Cities in Asia and the Pacific are at the forefront of efforts to secure a sustainable future. With urbanization projected to continue at a rapid pace, Asia and the Pacific’s cities will play an increasingly important role in determining the region’s development pathways. Already home to 60 per cent of the global urban population, and the majority of the region’s residents, cities in Asia and the Pacific face challenges related to increasing demands for natural resources, and to provide basic services, affordable housing, and livelihood opportunities for all. The region’s cities are also well positioned to capitalise on their dynamic potential to foster innovation and social inclusion, protect cultural heritage, develop transformative urban solutions, and lead efforts in Asia and the Pacific to transition to a more sustainable future. The region’s cities will determine whether the aspirations of the global development agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the New Urban Agenda can be achieved.

In this context, the Seventh Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-7) will be held from 15-17 October 2019 in Penang, Malaysia, to mobilize partners from across the region with a focus on accelerating implementation of actions aimed to achieve a sustainable future for cities throughout Asia and the Pacific. APUF-7 will bring a diverse array of city representatives, expert speakers and thought leaders who are shaping the region’s urban future. Since the first APUF conducted in Bangkok in 1993, the Forum was held every 4-5 years as the largest regional gathering of urban stakeholders, engaging policymakers from local and national governments, financial institutions, civil society, the academia, the urban training-research community, and the private sector. The Forum of 2019 will discuss innovative solutions, identify common actions and objectives and strengthen effective partnerships to achieve sustainable urban development.

Penang as the host city for APUF-7 is a positive example of implementing urban innovation for sustainable urban development in practice, including in gender responsive budgeting, promoting cultural heritage and participatory governance.
**Urban Innovation Sessions** provide an opportunity to discuss the overall theme of APUF-7: “Future of Asia and Pacific Cities: Transformative Pathways to Achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. These sessions are aimed to deepen practical knowledge on sustainable urban development solutions, identify emerging issues, showcase joint initiatives and projects, listen to all voices, and help spread greater awareness of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and showcase innovations, new data, research and solutions towards their accelerated implementation. These sessions may introduce themes that are not necessarily directly connected to the main sessions of the Forum but are still relevant for sustainable urban development. These sessions will be conducted in parallel to the four ‘Deep Dive Discussions’ across all three days of the Forum and will be from 60 to 90 minutes in length. Urban Innovation Sessions topics will be organized through an open call.

**Criteria for Urban Innovation Sessions**

1. Any stakeholders can submit an application to organize an Urban Innovation Session at APUF-7 - from National governments, local authorities, International Organizations and UN entities, civil society organizations, academia, professional associations to private sector firms, for example. Given the large number of requests anticipated and taking into consideration the space limitations and time allocated for the Urban Innovation Sessions, requests should be limited to **ONE** application per institution or entity.

2. The urban innovation sessions should be open to all Forum participants and not exceed room capacity. Organizers of closed events or by-invitation-only events aiming for a specific audience are kindly advised to obtain alternative locations.

3. Proposed Urban Innovation Sessions should be closely related to the theme of APUF-7, “Future of Asia and Pacific Cities: Transformative Pathways to Achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, demonstrating innovation, foresight and “out of the box” approach to sustainable urban implementation in the Asia-Pacific region.

4. Given space limitations at Setia Spice Convention Centre in Penang, the selection panel will prioritize events that have multiple co-organizers. Action-oriented and innovative proposals linked to the transformative commitments and effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals in cities will be also given a priority. Though linkages to one or more of the main APUF-7 topics of Urban and Territorial Planning; Urban Resilience; Data and Technologies for Smart Cities and Urban Finance, is encouraged, other topics showing clear linkages to sustainable urban development will be considered.

5. All sessions should demonstrate sub-regional¹, gender and age balance in speakers, content and attendance, as well as a multi-stakeholder approach. The cross-cutting social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable urban development, including the perspectives of people with special needs, should be integrated into all Urban Innovation Sessions.

**Call for Proposals**

The Application Form for the Urban Innovation Session should provide a detailed description of the session, including its thematic focus, speakers/presenters and its potential contribution to APUF-7 using the on-line application at the [APUF-7 official website](https://www.unescap.org) by **1st July 2019**.

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¹ North and Central Asia (including Russian Federation); South and South West Asia; South East Asia; North East Asia; and the Pacific. For the complete list of ESCAP sub regional offices please access [https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states](https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states)
The results of the selection process will be announced by 1st September 2019. The full schedule of Urban Innovation Sessions will be posted as part of the APUF-7 programme on its’ website.

The Forum organisers will not produce fliers, distribute notices, or run other publicity efforts for Urban Innovation Sessions. Publicizing an event is the responsibility of its organizers. It is the responsibility of the organizers of Urban Innovation Sessions to make their own arrangements for issuing of ground passes, including for individuals, invited as speakers or guests.

Urban Innovation Session organizers can request equipment and services for their event. Confirmed Session organizers will be provided with an Audio/Visual Form to detail this request. There will be charges for the use of such equipment and related services which the event organizers must be prepared to cover. Official interpretation services are not available for Urban Innovation Sessions.

The sale of printed materials or any goods on grounds during the Urban Innovation Sessions or at any other time is strictly prohibited. Organizers are advised to set up displays or posters in designated areas within and outside the meeting rooms.

Food and beverages are strictly prohibited in the meeting rooms. Activities that involve food or beverages, such as receptions and cocktails, are allowed in the designated areas outside the meeting rooms and must be arranged directly with the Conference Catering Service. Forum co-organizers will not facilitate such arrangements.

CONTACT

All queries related to the Urban Innovation Sessions should be sent to apuf@un.org

Website: www.apuf7.org
The Urban Innovation Sessions provide an opportunity to discuss the overall theme of APUF-7, deepen practical knowledge on sustainable urban development solutions, identify new and emerging issues happen in parallel to the four ‘Deep Dive Discussions’ across all three days of the Forum and are for showcasing joint initiatives and projects, listen to all voices, and help spread greater awareness of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and showcase innovations, new data, research and solutions towards their accelerated implementation, including on themes less directly related to the four main ones of the Forum. The Sessions are from 60 to 90 minutes in length.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

1st July 2019.

The final list of the side events that have been selected will be available at the official APUF-7 website by September 1st, 2019.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

1. More than one organizer;
2. Closely related to the theme of APUF-7, “Future of Asia and Pacific Cities: Transformative Pathways to Achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”;
3. Demonstrating innovation, foresight and “out of the box” approaches to urban challenges in the Asia-Pacific region;
4. Clear linkages with one or more of the following:
   (a) the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals in cities;
(b) the major thematic topics of APUF-7: Urban and Territorial Planning; Urban Resilience; Data and Technologies for Smart Cities; and Urban Finance; and (c) Cross-cutting social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable urban development, including the perspectives of people with special needs.

5. Sub-regional1 balance in speakers and content; 
6. Gender and age balance in speakers and content; and 
7. Multi-stakeholder approach in speakers and content.

**ONLINE APPLICATION FORM**

**Title of your Urban Innovation Session:** [one sentence]

**Lead Organizer/Applicant:** [Main institution coordinating the event]

**Contact person:** [Name and Surname]

**Contact information:** [Email and phone number]

**Co-Organizers/Partners:** [Please make sure that there is a partnership between at least two organizations to run one urban innovation session]

**Session description:** [Please describe in max 1000 words the scope of the event including relevance of the topic and its connection with the overall theme of the APUF7, the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals in cities; interlinkages with the four major topics of the Forum; how the event demonstrates innovation, foresight and “out of the box” approaches to urban challenges in the Asia-Pacific region as well as cross-cutting social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable urban development, including the perspectives of people with special needs. Please also include a brief description of the methodology for the session here – i.e. panel, small group work, etc.]

**Key Questions:** [provide up to 3 key questions that will be embedded in the discussions]

**Proposed Speakers:** [Name and Surname; gender, country and institutional affiliation]

**Please describe how you plan to promote your event prior to APUF-7:** [max 250 words]

**Please describe how you plan to leverage the outcomes of your event after APUF-7:** [max 250 words]

For more information please contact [apuf@un.org](mailto:apuf@un.org)

APUF-7 website: [www.apuf7.org](http://www.apuf7.org)

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1. North and Central Asia (including Russian Federation); South and South West Asia; South East Asia; North East Asia; and the Pacific. For the complete list of ESCAP sub-regional offices please access [https://www.unesco.org/about/member-states](https://www.unesco.org/about/member-states)