

CALL FOR PROPOSAL

Towards Adequate Housing in the Arab Region: Evidence and Recommendations for Improving the Urban Rental Housing Market

The purpose of this Call for Proposal is to solicit Expressions of Interest from existing or prospective Implementing Partners to carry out research on the urban rental housing market in the Arab Region, in partnership with the Arab Land Initiative of UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), and the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS). This will include contributing complementary resources to achieve the common objectives outlined in this document and subsequently to be agreed in an Agreement of Cooperation (AoC) to be stipulated between UN-Habitat and the selected Implementing Partner.

Deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest:	28 November 2025
Contacts for questions and submission:	eleonora.serpi@un.org el.benmokhtar@un.org

I. Background

The Arab region faces acute challenges in rental housing driven by rapid urbanization, population growth, economic inequality and the proliferation of informal settlements, exacerbated further by conflict-induced displacement and climate-related stresses. Rental housing, often the only feasible option for low-income groups and displaced populations, has become increasingly unaffordable and insecure. Legal and policy frameworks in many Arab countries marginalize rental housing or do not adequately protect tenants' rights, leading to informal and exploitative rental arrangements. This is compounded by a shortage of formal rental stock and limited government intervention in the sector, resulting in a fragmented and exclusionary housing system. With urban populations projected to rise, access to secure, affordable rental housing is a critical concern, particularly for low-income, displaced and other vulnerable households.

UN-Habitat has long recognized the centrality of adequate housing to sustainable urban development and peacebuilding. UN-Habitat, through its Land, Housing and Shelter Section and its Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), supports national and local governments in the Arab region to enhance access to land and adequate housing, improve urban planning and urban development and protect housing, land and property (HLP) rights of displaced persons. The [Arab Land Initiative](#), launched by UN-Habitat, the [Global Land Tool Network](#) and its partners in 2016, plays a pivotal role in strengthening land governance, promoting equitable access to land and housing and addressing legal and institutional gaps across the Arab region. These efforts are aligned with UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026–2029, which prioritizes adequate housing, land and basic services for all, and recognizes rental housing as a core component of efforts to deliver inclusive, resilient urban development across the Arab region.

UN-Habitat and the Arab Land Initiative are currently inviting interested organizations and institutions from the Arab region to submit expressions of interest to conduct an assessment of the urban rental housing market in the Arab region and identify best practices and policy recommendations for improving the rental market in the region. This topic has been prioritized for further action following a request by the [Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All \(OEWG-H\)](#) for increased attention to the rental housing market. The findings of this assessment will directly contribute to and inform the ongoing work of the OEWG-H.

II. Research objectives, scope and methodology

A. Objectives and scope

The purpose of this research is to inform policy and programming on urban rental housing in the Arab region, including efforts to improve rental housing affordability, security and tenant protection, particularly for low-income, displaced and other vulnerable population. The specific objectives of the research are to:

- (1) **Assess the urban rental housing market in the Arab region.** Conduct a comprehensive desk review, complemented by key informant interviews, to analyze major trends, the role and significance of rental housing across the Arab region. The study will identify key challenges and opportunities, and propose actionable, regionally relevant solutions to inform policy and practice aimed at improving the rental housing market.
- (2) **Develop a robust and regionally relevant methodology for assessing urban rental housing markets in Arab countries.** This will build on [UN-Habitat's existing housing profile methodology](#) and incorporate insights from the regional assessment.
- (3) **Develop an urban rental housing market profile:** Apply the developed methodology in one selected Arab country (TBD among Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan) to produce a detailed urban rental housing market profile, serving as a pilot for future replication and scaling across the region.

B. Methodology

The selected implementing partner will be expected to apply the following methodological approaches to complete the research:

- **Desk review:** Analyze existing literature, data sources and policy documents related to urban rental housing across the Arab region.
- **Stakeholder consultations:** Conduct key informant interviews with representatives from government agencies, private sector actors, civil society organizations and academia. These consultations should include an Expert Group Meeting to gather diverse perspectives.
- **Selection of case studies:** Identify representative case studies to illustrate specific challenges, innovations or policy responses within the rental housing sector.
- **Primary data collection:** Carry out field-level data collection to develop one national urban rental housing market profile in the selected pilot country.
- **Validation:** Present preliminary findings to stakeholders for review and feedback, ensuring relevance, accuracy and applicability of the results.

III. Deliverables and timelines

A. Key deliverables

Under the Agreement for Cooperation, the selected implementing partner will be expected to deliver the following key outputs:

- D1. Regional assessment** (full report, policy brief and PowerPoint presentation)
- D2. Methodology** for assessing national urban rental housing markets (full report)
- D3. Organization of an Expert Group Meeting**
- D4. Pilot profile of a national housing market** (full report and interactive dashboard/maps)
- D5. Organization of an online webinar**

Table 1 (below) presents the tentative phased submission schedule for each deliverable, detailing timelines and what is expected at the draft and final stages.

B. Management and coordination

The research will be carried out by the selected implementing partner awarded the grant. Oversight will be provided by an UN-Habitat project manager, with technical advice from housing and land experts within UN-Habitat and the Arab Land Initiative's partners.

C. Budget

UN-Habitat will allocate a total budget of USD 75,000 to the selected implementing partner from the Arab region to carry out the research. This amount includes USD 67,000 for the development of the regional methodology for national urban rental housing market profiles, as well as the production of the laid-out regional report, policy brief and national housing market profile. An additional USD 8,000 is allocated for organizing a regional Expert Group Meeting (EGM) and an online webinar.

Table 1: Deliverables and timelines, corresponding to key deliverables listed in section III. A.

Month	Deliverables
Month 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D1. Regional Assessment: Inception report (methodology, work plan, case studies)• D2. Methodology: Inception report (scope, objectives, preliminary structure of the methodology document, proposed analytical areas, indicators, data sources, tools)
Month 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D2. Methodology: Draft indicator framework (proposed set of indicators for assessing rental housing markets, how to address data gaps)
Month 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D2. Methodology: Annotated outline
Month 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D1. Regional Assessment: Draft report (desk review findings, case studies, preliminary recommendations)
Month 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D2. Methodology: Draft methodology (guidance on data collection, analysis and reporting)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3. Expert Group Meeting: to present and discuss the findings and recommendations for the regional assessment and methodology for national rental market profiles
Month 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1. Regional Assessment: Draft policy brief (summary of key regional findings and recommendations)
Month 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1. Regional Assessment: Final laid-out report; final laid-out policy brief; PowerPoint presentation for dissemination in regional workshops/webinars • D2. Methodology: Final report • D4. Pilot profile: Inception report
Month 13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D5. Webinar: Launch of Regional Assessment report and policy brief • D4. Pilot profile: Data collection and analysis
Month 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D4. Pilot profile: Draft report (analysis, case studies, preliminary recommendations)
Month 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D4. Pilot profile: Validation and stakeholder feedback for pilot country profile
Month 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D4. Pilot profile: Final laid-out report; interactive dashboard/maps for Arab Land Initiative website

IV. Eligibility criteria and requirements for submissions of Expressions of Interest

UN-Habitat seeks a registered non-profit institution or organization from the Arab region to conduct comprehensive research on urban rental housing market conditions, identify best practices and develop evidence-based policy recommendations for improving the rental market in the region.

A. Eligibility criteria

Institutions and organizations applying for the Agreement of Cooperation to undertake this research **must** meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be a **registered non-profit organization** (university, non-governmental organization, civil society organization, training and research institution, others).
2. **Be based and registered in one of the countries composing the Arab region.**¹
3. Be proficient in **Arabic and English**.
4. Have expertise in housing markets, housing and land policy, land governance or urban economics in the Arab region.

B. Required documents for submissions of Expressions of Interest

Applicants must provide the documents listed below (see Table 2), including **(1) cover letter, (2) short portfolio with annexes and (3) technical proposal**. Only complete submissions with all required

¹ Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

documents will be considered by the selection board. Submissions from applicants failing to provide the requested information will be disregarded.

Submissions must be in **English ONLY**. Supporting documents can be submitted in English, Arabic or French.

Table 2: Required information for submissions of expressions of interest

<p>1. <u>Cover letter (max. 800 words)</u></p> <p>The cover letter must demonstrate the applicant's capacities and experience relevant to the research outlined in this Call for Proposal.</p>
<p>2. <u>Short portfolio (max 6 pages, excluding Annexed documents) of the organization</u> containing information on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Organization's vision, mission and objectives;Description of completed and current work relevant to the application;Organizational and management structure, including members of the Governing Board and their designations;Qualifications and technical skills of the personnel to be involved in the project, explaining the status of such personnel (permanent staff, consultant to be hired for the project, etc.). If additional personnel will be hired to implement the Agreement of Cooperation, indicate so;Information on office space;Description of anti-fraud controls and provide formal procedures;State if the organization has a bank account in its own name to receive the funds provided by UN-Habitat. The organization must have its own bank account, which is under the name of the organization and not under the name of an individual or another organization. <p><u>Annexed</u> documents should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Proof of membership to professional associations, if any;CVs of personnel to be involved in the project;At least one(1) reference letter from past donors or partners;Proof of legal status or certificate of registration in country or origin or operation;Audited company financial statements (balance sheet and income statement) and auditors report for the last two years;Proof of bank account in the organization name.
<p>3. <u>Technical proposal for Agreement of Cooperation to conduct the research described in this Call for Proposal (max 6 pages)</u>. Based on the proposed timeline (see table 1) and the proposed table of contents (see Annex A and Annex B), the technical proposal should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Description of the research approach and methodology for each deliverable (including data collection, analysis, stakeholder engagement, quality assurance, etc.);Work plan and implementation strategy for management of the research workstreams (including phased deliverable timelines, team roles, etc.);Outline of the budget proposal divided in categories including the in-kind contribution provided (including time from personnel, use of office premises and office assets, communication costs, etc.). All costs must be in USD and must describe the nature and value of contribution (in-kind or cash).

C. Submission instructions and contact information

Expressions of Interest must be delivered in electronic format no later than **28 November 2025 (11:59 PM EAT)** to **Eleonora Serpi** (eleonora.serpi@un.org) with copy to **El Habib Benmokhtar** (el.benmokhtar@un.org). Please include **"Submission – Research on rental market in the Arab region"** in the email subject line. All related questions or clarifications must also be sent to these email addresses. Applicants who send submissions to a different email address other than the ones specified will not be considered. The Expression of Interest and accompanying documents must be received in accordance with the instructions outlined here. Submissions from applicants failing to provide all required information and documentation (see Table 2) or who do not fulfill the basic eligibility criteria (see section IV(A)) will not be considered.

D. Criteria for assessment of submissions

Organizations will be selected in accordance with the procedure set out in the UN-Habitat IP Management Policy and Standard Operating Procedures. The selection board will evaluate all eligible and complete applications based on the criteria listed in Table 3, below.

Table 3: Criteria of evaluation (for your information only)

1. Technical capacity
1.1 Experience with project implementation of this type, size and thematic area.
1.2 Qualification and technical skills of the staff involved in the project.
1.3 Proximity to and knowledge about the target population and presence in the project area.
1.4 Availability of adequate office equipment for implementation.
1.5 Formal procedures of the office to monitor project execution.
2. Financial and administrative capacity
2.1 Financial sustainability and relevance.
2.2 Qualification of the applicant in terms of financial management.
2.3 Formal procedures and controls to mitigate fraud.
3. Quality of the financial proposal
3.1 The budget for the implementation of activities proposed by the implementing partner is: (i) cost-effective (i.e. the cost should be economical and prudently estimated to avoid any under/over estimation); (ii) justifiable/well supported; and (iii) accurate and complete.
4. Quality of the technical proposal
4.1 The technical proposal is sound and responds adequately to the specifications and requirements.

V. ANNEXES

ANNEX A. Preliminary table of contents: Regional assessment

I. Background and introduction

- Overview of the regional context and importance of rental housing in the Arab region
- Objectives and scope of the research
- Methodology

II. Policy and legal framework

Regional overview

- Existing laws, regulations and policies governing rental housing (including legacy frameworks, e.g. old rental laws)
- Common regulatory trends (e.g. rent control, eviction protection, informal rental)
- Summary of legal gaps and enforcement challenges
- Regional landscape of recent or ongoing policy reforms

Case studies

- In-depth analysis of legal and regulatory frameworks in selected countries
- Implementation challenges, gaps in enforcement and practical barriers (e.g. informal agreements, weak dispute resolution)
- Impact of policy reforms
- Role of judiciary and dispute resolution systems in practice
- *E.g., Analysis of the proposed rental law reform in Egypt*

III. Supply and demand for urban rental housing

Regional overview

- Analysis of demand drivers in the region: urbanization, migration, displacement, demographics, labor mobility and cultural preferences
- Mapping the typology of rental housing stock (formal/informal, public/private, affordable/luxury)
- Identify supply bottlenecks (e.g. unaffordability/lack of incentives for affordable rental, limited financing, barriers faced by women-headed households, youth, persons with disabilities and displaced populations/refugees)

Case studies

- Impact of displacement and migration: examine how refugees, IDPs and labor migrants affect demand, supply and pricing
- Impact of climate change on cost, supply, tenure security, etc.
- Barriers to access for vulnerable groups (e.g. women-headed households, youth, persons with disabilities)
- Transparency measures (e.g. presence of rental price regulations, use of standard contracts)

IV. Role of the private sector

Regional overview

- Typology of private rental actors: small landlords, developers, informal market players, etc.
- Explore incentives (subsidy schemes, rental vouchers or public-private partnerships for affordable housing) for landlords to offer affordable rental housing
- Common barriers for private investment in affordable rentals

Case studies

- Actor mapping of private rental actors (large developers, small landlords, informal market actors) and their role in responding to rental housing demand
- Assess effectiveness of country-specific incentive or subsidy programs
- Case examples of public-private partnerships and their outcomes in delivering affordable rental housing

V. Role of the public sector

Regional overview

- Map existing public/social rental housing programs across Arab countries
- Summary of government roles in financing, operating or regulating rental housing

Case studies

- Assess the extent and performance of public/social housing for rental housing programs, including targeting effectiveness (e.g. for low-income, displaced or climate-vulnerable populations)
- Evaluate opportunities for scaling up through government programs or donor support
- In-depth analysis of financing, maintenance and sustainability of public rental housing program in select countries

VI. Cooperatives and community led initiatives

Regional overview

- Presence and types of community-based or cooperative rental models
- Enabling policy and legal conditions for such models
- Barriers to replication or scaling in the regional context

Case studies

- Detailed case examples of functioning cooperative or community-led rental initiatives, including the role of civil society, local government or informal governance structures and impact on affordability, social cohesion or inclusion of vulnerable groups

VII. Best practices and innovative models

Regional overview

- Overview of types of good practices identified across the region (e.g. regulatory reforms, financial mechanisms, partnership models, use of standard contracts, rental regulation frameworks, temporary use of vacant housing for accommodating IDPs and refugees, community-based rental models, tenant protection or legal aid mechanisms)

Case studies / Spotlight examples

- In-depth assessment of how specific best practices or innovative models were implemented in selected countries, including analysis of success factors, risks and scalability

- Testimonials or impact assessments from local actors

VIII. Recommendations

- Regional-level recommendations for legal reform, financing, inclusion and market transparency tailored to different contexts (conflict-affected, climate-vulnerable, etc.)
- Guidance for donors, governments and practitioners

Annex 1

- Table showing key indicators and areas of analysis for regional baseline assessment of current rental housing market conditions across the Arab region

ANNEX B. Preliminary table of contents: National urban rental housing market assessment in the Arab region

Background, context and introduction

Guidelines for developing an urban rental housing market assessment

I. Institutional and policy framework

- Existing laws, regulations and policies governing rental housing (including legacy frameworks, e.g. old rental laws)
- Common regulatory trends (e.g. rent control, eviction protection, informal rental)
- Summary of legal gaps and enforcement challenges

II. Demand of urban rental housing

- Analysis of demand drivers at country level: urbanization, migration, displacement, demographics, labor mobility and cultural preferences
- Scale of rent: ownership vs rental trends
- Geographical distribution of rental demand (e.g. by governorate)

III. Supply of urban rental housing

- Typology of urban rental housing stock (formal/informal, public/private, affordable/luxury)
- Supply bottlenecks (e.g. unaffordability/lack of incentives for affordable rental, limited financing, barriers faced by women-headed households, youth, persons with disabilities and displaced populations/refugees)
- Affordability analysis: rent-to-income ratios (including changes in rent-to-income ratio trends across time and governorates/cities)
- Housing supply dynamics: vacancy rates and availability
- Macro-level supply and demand projections (next 20 years)

IV. Tenure security

- Tenure security of rental contracts

V. Rental housing finance

- Incentives (subsidy schemes, rental vouchers or public-private partnerships for affordable housing) for landlords to offer affordable rental housing
- Common barriers for private investment in affordable rentals
- Effectiveness of country-specific incentive or subsidy programs

VI. Cross cutting issues

- Impact of displacement and migration: examine how refugees, IDPs and labor migrants affect demand, supply and pricing
- Impact of climate change on cost, supply, tenure security, etc.
- Access to rental housing for vulnerable groups (e.g. women-headed households, youth, persons with disabilities)
- Transparency measures (e.g. presence of rental price regulations, use of standard contracts)

- Rental housing in slums/informal settlements

VII. Stakeholder assessment

- Role of the private sector: typology of private rental actors: small landlords, developers, informal market players, etc.; actor mapping of private rental actors (large developers, small landlords, informal market actors) and their role in responding to rental housing demand
- Role of the public sector: summary of government roles in financing, operating or regulating rental housing; existing public/social rental housing programs across Arab countries;
- Cooperatives and community led initiatives: presence, roles and types of community-based or cooperative rental models

VIII. Recommendations

- National-level recommendations for legal reform, financing, inclusion and market transparency

For clarifications, please contact [Eleonora Serpi](mailto:eleonora.serpi@un.org) (eleonora.serpi@un.org) with cc: El Habib Benmokhtar (el.benmokhtar@un.org), indicating in the email subject line: “Clarification Request – Research on rental market in the Arab region”.