA	SSWA	Pacific
3/5	4/11	3/9	3/10	0/21

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ESCAP member States have a digital development strategy

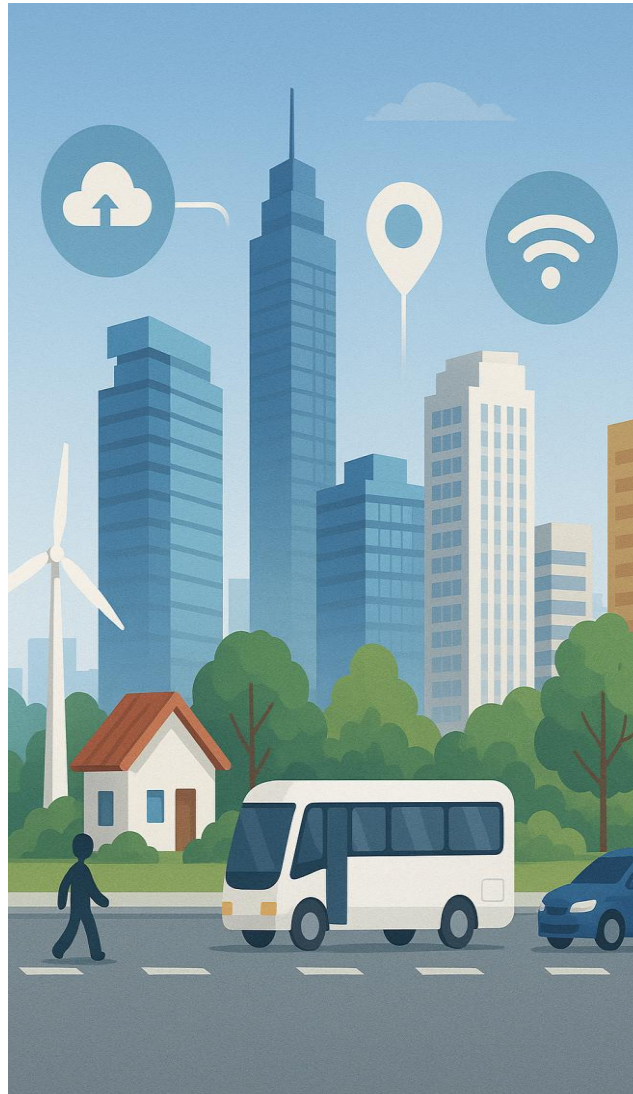
Digital versus Smart City Strategy?

- NSCS emphasizes smart city concepts; digital strategy spans broader digital development.
- NSCS focuses on urban transformation & digital strategy targets national economic goals.

Comprehensive Smart City Approach

Five Key Urban Domains

- 1. Urban Planning, Services & Infrastructure**
(e.g., land use, mobility, digital connectivity)
- 2. Environment & Sustainability**
(e.g., climate resilience, air/water quality, natural resource management)
- 3. Health, Well-being & Society**
(e.g., e-health, digital inclusion, social equity)
- 4. Governance**
(e.g., open data, participatory processes, digital accountability)
- 5. Economy**
(e.g., digital innovation, inclusive growth, entrepreneurship)



The Six Smart City principles

1. People-Centred & Inclusive

Promote well-being, equity, and community participation.

2. Sustainable & Resilient

Optimize resource use and adapt to climate and environmental risks.

3. Safe & Transparent

Uphold data privacy, cybersecurity, and build public trust.

4. Scalable & Interoperable

Enable integration across systems and adaptability over time.

5. Collaborative & Enabling

Foster partnerships, capacity-building, and open innovation.

6. Efficient & Adaptable

Use data to drive flexible, evidence-based decision-making.



What's New for Policymakers and Practitioners

- A people-centered, SDG-aligned definition of smart cities
- Practical guidance for both national and local levels
- A Smart City Readiness Framework to assess and plan
- Policy tools, case studies, and implementation templates
- Strong focus on **digital inclusion and equity**

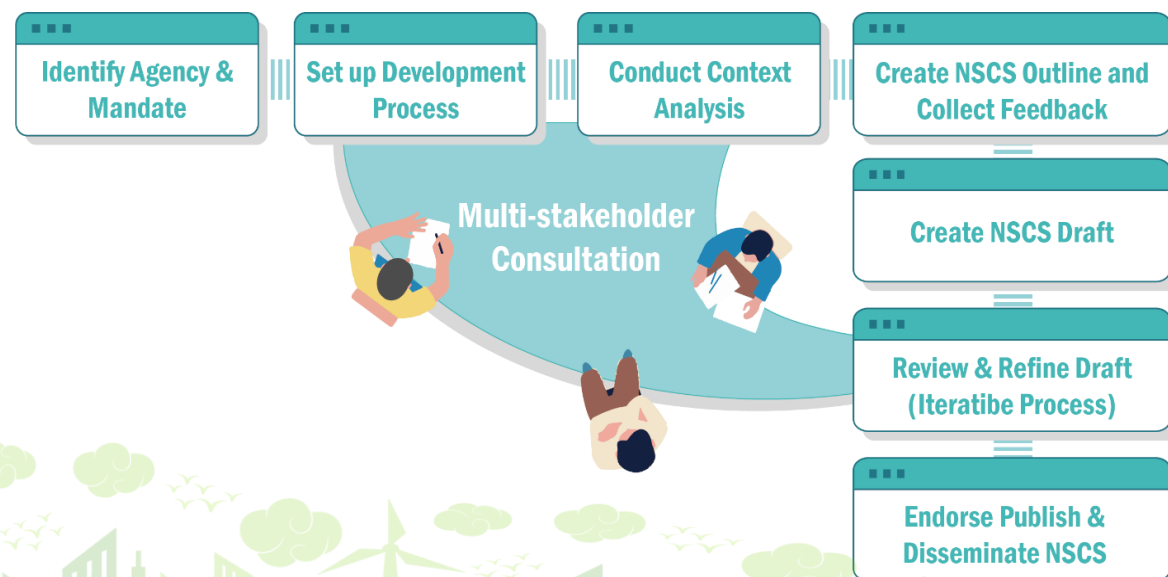
Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners

For National Governments:

- Develop or strengthen national smart city strategies
- Align national policies with climate goals and the SDGs.
- Guide the creation of enabling environments — regulatory, financial, and institutional

For Subnational Actors:

- Application of six principles to enhance smart city development
- Integrate cross-sector strategies across urban domains
- Develop Comprehensive Smart City Plans: Integrate digital infrastructure, sustainability goals, and inclusive design into urban planning.
- Use tools like the Smart City Readiness Framework, KPIs, and dashboards for effective smart city development & monitoring



Regional Impact and Collaboration

Foster Regional Peer Learning

Share experiences and scale solutions for inclusive urban innovation

Co-Create Through Regional Platforms

Use forums and technical support to develop context-specific strategies & policy recommendations

Advance Scalable, Interoperable Frameworks

Promote adaptable approaches across cities of all sizes

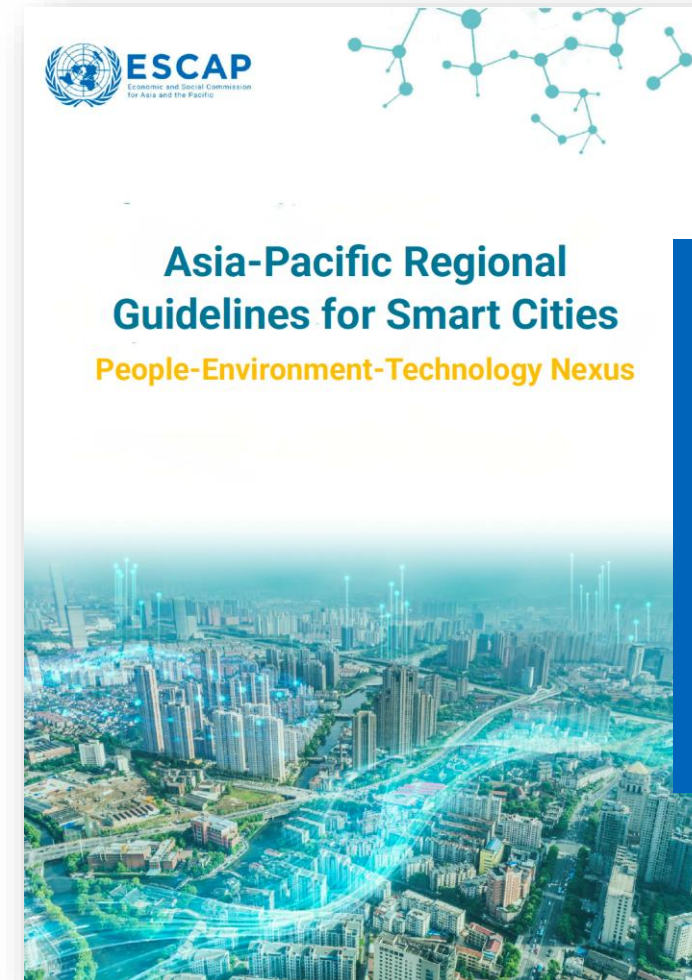
Link Smart Cities to the SDGs

Align digital innovation with better governance, services, and equity



Conclusion & Call to Action

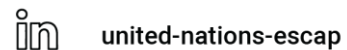
- ✓ These Guidelines offer a **strategic roadmap for cities** to become more inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready.
- ✓ Success will depend on **visionary leadership, collaborative action**, and a shared commitment to leave no one behind.
- ✓ Let's work together to shape **smart cities that serve people, planet, and prosperity**.



Regional Smart City
Guidelines

Thank you

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