

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

**Geneva, Switzerland
17-19 November 2021**

Contribution by United Kingdom

to the CSTD 2021-2022 priority theme on “Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-COVID world”

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PRIORITY THEME 2: STI for sustainable urban development in a post-COVID world

United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

Dear CSTD member,

The [24th CSTD annual session](#) selected “STI for sustainable urban development in a post-COVID world” as one of the priority themes for its 25th session (2021-22 period). This theme addresses SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

Urbanization is a complex megatrend touching on various issues including economic transformation, environmental sustainability, inclusion and poverty eradication, and resilience to natural disasters, climate change, and public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Cities also play a central role in shaping innovation and technological diffusion. In addition, peri-urban areas present increasing challenges in terms of poverty, sustainability, mobility, and economic performance. The 19th CSTD explored innovation and urban development in 2016. Since then, accelerating technological change and its deep impact on issues such as urban planning and management, critical systems’ resilience, and citizen and community involvement make it advisable for the CSTD to update its findings and to examine and share emerging good practices and consider the latest trends in science, technology and innovation that can contribute to greener, more resilient, and more inclusive cities, particularly in light of the knowledge gained in developing innovative responses to the challenge of COVID-19.

The CSTD secretariat is drafting an issues paper on the theme to be presented at the CSTD inter-session panel to be held on 17-19 November 2021. In this context, we are seeking inputs from CSTD Member States. We would be grateful if you could kindly answer the following questions based on your experience from your country or region.

1. What are the concrete challenges that your country has encountered in transition towards sustainable urban development to make cities productive, inclusive, and liveable?
 - Procuring innovative solutions by public authorities - often the process is difficult for small innovative SMEs to navigate
 - Changing behaviour patterns towards more sustainable outcomes eg move towards more sustainable travel options
 - Retrofitting the built environment as large upfront costs are involved
 - Digital divide - often difficult to engage citizens who are not connected (older generation, deprived communities etc), people are not sure what the benefits are for them in engaging with these technologies
 - Funding is difficult to secure for more niche projects or those perceived as potentially risky
 - Difficulties with complex supply chains and complex ownership structures of solutions make governance tricky

2. How has the Covid-19 pandemic so far impacted on sustainable urban development, and what lessons could we draw from the Covid-19 pandemic on sustainable urban development?
 - Change in working patterns and transport patterns
 - Local government budgets are stretched and focused on short term economic recovery (perhaps to the detriment of long term sustainability)
 - Corporate priorities are changing as they grapple with new priorities and new ways of working

3. What projects/policies has your country implemented to use science, technology, and innovation to make cities productive, inclusive and liveable? What are the main outcomes? What are the main challenges confronted while trying to implement these projects/policies?

- Policies/guidance/research etc from central government - Chief Scientific Advisors (CSA) Office for Science and Technology Strategy plus others
 - UKRI and other funding bodies have multiple grant funded calls for consortia to explore these themes at a research and at a practical level
 - Various Catapult centres have been set up by BEIS/Innovate UK to explore these themes
4. Can you provide examples of policies/projects/initiatives aimed at strengthening national STI capabilities for sustainable urban development? For example, how does your country build technology and innovative capabilities through investments in R&D and human capital? What institutional and regulatory arrangements are in place to stimulate R & D and innovation, and to effectively address unintended consequences of technological innovation, such as privacy, ethical, gender and other concerns?
- As above
5. Could you share case studies of regional and international cooperation that have helped your country in strengthening STI capacities? Can you provide success stories in this regard?
6. Could you suggest the contact person(s) of the nodal agency responsible for projects/policies or international collaboration related to the theme? We might contact them for further inputs.

Please send your responses and any further inputs on the theme to the CSTD secretariat (stdev@unctad.org) by 6 September 2021. We look forward to receiving your valuable inputs.

Sincere regards,
CSTD secretariat