



UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT'S

CATALOGUE OF SOLUTIONS

2026 - 2029





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UN-Habitat's Catalogue of Solutions 2026 - 2029

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Foreword

Meeting this moment

Disclaimer

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For thousands of years, cities have embodied humanity's aspiration to better futures. Urbanization, when adequately planned for, fosters opportunity, inclusion and prosperity. Yet when unplanned, it exacerbates inequalities, accelerates environmental degradation and erodes human rights. UN-Habitat was established in 1978 as the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements, mandated to ensure that humanity benefits from and steers urbanization in the right direction.

Today, this potential remains largely unfulfilled: **1.1 billion people, approximately 25 per cent of the global urban population, still live in slums and informal settlements.** Over the next 30 years, an additional 2 billion people are expected to live in slums or slum-like conditions, and our collective ability to act will continue to be tested, as cities across the world face crises, disasters, conflicts and rapid growth. Yet, transformational change is within reach, and I believe that together we can drive local and global solutions.

For UN-Habitat and many cities, this transformation starts with securing access to housing, land and urban basic services for all. Adequate housing and neighbourhoods underpin decent urban living conditions, enabling access to health, education, safety, social and economic opportunities. It is a cornerstone of sustainable development, peace and security.

This Catalogue of Solutions is UN-Habitat's practical commitment to delivering on the promise of cities, working hand-in-hand with all leaders and change-makers of the world. It brings together tools, methodologies and resources distilled into **81 tested and proven solutions**, drawn from years of UN-Habitat's impactful experience and solutions around the world. Mirroring the structure of UN-Habitat's strategy for 2026 to 2029, to guide you through UN-Habitat's offerings and kickstart or continue our collaboration.

Anacláudia Roszbach

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)



Image 1. Aerial shot of the buildings in the comuna 13 slum in Medellin, Colombia. © Freepik, Wirestock

A Global Portfolio of Solutions for Sustainable Urbanization

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations entity responsible for **promoting sustainable urbanization across the globe**. Headquartered in Nairobi, the organization deploys its normative and operational support to all regions.

This Catalogue presents an **up-to-date portfolio of tools and methodologies** through which UN-Habitat can support **national and local governments and other partners and stakeholders**, to address pressing urban challenges and drive an inclusive and sustainable urban future.



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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific	GI	Geospatial Information	OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	UNHA	UN-Habitat Assembly
ACCP	African Clean Cities Platform	GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation	OSR	Own-Source Revenue	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation.	GOSP	Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities	PCRD	Provincial Climate Risk Diagnostics	UNIDO	The United Nations Industrial Development Organization
AoSUM	Academy of Sustainable Urban Mobility	GPSN	Global Public Space Network	PFM	Public Financial Management	UNITAC	The United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities
BBB	Block-by-Block	GWOPA	Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance	PPPPs	Public-Private-People-Partnerships	UNI	UN-Habitat's Partnership with universities worldwide
BEAM	Building and Establishment Automated Mapper	GUID	Global Urban Indicators Database	PSSA	Public Space Site-Specific Assessment	UNOICT	United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit	GUDC	Global Urban Data Coalition	QoLI	Quality Of Life Index	UNOSAT	United Nations Satellite Centre
C40	Cities Climate Leadership Group	HLP	Housing, land and property	RFA	Resilience Framework for Action	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
CAPS	Centre on Africa Public Spaces	HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	ROSRA	Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis	UNU	United Nations University
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management	IAE	Paris Sorbonne Business School	SCC	Cities and Communities Consultation	UNWTO	UN Tourism (formerly known as the World Tourism Organization)
CDC	Community Development Councils	IALS	Institute of Advanced Legal Studies	SDF	The Spatial Development Framework	UPPR	Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction
CDS	Capacity Development Section	IFURL	International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages	STDM	Social Tenure Domain Model	URL	Urban-Rural Linkages
CIF	Cities Investment Facility	IntegrHa-	Centers of Social Integration and Habitat Co-creation	SEACAP	Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plans	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
CiCoSA	Circular Construction and Housing in Sub-Saharan Africa	bitat		SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs	USD	United States Dollars
COP	Conference of the Parties	IOC	International Olympic Committee	SICIP	Spatially Informed Capital Investment Plans	VLRs	Voluntary Local Reviews
CPI	City Prosperity Index	IOM	International Organization for Migration	SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	IPRR	Investment Programmes for Risk Resilience	SUSTRAN	Sustainable Transport of Fast African Cities	WaCT	Waste Wise Cities Tool
CURLA	Centre for Urban-Rural Linkages in Africa	ISWM	Integrated Solid Waste Management	SUMP	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
CWPSS	City-Wide Public Space Strategy	ITDP	Institute of Transportation and Development Policy	SURGe	Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation	WBG	World Bank Group
CWPSA	City-Wide Public Space Assessment	IUO	Integral Urban Operations	SWOPs	Sanitation-focused Water Operators' Partnerships	WHO	World Health Organization
CWSUPS	City-Wide Slum Upgrading and Prevention Strategies	KSN	Knowledge and Scientific Network	ToT	Training of Trainers	WMD	World Metropolitan Day
DEWATS	Decentralised Wastewater Treatment Systems	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean	UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments	WOPs	Water Operators' Partnerships
DIMSUR	Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience Centre	LMS	Learning Management System	UK AID	United Kingdom Aid	WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
DiPAS	Digital Participation System	LoI	Letter of Intent	ULLs	Urban Living Labs	WUF	World Urban Forum
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo	LRGs	Local and Regional Governments	UNDCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office	WWC	Waste Wise Cities
DRM	Disaster Risk Management	MASE	Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme		
DSU	Durable Solutions Unit	MDG	Millennium Development Goals	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa		
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation	MENA	Middle East and North Africa	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe		
EO	Earth Observations	MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme		
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization		
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance.	MSW	Municipal Solid Waste	UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific		
ETI	Entrepreneurship and Territorial Innovation Chair	MSWM	Municipal Solid Waste Management	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change		
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN	MVA	Multi-layered Vulnerability Assessment	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund		
FfD	Financing for Development	MYN	My Neighbourhood	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly		
GCF	Green Climate Fund	NAPs	National Adaptation Plans	UNGGIM	United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework		
GEF	Global Environment Facility	NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees		
Geo-ICT	Geographic Information and Communication Technology	NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations				
		NMT	Non-Motorised Transport				
		NSOs	National Statistics Offices				
		OCP	Our City Plans Toolbox				
		ODF	Open Defecation Free				

Introduction

The context for this Catalogue

The solutions featured herein represent approaches that have been tested and replicated in multiple contexts, in response to diverse urban challenges. Varied in scope and in the technologies applied, each entry corresponds to a unique solution, crafted by UN-Habitat, in alignment with the principles and priorities of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, and the UN-Habitat strategy for 2026-2029.

The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat

The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan converts UN-Habitat's vision of a 'better urban future' into a results-oriented plan. Anchored in the principles of the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, this plan constitutes UN-Habitat's roadmap towards global sustainable urban development.

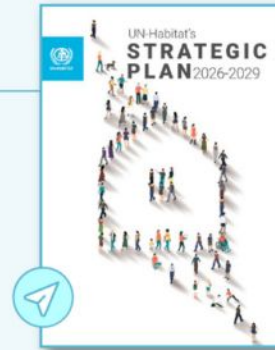
It establishes access to housing, land, and basic services as the backbone of decent urban living and ensures that no one is left behind. It addresses the needs of communities in informal settlements and slums, as well as people affected by humanitarian crises and climate impacts.

The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan also recognises the transformational potential of **housing, land and basic services for achieving the SDGs**.

Addressing the global housing crisis is a key entry point to tackling poverty (SDG 1), climate change (SDG 13), gender equality (SDG 5), access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), health and well-being (SDG 3), among other goals.

To optimise and advance all of the domains that housing, land and urban basic services connect to, UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan lays out tailored tracks.

It provides structured guidance through '**means of implementation**' (**how**), which include, for example, urban planning, participatory governance, capacity development and partnerships.



It also outlines '**impact areas**' (**for what**), showing how UN-Habitat's work contributes to broader global challenges:

- **Inclusive and equitable prosperity for poverty eradication** – Adequate housing provides stability, unlocks opportunities, and drives economic growth.
- **Environment and climate action** – Sustainable housing design, land use, and planning can cut emissions and strengthen resilience to climate impacts.
- **Preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction** – Adequate housing and services are essential for supporting displaced populations and enabling long-term recovery from crises.

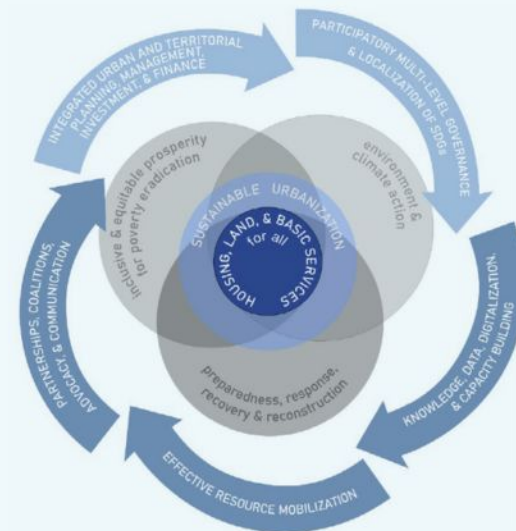


Figure 1. Key elements of the Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029. © UN-Habitat

The New Urban Agenda (NUA):

The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, 20 October 2016. It was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-eighth plenary meeting of the seventy-first session on 23 December 2016.

Translated into more than 30 languages, the New Urban Agenda represents a shared vision for a better and more sustainable future. As an action-oriented framework, it comprises practical recommendations to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. UN-Habitat is responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The SDGs are an integrated set of goals and targets. Achieving the targets under SDG 11 – “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” – has a transformative impact on multiple Goals (see the figure below).

In addition, several “urban-critical” targets embedded in other goals are vital to enabling sustainable urbanization.

As 2030 approaches, efforts must concentrate on support to cities and local-level action to accelerate SDG implementation.



Figure 2. Interlinkages between SDG11 and the other goals. © UN-Habitat

How to use this Catalogue?

Who is this Catalogue for?

This Catalogue is designed to support **stakeholders** and **partners** in identifying areas for support and collaboration with UN-Habitat. It may serve **country- and city-level officials, heads of relevant technical departments, funding partners** and **donors**.

Other **United Nations agencies** and **Resident Coordinators** may also find it a useful resource in countries where access to adequate housing, land and urban basic services is identified as an SDG acceleration pathway in the Common Country Analysis and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

How is the Catalogue organized?

Following the approach of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026-2029, this Catalogue is **organized along three sections**:

Section 1 The strategic focus

Solutions driving UN-Habitat's strategic focus on **housing, land and basic services**, comprised in the following chapters:

- A. Housing and land.
- B. Informal settlements.
- C. Urban basic services.

Section 2 Our impact areas

Solutions geared towards the **three impact areas of the Strategic Plan 2026-29**, comprised in the following chapters:

- D. Equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication.
- E. Preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction.
- F. Environment and climate action.

Section 3 Our means of implementation

Solutions driving the **means of implementation of the Strategic Plan 2026-29**, comprised in the following chapters:

- G. Integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investment and finance.
- H. Participatory multilevel governance and the localization of SDGs.
- I. Knowledge, data, digitalisation and capacity-development.
- J. Partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication.

Which solutions to use and how to combine them:

As readers identify their challenges and pathways to increase access to adequate housing, land and urban basic services, Catalogue entries are tagged to support the selection of integrated approaches. These approaches combine different indicators, enabling maximum impact across the SDGs within a given geographic or thematic context, while aligning with United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions and strategic priorities.

The 2026 Catalogue of Solutions provides an overview of available support from UN-Habitat to assist national, regional and local governments; civil society and private sector actors; grassroots communities and professionals; researchers and academia; and donors and financing institutions.

These solutions help address multidimensional urban challenges and enable all actors to work towards a better urban future for everyone. This Catalogue is not exhaustive. Additional solutions and tailored support may be available.

The strategic focus and the impact areas tags:
Indicate how each solution aligns with and supports the advancement of specific elements of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan.



Strategic focus: Land, housing, and basic services.



Impact area 1: Equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication.



Impact area 2: Preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction.

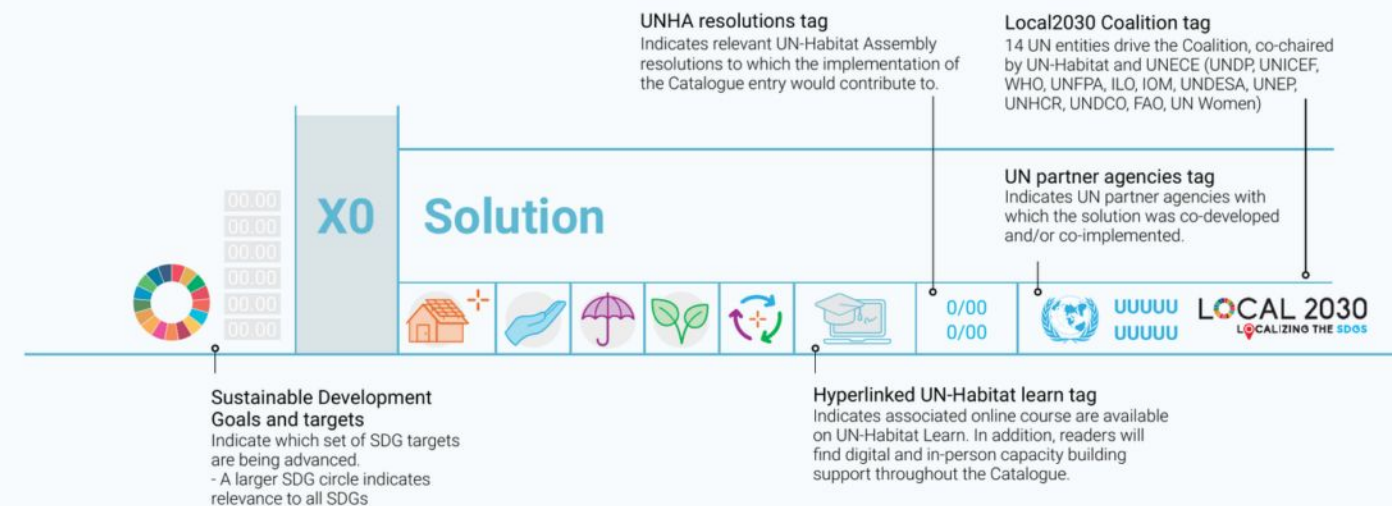


Impact area 3: Environment and climate action.



Contributing to **all impact areas** and the **strategic focus**.

Each entry in this Catalogue is marked with the following tags,



Chapter A: Housing and land

This chapter presents UN-Habitat's globally applicable and field-tested housing and land solutions. **Adequate housing is a cornerstone of sustainable urban development, and forms the basis for human dignity, health, security and prosperity.** By 2030, UN-Habitat estimates that three billion people, or about 40 per cent of the world's population, will require access to adequate housing. This demand is equivalent to 96,000 new affordable and accessible housing units every day. Currently, an estimated 100 million people are homeless, and one in four people live in conditions that endanger their health, safety, and well-being.

Access to housing and land is a precondition for employment, education, health care and social services, and serves as a foundation for inclusive urban growth. Yet the global housing deficit continues to expand, driven by rapid urbanization, rising land and construction costs, and limited access to finance.

UN-Habitat's housing and land solutions provide tailored methodologies for national and local governments to place adequate housing at the centre of urban policies, ensuring that people and human rights remain at the forefront of sustainable development. **Through integrated approaches, these solutions strengthen governance, promote affordability, secure land tenure and enable resilient, inclusive and climate-responsive housing.**



Image 2. Aerial view of lands bordering urban expansion in the Philippines. © UN-Habitat website/Shutterstock

SECTION 1
OUR
STRATEGIC
FOCUS



16.b
16.6
16.3
11.1
5.a
1.4

A1

Strengthen housing, land and property rights for peaceful societies

2/2
2/7

1/5

UNHCR IOM
OHCHR

Summary

Support to functioning housing, land and property (HLP) institutions and strong legal frameworks enabling security of tenure. As prolonged or intermittent conflict tends to fracture and incapacitate, if not destroy, a nation's housing, land, property framework, governments, humanitarian and development actors often require assistance in rebuilding and strengthening HLP institutions and legal frameworks in the post-conflict period.

This solution supports governments and international stakeholders by providing assistance that can be categorised into three areas:

1. Increase knowledge of key HLP issues and the HLP institutional and legal framework via the production of thematic legal papers, reports and guidance notes.
2. Support the process for HLP legal reform or legislation drafting via legal consultation and legislative review.
3. Build capacity of HLP administration institutions and supporting humanitarian and development actors via knowledge sharing, information briefs, legal consultation and advising.



Challenges addressed

Complex challenges affecting HLP rights arise in the post-conflict context of displacement and return. Specific HLP issues that contribute to tenure insecurity and homelessness or landlessness in these circumstances include property confiscation; unauthorised property sales or transfers; secondary occupation; HLP disputes; loss of HLP and civil documentation; damage to property records and land information systems; fragmented de facto land administration; demographic change; and damage to, and inadequate information on housing stock.

Weak legal frameworks and incapacitated HLP institutions compound these challenges and hinder recovery processes such as property restitution and reconstruction, consequently inhibiting the establishment of resilient, cohesive communities.



What UN-Habitat can offer

As the reconstruction of human settlements and societal institutions is the primary concern in post-conflict contexts, UN-Habitat has a critical role to play in post-conflict recovery efforts. The agency has become a leader in addressing HLP issues in post-conflict periods, recognising the key role of land in both triggering and resolving conflict and injustice.

Our support involves knowledge gathering, capacity building and legal reform support to prevent forced evictions and displacement, increase tenure security, enable the return of displaced persons and improve access to and/or the availability of affordable housing for all.

In addition to long-term institutional and legal reform, we utilise "fit-for-purpose" land administration tools such as temporary occupancy permits, and the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) which facilitates the provision and strengthening of HLP rights in a variety of contexts along the conflict to post-conflict continuum.

Vulnerable groups such as women, children, older persons, ethnic and religious minorities, and internationally displaced people and refugees tend to be most susceptible to human rights violations and HLP abuses during and following conflict. UN-Habitat aims to ensure that vulnerable groups are included in all HLP processes following conflict, such as property restitution, and specifically seeks to increase the security of tenure of vulnerable groups.

This solution builds on ongoing partnerships and collaborations with UNHCR, Norwegian Refugee Council and other stakeholders working on HLP rights in conflict and post-conflict countries.



For further information:
Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)



Duration of support

The timeframe for the activities can be split into phases: building knowledge, capacity, and identifying areas for legal change can take between **one to two years**; the process of enacting legal and institutional reform, meanwhile, usually takes between **one to five years** depending on the context.



Previous applications

This solution has proven relevant in both conflict and post-conflict contexts in **Syria** and **Iraq**. In Iraq, as of July 2019, UN-Habitat supported the government in mapping, registering, and resolving land claims by issuing 19,016 Occupancy Certificates.

These certificates have benefited 110,897 individuals (51.3% male and 48.7% female) from the Yazidi minority, who had long been unable to secure official recognition of the ownership of their lands and houses. The issuance of these certificates has enabled conditions for safe return, enhanced participation in local development processes.

Furthermore, UN-Habitat has supported the Iraqi government in establishing a strong legal framework to upgrade the UN-Habitat-issued Occupancy Certificates into formal government title deeds. Since 2023, UN-Habitat has been assisting Yazidi households in completing this upgrade process. To date, Yazidi families have received 4,243 official government title deeds.

As part of the EU-funded Syria Joint Programme, UN-Habitat is supporting the production of a wealth of knowledge on the legal and institutional framework on land and housing in Syria.

Part of this knowledge was designed to support the humanitarian and early recovery actors to carry out their activities with full awareness to complicated HLP issues resulting from or exacerbated by the conflict.

Moreover, this knowledge is used by UN-Habitat to direct its HLP support. One example is UN-Habitat's assistance to the land administration authority in Syria to reconstitute hundreds of thousands land and property records lost or destroyed during the conflict and preserve the remaining evidential documents.

This is taking place through the development and deployment of a searchable and strongly protected document management system using an adapted version of the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) system.

UN-Habitat is advocating the relevant authorities on necessary updates to the legislation regulating the reconstitution process to give the refugees and displaced persons better opportunity to participate in the recovery process.



For further information



Webpage: [Global Land Tool Network](#)



Video: [Yazidi's officially recognised as landowners, Ninewa, Iraq](#)



Image 3. family reunited at their rehabilitated house in Iraq.
© UN-Habitat



A2 Housing Sector Profiles



2/7

OHCHR
UNECE UNFPA
UNESWA IOM

Summary

The Housing Sector Profile is a strategic diagnostic solution that supports governments and housing-sector stakeholders in developing inclusive, evidence-based housing policies, strategies, programmes, and projects.

It provides a comprehensive understanding of the entire housing delivery system, recognising the diversity of supply channels, tenure arrangements, and actors.

Through a participatory and analytical process, the Profile assesses current and future housing needs, examines how housing is produced, accessed, financed, and regulated across income groups, and identifies opportunities to strengthen policy coherence, affordability, sustainability, and resilience.

The Profile serves both as an analytical tool and as a platform for dialogue, capacity building, and collective ownership of housing sector reforms.



Challenges addressed

The Housing Sector Profile supports the strengthening of housing systems to respond more effectively and equitably to the needs of all households across diverse contexts and income levels.

It promotes better alignment within housing markets, improved policy and governance coherence, stronger coordination between housing strategies and spatial planning, and enhanced access to land, infrastructure, and financing across diverse housing delivery systems and tenure types.

The Profile also contributes to improved data, institutional capacity, and the integration of climate resilience, sustainability, and the needs of vulnerable groups.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat conducts Housing Sector Profiles as a diagnostic tool that provides governments and other stakeholders with a systematic analysis of housing delivery systems at city and national level, helping to disclose bottlenecks and to identify gaps and opportunities in the housing sector.

Housing Sector Profiles help identify critical constraints to the provision of diversified housing opportunities and support the formulation of appropriate recommendations and policy responses.

The scope and scale of the Housing Sector Profile can be tailored to national or city-level contexts.

The solution includes the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Housing Working Group; a comprehensive review of existing data, policies, legal and regulatory frameworks; targeted fieldwork and stakeholder consultations; and the mobilisation of national and international expertise to address identified knowledge gaps.

The process is complemented by capacity building and knowledge-sharing activities, including workshops at national and sub-national levels, to strengthen stakeholder understanding and ownership of findings.

The Profile supports informed decision making and provides a practical foundation for the development or revision of housing policies, strategies, and programmes aligned with current and future needs.



Duration of support

Housing profiles can be completed in **six to nine months**.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat has conducted Housing Sector Profiles in Latin America, Africa and Asia since 2010, providing a foundation for understanding housing systems and informing policy and programme development. Key examples include:

- **Egypt** (2017): Detailed assessment of housing programmes, particularly for low-income households, clarifying key constraints and opportunities.
- **Ghana** (2011): Strengthened the evidence base for housing sector reforms and supported improvements in overall sector functioning.
- **Cabo Verde**: Comprehensive diagnosis of the housing system, re-framing national discussions on delivery options, including upgrading and incremental approaches, and facilitating engagement with development partners.
- Other countries: **Guinea Bissau, Cote D'Ivoire, Lesotho, El Salvador, Ghana** (update 2024), **Nepal, Liberia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Guyana, Iraq, Bahrain, Senegal**.



Image 4. Hyperlinked publications for different housing profiles. © UN-Habitat



For further information



[Publication: A Practical Guide for Conducting Housing Profiles](#)



Image 5. Housing complex. © UN-Habitat, hayane Massopust



A3 National housing strategies



2/7



Summary

Technical advisory solutions to national and local governments on the design, adoption and implementation of housing policies and strategies that advance the right to adequate housing.

This solution supports the development of long-term housing policies that address housing in an integrated manner, linking land, basic services, urban planning and social inclusion.



Challenges addressed

The solution supports governments in strengthening housing policy frameworks to respond more effectively to diverse and evolving housing needs. It promotes policies that go beyond supply-focused approaches, encouraging integrated solutions linking housing with land management, infrastructure, urban planning, and social development.

By supporting greater recognition of diverse tenure and housing delivery systems, improved coordination across sectors and levels of government, and stronger consideration of spatial equity, climate resilience, and inclusion, the solution helps create policy environments that enable more affordable, adequate, and accessible housing for all.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides technical advisory solutions to governments at city and national level through design, strengthening and implementation of housing policies and strategies.

Building on Housing Sector Profiles (A.2), this solution supports policy formulation that recognises the full diversity of housing delivery systems and tenure arrangements, including rental, cooperative, community-led, and incremental housing, as well as in-site upgrading as a priority where applicable.

Policy advice integrates housing with land management, urban and territorial planning, infrastructure provision, and climate strategies, with particular attention to well-located land, access to livelihoods and services, and the prevention of displacement and spatial exclusion. This solution also integrates green building and technology principles into national housing policies.

UN-Habitat also supports the definition of clear institutional responsibilities, multilevel governance arrangements, financing and economic instruments, and monitoring and accountability frameworks, enabling policies to move beyond adoption toward effective and lasting implementation.

Capacity building for local governments and mechanisms for participation, inclusion, and policy review are embedded throughout the process to ensure policies remain effective, inclusive, and resilient over time.

The outcome of these interventions is the adoption of policy or strategy by government counterparts, while the long-term results can be measured by an increased percentage of population with access to adequate housing, or lowering of the average cost of housing as a percentage of average income.



Duration of support

Housing policies and implementation strategies typically take **6 to 12 months** to complete, with additional time required for adequate consultations.



Previous applications

Successful housing sector analysis, policy reforms and re-evaluations of national housing policies have so far been conducted in more than 50 countries.

Recent examples include:

- **Angola:** Support to the government led to housing provisions in the National Development Plan and adoption of the Assisted Self-Construction Programme.
- **Paraguay** (2021–2022): Assistance to the Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Habitat supported the preparation of a new National Housing Policy.
- **Saudi Arabia:** Technical support for the design and implementation of the Developmental Housing Programme.
- **Peru:** Housing policy advisory services.
- **Kosovo*:** Assessment and revision of social housing programmes.
- **Egypt** (2017): Housing Profile informed national housing strategy development.
- **Cabo Verde:** Housing sector analysis supported more diversified and inclusive housing policies, including upgrading and incremental solutions.



“..Having realized how successful UN-Habitat has been in supporting other African countries such as **Malawi, Ghana, Zambia and Liberia** in developing Housing Profiles, we approached [them] to develop the Lesotho Housing Profile. We further approached UNDP.. And I am delighted that today we form a tripartite which radiates how **significant housing is to all of us**. I wish to impress to all key stakeholders involved to continue our concerted efforts to make the review of the National Housing Policy and the development of a strategy an equal success..”

Dr. Pontso Matumelo Sekatle, former Minister of Local Government of Lesotho and Ambassador of Lesotho to Belgium.



For further information



[Publication: Global Housing Strategy: making housing affordable for all](#)

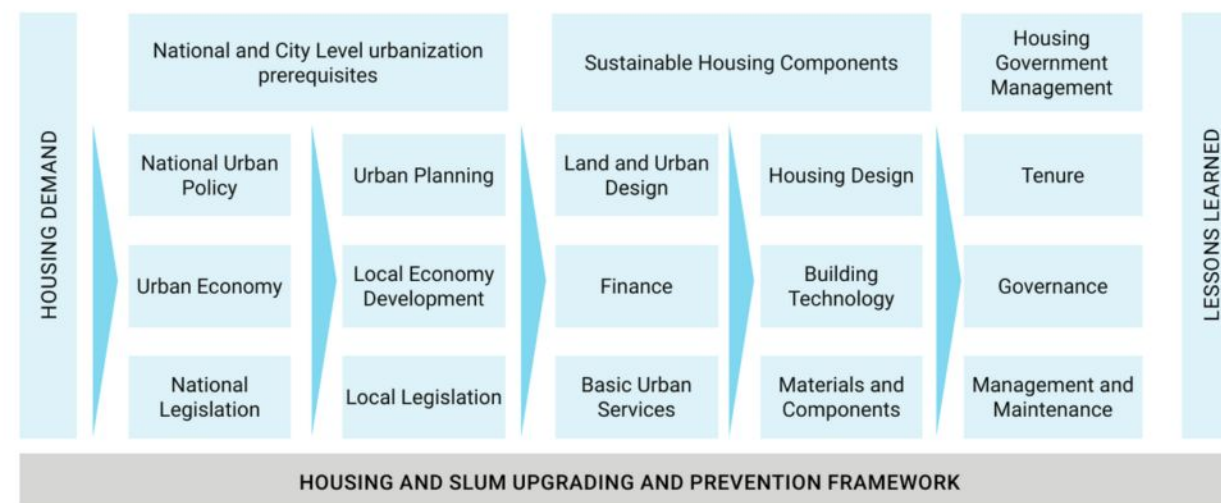


Figure 3. Diagram of the housing and slum upgrading and prevention framework. © UN-Habitat

* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UNSC resolution 1244(1999).

16.b
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A4

Forced eviction prevention and eviction impact assessments

2/2
2/7

OHCHR



Summary

Social and economic impact assessments of housing eviction, including support to the development of policies, laws, and participatory processes to prevent cases of eviction or facilitate adequate relocation.

Together with partners such as OHCHR, UN-Habitat also supports governments in building capacities to investigate alternatives to evictions and in developing human-rights-based policies and regulatory frameworks to conduct evictions.

These include the Handbook: Assessing the Impact of Eviction (2014); Losing Your Home: Assessing the Impact of Eviction (2011); Alternative to Forced Eviction and Slum Demolition (2016). (Find in further information).



Challenges addressed

This solution supports national and local governments to address inadequate housing and social protection. Evictions and relocations principally affect the poorest and most vulnerable populations living in deprived neighbourhoods, informal settlements and slums.

Such evictions and relocations are a violation of the fundamental right to adequate housing and protection against forced eviction enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Every year, 2 million people are forcibly evicted, and many more are threatened with evictions. This leads to several rights violations including the right to adequate housing, food, health, education, work, security and freedom of movement.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat is the principal United Nations agency working on the technical, social and economic dimensions of housing. The principal objective of this solution is to promote secure housing tenure which is a central element in the pursuit of inclusive, safe and resilient cities and human settlements.

Over the years, UN-Habitat has established strategic partnerships with key human rights actors and stakeholders at national and global levels on matters relating to the right to adequate housing and the prevention of forced evictions.

UN-Habitat has developed a comprehensive forced eviction reporting mechanism to ensure a standardised flow of information about alleged cases of unlawful evictions, relocations and displacement.

The tool is expanding on the methodology initially developed by the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE) and piloted in Brazil, Dominican Republic and Ghana. In the short term, support in this area contributes to a decrease in occurrence of forced eviction; in the long term, it supports governments in building capacities to investigate alternatives to evictions and in developing human-rights based policies and regulatory frameworks to conduct evictions.



Duration of support

From **1 to 12 months**, depending on the specific case, on the availability of data and the need for fact-finding missions.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat's advocacy work and knowledge products have enabled Member States to find alternatives to forced evictions. UN-Habitat has also led the preparation of country-specific profiles on "Housing and Human Rights" that have increased the knowledge base and capacities of local and national authorities to fill gaps in protection of the right to adequate housing, including in the realm of security of tenure.

Furthermore, through projects supporting adequate house provision, UN-Habitat has contributed to reducing eviction risks.

For instance, in **Somalia**, UN-Habitat partnered with the Norwegian Refugee Committee and Banaadir Regional Administration to support the sustainable, safe and durable integration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Mogadishu and Kismayo.

Prior to this intervention, all beneficiary households had experienced at least one eviction. And only 10 out of 80 landlord - tenant disputes were recorded. In 2018, only 3 of 80 households faced eviction threats, all of which were swiftly resolved through mediation, with technical assistance from UN-Habitat and partners.



".. **'Losing Your Home'** is an important and long overdue book, which I warmly welcome and recommend to the worldwide readership that it addresses and fully deserves. This book offers us a fresh and compelling look at one of the global and still unheralded enough crises of our times: **the increasing eviction and displacement of large numbers of people** – no less than tens of millions every year – who are uprooted from their houses mostly without receiving the support they need for rebuilding their lives from society as a whole. Every reader stands to benefit from studying.."

Mr. Michael M. Cernea, Professor at George Washington University



For further information



Publications:
[Assessing the Impact of Eviction](#)
[Losing Your Home: Assessing the Impact of Eviction](#)
[Alternative to Forced Eviction and Slum Demolition](#)



Video: [Awareness raising on what forced evictions are, their negative consequences and how they can be prevented](#)

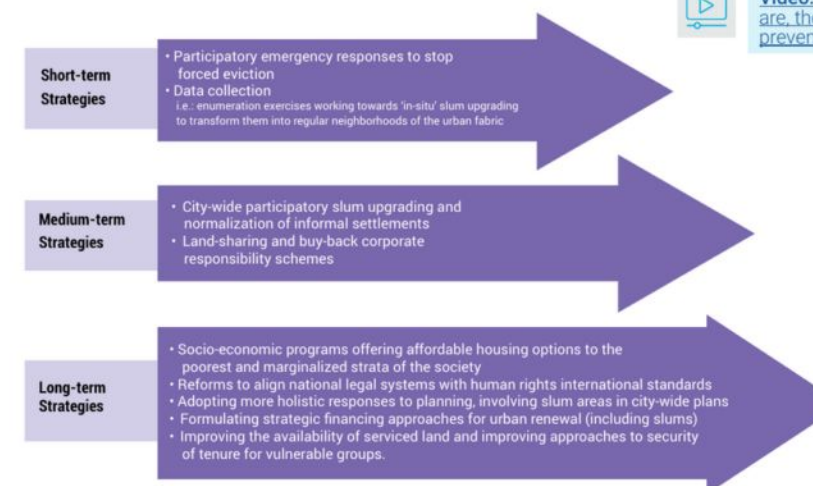


Figure 4. Strategies and interventions to prevent forced evictions and mitigate the risks. © UN-Habitat

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A5 Pro-poor, low-cost land information system



1/5 2/7
2/2



UNDESA UNDP
FAO



Summary

Building on the development of the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM), a land information system based on open-source software and implemented through participatory approaches, UN-Habitat provides solutions on the development of information systems towards:

1. Digital capture, recording and analysis of land rights, land use, land value and taxation, and land-related development.
2. Digital work flows, client services and institutional processes for efficient service delivery.
3. Digital inventories of assets, housing, buildings, open spaces and public lands, etc. to support planning, management and decision making purposes.



Challenges addressed

Sustainable urban development relies heavily on accurate and reliable information for planning, decision making, the provision of services and overall urban management. Poor land management and limited security of land tenure are among the principal drivers of unsustainable housing density and inadequate affordable housing supply.

However, high-end technology-driven solutions often create serious implementation constraints where issues such as those related to licensing costs of proprietary software have been reported to land administration programmes.

In addition, despite the developments and advances in Geo-ICT, there still exists a gap in the development of tools that model people-land relationships independently of the level of formalization or legality of these relationships.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat, through Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) partners, has developed (and is continuously improving) a low-cost land information system based on the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) tool.

STDM which follows a global standard, is a flexible system that can easily be customised and developed for various purposes and contexts. While its initial deployment is geared towards land rights recognition, its applications can be extended to facilitate and accelerate the following objectives:

- Land rights recognition and land recording.
- Local revenue generation (for example, land and property taxation).
- Land use and settlement planning.
- Document registration, archival, tracking and issuance.
- Digitalizing work flows, processes and service delivery.
- Digital inventories of urban assets, houses, buildings, public spaces, utilities, service centres, etc.

The core solution offered is the customization of tools to meet land information requirements of the application context. This includes strengthening the capacity of implementing partners in the use of the tool and, to some extent once established, to provide technical backstopping and promoting the scaling up of its application. UN-Habitat is uniquely positioned to provide support to:

1. National government authorities (and land administration institutions) to transform their manual land records and business processes into digital, transparent and efficient systems, including efforts towards improving land tenure security of urban and rural poor communities.
2. Local government authorities to digitalize their land records and documents, business processes, land use plans and revenue generation.
3. Academic institutions and civil society organizations that require low-cost land information systems in their projects and research work.



Duration of support

While the duration of support depends on many factors, **the average total duration is about 12 months**. The following is a typical estimated timeline for each step in the process:

- Planning and consultations (two months).
- Scoping and capacity assessment (one month).
- Tool customisation (three months).
- Mapping and enumeration (minimum three months).
- Data capture, validation, and analysis (minimum three months).
- Capacity development and strengthening of multi-stakeholder partnerships (varied).



Previous applications

The various applications of the STDM have accelerated land tenure security interventions, provided evidence-based information to facilitate land reforms, including land policy development and implementation, increased transparency and accountability, and contributed to improving efficiency in delivering services and strengthening the capacity of partners including government authorities.

Specifically, the interventions resulted in:

- Formal recognition of land rights and issuance of officially recognised tenurial documents and land titles (**Uganda, Namibia, Iraq, Zambia, Nepal**).
- Efficient delivery of land administration services and land-related transactions (**Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia**).
- Strengthened capacity of implementing partners (**Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Kenya, Uganda, Iraq, Sudan, Namibia, Zambia, the Philippines, Lao People's Democratic Republic**).
- Increased public confidence and trust in government authorities (**Nepal, Uganda, Sudan, Namibia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kenya**).
- Improved the land tenure security and safeguarding the housing, land, and property rights of internally displaced people and refugees (**the Philippines, Iraq, Lebanon**).



*"..Now I have evidence of land ownership because I have a customary land certificate! My life as a widow has changed because I now **feel secure with the land document. Like a dream, land related conflicts are almost unheard of now..**"*

Joyce Chowa, a beneficiary of the customary certificate of occupancy in Shipungu village, Chamuka chiefdom, Zambia



For further information:
Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)



For further information



[Web page: Arab Land Initiative](#)



[Tool: Global Land Tool Network web page](#)



[Model: Social Tenure Domain Model \(STDM\)](#)



Image 6. Inclusive and participatory mapping of informal tenure landholdings in Nepal. © UN-Habitat

A6

Safeguard housing, land and property rights of displaced people

11.3
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5.a
1.4



2/7



UNHCR
IOM

OHCHR
UNESCWA



Summary

Building on existing approaches for mapping and recording the housing, land and property (HLP) rights of vulnerable communities, this solution supports governments and international stakeholders to safeguard the HLP rights and documents of people displaced by conflict or disaster.

By georeferencing and storing HLP claims and supporting evidence, it enables displaced people to reclaim their HLP through mass restitution, compensation and dispute-resolution mechanisms while also enabling them to repair and reconstruct their homes.

The approach is a key enabler for durable solutions to displacement. It fosters safe, voluntary, and dignified returns, and it creates the foundation for social reconciliation, peace and stability in crisis affected contexts.



Challenges addressed

Documents and other evidence of HLP rights are often lost when people flee their homes, are destroyed due to conflicts and natural hazards, or confiscated by armed groups seeking to appropriate properties.

Storing copies of these documents, along with additional evidence, helps mitigate the risk of further loss and damage.

This is essential for achieving durable solutions and enabling post-conflict and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction programmes.



What UN-Habitat can offer

This solution builds on Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration and the Continuum of Land Rights approaches, and implements land tools developed by the [Global Land Tool Network \(GLTN\)](#) - such as Participatory Enumeration and the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) - while ensuring a rigorous do-no-harm approach.

The methodology includes

1. A model to identify targeted communities.
2. A communication and outreach plan to mobilise these communities.
3. A customised version of the STDM tool - a pro-poor, participatory and affordable land tool for recording people to land relationships along the continuum of land rights, regardless of their level of formalisation or legality, to georeferenced and store tenure relationship claims.
4. A Data Protection Protocol.
5. A Handbook for Enumerators to train project personnel on the data collection and management approach.
6. A claim certificate template.
7. A claim profile template.

Through a rigorous participatory and voluntary enumeration process, beneficiaries can claim various HLP rights, including full ownership, joint ownership, long- and short-term use rights, and record a wide range of legally recognised and additional types of HLP and personal evidence.

This solution mainstreams a strong gender dimension, encouraging women to submit HLP claims as claimants and as household members. Specific awareness-raising sessions on women's HLP rights are conducted as part of outreach activities.

This methodology is in line with the Pinheiro Principles (2005) and the framework for action set in the Guidance Note of The Secretary-General ["The United Nations and Land and Conflict"](#) (2019).



Duration of support

The timeframe varies according to the number of beneficiaries targeted and their geographical distribution approximately **two to four years**.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat implemented this solution in **Lebanon** and **Iraq** to safeguard the HLP rights of **Syrian** refugees. As of the end of June 2025, UN-Habitat mobilised over 100,000 Syrian refugee households, approximately half a million Syrians, and reordered over 33,000 claims to their HLP in Syria.



For further information:
Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)



"..The project's value is preserving the refugee's inherent right to property. A right that is often not **prioritised in the context of emergency response**. The HLP project does a perfect job of raising awareness of its importance and in assisting the refugees in **preserving it as safely as possible**.."

Project Coordinator, Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training



For further information



Case study: [Safeguarding evidence of housing, land and property rights of Syrian refugees](#)



Tools:

- [Participatory Enumeration](#)
- [Social Tenure Domain Model \(STDM\)](#)



Image 7. Awareness raising session in Domiz Camp, Iraq.
© UN-Habitat

Image 8. Aerial view of the industrial area in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. © Freepik, Moizhusein-1



Chapter B: Informal settlements

This chapter presents the field-tested, globally applicable solutions of UN-Habitat's approach to informal settlements. Informal settlements are among the most visible manifestations of urban inequality and exclusion. They often lack secure tenure, access to basic services, resilient infrastructure and safe living conditions. Today, **more than one billion people reside in informal settlements**, and without decisive and coordinated action, this number is expected to rise significantly in the coming decades.

UN-Habitat's informal settlements solutions promote integrated, participatory and scalable approaches to upgrading and prevention. **The solutions combine data-driven planning, inclusive policy and legal frameworks, community engagement and capacity building to enable long-term equitable transformation of informal areas.** Together, these approaches help governments and stakeholders strengthen institutional coordination, improve service delivery and empower communities as partners in change.



Image 9. Informal houses view in Morro Solar, Lima, Peru. © Freepik, Natali Milko

B1

Innovative city-wide slum profiling and enumeration

17
11.1
10
1



2/2



UNDESA UNICEF UNDRR
UNDP UNHCR



Summary

An innovative city-wide approach for collecting settlement-level and detailed household data on land tenure, housing, basic services and socioeconomic conditions.

This approach employs a set of inclusive, affordable and participatory tools, which produce evidence-based information to support the development and implementation of pro-poor and inclusive urban plans, policies and programmes.

With this information (which can be easily updated), cities are able to appropriately plan strategic improvements of informal settlements regarding tenure, housing, settlement plans, public spaces, utilities and services and infrastructure.



Challenges addressed

On average, 1.5 million people become urban dwellers every week. By 2050, the urban population will account for more than two-thirds of the world's population, with 90 per cent of the increase taking place in Africa and Asia.

Most of the informal growth has been in developing countries where slum populations constitute over 30 per cent of the urban population.

A lack of accessible, well-managed and efficiently used urban information hinders efforts to address this. Innovative, systematic profiling tools are crucial to support vulnerability mapping, access to basic services and targeted cash transfer programmes, for instance, which can ensure no one is left behind.



What UN-Habitat can offer

Developing and prioritising sound and timely policies, plans and programmes will require complete, reliable and near real-time information.

UN-Habitat's integrated approach, grounded in its experience in pro-poor and participatory enumeration and profiling, provides value for governments to build trust and engage communities in informal settlements, and, UN-Habitat builds on gathered data to support partners in identifying development needs and priorities for designing development projects such as land tenure, housing and settlement improvement, and for better resource planning and allocation.

Donor agencies can use this information to get a better understanding of exactly where and what the issues are in the informal settlements, and which interventions they can target for their funding.

At the national level, this approach has strengthened the capacity of partners (national governments and CSOs) to promote and implement appropriate land, housing and settlement planning policies, tools and approaches that are pro-poor, gender-appropriate, effective and sustainable.

At the local level, it has strengthened the relationship between poor urban communities and local government authorities.



Image 10. An aerial view of a section of the Kariobangi Slums in Nairobi, Kenya. © UN-Habitat website/Shutterstock



Duration of support

The support process typically takes from **four to six months**, depending on the size of the city.



Previous applications

Under the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme, urban profiling exercises were conducted in more than 20 countries, including national slum and urban profiles, and neighbourhood profiles.

These profiles provide data and evidence-based insights to guide urban policymakers and inform future planning and investment decisions.

Beneficiary communities have experienced improved tenure security, enhanced access to basic services and infrastructure and received better development projects, including from the private sector. Specific examples of support include:

Kenya: Nairobi, Mombasa

- Strengthened the capacity of change agents to implement and scale up pro-poor land interventions.
- Achieved tenure for the urban poor and improve access to basic services and infrastructure.

Uganda: Mbale, Masaka, Entebbe, Tororo, Arua, Kampala, Kabale, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Hoima, Gulu, Lira, Soroti, Moroto, Jinja

- Addressed land information requirements of women and men living in slum communities.
- Improved tenure security, inclusive planning and access to basic services and infrastructure.

Namibia: Gobabis

- Supported the government to provide security of tenure to residents, particularly the poor, women and vulnerable groups.
- Tested and implemented the Flexible Land Tenure Act.

Zambia: Lusaka

- Supported Lusaka City Council in improving tenure security in Kanyama Settlement, Issued 30-year occupancy licences to communities.

Rwanda: Kigali

- Supported Kigali's low-cost housing project through: Participatory settlement mapping; Housing design and neighbourhood planning; Community engagement and training; Inclusive and sustainable urban transformation.

Colombia: Soacha

- Improved tenure security planning for displaced populations in 'Ciudadela Sucre'. Implemented an inclusive neighbourhood upgrading project.

The Philippines: Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Davao

- Consolidated household information through enumeration and mapping.
- Enhanced barangay shelter planning, tenure security and community development initiatives (e.g. basic infrastructure, savings).

Nepal: Ratnanagar Municipality; settlements in Dolakha District

- Conducted municipality-wide mapping and household enumeration of informal settlements.
- Supported inclusive planning and identify development priorities.
- Assessed post-earthquake impacts.
- Improved tenure security.
- Enabled participatory settlement planning.



For further information



[Webpage: Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme](#)

B2

National guidelines and tools for inclusive slum upgrading



2/2



UNICEF
UNDP

UNHCR
UNDRR



Summary

National guidelines for participatory slum upgrading and urban transformation provide a practical and step-by-step guide for national authorities on how to start, manage, implement, and monitor participatory, sustainable and inclusive urban transformation processes of unplanned settlements, focused on the active engagement of local communities, solid technical support, and blended financing mechanisms.

The guidelines provide a sequence of activities and tasks, listing the key actors to be involved and their role in the process, supported by a constantly evolving set of tools for an effective and sound implementation.



Challenges addressed

Many countries face a lack of institutional capacity, knowledge, and practical tools to address informality and to design and implement participatory and sustainable urban upgrading.

Frameworks for slum upgrading are often fragmented or absent, resulting in isolated, short-term projects rather than coherent national or city-wide strategies.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports the development of step-by-step national guidelines and tools for participatory urban upgrading and combines this with technical assistance in participatory planning in urban development, housing & settlement design.

This support accompanies city-led upgrading projects targeting informal settlements and slum areas and focuses on housing, water, sanitation, roads and other infrastructure.

With support from UN-Habitat, a participatory framework for community-driven approaches is established through community communication, organization and community-based management, and by setting up a community mobilisation strategy to co-design neighbourhood plans, common spaces and new housing programs.

Capacity and institutional strengthening in participatory project implementation and management is provided to the government partners, non-state actors and community representatives. The participatory process typically involves a series of planning workshops and the development of the step-by-step guidelines and tools for participatory, sustainable, and inclusive slum upgrading and urban transformation.

The guidelines also look at the financial resources to be allocated to undertake the process and the time required to implement each step. They inform potential risks, and how to prevent and mitigate them.

A national guidebook provides support to all the implementing actors involved in upgrading processes, being national authorities, sectoral agencies, Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) development partners, NGOs or private companies. This ensures that a coherent and inclusive approach is adopted and aligned with the national and international strategies for participatory urban development.



Duration of support

The support is implemented within a **number of months**, depending on the scope of the urban upgrading project.



Previous applications

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) III helped establishing 21 national policies in African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries to guide ongoing slum upgrading initiatives, with some countries establishing major policy shifts, moving from project-based to institutionalized, strategic approaches.

These include:

Angola, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia, Saint Lucia, Guyana, and Fiji.



For further information



Videos:

- [Mpazi Project Presentation](#)
- [Mpazi Relhousing Project Concept](#)
- [UN-Habitat's visit to Mpazi rehousing pilot in Kigali](#)



Image 11. Community working groups. © UN-Habitat



Figure 5. Overview of the PSUP process, the 7 step process. © UN-Habitat

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B3

Urban law for informal settlements upgrading and prevention



2/2



UNDP



Summary

Support in identifying legal constraints for slum prevention and upgrading, aiming to ensure the right to tenure security, an adequate standard of living, and access to water and sanitation for the urban poor.

This solution helps to build an understanding of how the policy and legal framework supports or hinders affordable housing and informal settlements upgrading efforts.



Challenges addressed

Over 1.2 billion urban dwellers currently live in informal settlements and slums, a number projected to reach 3 billion by 2050. Informal settlements fall outside regulations on land use, building permissions, infrastructure and service provision.

Inhabitants often lack access to adequate housing and basic services, face insecure tenure and live under the threat of forced evictions. Policy and legal frameworks frequently fail to meet the needs of the most vulnerable local communities, hindering the realisation of their right to tenure security and an adequate standard of living.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat builds on its long-standing experience and expertise to improve the responsiveness of policy and legal frameworks to the needs of the most vulnerable communities and facilitate the realisation of their right to tenure security and an adequate standard of living.

This support is innovative in its scope and methodology. It is the first legal assessment to examine all dimensions hindering slum dwellers' enjoyment of basic standard of living.

The projects also assess the effectiveness of the legal framework by considering policy consistency, transparency of processes, clarity of institutional responsibilities and institutional capacity for implementation. A long-term outcome is the creation of enabling policy, legal and governance frameworks to increase the resilience of informal communities to climate-related weather events.



Duration of support

The activities of these projects occur in phases: building knowledge, capacity and conducting legal review to identify areas for change, typically **one to two years**; and legal and institutional reform, typically **one to five years** depending on the context.



Previous applications

This approach has provided evidence for and supported policy, legal and governance reforms across different regions:

- **Kenya:** supported drafting of the Kenya Slum Upgrading Bill.
- **Bolivia:** supported drafting of the new National Urban Policy.
- **Iran:** piloted in three cities with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.
- **Guinea:** supported the development of the new National Urban Policy and slum upgrading projects in Conakry.



The Informal Settlements Upgrading Legal Assessment Tool was awarded **the second prize for the most promising and innovative idea** to Leave No One Behind at the 1st World Summit on Leaving No One Behind held in Geneva from 7–8 February 2019.



For further information



Web pages:

- [Urban policy platform](#)
- [UrbanLex](#)



Tool: [Slum Upgrading Legal Assessment Tool \(2020\)](#)



Image 13. Inadequate housing condition in slums. © UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu

Image 12. Group of people in Kallayanpur slum, Dhaka, Bangladesh. © UN-Habitat



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B4

Local slum upgrading and prevention strategies



2/2



UNDP
UNICEF

UNDRR
UNFPA



Summary

UN-Habitat's local slum upgrading and prevention strategies improve living conditions, strengthen resilience, and prevent new informal settlements through integrated, participatory, area-based approaches.

They build on local knowledge, empower communities, and link physical improvements with policy, institutional, and socio-economic measures. Using Integral Urban Operations (IUO), these strategies address key neighbourhood quality-of-life elements and integrate informal settlements into official planning systems.

City-Wide Slum Upgrading and Prevention Strategies (CWSUPS) prioritise long-term, spatially and people-centred transformation, enabling coordination, partnerships, integrated programming, policy and regulatory reforms, capacity development, and strengthened institutional arrangements.



Challenges addressed

There are 1.2 billion slum dwellers worldwide, expected to rise to 3 billion by 2050 due to urbanization limited policies and interventions at scale.

Slums are often unmapped and unrecognised in city frameworks, with scarce resources unable to meet the scale of need. Upgrading interventions are frequently one-off projects focusing on a single neighbourhood.

Municipal authorities often face these complex responsibilities alone, with limited technical and financial capacity to implement inclusive, transformative solutions.



What UN-Habitat can offer

Both IUO and CWSUPS provide a strategic framework for slum upgrading and prevention at the neighbourhood, city, or national level. These strategies support the mainstreaming of slum upgrading and identify priority actions to mobilise resources and clarify roles and responsibilities among stakeholders for implementation.

The objective of UN-Habitat's local slum upgrading and prevention strategies is to move from one-off, isolated projects to integrated, citywide approaches and to achieve the physical, social, legal, and economic integration of all slums into formal urban planning processes and citywide strategies.

UN-Habitat plays a key role in promoting integrated, multisectoral approaches at the city level, supporting the coordination of stakeholders at different levels (including communities), and promoting participatory processes. These participatory approaches support the institutionalisation of strategies, while mobilising human and financial resources for slum upgrading and prevention at city and national levels.

UN-Habitat has decades of experience in slum upgrading worldwide, including the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (ACP countries, 2008–2021), the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF), Cities Without Slums, and other initiatives. UN-Habitat provides technical assistance to support the integration of participatory slum upgrading approaches into policy and regulatory frameworks.



Duration of support

The development of IUO and CWSUPS follows a participatory process lasting from **6 to 18 months**. It includes preparing a slum situation analysis, reviewing the policy and regulatory framework, participatory identification of priority actions, and validating the strategy.

CWSUPS serves as an action framework, designed for regular review and updates to guide systematic change and large-scale transformation.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), has developed Integral Urban Operations in settlements in **Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Cuba**.

Additionally, the CWSUPS have mainstreamed UN-Habitat's participatory principles, informed government priorities and budget allocations, and enhanced stakeholder capacities in over 50 cities globally.

Under the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP), UN-Habitat supported the establishment of 37 citywide strategies and facilitated 124 community projects, directly and indirectly benefiting over 15 million people.

This included 21 revised citywide strategies in 16 countries - among them **Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Gambia, Lesotho, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Jamaica, Fiji, and Solomon Islands**, and 16 new strategies in 14 countries, including **Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu**.

In addition, UN-Habitat supported the formulation of 96 participatory neighbourhood plans and financing strategies across 28 ACP countries, including **Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, and Zambia**.



"..PSUP influenced the urban development policy in Kenya and raised awareness on slums. And there is a real consultative process with communities and ownership. This methodology allows the programme to be packaged, even budgeted as one project.."

Mr. Isaac Mungaania, Kenya PSUP Country Team Coordinator



Image 14. PSUP community workshop in 2023. © UN-Habitat



For further information



Webpage: [Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme](#)



Publication: [UN-Habitat Mexico OUI Campesina](#)



Country stories:

- [Integral Urban Operation creating shared visions](#)
- [UN-Habitat carrying out comprehensive urban operations in seven neighbourhoods in four countries in Central America, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador](#)

Image 15. Water and sewerage pipeline in Africa. © UN-Habitat website/Shutterstock



Chapter C: Urban basic services

This chapter provides the globally applicable and tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on urban basic services. Urban basic services form the foundation of **healthy, inclusive, and resilient cities**. Access to water, sanitation, waste management, energy, and mobility systems determines urban well-being, economic productivity, and environmental sustainability. Yet significant gaps remain; one in four urban residents lack safely managed drinking water, and over a billion people live in informal settlements without reliable services.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area **promote sustainable, inclusive, and innovative urban basic services systems**. They encompass approaches for improving waste management and recovering resources, strengthening water and sanitation planning and infrastructure, and developing sustainable urban mobility strategies.

Additional solutions focus on advancing energy- and resource-efficient buildings, fostering learning and knowledge exchange through the Academy of Sustainable Urban Mobility.

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities further enhances cities' capacity to understand and plan for service access through evidence-based insights on urban form and proximity. Together, these solutions help cities enhance service quality, efficiency, and accessibility while promoting environmental sustainability.



Image 16. Waste composition analysis of household waste (WACT assessment), Nairobi, Kenya. © UN-Habitat

C1

Sustainable waste management and recovery of waste as a resource

14.1
12.5
12.3
11.6



2/3



UNEP



Summary

Design and implementation of integrated solid waste management (ISWM) strategies, including improved waste collection, resource recovery, upgrading final disposal sites, and general normative and operational response to plastic pollution and open waste burning.

Special emphasis is put on delivering municipal solid waste management (MSWM) solutions with equitable access to all, especially for the urban poor and other vulnerable groups.

This solution can use UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT), which comprises seven steps that guide cities to collect data on municipal solid waste (MSW) generated, collected and managed in controlled facilities, and plan for an improved MSWM system.

UN-Habitat, as part of the Secretariat of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste, promotes advocacy efforts, supports multi-stakeholder dialogue, and mobilises partners towards the prevention and circularity of waste.



Challenges addressed

UN-Habitat estimates that 2.4 billion tonnes of municipal solid waste is generated globally, of which 45 per cent or 1.08 billion tonnes are mismanaged. Mismanaged waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and plastic pollution, contributing to severe environmental degradation and overall public health threats.

It is estimated that in 2023, 11 million tonnes of plastic entered the ocean, while open dump sites are projected to contribute 8-10 per cent of overall global human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.

Urgent action is needed to improve cities' MSWM to mitigate climate change and reduce plastic pollution while creating employment and livelihood opportunities through an urban circular economy of waste.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports local governments to strengthen municipal solid waste management (MSWM) and advance resource recovery through practical, scalable solutions. Solutions include data collection and analysis for evidence-based planning; expansion of inclusive waste collection; design and implementation of recycling, resource and energy recovery strategies; and rehabilitation and construction of landfills, including the Fukuoka Method.

UN-Habitat also supports awareness-raising, establishment of waste management departments, city-to-city peer learning, and targeted technical assistance, such as local action plans to address marine litter.

Through the Waste Wise Cities (WWC) programme, UN-Habitat provides cities with access to a global network for capacity building, knowledge exchange, project preparation, and monitoring. WWC promotes a "data-to-action" approach to improve waste management performance, circularity, and climate outcomes in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As custodian of SDG indicator 11.6.1, UN-Habitat offers the Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT) to help cities establish baselines, monitor progress, and identify priority interventions across infrastructure, policy, and finance. WaCT is supported by an expert advisory group and partner network and is available in multiple languages. UN-Habitat also delivers integrated solid waste management (ISWM) training to help governments translate data into financially sound, no-regret investments.

In Africa, UN-Habitat hosts the African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP), providing technical support, capacity development, and investment facilitation. Cities may join WWC and ACCP to access ongoing support and global expertise.

UN-Habitat also contributes to global awareness and policy dialogue as Secretariat of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste, providing strategic guidance on zero waste, circular economy, and sustainable consumption. The organization coordinates the International Day of Zero Waste (30 March) and supports World Clean-up

Day (20 September) campaigns, mobilizing citizens, local authorities, and the private sector for cleaner, sustainable cities.

Relevant complementary solutions include ([C2 Water and sanitation planning](#)) and ([F3 Planning local climate action](#)), which enhance the impact and resilience of basic services in target areas.



Duration of support

Time frames for sustainable waste management services, including collection improvements, resource recovery, or disposal site upgrades, vary by city and community context. Typical interventions take **one to four years**. The Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT) provides rapid assessments, with data collection taking about **six weeks**.



Previous applications

WWC is a global programme joined by around 400 participating local governments. ACCP has over 230 member cities from 47 member countries on the African continent.

Some examples of recent progress made on sustainable MSWM include the establishment of baseline data for solid waste management with the WaCT in about 60 cities worldwide, as well as the development of the Sustainable Waste Management Action Plan 2020–2022 and identification of potential funding opportunities for Nairobi, **Kenya**, which will improve access to MSWM services for nearly 5 million residents.

Additional initiatives include the emergency rehabilitation of dump sites in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar in **Ethiopia**, and Hulene in Maputo, **Mozambique**; construction of a national model landfill using the Fukuoka method in Kiambu, **Kenya**; provision of waste collection and street cleaning in informal settlements in **Iraq**; community-based collection

and recycling led by women in Za'atari Syrian Refugee Camp, **Jordan**; development of sustainable waste management strategies in Bethlehem City and refugee camps in the **State of Palestine**; establishment of material recovery facilities in informal settlements in Nairobi, **Kenya**; strengthening of institutional and regulatory systems in Dar es Salaam, **Tanzania**; and the creation of policy guidelines through the Handbook on CiCoSA.



".. Waste management has been one of the pressing issues in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. UN-Habitat's survey with the Waste Wise Cities Tool, supported by the African Clean Cities Platform, was well received considering that the Nairobi City County Government had been relying on a study done with the Japan International Cooperation Agency back in 2010.."

Patricia Akinyi K'Omudho, Environment Information Officer, Nairobi Metropolitan Services.



For further information



Webpage:

- [Waste Wise Cities](#)
- [African Clean Cities Platform](#)
- [United Nations SG's Advisory Board on Zero Waste](#)
- [International Day of Zero Waste](#)
- [WaCT Data Portal](#)
- [World Cleanup Day](#)



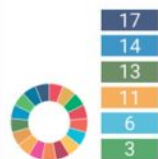
Publication: [WaCT Data and Step-by-Step Guide](#)



Case study: [Localizing Marine Litter Actions](#)



For further information:
Waste Wise Cities and the African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP)



C2

Water and sanitation planning and infrastructure investments



Summary

Development of inclusive climate-resilient water and sanitation investment programmes to support local communities, governments, and water and sanitation service providers. By embedding water and sanitation into housing and land-use planning strategies, UN-Habitat ensures slum transformation goes beyond physical upgrading to create dignified, healthy, and climate-resilient communities.

This approach supports the planning, design and implementation of water and sanitation components of national and city development strategies and comprehensive plans.

Key elements of the solution include diagnosis, identifying opportunities for investment, assisting cities to prioritise investments, preparing pre-feasibility studies and strengthening the capacities of governments and service providers.

Challenges addressed

In 2024, 2.1 billion people lacked safely managed drinking water services, and 3.4 billion lacked access to safely managed sanitation services.

Many local authorities and other water and sanitation providers lack tools, governance frameworks, technical skills and resources required to carry out these responsibilities. More reliable and timely data is needed to improve water and sanitation planning.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports national and local governments and water and sanitation providers to strengthen policy, governance, and institutional capacity, aligning water and sanitation with housing strategies and land-use planning for sustainable service improvements.

Global advocacy and knowledge sharing position water and sanitation as a pillar of sustainable housing and slum transformation, leveraging platforms such as the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA), Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition for Action, UN-Water, and the Global Wastewater Initiative.

The agency develops monitoring methodologies through the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative to track SDG 6 progress. Urban poor and marginalized groups, including women, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and migrants, are engaged in planning, implementation, and monitoring through multi-stakeholder platforms.

Strategic partnerships with financing institutions, including the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, and European Investment Bank, help mobilise investments and ensure infrastructure projects focus on the poor.

UN-Habitat provides pre-investment planning and capacity building to improve project appraisal, city ownership, and sustainability of investments. In (post-)conflict or crisis settings, the agency works directly with communities to restore access to water and sanitation, integrating resilient infrastructure for long-term sustainability.

UN-Habitat also supports climate-proofing of water and sanitation infrastructure, integration of circular economy approaches, and resource recovery, including decentralized wastewater treatment systems (DEWATS).

Duration of support

Water and sanitation support, depending on the local context, typically lasts from **one to four years**.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat has supported over 100 cities in 36 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America to design water and sanitation investment programmes combining policy, normative work, and pilot initiatives. These interventions have improved access to water and sanitation for 2.7 million people.

In **Nepal**, UN-Habitat supported the National Sanitation Campaign, reaching six million people across 19 districts and achieving Open Defecation Free status.

The agency strengthened city-wide inclusive sanitation systems through policy integration, data enhancement, and partnerships, contributing to the WASH Policy 2022, WASH Act 2023, and WASH Regulation 2025.

In **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, UN-Habitat improved water resilience in rural and emerging urban settlements under the Water Supply Infrastructure for Climate-Stressed Communities Programme.

Climate risk analyses informed the design of small-scale, climate-resilient water supply systems using gravity-fed and solar-powered technologies, integrated with community-led operation, maintenance, and disaster risk reduction measures.



Image 17. New girls toilet block in Mwanza, Tanzania. © UN-Habitat



"..New toilets have made it possible for us girls to stay in school and learn, we have our privacy.."

Khadija Ramadhani, school student, Mwanza City, Tanzania.



For further information



[Webpage: UN-Habitat water and sanitation](#)



For further information:
Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)



Figure 6. WASH and cities, understanding the challenge. © UN-Habitat

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11.2
3.6

C3 Sustainable urban mobility planning



2/8



UNEP

UNECE

UNESCAP

UNECA



Summary

Development of sustainable urban mobility plans that are designed to satisfy the mobility needs of people and businesses in cities and their surroundings for a better quality of life. These plans integrate all transportation modes and include a long-term vision and clear implementation strategies.

This solution introduces new concepts and methodologies for data collection on walking and cycling, provides advice on institutional and policy aspects of non-motorised transport (NMT), includes technical assistance for street design that caters for pedestrians and cyclists such as the design of footpaths, bike lanes and street crossings, and provides technical advice on electric mobility, bus rapid transit (BRT), street design standards and capacity building of officials.



Challenges addressed

Transport accounts for nearly a quarter of total energy-related CO2 emissions (which are increasing at a rate faster than any other sector), contributing to global warming as well as air pollution (seven million deaths annually), traffic congestion (hindering national and city economies), and road traffic crashes (1.2 million deaths annually).

The growth in this sector and ever-increasing transport demand is a worldwide phenomenon challenging most cities in emerging and developing economies.

While walking and cycling have been shown to address these challenges and increase health, poor infrastructure, safety risks, and a lack of integrated mobility planning processes discourage these forms of transport.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports cities to create Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), defining a long-term vision for urban mobility, based on data collection, scenario planning, demand forecasting, participation and multi-sectoral cooperation. UN-Habitat has a strong convening role with national and local governments, transport operators, civil society and financial institutions.

Its interdisciplinary expertise enables technical support in sustainable urban mobility planning, street design, transit-oriented development, public transport management and improvements of national and city road safety standards. UN-Habitat helps cities implement safe NMT infrastructure, and plan and budget for walking and cycling, the healthiest modes of transport.

UN-Habitat develops guidance tools such as 'Quick Guide to Bus Sector Modernisation', the toolkit 'Streets for walking and cycling – designing for safety, accessibility and comfort in African cities' and other resources as part of the United Nations Road Safety-funded 'Scaling Up Safe Street Designs in Ethiopia' project.

Finally, UN-Habitat supports electric mobility solutions through technical assistance, policy advice, business model development, and demonstration projects. It also supports mobility start-ups and applies innovative approaches to data collection, including the Multimer App to measure stress levels of cyclists, NMT analyses, transport planning, and management of wastewater treatment systems (DEWATS).



Image 18. Graduates of the Gender Inclusive E-moto driver training program, Kigali. © City of Kigali



Duration of support

Technical assistance on NMT infrastructure or the development of SUMP or a Street Design Manual take **one or two years**, while capacity building activities usually require a **few days**. Longer programmes of policy advice and technical assistance on public transport can last **three to five years**.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat has supported countries in East Africa (**Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mozambique**), MENA (**Egypt**), Asia (**Indonesia, India, Viet Nam**), and LAC (**Colombia, Brazil**) in promoting sustainable public transport and better street design for walking and cycling.

With support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and in collaboration with the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) and GIZ, UN-Habitat has supported the governments of **Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda** in their efforts to introduce BRT Systems in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Kampala.

UN-Habitat supported the preparation of operational plans, advised on the busway and bike lane infrastructure, and trained city and national officials, including through city to city exchanges. UN-Habitat is currently working with the Government of **Egypt** to introduce a Bus Rapid Transit system in Greater Cairo.

The BRT system integrates informal modes of transport and develops the country's first public bike sharing system, Cairo Bike, which served 12,000 users in its first eight months. These initiatives have specifically focused on the mobility needs of women and other vulnerable groups.

UN-Habitat has supported cities in implementing safe infrastructure for walking and cycling. In Medellin, **Colombia**, the creation of a segregated bike lane increased bicycle use by 270 per cent. Other examples include the pedestrianization of Luthuli Avenue in Nairobi and the National NMT Strategy for Addis Ababa, **Ethiopia**.



The partnership brings together **transformative projects** and initiatives

active in the field of de-carbonising cities and sustainable urban development.

The Urban Living Lab Center is co-hosted by **MIT, TU Berlin, the Wuppertal Institute and UN-Habitat**. Regional and thematic hubs are hosted by partner universities and network partners.



"..There is little doubt that the Sustainable Transport of East African Cities (SUSTRAN) Project has built a critical mass of activities and momentum intended to boost the confidence of international donors and financial institutions for providing financial support for the construction of viable SMT systems for all 3 cities. The significance of SUSTRAN assistance has been to build institutional capacity for Sustainable Urban Transport (SUT) developments in these cities and ensure pilot designs for BRT systems in these cities will maximise ridership and demonstrate the socioeconomic and environmental benefits of SUT systems.."

An external evaluation, completed in 2018 of the SUSTRAN project



For further information



Webpage: [Mobility and transport](#)



Publications:

- [Quick Guide to Bus Sector Modernisation](#)
- [Integration is key: the role of electric mobility for low-carbon and sustainable cities](#)
- [Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility](#)
- [Streets for Walking and Cycling – Designing for safety, accessibility and comfort in African cities](#)



Case studies:

- [Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan Ruiru](#)
- [Scaling Up Safe Street Designs in Ethiopia](#)
- [Gender-sensitive design for the Cairo BRT](#)
- [Guidelines for Developing and Implementing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan \(SUMP\) – Case Studies: Mitrovica South and Mitrovica North](#)



C4

Creating energy and resource efficient buildings



Summary

Technical assistance and methodologies to promote energy-efficient buildings, including institutional reforms, planning frameworks, design guidelines, and policies for green and low-carbon buildings, affordable housing and the wider built environment.

Support includes integrating energy and resource efficiency into national building codes; conducting assessments to inform climate action roadmaps for buildings and construction; designing and delivering pilot low-carbon demonstration projects; advising on design standards; strengthening the capacities of officials, building practitioners and national association of architects and quantity surveyors; and advising national and local governments on transitioning to renewable energy.

Challenges addressed

Buildings account for 40 per cent of energy consumption and are responsible for 30 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. 75 per cent of the buildings that will be standing in Africa by 2050 will be constructed within the next 25 years, highlighting the urgent need for ecological and low-carbon building design.

Currently, the housing shortage in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 160 million homes. Over 30 per cent of energy is wasted in buildings due to poor design that fails to respond to local climate conditions. Buildings also have a major carbon footprint due to the use of imported materials and carbon-intensive materials like steel and cement.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports gender-sensitive, inclusive, low-carbon and energy-efficient buildings using local and recycled materials. It leverages its role with governments, utilities, civil society and financial institutions to deliver integrated solutions with the latest technologies.

UN-Habitat also advises on municipal energy strategies, sustainable energy access and climate action plans.

The Building and Construction Decarbonisation Assessment toolkit, developed in 2024, guides assessments for Global ABC Roadmaps.

It provides a comprehensive approach to reducing emissions and enhancing resilience in the built environment. The Roadmaps set aspirational short-, medium- and long-term targets, aligned with the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action Human Settlements Pathways. (See also [solution F3](#)).

Duration of support

This support typically lasts between **one to four years**, depending on needs.



Image 19. Harare Multifunctional clean energy centre. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

UN-Habitat has provided technical assistance to integrate energy and resource efficient building codes and housing regulations in **Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Cameroon, Nigeria and Tanzania** promoting the adoption of low-carbon building principles.

UN-Habitat has implemented a six-year regional programme on energy efficiency in buildings for East Africa. UN-Habitat has developed tools and guidelines for capacity building for energy and resource efficient buildings.

Handbooks on tropical building design developed by UN-Habitat are used to train architects, urban planners, surveyors and engineers, and are included in curricula of eight universities in East Africa.

UN-Habitat has supported African municipalities in developing Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plans (SEACAP) through the Global Covenant of Mayors. It has also developed a multifunctional clean energy centre concept to provide jobs, vocational training and basic services for urban and peri-urban poor, with a focus on youths.

For further information

- Web pages:**
 - [UN-Habitat energy web page](#)
 - [The Housing Value Assessment Methodology](#)
- Publications:**
 - [Energy and Resource Efficient Urban Neighbourhood](#)
 - [Build Green Charter for Sustainable Building, Neighbourhood Design and Urban Mobility in Tropical Countries](#)
- Case study:** [Climate Action Roadmaps for Building and construction Bangladesh](#)



Image 20. Renewable energy as key to build resilient in Afghanistan. © UN-Habitat



C5

The Academy of Sustainable Urban Mobility (AoSUM)



Summary

The objective of the Academy of Sustainable Urban Mobility (AoSUM) equips global decision-makers with knowledge and tools to assess mobility challenges and develop strategies for sustainable, safe, accessible, efficient, innovative and clean urban mobility.

The Academy orients decision makers to urban mobility paradigms in the context of the global agendas; facilitates exchanges; provides a platform for learning on innovative mobility projects; and introduces sustainable funding mechanisms to participants.

Challenges addressed

Sustainable mobility requires political will, strong leadership, technical knowledge and strategic alliances with transport providers, mobility innovators, private developers, civil society, academia, research institutions and development partners. AoSUM brings these stakeholders together, empowering governments and partners to design action-oriented policies and implement sustainable mobility projects.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat offers a unique learning opportunity for decision-makers who wish to gain an advanced understanding of sustainable, inclusive and innovative urban mobility and exchange their experience with other practitioners through AoSUM. The Academy is an annual capacity building programme, comprising a course that links field visits to best practice mobility solutions, with expert lectures and e-learning products.

Topics covered include the need for sustainable urban mobility, multi-modal transport systems, low carbon mobility, gender and mobility, land-use integration, policy options and financing instruments for sustainable urban mobility.

The Academy brings together strategic partnerships of public and private institutions and financiers with a diverse pool of technical experts. The successful combination of theory and field visits to best practice mobility solutions - such as to the multimodal public transport system in Vienna, the BRT in São Paulo, Brazil, or the cable car system in La Paz, Bolivia, has attracted an increasing number of applications each year.

An e-learning module was established during the COVID-19 pandemic, complementing future face-to-face workshops: visit the above online learn tag for more.

Duration of support

The Academy is preceded by an exercise during which participants prepare a presentation of an innovative mobility example from a city of their choice. After the **week-long** academy, participants are invited to join the alumni network on social media to continue exchanging as a Community of Practice (CoP).

Previous applications

The Academy was established in 2017 in collaboration with the private sector. With positive feedback from participants, and interest in collaboration from additional partners, the Academy has become an annual event. Previous editions of the course have taken place in **Germany, Austria, Bolivia and Brazil** with participants from 37 countries since 2017.



"..I expected the Academy to be more like the usual transport workshop, but it was much more useful for my real work, bringing new solutions and different points of view.."

One of 2019 academy participants



Image 21. Participants on a walking tour in La Paz, 2019. © UN-Habitat



Image 22. Exploring São Paulo's bike share system during the Academy in 2019. © UN-Habitat

C6

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities (GOSP)

17
13
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7



Summary

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities (GOSP) is a knowledge and capacity building platform that curates best practices and local initiatives to advance urban proximity.

The Observatory was launched at WUF11 by C40, Chaire ETI at the IAE Paris Sorbonne Business School, UCLG and UN-Habitat. It aims to develop a common understanding of sustainable proximity and serves as a reference hub for knowledge sharing and capacity development, while mobilising a global network of urban actors to support cities in implementation and scaling.

Challenges addressed

The concept of proximity gained international relevance with Professor Carlos Moreno's "15-minute city" model, adopted by Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and other leaders. Proximity allows residents to access essential urban functions, learning, work, supplies, healthcare and leisure, within walking or cycling distance.

Adopting proximity practices enables inclusive, just cities, reduces traffic, noise and carbon emissions, promotes physical activity, strengthens social cohesion and supports cultural exchange. Local governments build trust and accountability while advancing decentralisation, climate resilience, social and economic development, and public participation.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat and its Observatory partners provide technical assistance to cities establishing proximity-based initiatives, advising on the revision or preparation of urban plans at multiple scales.

UN-Habitat can co-develop policy recommendations and draft urban and national policies that integrate proximity in urban planning and design. UN-Habitat can also facilitate public participation through interactive workshops to identify priorities, challenges and formulate recommendations for urban interventions.

UN-Habitat can support the monitoring and evaluation by developing key performance indicators and a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the impact of proximity initiatives.

Through our network of partners, cities and urban actors gain access to a community of practices and a repository of peer-reviewed and practice-based resources, establishing a peer-to-peer learning exchange and sustained dialogue around best practices.

Duration of support

Proximity initiatives vary in duration, depending on the city's targeted actions. They may focus on localized interventions, such as public space integration or neighbourhood regeneration, demonstration projects to showcase the benefits of proximity, or adopt a long-term approach and develop urban strategies or plans that integrate proximity into urban planning and design practices.

Proximity workshops engaging citizens in identifying community's needs usually last **one to two days**, depending on the scale of the intervention, the Observatory can develop **ad-hoc timelines** for city support.

Previous applications

The Observatory has mapped over 150 initiatives and over 70 knowledge resources. Initiatives have been broadly applied in Europe and the Americas, with growing examples in Africa and Asia. Paris has adopted proximity in neighbourhood regeneration, green mobility, public space integration and robust public consultation practices.

Additionally, together with the City of Paris the Observatory hosted the first international conference "Towards Sustainable Urban Proximities", where key actors of the global proximity community gathered to formulate a roadmap to establish a new decentralized urban governance model, empowering urban actors to deliver sustainable solutions to combat climate change and improve the quality of life in cities.



"..At a time of climate urgency and growing inequalities, proximity offers a hopeful model. By placing proximity into our strategies, we can re-imagine our cities, and create spaces that are more sustainable, equitable, and caring for our communities.."

Jan Van Zanen, Mayor of the Hague and President of UCLG



For further information



[Webpage: Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities](#)



[Conference: First International Conference on Sustainable Proximities](#)



Image 23. Mapping community needs through proximity workshop in Buenos Aires, Argentina. © Chaire-ETI

Chapter D: Equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication

This chapter presents the globally applicable and field-tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication, the first impact area of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan. **Equitable prosperity is essential for achieving sustainable urban development; it ensures that the benefits of growth are shared by all, leaving no one behind.** Cities are engines of opportunity and innovation, yet social mobility continues to face a wide range of obstacles, particularly for youth, women, migrants, and persons with disabilities.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area promote inclusive economic empowerment, social integration, and resilience through evidence-based and participatory approaches. They include **assessing vulnerabilities and socio-economic conditions to guide equitable policymaking, creating spaces and opportunities for young people to develop skills and access employment, and fostering community-based initiatives that promote social inclusion and co-creation.** Collectively, these interventions build the foundations for fairer, more prosperous, and inclusive cities.

Through these solutions, cities and local governments can move beyond short-term poverty alleviation toward **long-term prosperous urban systems grounded in equity and inclusion.**

SECTION 2 OUR IMPACT AREAS



Image 24. Family gathering in Kakuma Camp, Kenya. © UN-Habitat

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- 11.1
- 6.3
- 6.2
- 6.1
- 1.4

D1

Assessing vulnerabilities and solutions for inclusive cities



Summary

For cities to address challenges of inequality and deprivation, they must understand where these challenges are most acute and why. UN-Habitat and its partners map vulnerabilities in cities, particularly within areas where the urban poor live.

This includes identifying priority settlements, assessing access to shared facilities using primary data, identifying vulnerability factors, generating vulnerability data layers, analysing data, and engaging with urban authorities to apply the findings to decision making.

Challenges addressed

Spatial inequalities in and between urban settlements worsen segregation and social stratification. However, urban authorities and stakeholders face a shortage of dependable data and knowledge on spatial and socio-economic inclusion gaps.

A stronger understanding of these issues is necessary to inform policies and actions towards greater inclusion of marginalised groups and enhanced social cohesion. The collection of qualitative data on issues such as marginalised residents' life aspirations, their perceptions of neighbourhoods, and access to, or assessment of public services and infrastructure is often lacking.

Furthermore, the costly production of spatialised data has led to outdated datasets in many cities, which poses a problem for precarious settlements as incomplete or inaccurate data tends to hide intra-municipal segregation patterns.

Moreover, the lack of multi-sectoral spatialised information prevents governments from proposing holistic strategies to tackle fundamental gaps for vulnerable communities.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports cities and governments to design inclusive, evidence-based policies and investments by generating spatially disaggregated data that reveals patterns, severity and drivers of urban deprivation.

Through tailored vulnerability mapping approaches, UN-Habitat helps urban authorities identify priority areas and design spatially targeted interventions.

Support covers the full data cycle, including identification of survey areas, preparation of survey tools and digital data-collection applications, training of field teams, data analysis, creation of geospatial data layers, and application of results in planning and decision making.

UN-Habitat enables cities to measure and monitor inclusion through the Urban Inclusion Marker, which assesses spatial, social, economic and cultural dimensions of urban life at the neighbourhood level.

This approach allows governments to identify vulnerable communities, compare conditions across territories, and understand how gaps in access to housing, services, public space, health, education and economic opportunities intersect spatially.

More advanced applications support in-depth analysis of underlying socioeconomic, institutional and environmental drivers of exclusion, enabling differentiated policies, prioritisation of investments, scenario building, and impact monitoring aligned with the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

Complementary support includes socioeconomic profiling and household surveys in formal and informal settlements, participatory and rapid mapping of infrastructure and service disparities, and assistance in establishing urban observatories.

Together, these methods support governments in reducing inequalities, improving living conditions, and advancing inclusive and sustainable urban development.

Duration of support

UN-Habitat's support timelines vary by city size, data availability, resources and required level of detail: settlement-level data mapping can take as little as **two weeks**, while city-wide spatial mapping typically requires **one to six months**.

Preparing socioeconomic profiles based on household surveys typically takes around **six months**, depending on context.

Developing a tailored basic Urban Inclusion Marker generally requires **three months** in cities with sufficient data and up to **six months** where data gaps exist, complemented by about one week of training for government staff and stakeholders to ensure effective use of the results.

The Quick Participatory Mapping methodology takes **two to six months**, depending on the territory's complexity and scale, and uses open-source software so governments can maintain, update and apply the tools over time.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat has been collecting data and helping cities to improve the rights, quality of life and integration of vulnerable communities in urban spaces and settlements for decades. This experience is woven into other support, services and tools discussed throughout the Catalogue.

The Urban Inclusion Marker, socioeconomic profiles, and Quick Participatory Mapping methodology have been deployed to support urban areas in Latin America and can be applied and tailored to any context.

Quick Participatory Mapping, for example, has been applied to improve the delivery of public services and socioeconomic integration of favelas with Pacifying Police Units in Rio de Janeiro, **Brazil**, in partnership with the Pereira Passos Municipal Institute for Urban Planning of Rio de Janeiro

City Hall, directly benefiting roughly 711,000 dwellers in 208 settlements. On the other hand, the Urban Inclusion Marker has been implemented in 10 cities, of which four have the basic and extended versions of the tool available.



UN-Habitat implemented data-collection exercises for facilities and vulnerabilities mapping in 14 slums and informal settlements located in **Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan**. The surveys identified key vulnerabilities among urban poor communities, as well as the shortcomings of interventions which are not informed by data and clear sustainability plans. In Kenya, a survey was undertaken in five slums in Nairobi and all informal areas of Kisumu, Nakuru and Kilifi. In South Sudan, the survey covered the whole of Juba Municipality, which includes many informal settlement areas.



"..This partnership with UN-Habitat and the Pereira Passos Institute will expand, strengthen and make our database safer, enabling it to portray more accurately the reality of the people who live in the grotas. Furthermore, this agreement will bring onboard different perspectives and experiences, which has already contributed to our decision making and to the promotion of more assertive public policies for the people of Alagoas.."

Fabricao Marques, Secretary for Planning and Management of the Government of the State of Pernambuco (former for Alagoas)

For further information

-  [Webpage: Urban Inclusion Marker](#)
-  [Case study: Quick Participatory Mapping: Rio de Janeiro](#)

Urban Inclusion Marker (UIM)

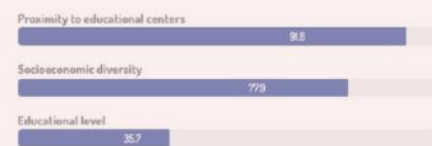
Lima, score: 65.2/100

Measures the overall level of inclusion in a city, understood as the ability of its residents to access goods, services and opportunities, in line with the concept of the “right to the city”.

Health and well-being



Education, culture and diversity



Public space, safety and recreation



Employment and economic opportunities



Quality housing and services

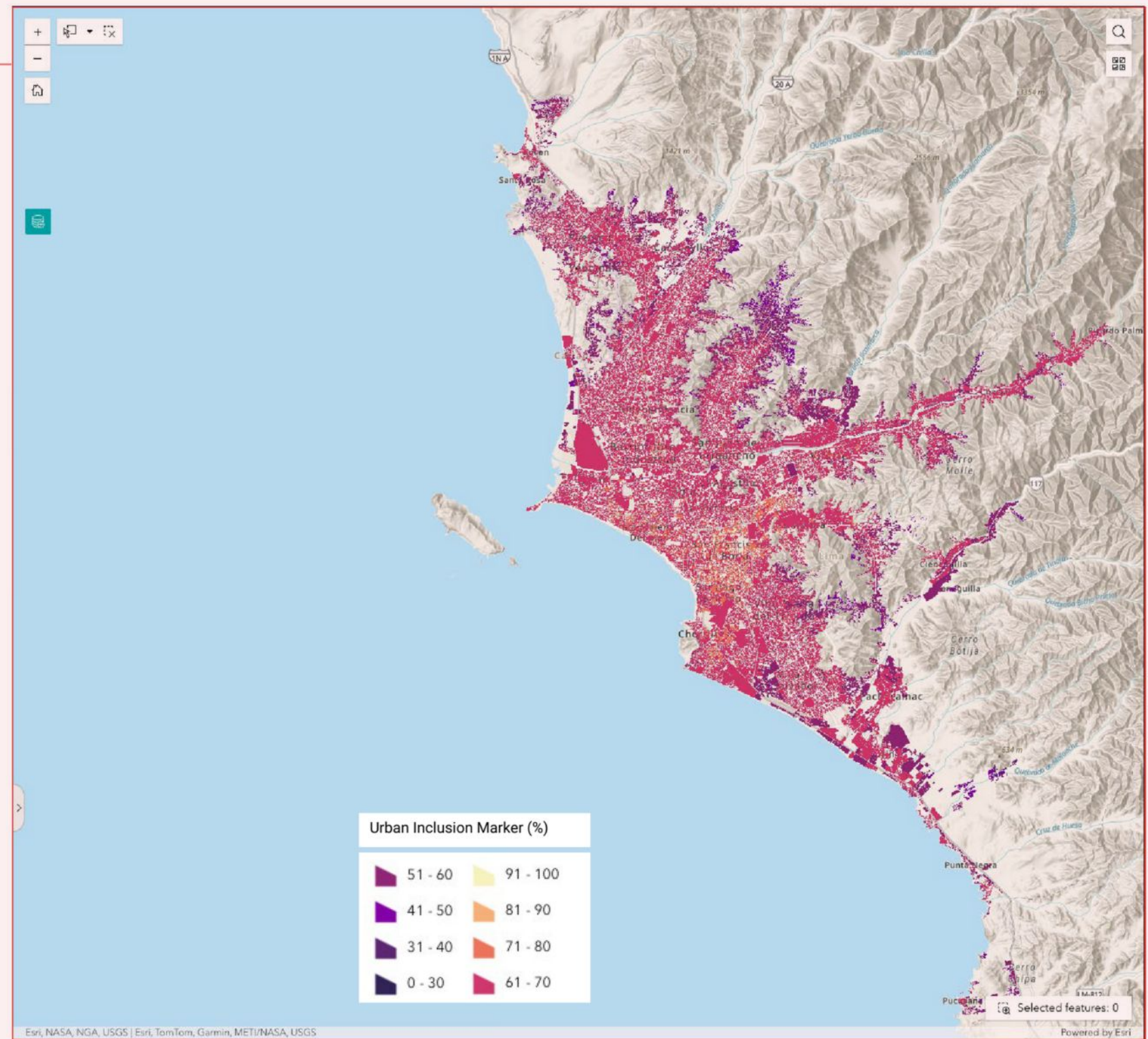


Figure 7. The Urban Inclusion Marker Scoreboard tool website for Lima, Peru. © UN-Habitat
Source: INEI National Population and Housing Census; Lima Cadastral Institute; Ministry of Health – National Programme for Air Quality Health Surveillance (Lima–Callao); Google Maps; Ministry of Education of Peru.

The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map, do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



D2

Creating urban resource centres for young people in cities



Summary

The provision of safe and productive urban spaces for young men and women is critical to youth and their communities' healthy development. The One Stop Youth Resource Centre programme was first founded in 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya, and now consists of a network of 10 youth centres in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The One Stops are centres that address youth access to urban spaces through a participatory process which engages youth and local governments in the design and implementation of the One Stops.

This solution supports local and national governments to establish new One Stops and accredits existing centres through UN-Habitat's accreditation programme.

Challenges addressed

Today, there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, most of whom live in developing countries. A lack of employment and other opportunities for youth threatens their prospects and well-being in cities.

The active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by 2030.

What UN-Habitat can offer

The urban resource centres – One Stops – provide relevant skills for urban youth to attain employment and decent jobs through training and access to technology.

UN-Habitat provides technical support to local governments to establish and run the One Stops; conducts local market research to ensure job training programmes are targeted and effective; and supports governments to ensure that the centres are inclusive and responsive to the communities' needs.

The support and operation of these centres are guided by a series of principles on youth development created by UN-Habitat and its partners in 2007, the Kampala Principles for Youth-Led Development, which focus on youth taking the lead in their own development and that of their communities.

UN-Habitat utilises its unique convening capacity to ensure that all relevant urban stakeholders are effectively engaged in the design and implementation of the One Stops.

This solution also supports the re-purposing and regeneration of underutilised urban structures to rapidly and efficiently bring new One Stops online. (See also [G5](#) and [H1](#) for more on UN-Habitat's work supporting inclusive public spaces).

Duration of support

UN-Habitat provides support in the development of the One Stop centres, with the goal of each being sustainably and independently run.

The development process is completed in three steps: Step 1 is a stakeholder engagement process; Step 2 is the establishment of a governance structure for the One Stop and programme planning; and Step 3 is the operationalisation of the One Stop's programmes. All three steps typically take **one year** and can be applied in an iterative and continuous manner.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat has supported the establishment of One Stops in ten cities in sub-Saharan Africa, which have provided health, training and recreational services for over 350,000 young men and women. The first One Stop was launched in Nairobi, **Kenya** as a partnership between the City of Nairobi, civil society and the local and national government.

The focus of the centre was to be a place that "empowers the youthful generation to have ownership of the development process and be agents of transformation in the city." The success of the One Stops has made them a model for providing a combination of resources in urban public spaces for youth.

For further information

Publication: [One Stop Accreditation Guide](#)

Model: [UN-Habitat One Stop Youth Centre](#)

- Training modules:**
- [Urban Youth Centre Setup Guide, Volume 1](#)
 - [Information Work and Youth – getting started guidelines, Volume 2](#)
 - [Community Mapping Guide – a youth community mapping toolkit for East Africa, Volume 3](#)
 - [Entrepreneurship Programming for Urban Youth Centres, Volume 4](#)
 - [Programme Planning and Evaluation in Urban Youth Centres, Volume 5](#)



Image 25. United Nations Secretary-General at the Slum Soccer Field, Mathare One Stop Youth Centre. © UN-Habitat

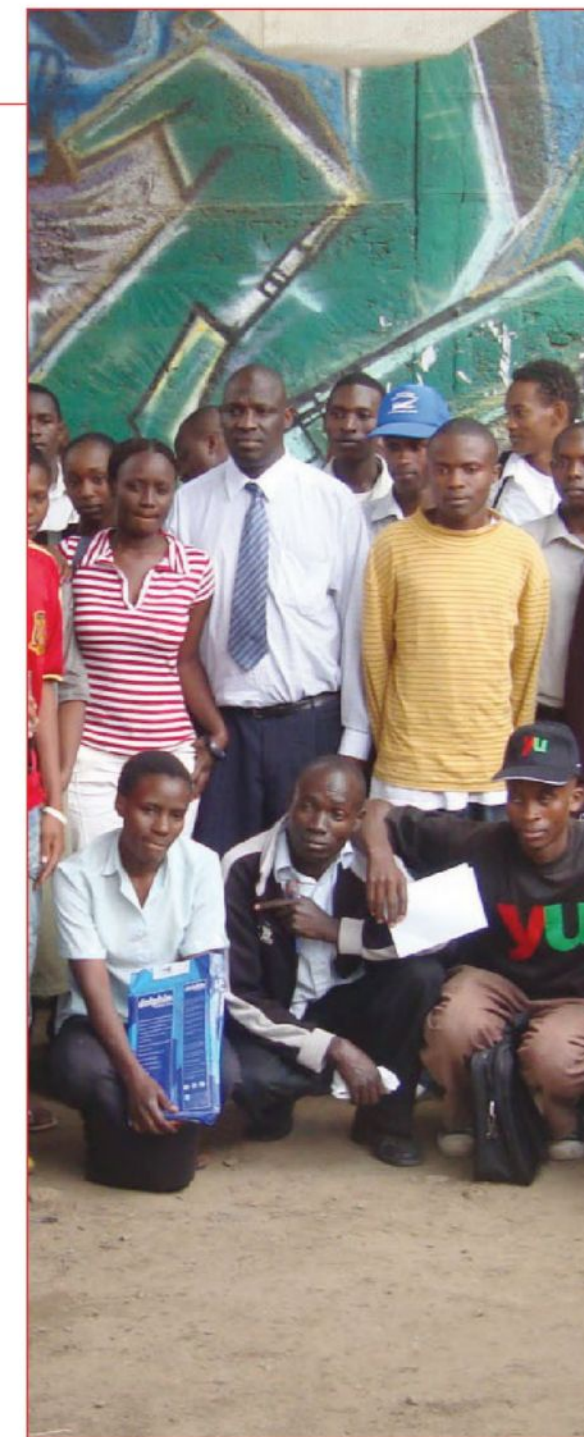


Image 26. Nairobi One stop Centre, Sanitation block ground breaking ceremony, Nairobi, Kenya. © UN-Habitat

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D3 Digaê! - Youth, communication and cities



Summary

A methodology to strengthen the social and economic inclusion of marginalised youth within municipal territories, through “educommunication” or “media literacy”. For local governments seeking to enhance the participation and socio-economic inclusion of marginalised youth in their territories, UN-Habitat offers technical support towards the production of an inclusion strategy and works directly with youth through participatory training in digital communication techniques.

Acquired digital communication skills are applied through the production of videos and documentaries, which serve as creative outlets for youth to experiment and express their own experiences of urban inclusion and exclusion. This methodology fosters youth participation and entrepreneurship solutions.

Challenges addressed

In a rapidly urbanizing world, children and youth face many challenges ranging from homelessness, high unemployment, crime, violence, drug abuse, lack of access to basic services, poverty, and exploitation. Often, they face these limitations as they migrate from rural to urban areas, and across nation states.

However, youth are leaders in innovation, the drivers of technology and the digital age, essential to steer cities towards sustainable urbanization. Cities must protect their young people and enhance their abilities to become active change-makers for their communities and territories.

UN-Habitat, with extensive expertise in participatory processes and capacity building, has developed a youth engagement methodology that supports cities to become marginalised youth while training participants to become digital communication and media experts, aiming at future employment and income generation.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Working together with an implementing partner specialised in youth engagement in digital communication education, UN-Habitat supports local governments with the creation of a socio-economic youth inclusion strategy and provides identified youth groups with tailored training in media and digital communication.

Depending on the context in which the methodology is implemented, and the needs of engaged youth, UN-Habitat empowers participants to reflect on and express their own experiences of inclusion and exclusion, looking at their territory and needs.

This participatory youth engagement and capacity building methodology can constitute a project of its own or be integrated within broader projects.

Duration of support

The duration of this solution varies, depending on local needs and projects. It can be implemented in a minimum of **six months**, or last up to **two years** to include 20 or more workshops, meetings and a full programme graduation to present produced documentaries and videos to city stakeholders.

Previous applications

This methodology was previously carried out in the capital city of Maceió in the state of Alagoas, **Brazil**, as part of the Digaê! Project. The project impacted 27 of the 100 “grotas” (local nomenclature for slums and urban communities located in steep and precarious valley bottoms) previously mapped by UN-Habitat in the city.

This methodology is applicable globally, with the support of a team of experts in educommunication or an implementing partner specialised in this area and can be tailored to any context to reflect local needs for youth socio-economic inclusion.

Presented outcomes in Maceió, **Brazil**, included affective-based maps of the “grotas”, media productions and community interventions in the field of communication and culture.



“..The Digaê! Opened doors and demonstrated that everyone has the right to dream of a better future, regardless of where they live. The reality of periphery is much broader than the stereotypes suggest. There is significant potential in the periphery, and Digaê! Managed to showcase the culture that exists in the grotas..”

Eloísa Graciliano, a young girl from 'Grotas of Piabas' and participant in a workshop held in Maceió, Brazil

For further information



Videos (PT)

- [Memories and Narratives from the Grotas of Maceió: Through the eyes of youth.](#)
- [\(R\)exist: Peripheral LGBTQIAPN + Experiences.](#)
- [Hope Comes from the Garbage.](#)
- [Exclusion.](#)



Podcasts (PT)

- [The Sound of Grotas.](#)
- [Give the idea, slum!: Episode 1.](#)
- [Give the idea, slum!: Episode 2.](#)

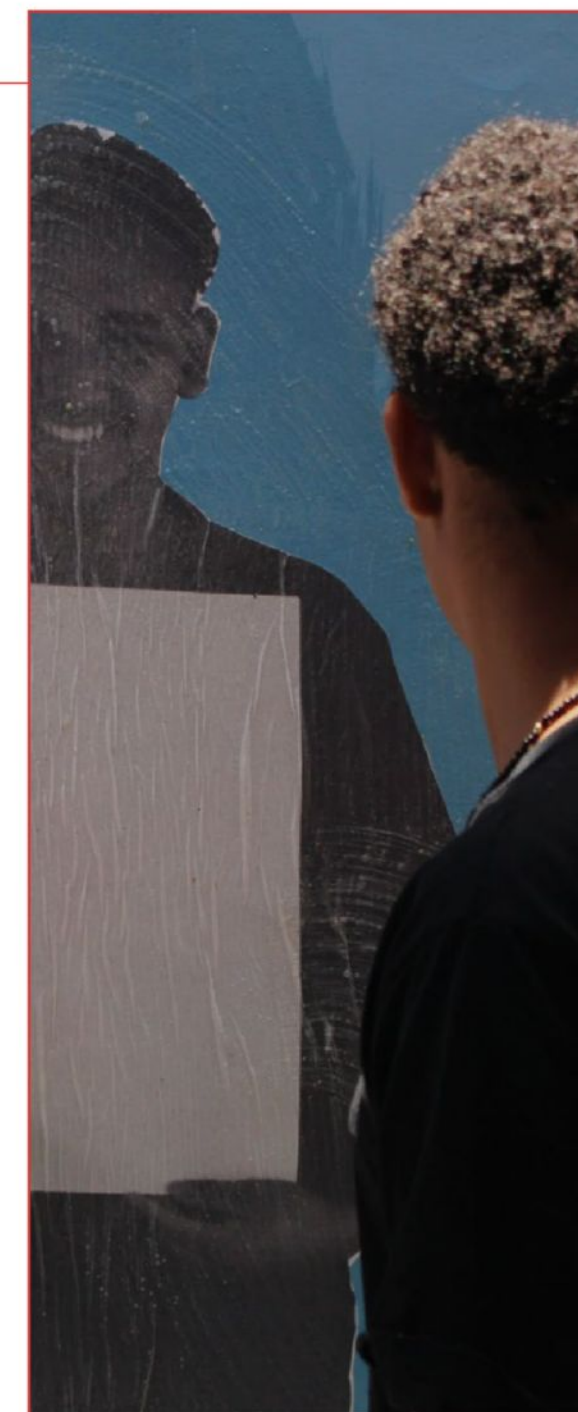


Image 27. Wall art as a tool for change by youth. © UN-Habitat

D4

IntegrHa-bitat: social integration and habitat co-creation centres

4.1
1.1



Summary

The social integration and habitat co-creation centres or “IntegrHa-bitat centres” represent a network of 112 multi-purpose community centres, open to all groups in a situation of vulnerability or social exclusion, to facilitate community-led change towards inclusive neighbourhood transformation and strengthened social cohesion at the local level.

Through co-creation processes, IntegrHa-bitat centres aim to provide capacity building and technical support to all community members and under-represented groups, including women, youth, older persons, and migrants.

Communities can request support for a wide range of neighbourhood improvement projects, including public spaces and habitat condition improvement. When becoming part of the IntegrHa-bitat network, centres join a global community of peer-learning and exchange of best practices.

Challenges addressed

A wide range of social groups, including refugees, migrants, IDPs, young and older persons, often find themselves under-represented in processes of urban transformation.

Failing to include these groups in actions that aim to improve local conditions, whilst not sufficiently considering the diversity of social groups present in the locality is likely to lead to flawed urban interventions and increased risk of eroding social cohesion.

For this reason, facilitating inclusive dialogues and co-creation when envisioning neighbourhood interventions should be a prerequisite for successful urban change and harmonious coexistence.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Through the IntegrHa-bitat network, UN-Habitat provides a range of capacity building tools to strengthen innovative participatory processes at the local level.

These multi-purpose centres are key to advancing multicultural dialogues towards peaceful coexistence and social cohesion, taking advantage of diversity for innovation and favouring the social construction of places, communities and opportunities.

IntegrHa-bitat centres foster inclusive spaces open to all, embracing diversity and addressing various needs while facilitating exchanges of information and services. Strategically located, they leverage local assets and cultural identities to promote integration, social cohesion and coexistence.

These centres function as platforms for community governance, enabling transparent and participatory decision making processes. They also serve as hubs for culture, creativity and innovation, celebrating mixed cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue.

By offering social protection services and support for socioeconomic integration, they respond dynamically to community needs, driving participatory neighbourhood transformation and co-creating a thriving, inclusive habitat.

Duration of support

Support depends on the specific context and on the needs of the local population or marginalised group requiring support. Centres join and leave the network on a voluntary basis.

Previous applications

The IntegrHa-bitat network of centres is currently present in 112 locations across **Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye and Uruguay.**

The IntegrHa-bitat centres were developed in the framework of the Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity project. Through this project, they supported co-creation processes for more than 70 actions to improve habitat conditions, including 45 tactical urbanism actions, 15 murals to promote inclusion, improvements to 11 community centres, 5 safe routes to school and 2 community gardens, among others.



“..This IntegrHa-bitat network has enabled the Casa Somos community centres to **gain visibility worldwide, establish clear guidelines on how to ensure inclusion and participation not only for people in human mobility situations but also for various priority care groups.** Through our involvement in the IntegrHa-bitat centres network, we have also achieved growth, forged better alliances with international organizations, and **gained recognition for our best practices and projects..”**

Verónica Suárez, Coordinator of Casa Somos of the Mayor's Office of Quito, Ecuador

For further information

[Session during WUF11: IntegrHabitat Centers: Shaping Integration in the Territories](#)



Image 28. First IntegrHa-bitat centre opening, Barranquilla, Colombia, 2021. © Andean Countries Hub

Image 29. Aerial view of a human settlement during flooding. © Freepik, Wirestock



Chapter E: Preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction

This chapter presents the globally applicable and field-tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on **preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction**, the second impact area of the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan. Urban areas are often at the forefront of emergencies, hosting displaced populations, providing essential services under strain, and driving local recovery. Strengthening urban resilience is therefore essential to ensure that cities can anticipate, withstand, and recover from shocks while continuing to advance sustainable urban development.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area support cities to build resilience, recover inclusively, and rebuild better after crises. They include tools and methodologies for **assessing urban resilience, planning risk-informed recovery, and integrating resilience into urban development processes**. The approaches also promote **durable solutions for displaced populations and empower communities to lead their own recovery and reconstruction efforts**. Together, these solutions enable cities to reduce vulnerability, strengthen local capacities, and foster sustainable peace and stability.



Image 30. A young boy stands amid the rubble in Gaza, State of Palestine. © United Nations



E1 City Resilience Profiling



Summary

An approach that allows cities to strengthen their resilience profiles monitoring and subsequently develop resilience strategies. Using the City Resilience Profiling Tool (CRPT), UN-Habitat supports local governments to lead inclusive and cross-sector processes to diagnose risks, engage stakeholders, and develop investment-ready resilience strategies. The process is flexible and tailored to diverse urban contexts. The main outputs of the process are clear recommendations and priority actions to enhance urban resilience.

Challenges addressed

Cities face a broad range of expected and unexpected hazards, exacerbated by climate change, which need evidence-based action for effective mitigation and preparedness. However, limited data, diagnostic capacities, and structures for cross-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration have made effective local action a challenge in many contexts.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat helps cities assess risks, engage stakeholders, and create tailored, investment-ready resilience strategies through inclusive and cross-sector processes. It produces clear recommendations and priority actions that strengthen urban resilience across diverse city contexts.

This solution considers social, environmental, economic and institutional aspects of human settlements in the urban systems model, diagnosis and recommended actions by building on the Guiding Principles for City Climate Action Planning (see solution F3). In the analysis of ongoing plans, programmes and initiatives, UN-Habitat also takes stock of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement to ensure resulting actions for resilience are aligned.

This fosters greater understanding by local stakeholders of the existing risks, including those due to climate change, and supports the development and implementation of plans to increase climate and disaster resilience.

Engaging civil society members also helps to ensure that marginalised groups have a voice in the analysis, diagnosis and mapping of actions for resilience building. Data collection is disaggregated where possible by gender and diversity, and the approach includes a gender strategy; human rights strategy; children, youth, and older persons' strategy; and a disabilities strategy.

The initial research and data collection determines the subsequent stages of implementation, including risk mapping, analysis and producing priority recommendations and actions. The advantage of this approach is that it is tailored to each city and captures uniqueness rather than imposing unsuitable solutions.

Duration of support

Estimated time frame per city is **9 to 12 months**, with each stage as follows: initiation (**one to two months**); hazard profiling (**two months**); urban systems understanding (**two to five months**); modelling (**two months**) and implementation actions for resilience (**two months**).



Image 31. Resilient schools built with the local community in Nampula Province, Mozambique, 2021. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

This solution has been applied on five continents: Latin America (Asuncion, **Paraguay**; Teresina, **Brazil**; San Jose, **Costa Rica**; Medellin, **Colombia**); Europe (Barcelona and Terres de l'Ebre, **Spain**); Africa (Dakar, **Senegal**; Maputo, **Mozambique**; Tunis, **Tunisia**); Oceania (Port Vila, **Vanuatu**); and Asia (Yakutsk, **Russian Federation**) and it has a global applicability.

Through the capacity built and the three main implementation outputs in each city, the accomplishments of this solution can be defined at three levels:

- Local level: increased commitment to build resilience in cities, increased resilience-building capacity and a shared vision of resilience among key stakeholders at the local level.
- The regional/national level: partner cities inform their national or regional urban resilience strategies and practices; the capacity developed can be mobilised to scale within the country; cities are better positioned to facilitate reporting on national progress towards global development goals.
- The global level: all recommendations for actions for resilience are aligned with the SDGs and their targets, allowing partner cities to track and report on their progress using the resilience baseline and the monitoring of impact as actions.



"..We adapt the term of resilience to that concept of attending to what cannot be postponed. UN-Habitat's City Resilience Global Programme has been key in identifying actions for resilience among our implementation priorities.."

Mr. Mario Ferreira, Former Mayor of Asunción, Paraguay.



For further information

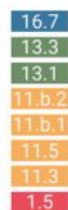


Web pages:

- [UN-Habitat website](#)
- [Urban resilience hub](#)



Image 32. Risk identification workshop with local stakeholders at Terres de l'Ebre, Spain. © UN-Habitat



E2 CityRAP: City Resilience Action Planning



Summary

Rapid, participatory and decision-oriented planning process to strengthen urban resilience in small to intermediate cities, or neighbourhoods in larger cities.

The tool facilitates an inclusive dialogue and rapid technical assessment to identify and prioritise climate and multi-hazard risks. The final output is a Resilience Framework for Action (RFA), which defines prioritised and feasible actions to progressively strengthen the city's resilience and inform planning and investment decisions.

Challenges addressed

Disasters and hazards, which are increasing both in scale and frequency due to the climate emergency, threaten the economies, safety, livelihoods, health and even lives of urban residents around the world, especially the urban poor and marginalised. In many small and intermediate cities, limited planning capacity, data and resources hinder effective risk management, increasing vulnerability and threatening to reverse the progress countries are making towards the SDGs.

What UN-Habitat can offer

CityRAP was designed by UN-Habitat and the Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience Centre (DiMSUR) so that local governments can adapt and implement it with minimum intervention from outside technical experts, using practical methods to leverage local knowledge. The methodology is founded on building existing local capacities and fostering endogenous development dynamics to ensure sustainability and ownership.

In addition to the local government, other urban stakeholders are involved, such as academia, national governments, NGOs, CBOs, private sector and others, creating synergies, and promoting collaboration and shared responsibility.

CityRAP takes a bottom-up approach where civic participation in the decision making process is key. Residents are included and empowered through community consultations, participatory mapping exercises, focus group discussions and workshops, ensuring that all the groups, especially the most vulnerable, are present and actively involved.

CityRAP aims to enable local governments to plan and undertake practical actions to strengthen the resilience of their cities against natural and other hazards emphasizing adaptation measures to climate change.

Duration of support

The CityRAP process is implemented over **three to four months** through four structured phases, led by a team of Municipal Focal Points with periodic technical support from UN-Habitat.

It can also be delivered through an intensive **five-day**, in-person Training of Trainers (ToT), equipping local stakeholders with the skills to independently apply and replicate the methodology.

Previous applications

This solution has supported the following countries and cities:

- **Burkina Faso:** Ouagadougou, Kongoussi.
- **Cape Verde:** Espargos, Praia, Santa Catarina.
- **Ethiopia:** Arada (Addis Ababa sub-city), Lideta (Addis Ababa sub-city), Adama, Dire Dawa.
- **Guinea-Bissau:** Bafatá, Bolama, Bubaque, Cacine, Mansoa, São Domingos.
- **Madagascar:** Antala, Morondava.
- **Malawi:** Lilongwe, Zomba, Mzuzu.
- **Mozambique:** Angoche, Chiúre, Chókwe, Cuamba, Dondo, Metangula, Mocuba, Montepuez, Vilankulo.

- **Sao Tome and Principe:** Água Grande, Neves, Água Grande District, Mé-Zóchi District, Cantagalo District, Caué District, Lembá District, Lobata District, Autonomous Region of Príncipe.
- **South Africa:** George, Port Alfred, Potchefstroom.
- **Comoros:** Fomboni, Foumboni, Moroni, Mutsamudu, Nioumachoua, Mitsamiouli.
- **Zambia:** Chipata, Lusaka.
- **Zimbabwe:** Chipinge, Gwanda, Mutare.
- **Senegal:** Bargny.
- **Mauritania:** Kaédi.
- **Nigeria:** Labondo.
- **Chad:** Mao.
- **Mali:** Nioro.
- **Niger:** Tillabéri.
- Ongoing in: **Côte D'Ivoire** and **Ghana**.

In January 2021, a "light" version of CityRAP was implemented for the first time outside Africa in Amman, **Jordan**, using a hybrid 'virtual and in-person' modality. More recently, the methodology has expanded to Latin America, including **Brazil**, where it is being applied to support climate resilience planning within broader multi-municipal initiatives and strengthen institutional capacity for coordinated action.

The application of the CityRAP methodology across all mentioned cities has enabled the following results:

- Triggering community self-mobilisation: Road opening, improvement of drainage in informal settlements, voluntary resettlement of people in Chokwe, **Mozambique**; drainage construction in Lilongwe, **Malawi**.
- Encouraging local authorities to mobilise funds: In Morondava, **Madagascar**, the city council mobilised USD 1.7 million to implement activities of coastal erosion mitigation prioritised by the CityRAP Tool.
- Influencing national policies for DRM and National Adaptation Plans: In **Malawi** CityRAP has been embraced in the national guidelines for urban DRM plans; in **Mozambique**, elements of the tool have been

included into ministerial guidelines for the elaboration of urban plans to enhance its resilience dimension.

- In **Sao Tome and Principe**, CityRAP was used to develop Local Adaptation Plans, one per district and the Autonomous Region of Príncipe, which informed the elaboration of a National Adaptation Plan.
- Facilitating mobilisation of external funds: UN-Habitat mobilised USD 14 million from the Adaptation Fund for a project to implement the outcomes of CityRAP process in four cities in south-east Africa.



"..After CityRAP we initiated the reorganization of the neighbourhoods, rearranging the settlements, opening new roads, identifying and opening new drainage canals to storm water in order to mitigate the floods. We also improved the sanitation with solid waste management.."

Ms. Evangelina Dundanani Maninguane Pfono, Chief Officer of Chokwe Municipal Council, Mozambique



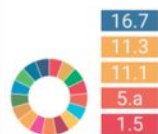
For further information



- Web pages:
- [DiMSUR](#)
 - [CityRAP](#)



Image 33. Participatory mapping at the neighborhood level during CityRAP in Kaédi, Mauritania, 2023. © UN-Habitat



E3

Urban profiling for crisis-affected and displacement-impacted cities



Summary

A standardised, multi-sectoral profiling and diagnostic methodology that provides an integrated analysis of urban conditions in crisis-affected, displacement-impacted, and rapidly evolving environments.

Combining secondary data review, spatial analytics, remote sensing, and field-based qualitative assessments, the methodology produces a shared evidence base that informs humanitarian, development, and peace-building interventions.

Urban profiling delivers structured insights on vulnerabilities, service gaps, institutional capacities, and priority needs at neighbourhood, settlement, and city levels, enabling partners to design coordinated responses and support recovery, durable solutions, and long-term urban resilience.

Challenges addressed

Cities affected by conflict, disaster, and large-scale population movements often lack coherent, up-to-date, and disaggregated data for decision making. Assessments are frequently fragmented across sectors and actors, limiting the ability to prioritise interventions or plan area-based responses.

Urban profiling addresses these challenges by consolidating spatial, social, economic, and governance information within a unified analytical framework.

It identifies neighbourhood-level vulnerabilities, pressures on land and housing, service deficits, institutional barriers, and risks faced by displaced and host communities, enabling partners to align strategies, reduce duplication, and target investments more effectively.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides end-to-end support for the design, implementation, and interpretation of Urban profiling. This includes establishing analytical frameworks, leading multi-sectoral data collection, conducting spatial analysis and remote sensing, and facilitating participatory processes such as key informant interviews, focus groups, and community validation workshops.

UN-Habitat develops the full suite of profiling outputs, including city scans, neighbourhood briefs, vulnerability maps, and strategic recommendations aligned with humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) objectives.

The organization also supports governments and partners in integrating findings into recovery planning, durable solutions strategies, and urban development policies.

Capacity building is offered through trainings on profiling methods, spatial analytics, and area-based approaches, ensuring national and local stakeholders can replicate and sustain the methodology.

Duration of support

Urban profiling exercises typically require **three to six months** depending on geographic scale, access constraints, and the depth of analysis requested.

Rapid city scans may be completed within **six to eight weeks**, while full multi-sectoral profiles - including field assessments, spatial analysis, and participatory validation - require **four to six months**.

Previous applications

Urban profiling has been applied across multiple regions, particularly in crisis and displacement contexts. In the Middle East, it has supported recovery and housing, land, and property (HLP) planning in **Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon** by providing neighbourhood-level vulnerability assessments and service gap analyses.

In East Africa, it has informed durable solutions and settlement upgrading in **Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya**, where profiling helped identify priorities for IDP integration and basic services. In **Mozambique and Madagascar**, the methodology guided post-cyclone reconstruction planning through spatial damage assessments and multi-sectoral diagnostics.

Across these contexts, Urban profiling has enabled partners to align humanitarian and development interventions, reduce duplication, and establish shared baselines for coordinated recovery and resilience programming.

In **Kenya**, profiling of refugee settlements provided a cross-sectoral overview, identifying challenges, opportunities and recommendations for improving settlement conditions. This informed the development of strategic visions and comprehensive regeneration strategies to achieve sustainable, inclusive and climate-resilient human settlements in the refugee hosting areas.

In **Syria**, UN-Habitat's profiling work supported the elaboration of Urban Recovery Plans using the area-based approach. The process was conducted based on wide participation and engagement with the local community.

In New Damietta and Kafr Elbatikh cities in **Egypt**, a host community for Syrian refugees, settlement profiling and spatial planning were used to develop scenario building and action plans, in addition to prioritising interventions and matching these interventions with potential financial mechanisms.



"..Urban profiling provided the clarity we urgently needed to align humanitarian and development interventions in displacement-affected neighbourhoods. The methodology helped us understand service gaps, land pressures, and institutional challenges in a structured and actionable way. It enabled government departments, United Nations agencies, and local actors to work from shared evidence base and prioritise investments for recovery and durable solutions.."

A Director of Urban Development, Ministry of Public Works

For further information

Publication: [Urban Recovery Frameworks and Durable Solutions Resources](#)

- Spatial profiles for:**
- [Amman \(Jordan\)](#)
 - [Irbid \(Jordan\)](#)
 - [Mafraq \(Jordan\)](#)
 - [Damietta \(Egypt\)](#)
 - [Kafr El Battikh \(Egypt\)](#)
 - [Douala 4 \(Cameroon\)](#)
 - [Douala 3 \(Cameroon\)](#)
 - [Tripoli \(Lebanon\)](#)

- Settlement profiling tool:**
- [Nakivale Settlement in Uganda](#)
 - [Kebribeyah Settlement in the Somali Region, Ethiopia](#)



Image 34. Hyperlinked publications for different spatial/settlement profiles. © UN-Habitat

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E4

Integrated urban planning in protracted crisis contexts



2/8
2/9



UNHCR IOM
UNESCO



Summary

Support UN-Habitat provides guidance and technical support for integrated urban planning solutions in protracted crisis contexts, aiming to improve living conditions, sustainably manage human settlements and create cooperative frameworks for recovery, development and prevention strategies.

By bridging normative to operational work, and promoting durable spatial development and investment solutions, UN-Habitat enhances collaboration between humanitarian and development actors.

This solution supports local governance and institutional development, ultimately fostering resilience in crisis-affected communities and promoting self-reliance among displaced populations.



Challenges addressed

This solution addresses several critical challenges, including the lack of long-term perspectives in traditional humanitarian responses, limited prioritisation of sustainable development programming leading to inequalities and tensions between host and refugee communities, disorganized urban growth, low economic livelihoods, exclusion from the private sector, and societal fragility.

These challenges compound and threaten the achievement of the SDGs. Moreover, urgent responses are needed to address climate change-driven crises, which exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and hinder recovery and sustainable development efforts further.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat tailors its solutions to meet specific challenges faced by national, sub-national or local governments and communities. Drawing on extensive experience and a diverse portfolio, UN-Habitat supports coordinated long-term solutions in humanitarian settings and integrated planning and development across crisis situations.

The agency collaborates closely with other United Nations agencies, international organizations, and non-traditional partners such as private sector investors. Using an area-based approach and integrated design and planning principles, UN-Habitat considers economic, physical, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects to develop integrated and resilient human settlements.

This approach bridges traditional humanitarian and development work, supporting strategic visioning and scenario development over early, medium and long-term horizons. Moreover, participatory planning tools allow the formulation of tailor-made strategies with differentiated approaches for vulnerable groups or those displaced by economic, social, and natural crises.

UN-Habitat engages national and local authorities to coordinate urban strategies across different scales, ensuring alignment with broader development plans and empowering municipalities to meet development standards.

Emphasising resilience, social integration, self-reliance and improved quality of life for refugees and host communities, the solution centres on community engagement through workshops, participatory planning, visioning and prioritisation sessions. Social inclusion indicators are integrated into monitoring processes, fostering broad-based social cohesion and ownership through innovative tools and technologies.

In response to rising climate emergencies, UN-Habitat's urban planning tools strengthen community resilience by integrating environmental considerations, promoting resource management, and supporting disaster adaptation. This solutions prioritise preserving natural conditions and mitigating climate risks.



Duration of support

The duration of UN-Habitat's support varies based on specific requirements from national and local governments, partners, and donors, spanning from **six months to many years**, due to the unpredictable nature of the crisis settings.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat has implemented solutions globally, including Kakuma and Kalobeyi in **Kenya**; Dadaab Complex in Kenya; refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**; Nakivale Settlement and West Nile Region in **Uganda**; and Kebabeyah Settlement in **Ethiopia**. Efforts also extend to cities in **Lebanon, Brazil, Cameroon, Egypt, and Jordan**, supporting displaced populations amid regional instability and climate hazards.

The Kalobeyi Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme in **Kenya**, supported by UN-Habitat, produced an Advisory Development Plan for a settlement hosting 60,000 refugees. In Kakuma and Dadaab, spatial profiles ([See E3](#)) aligned with county and national programmes, led to municipal status in 2023 and strengthened governance capacity.

In **Lebanon and Brazil**, UN-Habitat solutions promoted cohesive urban development, social inclusion, and economic opportunities for diverse communities ([See G5](#)). In **Cameroon, Egypt, and Jordan**, scenario building and action planning identified priority interventions for vulnerable neighbourhoods.

In **Iraq**, UN-Habitat and UNESCO collaborated on an Initial Planning Framework for the Reconstruction of Mosul, supporting local government efforts with comprehensive reconstruction and recovery plans, particularly for the Old City. The Framework, backed by desk research, field work, and data, provides actionable recommendations to revive Mosul and its metropolitan area.

Finally, in Latin America, through the Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity project, UN-Habitat developed neighbourhood co-creation processes that resulted in the formulation of Territorial Intervention Plans for 13 neighbourhoods in 10 cities across the region. These plans outlined actions to integrate Venezuelan refugees and migrants into the host community as a medium- and long-term response to the Venezuelan diaspora.



"..We used to fear living with other people as their cultures were different from ours, but we have started to integrate as we now see that our lives are similar. Thanks to donors, UN-Habitat and partners, we feel we are not displaced but have a home. Thank you. I have passed through several refugee camps, and I have never witnessed an organization that is willing to construct refugee homes that are strong and attractive, and that if someone had come, they would feel at home.."

Nimbona Isaac, refugee from Burundi who is currently living in Kalobeyi Settlement, Kenya



For further information



Webpage: [Planning for Humanitarian-Development Practice: Connecting Normative to Operations](#)

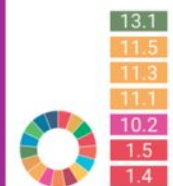


Publications:

- [UN-Habitat – UNHCR Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Contexts](#)
- [Urban Planning Responses in Post-Crisis Contexts](#)
- [Designing for Displacement: A Spatial Guide for Planning Along Seasonal Rivers in Drylands](#)
- [Mainstreaming Migration and Displacement in Urban Planning and Public Space](#)
- [The regeneration strategy for Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyi Settlement](#)
- [The action plan for selected displacement-affected neighbourhoods in Amman](#)

Image 35. Kalobeyi Pilot Shelter Programme in collaboration with Shigeru Ban Architects. © UN-Habitat





E5

Durable solutions for displaced people and vulnerable communities in cities



Summary

UN-Habitat addresses challenges from urban sprawl, overcrowding, and informality caused by population influxes, including returnees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs). If unmanaged, these issues affect both newcomers and vulnerable host community members.

Tailored to specific contexts, UN-Habitat's solutions include area-based spatial planning, mixed-shelter approaches, sustainable housing with rental support, livelihood initiatives, and strengthening local technical capacities on durable solutions. These efforts integrate multiple UN-Habitat solutions to mitigate challenges and reduce spatial inequality.

Challenges addressed

Sudden or prolonged influxes of people - refugees, IDPs, and returnees - driven by conflict or natural disasters such as droughts and floods - pose major challenges for national and local governments, particularly in developing countries.

These pressures strain resources, overload infrastructure, and increase social tensions. Urban sprawl, informality, and inadequate living conditions, including housing and services, often result from these population movements.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat leverages decades of experience in managing urban displacement within urban development. Drawing on global expertise in planning overcrowded and complex contexts, UN-Habitat collaborates with governments and international organizations to provide tailored solutions for cities facing population influxes.

These solutions establish pathways to durable solutions at scale through integrated territorial and urban development strategies and planning practices.

UN-Habitat's expertise in Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights is particularly relevant in these contexts. Beyond technical advice, UN-Habitat produces spatial data-based resources, including urban profiles for evidence-based decision making (see solution E3 and G4), assessments of crowded and informal sites, and area-based planning linked to masterplans for future displaced settlement development.

Community Action Plans (CAPs) outline priorities identified by communities and their leadership, ensuring inclusive and participatory planning.

Urban profiling exercises engage communities and local governments to identify the needs and insecurities of diverse population groups, defining context-specific priorities and visions for urban settlements.

Inclusive community planning addresses social exclusion by involving all under-represented groups - women, IDPs, youth, and marginalised communities - laying the groundwork for recovery focused on community priorities.

These solutions integrate capacity development from inception, ensuring sustainability and future replication of initiatives, tools, and methodologies by local actors. Effective planning solutions prioritise transformative projects that catalyse broader change.

UN-Habitat supports governments and stakeholders in identifying and facilitating financing mechanisms for durable solutions through strategic investments, capital planning, and land-based financing.

Duration of support

The duration varies based on governmental or community needs, ranging from **three weeks** for profiling exercises to **many years** for comprehensive solution support in post-crisis recovery.

As an essential part of this solution, UN-Habitat has established the **Global Framework towards Inclusive Solutions to Urban Internal Displacement**, supporting policymakers and programme managers in designing short-, medium- and long-term responses to urban internal displacement that are sustainable, scalable and transformative.



It closely aligns with the Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. The Framework tailors reform to the challenges and opportunities posed by internal displacement in cities and towns – an increasingly common phenomenon in an urbanizing world.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat has deployed its approaches through expert advisers in **Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Mozambique, Somalia and Cameroon**.

In **Iraq**, UN-Habitat collaborated with the government to develop a national strategy for long-term durable solutions for IDPs and a road map for enumeration, upgrading and regularization of informal settlements. Pilot projects in Mosul, Ramadi and Basra used participatory community planning to tailor interventions, provide livelihoods, improve services, and strengthen security of tenure.

In **Somalia**, UN-Habitat contributed to spatial plans linked to the Kismayo masterplan and enhanced sustainable urban housing solutions by integrating rental subsidies, traditional livelihoods, and HLP solutions. It supported the Durable Solutions Unit (DSU) for Benadir Regional Administration and developed a Durable Solutions Strategy (2020–2024), improving access to basic services for IDPs and returnees without discrimination.



For further information:
Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)

UN-Habitat also promotes the sustainable integration of displaced communities through spatial and economic strategies that ensure equitable access to services, housing, land and employment while supporting balanced regional growth and addressing climate change impacts.

Currently, UN-Habitat supports Hudur, Berdale and Baardheere in **Somalia** with displacement-sensitive urban planning. In **Cameroon**, crises have increased IDPs; with SECO funding, UN-Habitat is carrying out evidence-based, participatory planning in Douala's districts where most IDPs reside.



"..Previously before the project, we had to incur a lot of expenses in paying rent which caused our children to miss out on education. Also, our livelihood has improved since the small money we get from the casual jobs we do now we can use to buy food for our families.."

Kismayo Camp leader



For further information



- Publications:**
- [Somalia Country Programme Annual Report 2019](#)
 - [UN-Habitat Framework on Urban Solutions for Internal Displacement](#)



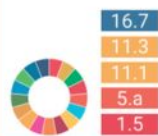
- Case studies:**
- [Kismayo Urban Profile \(Somalia\)](#)
 - [Hudur Urban Profile \(Somalia\)](#)
 - [United Nations Somalia: Towards Sustainable Urban Development in Somalia and IDP Durable Solutions at Scale](#)



- Strategic Urban Development Plans:**
- [Baidoa \(Somalia\)](#)
 - [Juba \(South Sudan\)](#)



- Video:** [Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Insights from Cameroon, Egypt, and Jordan](#)



E6

Community-led urban recovery through the People's Process



Summary

The People's Process is a proven, community-led solution that places affected communities at the centre of urban recovery, resilience-building, and housing reconstruction.

Through community mobilisation, the creation of Community Development Councils (CDCs), and community contracting, residents identify priorities, plan development actions, receive block grants, implement projects, and manage post-recovery governance. UN-Habitat provides technical guidance, institutional frameworks, and quality assurance.

This solution fosters social cohesion, ownership, economic empowerment, tenure security, and long-term sustainability in crisis-affected urban and peri-urban areas. It is an excellent tool for recovery planning, community-based DRM plans, and reintegration into reconstruction to build back better.

Challenges addressed

In many crisis-affected and informal urban contexts, reconstruction efforts are often top-down, slow, unsustainable, and disconnected from local needs. Vulnerable populations frequently lack voice, tenure security, and access to basic services.

Fragmented planning undermines social cohesion and increases dependency. The People's Process addresses these challenges by empowering communities to organise, plan, and contract services through Community Development Councils, fostering accountability, livelihood generation, equity (including women's participation), social inclusion, and resilience to future shocks through community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM).

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat offers technical guidance to governments and local authorities on designing and implementing participatory processes within urban recovery, housing reconstruction, and resilience frameworks.

This includes establishing community governance structures (Local Development Councils), providing social mobilisation support and participatory needs assessments, and training communities in urban planning, budgeting, and decision making.

In addition, UN-Habitat can support the design of community contracting modalities and the administration of block grants, while ensuring gender, youth, and returnee inclusion in governance structures and integrating land tenure support and basic service improvement considerations. Technical assistance and capacity building for monitoring, social audits, and quality assurance can be delivered as part of this solution.

Finally, by linking communities with municipalities for long-term governance, UN-Habitat also facilitates policy integration of community-led models and supports scale-up across humanitarian, recovery, and development phases.

Duration of support

The duration varies depending on the scope of recovery efforts. Community mobilisation and CDC establishment may take **one to three months**, while full implementation cycles covering participatory planning, block grant delivery, implementation, and monitoring typically range from **6 to 24 months**.

Capacity building and institutionalisation efforts may continue through long-term collaboration with municipalities. UN-Habitat has delivered People's Process support continuously for more than 30 years, adapting the model for humanitarian response, post-conflict recovery, and long-term urban governance.

Previous applications

The People's Process has been successfully implemented for over three decades in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in **Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Indonesia**, where it underpinned major urban programmes such as City for All and the Urban Safety and Security Programme, mobilising over 900,000 properties for land registration and strengthening CDCs for governance, resilience, and livelihood generation.

In **Myanmar**, the approach supported post-crisis housing and settlement upgrading in several states and post-crisis settings, improving resilience and community cohesion.

In **Bangladesh**, it facilitated urban resilience-building among displacement-affected communities in the UPPR programme.

Across these contexts, community contracting and CDC-led service delivery demonstrated increases in tenure security, municipal engagement, revenue generation, women's participation, and social sustainability.

For further information

- Publications:**
- [Guideline on the People's Process in Post-disaster and Post-Conflict Recovery and Reconstruction](#)
 - [Guidelines on the Production of Comprehensive Recovery Programmes](#)
 - [Guidelines on the Production of Integrated Development Concepts](#)

Video: [Playing Between Elephants - International Film Festival Award Movie on the People's Process](#)



Image 36. Representatives of a Community Development Committee (CDC) in Afghanistan. © UN-Habitat

Image 37. Nairobi center and uhuru park in Kenya. © Freepik, thelizton



Chapter F: Environment and climate action

This chapter presents the globally applicable and field-tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on environment and climate action, the third impact area of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan. Rapid urbanization, habitat loss, pollution, and resource depletion continue to threaten ecosystems and the well-being of urban and rural populations, especially the most vulnerable. Strengthening urban governance, policy coherence, and local implementation capacity is therefore key to achieving sustainable, resilient, and climate-smart cities.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area advance climate-responsive planning, governance, and action at all levels. **They include support for developing policy and legal frameworks for climate-smart urban governance, strengthening national and local alignment through multilevel climate action, and guiding cities in planning and implementing local climate strategies. The solutions also promote the protection of ecological assets and the use of territorial climate risk diagnostics to build resilience and safeguard communities and natural systems.**



Image 38. Alzohour triangle in Amman, Jordan. © UN-Habitat

17.14
13.b
13.2
11.b
11.1
1.5
1.4

F1

Policy, law and governance for climate smart cities



Summary

Strengthening urban policies, law and governance to advance cities' resilience and adaptation to climate change and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

These policies, laws and governance frameworks define where land, infrastructure and basic services can be built; lay out rules for planning and decision making; and set the context within which urban authorities, local governments and communities are expected to fulfil their mandate and react to emerging challenges.

This solution utilises the Urban Law Module of the Law and Climate Change Toolkit to support countries and local governments in reviewing and reforming their policy, legal and governance frameworks to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

This solution also builds the capacity of national and local governments, and other stakeholders including students, on the importance of urban law in promoting low-carbon, green, resilient and sustainable urban development through the e-learning course on advancing climate action through urban law (see learn tag above).

Challenges addressed

Climate change has been described as the 'defining issue of our time'. Human settlements emit a substantial portion of the world's greenhouse gases and are home to most of the population and infrastructure that is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

A resolute response to climate change requires deliberate and sustained action from both state and non-state actors, anchored in supportive regulatory and institutional frameworks, and regularly assessing their adequacy and effectiveness.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports countries to improve their policy, legal and governance frameworks to facilitate the implementation of their NDCs.

Through this support, UN-Habitat builds the capacities of national and local governments to better understand the legal and institutional frameworks required for effective climate change planning, management and governance.

The assessments focus on pro-poor approaches to climate action that do not compromise but enhance security of tenure and access to adequate housing for the most vulnerable.

This solution utilises the Law and Climate Change Toolkit, which is the result of a partnership between several international institutions, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNEP, UNFCCC, and other United Nations entities.

UN-Habitat is one of the contributing partners to the Toolkit and has led the development of the Urban Law module. At the forefront of efforts to promote climate-smart urbanization, UN-Habitat offers this support globally for all signatories of the Paris Agreement.

Duration of support

This solution can be effectively delivered in **two years**. The first year is dedicated to the assessment of policy, legislation and governance frameworks relevant to urban planning and climate change and to production of recommendations for legal change.

The second year is dedicated to the discussion of the findings and recommendations, to the identification of government's priorities and possible options for legal reform as well as capacity development.

Depending on the request, a fast-track option of **one year** is also feasible given past experiences from five countries that have benefited from this solution.

Previous applications

Since 2021, UN-Habitat piloted the Urban Law Module in 10 countries (including: **Colombia, Comoros, India, Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe**), influencing legislative and governance frameworks with key considerations from science and international best practices.

For instance, in August 2023, **Zimbabwe** enacted carbon credits legislation that was influenced by the outcomes of UN-Habitat's legal assessment. In 2023, **Oman** benefited from a review of its planning law to ensure that it was, among other things, climate conscious. Also, based on the aftermath of the devastating effects of Cyclone Kenneth, UN-Habitat supported **Comoros** to strengthen its policy and legal framework, considering resilience to climate change and natural hazards.

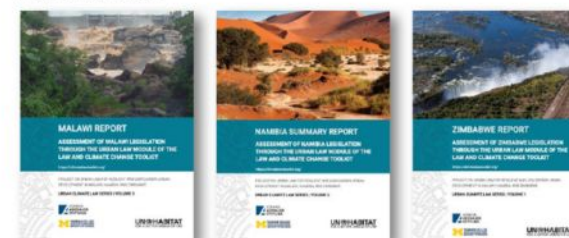


Image 39. Several hyperlinked urban law reports. © UN-Habitat



"..The findings of the assessment have created awareness on the importance of mainstreaming climate change, thus providing justification for reform that considers climate change in planning laws. There is a need to harmonize approaches in urban development if we are to achieve resilient and low carbon urban development.."

An official from Malawi, during a stakeholder validation workshop



For further information



Webpage: [The law and climate change toolkit website](#)



Publications:

- [Malawi climate urban law report](#)
- [Zimbabwe climate urban law report](#)
- [Namibia climate urban law report](#)
- [Multi-Level Governance for Effective Urban Climate Action in the Global South, \(2021\)](#)



Tool: [Urban Law Module of the Law and Climate Change](#)



Image 40. Students learn in a school affected by cyclone Idai in Beira, Mozambique. © United Nations

F2

Multilevel climate action for stronger national climate policies

13.b
13.2
11.b
11.5



2/5



Summary

Supporting national governments in comprehensively integrating urban and human settlement issues into their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national climate policies.

UN-Habitat offers tailored capacity building, technical cooperation and dedicated tools for policymakers to fully address the urban dimensions of climate change and successfully strengthen national climate policies from a multilevel governance perspective.

Challenges addressed

More than half of the global population resides in cities, and cities are responsible for a large share of global emissions. At the same time, cities are experiencing the compounded and intensifying impacts of climate change. Multilevel climate action is required to tackle urban-related climate issues and accelerate local, regional, and global change.

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), as well as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the primary national commitment and planning instruments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and UN-Habitat's tools can assist cities and countries in integrating urban issues into these national documents and national climate policies.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports national and local governments to integrate urban priorities into climate action and implement the Paris Agreement through tailored capacity building and technical cooperation.

To support NAPs, UN-Habitat provides technical guidance and tools to integrate urban and human settlement dimensions into NAP formulation, implementation and monitoring.

This includes support for NAP readiness processes, including proposals financed by the Green Climate Fund, and guidance on integrating nature-based solutions to enhance climate resilience, particularly in informal and vulnerable urban areas.

For NDCs, UN-Habitat offers analytical tools and technical assistance to strengthen urban content in both NDC design and revision processes. Support includes country-specific reviews of NDCs, tailored recommendations, direct assistance to NDC coordinators, and workshops for national and sectoral government teams. This support addresses both sectoral content (such as transport and housing) and governance processes, including local government engagement.

Beyond NDCs and NAPs, UN-Habitat assists countries in integrating urban dimensions into broader national climate change policies, supported by dedicated tools and training that enable coherent, inclusive and effective climate planning across levels of government.

Duration of support

UN-Habitat offers flexible support tailored to national needs. Assistance for national climate change policies ranges from **one-day** capacity building sessions to **several months** or **years** of sustained technical support.

Support for NAPs, including Green Climate Fund (GCF) readiness proposal development, typically lasts **two to five months**.

For NDCs, UN-Habitat provides **three to six months** of technical assistance to NDC coordinators during review or update processes, as well as short workshops consisting of one day per sector and one day of joint training for NDC teams.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat implemented urban climate projects in support of more than 100 cities worldwide and supported countries in accessing climate finance for urban system resilience through UNFCCC financial mechanisms.

In addition, "Addressing Urban and Human Settlement Issues in National Adaptation Plans" was applied globally, and UN-Habitat developed or committed to developing Green Climate Fund readiness proposals for **Bolivia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Laos, Liberia, Nigeria, and Yemen**, using the released NAP supplementary materials. Lastly, UN-Habitat used its experience to assist in the development of national climate change policies for **Fiji, Nepal, Sri Lanka** and **Papua New Guinea**.



"..Climate change is the most defining crisis of our time and the most significant challenge to achieve sustainable urban development.."

Hon. David Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia, and the president of UNHA.



For further information



Publications:

- [The Critical Role of Nature-based Solutions for Enhancing Climate Resilience in Informal Areas](#)
- [Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses: 2024](#)
- [UNFCCC supplementary materials to the NAP technical guidelines](#)
- [PNG's policy in Papua New Guinea](#)
- [Urban Content in NDC 3.0](#)



Image 41. A girl walks past newly constructed houses in Aceh, Indonesia, 2016. © UN-Habitat

F3 Planning local climate action

13.b
13.1
11.5
11.3



2/4 2/8
2/5

UNEP UNDRR UNESCAP
UNU UNECLAC UNECA

Summary

UN-Habitat supports local governments and built-environment professionals in addressing climate change through urban planning-led local climate action. Support spans strategic city-level guidance, practical assistance for developing and implementing local climate action plans, and targeted approaches for secondary cities and vulnerable communities.

UN-Habitat helps cities assess climate risks and overlapping urban, environmental and social vulnerabilities, enabling the identification of hotspot areas where compounded risks affect people, infrastructure, and ecosystems.

Challenges addressed

Urban areas are increasingly affected by extreme weather events, storm surges, flooding, heat waves, and water scarcity. A comprehensive urban planning response is a prerequisite for strengthening climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level, but broader urban development challenges must also be addressed.

This solution addresses the lack of technical guidance on climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable urban planning, providing urban stakeholders with the tools they need to develop effective solutions and implement climate-resilient and sustainable urban projects.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat supports cities and local governments to plan, review, and implement integrated and inclusive urban climate action aligned with the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda. Through a common reference framework, the Guiding Principles, UN-Habitat helps cities structure climate action plans that integrate mitigation, adaptation, and equity across sectors and governance levels.

To strengthen local and sub-national climate action planning, UN-Habitat provides systematic, step-by-step guidance through the Planning for Climate Change Guide and Tool, supporting cities, particularly secondary cities in developing countries, across the full planning cycle, from diagnostics and prioritization to implementation and monitoring.

UN-Habitat delivers technical assistance and capacity building for climate-resilient urban planning and design using the Urban Planning and Design for Climate Resilience reference tool. This solution helps cities integrate climate resilience into spatial planning, local development frameworks, and investment programming.

At the community and neighbourhood scale, UN-Habitat applies Community-Based Vulnerability Assessments and Action Plans to support risk reduction and climate adaptation, especially in informal settlements. This methodology enables locally grounded vulnerability assessments and the co-creation of climate action plans that inform city-level decision making.

At the city scale, UN-Habitat supports comprehensive risk analysis through the Multi-layered Vulnerability Assessment (MVA), identifying overlapping climate, environmental, and urbanization risks and translating these insights into targeted resilience actions and bankable projects.



Image 42. Aerial view of a tree-lined urban road with traffic. © Freepik, diegothomazini

Duration of support

The Support for implementing the Guiding Principles for City Climate Action Planning takes approximately **one month**, including two weeks of preparation, a one-week accompanied mission, and two weeks to finalise the assessment report.

Support under Planning for Climate Change, including the preparation of local climate action plans informed by vulnerability assessments and mitigation baseline studies, typically ranges from **3 to 15 months**.

Associated training courses or block seminars last one to five days. For Urban Planning and Design for Climate Resilience, trainings take three to five days, while comprehensive technical assistance projects supporting cities through planning and design processes usually run for around **12 months**.

Community-Based Vulnerability Assessments and Action Plans take **2 to 12 months**, depending on data availability and the size of the communities involved. Multi-layered Vulnerability Assessments (MVA) are typically completed within **three to nine months**.

When embedded in larger projects, UN-Habitat support using the MVA can extend up to **36 months**, covering stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and the translation of assessment results into urban climate action plans.

Previous applications

The Guiding Principles were successfully applied in Glasgow (**the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**), Lemon Grove (**the United States of America**), Vilankulo (**Mozambique**), Rajkot (**India**), Legazpi and Angeles (**the Philippines**), and Cuenca (**Ecuador**).

The Planning for Climate Change and the Community Vulnerability Assessment was conducted in **Cambodia** (Sihanoukville), **Fiji** (including Lami Town and three other

towns, ongoing), **Indonesia** (Makassar), **Nepal** (Kathmandu), **Papua New Guinea** (Port Moresby), **Pakistan** (Islamabad), **the Philippines** (numerous cities), **Samoa** (Apia), **Solomon Islands** (Honiara), **Sri Lanka** (Negombo and Batticaloa) and **Vanuatu** (Port Vila). Additionally, significant city-level climate action was developed in Latin America, particularly in **Mexico**.

The MVA tool was applied through UN-Habitat's RISE-UP Flagship Programme in fifteen cities across nine countries in South America (**Colombia** and **Bolivia**), Africa (**Ethiopia**, **South Africa** and **Madagascar**), the MENA region (**Jordan** and **Tunisia**) and Asia (**Lao People's Democratic Republic** and **Sri Lanka**).

The Urban Planning and Design for Climate Resilience: A Reference Tool for Local Governments and Planning Actors, was implemented in five cities in **the Philippines**, (including: Ormoc, Tagum, and Cagayan de Oro) enabling them to access and allocate financing to implement climate resilient urban design projects.

For further information

- Publications:**
- [The Guiding Principles for City Climate Action Planning](#)
 - [Planning for climate change: Guide - A strategic, values-based approach for urban planners](#)
 - [Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk - A Guide for Community Assessments, Action Planning and Implementation](#)
 - [Multi-layered Vulnerability Assessment - MVA](#)

- Case studies:**
- [Urban Planning and Design for Climate Resilience: A Reference Tool for Local Governments and Planning Actors in the Philippines](#)
 - [Municipal Strategy for Climate Action of San Nicolás de los Garza](#)

Tool: [Our City Plans Toolbox](#)

15.9
15.4
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F4

Protecting ecological assets in urban contexts to build climate resilience



Summary

Providing practical, accessible, integrated tools and solutions for local-level implementation of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) and urban ecosystem-based adaptation and management, including policy development, spatial projections of land-use conflict zones, biodiversity loss and climate vulnerability risk assessments, ecosystem services assessments, strategy and action planning, financing, and implementation.

By offering comprehensive support from community engagement to national adaptation planning, this solution helps city planners, local leaders, policymakers, and other practitioners leverage biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to make evidence-based decisions about where and how to develop, and enhance systemic resilience using a socially inclusive, nature-positive, climate-responsive approach to urban development.

Challenges addressed

The climate emergency significantly impacts urban areas, affecting infrastructure, basic services, housing, and citizens' livelihoods, health, and well-being. Rapid urbanization, population growth, and rural-to-urban migration exacerbate these issues, alongside escalating sea levels, extreme weather events, and rising global temperatures.

Changing land-use patterns, biodiversity degradation, and habitat fragmentation and loss further compound the crisis, particularly in the world's biodiversity hotspots. Effective spatial planning and urban land management, focusing on protecting biodiversity, preventing wasteful and dangerous land conversion, and leveraging Nature-Based Solutions, are essential to protect natural assets and enhance climate resilience.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a multidimensional, multi-scalar and multilevel approach, prioritising the most vulnerable populations, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides comprehensive support to cities in implementing strategies, policies, plans, and standards aimed at achieving integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation.

This includes restoring conflict urban zones and pro-actively guiding urban expansion while promoting and preserving biodiversity within urban environments through NBS that address environmental challenges and support diverse species and ecosystems alongside human development.

Leveraging a legacy of successful initiatives and collaborative efforts, UN-Habitat offers biodiversity and climate risk forecast planning, as well as technical guidance for preparing, planning, and financing NBS, and assists in designing projects and proposals.

This solution supports city governments and practitioners with tailored, practical advice and resources for integrating NBS into urban and spatial planning, catalysing climate-resilient infrastructure development, and enhancing individual and institutional capacities of local and national stakeholders.

Through these efforts, UN-Habitat helps urban stakeholders deliver integrated and inclusive climate action strategies, plans, and projects. Gained knowledge is also integrated into a comprehensive knowledge base, shared through platforms such as the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative, facilitating broader dissemination and application of best practices in urban resilience and NBS.

Duration of support

This solution can vary in duration, ranging from a **few days to several years**, depending on the specific needs and requests. Typically, outputs are produced between **one month and five months** after signing an agreement.

Previous applications

This solution has been delivered through several projects under the broad RISE UP portfolio, including projects funded by the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund, SIDA, AECID, United Nations Development Account 14, and the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund, spanning all of UN-Habitat's Regional Offices. Specific examples include:

- RISE UP – AECID, applied in **Bolivia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan, and Tunisia.**
- RISE UP – 2030 Sub-Fund, applied in **Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.**
- Adaptation Fund, applied in **Cambodia, Fiji, Ghana, Comoros, Côte D'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Pakistan, Solomon Islands, and Viet Nam.**
- Green Climate Fund readiness projects, applied in **Cuba and Costa Rica.**
- Pilot initiatives, implemented in partnership with UNEP, applied in **Bhutan, Madagascar, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Lucia.**
- Cities and Nature: Planning for the Future – Groundtruthing methodology, applied in **Costa Rica.**



"..Nature-based solutions (NBS) and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), especially when in partnership with the most vulnerable communities, can lower pressure points through reduced heat island effects, improved flood retention, and stabilized erosion-prone land, while stimulating socio-economic and, particularly, food security.

This brings the triple dividend of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, protecting ecological assets and biodiversity, and effectively adapting vulnerable urban communities and the built environment to climate change.."

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Former Executive Director of UN-Habitat and Former Mayor of Penang Island



For further information



- Publication:**
- [Strategy Paper on Nature-based Solutions to Build Climate Resilience in Informal Areas](#)
 - [White Paper on Cities and Nature: Planning for the Future](#)
 - [The Critical Role of Nature-based Solutions for Enhancing Climate Resilience in Informal Areas](#)
 - [Nature-based Solutions in Urban Regeneration](#)



Image 43. Participants collaborate on mapping climate resilient solutions. © UN-Habitat



Image 44. Mangrove planting in Lovobe, Madagascar. © UN-Habitat

F5 Territorial climate risk diagnostics

13.1
11.5



2/5



UNOSAT



Summary

The Provincial Climate Risk Diagnostics (PCRD) Tool is an Excel-based solution that offers a comprehensive approach for sub-national governments to assess and integrate climate risk considerations into their planning and investment programmes. It enhances risk analysis, supports evidence-based decision making, and fosters climate resilience.



Challenges addressed

The lack of comprehensive sub-national-level climate risk tools has led to inconsistent data and analysis across different levels of governance. This inconsistency hinders the effective integration of climate risks into development plans and investment programmes.

Additionally, there is a growing need for evidence-based Local Climate Action Plans and Strategies that can provide a structured and targeted approach to addressing climate vulnerabilities.

These challenges highlight the urgent requirement for a coordinated, multi-level approach to understanding and mitigating climate risks in development frameworks.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides robust technical support in implementing the PCRD tool, enabling climate vulnerability and risk analysis at the local level. This includes capacity building initiatives and specialised training for local government units, ensuring they have the expertise to apply these tools effectively.

UN-Habitat also offers comprehensive guidance on integrating climate risk analysis into planning and investment processes, ensuring that sub-national development plans and financial programmes are resilient and forward-thinking in the face of climate challenges.



Duration of support

Introductory sessions on climate risk tools and concepts can be conducted in a **one-hour** format. Extensive training on the use of the tool and capacity building on climate vulnerability and risk analysis typically lasts for **three days**.

For local governments seeking ongoing support, mentoring sessions can extend over a period of three to **six months**, guiding them through the full process of analysis, planning, and integration of climate risks into development programmes.

This flexible timeline allows UN-Habitat to tailor its support to the specific needs and capacities of each region.



Previous applications

This approach has been successfully applied in several regions across Asia, particularly in the provinces of **the Philippines**. Through the implementation of the PCRD tool, users have been able to develop Provincial Risk Resilience Road Maps and Investment Programmes for Risk Resilience (IPRR).

These plans have been integrated into Provincial Physical Frameworks and Development Plans, leading to more resilient, climate-adaptive governance structures. The impact has been a more coherent and evidence-based approach to managing climate risks at the provincial level.



For further information



[Tool: The Provincial Climate Risk Diagnostics \(PCRD\)](#)

Image 45. Mangrove-lined coastline houses in Sama Bajau, the Philippines. © Surigao del Norte Provincial Governor's Office



"..Risk-informed planning is critical for any region, and it becomes even more vital for provinces like Northern Samar that are susceptible to various disasters such as typhoons, floods, and landslides. With the help of UN-Habitat, Northern Samar was able to produce a risk profile that involves developing strategies that consider potential environmental hazards and risks. By identifying the risks in advance and working towards minimizing their potential impact, the province can safeguard the lives and properties of the community.."

Jay Keenson C. Acebucho, Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, Province of Northern Samar, the Philippines

SECTION 3 OUR MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter G: Integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investment and finance

This chapter presents the globally applicable and field-tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on **integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investment and finance**, the first means of implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan. Effective planning and management are fundamental to shaping cities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. As urbanization accelerates, cities and regions face growing pressures to balance population growth, infrastructure needs, environmental sustainability, and social equity through coherent and coordinated territorial approaches.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area provide cities and governments with practical tools and methodologies to **plan, design, manage, and finance sustainable urban development**. The planning and design solutions support evidence-based and participatory approaches that integrate global goals into urban plans, enhance the quality of public space, promote healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods, and guide spatial development.

In the area of local finance and economy, the solutions help cities develop financial strategies, enhance revenue generation, leverage land-based financing, and attract responsible investment through innovative mechanisms and partnerships. The policy, legislation and management solutions further strengthen legal and institutional frameworks, support coherent national and sub-national urban policies, promote urban-rural linkages, and foster inclusive metropolitan governance and civic participation in decision making.

This chapter includes the following sub-chapters:

- Planning and design.
- Local finance and economy.
- Policy, legislation and management



G1 Integrating global goals into urban development plans to guide urban transformation

- 17.9
- 16.7
- 11.7
- 11.6
- 11.5
- 11.4
- 11.3
- 11.2
- 11.1
- 10.2
- 1.4



Summary

Support and expertise to develop integrated urban development and statutory plans that guide urban transformation, reflect the New Urban Agenda principles, and further the achievement of the SDGs.

As plans guide the spatial development of cities and settlements, provide scenarios for projected growth, and identify future projects that cater to residents' needs, they cover sectors such as housing, transport, basic services, and social amenities.

Implementation of the plans requires appropriate legal and financial mechanisms that support the translation of plans into concrete action, generate revenue for municipalities, and clarify the financing mechanisms for public spaces and infrastructure.

Challenges addressed

The pace of rapid urban development, especially in cities, can lead to unsustainable growth patterns and inefficient land use, including urban sprawl, informal housing, congestion, and limited provision of basic services, social and recreational facilities, and infrastructure.

In crisis-affected or rapidly changing contexts, including migration, displacement, and post-crisis recovery, cities may also expand into areas exposed to disaster risks, such as flooding, landslides and other climate-related hazards.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat, through its Urban Lab, brings together expertise in planning, data analytics, urban economy, finance and governance to promote housing, land, and basic services, and supports city and county governments through Country Offices to develop plans guiding urban development in line with the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

The approach is integrative and focuses on key elements that can leverage the urban advantage for many, such as prioritising public space within a framework of urban density, mixed land use, social mix, equitable access to land and tenure security, and the integration of formal and informal spaces and systems.

In contexts where planning systems are not well developed or where local capacity may be strained, UN-Habitat plays a unique and effective role in ensuring that sustainable urban development systems are put in place.

UN-Habitat's support integrates climate-responsive solutions with human rights, social inclusion, participation, and gender-responsive strategies, such as representation in the process and approval and adoption stages by the council.

The planning process for this solution is itself a capacity building tool, and engagement with local actors is geared towards strengthening local authorities' ability to implement it in the future. Depending on the context and needs assessed, specific capacity building sessions are organized for different stakeholders, including technical staff, political decision-makers, and communities.



While UN-Habitat's Urban Lab is used internally by HQ and country offices, its solutions are available to external partners.

For more information, visit the below webpage:
[Global Network of Urban Planning and Design Labs](#)

Duration of support

The timeframe for developing urban plans varies depending on the context, data availability, and expected level of detail. The period to develop a statutory plan can range from **10 to 24 months**.

Other types of plans may require less time, although the consultative process can be intensive. Support at critical phases through coaching and specific inputs can also be provided to local planning departments.

Previous applications

This solution is relevant for developing contexts where local planning capacities are weak and urbanization rates are high, highlighting the need for integrated spatial planning. UN-Habitat has worked with over 50 cities on statutory plans that integrate global goals, principles, and agreements at the local level, including:

- **Haiti:** Cnaan, Les Cayes, Jérémie, Beaumont, Dame Marie.
- **Ethiopia:** Hawassa, Bahir Dar.
- **Kenya:** Moyale, Kalobeyei, Kisumu.
- **Comoros:** Moroni.
- **Tajikistan:** Khorog.
- **Guinea:** Conakry.

The Cnaan Structure Plan, developed under the Urban Development Initiative funded by USAID, supported the Interministerial Committee for Territorial Planning, the Unit of Construction, Housing and Public Buildings, and three Port-au-Prince municipalities in creating an integrated urban development plan after the 2010 earthquake.

It established a common vision, integrated government and NGO initiatives, and guided investment priorities based on extensive participatory planning with the Haitian government and the Haitian and American Red Cross.



"..Community participation has been one of the strongest assets of the plan. The plan has focused on addressing the priority interventions that are required from the community perspective to upgrade the informal urban structure of Cnaan and improve the lives of its residents.."

Ms. Rose-May Guignard, Senior Urban Planner, Inter-ministerial Committee for Territorial Planning (CIAT), Haiti

For further information



- Publications:**
- [Urban Structure Plan of Cnaan and Haiti](#)
 - [Kalobeyei Integrated Development Plan](#)
 - [Urban Planning for City Leaders: A Guide on Leveraging Planning for Urban Development UN-Habitat Urban Lab](#)



- Tools:**
- [Our City Plans toolbox](#)



Social media: [Urban Lab LinkedIn page](#)



Image 46. Infrastructure built based on the prioritised investments in the plan, Haiti. © UN-Habitat

- 11.7
- 11.6
- 11.5
- 11.4
- 11.3
- 11.2
- 11.1
- 10

G2 Rapid Planning Studios



Summary

The Rapid Planning Studio (RPS) is a 12-week 'rapid' planning process designed to quickly harness the knowledge of city stakeholders and identify actionable outcomes. It focuses on essential strategic elements to guide future development and investment toward sustainable outcomes.

Challenges addressed

Cities and municipalities in rapidly urbanizing countries rarely have the capacities to plan timely or to plan to scale for population growth, resulting in a shortage of available serviced land.

What UN-Habitat can offer

In this innovative solution, a process that typically takes six to 18 months is shortened to under 12 weeks. It disseminates UN-Habitat's approach and principles to technical municipal staff to rapidly build capacity, whilst running a three-day planning workshop to identify challenges, opportunities, and a way forward.

The RPS workshops integrate sustainable planning principles with public participation and social inclusion to ensure the needs and aspirations of the community are reflected in the plans and policies produced during the Rapid Planning Studio process.

The primary participants of the workshop are senior and technical municipal staff from planning, budgeting and economy, legal and regulatory, public works, and related departments.

The participation of national government representatives and local and/or international academic experts adds extra value.

The peer-to-peer learning approach brings planners and urban decision-makers together to reflect on and exchange their experiences as practitioners, while the learning-by-doing methodology creates an interactive workshop to address challenges in a direct, applicable, and functional way.

Upon completion, participants have the knowledge and tools to implement the full planning process. The RPS is described in a tested, detailed methodology that includes the participation of various thematic experts in urban planning, economy and finance, and urban legislation to jointly conduct and integrate the studio's results.

Duration of support

The RPS is a minimum **four-week**, maximum **12-week** process with sustained support, including preparation of materials and a **three-day** workshop that reproduces a full **6 to 18 months** planning process.

These activities include assessments of existing conditions, development of potential scenarios, and the design of presentations, posters, and brochures to be disseminated during the workshops, as well as the preparation of the post-workshop report.



Image 47. Rapid Planning Studio Workshop in Semarang, Indonesia, 2023. © UN-Habitat

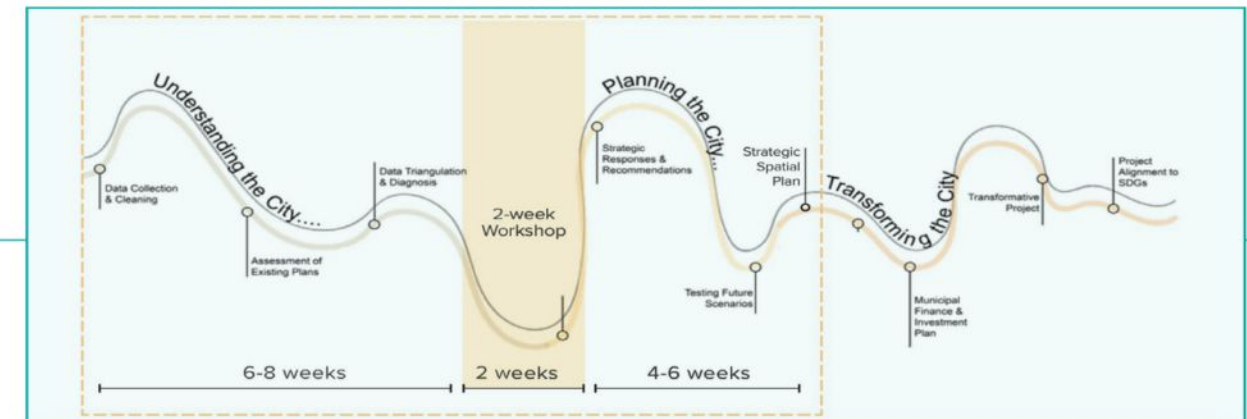


Figure 8. Rapid Planning Studio Process. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

The RPS methodology has been applied in **Kenya, the Philippines, Mozambique, Nigeria, Malaysia, and Ethiopia**, as well as in 17 cities of **Saudi Arabia** under the Future Saudi Cities programme. It has also been applied in Semarang, **Indonesia**, in collaboration with the WBG in 2023.

For further information

- Publications:**
- [Rapid Planning Studio 2023](#)
 - [Rapid Planning Concept Note](#)
- Case studies:**
- [Semarang Rapid Planning Studio Application](#)
 - [Rapid Planning Studio in Kenya Publications: Volume 1 and Volume 2](#)



Image 48. Participants inputs during RPS workshop. © UN-Habitat

G3 City-scale plan assessments

15.9
13.b
13.1
11
10



2/8

Summary

Support in analysing a city's master plan to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Deployment of the Assessment Tool will help gauge the strengths and gaps in existing city plans to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and align with the New Urban Agenda principles.

Challenges addressed

Incomplete or outdated plans without a clear vision, goals, and prioritised projects can lead to unplanned and unsustainable urban growth, exacerbating spatial inequality, urban sprawl, informal settlements, and environmental degradation.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat has developed the City-Scale Plan Assessment Tool to gauge the strengths and gaps in existing city plans and to identify actions to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets, align with the New Urban Agenda guidelines, and operate within the framework of the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.

The tool supports the self-assessment of plans by city governments, building capacity and advancing the SDG targets at the local level. The tool is designed to be accessible and to help city governments, ministries, consultants, and planning professionals assess existing or under-development master plans for cities and municipalities, particularly in developing countries.

The tool has the potential to become a digital interface, which can automate the results and show comparative graphs over time or across regions. Its unique value lies in its simplicity and ease of use, while remaining comprehensive for a diverse audience.

The tool includes elements of public participation and social inclusivity, addressed in the plan as scoring criteria, to ensure the needs and aspirations of the community are reflected in the plan so that the plan's goals reduce inequality and enhance inclusion within the city's spatial structure.

Issues of gender and age sensitivity of the plan are also assessed, considering specific gender and age dimensions of urban development, to identify possible areas for improvement.

The assessment report is an excellent input for local discussions on the role and impact of urban plans, and it lays the foundation for improved planning processes and the clarification of planning objectives ([see also solution F3](#)).

Duration of support

The training on how to use the tool can be conducted over a two-hour session, as the report and tool are clear, succinct, and user-friendly.

The assessment itself can be completed in a **few hours**, provided the assessor is highly knowledgeable about the plan being assessed. In the case of multiple reviewers/assessors, the process can be spread over a **few weeks** to average the scores and produce an unbiased assessment.

Previous applications

The City-Scale Plan Assessment Tool is suitable for small- to medium-sized cities in developing countries around the world that are in the nascent stages of a localized planning process.

The tool applies to city-scale plans and has been used in Kigali, **Rwanda**; Buraydah and Dammam, **Saudi Arabia**; and several municipalities in **China**.

It is currently being used in Mwanza, **Tanzania**, where the master plan was comprehensive in its coverage of sectors and was data-driven, but lacked concrete actions to guide the implementation of the projects identified. The ambitious visions of the plan did not align with the economic figures in the detailed analysis to ensure a return on investment for the identified and prioritised projects.

The city government was guided to revisit the proposed projects and conduct a feasibility assessment, and ultimately, the revised projects were better aligned to realise the vision of the plan while being economically feasible.

For further information

[Publications: UN-Habitat Urban Lab](#)

[Tool: Plan Assessment Tool for Rapidly Growing Cities](#)

Image 49. City scale shot. © UN-Habitat website/Shutterstock, Moiz Husein



G4

Urban and spatial profiling for strategic planning



2/8



- 17
- 16
- 13
- 12
- 11
- 10
- 9

Summary

Assessments of regions, cities, or neighbourhoods provide a clear understanding of natural and built environments, enabling evidence-based urban planning and prioritisation of strategic interventions. Profiling generates multi-sectoral spatial data, analysed through a participatory, area-based approach, to support national databases and inform recovery, humanitarian, development, and local government actions.

Using remote data, stakeholder input, and field collection, the solution integrates participatory methods and capacity building tools, fostering community ownership, improving social cohesion, and enhancing coordination and programming for effective decision making.

Challenges addressed

This solution addresses data scarcity and capacity gaps in data management across various levels. Often, socioeconomic and demographic information lacks spatial overlays, hindering the identification of areas with multiple deprivations. This evidence gap hampers data and knowledge management and impedes planning processes.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Urban and spatial profiling is a rapid method enabling the implementation of planning principles across different territorial scales. UN-Habitat brings together technical expertise in planning, data analytics, urban economy, finance, and governance to develop integrated profiles for cities, neighbourhoods, and settlements.

These profiles guide urban planning aligned with the SDGs and New Urban Agenda, emphasising participation and inclusion. Analyses use our tools to support local planning, ensuring equitable access, resilience, and sustainable growth.

Profiling also aids in assessing disadvantaged neighbourhoods and contributes to building a national database of comparable data. Neighbourhood profiles are shared via online portals, offering interactive geoportals with mapped data and a database of comparable indicators.

Through several of its tools, including the UNHCR–UN-Habitat Settlement Profiling Tool, UN-Habitat offers recommendations for prioritising effective investment opportunities for humanitarian actors in the short, medium, and long term. It identifies entry points for coordinating urban strategies and initiating priority projects across various scales.

Sharing this expertise early in such contexts enhances capacity within local and national governments, improving emergency response management, facilitating the adoption of recovery proposals, and accelerating progress towards development priorities and the achievement of the SDGs (see [solutions E3](#)).

Depending on specific needs, UN-Habitat delivers profiles alongside detailed diagnostic assessments, strategic recommendations, and action plans to guide sustainable development efforts.

Duration of support

The duration of support varies based on specific requests and contextual factors, such as the availability of information and collaboration with local governments.

The preparations and profiling process typically range from **2 to 12 months**, with additional time allocated to visioning processes and project prioritisation.

Profiling efforts can include tailored, integrated support to address complex challenges such as environmental resilience and socio-economic dynamics in the context of climate change and migration flows.

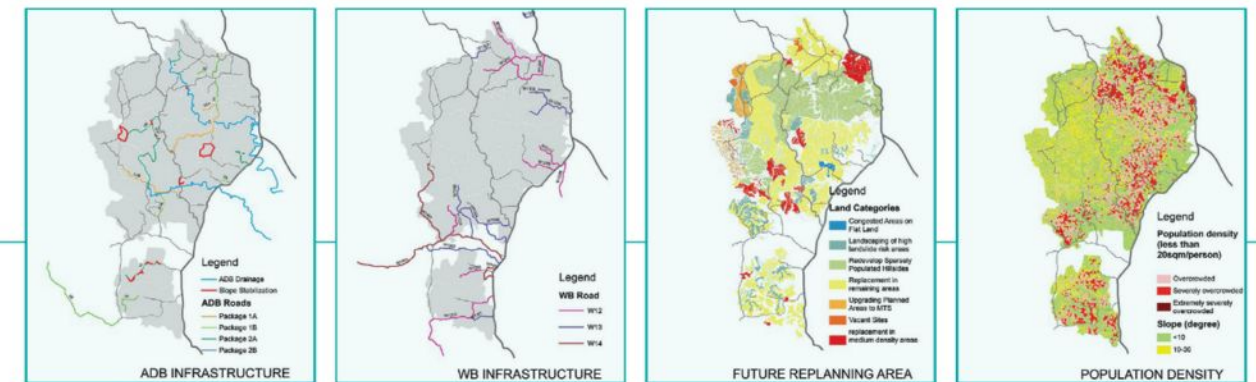


Figure 9. Infrastructure support in the Rohingya Camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

Urban and spatial profiling has been implemented globally across diverse contexts. For instance, profiling initiatives were conducted in **Lebanon, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Mexico, Indonesia, and Myanmar**. In **Saudi Arabia**, city profiles were developed for 17 cities under the Future Saudi Cities Programme, influencing strategic recommendations and action plans.

The profiles provided an evidence base to guide planning decisions in cities. In **Saudi Arabia**, city profiles prompted strategic recommendations, including re-routing metro lines in Medinah City to improve accessibility and social inclusion.

In **Lebanon**, collaboration with UNICEF and the RELIEF Centre enabled profiling of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, facilitating the sharing and comparison of indicators through an online geoportal (see detailed results in "Project Coverage" on the UN-Habitat–UNICEF neighbourhood profiles portal).

In Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**, wider-scale settlement profiling and spatial planning underscored the need for urban planning expertise in emergency contexts, influencing stakeholders such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNHCR, IOM, and other United Nations agencies.

In **Ethiopia**, city profiles informed evidence-based strategies and projects by spatially understanding key thematic development dynamics. In **Cameroon, Egypt, and Jordan**, profiling contributed to understanding migration and urban development dynamics, offering mapping of the urban areas in need of strategic interventions and investments.

The process led to the formulation of strategic action plans and the prioritisation of interventions and investments at the neighbourhood level through participatory data collection and validation.

Khorog City, **Tajikistan**, exemplifies an integrated approach to resilience-building in mountainous regions vulnerable to extreme hazards exacerbated by climate change.

UN-Habitat partnered with various organizations, regional and local governments to build socio-economically and environmentally resilient urban strategies.



"..The urban analysis, findings and recommendations presented here are incredibly important and need to be prioritised to achieve the goal that we are striving for. [...] And my hope in this regard is that together with UN-Habitat, partner agencies, like SECO and AKDN, and with the support of the government, we will be successful in transforming Khorog into a resilient city for future generations.."

Yodgor Fayzov, former Governor of GBAO (Regional Government),
Tajikistan

For further information

Web page:
 • [Portal of UN-Habitat-UNICEF neighbourhood profiles in Lebanon.](#)

Case studies:
 • [Integrated spatial plan and the Urban Lab approach in Khorog City, Tajikistan](#)

Planning, design, management and development of inclusive public spaces



Summary

This solution supports cities, local governments, and stakeholders in creating socially inclusive, integrated, connected, environmentally sustainable, and safe streets and public spaces, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups.

UN-Habitat provides a participatory methodology to engage communities, including youth, older persons, people with disabilities, and other under-represented groups, in the planning, design, upgrading, and management of public spaces.

The approach combines city-wide public space assessments, multi-scale strategies, site-specific co-design workshops, tactical urbanism, and placemaking activities. It integrates best practices from UN-Habitat's global network of partners and provides technical guidance, policy advice, and capacity building support.

Communities are engaged through both low-technology participatory processes and digital tools, ensuring inclusivity even in contexts with limited access to digital devices.

Challenges addressed

Public spaces are often diminishing and unequally distributed due to unplanned development, inadequate street networks, overcrowding, poor maintenance, and privatisation.

This disproportionately affects the urban poor and marginalised communities, exacerbating spatial inequalities and limiting opportunities for social, economic, and cultural interaction.

During crises, such as natural disasters, health emergencies, or social upheavals, public spaces serve as critical infrastructure for community resilience, providing venues for emergency response, essential solutions delivery, and safe social interaction.

Urban projects frequently overlook the needs of under-represented groups, which can contribute to increased social inequalities and weaken social cohesion. Addressing these challenges is essential to creating inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban environments that respond to diverse community needs.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides a holistic, multi-faceted approach to public space development, management and maintenance, including:

- City-wide public space assessments to evaluate access, distribution, quality, and governance of public spaces and inform evidence-based strategies.
- City-wide public space strategies guiding local governments through structured processes for planning, implementing, and monitoring public space policies.
- Site-specific assessment tools and co-design workshops, including the Block-by-Block methodology, enabling inclusive community engagement.
- Technical design and implementation of tactical urbanism and placemaking interventions to activate, upgrade, and improve public spaces efficiently and inclusively.
- Participatory public space design methodology, including exploratory walks, affective mapping, cloud of needs, brainstorming, model conception, and collective prioritisation.
- Management and maintenance frameworks for green and public spaces enhanced through tailored advisory solutions for cities and organizations.



For further information:
Global Public Space Network (GPSN)

Duration of support

Projects typically last a minimum of **eight months**, including: initial assessments and stakeholder engagement (first three months), workshop preparation (fourth month), production and proposal development (next two months), and final presentation and consolidation (last two months). Duration may vary depending on the number of spaces and workshops.

Previous applications

This solution has been applied in multiple contexts:

- Over 170 public space upgrading projects have been implemented across more than 100 cities in 50 countries.
- Context-specific, city-wide public space assessments conducted in over 40 cities to strengthen participation, inclusivity, and evidence-based decision making in public space design and management.
- More than 100 capacity building events were delivered on creating safer, more inclusive, and accessible public spaces.



Image 50. Participatory workshop to assess public spaces in Neuquén, Argentina. © UN-Habitat



"..Aesthetic changes are indeed important because they attract citizens and generate curiosity. This is necessary to change urbanism, to have spaces that are closer and more comfortable. This is the most efficient public engagement we have had for city development projects.."

Mr. Daniel Carillo, Mayor of San Nicolas de los Garza, Mexico



For further information



Web pages:

- [Global Public Space Network \(Programme\)](#)
- [Global Public Space Programme on arcgis.com](#)
- [The Young Gamechangers Initiative](#)
- [Block by Block website](#)



Publications:

- [Annual Report 2023](#)
- [CWPS: a Guidebook for City Leaders](#)
- [CWPS: a Compendium of Inspiring Practices](#)
- [The Block by Block Playbook: Using Minecraft](#)
- [PSSA: Guidelines to Achieve Quality Public Spaces](#)



Tools:

- [Global Public Space Toolkit](#)
- [CWPSA toolkit](#)
- [Her City Toolbox](#)



Image 51. Training for data collectors on the CWPSA tool in Sharjah, UAE, 2019. © Sharjah Child Friendly Office

G6 Planning for healthy cities and communities

11.7
11.6
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3.4



Summary

UN-Habitat assists urban leaders, decision-makers, public health professionals, and planners by providing integrated approaches to urban health. These approaches prioritise eco-social health and well-being as central components of development strategies.

The approaches aim to empower local authorities, policymakers, and communities to grasp and implement practical urban health principles customised to local needs.

By transforming urban environments to promote healthier lifestyles, UN-Habitat works to reduce inequality and foster environmental health, ultimately creating vibrant and resilient communities.

Challenges addressed

Cities are hubs for the spread and growth of communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases (such as asthma, obesity, and cardiovascular conditions), and accidents.

They also face significant health inequalities and risks, including air pollution, poor sanitation services, lack of clean water, inadequate public spaces, and unsafe transport. These challenges are rooted in inadequate planning.

However, there is a significant opportunity to address these health challenges through an integrated planning approach that considers broad health determinants beyond the health sector.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat offers an integrated planning approach for creating healthy cities and communities. It brings together expertise in planning, urban design, urban economy, finance, mobility, housing, and governance to foster dialogue and develop clear urban health objectives.

UN-Habitat translates health challenges into practical urban planning frameworks and design interventions to reduce communicable and non-communicable diseases, accidents, and injuries.

UN-Habitat supports cities by assessing, preventing, and responding to crises, especially during conflicts and natural disasters where diseases often peak. It focuses on sustainable transport, buildings, and waste management to mitigate climate impact.

It also provides innovative local finance mechanisms and solutions to create healthier environments and reduce the financial burden on the health sector. The UN-Habitat approach ensures access to land rights and provides affordable, adequate housing, reducing displacement and homelessness and contributing to overall well-being.

It facilitates multi-sectoral collaborations to integrate health considerations beyond the health sector, ensuring practical local actions to localize the SDGs.

Duration of support

The timeframe for developing an integrated urban health planning framework and design proposal can range from **6 to 24 months**. Training and capacity development activities can be completed in **two to four days**.



Figure 10. People doing outdoor activities and Exercising in São Paulo, Brazil. © UN-Habitat website, Shutterstock

Previous applications

This solution has been utilised in various urban contexts to assist cities in planning healthier and enjoyable cities at different scales, including neighbourhood (e.g. public spaces, pedestrian-friendly streets, active transportation), city (e.g. reducing air pollution, promoting urban well-being), regional (food systems, transport), and global scales (knowledge sharing and learning packages for training).

UN-Habitat has applied the integrated urban health approach in over 10 countries, supporting cities in profiling their urban health situation, providing planning and design solutions, and understanding and influencing policies in an inclusive process.

Recent projects include initiatives in **Colombia, Senegal, and India** to enhance the health and well-being of young people (Young Gamechangers Initiative), as well as projects like Greener and Healthier Cities in **Bahrain** and Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities in **the Philippines**, focusing on urban green spaces and marine pollution, respectively.

UN-Habitat has also undertaken impactful work in **Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt**, addressing diverse urban health challenges and fostering resilient communities linked to emergency preparedness. In Khorog, **Tajikistan**, and Mexico City, **Mexico** UN-Habitat supported an integrated planning approach to heat mitigation through public space networks and wind urban corridors.



"..Healthy, inclusive and resilient urban communities will only be achieved if our approach is a collaborative one, and one which spans across sectors, constituencies, towns, cities, countries and regions.."

Mayor Bernard Wagner, Belize City



For further information



Web page:
 • [Health directory of resources.](#)

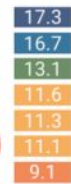


Publications:

- [Sourcebook: Integrating health in urban and territorial planning](#)
- [Compendium of Inspiring practices: Health Edition](#)
- [Implementing The International Guidelines on Urban And Territorial Planning For Improved Health And Well-Being](#)
- [Global framework for the response to malaria in urban areas](#)
- [The comprehensive multisectoral action framework - malaria and sustainable development](#)
- [Leveraging multilevel governance approaches to promote health equity](#)



Initiative: [The Young Gamechangers Initiative](#)



G7 Our City Plans Toolbox



Summary

A step-by-step methodology to assess, design, operationalise and implement inclusive urban planning processes to support national and local governments in the implementation of the principles of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. The toolbox is based on tried-and-tested methods for building local capacity and ownership.

It includes diverse, adaptable participatory activities and tools and is used at various stages of the planning process, enabling users to customise their city planning journey to their context and resources.

Through the methodology, different urban stakeholders will better understand urban planning processes that promote social and spatial inclusion and that can more effectively contribute to their city's vision, policies, strategies, plans and projects.

Challenges addressed

Complex urban planning frameworks and instruments, combined with weak planning capacities, can hinder the preparation and implementation of strategic plans, action plans, and projects.

For this reason, UN-Habitat has developed an incremental planning process that progressively supports urban stakeholders in building effective instruments in line with their legal frameworks, financial resources, and planning capacities.

What UN-Habitat can offer

The Our City Plans Toolbox presents four main phases that reflect the urban planning process: Assessment, Plan, Operationalisation, and Implementation. Each of these is broken down in detail in the figure below.

Different urban stakeholders can adopt tailored approaches to achieve sustainable urban development and inclusive communities.

This methodology has been developed and tested by UN-Habitat across multiple projects, setting the framework for national and local governments to strengthen their relations with stakeholders (e.g., national entities, investors, donors, civil society, academia, communities, etc.).

Our City Plans is available on an interactive digital platform that includes detailed activities, tools, resources, and other features to facilitate participatory urban planning processes across diverse contexts.

UN-Habitat provides technical assistance in the development and co-development of plans, including capacity building and knowledge sharing, adapting the methodology to different countries and regions, and developing tools to enable scalability.

The methodology follows an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient process for urban planning that aligns with global agendas and includes cross-cutting themes such as socio-spatial inclusion, climate action, urban finance, mobility, and gender equality, among others, which are addressed in different tools designed for this toolbox.

It also acts as a mediator and matchmaker between local governments with limited capacities and investors so that no place is left behind.

Duration of support

The incremental nature of the methodology enables the different building blocks of the planning process to be incorporated progressively as the government builds up the required basis and capacity for the additional blocks.

While a fast-track approach is usually developed within **6 to 18 months**, the aim of the methodology is to build a long-term, multi-year engagement with governments to progressively support the improvement and refinement of the different aspects of the planning process.

Previous applications

The toolbox was applied globally and targets small and intermediate cities in developing countries. However, the incremental process framework is flexible and could be adjusted to small cities in emerging and developed contexts, as well as large urban areas.

The toolbox's development was based on UN-Habitat's experience across several contexts and regions. Past projects and experiences included **Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mexico, Argentina, Central America, Nepal, Bangladesh, Viet Nam** and among others.

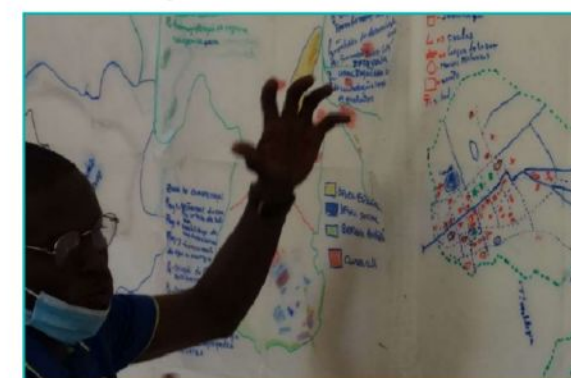


Image 52. Participatory Mapping in Bolama, Guinea Bissau. © UN-Habitat



Image 53. Participatory Workshop in Las Lajas, Argentina. © UN-Habitat



"..Our City Plans Toolbox has supported the Municipality of Bissau to bring together key stakeholders to forge a common and shared city sustainable development vision – Bissau 2030, which will guide its development towards a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future.."

Mr. Vladimir Vieira Fernandes, General-Director of Territorial Planning, Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Urbanism, Government of Guinea-Bissau



For further information



Webpage: [Our City Plans digital platform](#)



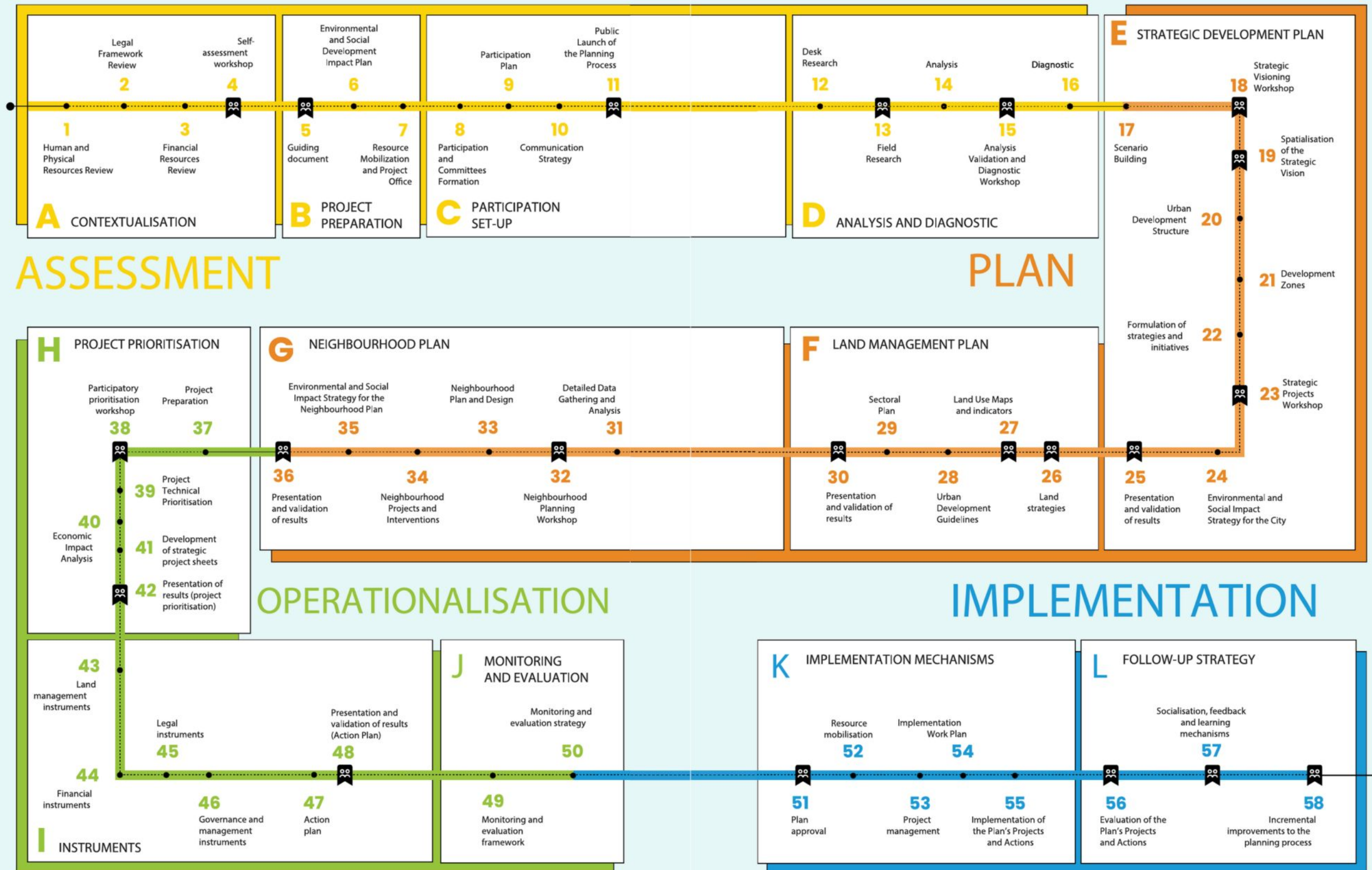
Publications:

- [Our City Plans](#)
- [Adaptation of Our City Plans Toolbox to the Central America Region](#)

Visit our digital platform!



Figure 11. Process roadmap of the Participatory Incremental Urban Planning methodology. © UN-Habitat



G8 Spatial Development Frameworks

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Summary

The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) is a methodology driven by a participatory approach, to support decision-making for policy implementation at various levels of government. It guides where, what, when, and how to invest, providing a strategic spatial planning process that ensures a smooth transition from high-level policy recommendations to concrete, actionable investments while building and reinforcing institutional planning capacity.

It promotes a better understanding of what occurs at different scales during a rapid urbanisation process, especially the regional and metropolitan scales. In particular, it looks at the territory in all its complexity, integrating its different dimensions, making a link with supra-national, national and sub-national policies so that they can be better anchored to the territory.

It includes four main phases (understand the territory, plan actions, prioritise investments, portfolio of priority investments), which are flexible and modular enough to produce useful and robust products and strategic planning recommendations adapted to a country's resources and technical capacities at the end of each phase independently.

Challenges addressed

Urban sprawl, socio-economic and environmental crises, conflicts, population displacement, growing informal settlements, and unbalanced territorial inequalities are all worsened by a lack of harmony between national budgeting and spatial planning, particularly in contexts characterised by conditions of fluidity, uncertainty and scarcity of data.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat is uniquely placed to develop Spatial Development Strategies that outline priority development areas, nodes, and corridors using a "Matrix of Functions." The Matrix of

Functions is a strong strategic spatial planning tool that aggregates functions of different natures and provides an accurate reading of the territory under analysis.

UN-Habitat can also recommend a Spatial Strategic Action Plan, which includes a portfolio of priority projects that can best achieve the strategic objectives of the region. The Spatial Strategic Action Plan is developed based on the Multi-Criteria Ranking Model (MCRM), a decision-making process using three criteria: the spatial relevance, the impact on the creation or improvement of services and functions, synergies or the multiplier effect. This model allows to identify priority projects to build a safer, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable territory.

Thus, the SDF does not create new normative plans or strategies but provides a strategic framework for adapting existing ones or developing new ones, ensuring their effective implementation in the territory. It includes methods that can be adopted and integrated into the countries' regulatory frameworks for preparing development plans at the regional and metropolitan scales.

UN-Habitat mainstreams coordination and facilitates dialogue on spatial investments among different tiers of government, engages potential donors, and involves academia to evaluate the suitability of proposed interventions.

Duration of support

Each phase is flexible and modular enough to produce robust products, tailored strategic planning recommendations, and build technical capacities.

Phase 1 (understand the territory) typically takes **one to three months** to develop a Spatial Development Strategy; Phase 2 (Plan Actions) typically takes **three to four months** to develop a Strategic Spatial Action Plan; Phase 3 (prioritise investments) typically takes **three to four months** to design the Integrated Investment Plan; and phase 4 (portfolio of priority investments) typically take five to six months

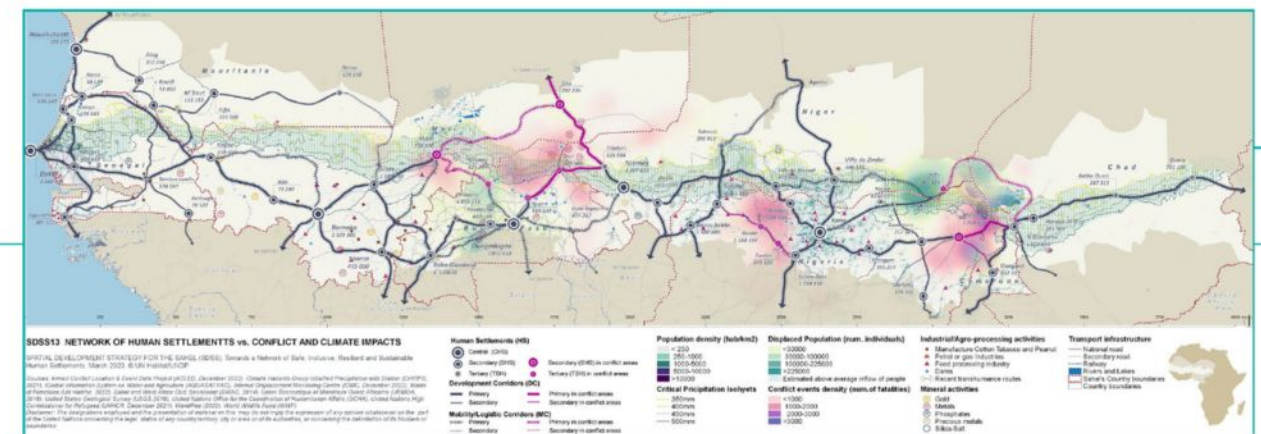


Figure 12. Network of Human Settlements vs. Conflict and Climate Impact. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

The SDF is relevant for developing territories at several scales and has thus far been applied at metropolitan scale in **Côte D'Ivoire** (Greater Abidjan) and in **Mozambique** (Maputo Metropolitan Area and Northern region, Inhambane Province); at regional scale in **Lao People's Democratic Republic** (Southern Province), in **Myanmar** (township), in **Sudan** (Darfur region), and in **Nigeria** (Adamawa State); at national scale in **Rwanda, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde, and Guinea** (Conakry); and at transnational scale in the Sahel (eight countries, including transboundary areas in the Liptako-Gourma area, and in the Kano-Agadez Corridor).

For instance, the Sahel used the SDF to attract structural investments to achieve a network of safe, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable human settlements in the region. Abidjan's Metropolitan Region used the SDF to support pilot initiatives to create decent jobs for migrant workers and their host communities living in the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.



"..This is the first time that such a spatial planning product could be carried out in this war-torn area.."

Mr. Ali H. Al-Za'tari, former United Nations Resident Coordinator of Sudan when presented with the Darfur SDF

For further information

[Publication: The Spatial Development Framework to facilitate urban management in countries with weak planning systems](#)

[Case study: Regional Spatial Planning Strategy of Darfur, Sudan](#)

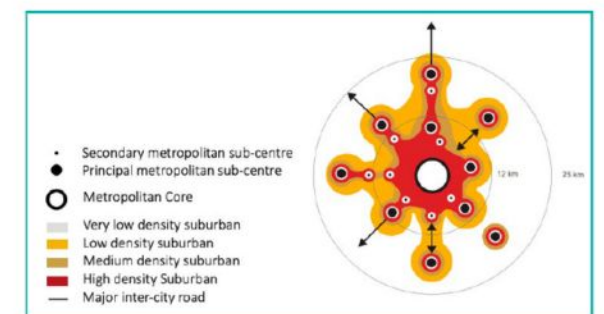


Figure 13. Traditional poly-centric city model, Johannesburg SDP. © Urban Morphology Institute

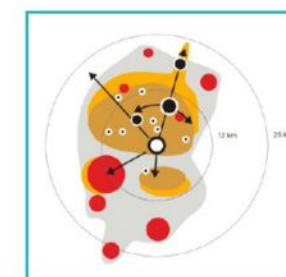


Figure 14. Inverted poly-centric city model, Johannesburg SDP. © Urban Morphology Institute.

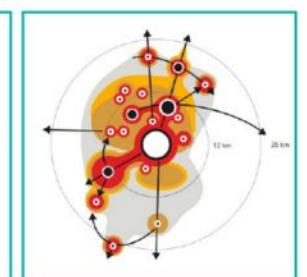


Figure 15. Compact poly-centric city mode, Johannesburg SDP. © Urban Morphology Institute



G9 MY Neighbourhood



Summary

The Neighbourhood Urban Design Guidelines aim to achieve sustainable urban spaces, localize the SDGs, and implement the New Urban Agenda. Rather than firm recommendations, they offer a new urban design perspective, viewing the city as a continuum from neighbourhood to city-region scale, highlighting the impact of integrated neighbourhood interventions on a city-wide scale.

Delivered through the "MY Neighbourhood" framework and based on extensive research and project experience, the MY Neighbourhood guidelines tailor sustainable design principles for diverse geographies.

They deepen links to the local economy, place identity, inclusivity, and urban resilience by translating international recommendations into localized principles that emphasise gender-, age- and disability-responsive, as well as climate-responsive design.

This ensures they adapt to the specific needs of each community and climate. The guidelines ensure adaptability across cultures, offering contextualised editions such as "MY Neighbourhood for Mountainous Cities", and potential editions (MY Neighbourhood for urban regeneration, MY Neighbourhood for post-conflict reconstruction, etc.).

Challenges addressed

MY Neighbourhood guidelines address challenges such as a lack of an integrated approach, siloed urban design processes, and de-contextualised solutions, which often lead to unsustainable urban practices.

Weak legal frameworks and incapacitated HLP institutions compound these challenges and hinder recovery processes.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Through "MY Neighbourhood", UN-Habitat offers a comprehensive technical urban design framework that supports an integrated urban design process, identifies synergies between sectors and interventions, and develops transformative, area-based strategies and urban design projects that spatialises the city-wide visions.

This framework provides cities with the mechanisms to replicate urban design guidance in their specific contexts. It helps monitor the outcomes of urban design interventions and aligns the city's performance against global indicators (SDGs, New Urban Agenda, etc.).

Additionally, UN-Habitat offers a package of techniques to facilitate active participation and ensure multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration through engaging activities such as the ideation matrix and "MY Neighbourhood" participatory game.

Through MY Neighbourhood, UN-Habitat also offers capacity building training and a self-assessment checklist for independent use.

Duration of support

Support for the development of Neighbourhood design guidelines using "MY Neighbourhood" can range from short-term workshops (**one day to a week**) to long-term engagements (**several months**, including design studios and a variety of participatory sessions), depending on the scale and depth of the challenges.

Previous applications

The Neighbourhood design guidelines are globally relevant and have been developed in various regions using the "MY Neighbourhood" framework.

In Central Asia, it led to the development of urban design guidance for the city of Khorog, **Tajikistan**, and Naryn, **Kyrgyzstan**, increased the capacity of local actors on integrated urban design, engaged youth, and popularised the subject of urban design.

The methodology was also piloted in **Bahrain**, **Türkiye**, and **Egypt** independently through local partners and tested for participatory design workshops and idea-generation exercises.

In Europe, the MY Neighbourhood methodology was tested in design workshops focused on inclusive urban regeneration, such as a summer school with Queen's University, Northern Ireland.



"..Since population in cities is growing rapidly and some countries do not have standards to implement community and social infrastructure this document is so relevant and needed!.."

Karolina Lepa-Stewart, Team Lead/Project Manager,
Henning Larsen

For further information

Publication: [MY Neighbourhood](#)



Image 54. Youth participating in public space design, Petrolina, Brazil. © UN-Habitat



Image 55. UN-Habitat conducts an ideation activity with youth in Khorog, Tajikistan. © UN-Habitat, Lambert Coleman

Image 56. During the implementation of one of the infrastructure improvement project in Afghanistan. © UN-Habitat



Sub-chapter

Local finance and economy

UN-Habitat offers a range of interconnected solutions that seek to kickstart a virtuous cycle towards improved service delivery and investment at the local and regional level.

UN-Habitat seeks to do so by working with local governments to assist them in developing financial strategies and providing local and national governments the tools to make informed decisions for effective financial planning and sustainable territorial development.

These financial strategies take a holistic view of the revenues, expenditures, assets, liabilities, risks and opportunities of local governments and provide guidance on how they should be more effectively managed to increase the fiscal space of the local government whilst ensuring overall economic, environmental, and social considerations are taken into account.

Increased fiscal space and investment in turn improves access to finance for local governments to ensure an adequate service delivery for all.

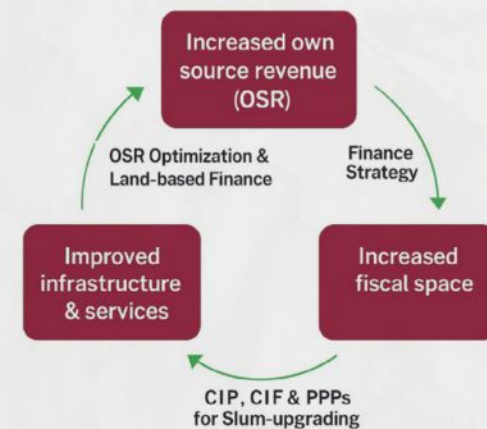
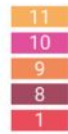


Figure 16. Interconnection and objectives of UN-Habitat's local finance and economy solutions. © UN-Habitat

G10 Finance strategy



2/10



Summary

The finance strategy guides local governments in effectively improving their financial position. In doing so, it seeks to ensure that a city can provide essential solutions and boost economic growth while maintaining financial sustainability.

The finance strategy supports cities in identifying key fiscal bottlenecks and guiding them on how to optimise the use of existing resources and how to attract additional external funding and finance, based on an assessment of the city's unique current and capital expenditure needs, as well as its assets and liabilities.

Challenges addressed

The finance strategy addresses several challenges to ensure strategic financial planning, optimal leverage of financial opportunities, and effective use of existing resources. While the full range of funding and financing sources should be leveraged to attract additional resources for urban development, cities cannot use all these sources simultaneously.

They must prioritise the instruments they seek to use based on their distinct expenditure needs and financial opportunities. Once a city has selected an effective instrument, it still needs to be able to leverage those instruments correctly.

For example, a city may not know with whom to engage to attract private investment in a project, nor how to present it to selected financiers.

Lastly, once the resources have been attained or optimised, the city still needs to allocate them effectively among expenditure options to ensure the greatest possible impact on its development goals.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides training and technical assistance to support cities in developing a finance strategy. In doing so, UN-Habitat leverages two of its own tools, namely

- A fiscal space assessment.
- The Local Finance Framework.

The fiscal space assessment is a simplified diagnostic tool to help cities identify the key bottlenecks curtailing their fiscal space. It is being digitalised to help cities track their fiscal space performance over time and facilitate benchmarking. By providing comparative data from other cities, the dashboard enables city comparisons that motivate action and cross-city learning.

Once local governments have increased their fiscal space, it is critical for them to consider how they can finance their infrastructure projects. This is where the Local Finance Framework supports cities in identifying opportunities to access external finance and linking specific projects to the appropriate financial or funding instruments. Duration of support.

Duration of support

The development of a finance strategy takes around **three months** depending on the size of the city as well as the availability of data.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat worked with six African cities (**Ethiopia**: Addis Ababa; **Kenya**: Nairobi; **Tanzania**: Dar es Salaam; **Rwanda**: Kigali; **Zambia**: Lusaka, and **Cameroon**: Yaoundé) to assist them in developing improved financial strategies. As a result of this work, cities improved their data management and their knowledge of public financial management.

The work also paved the way for more evidence-based and strategic decision making on financial issues at the city level and drew the attention of decision-makers to key financial realities that required urgent attention.

Lastly, it provided partners with a simple, user-friendly way of determining where external finance had realistic potential to be used for the provision of infrastructure and where cities still needed to work on their own readiness through own-source revenue (OSR) reform and public financial management (PFM) reform before being able to unlock external finance.



"..This is a practical and straight-forward approach to help us identify the key financial issues preventing us from improving our overall financial planning and management.."

Lusaka City Council



For further information



Web pages:

- [Cities Investment Facility](#)
- [Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis](#)

Image 57. During one of UN-Habitat's Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis Sessions. © UN-Habitat



- 17.3
- 17.1
- 16.6
- 16.5
- 11.c
- 11.b
- 10.4

G11 Optimising Own Source Revenue (OSR)



Summary

Support to cities and local governments to improve their financial position, enhance service delivery, and strengthen government accountability by optimising their own-source revenue (OSR).

In working with cities to optimise OSR, UN-Habitat offers a self-assessment tool, Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis (ROSRA), to develop evidence-based and strategic OSR reform plans. It also offers an online Own-Source Revenue course to build the capacity of local governments in managing OSR.

Challenges addressed

This solution supports local governments in addressing challenges in the space of local finance and governance.

More specifically, it supports local governments in designing and administering more effective own-source revenue systems, enhancing the accountability and transparency of government processes, and improving public perception and addressing corruption.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat offers two distinct services in the OSR space. Firstly, it provides a methodology and tool for the optimisation of OSR called the Rapid Own-Source Revenue Analysis (ROSRA).

The ROSRA tool draws on UN-Habitat's experience in optimising OSR across more than 30 developing countries worldwide. It is based on a quantitative gap analysis that estimates revenue potential for major revenue sources and de-constructs revenue leakage to identify root causes and reform entry points.

It supports local revenue administrations in better understanding and communicating the weaknesses of their OSR systems facilitates strategic, resource-efficient interventions and helps build reform momentum within local governments.

UN-Habitat also provides support and expertise in implementing action plans and ensuring that OSR plans deliver concrete results, including increased revenues and improved financial management more broadly.

Finally, the Online OSR Course, is designed to accompany, legitimise, inform, and support local officials seeking to reform existing OSR systems at the local level. The course is divided into five e-learning modules and covers topics such as overall OSR principles, best practices, diagnosing OSR issues, property tax reform, and user-charge reform.

Duration of support

Usage of the ROSRA online tool takes **several days**, depending on the availability of data within the local government. The Online OSR Course also takes **several days** to complete, depending on the user's dedication and pace.

Where local governments do not have sufficient data to meaningfully complete the ROSRA themselves, they can request UN-Habitat support to carry out a diagnostic of their OSR system, which can take **two to six months** to complete.

Bespoke, in-person training models on specific aspects of OSR systems are also offered by UN-Habitat and can take **two to four weeks** to prepare.

Previous applications

The ROSRA tool was used by over 20 local governments worldwide. The most in-depth application of the ROSRA took place in Kiambu and Kisumu Counties in **Kenya**. In Kiambu, the approach enabled revenue to double in one year.

In the case of Kisumu, the action plan was not implemented, but it helped create reform momentum by showing that the county had collected only 18 per cent of its revenue potential in 2018/19, equivalent to an annual loss of around USD 30 million.

By revealing that over USD 70 million in revenue could be recovered from arrears in property taxes owed by the 10 per cent largest landowners, the approach helped outline clear reform targets for future administrations and increase overall transparency in the local finance system.

The online OSR course was based on training delivered to over 100 local governments worldwide.

These trainings helped identify key challenges faced by local governments and enabled the design of a teaching methodology that directly addressed their most pressing issues.



Image 58. Vendor activities in the market. © UN-Habitat website, shutterstock

"..This ROSRA tool provided one the most accurate analysis of our OSR system that we have received until now and it is spot on.."

Mr. Eric Orangi, Former Chief Financial Officer, Kisumu County, Kenya.

For further information

- [Publication: Finance for City Leaders Handbook](#)
- [Tool: ROSRA](#)

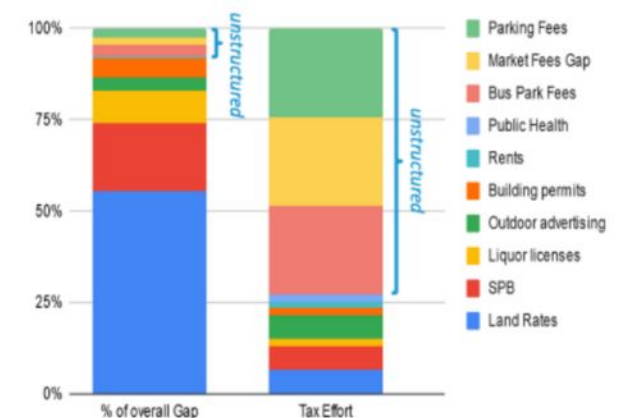


Figure 17. Revenue Gap by Stream vs Tax Effort (cost) by Stream. © UN-Habitat

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G12

Land-based finance for good governance and inclusive development



Summary

A flexible set of instruments that can be adapted to a variety of institutional and cultural contexts, aiming to enhance the availability of resources for local development through leveraging land.

These instruments strengthen local finances and the ability of local governments to improve infrastructure and services provision, with far-reaching social and economic benefits.

Challenges addressed

This solution supports national and local governments, residents, and international and local partners in addressing challenges in municipal finance for the delivery of infrastructure and essential services, as well as in promoting building of the social contract and good governance for all.

Compared with other commonly used revenue streams, land-based finance tends to increase the progressivity of the tax system, thus promoting equity, and has fewer negative impacts than many other revenue tools. It can help to establish reciprocal relationships of accountability between resident communities and government.

What UN-Habitat can offer

This solution engages UN-Habitat's innovative land-based finance tools, approaches, and a wealth of knowledge, both international and in pilot countries and cities.

UN-Habitat supports governments in adopting, adapting and implementing land-based finance instruments, taking into account the level of administrative resources required, and where those resources are located within the government.

This solution supports local governments in improving their administrative capacities on land-based finance and taxation, for example, through enhanced local land and

property valuation, improved collection of local property taxes, increased land registration, or improved regulatory frameworks for municipal financial management.

It takes an inclusive approach to land tenure across the full continuum of land rights and allows for innovative approaches, for example, allowing participation of occupants (with recognition of their occupation rights) as much as of the owners of the land on which people live.

This approach can also increase social inclusion, which is the focus of a current two-year project in Afghanistan and Somalia. Land-based finance can make funds available for essential services such as sanitation and electricity to contribute to a cleaner environment.

Duration of support

Orientation and preliminary policy and technical advice can be provided on a short notice. More detailed training and implementation guidance can be provided, within **two months** timeframe from inception to delivery. Concrete projects are **multi-year** by nature.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat, in partnership with other local and global actors, conducted trainings in **Iran, Egypt, the Philippines, Kenya, Canada, Haiti, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia**, and implemented projects in **Somalia and Afghanistan**.

In **Afghanistan**, for example, UN-Habitat supported 12 municipalities by using innovative land tools to survey and register all properties within municipal boundaries. In just two years, urban communities surveyed 670,000 properties across eight municipalities, and 2,000 occupancy certificates were issued to households in informal settlements.

Based on the updated property register, target municipalities collected USD 8 million in Safayi (*a municipal property tax*) from 150,000 properties over two years.

UN-Habitat supported Somaliland and Puntland authorities in **Somalia** in developing and enacting a relevant regulatory framework for municipal financial management, including a local government finance policy.

Together with local authorities, UN-Habitat established a Geographic Information System (GIS) property database in which data on the locations of properties and urban parcels were surveyed, catalogued, and regularly updated.

Across 15 districts in Somaliland and Puntland (**Somalia**) authorities collected a total of USD 3 million per year from property tax, which benefited both local authorities and communities, supporting road construction and subsidised health and education services.

For further information

- Publications:**
- [Where to start? A Guide to Land-based Finance in Local Governance](#)
 - [United Nations Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Land and Conflict](#)
 - [Leveraging Land: Land-based Finance for Local Governments. A Trainer's Guide](#)



For further information:
Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)



Image 59. Settlement reconstruction in Nias, Indonesia. © UN-Habitat

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G13

Innovative financing and PPPs for slum upgrading

2/1
 2/10
 UNCDF UNDP UNECLAC UNECA
 UNICEF UNEP UNESCAP

Summary

Innovative financing models involving national and local governments, communities and the private sector to advance slum upgrading. UN-Habitat implements and supports a combination of tools and solutions for financing slum upgrading:

1. Innovative financing tools and PPPs to support financing frameworks.
2. Community Managed Funds and setting up PPPs.
3. Market studies to identify innovations and investment opportunities for slum upgrading and prevention.

Challenges addressed

More than one billion people worldwide live in slums. Despite progress in improving slums and preventing their formation, absolute numbers continue to grow.

The magnitude of the slum challenge has been recognised globally and is reflected in the international development agenda, including SDG target 11.1.

Finance at scale is required to address this challenge, but available resources are limited. Companies and investors often face an insufficient enabling environment to develop modern solutions and affordable innovations for informal urban areas, which require targeted support and attention.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat uses a combination of innovative approaches to address the need for adequate financing of slum upgrading and prevention strategies.

Innovative financing tools and frameworks for slum upgrading and prevention: A financing strategy for slum

upgrading assesses the magnitude of need, estimates the cost of interventions, and proposes financing and delivery frameworks.

Innovative financing strategies are essential to ensure the strategic allocation of available funds, leveraging human and financial capital from national budgets, the private sector, investors, financing partners, and communities to achieve impact at scale.

By setting up Community Managed Funds and Public-Private-People Partnerships (PPPPs) for slum upgrading and prevention: UN-Habitat acts as an enabler, fostering partnerships among diverse stakeholders to establish Community Managed Funds and PPPPs for inclusive finance, linking businesses, communities, and national and international actors.

Working with governments, UN-Habitat also supports the formulation and review of policies that promote community-led interventions for slum upgrading and prevention.

Duration of support

The typical duration of support for providing context-specific, innovative financing tools and frameworks is about **six months** (including a participatory process in parallel to the development of national or city-wide strategies, design of national programmes and policies).

For Community Managed Funds and PPPPs, it is typically **11 months** (comprising community sensitisation and organization, training and capacity building for partners, neighbourhood planning and setting up of the funds); and for market studies, the duration of support is about **four months**.

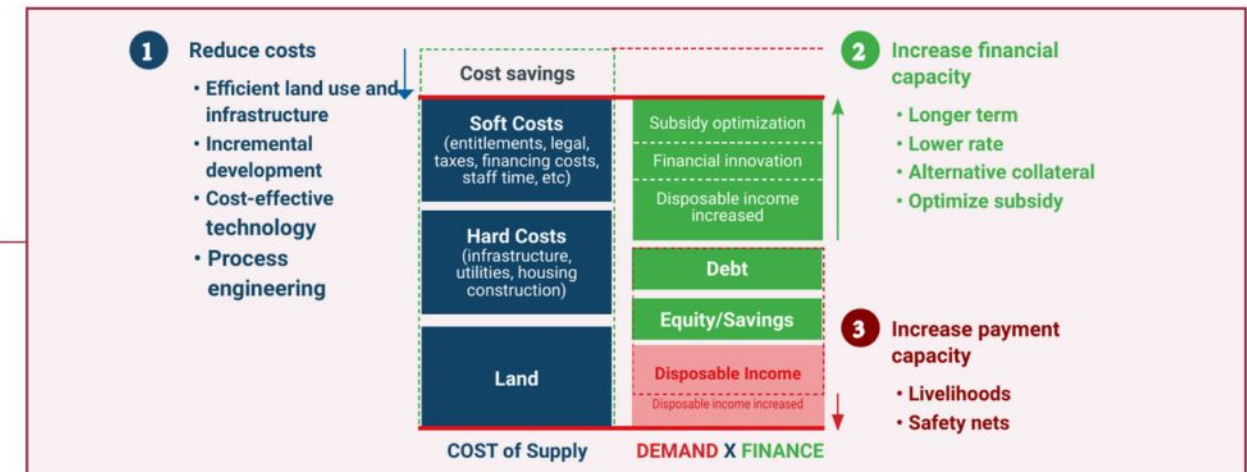


Figure 18. Cost, demand, and financing framework. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

This solution has been applied in numerous communities. 40 Community Managed Funds have been implemented in nine countries in Africa (**Kenya, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Niger, Senegal, Mozambique, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ghana**); and in two countries in Asia (**Sri Lanka and Afghanistan**).

Market studies have been conducted in **Kenya, Senegal, Nigeria and Cameroon**. Thus far, our financing framework has been applied to the development of City-Wide Slum Upgrading strategies in **Cabo Verde**, where the key principles of the framework have been mainstreamed to identify sustainable priority actions for slum upgrading at the city level.



Image 60. Implementing tools for participatory urban upgrading in Kigali, Rwanda. © UN-Habitat

"..UN-Habitat has strengthened the country's capacity on slums upgrading. This has enabled the Government to launch projects in about five cities on 1,700 hectares for a total population of 250,000.."

*Ms. Celestine Ketcha Courtes,
 Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon*

For further information

[Webpage: Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme](#)



Image 61. Água Funda Community Centre in Cabo Verde. © UN-Habitat

G14 Cities Investment Facility (CIF)



Summary

The Cities Investment Facility (CIF) programme is a multi-stakeholder initiative designed to address the urban infrastructure development gap while advancing the SDGs.

The programme seeks to unlock private capital investment in urban infrastructure projects in low- and middle-income markets by supporting ideation, design, financing, and implementation through a series of partnership-based instruments.

Challenges addressed

Recent estimates put the global annual municipal infrastructure funding gap at USD 15 trillion. While multiple factors contribute to this gap, a primary obstacle is the lack of investment-ready projects at the local level.

Local governments in low- and middle-income countries often lack the funding, institutional capacity, and technical expertise to prepare projects in accordance with international standards and the requirements of international financial institutions or potential investors.

What UN-Habitat can offer.

Through CIF, UN-Habitat provides three main technical advisory solutions to support a strong financial foundation for sustainable urban projects.

- First, through project sourcing, the CIF engages private-sector partners and government authorities to identify high-potential, high-impact project concepts for further preparation.
- Second, the CIF conducts pre-feasibility analyses for short-listed projects, including initial ESG, technical, and financial screening using established UN-Habitat tools, such as the WaCT tool for waste management infrastructure.

- Third, the CIF offers capacity building and advocacy, creating platforms for knowledge exchange, promoting CIF activities through global networking events, and disseminating relevant knowledge products to stakeholders.

By convening and preparing a pipeline of SDG-compliant, bankable infrastructure projects, the CIF directly supports the achievement of United Nation's 2030 Agenda, fostering economic activity and growth through urban infrastructure investments.

Duration of support

While capacity building and advocacy are carried out throughout as core activities of the programme, project sourcing typically takes **six months**, followed by a further **six months** for pre-feasibility (**one year**).

Previous applications

CIF received its first earmarked funding for project sourcing and pre-feasibility in 2025. Through this support, the facility carried out project sourcing for waste management infrastructure projects.

These funds are earmarked for **Morocco** and **Tunisia** which have previously had successful application of UN-Habitat tools in the area of solid waste management.

By convening and preparing a pipeline of SDG-compliant, bankable infrastructure projects, the CIF directly supports the achievement of United Nation's Agenda 2030, fostering economic activity and growth through urban infrastructure investments.

Origination	Country Analysis + Stakeholder Mapping	Project Criteria + Call for Projects	Project Selection	Project Concept	Public-Private Introductions
Duration	1 month	2 months	1 month	1 month	1 month
Parties	UN-Habitat Country Office	Key Ministries + Project Cities	UN-Habitat Project Selection Committee	UN-Habitat Project Officer	Project Cities + Private Partner

Figure 19. CIF Process Flow Powered by the Feasibility Funding Facility. © UN-Habitat



"..The Cities Investment Facility Urban Finance Masterclass is a critical platform for project developers and municipal representatives to explore innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable urban development. The masterclass enhanced my understanding of technical and financial project structuring and blended finance and will have a significant value add for the advancement of sustainable waste management infrastructure in Tunisia.."

Mr. Mohamed Wassim Gaied, Project Manager and Senior Engineer, Controlled Landfill of Sousse, Tunisia

For further information

[Webpage: CIF](#)

[Video: Intro video about UN-Habitat's CIF](#)

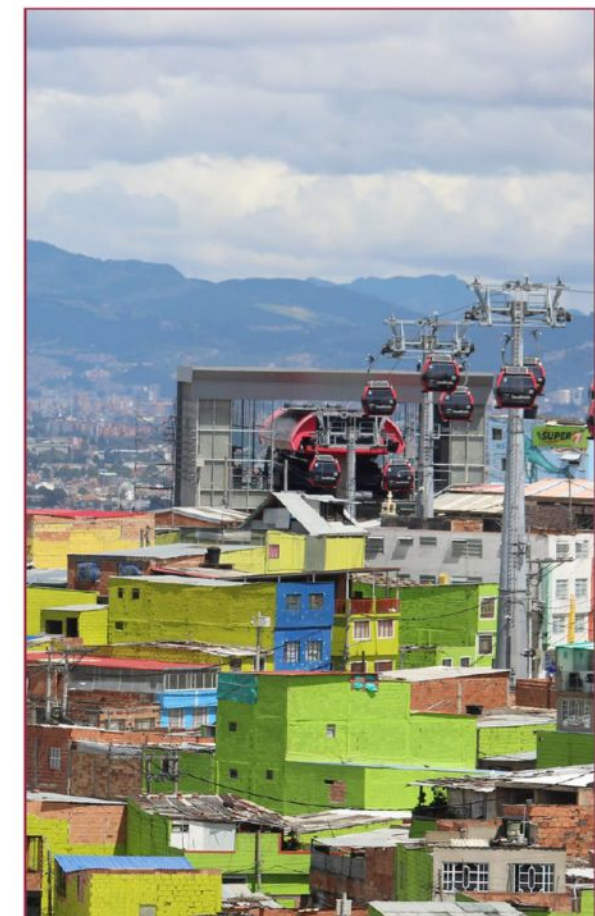
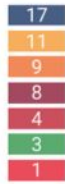


Image 62. City scene with different activities. © UN-Habitat/ Hector Bayona



G15

Spatially Informed Capital Investment Planning (SICIP)



Summary

Spatially Informed Capital Investment Plans (SICIP) are developed as part of a strategic spatial planning process, integrating infrastructure investments (projects), municipal finance allocations (budget), and spatial plans (development outcomes) to achieve spatially targeted, area-based investment.

They provide a strategic framework to prioritise and sequence projects and investments aligned with spatial and economic development strategies and the realisation of sustainable and resilient outcomes. SICIPs guide investment decisions to support SDG localization.



Challenges addressed

Urban capital investment planning shapes future cities and economies. Over USD 1 trillion is invested annually by sub-national governments, with developing countries spending around USD 314 billion. However, up to half of this investment is wasted due to poor targeting and inefficient allocation, risking USD 2.4 trillion in losses over 15 years. Improving funding prioritisation for impactful projects can reduce waste and accelerate SDG localization.

Major obstacles include a lack of sectoral integration, misalignment between national and local decisions, and disconnects between planning, project implementation, and budgeting. Thus, well-intended plans rarely materialise. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that integrates sustainable urban plans, the necessary projects, and municipal finance.



What UN-Habitat can offer

The SICIP is an evidence-based process that identifies, prioritises, and estimates a city's medium-term investment needs, considering existing infrastructure and service gaps, as well as projected growth needs reflected in the spatial plans and strategies.

The result is a clear indication of where and when projects should be implemented to achieve sustainable and resilient development outcomes, considering financial constraints. This medium-term projection of capital investment is key for allocating public resources and attracting private investment.

The approach is applicable to regional, urban and neighbourhood contexts. Through this solution, UN-Habitat provides support to local governments and partners in developing strategic spatial plans, identifying and prioritising projects, and aligning budgets with available financial resources by exploring the context-specific financial mechanisms.



Duration of support

Training to introduce the SICIP methodology can be conducted through a **full-day workshop (six hours)**. Training for technical professionals on methodology and application can be conducted through three to five days (six hours per day) workshops.

Full implementation of the SICIP methodology by UN-Habitat can be delivered in **three months** if the context (region, city, neighbourhood) already has a strategic spatial plan in place. If there is a need to develop the strategic spatial plan, full implementation of the SICIP solution can be delivered in **six to nine months**.



Previous applications

The SICIP methodology was fully applied in Naryn, **Kyrgyzstan**, and Khorog, **Tajikistan**, alongside Strategic Spatial Planning, to guide city-scale investments. As a result, the Investment Cards produced from this process were presented to donors, investors, and development partners. Consequently, the city began implementing prioritised projects to initiate area-based transformation.

The methodology was adapted to the regional scale and tested in Conakry, **Guinea**, to guide the development of detailed neighbourhood plans.

At the neighbourhood level, the SICIP methodology was applied in **Jordan, Cameroon, and Egypt** in close collaboration with local governments and municipalities to address the needs of migrants and host communities.

The full SICIP methodology and approach were developed and delivered as a training solution to the government and private-sector consultancy firms in **Indonesia**.



"..The evidence-based identification of needed projects supported our decisions in guiding the available local resources and at the same time supported us in directing funds to the right action in the right place.."

Nemeh Qatanani, Amman Municipality



For further information



Case studies:

- [Example of a SICIP application at the regional scale in Conakry, Guinea](#)
- [Example of a full application of SICIP at the city scale in Khorog, Tajikistan](#)
- [Example of a SICIP application at the neighbourhood scale in Amman, Jordan](#)



[Tool: Our City Plans Toolbox](#)



Image 63. Stakeholders brainstorming and sharing their perspectives during the vision workshop in Amman. © UN-Habitat

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G16

Territorial assessment for economic development



Summary

UN-Habitat support to governments in assessing their territorial economic strengths to attract investment and foster inclusive growth.

UN-Habitat's assessment methodologies promote integrated, inclusive economic development by leveraging agglomeration economies through enhanced inter-city linkages and territorially contextualised industrial competitiveness strategies. This enables sustainable progress, reduces socio-economic gaps and environmental challenges, and improves living standards for all.

Challenges addressed

In a context where local territories are affected by multidimensional crises (e.g., climate change, poverty, conflicts, etc.), addressing social and economic fragilities is vital to support communities and fulfil the 2030 Agenda.

To return to a path of sustainable development, territories require innovative proposals to reinforce positive city-to-city economic development and attract investment in industries that can generate quality jobs, ensure environmental sustainability and facilitate recovery and socioeconomic growth.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat's "systems of cities" approach delivers territorial assessments that analyse city-to-city connections, service provision, and economic ties between urban and rural areas.

These assessments can include additional layers, such as biodiversity zones, when relevant. Building on assessment findings, UN-Habitat develops policy guidelines for integrated territorial development and supports comprehensive territorial projects. Using the "territorial-industrial atlas" approach, UN-Habitat offers an extensive assessment of

industrial activities within a selected territory, combining industrial analysis with other territorial characteristics, including environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and urban-regional structures.

The production of an atlas of industrial and territorial perspectives provides a strategic analysis that identifies industrial sectors with high potential for future socio-economic growth within given territories.

It also recognises the emergence of specific regional corridors within the country that are highly suitable for the sustainable industrial development of strategic sectors, enabling a new generation of foreign investment that seeks to improve social and economic conditions, generate prosperity, and even mitigate negative environmental impacts on the local population.

Duration of support

Depending on the territorial scope, these resources can be developed in **9-18 months**.

Previous applications

The "territorial-industrial atlas approach" has been implemented in several **Mexican** territories but is applicable globally. The "system of cities" approach was carried out in multiple territories within **Ecuador, Bolivia** and **Colombia**.

This approach has shaped urban policies in Bolivia and at the sub-national level in Ecuador and Colombia.

The territorial analysis of Manabí, Ecuador, proved useful in enhancing the understanding of the urban-rural linkages in this province, providing clear insights that influence regional planning and development.

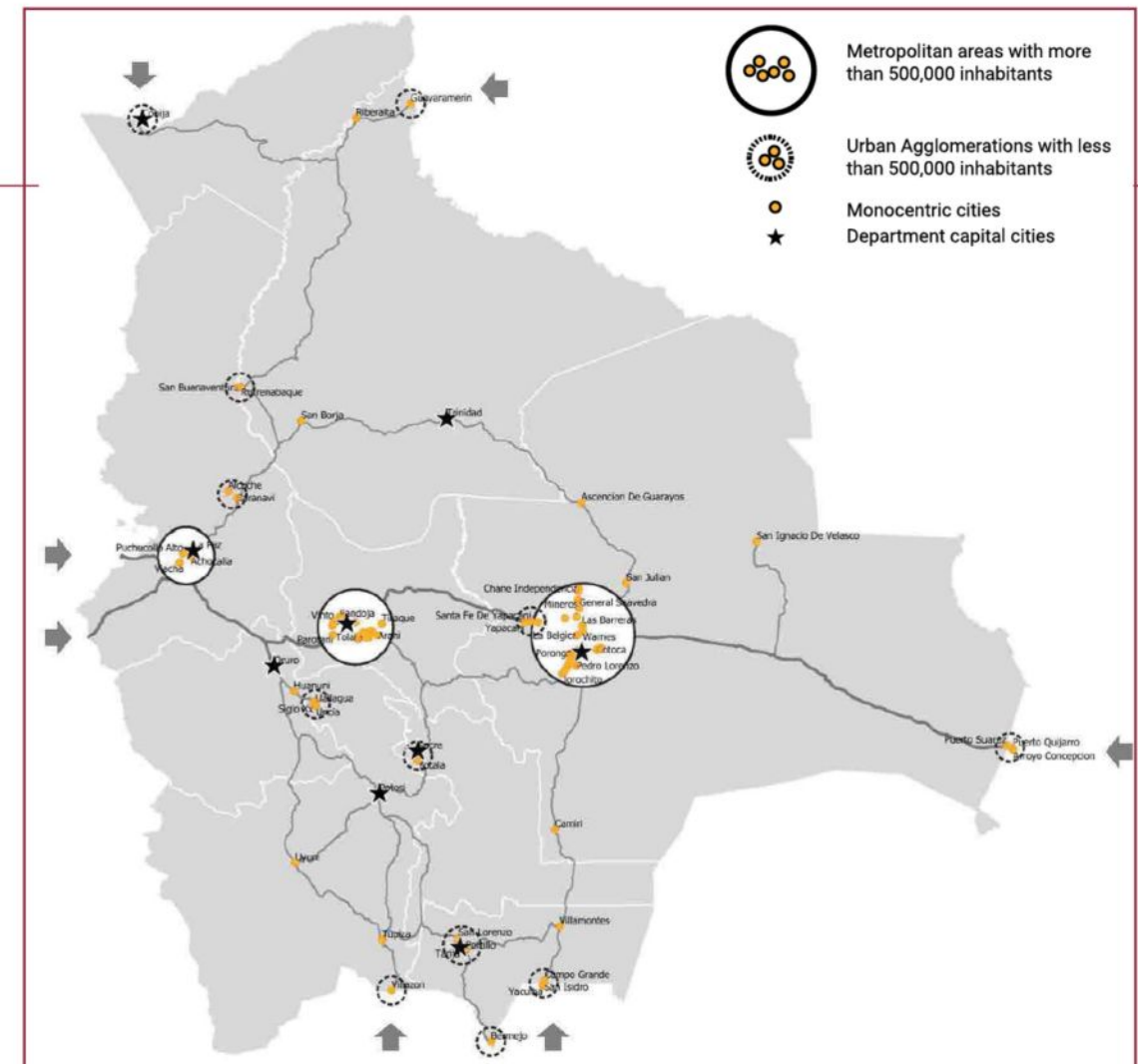


Figure 20. Map of the Bolivian city system. © UN-Habitat



".. The central axis of the Atlas is a proposal for social welfare, people's quality of life, environmental impact and gender equality. It contemplates sectors with high growth in the global market and identifies Mexico's potential to lead these industries, which in turn strengthens our commercial interaction at a regional level and promotes the diversification of our economy with the rest of the world.."

Marcelo Ebrard, Secretary of Economy of Mexico.



For further information



[Webpage: Industrial Atlas for Investment Attraction, Mexico.](#)



Case studies:

- [System of Cities, Bolivia](#)
- [System of Cities, Manabí Province, Ecuador](#)

Sub-chapter

Policy, legislation and management

G17 Legal frameworks to plan sustainable cities



Summary

Support to national and local governments in assessing and reforming their urban planning, legislative and governance frameworks to develop a solid context for participatory urban planning and rights-based approaches to development.

This solution utilises methodologies and tools such as the "Planning Law Assessment Framework", a diagnostic tool to benchmark legislative quality and identify the strengths and weaknesses in planning regulatory frameworks and training packages on legal drafting and regulatory quality, policy, legislation and planning law.

Challenges addressed

Ineffective implementation of urban planning laws and plans leads to unsustainable urban planning practices (urban sprawl, inadequate public and green spaces, lack of connectivity and walkability); tenure insecurity; insufficient supply of serviced land for the urban poor; insufficient municipal tax revenues; and vulnerability to climate-related events.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat is uniquely positioned to support national and local governments to overcome these challenges due to its knowledge of urban legal systems from over 70 countries in all major regions of the world, use of robust and tested legal assessment and reform methodologies, and access to a broad network of universities, research centres and legal experts.

UN-Habitat provides assistance to national and local governments in evaluating and reforming their urban planning laws and governance systems, creating a strong foundation for participatory planning processes and rights-based development approaches.

In addition, UN-Habitat provides expert guidance by formulating international legal and institutional comparative case studies to help national and sub-national governments with their legislative and governance framework reforms and monitoring and evaluation. An international benchmarking study offers valuable practices and evidence-based recommendations for modernising urban legal systems.

To ensure meaningful results, case studies are carefully selected to align with the legal systems and social contexts of the target country. UN-Habitat has developed a comprehensive methodology to identify relevant and successful urban development legal models.

Duration of support

The review of urban planning law and governance frameworks and the development of recommendations for legal reform are normally completed within **one year**. The development of reform options based on the needs of the national or local government can be completed in **one year**. Training can be delivered in a **one-hour** session to introduce a topic, or through engagements that build expertise among personnel over **several months to years**.

Depending on the research's thematic areas and topics, finalising case studies and comparative findings, including obtaining feedback from the beneficiary country or city, can take **three to four months**. Developing the methodology for the country selection process takes **one to two months**.



Image 64. Non-Profit Housing Workshop in Riyadh. © UN-Habitat

Previous applications

This solution has supported the development of planning laws and policies in some 40 countries, with positive outcomes such as:

- New planning laws in **Egypt** and **Oman**, through a thorough and participative legislative review process.
- Key recommendations for evidence-based National Urban Policies in **Bolivia**, **Guinea**, **Conakry** and **Comoros**. In the latter two countries, a climate-resilient Town Planning Code was also formulated.
- Legal options to guide the reform of the urban planning framework in **Saudi Arabia**; and city-wide (Khorog and Naryn) and national legislative reforms in **Tajikistan** and **Kyrgyzstan**, respectively, providing a novel and replicable approach for climate-resilient legislation in mountainous areas.

At the request of **Lesotho**, UN-Habitat and IALS undertook two comparative case studies (2020-2021):

- One on rental regulations: Rent Regulations in **Kenya**, **Nigeria**, **Botswana**, and **South Africa**.
- Another on housing laws: Comparative Analysis of Housing Acts in five Countries: **Bolivia**, **Botswana**, **Ethiopia**, **Nigeria**, and **South Africa**.

These case studies are currently supporting **Lesotho** in the development of the National Housing Bill.

UN-Habitat and Fordham University have supported the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** in revising its town planning code through findings of the Benchmarking Case Studies on Planning Laws in Five Developing Country Contexts: **Ghana**, **Kenya**, **Peru**, **the Philippines** and **South Africa** (2022).

The same institutions have supported **Oman** to draft a new planning law in 2023 through Benchmarking Case Studies on Public Participation in Spatial Planning Processes in Four Countries: **Australia**, **Chile**, **South Africa** and **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** and Benchmarking Case Studies on Planning Laws in Five Countries: **Netherlands**, **Morocco**, **South Africa**, **South Korea**, and **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**.

Viet Nam has also benefited from this solution by reviewing its urban development legal reforms, informed by inspiring practices identified in the UN-Habitat-Fordham Comparative Research on Urban Development and Management Laws in 11 countries: **Australia**, **Brazil**, **Chile**, **Kenya**, **Panama**, **Peru**, **the Philippines**, **Rwanda**, **South Africa**, **South Korea**, and **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**.



"..UN-Habitat has supported us to develop a modern and practical regulatory framework for housing legislation through case studies to analyse practices of other African countries on housing provision and effective management of housing funds.."

Ms. Mamphaka Mabesa, , Director of Housing, Directorate of Housing in the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police, Lesotho

For further information

- Web pages:**
 - [Urban policy platform](#)
 - [UrbanLex is a free global database which aims to improve access to the legislation that regulates the urban environment](#)
- Publication:** [Planning Law Assessment Framework](#)
- Case studies:** [Benchmarking on Planning Laws in Five Countries: Morocco, Netherlands, South Africa, Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)

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G19

Leaving no place behind: strengthening urban-rural linkages



Summary

UN-Habitat deploys the Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles to help shape and implement strategies, policies and plans for sustainable integrated urban and territorial development.

The accompanying Framework for Action helps build an enabling environment for more inclusive and functional urban-rural linkages and offers practical suggestions that can be adapted to diverse contexts.



Figure 22. The Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles. © UN-Habitat

Challenges addressed

The urban-rural divide often results in urban migration, poverty, and inequality, which in turn affect various areas such as economic development, environmental degradation, social tensions, and economic disparities among both urban and rural populations.

The interactions between urban and rural areas are multifaceted and dynamic, involving a range of factors and influences spanning physical, economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

These interactions include both contiguous linkages, where urban and rural areas are closely connected geographically and functionally, as well as telecoupling, which describes interactions that occur over long distances through flows of goods, information, and human and financial resources.

To effectively manage and address the complexities arising from these interactions, it is crucial to adopt context-based approaches that consider the urban-rural continuum and are sensitive to the specific characteristics and dynamics of each territory. A whole-of-government approach, which includes multi-sector, multilevel, and multi-stakeholder involvement, is thus encouraged in urban-rural linkages interventions.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat is supporting governments at all levels and other stakeholders in elaborating and implementing policies, strategies, and frameworks that enhance linkages among urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.

This is done through implementing the guiding principles of urban-rural linkages in the local context, to contribute to achieving the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

UN-Habitat supports countries by expanding knowledge, capacity development, advocacy and partnership building, technical advisory and pilot demonstrative interventions.

Knowledge includes developing norms, standards, and thematic guidance on urban-rural linkages, covering areas such as urban policies, SMART villages, biodiversity, markets, land, and food systems.



Image 65. Official opening of the 3rd International Forum on URL. © Songyang TV

Capacity development through training workshops, learning tools, courses, manuals, and sharing best practices. Advocacy and partnership efforts are advanced through global events, international forums, and newsletters, fostering the sharing of experience and awareness of emerging trends.

Technical assistance to countries includes the development of tools and methodologies for localizing principles and support to governments with thematic guidance and knowledge products on the dimensions of urban-rural linkages.

Duration of support

The support typically takes at least **two years**. The first year is dedicated to the assessment of the nature and extent of urban-rural interactions, impediments and enablers thereof.

The second year focuses on prioritising the issues to address, data collection for evidence, and devising an action plan for the recommendations. Subject to funding availability, pilot projects or initiatives could be implemented with partners in the second or third year.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat developed the Guiding Principles of Urban-Rural Linkages (URL-GP) with contributions from over 130 stakeholders across 40 international agencies. The guiding principles were published in 2019.

Following this, diverse thematic papers and tools were developed focusing on areas like food systems, nutrition, land, biodiversity, urban policies and transportation. More than 15 training workshops have been organized in seven countries, namely **Cameroon, Guinea Conakry, Zanzibar,**



Image 66. Launch of the Centre for Urban-Rural Linkages in Africa. © University of Nairobi

Tanzania, Niger State, Nigeria, Morocco, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, enhancing the capacities of over 500 stakeholders.

Best practices have been documented in three compendia with 58 case studies from 60 countries, promoting cross-learning and replication. The International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages (IFURL), held in **China** with over 600 participants over three editions, from 25 countries, emphasises global dialogue.

The Centre for Urban-Rural Linkages in Africa (CURLA), launched in 2023 at the University of Nairobi, fosters policy research and capacity building. UN-Habitat has also supported over thirteen countries in integrating urban-rural linkages into their urban policies, exemplified by Niger State, **Nigeria's** Urban Policy adopted in 2021.



"..The capacity development workshop and project at large has equipped us on how to utilise Urban-Rural Linkages tools that will help us in planning for our urban areas and the respective peri-urban and rural areas. This includes enhancing connectivity and equitable allocation of the services to minimize mobility to the cities from the rural areas whether for employment or better goods and services.."

*Mr. Mohammed Habib, Director Dept. of Urban and Rural Planning
 Commission for Lands, Tanzania*



For further information



- Web pages:**
- [UN-Habitat's Urban-Rural Linkages project website](#)
 - [International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages \(IFURL\)](#)

G20

MetroHUB: supporting sustainable metropolitan and regional development

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Summary

MetroHUB supports the development of an integrative approach for metropolitan management, encompassing metropolitan policies, governance, legal frameworks, planning and financing mechanisms, in the world's metropolises and regions.

MetroHUB promotes inclusive collaboration across sectors and levels of government and brings together relevant local stakeholders from civil society, the public sector, and academia.

Challenges addressed

As urbanization continues to intensify around the world, metropolises are becoming increasingly complex territories to manage. The lack of an integrated management approach can threaten territorial cohesion and sustainable development. MetroHUB's support for metropolitan and regional management specifically addresses:

1. Urban and regional inequalities through cooperative and integrated management systems.
2. Urban-rural disparities implementing territorial development approaches.
3. Service delivery in large cities, mega-cities, and metropolitan regions through multisectoral policy development.

What UN-Habitat can offer

MetroHUB is structured as a platform, joint initiative, and network of international experts tailoring innovative metropolitan solutions to local contexts, informing evidence-based metropolises' decision making processes, and strengthening the capacities of local and metropolitan actors.

The technical support delivered through this solution is directed at increasing the capacity of metropolitan and regional actors; drafting metropolitan policies and legal frameworks; strengthening governance mechanisms; supporting metropolitan and regional planning; and innovating new financing mechanisms.

MetroHUB also collaborates with partners to support the World Metropolitan Day (WMD) global advocacy campaign every year to create an occasion for local, regional and metropolitan governments to engage in collective action to build more equitable, resilient and prosperous metropolises, and to organize local observance events jointly with UN-Habitat.

Duration of support

MetroHUB solutions have diverse scopes and timeframes depending on local contexts and partners' needs and requirements.

For instance, the capacity development programmes are implemented as postgraduate courses of **one-year** duration, executive certificates of **three months**, targeted trainings of **one week**, or summer schools of **one week**.

Previous applications

MetroHUB has carried out successful training, field visits, technical assistance, normative support, knowledge exchange, and advocacy in many urban contexts across the globe, including **Argentina, Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Italy, Mali, Mexico, Paraguay, Spain, and Uganda**.

The MetroHUB initiative supports capacity development programmes, which have been implemented in Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Italy and Paraguay, in partnership with local universities.

They are customised according to local needs, duration and beneficiaries, and cover topics such as policy, governance, legislation, planning, financing mechanisms and advancing territorial approaches to the SDGs at the metropolitan and regional scales.

More than 300 people have been trained through these programmes, and MetroHUB has been acknowledged for its assistance to metropolitan stakeholders.

Following the success of its collaboration with MetroHUB, the Colombian Association of Metropolitan Areas (ASOAREAS) recognised MetroHUB in 2020 for four years of support in areas such as capacity development, metropolitan planning and legislation, advocacy, and best-practice exchange.

For further information

- Web pages:**
- [MetroHUB website](#)
 - [Urban Policy Platform](#)
 - [World Metropolitan Day](#)

Publications: [The Montreal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas](#)

Image 67. Quito metropolitan area, Ecuador. © UN-Habitat URL webpage

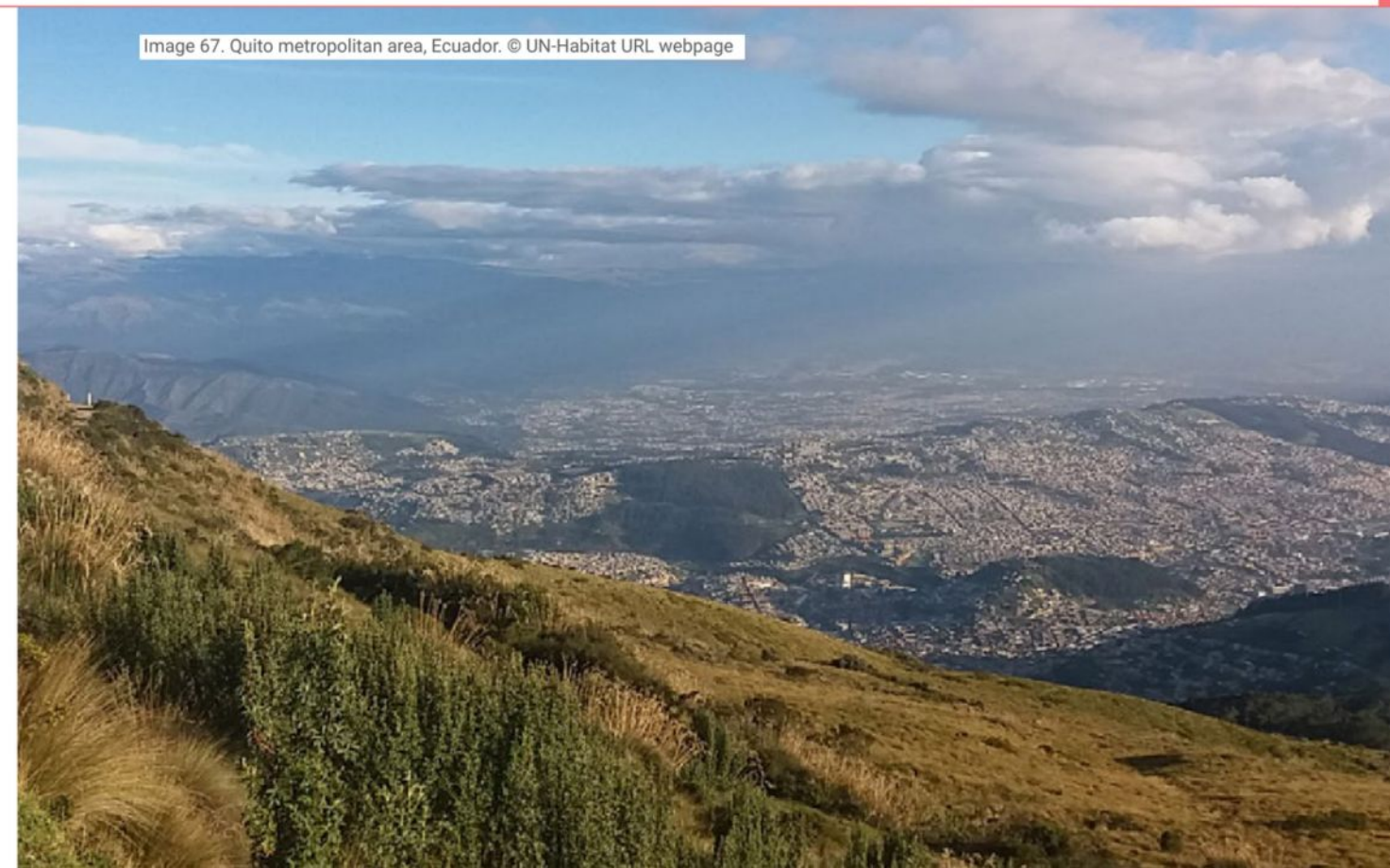


Image 68. Girls reading. © UNICEF/UN0491186/Vishwanathan



G21

Empowering children in urban policy and legislative decision making



Summary

This solution assists policymakers in prioritising children's needs and priorities in decision making, towards addressing challenges facing the growing youth demographic in urban areas, projected to be 70 per cent by 2050.

UN-Habitat and UNICEF's joint Guidance on Child-Responsive Urban Policies, Laws and Standards provides best practices for mainstreaming children's rights in urban development.

This guidance equips governments with recommendations for child-oriented laws and policies, aids community organizations in advocating for children's needs, and empowers children to influence issues affecting their lives, such as growing, learning, and playing.

Challenges addressed

Through partnerships with institutions such as UNICEF, WHO, and Save the Children International, this solution addresses the under-representation and marginalisation of children in urban development.

It emphasises actively engaging children in decision making and creating urban standards prioritising their needs. This ensures children's voices are heard and valued, leading to more sustainable cities for future generations.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Equipped with the guiding framework and best practices approaches to child-responsive urban policies, laws, and standards, UN-Habitat offers the following:

- Development of a context-specific, qualitative, and quantitative assessment of children's participation in urban development.

- Administration of the assessment among local stakeholders and conducting detailed diagnostic of factors hindering children's participation.
- Creation of a tailored step-by-step mechanism, based on the outcomes of the analysis, to empower diverse groups of children, including those with disabilities, in alternative care, migrants, refugees, conflict-affected areas, and slums, to participate in urban policy and lawmaking.
- Training and capacity-development sessions with various stakeholders on meaningful, long-lasting child participation.

Duration of support

This initiative solution is designed to last from **6 to 12 months** to comprehensively assess and address the level of children's participation in a specific context and provide tailored recommendations.

By offering these solutions, UN-Habitat (jointly with partners) aims to create sustainable models for child-responsive urban development that can be replicated across different regions, ultimately working towards a future where every child's voice contributes to building better, more inclusive cities.

Previous applications

This new initiative is currently being piloted in Ramallah, **State of Palestine**, and Kerala, **India** (with UNICEF, WHO, and Save the Children International) to promote children's participation in urban development processes.

By focusing on these vulnerable regions, the aim is to create successful models of child-oriented urban development that can be replicated and adapted globally.



"..It is time to cast aside all prejudices – that children are too young and do not have the knowledge and skills to understand the complexity of participation as we possess all necessary mechanisms to provide them with the ability to be active community members.."

Michal Mlynár, Former Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat

For further information

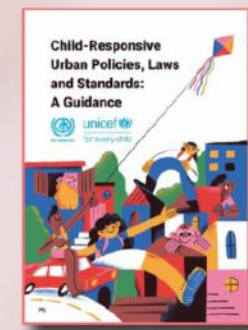


Image 69. Empowering youth in participation process. © UN-Habitat



Chapter H: Participatory multilevel governance and the localization of SDGs

This chapter presents the globally applicable and field-tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on **participatory multilevel governance and the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, the second means of implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan. Effective governance is at the heart of sustainable urban development. It ensures that decision making processes are inclusive, transparent, and accountable, and that all levels of government work together toward shared development goals. As urbanization accelerates, local and regional authorities play an increasingly crucial role in translating global agendas into local action and measurable impact.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area promote **inclusive participation, effective multilevel governance, and local implementation of the SDGs**. Under participatory processes, the solutions support co-creation of safe and inclusive public spaces, strengthen participatory accountability mechanisms for city policies, and empower women and girls to shape their urban environments. In the domain of multilevel governance and SDG localization, the solutions guide cities in embedding the SDGs into policies and projects; and build capacity for Voluntary Local Reviews and country-level localization frameworks. Together, these tools and initiatives help cities and territories to measure progress, foster policy coherence, and strengthen local ownership of the global development agenda.

This chapter includes the following sub-chapters:

- Multilevel governance and SDG localization.
- Thematic solutions for SDG Localization.
- Participatory processes.



Image 70. Dignitaries discuss multilevel governance for the localization of the SDGs. © UN-Habitat, Peter Ndolo

LOCAL 2030

LOCALIZING THE SDGS



Sub-chapter

Multilevel governance and SDG localization

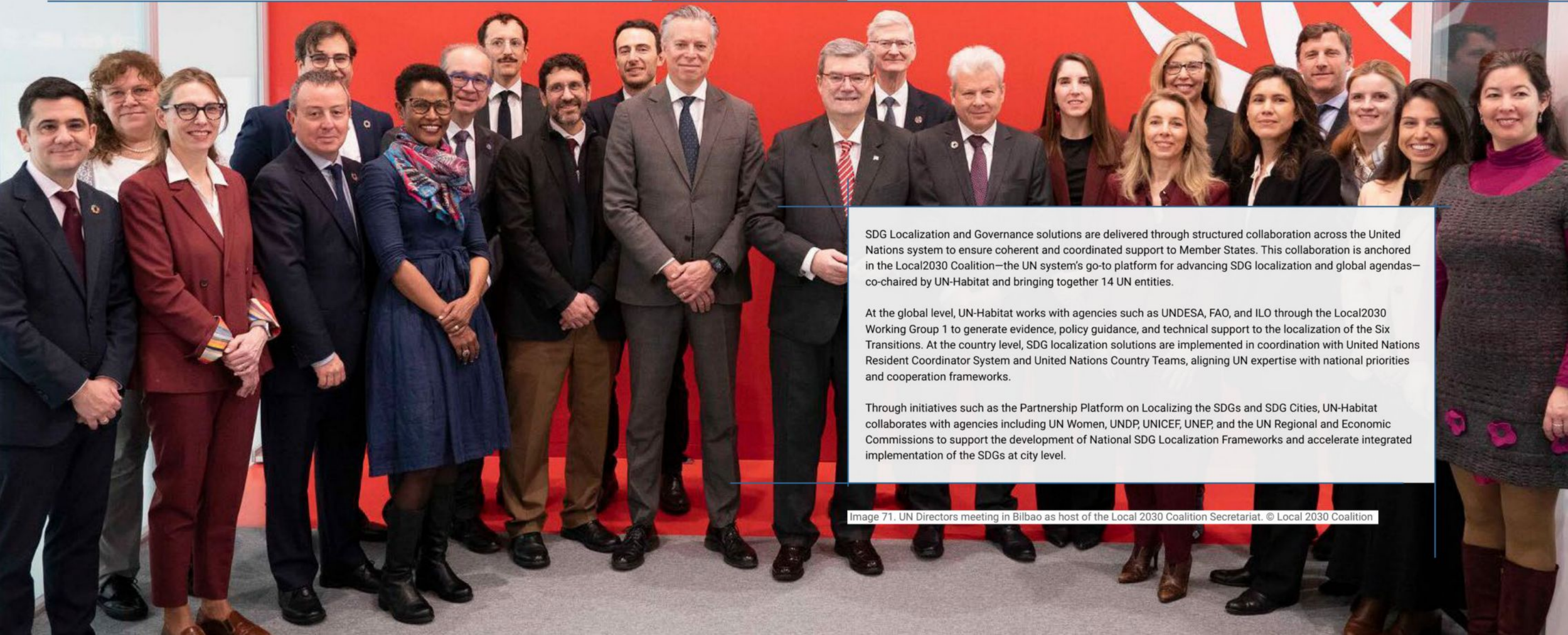
From the global to the local level, localization is the opportunity and operational solution to combine, multiply, and increase the impact of development action. Through localization, governments and stakeholders can come together and deliver real, tangible, systemic change for local communities, where development matters the most.

Housing is not just shelter, it is essential for health, education, dignity, safety and social inclusion, it is the roof of the SDGs – and without it, the promise to leave no one behind will not be fulfilled. In this context, UN-Habitat recognises participatory multilevel governance and SDG localization as essential to achieving access to adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

As co-chair of Local2030 – the United Nations system-wide initiative on localizing the Agenda 2030 – and with the intent of advancing the Coalition’s principles and vision, UN-Habitat leads operational support to countries, cities, and communities on SDG localization and multilevel governance. Key operational initiatives include SDG Cities and the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs, offering tested approaches and tools, fostering collaboration, capacity building, and peer learning for transformative change at the local level.

UN-Habitat’s solutions for SDG localization and multilevel governance leverage a broad ecosystem of enablers, including sports and action-research for integrated local development.

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SDG Localization and Governance solutions are delivered through structured collaboration across the United Nations system to ensure coherent and coordinated support to Member States. This collaboration is anchored in the Local2030 Coalition—the UN system’s go-to platform for advancing SDG localization and global agendas—co-chaired by UN-Habitat and bringing together 14 UN entities.

At the global level, UN-Habitat works with agencies such as UNDESA, FAO, and ILO through the Local2030 Working Group 1 to generate evidence, policy guidance, and technical support to the localization of the Six Transitions. At the country level, SDG localization solutions are implemented in coordination with United Nations Resident Coordinator System and United Nations Country Teams, aligning UN expertise with national priorities and cooperation frameworks.

Through initiatives such as the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs and SDG Cities, UN-Habitat collaborates with agencies including UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNEP, and the UN Regional and Economic Commissions to support the development of National SDG Localization Frameworks and accelerate integrated implementation of the SDGs at city level.

Image 71. UN Directors meeting in Bilbao as host of the Local 2030 Coalition Secretariat. © Local 2030 Coalition



H1

The Local2030 Coalition Localization Marker 2.0 and Localization Blueprint



Summary

The Local2030 Coalition Localization Marker 2.0 and Localization Blueprint are structured tools to strengthen the design and financing of SDG programmes at the local level through a territorial and systemic approach.

The Blueprint provides a modular framework for developing initiatives with clear value propositions, institutional alignment, and financing logic; while the Localization Marker complements this, serving as a diagnostic tool to assess the degree of localization in proposals across governance, participation, finance, and accountability.

Together, they support United Nations Country Teams, governments, and partners to prepare higher-quality, locally rooted programs that are both implementable and finance-ready.

Challenges addressed

Many sustainable territorial development programmes remain fragmented and disconnected from local realities, limiting their effectiveness and sustainability.

Gaps in governance alignment, weak stakeholder participation, and a lack of financing structures reduce long-term impact.

The Localization Blueprint and marker address these challenges by supporting governments, partners, and United Nations Country Teams to embed multi-level coherence, participatory governance, and financial localization into their programmes from the start.

They provide teams with a practical methodology to improve programmes' quality, strengthen ownership, and increase the potential for systemic transformation.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat serves as the permanent co-chair of the Local2030 Coalition, the United Nations System platform to accelerate the localization of the 2030 Agenda, which offers technical assistance to apply The Local2030 Coalition Localization Marker 2.0 and Localization Blueprint in the development of territorial programmes for the achievement of global development agendas.

This includes structured design sprints, bootcamps, and technical coaching to help national and local governments, United Nations Country Teams, and partners co-create proposals aligned with local priorities.

The solution also provides peer learning, diagnostic assessments, and tailored support to refine financing proposals.

The Local2030 Coalition connects teams with the Joint SDG Fund, Member States, academia, and private sector partners to expand financing opportunities. The approach reduces program design time and improves proposal quality, increasing the chances of securing funding and delivering systemic impact.

Duration of support

Introductory workshops and training sessions can be delivered over **two to four days**. Design sprints typically last three to five days, with additional proposal refinement and financing dialogues taking up to **three months**.

The Localization Marker 2.0 can be applied in a short time frame as a self-assessment, making use of an interactive, smart review to support effective local tailoring, or as part of a longer, structured programme design.

First piloted in 2024–2025, the methodology is offered continuously, with annual bootcamps and regularly updated modules to sustain peer learning and knowledge exchange.

Previous applications

This methodology was applied during the Bilbao Design Sprint in May 2025, hosted by the Basque Government, the Local2030 Coalition, and the Joint SDG Fund, with the support of the Government of **Spain**. Country teams from **Nepal, the Philippines, Jordan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Cabo Verde, Colombia, and Honduras** participated, alongside global experts and investors.

Using the Local2030 Coalition Localization Marker 2.0 and Localization Blueprint, proposals on food systems, climate resilience, circular economy, and inclusive financing were developed, resulting in USD 24 million in initial commitments and a potential leverage of up to eight times more.

The methodology also shortened design timelines from nine to three months. The solution is replicable and adaptable to different regions and sectors. Following the success of the Bilbao Design Sprint, the Bilbao Blueprint Bootcamp was launched as an annual platform to provide ongoing technical and financial support for the co-creation of local solutions that drive systemic change.



"..The blueprint developed in Bilbao will provide invaluable guidance ahead of the Fourth Financing for Development Conference (FfD4), helping us scale local priorities that deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and guide our work around the globe to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).."

Lisa Kurbiel, Head of the United Nations Joint SDG Fund Secretariat

For further information

[Webpage: The Local 2030 Coalition](#)



Image 72. Workshop during the Bilbao Design Sprint, Bilbao, Spain. © Local2030 Coalition



Image 73. Workshop session during the Bilbao Design Sprint, Bilbao, Spain. © Local2030 Coalition



H2 National SDG Localization Frameworks



Summary

National SDG Localization Frameworks, developed through the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs, strengthen coherence, effectiveness, and impact of existing national efforts for sustainable development.

They do so by creating multilevel enabling environments encompassing governance mechanisms, policies, and resources, driving the implementation of catalytic projects with the highest impact at the local level.

The delivery of National SDG Localization Frameworks is ensured through tailored technical support to local governments and stakeholders, focusing on enhancing their investments, planning and data capacities based on the SDG Cities approach.

Embedded in the Local2030 Coalition, the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs is implemented by UN-Habitat, in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE).

Challenges addressed

The National SDG Localization Frameworks aim to tackle the following challenges and gaps:

1. Knowledge Gap: Lack of information and disaggregated data, limiting the understanding of challenges and hindering progress tracking at all levels.
2. Coherence and Decision making Gap: Disconnect between national and local policies reducing coherence, effectiveness and overall impact of sustainable development efforts.
3. Implementation Gap: Limited technical, human and funding resources at the local level, weakening overall national delivery and efforts to advance progress and sustainable development.

What UN-Habitat can offer

The Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs is an operational initiative jointly promoted by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) and UN-Habitat aimed at accelerating SDG localization at the country level.

Anchored in the principles of multilevel governance and policy coherence for sustainable development, it supports countries in designing National SDG Localization Frameworks: the comprehensive architecture of policies, mechanisms, initiatives, and financing needed to localize national priorities and transform them into real, transformative results on the ground.

Embedded in the Local2030 Coalition and guided by the Localization Blueprint, National SDG Localization Frameworks adopt a systemic approach supporting national and local governments to convene and take collective action toward shared development priorities, ultimately enabling the design and implementation of catalytic, high-impact projects at the local level.

The delivery of the Frameworks is anchored in empowered institutions and strengthened capacities of local governments and stakeholders, focusing on enhancing their investment, planning, and data capabilities in line with the SDG Cities approach.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) are a cornerstone of National SDG Localization Frameworks and the Partnership Platform's broader support to local and national governments.

Duration of support

From **1.5 to 3 years**. The duration of the suggested support depends strongly on the existing country governance and policy structures as well as the existing data, planning and finance capacities at both the national and local levels.

Previous applications

Senegal and Tunisia are the pioneering countries testing and advancing the first National SDG Localization Frameworks. Nine other countries have signed Letters of Intent to join the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs as partner countries and working to build the foundations of their Frameworks, including **Brazil, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, Jordan, Nepal and Zambia**.

At the local level, solutions and technical support build on the SDG Cities approach, tested and strengthened over the past years with partners across more than 30 countries.



"..Decentralization must be a model of success - we need to pursue dialogue through a participatory approach with citizens, and strengthen the skills of local authorities to find fair, sustainable solutions for the future of our territories.."

Hon. Moussa Bala Fofana, Minister of Urban Development, Local Governments and Territorial Planning, Senegal

For further information

[Webpage: SDG Localization Partnership Platform](#)



Image 74. Partnership Platform scoping in Senegal. © UN-Habitat



Image 75. Partnership Platform scoping in Senegal. © UN-Habitat



Image 76. Partnership Platform scoping in Tunisia. © UN-Habitat



Image 77. Special Event on Multilevel Governance at the UN-Habitat Assembly. © UN-Habitat



H3 SDG Cities: city development made easy



Summary

SDG Cities is UN-Habitat's corporate approach for sustainable urban development, combining UN-Habitat's solutions for cities under a unified framework. Built by cities, for cities, it offers a demand-driven, practical approach to simplifying complex development processes and providing support across three tracks: data, planning, and investments.

SDG Cities hence provides cities with a clear roadmap for strengthening institutional capacities and turning policies into investment-ready projects, through the SDGs.

SDG Cities connects a Global Community of more than 180 cities across 40 countries, providing a unique platform for peer learning and partnership building.

Challenges addressed

Cities face three main, interconnected challenges in sustainable development:

1. **Data Gap:** Insufficient, inconsistent, or siloed local data limits evidence-based planning and SDG monitoring.
2. **Capacity & Coordination Gap:** Limited institutional and technical capacities, coupled with weak multilevel governance, hinder coherent planning and delivery.
3. **Participation & Implementation Gap:** Inadequate stakeholder engagement and difficulties in translating plans into investment-ready projects slow progress.

SDG Cities tackles these gaps through a structured methodology that strengthens data systems, builds local capacities, promotes inclusive planning, and supports cities to develop actionable, financeable pathways for sustainable and resilient urban development.

For further information:
SDG Cities Global Community

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat, as the focal point for sustainable urban development and human settlements, leverages its mandate, expertise, and global networks to help local governments translate the SDGs into actionable strategies, inclusive planning processes, and roadmaps toward investment-ready projects.

UN-Habitat provides guidance documents, tools, and practical resources, and offers hands-on technical backstopping across all phases: onboarding, data, planning, and investment, including for participatory diagnostics, Action-Oriented VLRs, capacity building workshops, stakeholder engagement, facilitation of multilevel governance and data collection, analysis, and visualisation.

Anchored in partnerships and the Local2030 Coalition, the agency also promotes peer learning, strategic alignment with national priorities, and global advocacy, enabling cities to implement coherent, inclusive, and resilient development strategies that advance the 2030 Agenda while addressing inequalities, vulnerabilities, and climate challenges.

This is also implemented through the SDG Cities Global Community, which provides a city-to-city networking space where cities interact, build partnerships, and strengthen capacities.

Duration of support

From **6 to 18 months**. The duration of support under the SDG Cities Initiative strongly depends on each city's context, existing processes, and capacities. The initiative is modular and demand-driven, allowing cities to engage with the components most relevant to their needs.

Cities with limited prior engagement or official data may take up to **18 months** to complete the full SDG Cities process, from onboarding to investment roadmaps.

Previous applications

SDG Cities has been applied across more than 30 countries and 180 cities. Some cities have focused primarily on producing VLRs, while others have engaged in the full SDG Cities process. Concrete impact examples include:

Penang, Malaysia: Penang strengthened its strategic planning by integrating SDG diagnostics into the Penang Bay Strategic Plan. The city used the SDG Cities workshops to improve data quality and refine priorities, contributing to a more coherent long-term development strategy for a world-heritage, multi-level urban region.

Madinah, Saudi Arabia: Madinah established a comprehensive SDG-linked urban observatory that tracks indicators, targets, and financial data across sectors. This enabled evidence-based planning, informed its VLR development, and helped align local priorities with national ambitions, becoming a model for other Saudi cities.

Mafra, Portugal: Mafra advanced its financial strategy to ensure projects align with SDG priorities, budget availability, and long-term fiscal planning, turning VLR recommendations into investment-ready proposals and inspiring replication in six other cities.



"..The importance of the initiative of SDG Cities is that it provides a platform exchange with other governments locals around the world to learn and generate shared experiences.."

Maikol Porras Morales, former Mayor, Sarchí, Costa Rica

"..SDG Cities offers a holistic and demand-driven approach, aimed at making things easy for cities- simplifying complex urban development processes and enhancing local action to accelerate cities' pathway towards inclusive prosperity.."

Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director, UN-Habitat

For further information

- Web pages:**
- [SDG Localization web page](#)
 - [Join the SDG Cities Global Community](#)
 - [UN-Habitat VLR Repository](#)

- Publications:**
- [Action-Oriented VLR Methodology](#)
 - [VLR Guidelines Vol.1](#)
 - [VLR Guidelines Vol.2](#)



Image 78. SDG Cities Global Conference 2025. © UN-Habitat



Image 79. SDG Cities Lusophone Cities Seminar. © UN-Habitat



Image 80. SDG Cities VLR process- Stakeholder forum in Chandragiri, Nepal. © UN-Habitat



H4

Voluntary Local Reviews: an action-oriented process for local SDG implementation



Summary

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) are a city-led process to advance SDG localization and implementation, the cornerstone of the SDG Cities approach. Increasingly adopted by local and regional governments worldwide, VLRs provide a structured pathway to align data collection, strategic planning, and budgeting with the SDGs.

UN-Habitat's Action-Oriented VLR methodology links local SDG monitoring and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework to evidence-based recommendations, enabling cities to translate data into action.

By fostering horizontal and vertical policy coherence, VLRs help cities advance transformative, locally owned SDG implementation.

Challenges addressed

Cities face complex challenges in advancing the SDGs, including fragmented data systems, limited capacity, weak alignment between local and national policies, and difficulties in mobilising finance.

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), particularly when integrated into the SDG Cities approach, provide a structured, participatory, and data-driven process to address these gaps.

UN-Habitat's Action-Oriented VLR methodology maximises the chances of successful SDG implementation by providing a concrete pathway that enables cities to identify SDG priorities, strengthen institutional capacities, foster multi-level governance, and develop actionable recommendations, thereby transforming monitoring and reporting into a practical tool for strategic planning and long-term sustainable development.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with partners, supports local and regional governments in developing VLRs through technical guidance, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. As the United Nations custodian of the New Urban Agenda and key SDG indicators, the agency provides a globally recognised, action-oriented methodology to help cities link monitoring, planning, and strategic investment.

UN-Habitat has also developed global and regional VLR guidelines, toolboxes, and online resources, enabling governments to tailor the VLR process to their context. Through workshops, technical backstopping, peer-learning, and advisory solutions, UN-Habitat helps cities collect, analyse, and visualise data, engage stakeholders, and translate findings into actionable recommendations.

UN-Habitat has developed a gender-focused version of the VLR methodology and is exploring further thematic guidance and tailored support to expand the relevance and impact of VLRs across different urban challenges. UN-Habitat also leads global advocacy on SDG localization and VLRs in international fora such as the High-Level Political Forum and the World Urban Forum.

Duration of support

With UN-Habitat's technical support, the development of a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) typically takes around **9 to 12 months**, depending on the city's context, existing data, and institutional capacities.

As the process is modular and flexible, it allows adaptation to cities with varying levels of experience, resources, or prior engagement. For cities with very limited data or prior involvement, the full process may take up to **18 months**.

VLRs can also be integrated within the SDG Cities process, enabling alignment with broader local SDG planning, investment, and capacity building initiatives.

Previous applications

More than 445 Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) have been conducted by local and regional governments worldwide, demonstrating their broad applicability and relevance. Cities and regions across Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia, Oceania, the Middle East, Central Asia, and small island states have undertaken VLR processes, reflecting diverse contexts and governance systems. Concrete impact examples include:

Nis, Serbia: Established a dedicated SDG monitoring unit post-VLR for data collection, analysis, and informed decision making.

Udon Thani, Thailand: Integrated local indicators and the Urban Monitoring Framework in its first Action-Oriented VLR, strengthening climate-focused project planning and informing the development of Thailand's National Guideline to support future VLRs.

Mwanza, Tanzania: Strengthened stakeholder engagement and peer learning through twinning with Tampere, **Finland**, enhancing local SDG data collection.



"..We hope that the VLR of Udon Thani City Municipality will serve as a valuable guide for other cities in the country. The analysis and suggestions from the VLR can be translated into actionable strategies for implementation.."

Dr. Thanadorn Phuttharak, former Mayor of Udon Thani, Thailand

For further information

- Web pages:**
- [UN-Habitat VLR Platform](#)
 - [SDG Localization training module 3](#)

- Publications:**
- [Action-Oriented VLR Methodology](#)
 - [VLR Guidelines Vol.1](#)
 - [VLR Guidelines Vol.2](#)



Image 81. Global VLR Workshop, WUF12. © UN-Habitat



Image 82. SDG Cities VLR process in Mwanza, Tanzania. © UN-Habitat



H5 Capacity building for SDG localization



Summary

Capacity building is central to UN-Habitat's SDG Localization efforts. Integrated capacity building packages combine tools, methodologies, and e-learning equipping different levels of government to localize the SDGs. SDG Cities addresses the needs of cities and local governments, while the National SDG Localization Frameworks support national governments through multilevel governance systems.

The delivery method emphasises peer exchange, expert advice, and gamification to meet capacity gaps. All initiatives align with Local2030 Capacity Building efforts, fostering a coordinated approach to implementation.

Challenges addressed

The main challenges addressed include the lack of coordination and expertise when it comes to SDG Localization, both between national, regional, and local governments, as well as within the different levels of governments.

Local governments often face insufficient capacities, lacking the necessary expertise, resources, and infrastructure to effectively implement SDG projects at the local level.

At the same time, differing interpretations of SDG localization across United Nations agencies lead to parallel rather than coordinated efforts.

Addressing these gaps and fostering a shared understanding is essential to strengthen multilevel collaboration and achieve impactful SDG localization, which this solution directly responds to.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with partner organizations and sister UN agencies, builds the capacities of local, sub-national, and national governments to advance SDG localization.

Through the SDG Localization Modules developed with UCLG, general Training of Trainers on SDG Localization is provided, including Module 2, which focuses on integrating the SDGs into local planning and policy cycles.

At the city level, targeted capacity building is delivered through the SDG Cities, which provides a coherent and tested package of tools and e-learning courses around its three tracks: data, planning and investment.

A similar structured approach is applied at the national level through the National SDG Localization Frameworks, which integrate phased processes and concrete tools.

All these initiatives contribute to and align with the Local2030 Capacity Building efforts, ensuring a coordinated approach to SDG implementation.

Duration of support

The support varies depending on the needs, and so does its duration. Introductory sessions consist of **one-hour** webinars or **one-day** trainings on specific topics.

Similarly, comprehensive training can take place over **three to six months**, depending on the capacity need being targeted. Finally, e-learning courses that are self-paced accompany the targeted support for continuous learning.

Previous applications

Throughout the year, multiple training sessions and workshops are delivered in various formats. This includes organization of training of trainers and workshops in the context of global and regional events, as well as for specific countries or cities. Concrete impact examples include:

Trainings at the 12th edition of the World Urban Forum or the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, bringing international and regional partners together into interactive sessions.

Inter-regional Workshop on SDG Localization in Amman, **Jordan**: Extended workshops allow for comprehensive coverage of multiple training components. The key factors contributing to their success include peer learning, focused training sessions, and interactive exercises.

Technical workshops at the SDG Localization Dashboard Training in Bishkek, **Kyrgyzstan**, brought together local government officials, statisticians, and IT experts to explore how SDG Dashboards can support data-driven decision making. Participants engaged in a role-playing exercise, stepping into the shoes of different stakeholders to map out key dashboard needs.



"..The workshop was interesting, as we got to look for data in city processes and urban processes, through the lens of the SDGs. For example, the exercise encouraged you to look at these processes from other perspectives: The perspective of the municipality, business representative, or academia.."

Azhar Baisalova, Project Manager, Move Green (Civil society organization), participant of the Capacity building workshop on SDG Localization dashboards in Bishkek city

For further information

[Webpage: SDG Localization Resources](#)

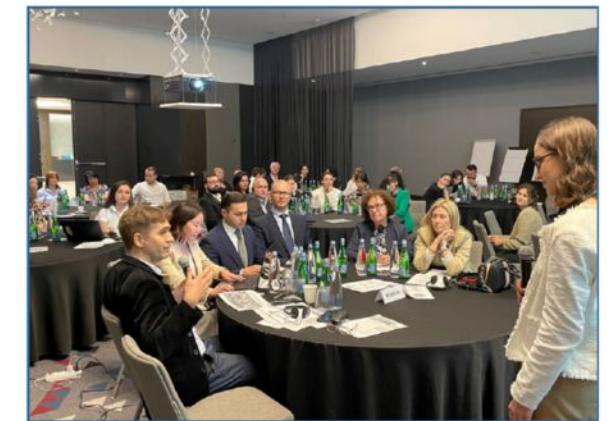


Image 83. VLR Training targeting city officials in Tbilisi, Georgia. © UN-Habitat



Image 84. Training Event on Planning for Change with the SDGs at WUF12. © UN-Habitat



H6 Embedding SDGs in local urban interventions



Summary

Supporting cities to align their priorities and investments with SDGs and SDG impact. This solution promotes policy coherence and helps primarily cities to achieve their SDG targets through project design, development and implementation.

It uses the SDG Project Assessment Tool (SDG Tool) to support the development of inclusive, sustainable, and effective urban projects in alignment with the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

The SDG Tool aims at both improving the technical quality of projects and promoting an enabling environment for its implementation. Its application is tailored to individual projects, responding to different cities' unique conditions and priorities, and allows for the assessment of how a specific intervention addresses the SDGs by creating a unique SDG profile.

Challenges addressed

Cities face a diverse set of challenges in urban planning, transport, resilience, and data, which affect the achievement of the SDGs. Strengthened awareness of the relationship between the SDGs and project development can be fostered through a participatory process.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat acts as a neutral facilitator in guiding the localization of SDGs in urban projects, safeguarding standards for urban development, and ensuring that different interests are met and addressed in the process, including cross-cutting issues and a long-term, holistic approach.

The assessment of project development using the SDG tool will be supported by an online platform (still to be launched) where assessment results can be discussed and compared across projects, cities, and key partners.

The online module will enable remote application of the SDG Tool, making the process more time- and cost-effective while limiting negative environmental impact.

Duration of support

Application of the SDG Tool is context-specific and is anticipated to be used in conjunction with key milestones in the project development cycle, at least **three to five times** to generate useful outcomes.

Previous applications

The SDG Tool has been applied in 30 projects across 19 cities in 10 countries globally: South-East Asia (**the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar**); Africa (**Nigeria, South Africa**); Europe (**Türkiye**); and South America (**Brazil**).

It was applied through a participatory process in which key partners selected a set of tailored sustainability principles that responded to the project-specific conditions and objectives.

Image 85. Traffic in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. © UN-Habitat



"..The SDG Tool session noticeably improved the development of the project. The session brought together different programme partners and thereby created a common understanding about the expectations for the project. Sharing different perspectives openly helped us to resolve issues before they occur. The SDG Tool session also improved the municipality's capacity to frame urban projects in a more comprehensive and integrated way.."

Ms. Duygu Ece Kızıllarlan, Public Works Directorate, Cankaya Municipality, Ankara, Türkiye



For further information



- Web pages:**
- [Knowledge management platform: SDG tool page](#)
 - [The Global Future Cities Programme Story: New SDG project assessment tool aiming for better urban projects](#)



- Tools:**
- [SDG tool General Framework](#)
 - [SDG tool Users Guide](#)



Video: [SDG tool video](#)

Thematic solutions for SDG Localization

H7 Sports for advancing SDG localization



Summary

Sport is recognised not only as recreation but also as a basic service that strengthens multilevel, cross-sectoral, and integrated urban transformation. It helps governments and cities localize global commitments, linking inclusion and sustainability to health, youth aspirations, economic prosperity, and public spaces.

UN-Habitat has launched the Sports for Sustainable Urban Development with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to leverage the potential of sport to shape cities and deliver transformational change for local communities.

Our work focuses on integrating sport into cities' analysis and planning processes, while building the capacities of local governments to design, develop, and fund sports-related infrastructure and programmes, fostering integrated urban development processes and boosting opportunities for the social and economic development of local communities.

Challenges addressed

While the universal appeal of sport offers enormous potential for community engagement, it remains underutilised in advancing integrated local development processes, accelerating SDG localization.

Urban and national policies often treat sport as an isolated sector rather than a driver of inclusion, well-being, and climate action.

This solution addresses that gap by integrating sport into local and territorial SDG strategies, enabling both national governments and cities to use sport as an instrument for place-based transformation, behavioural change, and strengthened national-local collaboration toward sustainable urban futures.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat offers technical support and expertise, capacity building, and advocacy opportunities to help governments embed sport in integrated local planning processes, driving the design and implementation of catalytic sports-related projects.

Our support spans policy alignment, data-driven planning, and partnership facilitation, ensuring sport contributes to the SDG Localization agenda.

This is informed by an established methodology from the Sport for Sustainable Urban Development Playbook, which is being applied in 4 pilot countries (Brazil, Egypt, Jordan, and Ghana). The Playbook allows for:

- Awareness-Raising: sensitising national and local governments to the benefits of sport as a driver of SDG Localization and Urban Regeneration processes.
- Capacity development: empowering municipalities, planners, and sport organizations to integrate sports into local planning processes.
- Territorial analysis and data tools: mapping how sport contributes to SDG targets at the local level.
- High-impact project development, partnership facilitation and resource mobilisation: connecting governments, communities, and private actors to implement sport-driven initiatives.
- Policy integration and governance alignment: linking sport to national and local SDG plans, climate strategies, and investment frameworks.

Duration of support

Introductory training and diagnostic workshops can be delivered within **one to three months**. Comprehensive localization and urban planning support, including multi-stakeholder consultations, integration of sport into SDG frameworks and city planning and development processes, and capacity building, typically spans **6 to 12 months**.

For cities or ministries adopting pilot initiatives, extended technical assistance and evaluation can continue for up to **24 months**, depending on scale and context.

Previous applications

This solution builds on ongoing collaboration under the Sport for Sustainable Urban Development Initiative, jointly implemented with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), where one city in each of **Egypt, Jordan, Ghana, and Brazil** is currently developing a planning process that integrates sport as a driver of sustainable urban transformation.

Each pilot city embeds sport within its Voluntary Local Review or city strategy, linking urban planning, inclusion, and climate resilience. Local governments are also investing in sports infrastructure designed as inclusive, environmentally friendly public spaces that serve as hubs for health, community engagement, and youth empowerment.

These experiences demonstrate how sport can translate national SDG frameworks into territorial action, foster multilevel governance coordination, and create tangible local impact through policy innovation, spatial transformation, and behavioural change.



"..Every time we open a community sports space or a school field, we uncover potential. Sport teaches discipline, teamwork, and hope – especially for our youth. Our next step is to sustain these initiatives so that every child, regardless of background, finds their place to play, learn, and lead.."

Florence Namayanja, Mayor of Masaka, Uganda

For further information

[Webpage: Sports for Sustainable Urban Development](#)



Image 86. Public Space for Urban Sports Design Workshop during Sustainable Egypt Youth Summit 2025. © UN-Habitat



Image 87. Public Space for Urban Sports Design Workshop during Sustainable Egypt Youth Summit 2025. © UN-Habitat



H8 Action research for SDG localization



Summary

The Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network aims to strengthen national and local SDG localization systems by ensuring that governments have access to robust, applied, and place-based evidence for public policy.

It does so by mobilising academic institutions, researchers, and PhD clusters to co-produce knowledge directly aligned with SDG priorities, VLRs, and National SDG Localization Frameworks.

Through structured academic programmes, research grants, and technical mentoring, the Network connects universities, local governments, national institutions, and United Nations agencies, building long-term national capacity for evidence-driven planning, monitoring, and implementation of the SDGs.

Challenges addressed

Many countries face gaps in SDG data, insufficient localization research, weak national–local-academia knowledge partnerships, and limited capacity to translate evidence into actionable urban policies.

Local governments often lack the analytical depth required for VLRs, spatial assessments, and monitoring frameworks.

At the same time, young researchers struggle to access real policy environments. The Network addresses these gaps by creating a structured platform where academic research supports city-level implementation, strengthens national policy processes, and embeds long-term knowledge systems for SDG localization.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat provides overall coordination, methodological guidance, and technical supervision for the design and delivery of country implementation of the Knowledge and Scientific Network. This includes developing national academic programmes on SDG Localization, like curricula, mentorship frameworks, and research quality standards, and establishing PhD and research clusters aligned with SDG priorities.

UN-Habitat offers technical mentoring on SDG data, multilevel governance, spatial analysis, VLRs, and evidence-based policymaking, while supporting the integration of research outputs into local development plans, VLRs, and National SDG Localization Frameworks.

UN-Habitat also produces research analysis and policy recommendations that can be translated into project proposals, and facilitates structured collaboration between universities, national ministries, local governments, and United Nations Country Teams.

Through the Local2030 Coalition, partners gain access to global communities of practice, joint events, peer learning, and research dissemination. Across all activities, UN-Habitat ensures methodological consistency, quality assurance, and alignment with the New Urban Agenda and SDG Localization Frameworks.

Duration of support

Generally, a full cycle takes around **12 to 18 months**. Setting up the initiative in the country (letters of intent with cities, selection of a cohort of researchers, selection of relevant project staff): **three to five months**.

Academic Programme on SDG Localization in eight modules: **8 to 10 months**. Finalisation of researchers' outputs: **one to three months**.

Previous applications

The solution is currently being implemented in **Tunisia** and **Jordan**, where the Network has established national clusters of PhD students from leading universities.

Research focuses on SDGs prioritised by partner cities, Kerkennah and Sousse in Tunisia, and Irbid and Aqaba in **Jordan**. Researchers receive scholarships and structured mentoring from UN-Habitat and academic partners.

Their findings inform spatial diagnostics, SDG indicator baselines, local planning documents, and VLR processes.



"..This work shows the power of involving communities in both restoration and science. When people feel responsible and connected to the process, restoration becomes more meaningful and more sustainable.."

Nada Abdelkader, PhD., Tunisian KSN Scholar

"..I'm truly honoured to be here today. Being part of the KSN programme - and the role it plays in building indigenous capacities for territories to connect multi-stakeholder and multilevel action - is a privilege. It allows us to drive a transitional model that places ethics at the core.."

Javier Cortés Fernández, Director of eLankidetza, the Basque Agency for Cooperation and Solidarity.

For further information

[Webpage: Local2030 Knowledge Scientific Networking landing page](#)

[Publication: Local2030 Knowledge Scientific Network Concept Note](#)



Image 88. KSN Local Lab in Action in Kerkennah, Tunisia. © UN-Habitat



Image 89. KSN Local Lab in Action in Kerkennah, Tunisia. © UN-Habitat



H9 The Quality of Life Index



Summary

The Quality of Life Index (QoLI) is an innovative, SDG-aligned, globally tested and standardised methodology for measuring well-being in cities. The approaches of the Quality of Life initiative and the Local2030 Coalition are being aligned with the aim of maximising impact at the local level. The Index helps governments align policies with what matters most to residents.

By combining official statistics, perception surveys, and innovative data sources (e.g. geospatial data, mobile phone pings), the Index provides a holistic, people-centred measure of progress. It supports city leaders in diagnosing urban challenges and designing evidence-based interventions.

Building on VLRs, and the SDG cities approach, the index combines global indicators with locally defined ones, adding to an inclusive framework to advance the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, thereby directly supporting SDG localization.

Challenges addressed

Traditional urban monitoring often focuses on economic or sector-specific indicators, overlooking residents' lived experiences. This creates gaps in understanding inclusivity, equity, and overall well-being.

The QoLI Index addresses these challenges by providing a multidimensional and standardised framework that integrates diverse data sources. It helps cities move beyond GDP and infrastructure metrics to measure what truly matters to people: access, opportunity, safety, resilience, and belonging.

By capturing disparities across gender, age, geography, and income groups, the Index enables evidence-based policymaking that fosters more equitable and sustainable urban development.

This positions the Index as a practical instrument for local governments to add a human-centred lens to SDG progress assessments.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat offers cities a comprehensive methodology, technical support, and capacity building aligned with the Action-Oriented Local Reviews process and the broader SDG Cities process to adopt and implement the Quality of Life Index. Through the Quality of Life Platform, cities access digital tools for policy making and innovation.

UN-Habitat also facilitates training via the Platform, ensuring that local actors can adapt indicators to their context. The solution provides governments with actionable insights to identify policy priorities, measure progress toward SDGs, and engage citizens in shaping urban futures.

In doing so, it informs SDG localization processes by complementing them with bottom-up perspectives on what residents truly value. Leveraging partnerships across the United Nations system, academia, and civil society, UN-Habitat ensures data quality and inclusivity.

Cities gain not just a measurement tool but also a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and decision support, empowering them to advance people-centred urban development and build more resilient, equitable, and sustainable communities.

Duration of support

Support through the Quality of Life Initiative is flexible and tailored to city needs. Initial scoping and training workshops can be delivered in **one to three months**, while full implementation of the Index, including data collection, analysis, and reporting, typically takes six to eight months.

Capacity building programmes and knowledge exchange activities are offered throughout the process, with ongoing access to the Platform. UN-Habitat has been developing and refining this solution since 2024, with iterative updates based on pilot city experiences.

The overall methodology is maintained and will remain available for at least **the next five years**.



Image 90. Street scene from an Asian city. © QoLI, UN-Habitat website/shutterstock

Previous applications

The Quality of Life Initiative is global in scope. It has been piloted in nine cities: Bhubaneswar, **India**; Kampala, **Uganda**; Logan, **Australia**; Madinah, **Saudi Arabia**; Nis, **Serbia**; Queretaro, **Mexico**; Quito, **Ecuador**; Udon Thani, **Thailand**; and Vancouver, **Canada**.

In Nis and Udon Thani, results have already informed Action-Oriented VLRs, demonstrating the Index's practical role in advancing SDG localization. In 2025, the Initiative is scaling up further in cities worldwide. These experiences confirm its adaptability in shaping more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.



"..It's not that obvious to decide how to measure quality of life, so the fact of having a global initiative that will give us global indicators to the quality of life and then the ability also to localize it, with the extra local indicators – we make sure that we have a standard way to measure it throughout the planet and a faster way to implement the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. And making sure also that we benchmark ourselves against other cities throughout the world to get the best quality of life possible for our citizens locally.."

Zakaria Oulad, City Counselor, Agadir, Morocco

For further information

- Web pages:**
- [Quality of Life Initiative \(UN-Habitat official site\)](#)
 - [Platform: QoL Impact – Digital home of the index and innovation tools](#)
 - [UN-ECA on Quality of Life Initiative](#)

- Publications:**
- [Research Article: "Mapping urban well-being with Quality Of Life Index \(QoLI\)"](#)
 - [United Nations Statistics / Quality of Life Index Presentation](#)
 - [Quality of Life Initiative Brochure](#)

- Other: Social Media:**
- [The QoLI on X \(formerly Twitter\)](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
 - [LinkedIn](#)



Image 91. Quality of Life Conference 2024: Paving the Way for Inclusive and Resilient Cities. © UN-Habitat

Sub-chapter

Participatory processes

H10 Block-by-Block: co-creating public spaces

- 16.7
- 13.1
- 5.5
- 5.b
- 11.7
- 11.3



Summary

An innovative approach to public space planning and design that combines community engagement with digital technology, employing community meetings, presentations, site visits, and interactive design workshops.

These workshops feature Minecraft (a video game often described as "digital LEGO"), which allows participants to creatively visualise potential design solutions in 3D.

Building on the concept of placemaking, a collaborative, people-centred approach to planning and managing public spaces, this method aims to build local capacity and leadership, ultimately empowering communities to share their shared environments.

Challenges addressed

The global issue of youth and community exclusion from urban development decision making stems from a lack of awareness and misconceptions about the required expertise.

It provides a platform for diverse urban residents to easily share ideas and actively contribute to solving urban challenges, regardless of their background or skills.

This inclusive method aims to create more responsive and sustainable public spaces while combating the disproportionate negative effects of inadequate public spaces in marginalised communities, such as reduced biodiversity, urban decay, air pollution, and the urban heat island effect.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat pioneered the Block-by-block methodology in 2012 and has since implemented 184 public space projects in 55 countries across Africa, Europe, Asia, North America, and Latin America. It ensures public space design and implementation are inclusive and responsive, while its unique convening power facilitates collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

UN-Habitat utilises two complementary approaches: the Block-by-Block methodology, which uses Minecraft as a participatory tool to co-create public space, and placemaking, a collaborative planning approach.

These methods have engaged over 50,000 community members, including youth, and impact 2.8 million people directly or indirectly. UN-Habitat's approach not only transforms physical spaces but also builds local capacities, enhances digital literacy, and empowers communities to actively shape their urban environments.

This proven methodology has shown increased interest from local governments and NGOs, positioning UN-Habitat as a leader in participatory urban design and sustainable public space development globally.

Duration of support

Technical Block-by-block projects often take **one year** and encompass three phases: planning, Minecraft co-design, and implementation. The planning phase (Phase I) takes about **8 to 12 weeks** and involves site selection, financial planning, technical preparations, and operational requirements.

The Minecraft co-design phase (Phase II) is the core workshop, usually lasting **two to three days**. It includes site visits, vision-setting, Minecraft training, co-creation sessions, and idea prioritisation.



Image 92. Completed child-friendly playground in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2022. © Urban Initiatives



Image 93. Completed child-friendly playground in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2022. © Urban Initiatives

The implementation phase (Phase III) can span **two to six months**, featuring expert design studios, community validation meetings, inclusive implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This flexible structure allows customisation to meet each community's specific needs while ensuring comprehensive participatory public space development.

Placemaking engagement depends on the nature of the project and process, which is often tailored. It can be completed within three weeks, while some longer-term processes can take up to **three months**.

Previous applications

The Block-by-block methodology was applied globally in 100 cities in 55 countries. This initiative engaged over 50,000 community members, with a particular focus on youth participation.

It was also applied in targeted border cities in **Lebanon** and **Brazil**, as part of the "Urban Connections" project. The program ensured diverse representation, including participants aged 5 to over 65, with approximately 40 per cent being women and girls.

The initiative's reach extended far beyond direct participants, impacting approximately 2.8 million people.

The Block-by-block approach demonstrated its effectiveness in fostering inclusive, community-driven urban design across diverse global settings, while simultaneously building valuable skills among participants of all ages and backgrounds.



"..In the past, this space was in poor condition, but now, we feel grateful that our children and grandchildren can play in this park. It has become a brighter and happier place for the residents of Rusunawa Mangkubumen, and everyone in the surrounding kampong is touched by the transformation. Personally, I enjoy exercising here and sweeping the park ground early in the morning to keep it clean and pleasant.."

Sri, an elderly woman in Rusunawa Mangkubumen, (a public space that was implemented in Solo, Indonesia)



For further information



- Web pages:**
- [Block by Block Website](#)
 - [Impact Story: 2023 Impact Block-by-Block Approach](#)



- Publications:**
- [The Block-by-Block Playbook: Using Minecraft as a participatory design tool in urban design and governance](#)
 - [Mainstreaming Migration and Displacement in Urban Planning and Public Space Development](#)



- Videos:** [Block By Block - A Minecraft & UN-Habitat Collaboration - YouTube](#)



For further information:
Global Public Space Network



17.9
17.8
16.7
16.6
11

H11

Building participatory accountability systems for city policies



Summary

Innovative online tools to support feedback loops with citizens on city policies, expanding the space for citizen participation and participatory accountability.

They are supported by developing partnerships with various city stakeholders. A training and capacity building needs assessment process also allows for a more participatory approach to translating policies into action.



Challenges addressed

Lack of open data, transparency, accountability and the capacities necessary to build and oversee these systems hinder citizen participation and oversight.



What UN-Habitat can offer

Participatory accountability systems strengthen partnerships among local authorities, academia, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society to improve public policies in cities and increase transparency and accountability.

The solution includes workshops and citizen consultations, with partnerships with start-ups specialised in digital tools for local governments.

UN-Habitat has developed the content of the Sustainable Cities and Communities Consultation (SCCC) as well as templates and tools that facilitate training needs assessments for cities and local authorities, and guidance for development of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).



Duration of support

The SCCC is implemented over **four months**, and results are presented **two to three months** after the closure of the consultation closes.

Training workshops vary in duration and are typically recommended to take place over **two to four days**.

A minimum of **two years** is recommended to ensure continuity.



Previous applications

The solution has been provided in six cities and the consultation in over 830 cities in **Bolivia, Brazil and Peru**. The methodology and online consultation can be replicated in any city and/or region.

This has supported the production of four VLRs on the progress of SDG 11, and the training of over 1,200 local authorities, civil society and academia.

This solution can be continuous. For example, in **Brazil**, where the initiative has been endorsed by the National Federation of Municipalities, the consultation will be conducted annually until 2030 to track changes in citizens' perceptions of SDG 11.

The consultation has also been featured twice as an example of UN-Habitat's innovation in the United Nations Innovation Network and is in the UNDESA database of best practices for SDG 11.



"..Citizen collaboration and transparency are the best tools to improve public management. The technology ensures the dialogue with population happens quickly, efficiently and allows the results of this conversation to be measured which facilitates the evaluation of public managers.."

Mr. Gustavo Maia, CEO and co-founder of Colab



For further information

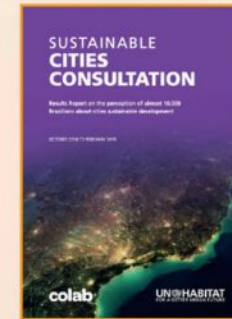


Image 94. Group of young African friends using their phones to add their inputs in a phone app. © Freepik, Wirestock

H12 Her City Toolbox

17
16
11
10
5



Summary

Her City Toolbox is an innovative digital platform, providing a step-by-step methodology to guide local government and urban actors to make cities better for everyone by adopting a more sustainable and inclusive urban development approach.

It is run for, by and with women and girls by adopting a participatory and co-design approach, ensuring women's experiences in public spaces are adequately represented in urban development processes and actively inspiring more considerate, inclusive, and safe cities.

Challenges addressed

Women and girls are often under-represented in decision making processes; hence many urban projects do not respond to their needs. Inclusive participatory processes are essential for sustainable urbanization, but in many parts of the world, there is still a lack of capacities and experience in conducting meaningful participatory processes, especially when it comes to vulnerable groups.

Integrating the diverse experiences and needs of women and under-represented groups in urban development processes leads to a more inclusive city, enabling change-making, placemaking, and policies that ensure the engagement, consideration, and urban safety of women and girls.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Together with partners, experts, and stakeholders, UN-Habitat has developed a digital toolbox to set up efficient and inclusive participatory processes that inform and improve urban development in cities.

The new version of the Her City Toolbox brings together a comprehensive framework for inclusive, participatory urban development.

Building on the success of the original toolbox, which focused on participatory data gathering and design, the new edition integrates additional methodologies to enhance participatory urban development across a wider range of contexts.

It includes tools for monitoring and evaluation; planning across urban scales; construction, management, and maintenance; policymaking; and inclusive urban development in complex emergency contexts.

The Her City Toolbox contains 11 building blocks as digital guidelines for assessing, co-planning, and co-implementing public spaces and better cities from a girl's perspective. Each block contains a series of activities and clear steps with a specific level of participation by girls and women of all ages, ensuring their engagement throughout the process.

Various digital tools developed by UN-Habitat and external partners are included in each building block. The platform is open source, user-friendly, and encourages active dialogue between professionals and young citizens.

The Her City Toolbox has a particular focus on gender, youth, and people living in vulnerable areas, including informal settlements. However, it is a guide to mainstream inclusion in any urban development project. It is intended for project managers and other urban actors who want to ensure meaningful engagement in their respective cities. As a process, the Her City approach encourages the use of digital tools and technology, thereby increasing the digital skills of women and girls.

Duration of support

The Her City Toolbox is modular, divided into 11 distinct blocks. Depending on the project team's priorities and the capacities and resources in place, the process can be tailored accordingly. The overall process takes approximately **six months**, excluding the construction phase.



"..For me it was extremely productive because it was a space not only to listen, but above all to speak. Even this is a private matter for women, we are silenced. To have a space to discuss, to bring our desires, proposals for the city that we dream of and that we want for ourselves and our children. It was a diverse group, and that was enriching, there were women with formal study, others with learnings from the school of life and all of them had a lot to share. This exchange about our city and territories was extremely important.."

Clícia Roberta, Member of the Black Women's Network of Pernambuco, Santo Antônio (Brazil).

Previous applications

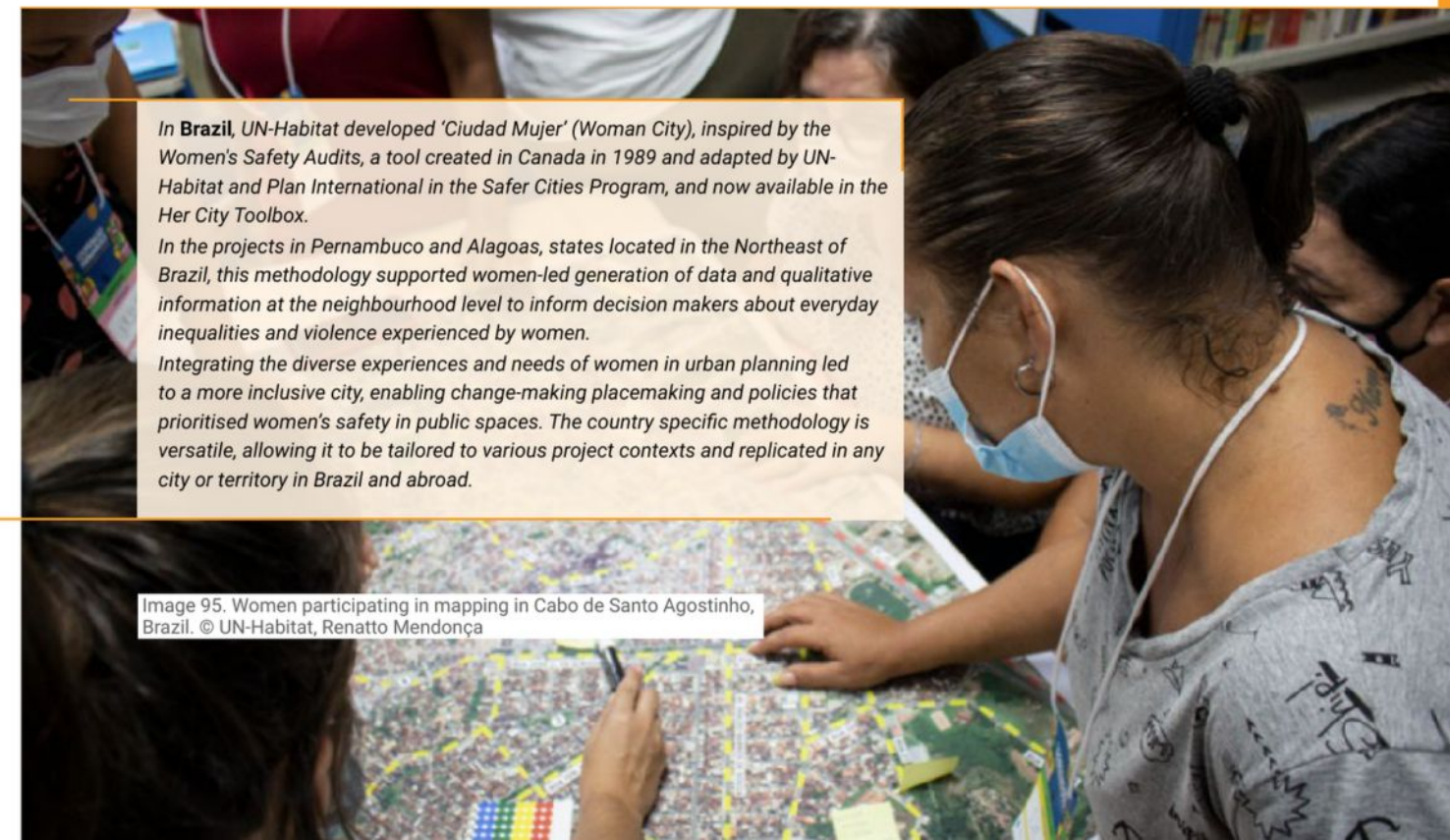
Her City initiative and the toolbox could be applied in urban contexts across all countries. Users could independently set up their own project on the platform with no additional support required, as the process was self-explanatory. To build capacity to use the toolbox, UN-Habitat and partners supported 1,550 users who led 450 independent initiatives across 560 cities in 125 countries.

UN-Habitat and partners led over 20 United Nations partnership projects, resulting in 30 gender-transformative sites that directly benefited nearly 350,000 people.

Through 130 participatory workshops, they engaged 5,000 urban actors; 160 training sessions built the capacity of 2,000 professionals; and 100 events informed 9,000 participants, reaching over 8,000,000 in global media.

For further information

-  [Webpage: Her City Toolbox](#)
-  **Publications:**
 - [Her City Guide](#)
 - [Stories of Change](#)
-  **Videos:** [YouTube: @HerCity](#)
-  **Other: Social Media:** [Instagram: @HerCityToolbox](#)



In Brazil, UN-Habitat developed 'Ciudad Mujer' (Woman City), inspired by the Women's Safety Audits, a tool created in Canada in 1989 and adapted by UN-Habitat and Plan International in the Safer Cities Program, and now available in the Her City Toolbox.

In the projects in Pernambuco and Alagoas, states located in the Northeast of Brazil, this methodology supported women-led generation of data and qualitative information at the neighbourhood level to inform decision makers about everyday inequalities and violence experienced by women.

Integrating the diverse experiences and needs of women in urban planning led to a more inclusive city, enabling change-making placemaking and policies that prioritised women's safety in public spaces. The country specific methodology is versatile, allowing it to be tailored to various project contexts and replicated in any city or territory in Brazil and abroad.

Image 95. Women participating in mapping in Cabo de Santo Agostinho, Brazil. © UN-Habitat, Renato Mendonça

Image 96. Young Gamechangers in Bargny, Senegal contributing during the Block by Block workshop. © UN-Habitat



Chapter I: Knowledge, data, digitalisation and capacity-development

This chapter presents the globally applicable and field-tested solutions of UN-Habitat's work on **knowledge, data, digitalisation, and capacity development**, the third means of implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan. Reliable data, strong knowledge systems, and skilled institutions are essential foundations for effective urban governance and sustainable development. In an era of rapid digital transformation, cities must harness innovation and evidence-based insights to plan, manage, and monitor urban growth while ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital transition.

UN-Habitat's solutions in this area support the **generation, use, and application of knowledge and technology** for sustainable urbanization. Under SDG and NUA monitoring and reporting, the solutions support cities and countries track progress through implementation and reporting tools such as the Global Monitoring Framework, urban observatories, and data platforms. Capacity building and digitalisation solutions strengthen skills and institutional capacities through training, global learning initiatives, and the use of digital education platforms. The innovation-focused solutions promote challenge-driven innovation and technological acceleration to support local governments in addressing urban challenges through creative, data-informed, and scalable approaches.

This chapter includes the following sub-chapters:

- SDG and NUA monitoring and reporting.
- Capacity building and digitalisation.
- Innovation.



Image 97. Participant presenting during one of the Block by Block workshops Bargny, Senegal. © UN-Habitat

Sub-chapter

SDGs and NUA monitoring and reporting

I1

Implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the New Urban Agenda



Summary

The New Urban Agenda (NUA), adopted at Habitat III and endorsed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/256, offers a comprehensive framework for inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban development.

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, it is structured around three transformative commitments - social, economic, and environmental - supported by practical implementation tools.

UN-Habitat can assist Member States and partners in contributing voluntary progress inputs, monitoring achievements, and translating the Agenda into actionable, measurable results.

This solution provides advisory support, data analysis, and reporting assistance to ensure effective implementation and compliance with the Secretary-General's mandated four-year progress reporting cycle.

Challenges addressed

The 2018 and 2022 quadrennial reports offered strategic guidance and identified key challenges to implementing the New Urban Agenda. Ahead of the 2026 report, UN-Habitat is conducting stakeholder surveys and needs assessments to analyse persistent barriers to effective implementation of the NUA.

These findings inform targeted capacity building, engagement, and mobilisation strategies. The 2026 report will serve as a midterm review, assessing progress, identifying gaps, and outlining strategic actions to accelerate implementation.

Our solutions support data collection, analysis, and reporting, enabling partners to contribute effectively to the Agenda and strengthen urban development outcomes through evidence-based decision making and collaborative approaches.

What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat assists Member States in monitoring, reporting, and advancing the New Urban Agenda (NUA) through tailored solutions that build capacity, strengthen evidence, and enable shared learning.

Through national reporting support, UN-Habitat provides countries with guidance and advisory assistance to prepare high-quality New Urban Agenda (NUA) progress reports.

It offers National Reporting Guidelines, advisory support to focal points and inter-ministerial teams, and feedback on draft reports, while promoting the exchange of good practices and lessons learned.

By monitoring and data capacity building, this solution strengthens countries' ability to collect and use urban data. It provides e-learning courses, webinars, and toolkits, along with guidance on the Urban Monitoring Framework and NUA Suggested Reporting Indicators.

The solution also helps align NUA monitoring with SDG 11 and national urban policy frameworks and supports evidence-based reporting through data mapping and analysis.

Through peer learning and knowledge exchange, UN-Habitat promotes collaboration through the Urban Agenda Platform; a global repository of reporting status, good practices, and knowledge products. It also features the NUA Learning Series of live webinars, global and regional progress reports, and technical or regional workshops for NUA focal points, fostering shared learning and stronger urban reporting practices.

Duration of support

Capacity building activities, including webinars and training sessions, range from **one-hour** introductory formats to **multi-week** learning series. Self-paced courses are available year-round via UN-Habitat Learn.

Resources such as reporting templates, branding kits, and guidelines are updated regularly and typically delivered within **one to five months** of request or agreement. The New Urban Agenda Platform is now launched.

Support for national reporting and stakeholder engagement is ongoing, aligned with the quadrennial reporting cycle and the 2026 midterm review.

Previous applications

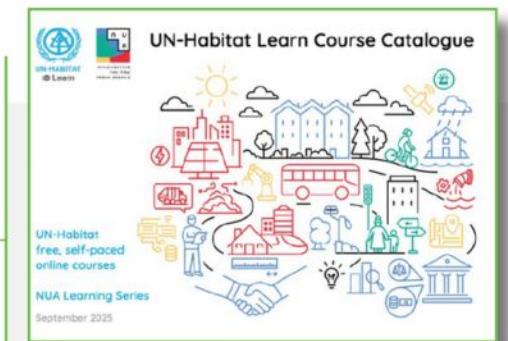
The NUA has been applied globally, with notable regional and national relevance. In Asia-Pacific, **Malaysia** is developing a dedicated regional platform to support NUA implementation, while **Morocco** is advancing a similar initiative for Africa.

The NUA has been integrated into national and local policies through urban forums and reporting processes in countries such as the **Republic of Korea** (Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, Suwon), **Ethiopia** (Africa Urban Forum, Addis Ababa), and **Egypt** (World Urban Forum, Cairo).

Over 40 Member States submitted national progress reports in the previous cycle, and at least 55 are expected in the current cycle.

The NUA's impact includes strengthened monitoring, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and improved policy alignment with the SDGs.

Regional platforms and global events, such as the World Urban Forum, have facilitated knowledge exchange, peer learning, and the scaling up of successful practices, contributing to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban development worldwide.



To empower partners with innovative tools, knowledge, and peer-to-peer exchanges that are key to driving the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat has developed the NUA Learning Series.

This includes the UN-Habitat Learn Catalogue, which brings together everything you need to start learning about the New Urban Agenda and provides structural learning pathways to support the planning and implementation of the NUA's intervention mechanisms.



".. We need to go beyond policy to actual implementation. Housing is a key incentive for development, but it cannot stand alone without complementary services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure.."

Hon. Ellen Olounfe Pratt, former Deputy Minister for Urban Affairs, Liberia

For further information

[Webpage: The New Urban Agenda Platform](#)

[Publication: UN-Habitat Learn Catalogue \(Sept 2025\) | PDF to Flipbook](#)



12 Global Urban Monitoring Framework



Summary

Since its adoption in 2022 by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) has served as the globally agreed-upon framework for tracking progress in urban development.

It combines 77 key urban development indicators from prominent global agendas and indices, including the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the City Prosperity Index, and the UNESCO Culture 2030 Agenda, among others.

Through its five domains - society, economy, environment, culture, and governance - and widespread adoption, the UMF enables cities to holistically evaluate development progress, learn from selective comparisons with other cities, and more effectively exchange data and knowledge with key stakeholders, with the goal of driving better decisions and outcomes in cities.

Its focus on greater data disaggregation and more precise spatial definitions has further aimed to improve global data, understanding, and outcomes for people and places that have traditionally been left behind in the urban development process.

Challenges addressed

Over the years, many indicators have been developed to measure urban performance and development. Yet before 2022, these urban indicators were largely scattered across various indices and agendas, such as the City Prosperity Index, the SDGs, and the UNESCO Culture 2030 Agenda.

In recognition of the need for a single, comprehensive, globally recognised set of indicators, in 2018, the United Nations Statistical Division and United Nations Chief Executive Board requested UN-Habitat to lead the development of a new Urban Monitoring Framework that could synthesise and harmonise urban indicators from

across these various indexes, tools and agendas. Since its development and endorsement in 2022, the UMF has provided a common framework for holistically measuring development in cities, helping to inform better policies, drive new partnerships and investments, and accelerate progress towards more sustainable cities.

What UN-Habitat can offer

The UMF comprises a set of metrics that, when combined, accurately describe the conditions and trajectory of an urban area. The framework is organized along 4 city objectives and 5 domains (see the structure and process below). Various indicators are mapped across this structure of objectives and domains that are easily applicable at the local, regional, and global levels.

The UMF offers urban stakeholders six key benefits:

1. Easier reporting on New Urban Agenda and SDG process due to harmonization across important frameworks (national governments, local governments): a) VLRs. b) VNRs, NUA NPRs, NUPs, NDCs.
2. Holistic urban monitoring to improve decisions and outcomes across many different development areas.
3. Flexibility to tailor methodologies to local contexts to improve the precision of decisions.
4. Inclusivity through emphasis on data disaggregation, precise spatial methodologies that can better attribute data to people from specific groups or places.
5. More effective communication of achievements and needs to stakeholders due to a common framework, to attract new investment.
6. Data sharing, comparison and peer-to-peer learning from open-data principles and a common framework.

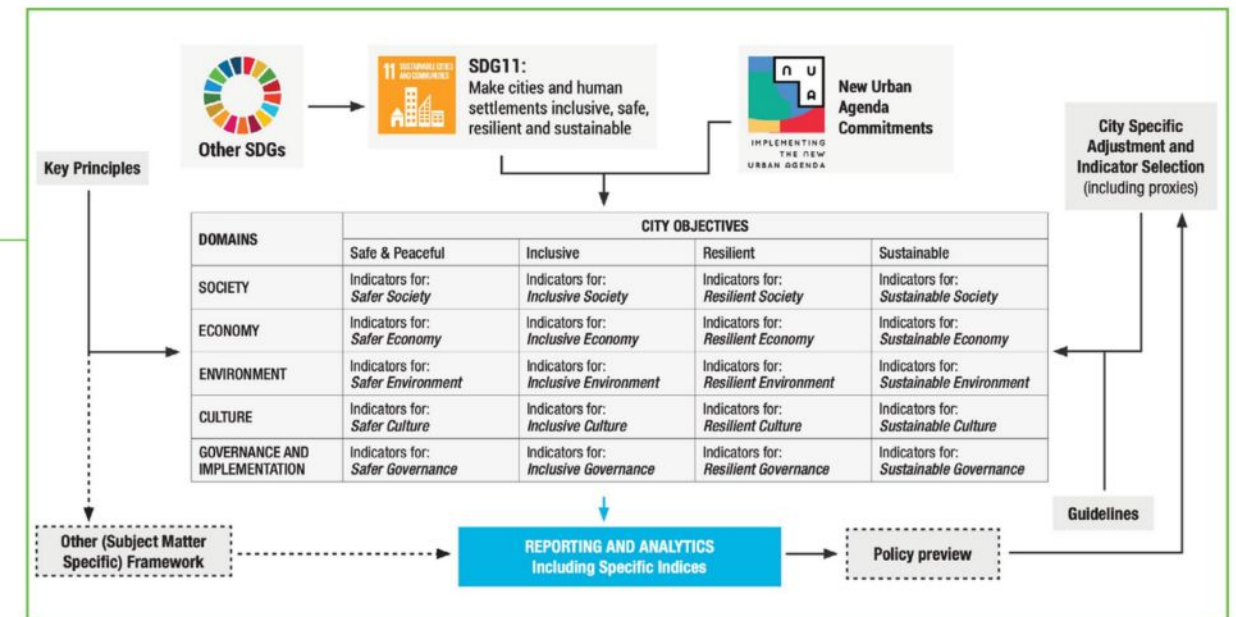


Figure 23. UMF structure and process. © UN-Habitat

Through the implementation of the framework, UN-Habitat provides coordination for application, helps build capacities, and supports the selection of indicators and their rationale as well as computation methodologies, structuring of available data from existing frameworks, and the localization of the framework.

This solution is usually in the form of meetings, training, workshops, data sharing, and other forms of collaboration.

Duration of support

The duration of support to adopt or adapt to the UMF ranges from **three months to two years** depending on the urban area or city's state of data and human resource expertise. Generally, successful adoption of the UMF approach can be achieved within three to **six months**.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat has supported 94 cities from 46 different countries in applying the full Urban Monitoring Framework. This includes early adopters, such as Shanghai (China), Madrid (Spain), Sydney (Australia), Kigali (Rwanda), Mombasa (Kenya), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Qassim (Saudi Arabia) and La Paz (and over 10 cities in Bolivia), among others.

Expanded implementation is ongoing, including under UN-Habitat's SDG Cities Programme and support to Voluntary Local Reviews, through which 30 additional cities are currently implementing the UMF.

Support towards data collection and monitoring was also provided in over 400 cities across the world, through former indices such as the City Prosperity Index, now built into the UMF.

For further information

- Web pages:**
- [Urban Monitoring Framework](#)
 - [United Nations System-Wide Urban Monitoring Framework \(Urban Agenda Platform\)](#)
- Video:** [SDG Cities Global Conference Session 2: Global Urban Monitoring Framework and its local application](#)

For further information:
Global Urban Data Coalition (GUDC)



I3 Direct support on SDG indicator monitoring



Summary

UN-Habitat, as the designated custodian agency for 9 of the 15 indicators under SDG 11 and supporting the monitoring and reporting of 4 indicators in other goals, engages with countries through National Statistical Offices to offer support in SDGs and NUA monitoring and reporting processes.

UN-Habitat works with various stakeholders to support Member States in establishing the required monitoring systems for SDG 11 and other urban SDGs, creating the conditions to produce and use urban data for policymaking and to inform transformative actions.

Challenges addressed

Cities need robust data systems and relevant expertise to build an evidence base for policymaking, monitoring and reporting. UN-Habitat surveys show many countries remain in the early stages of data system development, limiting their ability to integrate data into decision making and produce timely, evidence-based policies.

Understanding urban inequalities, service gaps, and neighbourhoods being left behind requires Earth Observation and Geospatial Information (EO & GI) technologies. These tools are essential not only for data production but also for translating complex datasets into accessible products that guide transformative actions and investments.

EO & GI technologies are now a core component of any data management strategy at all levels. The UN-Habitat-led Spatial Data Integration Model provides guidance on leveraging spatial technologies for planning, monitoring, and reporting, aligned with the harmonised Global Urban Monitoring Framework. This approach helps cities and countries translate data into actionable insights to improve urban development outcomes.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Using its expertise in data collection, monitoring, and capacity development, and as a custodian agency for various SDG and urban indicators, UN-Habitat supports governments through workshops, knowledge sharing, training, and tailored assistance.

This solution helps governments, local authorities and civil society to collect, manage and use urban development data, promotes the use of indicators for policy, planning and management through participatory processes, and aggregates and disseminates monitoring results and good practices globally, nationally and locally.

UN-Habitat has developed training modules with detailed indicator meta-data that cover monitoring rationale, reporting processes, key concepts, measurement approaches, tools, and data sources.

The agency responds to requests from countries and cities through meetings, webinars, workshops, and an e-learning platform that guides users through indicator monitoring processes and methodologies.

A harmonised Global Urban Monitoring Framework integrates SDG and NUA urban monitoring, allowing technical assistance and capacity development to replace previously fragmented systems. On urban spatial data, UN-Habitat collaborates with partners to advance GIS and Earth Observation technologies, providing tools for city data generation and processing, including data extraction codes, GIS plugins and harmonised curation workflows.

These solution tools support NUA and SDG reporting, and meta-data are available for partners seeking methodological details. UN-Habitat can also generate baseline spatial data for countries and cities, sharing it with National Statistics Offices for validation, planning and inclusion in the Global Urban Indicators Database.

The Earth Observation Toolkit for Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements is an online resource offering guidance on applying EO for SDG 11 monitoring, urban policy planning and implementation.

Duration of support

The duration of support varies widely depending on the levels of system development requested by a country through its NSO.

A **one-week** workshop is sufficient to cover the training modules for 10 SDG indicators and associated tools, such as a national sample of cities and the EO toolkit application, amongst others, but regular follow-ups may be required for up to **a few years**. The time required to cover one module on the e-learning platform is **two to three hours**.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat and partners have jointly conducted several regional, national and local workshops in which more than 100 countries and hundreds of urban authorities have participated.

The agency has also contacted all National Statistics Offices (NSOs) annually to collect data on indicators for SDGs 11, 1 and 6 under its custodianship, during which countries are also requested to identify whether they need support to produce related data.

Since 2021, UN-Habitat has directly supported more than 50 countries in producing data on various SDG 11 indicators, resulting in global data availability for more than 1,500 cities worldwide.

This solution, implemented through technical in-country training, aims not only to support data production but also to encourage collaboration among national institutions to advance urban monitoring and data-driven decision making. Beneficiaries of this support have included countries such as **Kenya, Chile, Tunisia, Nepal, Malawi, Ecuador, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates**.

For further information

Publications:

- [GIS Handbook for Municipalities](#)
- [GIS as a Planning Support System for the Planning of Harmonious Cities, No 3](#)

Tool: [The Earth Observations Toolkit for Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements](#)



Image 98. UN-Habitat and partners discussion for monitoring the SDGs, 2022, Nairobi, Kenya. © UN-Habitat



14 The Global Urban Indicators Database



Summary

The Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID) provides data and links to numerous urban datasets and guides, available for cities from all regions. This compilation of urban data includes data shared by statistical offices, data generated by the UN-Habitat's data team, and data acquired from other trusted sources, including partners and ongoing thematic projects run by UN-Habitat branches and sections.

This online open-access platform allows users to explore, visualise, compare, and download data, including their meta-data files. Datasets are tagged for convenient searching, mostly corresponding to SDGs and the NUA indicators.



Challenges addressed

Reliable city-level and urban data is in high demand. Yet supply does not meet demand for this type of granular data that supports local-level planning and action.

When the right data are in the right hands at the right time, decisions can be better informed, more equitable and more likely to protect the rights of urban citizens and vulnerable populations.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat collects, generates, and inputs data to open data portals and dashboards accessible via the Urban Indicators data site. The main data access platform, commonly referred to as the Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID), comprises nearly 142 indicators with open access for the public, covering 193 countries and over 1,500 urban areas.

The data is structured thematically and can be downloaded or visualised on dashboard charts and web maps. UN-Habitat offers data capacity building support, including data generation through training or direct data production at the city or national level.

National statistical offices are invited to review and validate the data for their use in monitoring progress on urban indicators, preparing VNRs and VLRs, and incorporating them into their local decision making mechanisms.



Duration of support

The GUID's datasets and documentation meta-data are continually updated by UN-Habitat's data teams, but all of this data comes from local and national sources.

Countries and cities facing challenges in producing data for urban-related SDG targets and NUA commitments can be supported over a period of **6 to 24 months** to establish the enabling environment for local urban data production.

This includes direct technical training for staff, advice on technological applications, and sharing best practices that can be easily adapted for efficient data production at the urban level.



Previous applications

Previous versions of the database mostly covered Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets on slums and access to urban basic services and was run on the DevInfo (*a data management and visualisation software*) engines.

The database is web-based and covers nearly all countries and over 142 indicators which are drawn from SDGs and NUA frameworks and new adaptations from the Global Urban Monitoring Framework.

The database is also linked to the Urban Agenda platform, where secondary data analysis is available as visualisations aligned with the NUA transformative commitments.

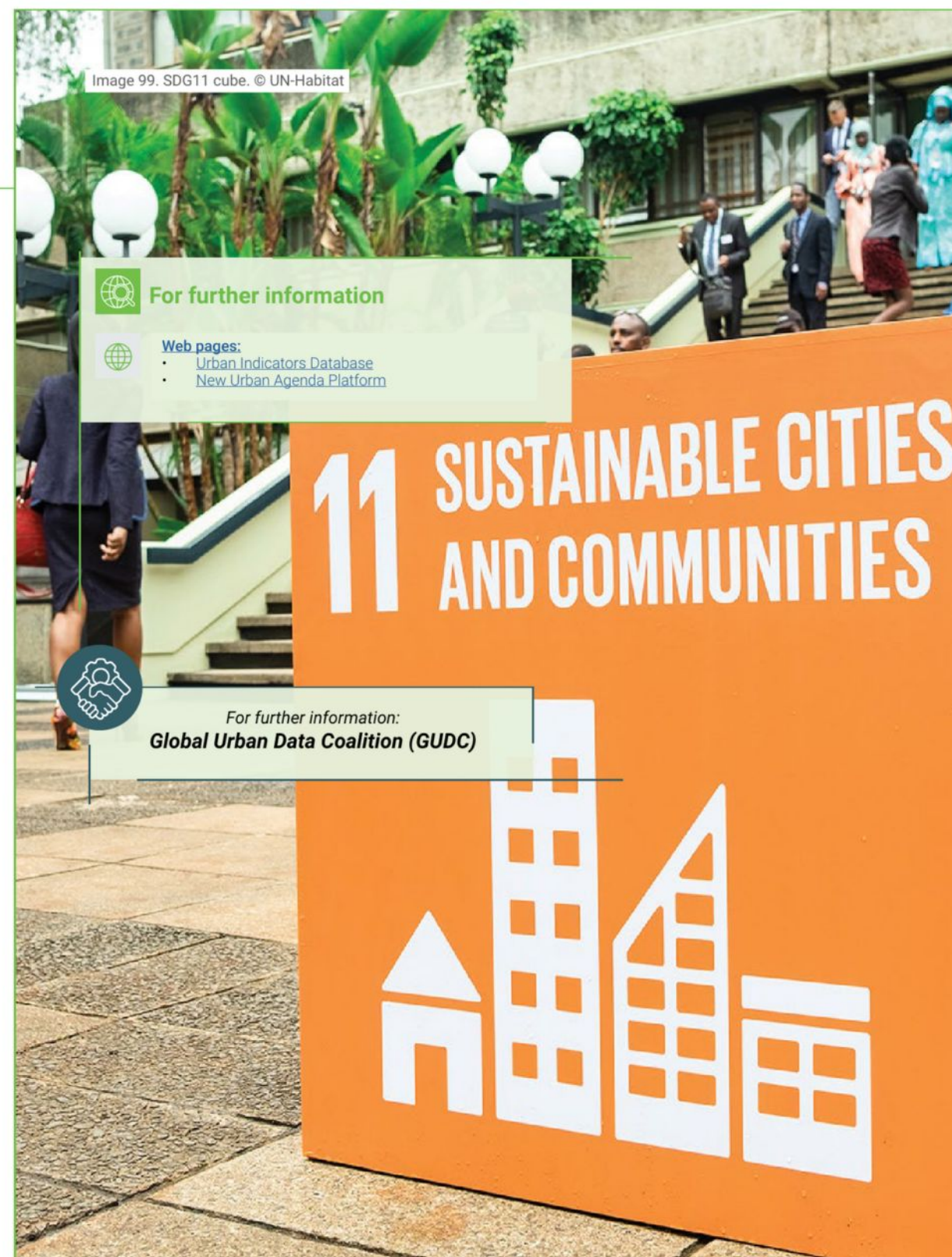


Image 99. SDG11 cube. © UN-Habitat



For further information



Web pages:

- [Urban Indicators Database](#)
- [New Urban Agenda Platform](#)



For further information:
Global Urban Data Coalition (GUDC)



15 Urban Observatories



Summary

An urban observatory is a local network of stakeholders responsible for producing, analysing and disseminating urban data on a meaningful set of indicators that collectively reflect prioritised issues on sustainable development in each area or country.

Data and information resources produced by the local network are used to support decision making and the formulation of evidence-informed policies.

An urban observatory is therefore a local hub for urban monitoring at the local or national level, provides a platform to facilitate data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting on performance against different indicators, and supports effective knowledge exchange and evidence-based governance.

Challenges addressed

In many parts of the world, the lack of good quality, relevant, accessible, and timely local data on cities is a key element impeding progress in monitoring and reporting on global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

The lack of sound urban data also affects the formulation of evidence-based policies and the design of programmes that respond to urban dynamics and related challenges.

As countries move towards increased decentralisation and localized decision making, there is a need for local monitoring systems and networks that can support the tracking of progress, the identification of setbacks using new approaches and techniques, and the formulation of evidence-informed policies.

Local authorities also require periodic assessments of their state of development and accurate tools to evaluate policy outcomes and the impact of specific plans and actions.

What UN-Habitat can offer

An urban observatory serves as a local hub for urban monitoring at the local or national level, supporting effective knowledge exchange and evidence-based governance.

As the global coordinator of the Global Urban Observatory Network, UN-Habitat develops the capacity of local and national authorities to establish urban observatories.

This assistance includes providing guidance to local authorities and networks on resource requirements, creating databases, prioritising indicators and aligning them with global reporting frameworks and tools, such as the application of the national sample of cities and global urban monitoring frameworks.

Through this support, authorities are able to develop, collect and analyse data on a set of localized indicators to monitor a range of local or national priority issues; establish permanent mechanisms for monitoring SDGs and urban indicators; promote the use of urban data in planning and policymaking at local and national level; disseminate information to strengthen accountability and transparency; and promote local ownership of the urban indicator system and a culture of monitoring and assessment.

Duration of support

The level of support provided depends on numerous factors, including the availability of resources and complementary local data systems, as authorities are at different stages of data-systems development. Typically, the setup of an observatory requires about **eight months** to complete.

Additionally, a **three-day** capacity building workshop provides stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the model and the skills to get started. Further training support can be offered throughout the different stages of the process to establish the observatory, as highlighted in the chart below.

Previous applications

UN-Habitat managed and coordinated local and national urban observatories worldwide. Membership in the network is open to all urban observatories, and applications to join are vetted by UN-Habitat based on the observatory's relevance to urban monitoring, its use of data for informed decision making, and other criteria.

Membership in the network also included issuance of a certificate of participation by UN-Habitat. Globally, there are more than 300 urban observatories operating at different levels, of which 40 are officially certified by UN-Habitat and are members of the network.

For further information

- Webpage:** [Global Urban Observatories](#)
- Publication:** [A guide to setting up an urban observatory](#)

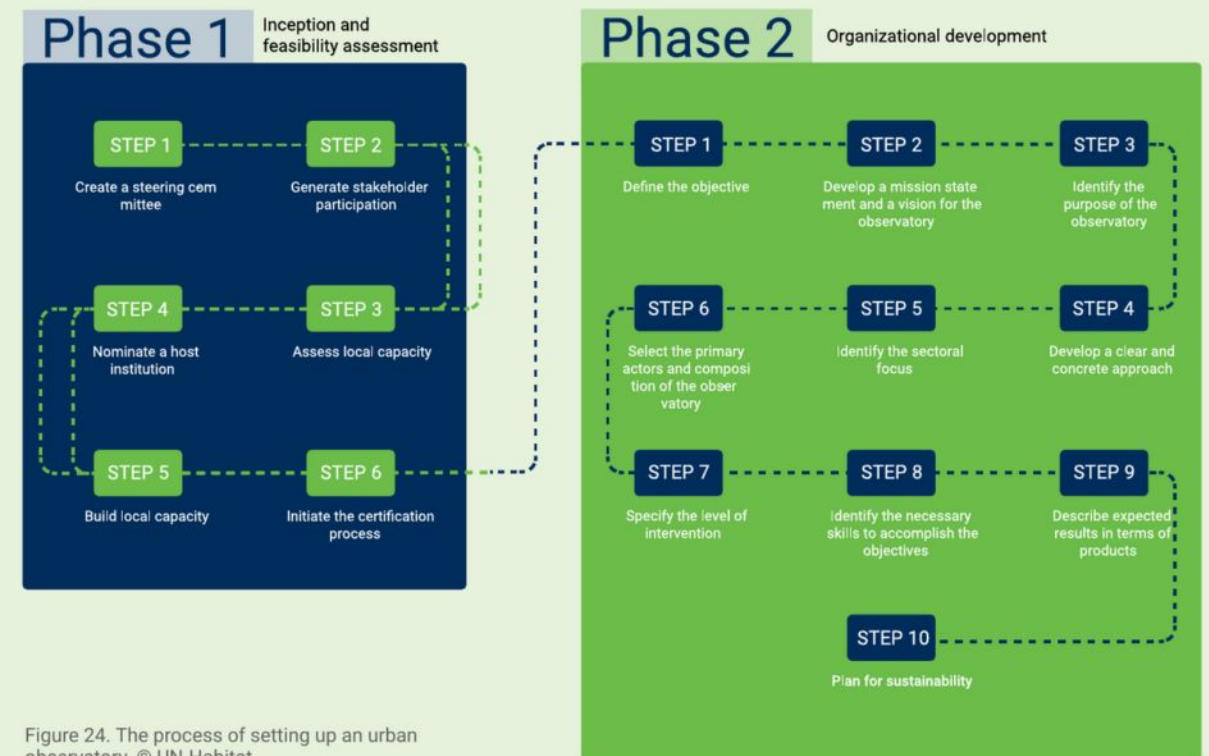


Figure 24. The process of setting up an urban observatory. © UN-Habitat

Sub-chapter

Capacity building and digitalisation

16 Integrating urban research and practice: the UNI Network

1/3 UNU

Summary

UN-Habitat's academic partnerships are a cornerstone of its mission to promote sustainable urban development. These partnerships are designed to enhance urban sustainability through collaboration with universities worldwide.

The Habitat UNI is UN-Habitat's collaboration framework for academia, research institutions, and think tanks. It serves as a bridge between urban sustainability research and urban development practices. UN-Habitat engages with academic institutions in many ways. This engagement culminates every two years at the World Urban Forum.

The UN-Habitat University and Research Partnerships Framework, launched at WUF12 in Cairo, channels cooperation through five shared agendas:

- Knowledge co-creation and research.
- Data, monitoring, and reporting.
- Capacity development.
- Urban policy and practice.
- Advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and outreach.

Various partnership modalities are used to address priority challenges across the 5 impact areas and to find new ways to bridge theory and practice to address the capacity, data, and policy gaps that cities face around the globe.

Challenges addressed

Fragmented research efforts on urban issues, inadequate data collection and analysis to support urban development, and the absence of standardised mechanisms for monitoring and reporting hamper impactful urban and territorial development cooperation.

Capacity gaps in sustainable urbanization persist across sectors and countries, highlighting the need for targeted education and training to prepare both current and future generations of urban practitioners.

Moreover, a disconnect between academic research and practical urban policy implementation, along with insufficient stakeholder engagement between knowledge institutions and urban practitioners, undermines progress.

Inefficient communication channels between academia and urban stakeholders further compound these issues, emphasising the importance of fostering collaboration and evidence-based approaches to urban policy and practice.

What UN-Habitat can offer

Through its unique convenor position, UN-Habitat supports connecting knowledge institutions with governments, cities, the private sector and civil society to expand collaborations and address the most pressing challenges cities face

Opportunities for engagement include:

Joining the World Urban Forum Academy, where collective agendas for research, capacity development and innovation are built. Held every two year, the World Urban Forum (WUF) is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization, Integrate UN-Habitat's self-paced online courses in your curriculum, accessible on the UN-Habitat Learn platform.

Joining Habitat UNI (Free Membership): Higher education and research institutions with significant work on sustainable urbanization that are interested in partnering with UN-Habitat and other sectors can apply for free membership at Habitat UNI.

Members are including in the mailing list to learn about multiple opportunities for collaboration with UN-Habitat initiatives, such as the Innovate4Cities Conferences and engagement in the World Urban Campaign - Urban Thinking Campuses.

Habitat UNI Hubs can be established in the city, national, regional, or global level with a clear 2-year plan to advance sustainable urbanization across the five impact areas of the UN-Habitat University and Research Partnerships framework.

Governments, donors or financing institutions can also express their interest in initiating a hub. The formation of Habitat UNI Hubs requires in-kind and financial commitments from applicants.

Joint efforts with academic and research institutions aim to address research and capacity gaps in sustainable urbanization for both current and future generations of practitioners. These efforts include developing targeted hybrid and in-person training programs, and leveraging digitalization for learning and capacity development.

Online learning materials and courses, such as MOOCs, webinar series, and self paced e-learning opportunities can be made available on UN-Habitat Learn, UN-Habitat's unique learning platform. Collaborations include the creation of educational resources like the Global Urban Lectures series and the establishment of curriculum and competency frameworks to enhance learning and professional development.

Duration of support

Membership in the UNI Network varies according to the specific needs and resource availability of partners. Habitat UNI Hubs generally work through a **two-year** collaboration plan.

Previous applications

This initiative builds on UN-Habitat's existing partnerships with academia and research institutions, aiming to increase coherence and efficacy of these collaborations.



To express interest in collaboration and apply to create a Habitat UNI Hub; unhabitat-uni@un.org

For further information

- Web pages:**
- [UN-Habitat UNI Network Webpage](#)
 - [Global Lectures Series](#)
 - [UN-Habitat Learn](#)

Publication: [Linking UN-Habitat and universities: Harnessing the potential of knowledge partnerships](#)



Image 100. Interactive session with students from the Baret Scholars Programme at UN-Habitat HQ. © UN-Habitat



Summary

Establishment of regional training centres of excellence to fill the critical capacity needs of municipal and city leaders to effectively respond to pressing demands of urbanization.

Capitalising on more than 10 years' experience in building regional capacities across Asia and the Pacific as well as in Africa, UN-Habitat extends its expertise to partners by jointly establishing training institutes and co-producing bespoke and cutting-edge training courses and materials, whilst providing unparalleled opportunities for city-to-city exchange and cross-fertilisation of ideas through its wide alumni network.



Challenges addressed

Due to limited resources, many local governments do not have adequate capacity and institutional arrangements to strive for excellence, hence being unable to improve their processes, up-skill their workforce, promote challenge-driven innovation and cross-fertilisation of ideas, and adopt new ways of doing things, new policies, and new technologies.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat uses over 16 years of experience in facilitating cutting-edge learning in sustainable urban development through regional training centres in Asia and the Pacific, as well as in Africa, for this solution, and can replicate and further tailor this knowledge transfer model in other regions.

The centres bring together a network of city leaders and urban practitioners, providing a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experiences while also fostering a long-term network of alumni.

Innovative approaches and best practices are incorporated into UN-Habitat's trainings. Learning modules and site visits are carefully selected to provide cutting-edge perspectives to participants.



Duration of support

The establishment and operationalisation of a regional training centre of excellence depends on specific capacity building plans, funding opportunities and terms of partnership. The duration of the training courses usually lasts between **5 to 10 days** but can be tailored to meet specific demands and constraints.



Previous applications

Through its partnership with the Gangwon Provincial Government, **Republic of Korea**, UN-Habitat has established a competitive urban training and capacity building provider in the Asia-Pacific region, leveraging synergies between the parties in urban excellence and training.

This initiative has led to a large alumni network of senior decision-makers and policymakers across Asia, as well as unparalleled access to a wealth of knowledge and opportunities for cooperation.

The regional training centres can increase in the uptake and regional outreach of practical tools, such as in the case of the City Prosperity Index (CPI), which saw its application increase in **Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bangladesh**, as well as UN-Habitat's approach to building urban resilience through Ecosystem-based Adaptation, which is being rolled out in several countries in Asia Pacific and Africa.

An average of 90 per cent of surveyed participants stated that the training course had met their expectations. 63 per cent of the surveyed alumni indicated that support from IUTC will help them apply the knowledge gained from the training course to their work and programmes.



"..The sessions were relevant as we also got to learn live examples of how other sources of energy could be utilised in climatic condition like ours, for example, use of solar panels in sub-tropical and tundra climatic regions.."

Training participant, IUTC, 2023



Image 101. IUTC building. © UN-Habitat



18

Digital capacity building for sustainable urbanization



Summary

UN-Habitat's Capacity Development Section (CDS) supports the development of digital capacity building on sustainable urbanization by ensuring the transfer of knowledge, skills and competencies using different methodologies: online self-paced learning, technical webinars, 'Global Urban Lectures', mobile learning, etc.

The CDS leverages partnerships with governments, partners and relevant stakeholders to develop innovative learning solutions that are fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as enshrined in Agenda 2030.

The overall goal is to strengthen the capacities of targeted professionals and enable them to acquire specific competences, facilitate the implementation of policies, frameworks, and decision making processes, and address local and regional-level challenges.

Challenges addressed

Capacity gaps significantly hinder the ability of government institutions and other urban stakeholders to effectively implement sustainable urban development plans and policies, falling short in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

What UN-Habitat can offer

CDS is dedicated to bridging capacity gaps at the local and national levels through capacity building initiatives that enhance competencies in sustainable urban development.

Digital capacity building solution offerings include the development of multilingual, self-paced, and facilitated online courses, which are accessible and free of charge on the UN-Habitat Learn Platform - UN-Habitat Learning Management System (LMS) in Moodle.

Secondly, UN-Habitat hosts online classrooms through the UN-Habitat Learn Platform for support of hybrid learning experiences. In addition, the development of the Global Urban Lecture Series, free educational video lectures on sustainable urbanization, is offered, as well as a series of mobile learning courses for low-connectivity contexts.

Finally, UN-Habitat provides support in all phases of instructional design, from assessing the needs of target audiences to developing content and facilitating learning experiences.

Duration of support

The development of digital capacity building products requires **two to six months** of preparation and depends on funding availability. Self-paced courses accessible on the UN-Habitat learn platform are delivered asynchronously, allowing learners to take the course at their own pace, anywhere, at any time.

Online classroom sessions and technical webinars are delivered synchronously, depending on preference and topic.

Previous applications

Currently, the UN-Habitat Learn platform offers 44 courses across various topics and has 12,223 registered users.

The courses are designed to empower learners by bridging knowledge and skills gaps across various subjects, including the New Urban Agenda, urban waste management, urban mobility, ecosystem-based adaptation, own source revenue generation and municipal finance, urban safety, public spaces, and national urban policies - to name a few.

Certification is granted upon completion of the learning activities for each course, demonstrating the acquisition of specific competencies through performance assessments.

Since its founding, the series has launched 6 seasons and 63 videos, accumulating over 330,000 views. 16 of UN-Habitat's 30 most-viewed YouTube videos are Global Urban Lectures, making them one of its most successful outreach initiatives.

The Global Urban Lectures reach both the public and the 143 partner universities and 1,000 individual members of Habitat UNI. The lectures can be utilised for both professional training and personal self-learning, as well as refresher courses.

They can also be utilised as resource materials for academic curricula, embedded in e-learning courses, and screened at public events as an introduction to debates on subjects relevant to cities and urban development.



"..I was looking for a platform which I could help me to design urban development. UN-Habitat Learning Platform solves my problem by helping me acquire a deep understanding of the essence of urban solutions. This online platform is more practical, more user friendly and more interactive. Similarly, we can learn from experience of other countries regarding urban related solutions. I am delighted to be user of this online platform.."

Saurab Dhakal, Engineer, Kathmandu Valley Development Authority.



For further information



- Videos:
- [Global Urban Lectures Season 6](#)
 - [All online lectures](#)

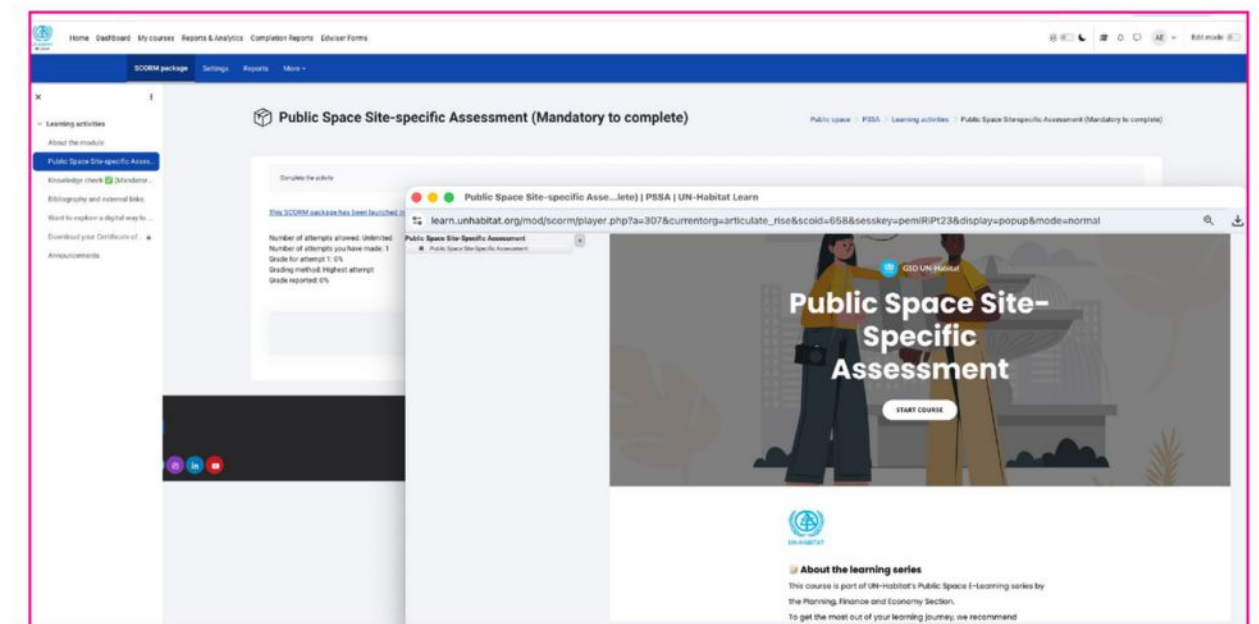


Figure 25. Screenshot of one of UN-Habitat online courses available on UN-Habitat Learn platform. © UN-Habitat



Summary

Cities can use open, challenge-driven innovation to identify smart solutions to urban challenges. UN-Habitat supports local governments in conceptualising innovation competitions, defining challenges, engaging stakeholders and communities, producing challenge briefs, reaching out to innovators, and selecting and implementing winning solutions.

Cities work with UN-Habitat and partners and stakeholders to identify and refine the challenge. Challenge initiatives have been widely used to engage cross-sectoral perspectives and vulnerable groups, such as youth, girls, and women, in developing innovative local solutions.



Challenges addressed

Cities today are in a state of constant change, and new ways to solve existing urban problems are needed. Local governments around the world face challenges in identifying, procuring, and implementing appropriate innovative and smart solutions.

Challenge-driven innovation is a way to bridge the gap between local governments and the private sector in an inclusive way, while putting people's needs front and centre in developing solutions.

Challenge initiatives help cities assess how innovations are currently used and how they can better address residents' needs. Challenge-driven innovation is a people-centred methodology in which public participation and inclusion are integral throughout.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UN-Habitat has developed a bespoke methodology which uses challenge-driven and open innovation to help cities identify, test and procure innovative solutions through crowdsourcing, bringing public, private, academic and civil society stakeholders together to implement innovations that solve urban challenges.

UN-Habitat takes local governments through a process of challenge definition, innovator engagement, system demonstration, implementation and investment. Throughout the process, technical support and resources are provided to develop local capacities in procuring and experimenting with innovation processes and system demonstrators.

With extensive expertise and experience addressing urban challenges, UN-Habitat can provide cities with tailored support based on local needs, including the participation of stakeholders from different sectors, especially the community.

Women and youth participation is predominant in existing applications of the methodology and has shown positive results in sparking innovation. Challenge-driven innovation offers cities and local governments the opportunity to experiment with and test solutions to better understand the innovation ecosystem.

Such practical experience enhances local capacities in different areas, including procurement and investment in solutions aimed at addressing social and environmental challenges, and the achievement of the SDGs at local level.



Duration of support

UN-Habitat's challenge-driven innovation process can take anywhere from **six months to three years**, depending on the nature and aim of the challenge. It is also possible to use parts of the process to innovate a wide range of programmatic initiatives.

For example, practical challenge definition workshops can be completed in **two to four hours**, challenge statements can be developed in a few days, and a wide range of community and stakeholder engagement processes can be done over **several days**. Some rapid-development applications of the methodology, such as hackathons, can be completed in **two to three days**.



Previous applications

UN-Habitat has long used incentives and competitions to engage with stakeholders and identify solutions to urban challenges, beginning with the Dubai International Best Practices Award for Sustainable Development in 1995. Since then, UN-Habitat has employed challenge-driven innovation to foster public participation in problem solving and decision making, pilot and test new solutions, and collaborate with academia, civil society, and the private sector to accelerate sustainable urbanization.

Innovate **Kenya** Counties Challenge implemented in 2016-17, in partnership with Ericsson AB, Kenya's Ministry of Development and Planning, Strathmore University, Akirachix, Omidyar Network, SIDA, UK AID and USAID identified digital innovations to strengthen youth participation in local governance.

Mindanao Youth Innovation Hackathon, launched together with UNIDO and Red Wizard Events Technology in 2019, brought together students from across Mindanao to generate innovative ideas for the rehabilitation of Marawi in **the Philippines**, a city plagued by water, sanitation, and waste problems.

Climate Smart Cities Challenge launched in 2021 with Viable Cities together with Bogota, **Colombia**; Bristol, **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**; Curitiba, **Brazil**; and Makindye Ssabagabo, **Uganda** to transform systems related to housing, waste management and freight

transportation and reduce their impact on the climate, with an initial grant of approximately USD 100,000 to the winning team.

Katowice Energy Innovation Challenge organized with the city of Katowice on the sidelines of the WUF11 identified solutions for acceleration and incubation towards the transition to clean and renewable energy systems.

In 2024, UN-Habitat launched the Minecraft Global Challenge and the Water as Leverage City Challenge.



Image 102. Clean technology hackathon in Marawi City, the Philippines. © UN-Habitat, Mark Padida



For further information



[Webpage: Climate Smart Cities Challenge – Preparing cities to scale climate solutions](#)

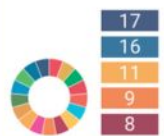


[Publication: Urban Resilience Hackathon Driving Innovation for Better Cities, Lessons Learnt Report](#)



Challenges Examples:

- [Innovate Kenyan Counties Challenge - Improving local governance for youth using ICTs](#)
- [Katowice Energy Innovation Challenge – Digital solutions for the urban energy transition](#)
- [Future Cities Challenge – Young people design their cities of the future to address urban challenges](#)
- [Water as Leverage City Champion Challenge](#)



I10

United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC)



Summary

The United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC) – a collaboration between UN-Habitat, HafenCity University and the United Nations Office of ICT – is an innovation accelerator based in Hamburg, Germany.

UNITAC works with a variety of innovation, prototyping, and applied research methodologies to develop innovative solutions that accelerate progress toward the SDGs.

It complements UN-Habitat's technical and normative support for frontier technologies and mechanisms for digital cooperation and governance, ensuring that digital technologies are built on a foundation of respect for human rights and provide meaningful opportunities for all people and nations.

The United Nations accelerator model develops prototypes and concepts that can be implemented by United Nations regional and country offices in partnership with national and local governments.



Challenges addressed

Urbanization and digitalisation are the two most important trends in the twenty-first century. To contribute effectively to urban sustainability, frontier technologies and innovation need to be applied appropriately to ensure that the prosperity they bring is shared among people, cities and regions.

UNITAC operates on a needs-driven approach, focusing on real urban challenges and existing needs faced by local governments and cities, and developing technologies that address them.

It provides an opportunity for governments to develop capacity and expertise in digital transformation that is inclusive, ethical, and prioritises quality of life and human rights, focusing on society's most pressing issues.



What UN-Habitat can offer

UNITAC provides an environment for experimentation and learning, where solutions and pilots can be tested and prototyped in collaboration with a network of partners. UNITAC has three thematic work streams:

1. Open, transparent and participatory governance of data and digital platforms.
2. Mapping, spatial analysis, data analytics and visualisation.
3. People-centred smart cities.

Through a team of data scientists, technologists, smart city specialists and urban development experts, UNITAC provides innovation and technology support to national, regional and local governments.

Projects and use cases are selected through regular open calls in which potential partners are invited to present their urban challenges and technology needs related to UNITAC's three themes.

The UNITAC team then works collaboratively to develop prototypes, technologies, data tools, methodologies and approaches to meet these challenges. Each technology project sets its own objectives and expected outcomes, which are evaluated at the end of the process.



Duration of support

The time required to implement UNITAC projects varies with scope. Short-term projects can take from **six to nine months**. The accelerator operates with co-creation and challenge methodologies, which include workshops to discover and define challenges with governments and stakeholders that can take an estimated **one or two days** up to **six months**.

Projects of bigger scope can take **several months** or up to three years and cover different stages, including assessing the challenge, testing and prototyping and implementation.



Previous applications

Since 2021, UNITAC has been supporting local and national governments through different projects and tools:

BEAM – Building and Establishment Automated Mapper: In collaboration with eThekweni, **South Africa**, UNITAC has developed a tool, BEAM, that uses machine learning to accelerate the spatial recognition of informal settlements and structures on satellite imagery, enabling the municipal government to automatically detect informal structures and improve their upgrading and service delivery interventions.

The tool is also currently being piloted in 8 cities in Central America, with the aim of creating an online repository of mapped informal settlements, including basic spatial data.

Digital Participation System (DiPAS): DiPAS is a digital tool for public participation with location-based feedback functionality, piloted in Gaborone to develop a river corridor plan that makes the city more resilient to flooding.

The tool allows decision-makers to systematise consultation inputs and use maps to capture feedback from the community and other stakeholders.

Digital solutions and capacity building for more climate resilient informal areas and smart resilient urban recovery, in Namibia and **Ukraine**.

In **Namibia**, UNITAC is developing data platforms to support national housing information systems focused on informal settlements and integrate residents' needs more inclusively into urban planning.

In **Ukraine**, UNITAC is developing a data platform and digital tools to support a more informed-based decision making process for the planning of recovery and reconstruction efforts in the country.

In 2024, UNITAC launched three new projects:

- With GIZ **Bangladesh** on innovations for climate-smart urban development in four municipalities
- With the Hargeisa Water Agency on bridging water access for the urban poor in **Somalia**.
- With the Public Space Network on improving data collection on solid waste generation in informal settlements in Nairobi, **Kenya**.



"..The unique structure of UNITAC represents this global perspective itself and is the result of an excellent cooperation between UN-Habitat, UN-Office of Information and Communication Technology, the city of Hamburg, HafenCity University Hamburg and the German Federal Government.."

Mr Niels Annen, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany



For further information



- Web pages:**
- [United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities Initiatives](#)
 - [Supporting sustainable urban recovery in Ukraine](#)



Model: [Leveraging local expertise to enhance urban sustainability with BEAM](#)



Image 103. Virtual reality experience at UN-Habitat Assembly. © UN-Habitat, Kiara Worth

Image 104. Multilevel Governance session during the resumed second session of UN-Habitat Assembly. © UN-Habitat



Chapter J: Partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication

This chapter presents the global solutions of UN-Habitat's work on **partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication**, the fourth means of implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan. Achieving sustainable urbanization requires collective action and shared responsibility. No single actor can tackle the complex social, economic, and environmental challenges of cities alone. Strong partnerships, inclusive coalitions, and effective advocacy are therefore essential to mobilise knowledge, resources, and action toward the shared goals of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA)**.

UN-Habitat's partnerships and coalitions provide **platforms for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and advocacy** on key dimensions of sustainable urban development. These include global alliances such as the **Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)**, which strengthens public utilities; the **Local2030 Coalition**, which advances SDG localization; and the **Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)**, which promotes equitable access to land and tenure security.

Other partnerships, include the **African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP)**, the **Global Public Space Network**, the **SDG Cities Global Community**, and the **Global Urban Data Coalition (GUDC)**. Together, these coalitions serve as catalysts for collective learning, coordinated action, and evidence-based advocacy.



Image 105. Participants during a session at the 6th GWOPA congress in Bonn, Germany. © World Waternet