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.
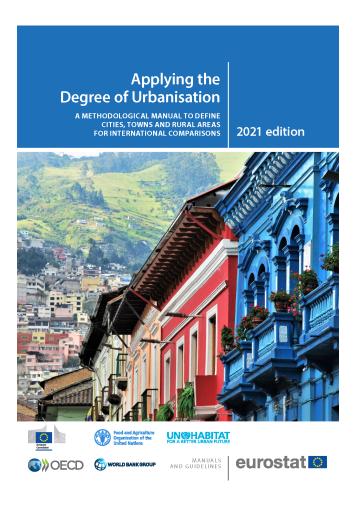
Applying the Degree of Urbanisation

A METHODOLOGICAL MANUAL TO DEFINE CITIES, TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS | 2021 edition

Table of contents

Editorial team

Lewis Dijkstra (European Commission, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy), Teodora Brandmüller (European Commission, Eurostat), Thomas Kemper (European Commission, Joint Research Centre), Arbab Asfandiyar Khan (FAO), INFORMA s.à. r.l. and Paolo Veneri (OECD).

Acknowledgements