



URBAN AND CITIES PLATFORM OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Concept Note:

LAV (Housing Laboratory)

Urban and cities' platform

(XXVIII MINURVI Assembly version. October 2019)

LAV organizing group:

MINURVI

UNIAPRAVI

ECLAC

Habitat for Humanity

UN Habitat

TECHO Internacional

Cities Alliance

Smart Cities

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Overview.

The following report presents a synthesis of the main contents developed during the LAV of the Urban and Cities Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is an effort promoted by MINURVI together with a working group formed with ECLAC and UN Habitat, with the assistance of UHPH and in coordination with various organizations. Aiming at expanding participation, diversity of perspectives and coordination among the actors in the regional ecosystem of urban development, seeking to strengthen the process of implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean's cities.

We thank MIVAH, in its competence as MINURVI 2019 presidency, for the invitation to participate in facilitating this process, as well as all the organizations that have been part of it. We hope that the coordination around this and other initiatives will continue in the future.

Executive Committee - UHPH



1. LAV GOAL

Contribute to the design and development of the Urban and Cities Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean (PUC), understanding the complementary roles of the organizations involved in the construction process; inputs from various strategic sectors; and knowledge and extent platforms' mapping and presentation on existing public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean for urban issues. In addition, identify complementary alternatives, coordination opportunities and development options for the Urban and Cities Platform, aligned with the priorities, initiatives and work agenda, both from the MINURVI and the Governments that comprise it.

2. CONTEXT

Defining the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 11, represents an opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the world's most urbanized region, to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." Additionally, the Habitat III conference (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development) that took place in the city of Quito, Ecuador in October 2016, allowed the region to occupy a prominent role in the process of reaffirming the global commitment.

The participatory design to develop the Regional Action Plan (PAR by its Spanish acronym), coordinated by ECLAC and UN Habitat, in support of the MINURVI, is an advance in relation to the Habitat III conference and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) implementation of in LAC. Along these lines, a regional urban platform can represent a strategic pillar to support countries and key actors in the NUA implementation process. It is a strategic initiative that must be based on the compendium the region has developed in this area, to promote coordinated and complementary action aiming at the creation of knowledge transfers and critical mass for urban issues that affect our region. So, it is also very important to bear in mind that technological interconnection is a challenge that must be adequately faced to optimize all the information, data, experiences and assets present in the regional urban ecosystem.

The PUC is a part of the strategic alliance of the MINURVI, ECLAC and UN-Habitat, to support and promote the regional implementation of the NUA and the urban dimension compliance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in our region, in particular SDG 11. This platform seeks to be a key instrument to facilitate the follow-up and monitoring of urban development in the region, promote capability building and the exchange of experiences and practices among peers; as well as a space for reference and convergence of various networks and collaborative efforts to build new responses to the challenges of the NUA implementation.

3. LAV SESSIONS' METHODOLOGY

LAVs are the Specialized Technical Arm of the Urban Housing Practitioners Hub (UHPH). They have been designed as dynamic and horizontal spaces for the collaborative exchange of knowledge on pressing urban and housing issues between experts and professionals from different sectors (public, private, academic, NGOs, communities and others).

Through this LAV, spaces of various types were carried out with the participation of multiple actors from the public sector, multilateral organizations and civil society, in a process that allowed the creation of inputs for the PUC's strategic dimensions presented in this Concept Note.

Urban Housing Practitioners Hub (UHPH)

The Urban Housing Practitioners Hub or UHPH is an open platform for the exchange, gathering and dissemination of practices, knowledge, and stakeholders working around housing and urban habitat in Latin America and the Caribbean. It combines the digital space with face-to-face interactions so that those working in the sector can connect with each other and access information and practical solutions in real time.

It was established in October 2016, during Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, thanks to the funding and support of Cities Alliance and Habitat for Humanity; in June 2017, the UHPH was ratified by the 17th General Assembly of the MINURVI. Today it has UNIAPRAVI (Inter-American Housing Union) as the implementing entity and with extensive financial and strategic support that includes the governments of Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico, CAIXA of Brazil, Chile, Argentina, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay; and the IDB institutions, the Lincoln Institute, the World Bank, the Confederation of Municipalities of Brazil, TECHO, CAF, the Global Platform for the Right to the City, UN Habitat, ECLAC, GIZ, and the REDEUS and RIVHA research networks.

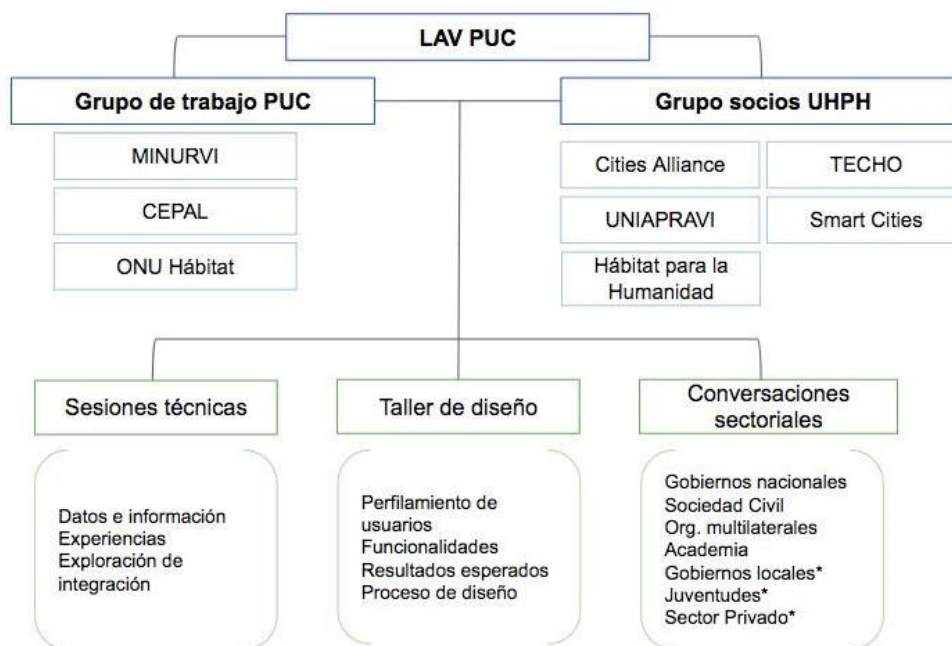
Operational modules are: Housing Labs - LAVs, Practices Contest, Latin American and the Caribbean Forum on Housing and Habitat (biennial), Members Network and resources (library).

4. LAV'S DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The PUC has a working group made up of the MINURVI, UN Habitat and ECLAC, which is accompanied and supported by a group of partners linked to the UHPH. These partners are Cities Alliance, Habitat for Humanity and UNIAPRAVI, member organizations of the UHPH Executive Committee, as well as TECHO International and Smart Cities, which are also linked to this initiative. Together, these organizations make up the LAV organizing group.

Through the MINURVI, as an applicant organization, within the UHPH framework, this LAV was implemented to address the general objective mentioned above, based on a participatory, dynamic and results-oriented process. At a general level, three types of spaces were developed within the LAV framework:

- a) **Technical sessions** among all members of the LAV organizing group, that addressed mapping of platforms and initiatives in the region with potential to contribute to the PUC; additionally, potential sources of official and unofficial data and information were identified to contribute to the monitoring of the NUA; and, finally, opportunities for integration at a technical level were also briefly identified.
- b) **Design workshop**, thanks to the financial support of UN Habitat, a workshop was held with user experience innovation methodologies, that allowed creating inputs for user profiling and, based on this, identifying key elements for functionalities, expected results and products of the PUC.
- c) **Sectorial talks**, provided by the UHPH executive committee, with the participation of a diversity of actors to obtain feedback on the project profile, identify collaboration opportunities, coordination and synergy, and explore the potential of the PUC implementation in various contexts. Currently, representatives of national governments, civil society organizations, multilateral organizations and academy have participated in these conversations. Additionally talks are scheduled involving the private sector, youth representatives and local governments.



*Pending for execution

The design workshop report can be consulted in the MINURVI document folder. In addition, participation details and recordings of technical sessions and sectorial talks are available through request addressed to the UHPH.

5. RESULTS: KEY INPUTS FOR THE PUC DEVELOPMENT

In general terms, the LAVs sessions allowed identifying elements and inputs for the main contents and functionalities, contributing to priority users' profiling and devising a development process for the PUC, as an initiative that seeks to complement and coordinate with other regional platforms and projects.

Based on these inputs, and considering the regional public well-being culture of the PUC, it will seek to conceptualize an inclusive and strategic ecosystem of actors, content and collaborative products based on the expertise of the various actors operating in the sustainable urban development ecosystem in LAC. The main synthesized contents of the sessions are described below, as recommendations and inputs to be considered in the PUC development process.

a) CONTENTS, FUNCTIONS AND RESULTS

As previously mentioned, the PUC seeks to be an effective tool to support the implementation and monitoring of the NUA and the SDGs in the region's cities. Thus, the PUC's main functions are outlined below; these have also been identified as keys to its development in a complementary way, among various actors and through an iterative and scalable development process.



b) INFORMATION SOURCES

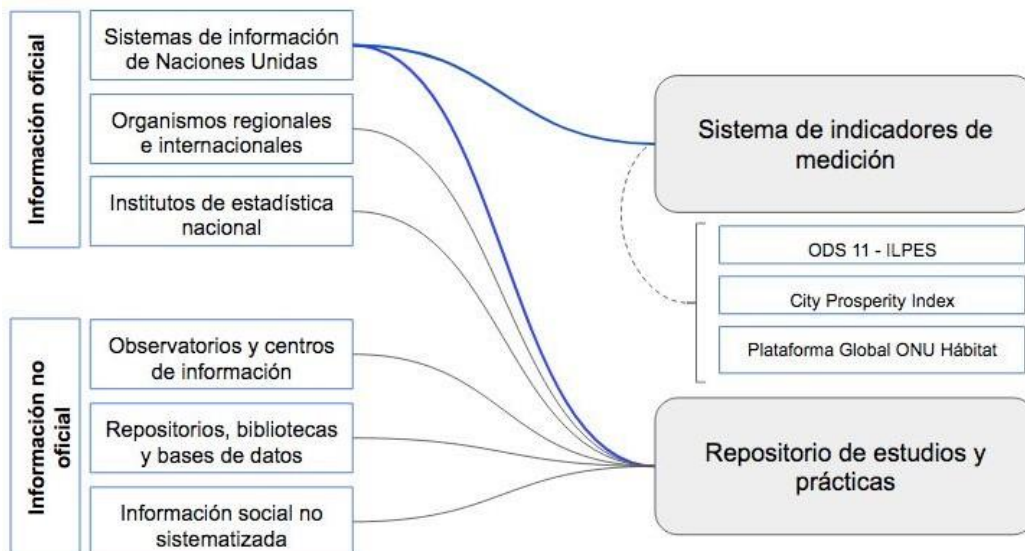
One of the region’s strengths is the amount of information, data and knowledge in relation to urban development, permanently produced by various sectors and on multiple scales in LAC.

Contrarily, although there are initiatives that seek to strengthen coordination between the various information sources and forms, it has been possible to identify that important challenges persist regarding the integration of this compendium built by the region’s urban ecosystem.

Hereby, the PUC has significant potential to contribute to efforts to pool and enhance, through integration, the NUA’s implementation and monitoring capability.

Therefore, following the scalable development perspective for the PUC’s initial version, information sources and producers that can be classified and systematized in various ways to contribute effectively have been identified. These will be integrated to the platform from the beginning and will allow learning to be created for future efforts to integrate information and data sources.

Distribución de fuentes de información versión de inicio de PUC



So, following the line established by the functionalities’ definition, for a PUC’s initial version, the information could be separated into two classifications’ types.

First, the indicators’ system for the NUA’s measurement and monitoring which is part of the priorities established by the MINURVI. In an initial version, it would be considered that the most effective action would be to integrate information that is currently available in the United Nations information systems since they share technical and statistical attributes. Thus, it is considered that the SDG 11’s monitoring indicators, mapped by the

Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES by its Spanish acronym) associated with ECLAC, the indicators of the City Prosperity Initiative implemented by UN Habitat in various cities in the region, and the indicators built for the NUA Global Platform that is currently being developed by UN Habitat, make up an initial battery to be considered as the starting point of the PUC’S indicator system.

On the other hand, the various initiatives for unofficial information production, as well as other content official sources, may be included in the category of studies, data and practices repository. In the PUC’s version, this information will make the critical function of complementing and contrasting official information sources. As part of the development process and learning results from the PUC’s first phase, it will be possible to contemplate innovative ways for the coordination and integration between various official information sources and between these and the production of content produced by unofficial sources.

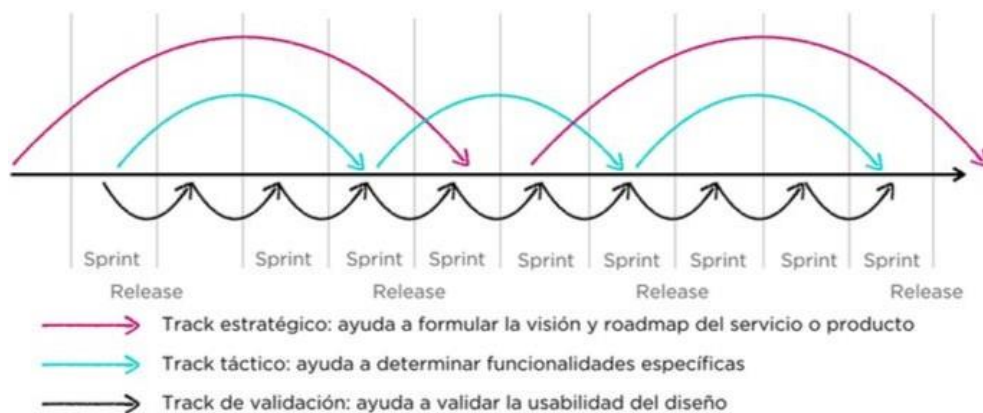
c) GOVERNANCE



It is recommended that governance be led by a coordination group of participants with complementary roles, where organizations that make up the ecosystem can contribute to it according to their expertise in a coordinated and harmonious way.

Additionally, efforts must be made to ensure that governance is participatory, effective, and efficient, through the involvement of organizations representatives and key sectors for LAC's sustainable urban development. So, various coordination initiatives may be activated that, as the case may be, may be sectorial, sub regional, by government levels or technical development, among others that are considered useful at each development moment and for the different platform functions.

d) DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



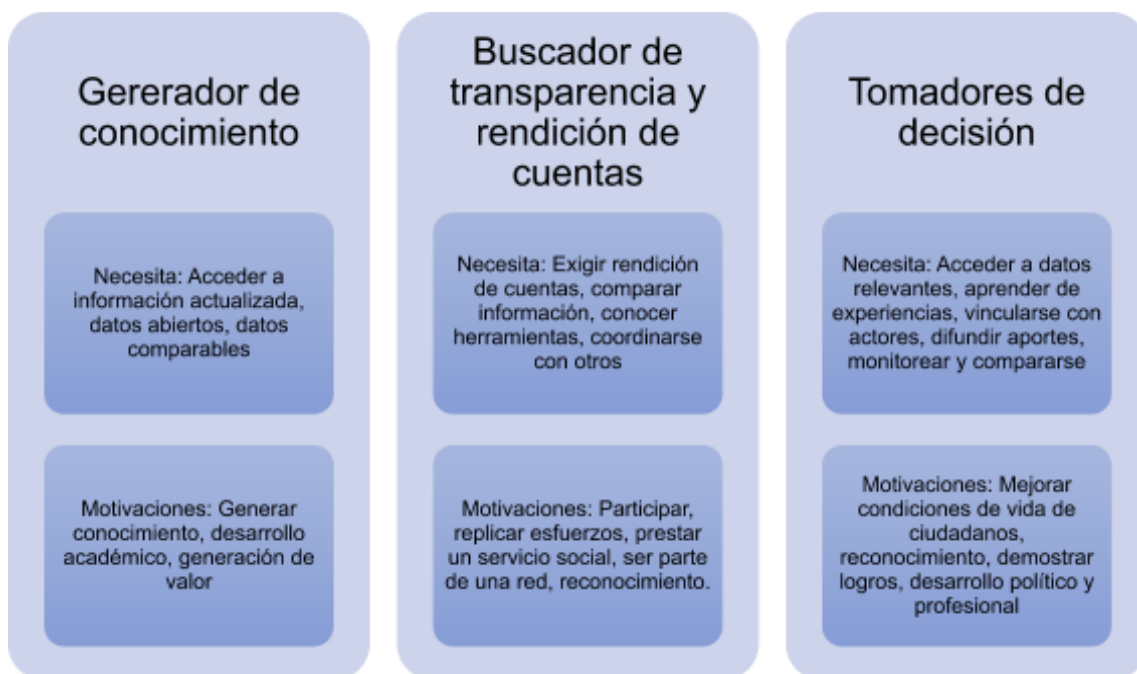
It will be contemplated to carry out an agile, iterative, viable development, focused on the user and through a scalable process. In the same way, the following development phases have been proposed in a preliminary way:

- i. **Prototype:** Developed from the basic functions definition and based on the identification of the currently available and useful information.
- ii. **Minimum Viable Product:** With feedback from the prioritization, identification and profiling of users and viable opportunities for complementarity with available platforms
- iii. **Scalable development:** Permanent evolution of content, functionalities, user profiling, interconnections and complementarity, among others.

e) PRIORITY USERS' PRELIMINARY PROFILING

So far, three types of potential users have been prioritized through user-centered design methodologies for development (phase I and II). Besides, a potential users' preliminary profile has been developed in order to identify the functionalities and basic contents. This information is to be feed-backed and supplemented in the PUC's development escalation process.

It is important to consider that these user profiles (personifications) can be found in different types of actors (political, social, academic, private, etc.) and in turn, share their needs, motivations, behaviors and frustrations among different profiles.



f) INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS, URBAN THEMES AND KEY EVENTS

In the talks between the various actors that participated in the LAV, it came to light the need and potential of the PUC to develop an integrated perspective of the various sustainable development agendas that operate in the regional urban space and, in turn, that these are based on a Human Rights approach, specifically through the Right to the City paradigm strengthening.

In accordance with the above, the following international agendas were prioritized in order to be integrated into the PUC's development perspective:

1. 2030 Agenda: Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
2. New Urban Agenda
3. Regional Actions Plan

Similarly, various thematic areas were identified to organize the PUC's development process, information management and future functionalities. These are detailed below and the initiative to identify the various sub-thematic areas within each one and the interaction between them is pending.

- I. Cohesion and Social Equality
- II. Urban Frameworks
- III. Territorial Orientation
- IV. Urban Economy
- V. Urban Ecology and Environment
- VI. Urban Housing and Basic Services

For platforms introduction into the ecosystem, it will be necessary to carry out a thematic crossing exercise to organize and formalize the contributions in a comprehensive way, as well as understand the type of content that each platform provides.

On the other hand, various face-to-face spaces were identified, where the recurring participation of Latin American urban ecosystem organizations' members can be exploited to strengthen the PUC's integration and interaction, as well as to promote regional work integrated into spaces of international projection.

- Regional and International Forums with urban themes
- World Urban Forum
- ECLAC Cities Conference
- Latin American and the Caribbean Forum on Housing and Habitat
- National Forums

On this subject, the need to organize an events calendar, identify the potential of each of these for the strengthening of the PUC's various dimensions, and the organization between various actors to carry out the management of an international agenda around the initiative, are pending issues.

4. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Among the main challenges for the PUC development process and to enhance its regional well-being culture, the following stand out:

Governance. Develop a governance model that is efficient and at the same time promotes the effective participation of the various actors in the urban development ecosystem in LAC.

Resource mobilization. The PUC's permanent development requires efforts to mobilize technical, administrative, and financial resources to maintain the operation, updating, and constant innovation of the platform's various functions.

Integration. The integration of the various sources of information, data, statistics and other diversity of official and unofficial content from the regional knowledge compendium represents a challenge that includes political, statistical, technological and diverse dimensions, whose approach will allow integration, creation of synergies and enhance the contribution of the PUC and its various participating actors in the NUA's implementation and monitoring process.

Redefinition of value creation. The consults and talks reveal high expectations on the part of the various sectors regarding the PUC's usability and added value. For this reason, it is a challenge to refine the definition of the profiles, functionalities and expected results, in order to transparently manage expectations about the PUC's contribution to various actors, sectors and themes in the urban sphere.

Innovation methodologies for development. Agile, user-focused and design-thinking methodologies will enable a more effective and scalable development process for the PUC. It is important to generate efforts to incorporate these methodologies in a participatory, professional way, and adapted to the requirements of processes and formalities associated with the various technical actors in the platform's development.

Public communication strategy. The PUC's potential is associated with the adoption process by the various NUA's implementing actors, as part of the tools to provide, integrate and promote its work. So, a communication strategy adapted by the various priority audiences for the PUC's implementation and scale-up process is a short-term challenge. According to the above, special emphasis is placed on communication with local governments, organizations and movements that work in the territory, professional and training researchers, technicians from various sectors of the executive branch and other national government branches.

Based on the experience incorporated so far, the following recommendations are prioritized for the next work period:

- Continue strengthening the PUC working group, made up of ECLAC, UN Habitat and the MINURVI, through strengthening teamwork with complementary functions. For this reason, it is recommended to develop technical strengthening initiatives to streamline the MINURVI's management, as well as incorporate facilitators for innovative design methodologies' development.
- Continue developing the PUC's UHPH LAV, in strong relationship with the current and future support group member organizations, as a key element of a strategy that allows strengthening the complementarity of profiles and dialogue between various actors in the region's sustainable urban development ecosystem.
- Continue to promote political commitment to the PUC by the governments and authorities of the MINURVI, as well as strengthen the commitment of national, sub-national and local governments in the NUA's implementation process.

5. Next steps

- Delivery of Concept Note and synthesis of the LAV process at the 2019 MINURVI Assembly
- PUC's prototype presentation at the 2019 MINURVI Assembly

ANNEXES

A. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR LAV DESIGN

- What are the platforms and networks in Latin America? What knowledge products/services do they offer?
- What are the attributes of the platform to be built?
- How to promote complementarity between platforms in an effective technological and strategic point of view to create mobilization and content? How do we connect?
- What modern platform principles should we consider for regional platforms?
- What would be the specific platforms' audiences?
- What modalities are most effective for knowledge and experiences exchange?
- How to articulate the existing platforms around an urban platform in LAC? (platform over another platform)
- How to bring together experiences on and practical cases to the knowledge and critical mass creation process on the LAC's urban agenda?
- How to better integrate regional platforms and networks regarding the MINURVI's needs and priorities?
- What is the national governments role in urban areas and housing?
- How to create a governance that allows the ecosystem actors to enrich the contents and propose improvements to the strategic orientation?

B. LAV ORGANIZING GROUP CONTACTS

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