

Applying the degree of urbanisation manual

Statistics Explained

Applying the Degree of Urbanisation – A methodological manual to define cities, towns and rural areas for international comparisons is an online publication, also available to [download in PDF format](#) (ISBN: 978-92-76-20306-3, doi: 10.2785/706535, cat. number: KS-02-20-499-EN-N). It was produced in close collaboration by six organisations – the [European Commission](#), the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#), the [United Nations Human Settlements Programme \(UN-Habitat\)](#), the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#), the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) and [The World Bank](#).

This manual develops a harmonised methodology to facilitate international statistical comparisons and to classify the entire territory of a country along an urban-rural continuum. The degree of urbanisation classification defines cities, towns and semi-dense areas, and rural areas. This first level of the classification may be complemented by a range of more detailed concepts, such as: metropolitan areas, commuting zones, dense towns, semi-dense towns, suburban or peri-urban areas, villages, dispersed rural areas and mostly uninhabited areas.

This manual is intended to complement and not replace the definitions used by national statistical offices (NSOs) and ministries. It has been designed principally as a guide for data producers, suppliers and statisticians so that they have the necessary information to implement the methodology and ensure coherency within their data collections. It may also be of interest to users of subnational statistics so they may better understand, interpret and use official subnational statistics for taking informed decisions and policymaking.

Applying the Degree of Urbanisation

A METHODOLOGICAL MANUAL TO DEFINE CITIES, TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

2021 edition



Table of contents

Foreword

1. Introduction

2. The legal and policy framework

3. Rationale and advantages

4. How the principles of official statistics and classifications are fulfilled

5. Constructing a population grid

6. Methodology for applying level 1 of the degree of urbanisation classification

7. Extensions to level 1 of the classification

8. Which spatial units to use and adjustments to address geographic issues

9. Selected indicators for sustainable development goals by degree of urbanisation and functional urban area

10. Tools and training

11. Conclusions

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