

## Foreword

**U**rban issues have emerged as key features on national policy agendas. The importance of cities and their corresponding metropolitan areas to the national economy makes them key players in the international marketplace. This in turn leads governments to renew their support to cities. At a time of increasing globalisation and international competition for investment, urban regions have become the target of a wide range of public interventions. Throughout OECD member countries these policies encompass plans to solve traditional urban problems – urban sprawl, abandoned districts, and poverty – and newer issues such as competitiveness strategy, city marketing, environmental sustainability, and innovation.

The series on National Urban Policy Reviews (NUPR) responds to a demand from member countries voiced at meetings of the Territorial Development Policy Committee and aims to analyse the role of urban areas in regional development and national performance. National reviews are a leading feature of the OECD's mandate and examine macroeconomic, educational, industrial, tax, environmental and regional development policies, in addition to other areas of interest to the Organisation. The OECD National Urban Policies Reviews seek to provide a comparative synthesis of urban policies in OECD countries, focusing on the role of central governments.

A National Urban Policy Review provides a comprehensive assessment of a country's urban policies as seen through multiple lenses, including economic, social and environmental. First, the reviews focus on the policies designed and introduced by the central government that directly address urban development and regional development policies with an urban development focus. Second, the reviews analyse how national spatial planning for urban regions along with specific sectoral policies may indirectly impact urban development. Indeed, often public policies are designed in such a way that they target sectoral objectives with little or no regard for their profound impact on urban areas. Third, the reviews address issues of governance, including inter-governmental fiscal relationships and the various institutional, fiscal and policy tools aimed at fostering co-ordination on urban development among different layers of government and among different administrations at the central level. For instance, ineffectiveness in public service delivery and other policy areas have in part been related to fragmented urban government structures. From country to country the OECD National Urban Policy Reviews follow a consistent methodology that will feature cross-national comparisons and recommendations on the integration of sectoral policies into urban development policy and planning.



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