# Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries: I.R. Iran, Myanmar & Nigeria"

**UN-HABITAT**

**RMIT** UNIVERSITY

**MOLIT**
Ministry of Land,
Infrastructure and Transport

P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA
Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)
www.unhabitat.org

**HS Number**: HS/042/23

Evaluation Report 2023/3

# Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries: I.R. Iran, Myanmar & Nigeria"

UN-HABITAT

RMIT UNIVERSITY

MOLIT
Ministry of Land,
Infrastructure and Transport

# Contents

# List of Figures

# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **DUHD** | Department of Urban and Housing Development |
| **EA** | Expected Accomplishment |
| **EGM** | Expert Group Meeting |
| **ICNUP** | International Conference on National Urban Policy |
| **KM** | Knowledge Management |
| **KRIHS** | Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements |
| **MDAs** | Ministry, Department and Agencies |
| **MOLIT** | Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of Republic of Korea |
| **MoRUD** | Ministry of Roads and Urban Development of I.R. Iran |
| **MSDP** | Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan |
| **NUA** | New Urban Agenda |
| **NUC** | National Urban Committee |
| **NUP** | National Urban Policy |
| **NUP-F** | National Urban Policy Framework |
| **NUPP** | National Urban Policy Programme |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **PLGS** | Policy, Legislation & Governance Section of UN-Habitat |
| **PPE** | Personal Protective Equipment |
| **ROAP** | Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of UN-Habitat |
| **ROAS** | Regional Office for Arab States of UN-Habitat |
| **SCS** | Smart City Strategies |
| **SDGs** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SUP** | Subnational Urban Policy |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UN-Habitat** | United Nations Human Settlements Programme |
| **UPB** | Urban Practices Branch of UN-Habitat |
| **WUF** | World Urban Forum |

# Executive Summary

——

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This report concerns the evaluation of the Korea-funded project entitled "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)". The evaluation was undertaken by researchers (evaluation team) from the Centre for Urban Research, RMIT University, to give an independent appraisal of the programme's operational experience, achievements, opportunities, challenges and recommendations that will inform future phases. The evaluation seeks to serve the purposes of accountability for results achieved as well as enhance learning to improve current and future NUP development and implementation. The report expounds on evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations that could be used to inform the development and implementation of future NUP funded projects as well as other similar projects. The main target audiences for the evaluation report are the donor (Government of the Republic of Korea), the project team and UN-Habitat management, and other NUP key stakeholders, including the UN-Habitat Executive Board. The evaluation covered the programme implementation period, from 2017 to 2022.

## OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

With the adoption of global frameworks such as Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework, National Urban Policies (NUPs) have been identified as a key tool to support the implementation and monitoring of the global urban agenda. In 2016, during the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador, UN-Habitat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Cities Alliance launched the National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) as a joint initiative to contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the development of NUPs.

The work of UN-Habitat on NUP is rooted in the Governing Council resolution HSP/GC/24/L.6 and the Governing Council resolution HSP/GC/25/L.12 requesting the Executive Director "in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to develop a general framework for the development, where appropriate, of national urban policies based on international good experiences, to further support member states when developing and improving their urban policies" and "to further strengthen partnerships, peer learning and a community of practice approach on national urban policies as means of supporting national and local governments as they develop and implement policies".

The project "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)" was a pilot phase of the National Urban Policy Programme. It was organized through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Korea and UN-Habitat signed at the Habitat III conference and was funded by the Republic of Korea through the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. The project had an approved budget of USD 2,673,368 (USD 2,583,087 received) and ran from July 2017 to November 2022.

The pilot phase has been managed by the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) of the Urban Practices Branch (UPB) of UN-Habitat with the involvement of country and regional-based focal points for the respective benefiting countries. It was implemented in partnership, internally at UN-Habitat and also externally with partner organizations, such as the Korean Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS), the Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Cities Alliance.

The purpose of the project was to support development of National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in three pilot countries, I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Niger State (Nigeria). In Nigeria, a Subnational Urban Policy (SUP) was to be developed in Niger State, one of Nigeria's states.

**In particular, the project aimed to:**

1. Enhance capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies.

2. Increase centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies.

3. Provide augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. (UN-Habitat 2017)

The project has supported international capacity building, including exchange visits to the Republic of Korea and Poland. It has also facilitated the organization of International Conferences on NUP and supported the preparation of normative products. At the country level, consultations and activities were conducted and reports created following the five phases of NUP (Feasibility, Diagnosis, Formulation, Implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation). Furthermore, demonstration projects were defined and implemented at the country level. In I.R. Iran, the "National Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy" was submitted to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD) in August 2022. In Niger State, Nigeria, the "Niger State Urban Policy" and "Niger State Smart City Strategy" were presented to the advisory board and the state legislative council and is awaiting final approval and enactment into law, with the legislative process still ongoing. In Myanmar, draft documents of the "Myanmar National Urban Policy" and "Smart City Strategy" have been developed, however, since the 2021 military takeover the implementation of the NUPP has been on hold.

## APPROACH AND METHODS

The focus of the evaluation was on the pilot phase "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)" using a Theory of Change (TOC) approach. The Theory of Change approach tests the connection between the elements of the programme and their efficacy in achieving the programme goals. However, while the TOC establishes the framework for change process, changes are driven by stakeholders' views, perceptions, and decisions taken by actual institutions and policymakers. Accordingly, interviews and focus group consultations with stakeholders, on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence of the programme played an important role in this evaluation. Information and data for the evaluation was collected using four methods: document analysis; interviews with project beneficiaries and stakeholders; focus groups drawn from the broad group of stakeholders, and a survey distributed to beneficiaries of the project. The combination of methods enabled a better understanding of the project and its activities through the document analysis, in-depth reflections on the project and future developments through the interview process and focus groups as well as an understanding of the perception of the different activities and components in the beneficiary countries through the survey.

## KEY FINDINGS

This evaluation of the "NUP and Smart Cities Strategies" project affirms the importance of a multi-level policy dialogue to develop a national urban policy and the positive role that the presence and support of UN-Habitat can play in this process. The development of national urban policies and smart city strategies can assist in understanding and addressing opportunities and challenges presented by (rapid) urbanization and to bring different stakeholders together to understand the breadth of issues and opportunities, develop pathways for positive outcomes of urbanization and establish an ownership of the policy and its subsequent actions.

**The project has achieved its expected accomplishments to:**

1. Enhance capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national/sub-national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies.

2. Increase centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies.

3. Provide augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. (UN-Habitat 2017)

Elements of the project that were mentioned by research participants as having contributed to **enhanced capacity** are; peer-to-peer learning, participation in international conferences, technical assistance through UN-Habitat, and capacity development sessions and seminars. One interviewee also mentioned that it was useful to understand the situation of the country through data collection and analysis and present this data to relevant stakeholders. The normative UN-Habitat guides have also been mentioned as capacity-enhancing. One interviewee highlighted the merits of learning by doing rather than by instruction, that means participating countries were supported in the steps of NUP/SUP and Smart City Strategy (SCS) development through practical support and advice, and learned through their own experiences, rather than purely following a best-practice guide. Particular areas for which interviewees stated that understanding has improved within the countries are issues such as informal settlements/slum upgrading, urban-rural interface, and the need for cooperation.

Particularly the multi-level policy dialogues and the NUP advisory boards were seen to have led to **increased centralization of knowledge** as well as an increased awareness about the importance of NUPs and the tools to use. Dialogue participants came from many different sectors and levels which was important for synergizing areas of knowledge. For Smart City Strategies there has been a mixed assessment with most participants highlighting an increase in knowledge, but other participants assessing the development of the Smart City Strategies as less open and participatory.

There is evidence of smart city thinking across domains, i.e., the opportunities of smart cities as well as the potential synergies are considered for different areas, such as land use, education, vulnerable settlements, and water supply. One interviewee pointed out the cooperation in Niger State which made digitization of data possible (e.g. for water pipes), which is now available to everyone.

**Opportunities for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities** on urban policy and smart city strategies were highly valued. The research participants stated that study visits, the online learning exchange and international conferences have augmented the opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities. The networking events at the World Urban Forum (WUF) 10 and 11 and the visits to Korea and Poland have been equally pointed out as particularly beneficial events for knowledge sharing and peer learning. One interviewee acknowledged that the open discussion between participating countries assisted in learning the processes. In addition to the knowledge sharing experience and peer learning of the participating countries, other countries were able to further learn from the experiences of each the three participating countries, particularly through conferences and the WUF.

With regard to **relevance and coherence**, the project has been consistent with relevant national policies and strategies, and national development plans. Also, the NUP/SUP documents refer to the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, as well as the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework.

The development of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs, as well as the technical assistance and knowledge exchange, was perceived as useful by beneficiaries, as it facilitated a clearer structuring of urban and other related policies, including the coordination of projects and urban development; enabled a better understanding of interrelations, and responses to issues such as land readjustment.

Concerning **efficiency and effectiveness**, the project has achieved its planned results and interviewees and focus group participants stated that the design and implementation of the project have worked well, although naturally, the disruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic influenced its implementation. However, the project team was able to respond flexibly to this challenge. Major factors that contributed to the achievement of the expected accomplishments were committed individuals, the technical support, the policy dialogue in the countries, meetings between beneficiaries, UN-Habitat and the Korean donors, and political will from respective governments. As discussions and participatory processes take time and political will, this has led to some parts of the project, particularly the final development of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs, needing more time than planned. However, all countries had developed the policy and strategy which considered the time lag aspect to the end of the project. The implementation of the project was monitored through annual reports and updates on project plans (as well as quarterly updates). Necessary changes were recommended in the reports and discussed in meetings with the donor.

The demonstration projects have been considered a valuable and efficient type of activity, as they were tangible and have led to visible outcomes on the ground. The policy dialogues have also been mentioned as an important and efficient part of the project, as they have led to increased awareness, ownership and capacity and knowledge about NUPs/SUP and SCSs in the countries. Ownership by local stakeholders was very important for the effectiveness of the project. This also includes political interest. Involvement of local stakeholders in the development of the process, resulted into high ownership for the developed NUPs/SUP, and to some extent also SCS, as research participants reported.

From the document analysis and the accounts of participants, the project was delivered in a cost-effective manner, and the resourcing was considered sufficient and justified. Particularly, the demonstration projects were reviewed as cost-effective, since they only had small budgets, but quite tangible to the population. The level of funding was viewed as a positive factor by some respondents, which allowed the NUP projects in the countries to be done well and in a timely manner to build national and sub-national awareness and support for the program.

While the **impact** of the developed policies cannot be assessed yet, the project has supported development and improvement of policies, plans and designs, and has kickstarted the implementation of the policies through the demonstration projects.

The developed urban policies and smart city strategies aim and work towards the long-term outcome of more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change (United Nations (n.d.), SDG 11).

The **sustainability** of the project is supported through the involvement of local stakeholders in workshops and discussions about the context of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs, as well as demonstration projects. Beneficiaries were also involved in monitoring and reporting, as they had to prepare annual reports that focused on which milestones had been achieved. In-country activities, such as national and sub-national workshops, or a NUP/SUP advisory board are replicable, with differences between countries, according to their governance structures, stakeholders involved and political interest. The replicability and sustainability of the project can also be seen in the fact that funding for a Phase 2 has already been secured which will include the three participating countries of this project plus five additional countries.

**Working arrangements** differed between the countries and were influenced by local structures and local interests. For instance, the local project manager in Niger State was not affiliated with a state government ministry or department. In Myanmar, the project team was largely external, i.e., from UN-Habitat, but in the Ministry of Construction, a high-ranking official was interested in the project and understood the importance of National Urban Policy. In I.R. Iran, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD) was also strongly involved and interested in the project. This influenced implementation modalities.

It cannot be said that one is better than the other, but the political structure and political will need to be considered when implementing the project, undertaking activities, workshops, and implementing demonstration projects.

Active participation and involvement of the UN-Habitat Headquarters, being the lead agency, made the project unique from other UN projects, where generally regional offices are more involved. The combination of local and HQ UN-Habitat staff with local project managers in (or outside) government was generally assessed as successful by the interviewees, as this meant that UN-Habitat could provide technical assistance and advice, while the overall process was a local process with local stakeholders discussing priorities of the NUP/SUP together. This in turn, meant that the policy responds to the local context and that stakeholders feel ownership of the policy. It also made the organization of the global exchange element of the project easier.

**Social inclusion issues** of gender equality, youth, human rights and climate change were integrated into the design, planning and implementation, reporting and monitoring of the project through discussion in the different phases of the project and reference to the New Urban Agenda and SDGs. While all NUP/SUP documents deal with climate change explicitly in a specific section and with goals and priorities, the other cross-cutting issues came out particularly in the demonstration projects. A large part of the demonstration projects took place in informal settlements, while others included urban reforestation for climate change mitigation, and empowering youth living with disabilities.

Overall, this evaluation supports findings of previous reports on the National Urban Policy Programme that contexts, governance structures of countries and political will matter in the development and implementation of urban policy. The three countries undertook the same processes but in different ways and there were some changes in the political structure as well as in political interest which influenced the project. While the political context cannot be influenced by UN-Habitat or the broader NUP programme, the approach of a broad stakeholder engagement and participatory approach can help in establishing a broader support of the national/sub-national urban policy and smart city strategy, including bi-partisan and community support, which in turn can help to keep the momentum even if new governments or stakeholders come in or government or stakeholders in government lose interest.

Implementation of the urban policy and smart city strategy is an important part of the debate and sometimes also where the process gets stuck, i.e. after the formulation of the policy it is sometimes difficult to find a starting point for implementation, to organize the financing of implementation projects, and to keep the momentum going. In this project, demonstration projects were one element that started the implementation process and were seen as highly productive by research participants. It is important to provide a clear relation to the national or sub-national urban policy of the demonstration projects.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Administrative issues:** Continuity of staff and local stakeholders involved is an important asset for projects and should be supported. To avoid disadvantages of fluctuation, a clear recording system of the process to ensure knowledge retention is useful. The adaptability and agility that the project has shown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and also to other necessary changes were important for its success. UN-Habitat Headquarters being the lead agency was different from other UN projects, where generally regional offices are more involved. It was mostly considered beneficial by research participants. Access to and cooperation with government staff and officials in the countries was crucial for UN-Habitat staff.

**Contextualization:** National urban policies need to be contextualized to the urban issues, priorities and needs of the respective country. Similarly, smart city strategies have to be adapted to the different needs and capacity for smart cities in the countries. Allowing for this adaptation through participatory dialogues is significant, including the decision on which stakeholders to approach in the country, depending on the political structure and the further context. The evaluation has shown that in some countries the government wanted to be more involved in decisions on the project than in other countries, which has to a great extent influenced implementation modalities.

**Political interest, continuity and local ownership:** While it is not strictly a responsibility of UN-Habitat and cannot be influenced by the project, the evaluation has shown – as have other NUPP reports before – that political will, political interest and also political continuity has a crucial impact on the development of NUP/SUP and SCS. Political will/interest furthermore impact implementation, as funding needs to be provided to implement the policy. As changes in government can and will happen, bi-partisan support and broad stakeholder involvement and support of the NUP are central. This can be supported by UN-Habitat through connecting with key decision makers from the outset. Furthermore, increasing public awareness and understanding of the need for and benefits of national urban policies has the potential to encourage political will. Related to this, the evaluation has also shown that local champions are central to the success of the NUP development process. They know the context of the country, know stakeholders, and can speed up the NUP formulation process.

**Timing and flexibility:** With a focus on ownership of the NUP and SCS, their development cannot be rushed, as participatory processes are necessary to develop and support ownership by local communities and stakeholders and to understand the urban problems at the local, subnational and national level. Within the project this has led to some parts of the project needing more time than planned in some countries. Thus, the management had to adjust to different timings of the development of reports and draft policies in the participating countries. The lesson is that there needs to be a combination of milestones and some flexibility for achieving those milestones.

**Implementation:** The implementation of the developed urban policies and smart city strategies was mentioned by participants as a challenge and important next step. Stakeholders mentioned that some further support for implementation after finalizing the policy and SCS would be beneficial to ensure implementation is started. While implementation is not strictly UN-Habitat's responsibility, some support for actualizing the policy has been provided through demonstration projects in the NUP and Smart Cities project. Most research participants were very supportive of the demonstration projects, seeing them as a valuable and efficient type of activity, as they are tangible and have led to clear outcomes on the ground. The demonstration projects often cater for the youth, poor, and vulnerable groups at local levels and/or are related to climate change adaptation or mitigation. They were also seen as raising awareness of the NUP and urban issues. However, demonstration projects in their nature tend to be more focused on material conditions rather than policy development and coordination, so that it is important to draw a clear connection between the NUP/SUP and the demonstration project.

**Smart Cities:** The development of a Smart City Strategy is beneficial for understanding how urbanization issues and opportunities can be responded to or supported through smart technologies, how to support capacity through the smart cities concept and to be prepared for future opportunities and project suggestions by development partners. The interviews and focus group discussions have shown that not everyone sees the Smart City Strategy as a central element of the NUP/SUP, but participants acknowledged its usefulness.

One example for this is the opportunity to digitize land and land ownership which can then support raising equitable taxes and finance for infrastructure development at local and metropolitan scales.

**Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange:** The knowledge exchange was a highly valued element of the project. Research participants reported that the international conferences and also the exchange visits were particularly beneficial. Other peer-to-peer learning exercises such as the regular project online meetings where the countries could exchange their experiences were also considered fruitful. Furthermore, other countries were able to learn from the experiences of the participating countries. Two interviewees suggested the additional development of an online exchange platform as a useful element.

A combination of participation in international conferences (i.e., ICNUP or WUF), exchange visits and online learning through meetings as well as platforms or databases seems to be most promising.

**Cross-cutting issues:** Climate change was the most prominent cross-cutting issue in the developed NUPs/SUP, while gender equity, youth, and human rights were less obvious, but still mentioned, including references to the poor, the disabled and more broadly, vulnerable groups. Interviewees pointed out that the cross-cutting issues of gender equity, youth, and also climate change were addressed in the demonstration projects with different vulnerable groups being involved in those projects.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendation 1: Flexibility and adaptability

The most notable recommendation from the evaluation is to allow for enough time that a participatory process needs. This improves ownership and buy-in of the urban policy and smart city strategy, as more voices are heard and considered and more stakeholders, including from outside government, become aware of the policy and understand the importance of responding to urbanization issues, as is also acknowledged in the NUP Guiding Framework (UN-Habitat 2015). Yet, it is still important that a project plan with milestones exists, in order to avoid the process losing momentum and sense of direction. Therefore, deadlines for certain project milestones (such as the feasibility report, diagnosis report etc.) in combination with sufficient flexibility to allow for local discussions, consultations and building of a supportive project constituency as well as responses to unforeseen events (such as a global pandemic) provide a useful approach to support the

success of NUP/SUP and SCS formulation. This also includes some budget flexibility with regard to what funds are used for.

## Recommendation 2: Face-to-face and online knowledge exchange

A second recommendation arising from the evaluation is the high value of the knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning for the countries involved, and also for other countries which can learn from the experiences of the participating countries. While research participants assessed the face-to-face knowledge exchange through international conferences and exchange visits as extremely useful, there is also a case for online exchange and learning. The face-to-face visits were outstanding for research participants as special events, but online events and meetings also supported knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning.

In addition to those meetings two interviewees suggested the establishment of an online platform where information could be stored and experiences exchanged or shared and which can also be extended to stakeholders and practitioners outside of government. For future NUP funded projects, a combination of face-to-face and online knowledge exchange programs and peer-to-peer learning would be a more promising pathway.

The three pilot countries in this program could facilitate knowledge management regarding results and lessons learned from the implementation process in a number of ways. First, there is the opportunity for online events in which the country is present on the outcomes that have been achieved. Second, it would be desirable for a permanent repository of project reports and additional collateral to be posted on the internet, so that these are available on an ongoing basis for future reference.

Third, there is the potential for events to be held which bring together participants from the three project countries to share knowledge with an opportunity to also involve wider sets of interested parties including countries who are prospective participants in further NUP projects, such as was done during the World Urban Forum 11. It would also be valuable to inquire with the countries themselves as to what forums for knowledge management would be most appropriate to their needs given the country context, institutional landscape, and technical and civic capability.

## Recommendation 3: Further thematic approaches and entry points

While smart cities were a thematic approach in which the participating countries were interested, and which was acknowledged as useful in order to understand future opportunities and requirements for smart technologies, some research participants mentioned that further thematic approaches could be useful entry points for other countries.

Therefore, future NUP funded projects could also support the inclusion of other thematic approaches and with that an additional focus in the NUP/SUP formulation phase. The research participants suggested that these thematic approaches would depend on specific problems and emergencies in the countries in relation to their urban development, such as housing provision, informal settlements, and specific environmental crises.

## Recommendation 4: Engagement of local communities

A further recommendation arose in the interviews and focus groups from comments that participatory engagement with local communities to gauge needs for urban infrastructure, services and amenities is important to generating support. Using the NUP as a means of asking communities what they want and engaging in dialogue about priorities was considered as a central element for success. This also includes data collection and analysis to understand urban issues better, and to reflect them back to local communities. The engagement of local communities can further lead to increased political will or interest through communities asking for and being interested in solutions to urban issues and in positive urbanization. While the exact form of participation will depend on governance structures in the country, further NUP funded projects should aim at providing for the engagement of local communities.

## Recommendation 5: Implementation and demonstration projects

A topic area that was important to research participants was the implementation of the developed policies and strategies. The current project has responded to this crucial area with the element of demonstration projects, which are tangible projects on the ground responding to priorities and goals identified in the developed NUP/SUP and SCS.

The evaluation has shown that stakeholders within the countries and from UN-Habitat thought that the demonstration projects were a central part of the project, as they raised awareness for the NUP/SUP in the community and showed up possible pathways for implementation. Thus, a future NUP funded project should consider including more demonstration projects. It will be important, however, to ensure that the connection to the NUP/SUP is clear. Further support for implementation after the NUP and SCS has been adopted could be advice on how to secure funding for implementation, identifying priorities and projects that can achieve some first results quickly, and developing an implementation plan. For the participating countries, this is addressed to some extent by including them in Phase 2 of the project which will focus on implementation.

### Recommendation 6: Scaling up and replicability

UN-Habitat and partners should give due consideration to the issues identified in implementing the current project and craft future interventions to address these issues. In particular, there is a challenge with scaling up interventions beyond the three countries involved in the evaluated project. There may be advantage in more countries being involved in demonstration and pilot projects each round, in terms of cross-country knowledge exchange and learning. However, this may require greater coordination. The potential for regionally framed programs could also be considered so that nearby countries with similar national and urban characteristics could be supported in NUP development and cross-national learning. This would require careful selection to ensure conducive political contexts. It is appropriate that the general NUP Theory of Change be applied across different countries to ensure coherence and continuity of the program across countries and over time.

However, the TOC should be updated following evaluations of previous projects to incorporate experiences in implementation and recommended enhancements to programs. The TOC should also be applied in a way that is able to account for national differences in geographical, social, economic, urban, and political contexts. One option is to have a set of overarching program objectives while also having a flexible set of objectives that allow for national differences.

The question of ensuring accountability for NUP implementation processes remains challenging, especially in national contexts where there is political disruption and transition. Ideally NUP projects would have clear and accountable project leads who take responsibility for development of the project and the execution of policies arising from the project. However, transparency and accountability may not always be feasible in every country context therefore it is desirable that in addition to a clear lead institution, there is a reference body made-up of relevant governmental industry and non-governmental stakeholders who are able to provide further guidance and feedback on project or program implementation.

### Recommendation 7: Reporting and handover

A further recommendation arising from the evaluation is that clearly defined reporting and archiving processes will be necessary to allow for easy handovers when staff or other project partners leave, as is often the case in policy projects. This would also allow for retracing certain discussions and decisions in hindsight, even if staff and stakeholders involved have left.

# 1.  Introduction

The world is rapidly urbanizing. Over half of the world's population now lives in cities, and studies project this share to reach 68 per cent by the middle of the century (UNDESA 2019). At the same time the global population has nearly doubled over the past 40 years which means that the absolute number of people living in urban areas has grown even more significantly (OECD and European Commission 2020). However, the intensity of urbanization differs across the world. While much of the population growth is occurring in the large metropolitan areas, in Africa and South Asia high rates of population growth lead to development of new and small metropolitan areas (Seto et al., 2012). In addition, the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people and cities may influence urbanization rates, as well as perceptions of government and increase environmental awareness (OECD, 2020).

Increasing urbanization emphasizes the salience of cities due to their direct effect on the economic, social and environmental conditions of nations. Unplanned urbanization can exacerbate environmental, social and economic problems such as environmental degradation, disparity in access to basic services, inadequate infrastructure and basic services, and the proliferation of informal settlements and urban poverty. Conversely, well-functioning cities provide opportunities to address such issues and support wellbeing and prosperity of the populace. A precondition to realizing these benefits is urban and territorial planning and policies.

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) which was adopted at the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador in 2016, has given explicit emphasis to the importance of National Urban Policies (NUPs) for sustainable urbanization, and commits to taking measures to enhance the ability of governments to develop and implement such over-arching policies. The UN-Habitat National Urban Policies Programme (NUPP) is central to these efforts and has led to the development of urban policy process guidelines and implementation of urban policies in different countries at national and sub-national levels. To date, UN-Habitat's NUPP tools, guides and approaches have been applied in 56 different countries, and national urban policies have been implemented or are in development in 162 countries (OECD; UN-HABITAT; UNOPS 2021; https://urbanpolicyplatform. org).

At the Habitat III conference, the Republic of Korea committed to support the development of the National Urban Policy Programme. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) of the Republic of Korea supported the pilot phase project "Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries", with an approved total budget of US$ 2,673,368 ( US$ 2,583,087 received). The purpose of the project was to support the development of National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in the three pilot countries, Myanmar, I.R. Iran, and Nigeria, which for the latter was focused on the sub-national scale via Niger state.

The project started in July 2017 and ended in November 2022. The management of the programme was within the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) of the Urban Practices Branch (UPB), UN-Habitat and involved country-based focal points.

The project was approved with an evaluation framework, which was highlighted in the cooperation agreement/MOU between UN-Habitat and Korea.

This report concerns the evaluation of the Korea–funded programme entitled "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)"[1] in order to inform subsequent phases. The evaluation was undertaken by an evaluation team of researchers from RMIT University's Centre for Urban Research.

## PURPOSE OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation seeks to support accountability for results achieved and advance learning that would improve current and future NUPs development and implementation. The evaluation process was based on the UN-Habitat Evaluation Manual (UN-Habitat 2018).

It is an independent and forward-looking appraisal of the project's operational experience, achievements, opportunities, and challenges based on its performance and expected accomplishments.

**From the Terms of Reference (see Appendix) for the evaluation, the specific objectives of the evaluation were to:**

i. Assess the performance of the programme in terms of the extent to which it achieved planned results at the expected accomplishment (outcomes) and output levels;

ii. Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence of the projects with other policies and programmes related to NUPs;

iii. Assess enhancement of technical and institutional capacities of national, sub-national and local governments to strengthen their national urban policy-making processes and increased awareness of countries in the region of tools, frameworks, procedures and best practices in National Urban Policy making. This will entail analysis of delivery of outputs, achievement of outcomes, and long-term effect;

iv. Assess the planning and implementation modalities, including working arrangements and how they may have affected the effectiveness of the projects;

v. Assess how social inclusion issues of gender equality, youth, human rights and climate change were integrated in the projects;

---

1  In the following this project will be referred to as the "NUP/SUP and SCS" project, the "NUP and Smart Cities" project or as the "current project".

vi. Identify lessons and propose recommendations for the implementation of the national urban policy and the New Urban Agenda in the three countries, in terms of what should be done on what needs to be done to effectively implement, promote, develop and monitor UN-Habitat's support to national and local authorities in formulating and implementing National Urban Policies;

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

As urbanization increases, the impact of cities on the economic, social and environmental circumstances of nations also takes an upward trajectory. Well-functioning cities address issues such as inequality, poverty, disease, climate change and disaster resilience among other challenges and urban policy is an important mechanism to support this action (Kundu et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts have highlighted the need for urban planning even further due to its negative effect on slum areas and informal settlements in regards to infections and public health responses (United Nations Statistics Division, 2020).

The UN-Habitat Programme has led the development of urban policy guidelines and implementation, with the National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) central to these efforts.

A National Urban Policy (NUP) is defined as:

> A coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term (UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance, 2014, p. iii).

While sharing this broad scope, there is a great deal of variation in the composition and intent of NUPs reflecting the different environmental, social, economic, and political circumstances of nations. Thus, NUPs are necessarily broadly defined, and the NUPP does not provide prescriptive frameworks for their development, as countries need to respond to their circumstances (Hohmann, 2017; Holland, 2015).

The NUPP aligns with global agendas that unite nations in meeting challenges of climate change and sustainable development. In particular, the NUPP is a mechanism for the implementation and realization of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Paris Agreement*, the *Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk,* the *New Urban Agenda,* the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* as well as the *Africa Agenda 2063* (United Nations 2016).

# 2. Overview of the "Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries" project

With the adoption of global frameworks such as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework, National Urban Policies (NUPs) have been identified as a key tool to support the implementation and monitoring of the global urban agenda. In 2016, during the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador, UN-Habitat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Cities Alliance launched the National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) as a joint initiative to contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the development of NUPs.

The work of UN-Habitat on NUP is rooted in the Governing Council resolution HSP/GC/24/L.6 and the Governing Council resolution HSP/GC/25/L.12 requesting the Executive Director "in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to develop a general framework for the development, where appropriate of national urban policies, based on international good experiences, to further support member states when developing and improving their urban policies" and "to further strengthen partnerships, peer learning and a community of practice approach on national urban policies as means of supporting national and local governments as they develop and implement policies".

The project "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)" was a pilot phase of the National Urban Policy Programme. It has been organized through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Korea and UN-Habitat signed at the Habitat III conference and was funded by the Republic of Korea through the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. The project had an approved budget of USD 2,673,368 (USD 2,583,087 received) and ran from July 2017 to November 2022.

The pilot phase has been managed by the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) of the Urban Practices Branch (UPB) of UN-Habitat with the involvement of country and regional-based focal points. It has been implemented in partnership, internally at UN-Habitat and externally with partner organizations, such as the Korean Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS), the Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Cities Alliance (UN-Habitat 2022a).

The purpose of the project was to support development of National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in three pilot countries, I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Niger State (Nigeria). In Nigeria, a Subnational Urban Policy (SUP) was to be developed in Niger State, one of Nigeria's states.

**In particular, the project aimed to:**

1. Enhance capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies.

2. Increase centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies.

3. Provide augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. (UN-Habitat 2017)

Social inclusion issues of gender equality, youth, human rights and climate change were integrated into the design, planning and implementation, reporting and monitoring of the project throughout the different phases.

The project has supported international capacity building, including exchange visits to the Republic of Korea. It has also facilitated the organization of International Conferences on NUP and supported the preparation of normative products. At the country level, consultations and activities were conducted and reports written following the five phases of NUP (Feasibility, Diagnosis, Formulation, Implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation).

Furthermore, demonstration projects were defined and implemented on the country level. In I.R. Iran, the "National Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy" was submitted to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD) in August 2022. In Niger State, Nigeria, the "Niger State Urban Policy" and "Niger State Smart City Strategy" were presented to the advisory board and the state legislative council for final approval and enactment into law, with the legislative process still ongoing. In Myanmar, draft documents of the "Myanmar National Urban Policy" and "Smart City Strategy" have been developed, however, since the 2021 military takeover the implementation of the NUPP has been on hold.

# 3. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

This section sets out the theoretical underpinning to the evaluation and its implementation to achieve the project objectives.

## 3. 1.  APPROACH: THEORY OF CHANGE

The evaluation of the pilot phase "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Nigeria)" has used a Theory of Change approach. Evaluating the effectiveness of policy using the Theory of Change is framed by considering the impact of policy given the goals, inputs and actions related to its implementation (Rogers 2014). In other words, the Theory of Change approach is a conceptual frame that tests the connection between the elements of the programme and their efficacy in achieving its goals. This frame is applied in practice through document analysis, a survey, focus group discussions and interviews.

This evaluation has built upon the Theory of Change used by the previous evaluation of the overall NUP programme, which focused on the effectiveness of the overall NUPP and its tools (UN-Habitat 2022c) and adapted that original approach for the purpose of this evaluation. This has involved a focus on the substantive activities undertaken within the NUP and Smart Cities project and their relations to the expected accomplishments and outcomes of this project. However, these relations have been considered in the context of the objectives and outcomes of the broader NUPP.

The Theory of Change used in this evaluation is depicted in the diagram below (Figure 1). The diagram shows how the tools, resources and guidance provided through the NUP and Smart Cities project contribute to the expected accomplishments and outcomes, as well as to the overarching goals of the NUP programme. The arrows in the figure indicate how the specific actions, or content, undertaken in the project are related to the objectives and outcomes. The report highlights cases where the evaluation found varying relations between the actions and objectives than anticipated.

The focus of the current evaluation was how the support for the development and implementation of NUPs in the three selected countries has contributed to the achievement of objectives (pillars), outcomes (expected accomplishments) and long-term outcomes of the NUPP. The diagram highlights the *content* that is particularly relevant for the evaluation of the pilot phase. While the long-term impact is of a lower importance for the evaluation of this project as it focused on the *development* of National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies, that longer timeframe is still presented in the Theory of Change to provide the broader context.

The survey and interview design implemented this Theory of Change by asking respondents about the efficacy of the pilot phase project in the selected countries and its actions, i.e., the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and its coherence with other related policies and programmes. The survey focused on the *content* aspects of the program within the Theory of Change, while the interviews and focus groups also asked questions in relation to the *expected accomplishments* and *outcomes*.

The evaluation analyzes what key activities were completed (content), who was involved, whether the activities of the project resulted in the anticipated outputs, what challenges arose, whether there were any unintended consequences, and what external factors influenced the activities and outputs.
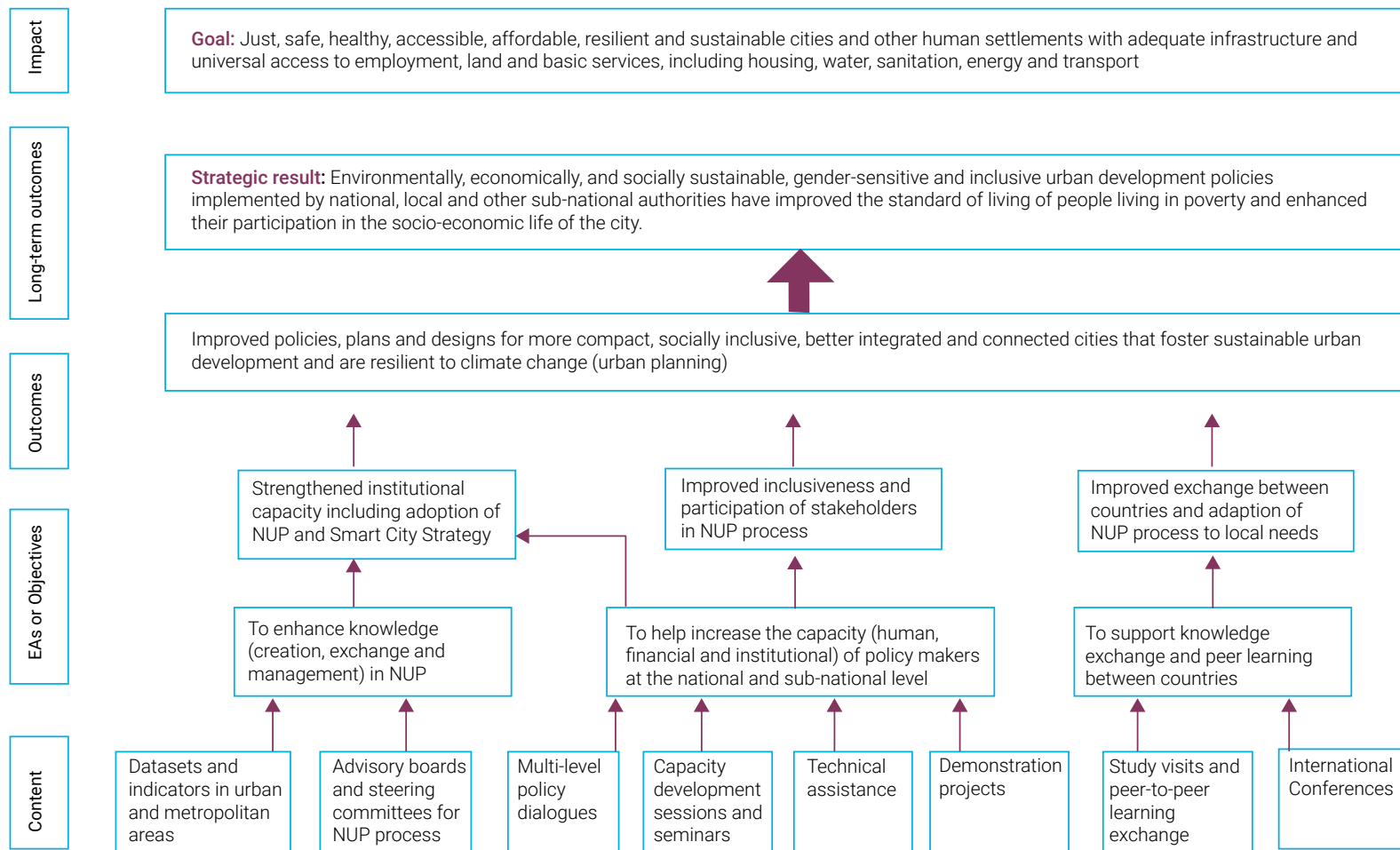
**Figure 1.** Theory of Change – NUPP

## 3. 2.  DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The research design aimed at maximizing the relevance, credibility, quality and uptake of the evaluation. Data for the evaluation was collected using four methods: document analysis, interviews drawn from beneficiaries as well as the broader group of stakeholders in the project, focus groups drawn from the broader group of stakeholders, complemented by a survey of stakeholders in the three beneficiary countries.

The research was undertaken remotely with interviews and focus group discussions conducted via online meetings. The advantage of remote data collection remains a short timespan without travel costs and emissions. It has the disadvantage that contacting potential research participants is more challenging, due to lack of personal contact as compared with other methods such as face-to-face contact and thus potentially less engaging for participants. The combination of methods generated materials that allowed for both a broad overview of the project and its activities through the document analysis, in-depth reflections on the project and future developments through the interview process and focus groups, as well as a broader overview of the perception of the different activities and components in the beneficiary countries through the survey.

For the interviews, 24 people were contacted from six different agencies (with different divisions/offices within UN-Habitat counted as one agency), of which 20 people agreed to participate (a response rate of 83%). Interviewees were involved in the project on the global level, or in I.R. Iran, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Korea.

For the focus group discussions, 31 people were contacted from nine different agencies (again including different divisions/offices within UN-Habitat as one agency), of which 17 people were willing to participate (a response rate of 55%). The other 16 people either declined (four) or did not respond to the specific email (12); however, six of these persons took part in an interview instead. Eight of the 17 people who agreed to participate were not able to attend the focus group meeting due to competing work schedules; nearly all of them (seven) took part in an interview instead. Nine people participated in the focus group discussions.

The survey was aimed at stakeholders and participants in the benefiting countries, which meant that UN-Habitat staff, including in the country offices and other global agencies were not invited to the survey. The survey invite was distributed to five local contacts for which contact details were available, as well as to 54 contacts that work in the realm of NUPP in the three countries from professional networks of the researchers, mostly in Iran and Nigeria, adding up to 59 potential respondents that were directly contacted. The survey invitation was furthermore sent to five UN-Habitat staff/consultants who have worked for the project within the countries to distribute to local stakeholders. Overall, eight people responded to the survey. As it is not known to how many people the survey invitation has been distributed to, and/or how many of those people were eligible for the survey (i.e., had involvement in the current project), the response rate is not known.

However, if a number of 59 potential respondents is assumed from the distribution by the research team, then the response rate would be about 14% (8 responses out of 59 potential respondents). Several attempts have been made to distribute the survey invitation more widely.

Further detail on the methods used for these processes is provided in the next section. The survey and interview questionnaires are included in the Appendix.

# 4.  Main Findings

This section reports the outcomes from the evaluation methods, namely the document analysis, survey, interviews and focus groups. Furthermore, the evaluation section gives an interpretation and analysis of the data, particularly in relation to the expected accomplishments, as well as findings on (i) relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence; (ii) planning and implementation modalities; and (iii) issues of social inclusion. As the approach was mostly qualitative and the research focused on the experience and reflections of stakeholders in the project, data is mostly reported on in a qualitative manner, with some descriptive statistics for the survey.

## 4. 1.  DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Available documents relevant to the project were analyzed with a focus on the project performance, operational experience, achievements, opportunities and challenges, on a broader level as well as for each of the selected countries. This included 17 documents for the NUPP in general, 20 documents for the global level of the NUP and Smart Cities project, and on the country level, 11 documents for I.R. Iran, 12 documents for Myanmar and 13 documents for Niger State.

A list of the documents reviewed is included in the Appendix. This section summarizes the most relevant content of the documents. This includes a brief summary of relevant international policies and NUPP documents, activities undertaken within the project, and National/Subnational Urban Policies, Smart City Strategies and further documents developed in the three participating countries.

### 4.1.1.  International policies and NUPP frameworks, reports and evaluations

The UN-Habitat National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) supports the implementation of urban policy development in countries at national and subnational levels. It is supported by a range of resources which are available through the *Urban Policy Platform website*.

These resources include normative guides on formulating and monitoring NUPs, NUP regional reports, and thematic guides for key policy areas for NUPs.

Normative guides include:
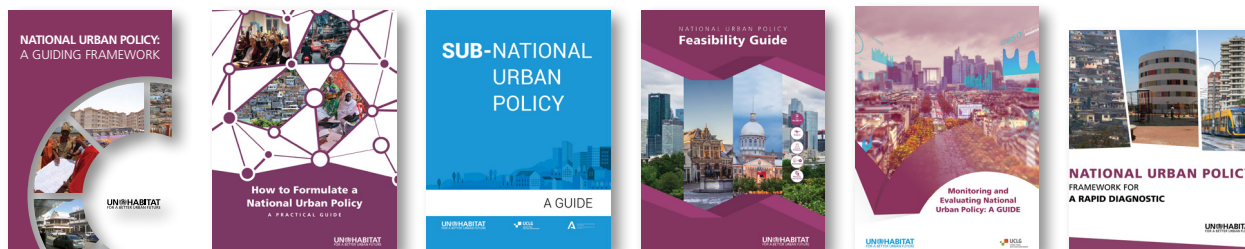


Thematic Guides include:



These guides were relevant resources for the development of NUP/SUP in the current project. Further relevant documents include:
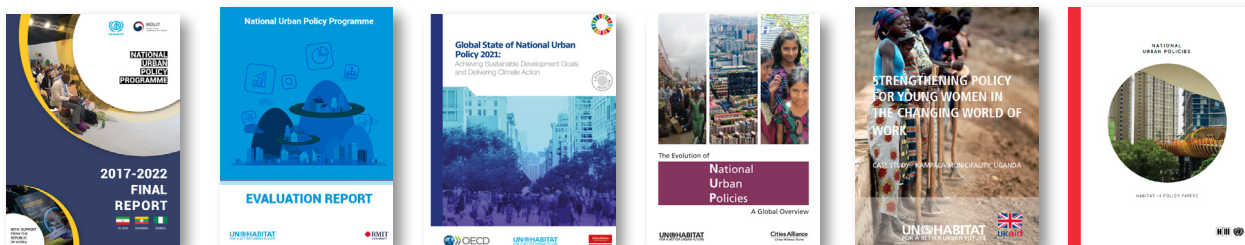


The **NUP Guiding Framework** (UN-Habitat 2015, p. 4) explains the five phases of the development of a NUP.

- ▪ Feasibility
- ▪ Diagnosis
- ▪ Formulation
- ▪ IImplementation
- ▪ Monitoring and Evaluation

These phases were also part of the current project on NUP/SUP and SCS (see also expected accomplishments and related outputs and activities in the appendix).

The NUP process is furthermore based on three key pillars, which are considered through the policy development process: participation, capacity development and acupuncture projects (UN-Habitat 2015, pp. 13-17). These three key pillars were part of the project design of the NUP/SUP and SCS project. The processes in the three countries involved participatory approaches with policy discussion workshops that incorporated relevant stakeholders, and for Niger State, also town hall meetings and press conferences which engaged the public. The project also involved an assessment of policy capacity as well as capacity-building workshops and seminars. The element of demonstration projects in the project is the implementation of the pillar of acupuncture projects (see also section 4.1.3).

The National Urban Policy Programme aligns with global agendas that unite nations in meeting challenges of climate change and sustainable development. In particular, the NUPP is a mechanism for the implementation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Paris Agreement*, the *Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk,* the *New Urban Agenda,* the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* as well as the *Africa Agenda 2063* (United Nations 2016). The New Urban Agenda emphasises the importance of NUPs for sustainable urbanization and the National Urban Policy Programme aims to contribute to the successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The relationship to those global agendas is also acknowledged by the NUPs developed through the current project.

The evaluation of the NUPP 2014-2021 (UN-Habitat 2022c, pp. v-vii) found that the overall programme has been mostly effective at the country level, particularly in instances when UN-Habitat provided direct support to countries. Major challenges identified were varying national-level political will and ensuring policy continuity at the national level. Three main actions were identified to increase the NUPP's impact: a greater emphasis on including policymakers in the formulation and implementation processes, increasing opportunities for countries with similar urban policy needs and contexts to share experiences and knowledge, and additional knowledge dissemination and uptake through distributed and online education systems.

The other subsequent parts of this report address the current project's experience in the three countries in greater detail.

## 4.1.2. Activities undertaken

Based on the annual reports and the final report of the project, the following activities were part of the project:

### a.  Formation of an in-country NUP Advisory Board

Advisory boards were established in 2018 (I.R. Iran) and 2019 (Myanmar, Niger State) respectively. The advisory boards were comprised of local stakeholders relevant to NUP development.

In I.R. Iran, the advisory board was called National Habitat Committee (NHC) or the Steering Committee (SC); in Myanmar, National Urban Committee (NUC), and in Niger State Technical Support Team (TST).

The Iranian National Habitat Committee and Steering Committee were both chaired by the Urban Planning and Architecture deputy at the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD). The NHC meetings had about 50 participants, and the SC meetings had about 10-15 participants depending on the topics of the meetings. Participants were drawn from the national government, local government, the private sector, academia, and civil society organizations.

The Myanmar NUC was chaired by the Union Minister of Construction, and had members from ten ministries, three City Development Committees, parliament members and development partners. The Niger State TST had members from government, private sectors, NGOs, labour union, academia, and media and was chaired by the Secretary to the State Government. In Niger State, there was also a Drafting Team of eight policy experts to draft the State Urban Policy framework.

### b.   Completion/revision of a NUP Feasibility Policy Note; completion of a NUP Diagnosis Clinic; completion of a Diagnosis paper

The countries completed the Feasibility Policy Note, the NUP Diagnosis Clinic and the Diagnosis paper in 2018 and 2019. This was based on the *NUP Guiding Framework* (UN-Habitat 2015). As an example, the feasibility and diagnosis report in Niger State was based on quantitative and qualitative data from a variety of sources such as policy documents, gazette documents, statistical records, development plans, maps, field visits, a questionnaire, and interviews with officials of relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies together with information gathered at town hall meetings.

### c.   Demonstration projects for implementation of the National Urban Policy

The demonstration projects were planned for the implementation of the National Urban Policy. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided in 2020 to introduce demonstration projects that were related to both COVID-19 and the NUP/SUP. One proposal per country was selected as demonstration projects.

The projects included improving access to water, and dissemination of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer, and prevention kits. More detail can be found in the *Report on Demonstration Projects with Response to COVID-19* (UN-Habitat, n.d.). Further demonstration projects were implemented in 2021 and 2022.

**These included the following projects:**

- ▪ An advocacy and capacity building package (NUP and SCS summary document, flyer, poster and an animated video clip to introduce the I.R. Iran NUPP and findings in English and Persian) (I.R. Iran)

- ▪ Improvements to infrastructure and services in a selected informal settlement in Yangon (Geospatial Mapping of basic services infrastructure in one pilot settlement; home improvements; household toilets; rainwater harvesting kits; public space/community area improvement; short-term capacity building activities) (Myanmar)

- Urban Reforestation for climate change mitigation (planting of 6,000 mangrove trees and 2,000 fruit trees on over 50 hectares of land) (Niger State)

- Rehabilitation of three bi-water schemes (water schemes for three small towns to enhance steady supply of clean water) (Niger State)

- Provision of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and community open space (the WASH project is providing 2,500 people with basic drinking water daily, and 2,000 persons with improved sanitation facilities services) (Niger State)

### d. Development of a guiding framework for developing and integrating a smart city strategy within a NUP

UN-Habitat developed a Smart Cities Strategic Guide for integrating smart city strategies in National Urban Policy (UN-Habitat, n.d.) which gives 11 recommendations how a Smart City Strategy can be integrated into NUP development.

### e. Data collection to support elaboration of the Smart City strategy

Relevant data was collected in the countries. For instance, in I.R. Iran a 'Review and Analysis of National and Transnational Documents, Regulations and Laws on Smart Cities in I.R. Iran' and interviews with Smart City experts were undertaken. For Myanmar, information of on-going initiatives for smart cities was collected. In Niger State, a training workshop on the Kobo Toolbox software was conducted.

### f. Toolkits for Monitoring and Evaluation

For the toolkits for monitoring and evaluation there are global documents and guides available, such as *Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide, Global State of National Urban Policy 2018/2021,* and the *National Urban Policy Platform.*

Specific toolkits on the country level were not developed, but for Niger State it is mentioned that as one of the next steps, the Monitoring Toolkit and Evaluation tool will be co-developed with the Niger State Planning Commission on the Urban Policy.

### g. Annual project reports

Annual project reports have been prepared by the countries and compiled by UN-Habitat with additional information on activities at the global level. The reports inform about the relevant background of the countries, project activities undertaken in the respective time frame at the countries and on the global level, as well as the next steps and planned activities. These reports were prepared in 2017, 2018/19, and 2020, with a final report in 2022.

### h. National Urban Policy Programme knowledge management and sharing plan

A NUPP Knowledge Management Strategy was developed in 2020. The strategy covers four knowledge management strategic objectives, as well as tools and methods to implement the strategy, a high-level implementation plan and roles and responsibilities (UN-Habitat 2022b).

### i. Organization of International Meetings on National Urban Policy

UN-Habitat organized several international meetings for knowledge exchange and peer-learning.

**These included:**

1. Exchange Visits to the Republic of Korea and Poland (see below)

2. The Third International Conference on National Urban Policy (ICNUP), October 2019

3. National Urban Policy Events during World Urban Forum 10 (February 2020)

4. Expert Group Meeting (EGM) (webinar) for knowledge sharing (December 2021)

5. National Urban Policy Events during World Urban Forum 11 (June 2022), including the celebration event for the finalization of the Phase 1 and the launch of the Phase 2 (June 2022)

### j. Exchange visits

**There were three exchange visits during the project:**

- ✓ Exchange Visit to the Republic of Korea (December 2017)

- ✓ Exchange Visit to the Republic of Korea (June 2019)

- ✓ Knowledge Exchange Visit to Katowice, Poland (June 2022)

The idea behind the exchange visits was to learn from the Korean experience of NUP development and smart cities. The first exchange visit focused on NUP and provided the opportunity to learn from the Korean experience and for knowledge sharing between the three participating countries. The second exchange visit focused on smart city strategies and was oriented towards supporting the three countries in developing their smart city strategies as well as enabling sharing of experiences among them.

The exchange visit to Poland was coordinated with the WUF 11 and focused on sharing the results of the NUP and Smart Cities project. In addition, there were site visits in Katowice, to learn from the Polish experience.

### k. NUP stakeholders workshops

The workshops had the objective to involve relevant stakeholders in the development of the NUP and smart city strategy so as to achieve a participatory approach.

Preparation of the workshops involved the creation of a list of relevant stakeholders and data collection.

The organization and specific content of workshops differed from one country to another. Workshops that have been undertaken in each country are listed below:

### i. I.R. Iran

In I.R Iran, two workshops were held during the preparation of the Diagnostic report and the report was launched in a third workshop in December 2018. Three workshops were conducted for the development of the NUP and SCS document, in October 2021, December 2021, and August 2022. In the last workshop the final version of the NUP and SCS document was shared. Workshop participants were from the national government, local government, the private sector, academia, and civil society. An average of 30-50 participants took part in the workshops.

### ii. Myanmar

In Myanmar, three consultation workshops were conducted. These includeda sub-national level workshop in June 2018 with representatives of states and regions, a national level workshop in December 2018 with about 500 participants from the government, international development partners and INGOs, and another national level workshop in October 2019 to finalize the NUP Framework.

Other meetings included a half-day technical meeting with senior urban experts of the Department of Urban and Housing Development, a development partner meeting and a workshop on the integration of the smart city strategy in the NUP in October 2019.

In a final high-level national level urban forum in December 2019, the zero draft of the NUP was shared with participants. Due to political reasons, there were no further workshops thereafter, and the military coup in Myanmar put the implementation of the NUPP on hold indefinitely.

### iii. Niger State

In Niger State, four technical meetings were held with relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies to inform them about the SUP development process. The team further conducted a technical workshop in September 2019 to present the draft feasibility and diagnostic reports to the Ministries, Departments and Agencies. These reports were equally discussed in a quarterly meeting of the Technical Support Team in November 2019.

In December 2019, four town hall meetings were held in four different cities to inform, collect additional data and build consensus on the development challenges in Niger State and identify core issues to be addressed in the state urban policy. The town hall meetings were organised in Minna (9 December 2019, attended by 173 participants), Bida (11 December 2019, attended by 70 participants), Kontagora (14 December 2019, attended by 59 participants) and Suleja (16 December 2019, attended by 83 participants).

In January 2020, an Expert Group Meeting about smart city initiatives was organized with the participation of 19 persons from various sectors, including researchers and academia.

In March and April 2020, Niger team conducted further technical sessions and public consultation workshops where 35 and 15 policy actors participated respectively from various sectors. In September 2020, a policy briefing was organized with Ministries, Departments and Agencies with an attendance of 15 policy actors. In November 2020, a one-day policy dialogue and validation workshop led by the Secretary to the Government of Niger State was organised. The workshop gathered 102 experts and policymakers across different sectors in the state, in addition to experts from UN-Habitat and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Federal Republic of Nigeria who participated online.

### l.  Capacity building sessions

UN-Habitat has conducted different capacity-building sessions in the three countries. Examples include capacity building sessions at the launch of the Diagnostic report in Iran, capacity development training for officials of the Ministry of Construction in Myanmar in NUP and SCS, and a Kobo Toolbox training workshop in Niger State (UN-Habitat 2022b).

### m.  Regular meetings

Regular meetings between internal stakeholders were held to discuss the project status. The final year incorporated more frequent meetings to support the final phase of the project.

## 4.1.3. National/Subnational Urban Policies, Smart City Strategies and further documents developed during the project

### Global level

Annual reports were prepared in 2017, 2018/19, and 2020, with a final report in 2022. A NUPP *Impact Story Booklet* of the project has also been prepared. For the knowledge exchange, exchange visit booklets have been published (2019 and 2022), plus a report on the World Urban Forum in 2022. In addition, a report on the demonstration projects in relation to COVID-19 has been prepared. A Smart Cities Strategies Guide and a Guidance Note for identifying demonstration projects have also been developed and distributed to the participating countries. See also the list of documents in the appendix. The annual reports contained information on the main activities undertaken in the respective period, the progress for each of the three countries, the next steps and their activity plans, spelling out which activities had been completed and which ones were planned for the future. They also contained the financial reports on project expenditures.

**The main activities undertaken at the overall project level include:**

- Exchange Visits to the Republic of Korea (December 2017 and June 2019)
- The Third International Conference on National Urban Policy (ICNUP), October 2019
- Development of a Quick Guide for Integrating Smart City Strategies in National Urban Policy, 2019
- National Urban Policy Events during World Urban Forum 10 (February 2020)
- Development of a Guide for Identifying Demonstration Projects (2020)
- COVID-19 Demonstration Projects (2020)
- Development of the NUPP Knowledge Management Strategy

- Expert Group Meeting (webinar) for knowledge sharing (December 2021)

- Knowledge Exchange visit in Katowice, Poland (June 2022)

- National Urban Policy Events during World Urban Forum 11 (June 2022)

- Celebration Event for the finalization of the Phase 1 and launch of the Phase 2 (June 2022)

The activity plans of the different countries show that different project phases operated over different timeframes between the three countries. For example, Myanmar had already developed its draft NUP and SCS in January 2021; however, this did not get officially finalized due to the national political situation and the pausing of the project by UN-Habitat. In contrast, I.R. Iran and Niger State finalized their NUP/SUP and SCS in 2022. Another example is that I.R. Iran had already completed its Feasibility Policy Note in 2017, while for Myanmar and Niger State this was still ongoing at that time. However, broad time frames were similar, and all countries achieved their aim to formulate a NUP/ SUP and SCS over the course of the project. This shows that smaller differences in time frames do not significantly impact on the overall goal and need to be accepted as different processes are undertaken differently between countries.

The *Smart Cities Strategic Guide* describes the evolution of the smart cities concept, its interrelation with National Urban Policy and how to National Urban Policy as a driver to promote smart city development. It gives 11 recommendations on how to integrate Smart City Strategy into NUP development, under the three headings of 'co-creating smart city with citizens', 'governance with the engagement of multi-stakeholders' and 'coherent leadership for smart city'. The guide furthermore explains how the recommendations fit with the five NUP phases and the three pillars of the NUP process – participation,

capacity development and acupuncture projects. Interviewees agreed on the helpfulness of the guide in the development of the Smart Cities Strategy.

The Guidance Note for identifying demonstration projects suggests key steps for implementing NUPs through demonstration projects.

### i.   I.R. Iran

In I.R. Iran, the National Urban Policy and Smart Cities Strategy have been developed as one document, which was finalized and submitted to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD) in August 2022, in English and Persian languages. Two demonstration projects have been undertaken and reported on, of which one provided humanitarian support in a vulnerable community while the other included the preparation of an advocacy and capacity-building package, including summary reports, flyers and posters on the Iran NUP and SCS. Further documents developed during the project include the Diagnostic Report, Diagnostic Report Issues Papers, a Project Document for MoRUD, the Inception Report, a report for the Policy Dialogue, seven technical reports for the NUP development and three technical reports for the Smart Cities Strategy development. At the time of writing this evaluation report, no framework for monitoring and evaluation had been developed. The next paragraph gives a brief overview of the content of the Iran NUP and SCS to highlight the final outcome of the project. Other documents are not described in further detail.

The first section of the **I.R. Iran NUP and SCS** gives an overview of national urban policies in general, the connection to the New Urban Agenda, the history of urban policymaking in I.R. Iran and the conceptual framework and methodology for the development of the Iran NUP. Section two describes the rationale for the NUP, referring to the Iran urban profile and priority areas in urban policymaking in I.R. Iran. The next section presents the goals and objectives of the NUP and SCS and 13 policies which are connected to the 13 goals. For each policy, the public problem in I.R. Iran is described and relevant documents, objectives and sub-policies, and smart city considerations are listed.

The fourth section of the I.R. Iran NUP and SCS contains the Smart City Strategy, including a vision statement, goals and strategic direction, the strategic Smart City model for I.R. Iran and development policy suggestions. The final section of the document presents proposed action plans for the NUP and the Smart City Strategies in the form of a list for each policy with the following information: policy instruments; policy actors; policy evaluation criteria (outputs and impacts); policy timing (time required); geographic coverage; and policy level (governance and/or managerial).

## ii. Myanmar

The Myanmar NUP and Smart City Strategy remain in draft due to the change of government in 2021, following which formal work on the project has been suspended. A draft NUP Implementation Plan had also been developed. Demonstration projects were still implemented with a humanitarian focus; one related to COVID-19 and another related to informal settlement upgrading, with reports for both projects. Further documents include a National Urban Policy Framework (functioning as a Feasibility Study), as well as two documents developed before the start of this project: *National Urban Policy Note* (2014) and *Rapid Urban Diagnostic Report* (2016). The next paragraphs give a brief overview of the content of the Myanmar draft NUP, draft NUP implementation plan and draft SCS to highlight the final outcomes of the project. Other documents are not described in further detail.

The **Myanmar draft NUP** gives an overview of Myanmar's Urban Context and the purpose and process of the formulation of the NUP. It also states the NUP vision, goals, principles, themes, and interventions. The draft policy then describes linkages to national and international policies and strategies, after which policy themes and the related policy interventions are described in more detail. In the final section, the NUP refers to capacity development which is one of the goals of the NUP and the implementation of the NUP, referring to the Implementation Plan. **Myanmar's draft NUP implementation plan** is comprised of the policy interventions stated in the NUP, their urgency assessment , related existing programs and relevant stakeholders.

The **Myanmar draft Smart Cities Strategy** describes the existing situation in Myanmar in relation to Smart Cities, including the alignment with existing policies and the draft NUP. The draft strategy then defines smart cities and presents Myanmar's Smart City vision and the developed Smart City Model for Myanmar and entry points.

The strategy then talks about four important decisions - integration of NUP and SCS, establishing smart city leaders, collaborative approach, and funding options - and the implementation of the Smart Cities Strategy, including 68 actions. The SCS describes the NUP as addressing the spatial and physical aspects of urban development while the SCS addresses the technological attributes. Myanmar is aiming to combine the three models of a start-up smart city, a citizen smart city and a planned smart city.

In addition to the Myanmar NUP strategic documents, there are also reports on the two demonstration projects, describing their implementation. Both demonstration projects have been undertaken on a local community level in cooperation with community-based organizations.

### iii.  Niger State

In Niger State, the State Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy have been developed with the Niger State Urban Policy approved by the Niger State Government Executive Council as a framework to guide urban and territorial development in the state in June 2021. In February 2022, the Niger State Urban Policy document was presented to the advisory board and the state legislative council for final approval and enactment into law. Several demonstration projects have been undertaken to support implementation, including two COVID-related demonstration projects, which have been reported in the overall report for the project. Further documents developed during the project include a Diagnostic Report, a Feasibility Report, a Policy Note, and a Draft Niger State Urban Policy Law (for the establishment of the Niger State Urban Policy Commission). At the time of writing, an implementation plan or monitoring and evaluation strategy has not been established.

The following sections offer a brief overview of the content of the Niger State Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy to highlight the final outcomes of the project. Other documents are not described in further detail.

The **Niger State Urban Policy** gives an overview of urbanization in Niger State and the relation to the existing state, national and international frameworks before describing the policy framework of the SUP. The framework section includes information on the relevant stakeholders, the overall policy goal, objectives, guiding principles, expected policy outcomes, thematic components and recommended actions. This introductory material is followed by 11 sections identifying priorities and describing the background, sectoral goal, policy objectives and strategies, and expected policy outcome for the respective priority. The State Urban Policy concludes with a section on monitoring and evaluation.

The **Niger State Smart City Strategy** describes the existing situation in Niger State and Nigeria in relation to smart cities. It places a keen interest on urbanization of the country and state, smart cities initiatives, the Nigerian national policy on smart cities, a policy review of relevant policies and initiatives, the alignment to the NUP and Niger State Urban Policy and challenges of smart cities in Nigeria. The strategy then discusses what a smart city is, smart city services and smart city attributes, and current initiatives on smart cities. Then the Niger State's Smart City Vision and Goal are stated and objectives and strategies for objectives are listed. The next section describes the building blocks of a smart city, smart cities typologies (brownfield, greenfield and mix) and names 76 intervention actions in relation to the NUP priorities, including their priority – high, medium, long-term – the current situation and relevant stakeholders.

The final section refers to the implementation process, institutional arrangements and monitoring and evaluation. Finally, the appendix lists candidate projects for smart cities in Niger State.

## 4. 2.  SURVEY RESULTS

The country teams undertook a survey of country-level respondents to complement the documentary review and the interviews and focus groups. The survey was distributed via email to the country contacts for I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria (five overall) with a request to participate and forward the survey to relevant stakeholders in their countries. The survey was also distributed to 54 contacts that work in the realm of NUPP in the three countries from professional network of the researchers, mostly in Iran and Nigeria, thus adding up to 59 potential respondents that were directly contacted. Furthermore, five UN-Habitat staff country contacts were asked to distribute the survey link to relevant stakeholders. The survey focused on stakeholders in the participating countries that were not affiliated with UN-Habitat, in an effort to understand their assessment of the project more clearly. It had 16 questions, including a mix of Likert scales, assessment matrices and text entries, as well as information on the country and area where respondents worked. It took 10-15 minutes to complete.

The survey received eight responses, one for Myanmar, three for I.R. Iran and four for Nigeria. . While this absolute number may seem low, it should be noted that the pool of potential respondents was relatively small, due to an internal focus on stakeholders in the participating countries which means that international stakeholders were not included.

It should also be noted that while the survey provides information on the view of local stakeholders on the project, the evaluation necessarily presents a stronger focus on interviews and focus groups as these methods were better suited to gathering in-depth reflections.

When looking at the response rate it can be safely deduced that it is comparable to a larger, similar survey undertaken for the evaluation of the overall NUP programme (UN-Habitat 2022c) which had a response rate of about 12%. While it is not possible for the current survey to assert a clear response rate as it is not known to how many people the survey link was forwarded, assuming a number of 59 potential respondents (five country contacts through UN-Habitat plus 54 contacts through professional networks), then the response rate is about 14% (8 responses out of 59 potential respondents).

Possible reasons for invited stakeholders not taking part in the survey lie in the political context. In Myanmar, the government changed through a coup, which means that many of the stakeholders that were involved in the project are not working in the area anymore, are difficult to reach, could be afraid of repercussions or may not see the value of participating, as the project is on hold for Myanmar. I.R. Iran experienced political unrest during the time of the research. This means that local stakeholders got pre-occupied with handling more urgent topics and processes.

Thus, the tense political situations most likely explains why potential respondents have not responded to the survey. Additionally, three of the five country contacts participated in interviews so that it is likely that they have not responded to the survey.

The research team made several attempts to encourage responses and invite further distribution of the survey to in-country contacts.

Of the eight survey respondents, six came from government (three at the national level and three at the sub-national level), one respondent came from a national development agency and another respondent from the private sector. Respondents have worked between two and 32 years in positions relating to National Urban Policy, with an average of about 10 years (Figure 2).
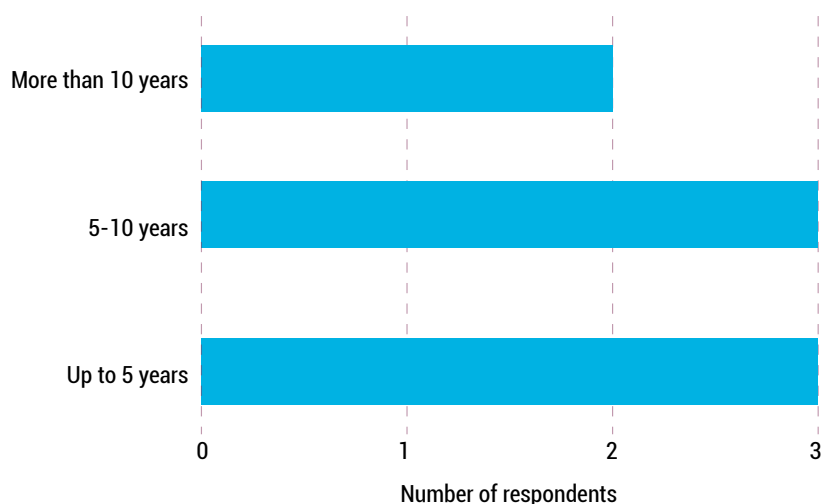


**Figure 2.** Years of relevant professional experience

The assessment of the NUPP overall and the NUP and Smart City Strategies pilot phase differs among the respondents. Figure 3 shows how survey respondents rated the **performance of the overall NUP Programme** on a scale between 0 and 100 in five main measures: overall effectiveness, relevancy, impacts, efficiency and return on investment.

While the graph shows the difference in assessment, it also shows that all respondents assessed the relevancy of the programme as quite high. This is particularly clear for Respondent 5, whose assessment of the other measures were quite low. Respondents 2 and 7 assessed efficiency as somewhat higher than relevancy, and Respondent 4 assessed return on investment as higher.
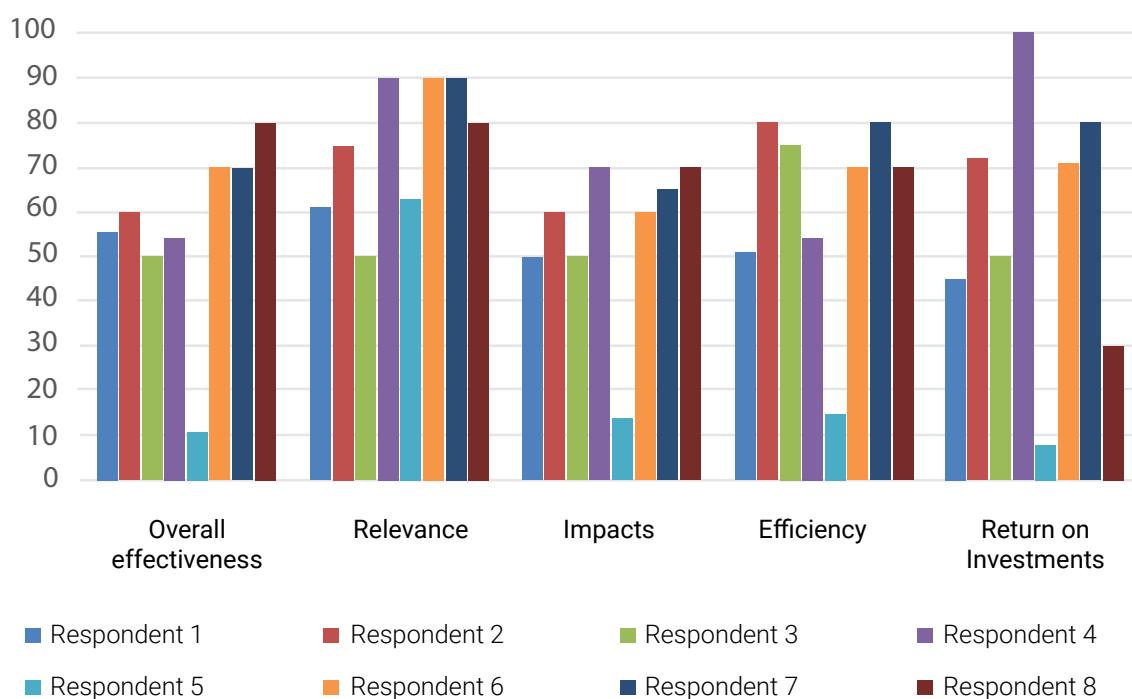
**Figure 3.** Assessment of overall NUPP

The average assessment of the respondents is comparable to the average assessment in the overall NUPP evaluation from 2021 (UN-Habitat 2022c), as shown in Table 1.

Overall effectiveness is assessed a bit lower, while efficiency and return on investment are assessed a bit higher.

| | Average assessment current survey | Average assessment NUPP evaluation 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall effectiveness** | 56 | 62 |
| **Relevancy** | 75 | 73 |
| **Impacts** | 55 | 54 |
| **Efficiency** | 62 | 58 |
| **Return on investment** | 57 | 54 |

**Source:** Survey responses and UN-Habitat 2022c

**Table 1.** Assessment NUPP overall performance

Figure 4 shows the assessment of different elements of the NUP and Smart Cities project. The overall project was assessed as very or extremely useful by all respondents, except for one who assessed it as moderately useful.

The respondents also reviewed country exchange visits as very or extremely useful, except for one respondent who assessed them as slightly useful, while two respondents did not assess them at all, probably because they did not take part in the visits.

Concerning the workshops on preparing a NUP and Smart City Strategies Action Plan, the assessors considered Expert Group Meeting and the Guidance Note for identifying demonstration projects as very or extremely useful by most respondents. The COVID-19 demonstration projects were highlighted as achievements in further survey responses and also assessed positively in the interviews, while the support for them was assessed differently between slightly and extremely useful.

The evaluation team noted some differences between respondents from the three countries. Respondents 1-4 came from Nigeria, Respondents 5-7 from I.R. Iran and Respondents 8 from Myanmar. As Figure 4 shows, respondents in I.R. Iran rated some of the elements as less useful than other respondents; however, there still exists differences in assessment between the respondents from I.R. Iran.
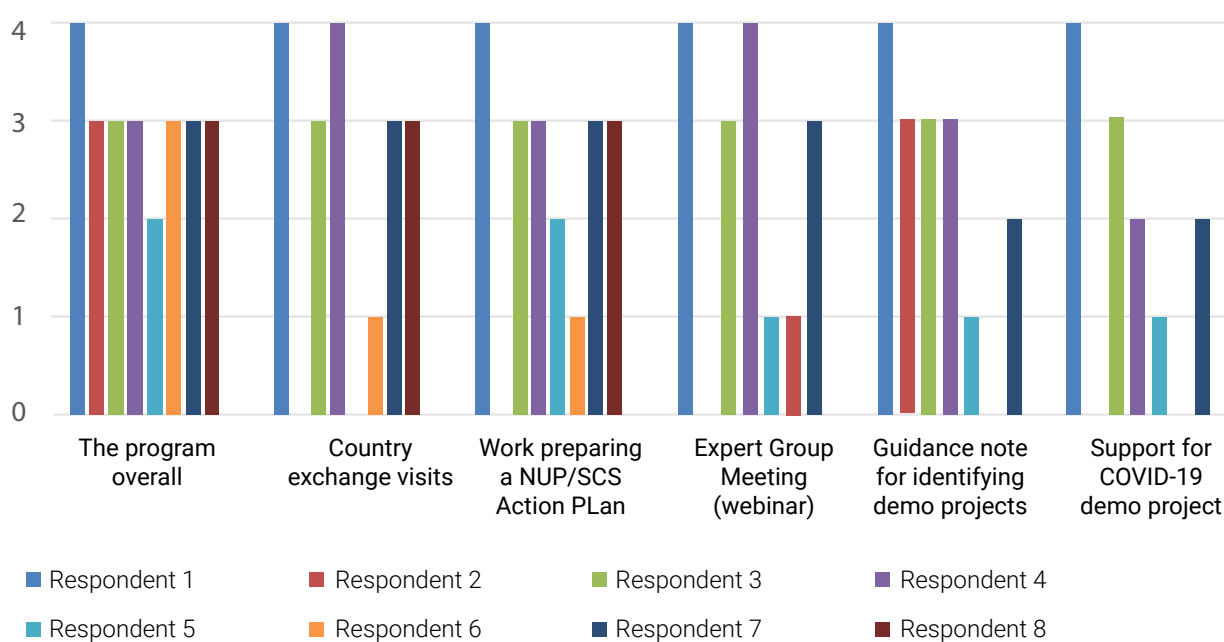


**Figure 4.**  Assessment of different elements of the NUP and Smart Cities project

*Note:* **4** *= extremely useful,* **3** *= very useful,* **2** *= moderately useful* **1***= slightly useful* **0***= no response [not at all useful was not selected by any respondent]*

Five respondents stated saw no issues with the NUP development in their country not being **consistent with other national policies** or development programs. One respondent did not respond and two respondents saw issues. One of them did not expand on what the issues were, while the other cited fragmentation between spatial development plans and the priorities of urban management officials.

The respondents saw the **greatest challenges for implementing NUPs at the national level** in policy silos and institutional fragmentation (7 respondents out of 7), insufficient financial resources (6 respondents out of 7), and lack of political will/policy continuity (6 respondents out of 7). In Myanmar and Niger State, insufficient human resources were also seen as a challenge.

For Niger State, a lack of technical expertise was also mentioned by one respondent, as well as a lack of synergy between the three tiers of government; and inadequate buy-in from the state and local governments.

**Suggestions for improvement of the NUP and Smart City pilot phase** included: to support and facilitate financing for the implementation of the NUP, further technical advice by UN-Habitat, strengthening of stakeholder participation. Also, emphasis on the operationalization of policies in spatial development plans and urban management actions and more transparent decision-making and broader information about the program to include the public more. In a similar manner, it was suggested to ensure that all stakeholders are identified and also sensitized to the program so that all urban challenges are factored in. A bottom-up and stakeholder-driven process for local and sub-national levels of government to engage their active participation was suggested.

This was seen as pivotal since the local government is the tier that implements projects on the ground, and the sub-national level is also important but might not be aware of their role and the importance of a (sub-) national urban policy. A suggestion was to engage even stronger with the political leadership to ensure that they understand the process of preparing the policy and its potential benefits. For the overall NUP program, respondents also commented that it is important to follow up on the implementation and the results of the compiled policies and that it is important to eliminate silos between Ministries, Departments and Agencies while ensuring the ownership of the project by stakeholders at national, state and local levels.

As **achievements** of the project the demonstration projects and the stakeholder participation in the NUP process were highlighted by survey respondents, as well as attracting more attention and interest of national and local authorities to the issue of urban policy.

## 4. 3. INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUPS RESULTS

Interviews have been undertaken with 19 key stakeholders of the NUP programme. This included current and previous staff at UN-Habitat Headquarters, local UN-Habitat project managers, staff at the UN-Habitat Regional Offices and Country Offices, Urban Consultants, staff at the Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, staff at the Korea Research Institute for Humans Settlements and local beneficiaries (see the appendix for affiliations of interviewees). The interviews were semi-structured and took 52 minutes on average. Four of the interviewees responded in writing. The questions addressed to stakeholders in the benefiting countries differed slightly from the questions to other stakeholders.

The former focused on their respondents' local experience, whereas the latter majored on broader questions regarding the overall program. The semi-structured approach to the interviews allowed a more in-depth investigation of key areas of interest of the respondent. The interview guide can be found in the appendix.

The study undertook two focus group discussions with participants from UN-Habitat Headquarters, UN-Habitat Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat Regional and Country Offices, UN-Habitat NUP and SCS project managers, UNDP and Cities Alliance. Focus groups aimed at understanding evaluation issues and obtaining qualitative information.

The focus groups discussed similar questions to the interviews but focused on lessons learned as well as specific topic areas that came up in the discussions, such as ownership, different understandings of smart cities, selection of countries, inter-sectorial dimension, knowledge exchange, catalytic effects and implementation.

Again, the current political situation is likely to be one reason for this. Additionally, staff fluctuation could also be a reason.

As with the survey, interview and focus group participation of beneficiaries was lower than participation of UN-Habitat staff in the different countries, regions and at headquarters, and from other global entities. Fewer of those stakeholders contact details were known hence, fewer could be reached, or responded to an interview request or focus group invitation.

The findings of the interviews and focus groups will be highlighted in the next section.

**Main discussion topics included;**

- ✓ the importance of local ownership,

- ✓ the impact of governance structures (SUPs may be more relevant than NUPs in some countries,

- ✓ participatory approaches will be different in centralized governments),

- ✓ the impact and relevance of cities and the local level on NUP/SUP,

- ✓ barriers (such as silos, loss of political interest, political changes),

- ✓ the importance of participatory approaches and multi-stakeholder dialogues,

- ✓ how the smart cities concept can be adapted to the local context,

- ✓ the tangibility of demonstration projects, the timing of participatory workshops and demonstration projects,

- ✓ the importance of flexibility and that policy cannot be rushed,

- ✓ the 'now what' after policy formulation, the advantages of peer learning and knowledge exchange,

- ✓ the interaction between local stakeholders and UN-Habitat and some administrative issues.

The following section points out views of the majority of interviewees and focus group participants, but also highlights views that were mentioned only by one or a few research participants, where these point to relevant or interesting points, and to positive results or opportunities for improvement.

# 4. 4. EVALUATION

This section responds to the evaluation questions of the performance of the programme; the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence of the projects with other policies and programmes related to NUPs; the planning and implementation modalities, and the integration of social inclusion issues.

## 4.4.1. Performance of the programme

This section describes the extent to which the programme achieved planned results at the expected accomplishment (outcomes) and output levels.

**a.  Enhanced capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies**

While capacity development and the status of capacity before the project has been varying between the countries, the capacity of sub-national and national governments to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies has been enhanced significantly through the project. Elements of the project mentioned by interviewees and focus participants as having contributed to enhanced capacity are peer-to-peer learning, participation in international conferences, technical assistance through UN-Habitat, and capacity development sessions and seminars. One interviewee also mentioned the need to understand the situation of the country through data collection and analysis and present this data to relevant stakeholders. Another interviewee highlighted the importance of data and indicators for monitoring. Though developed outside the current project, the normative UN-Habitat guides have also been mentioned as capacity-enhancing, and for the current project, the "How to formulate a NUP" guide was translated partly and the "20+

Reasons Why National Urban Policy Matters" booklet was completely translated into Persian so that more country stakeholders were able to read the guides.

One interviewee stated that the exposure to UN-Habitat best practices – such as through the support of UN-Habitat or the conferences – was important for increasing capacity in government, particularly in comparison to previous processes where an external consultant would do much of the work of policy development and having a document at the end was the main goal. Another interviewee highlighted the merits of learning by doing rather than by instruction, that means participating countries were supported in the steps of NUP/SUP and SCS development through practical support and advice, and learned through their own experiences, rather than purely following a best-practice guide. Particular areas for which interviewees stated that understanding has improved within the countries are informal settlements/slum upgrading, urban-rural interface, and the need for cooperation.

From the interviews and focus groups, it seems that the larger part of capacity development is linked to the *development and implementation* of NUP/SUP and SCS, as this was the main focus of the project. *Monitoring and evaluation* of the NUP/SUP and SCS was not as much an element of the project, apart from the data collection and data analysis for the development of the feasibility and diagnosis report, so that capacity development was a bit lower in this area. Monitoring and evaluation will be a stronger focus in phase 2 of the project.

For Myanmar, interviewees mentioned that despite an attempt to find local consultants, lack of many planners or urban experts in the country led to outsourcing of an external consultant. However, even though there was a preference for a local urban expert, the overall process still improved the capacity of stakeholders. Capacity enhancement occurred due to the workshops that were organized to discuss the content and priorities for Myanmar, and the iterative process of policy development with its feedback loops. One interviewee also stressed the presentation of the Myanmar process at the WUF10 in Abu Dhabi by government officials and subsequent discussions as important for capacity building. Additionally, and on another scale, the demonstration projects have improved the capacity of local communities through practical guides for local improvements, such as the building of houses and toilets.

For Niger State, the improvement of capacity at the *local* level, in the communities, has also been mentioned. Interviewees referred particularly to the improved understanding of urban issues and potential responses to the issues within the community, and the understanding that joint approaches are necessary.

For state government, the improved understanding of interrelations between urban planning and other areas, such as water or electricity supply, was mentioned by one interviewee.

Increased centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies.

According to the research participants, the project has led to some centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. In particular, the multi-level policy dialogues and the advisory boards were seen to have led to increased centralization of knowledge and also increased awareness about the importance of NUPs and the tools that can be used. Dialogue participants were from many different sectors and levels, which was important for bringing together different areas of knowledge. An interviewee mentioned the horizontal cooperation between ministries in Myanmar through the project to which the involvement of local and regional government and some NGOs in the workshops added. This was similar in the other countries. However, in interviews for Myanmar and I.R. Iran, it was also mentioned that the participation of national and to some extent, regional stakeholders was most important, with the local level being involved to a lesser extent. In contrast, the interviewees perceived knowledge of the local level as highly valuable for the development of the SUP in Niger State. For Smart City Strategies, there has been a mixed assessment with most participants highlighting an increase in knowledge, but other participants assessing the development of the Smart City Strategies as less open and participatory.

In some cases, the relevance and meaning of 'smart' were not always clear to country participants. However, there was evidence of this uncertainty spurring interest in opportunities to use technologies in new locally relevant ways which led to innovation in urban development and infrastructure planning. Evidence also points to smart city thinking across domains: One interviewee pointed to the cooperation in Niger State which made digitization of data possible (e.g., for water pipes) that is now available to everyone.

The digitization of land tenure has been named by another interviewee as a future project, with an ability to centralize knowledge further and will also support further digital frameworks through which to raise finance at the local scale for infrastructure enhancements such as water and sanitation. The digitization of land is highlighted in the Myanmar draft NUP and SCS, and in the Niger State SUP and SCS. For I.R. Iran, a cadaster already exists and digital public access to the cadaster is pointed to as a smart city consideration.

### b. Augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies

Although the COVID-19 pandemic brought about obvious challenges to face-to-face activities , whereby some activities had to be postponed or cancelled, the activities that took place were highly valued. The research participants stated that study visits, the online learning exchange and international conferences had augmented the opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities. The networking events at the World Urban Forum (WUF) 10 and 11 and the visits to Korea and Poland stood out as particularly beneficial events for knowledge sharing and peer learning. One interviewee also stated that the direct exchange between the participating countries provided useful learning from the experiences of the other countries, and that despite obvious differences, participating countries faced relatively similar challenges as they were going through the same process. The interviewee also acknowledged that the open discussion that happened between the countries assisted in learning processes. In addition to the knowledge sharing experience and peer learning of the participating

countries, other countries were able to learn from the experiences of the three participating countries, particularly through conferences and the WUF.

A suggestion came forth to increase knowledge sharing and peer learning activities so as to establish an online database or online courses where the gained experience can be disseminated further. Further suggestions for improvement included further strengthening of peer communication through more exchange opportunities between the countries and between country stakeholders, and that the exchange visits could be more versatile, as the second visit to Korea was assessed as similar to the first one, while the additional exchange in Poland gave new insights. One interviewee opined that the visit to Korea was not a crucial element of the project. However, this interviewee was not located in a participating country, and several other interviewees highlighted the benefit of experiencing the projects in Korea.

### c. Outputs

As described in section 4.1.3, outputs of the project include annual reports (2017, 2018/19, 2020), a draft final report, a NUPP Impact Story Booklet, exchange visit booklets (2019, 2022), a report on the World Urban Forum in 2022, a report on the COVID-19 demonstration projects, a Smart Cities Strategies Guide, and a Guidance Note for identifying demonstration projects.

NUPs/SUP and Smart City Strategies have been developed for each country (in draft form for Myanmar), and demonstration projects implemented. I.R. Iran has also developed a Diagnostic Report, Diagnostic Report Issues Papers, a Project Document for MoRUD, the Inception Report, a report for the Policy Dialogue, seven technical reports for

the NUP development and three technical reports for the Smart Cities Strategy development. One demonstration project also included the preparation of an advocacy and capacity-building package, including summary reports, flyers and posters on the Iran NUP and SCS. Myanmar has developed a draft implementation strategy, a National Urban Policy Framework (functioning as a Feasibility Study), and reports on the two demonstration projects. Niger State has developed a Diagnostic Report, a Feasibility Report, a Policy Note, and a Draft Niger State Urban Policy Law (for the establishment of the Niger State Urban Policy Commission). See the appendix for a list of the documents.

## 4.4.2. Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence of the projects with other policies and programmes related to NUPs

This section responds to the evaluation questions with regard to the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence of the projects with other policies and programmes related to NUPs.

### a. Relevance

The NUP/SUP documents refer to the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, as well as the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework (NUP and SCS I.R. Iran, pp. 2-3, Draft Myanmar NUP, pp 18-22, Niger State SUP, pp. 16/17). For example, the NUP and SCS I.R. Iran states:

> "NUPP in I.R. Iran seeks to contribute to a larger extent to urbanization and its emerging challenges, while also consolidating and sharing knowledge on urban policy at the global level. It is also a tool for implementation and monitoring of global urban agendas, such as the New Urban Agenda, Paris Agreement (agreed upon by I. R. Iran in Paris, on 12 December 2015) and Sendai Framework (agreed upon by I. R. Iran in UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, on 18 March 2015)." (p. 2)

The documents include some sections or priorities on vulnerable groups, the poor, human rights, women and youth. These groups are mostly mentioned under land governance (Myanmar, Niger State), housing (Myanmar, I.R. Iran) and vulnerable areas (I.R. Iran). Only the Niger State SUP mentions human rights specifically, in relation to the 'right to the city' under participation (Niger State SUP, p. 44).

Participants have commented that the demonstration projects specifically respond to issues of vulnerable groups and poor, human rights, women and youth. For instance, the demonstration projects in Myanmar took place in informal settlements, and the second project focused on 'Building Resilience of Urban Poor Communities Through Basic Services Improvement in Peri-Urban Yangon' (UN-Habitat et al. 2022). Demonstration projects in Niger State included the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, rehabilitation of three bi-water schemes, urban reforestation for climate change mitigation, and empowering youth living with disabilities via hydroponic farming and experiential entrepreneurship training (Presentation at WUF 11, 2022)

The project has been consistent with relevant national policies and strategies as well as national development plans. Particularly, the draft NUP in Myanmar clearly points out the relationship of the NUP to the existing relevant national policies with a figure that depicts the relation to international targets and national policies and priorities (Draft NUP Myanmar, p. 22). For the NUP and SCS in Iran, national and transnational documents, regulations and laws on urban planning and smart cities in I.R. Iran have been analyzed and described in two technical reports, and the NUP and SCS document lists the documents that have been analyzed (NUP and SCS I.R. Iran, pp. 17/18).

The Niger State SUP also lists existing urban management frameworks, existing legal/legislative instruments and existing policy instruments (Niger State SUP, pp. 13-16).

The development of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs, as well as the technical assistance and knowledge exchange, was seen as useful by beneficiaries. They were seen as beneficial in order to structure urban and other related policies more clearly, understand interrelations better, and deal with issues such as land digitization and land readjustment. Some interviewees viewed the SCS as of a less direct need, but still considered useful as a longer-term strategy for future opportunities while thinking about how smart technologies can be married with current needs, e.g., to improve water and electricity supply. For NUP/SUP, it was considered valuable to formulate a policy that can steer and coordinate projects and urban development. One interviewee, though not a beneficiary, commented on the importance of having the capacity of a NUP to structure project-driven development with a vision to what development is needed (particularly to respond to suggested projects and development by stakeholders outside government). One beneficiary commented that the understanding of the importance of urban-rural linkages and of an integrated and balanced territorial development was a crucial element for positive urbanization outcomes in their country.

UN-Habitat Headquarters being the lead agency taking part in the project made it different from other UN projects, where generally regional offices are more involved. It received positive feedback from respondents who termed it generally useful as it also made the organization of the global exchange element of the project easier.

One interviewee mentioned that for some parts of the project more direct involvement of the regional office would have made processes easier, but also acknowledged that overall, the lead through headquarters was beneficial.

### b. Efficiency

According to the research participants, the design and implementation of the project have worked well, although naturally, the event of the COVID-19 pandemic influenced its implementation. However, the project team responded quite flexibly to this challenge. The demonstration projects have been considered a valuable and efficient type of activity, as they were tangible and have led to clear outcomes on the ground. The policy dialogues have also been mentioned as an important and efficient part of the project, as they have led to increased awareness, ownership and capacity and knowledge about NUPs/SUP and SCSs in the countries. While they have a lower profile, as they are more day-to-day activities, the technical advice provided through project-specific UN-Habitat staff in the countries and the meetings between the countries, UN-Habitat and the Korean stakeholders have also been considered as highly useful and efficient by interviewees.

The level of funding was viewed as a positive factor by some respondents, as it allowed effective implementation of the NUP projects in the countries and to take the necessary time to build national and sub-national awareness and support for the program. The direct funding of the project by Korea through UN-Habitat avoided bureaucracy on the country or state level, and enabled activities that were otherwise not possible.

UN-Habitat's expertise and advisory capability in the development of NUPs were viewed as highly useful and were respected by participants.

However, it was also mentioned that sending money to the countries sometimes took a long time due to bureaucracy, and that a small amount of funding to be spent flexibly in the country would make some activities easier and would require less negotiation and working time (e.g., in relation to demonstration projects). One interviewee mentioned that, particularly at the beginning of the project, there was a perceived inflexibility of how funds could be managed or used and that this made the process less flexible and less efficient as many negotiations were required to come to a conclusion (e.g., in relation to hiring staff). However, this became more flexible with time so that then funds could be used more efficiently. A further comment was that time for UN-Habitat staff outside the project is not necessarily budgeted, e.g., time of staff at the country office.

Partnerships to local stakeholders were important and assisted in the achievement of the planned outputs. These local stakeholders include staff at national, state and local government level, as well as at relevant other organizations. For instance, in Myanmar a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Construction, was interested in the project and supported it, which helped for example with the organization of workshops. In I.R. Iran, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD) was also strongly involved and interested in the project.

In Niger State, the connection to local stakeholders through professional networks assisted with organizing the consultation workshops and reaching out to the local communities.

Institutional arrangements were different in the participating countries. However, local UN-Habitat staff and the local focal point (project manager) were crucial for achieving the expected accomplishments, and particularly their involvement over nearly the whole duration of the project in all countries (i.e. stability). Where consultants had to be hired or where staff left during the project, the project delivery was impacted to some extent, as it took time to find new staff and for the new staff to take over (e.g. in I.R. Iran). However, once the new staff had been hired, there was no further impact. In I.R. Iran, a further impact was that the country office closed for a year so that some workarounds for processes had to be found.

For Niger State and I.R. Iran it was mentioned by interviewees that some demonstration projects faced bureaucratic hurdles, such as organizing some parts of the actual implementation through national or state government actors. In Myanmar, the main hurdle was that the demonstration projects were implemented while the NUPP implementation was on hold. The bureaucratic hurdles also involved the speed of sending/receiving of funding for the demonstration projects, which were to be implemented relatively short-term.

For Niger State team also faced difficulty as consultants needed to be hired for some demonstration projects to monitor/evaluate them, as no local staff was available. This added costs which were quite high in relation to the budget of the projects. Overall project delivery was not affected; however, this may have led to some demonstration projects not having been implemented or followed up further.

As discussions and participatory processes take time and political will, this has led to some parts of the project, particularly the final development of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs, needing more time than planned. However, all countries had developed the policy and strategy at the end of the project.

Data analysis and technical assistance and the Smart Cities Strategic Guide as services and products have increased the awareness of the need for and advantages of NUPs/SUP and smart cities. The processes have also led to a national or state dialogue and development of the policies and strategies.

From the document analysis and the accounts of participants, the project was delivered in a cost-effective manner. Particularly, the demonstration projects were seen as cost-effective, as they only had small budgets, but were tangible to the population. An interviewee also commented that the budget was relatively small in comparison to other UN projects and also considering the nature of the project.

## c. Effectiveness

The project achieved its planned results as the NUPs/SUP and SCSs have been developed in the participating countries. In like manner, the capacity for developing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and developing smart city strategies has increased overall and knowledge is more centralized and opportunities for knowledge sharing and peer learning were offered for participating and also for further countries (see section 4.4.1). Major factors that influenced the achievement of the expected accomplishments were committed individuals, the technical support, the policy dialogue in the countries, meetings between beneficiaries, UN-Habitat and the Korean donors, and political interest.

UN-Habitat has contributed to achieving the result through already existing normative guides, such as the 'How to formulate a National Urban Policy' guide, 'National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework' and the Smart Cities Strategies Guide that was developed during the project. Furthermore, local UN-Habitat staff has given technical assistance, coordinated the project and organized national workshops, policy dialogue and technical information sessions. This contribution was acknowledged by the interviewees. One interviewee pointed out that the exposure to UN-Habitat best practices supported the achievement of the planned results. Another interviewee stated that UN-Habitat, through their advice, opened up the policy dialogue a little further than otherwise might have happened (i.e., more stakeholders from below national levels were invited). The cooperation between UN-Habitat local staff and beneficiaries was important for achieving the planned results, which was supported by being located in the same city and that the UN-Habitat staff were focused on the specific project.

One interviewee highlighted that the cooperation supported the progress of the project through accountability and development of trust, pushing the project forward. As most UN-Habitat local staff were working on the project for most of the duration of the project, that helped to build trust as well.

UN-Habitat has also contributed towards knowledge sharing and peer learning through organizing the exchange visits and visits at the International Conference on National Urban Policy (ICNUP) 2019 and the World Urban Forum 10 in Abu Dhabi and the World Urban Forum 11 in Poland.

According to interviewees, the resourcing was sufficient and justified. One interviewee suggested that potentially more demonstration projects could have been funded to kickstart the implementation phase. Another interviewee mentioned that they had to change the team during the projects to achieve the results and that this required some negotiation, but it was achieved in the end.

National and local stakeholders have been involved in the design and implementation of the project (e.g., during bilateral meetings held during UN-Habitat 26th Governing Council and during the Second International Conference on National Urban Policy), and most interviewees assessed that the involvement was sufficient and also useful to develop the project according to the beneficiaries' needs and interests. For the implementation of the project, particularly the policy dialogue (e.g., workshops to discuss the diagnosis and feasibility reports and draft versions of the NUP/SUP) and the advisory board or steering committee were important elements where national and local stakeholders have been involved and were able to provide feedback on the drafts.

It differed between countries whether these stakeholders were mostly government stakeholders (i.e. local, sub-national and national government) or did also involve non-government organizations and the community. For Niger State, local communities were strongly involved through town hall meetings. For Myanmar and I.R. Iran, the focus was mostly on government stakeholders; however, some NGOs, professionals and academia were also invited to the workshops (see, for example, I.R. Iran NUP and SCS, p. 9). One survey respondent proposed a broader and more open involvement of stakeholders in the Smart City Strategy in I.R. Iran.

Ownership by local stakeholders was very important for the effectiveness of the project. This also includes political interest. Through the involvement of local stakeholders in the development of the process, there is a high ownership for the developed NUPs/SUP, and to some extent also SCS, as research participants reported. This ownership extends to different local levels. For example, in Niger State, the local community (i.e. outside of local government) was involved in the policy dialogue and participatory process and thus also feels ownership, if not for the actual policy, then for the ideas and problem identification that went into it. This has been enforced through the demonstration projects. For the State Government in Niger State, ownership seems to be more mixed, as some interviewees mentioned that some of the parties lost interest during the process. In Myanmar, after the change of government through the coup, the community level and NGOs became involved through the demonstration projects and felt ownership for those projects.

For I.R. Iran, the contextualization of the framework was important, in order to respond better to the urban needs and issues of I.R. Iran. This contextualization increased ownership and the will to implement the NUP. However, one interviewee also stated that, in general, the Iranian government is not strongly interested in planning or implementation of planning policies, and was skeptical about the implementation of the NUP.

The management of the project had to adjust to the major challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and its health risk and subsequent travel restrictions. This was done by moving knowledge-sharing activities such as the EGM online, and also by introducing the COVID-19 demonstration projects. Other changes the management had to adjust to were different timings of the development of reports and draft policies in the participating countries, and different approaches to the process, such as the participatory approach and demonstration projects. The lesson drawn from the project is the need to be a combination of milestones and some flexibility for achieving those milestones, and that meetings between beneficiaries, country teams, UN-Habitat Headquarter and the donor are imperative to understand requirements and the need for change.

The implementation of the project was monitored through annual reports and updates to project plans (as well as quarterly updates). Necessary changes were flagged in the reports and discussed in meetings with the donor.

### d.  Impact Outlook

As described in section 4.4.1 the project has attained its expected accomplishments. Interviewees and focus group participants mentioned how multi-level policy dialogues and the establishments of advisory boards assisted in increasing the (human and institutional) capacity and knowledge of stakeholders. They also noted that study visits, international conferences and further ways of exchange (such as online project meetings and the EGM) supported knowledge exchange between the participating countries, the donor and also other countries of interest which were able to learn through the international conferences. Thus, the pathway from content to outcomes in the Theory of Change diagram in Figure 1 appears to be valid, and the developed urban policies and smart city strategies aim and work towards the long-term outcome of more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change (United Nations (n.d.), SDG 11). While the impact of those policies cannot be assessed yet, the project has supported improved policies, plans and designs, and has to some extent started the implementation of the policy. However, the monitoring and evaluation phase is a step that will be fulfilled more clearly in the next phases of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs in the countries and state.

### e.  Sustainability

Local stakeholders have been able to design and implement several activities during the project. These mainly comprised of workshops and discussions about the context of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs, but also demonstration projects. Beneficiaries were also involved in monitoring and reporting, as they had to prepare annual reports that reported back on which milestones had been achieved. Monitoring and evaluation of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs has not been started at the time of writing. As the implementation of the policies and strategies will be the next step, the assessment of the sustainability of activities from the policies and strategies is not yet possible. However, the demonstration projects provide tangible outcomes and have a clear impact.

In Niger State, a step to achieve sustainability is the development of a law to provide for the establishment of the Niger State Urban Policy Commission.

While this law has not been enacted yet, the thought behind it is that it will provide sustainability to the Commission and the aims of state urban planning.

The in-country activities are replicable to a certain extent, with differences between countries, according to their governance structures, stakeholders involved and political interest. However, activities, such as national and sub-national workshops, or a NUP/SUP advisory board are activities that are replicable. The policy dialogue can also be replicated at a local level, as has been done in Niger State. Particularly the policy dialogue and demonstration projects can lead to further collaboration between stakeholders.

The replicability and sustainability of the project can also be seen in the fact that funding for a Phase 2 has already been secured which will include the three participating countries of this project plus five additional countries.

### f.   Coherence

The project has been consistent with relevant national policies and strategies, and national development plans. It overlapped to some extent with other similar projects or programmes. One example is a project to develop a climate change strategy in Myanmar which was funded by the European Union and the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative (GCCA+) and implemented by UN-Habitat and UN Environment. The developed Climate Change Strategy and Climate Change Master Plan were considered and referred to in the draft NUP.

Another relevant programme in Myanmar is the Urban and Regional Development Institute (URDI), which has been established in 2012 based on an MoU between the Ministry of Construction and UN-Habitat for Myanmar Program for Safer Settlements and Urban Research. URDI aims to enhance human safety by promoting urban research and capacity building (https://duhd.org.mm/en/about-us).

A further initiative which was mentioned by interviewees in relation to Myanmar was the ASEAN Smart Cities network which was established in 2018, where Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Yangon are pilot cities (https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-smart-cities-network/). In relation to that, some smart cities and new town developments by development partners such as ADB, JICA, or Korea were also mentioned by interviewees.

One interviewee stated that it could be confusing when UN-Habitat, OECD and the Cities Alliance undertook similar activities, and that these activities could be coordinated better or communicated more clearly. They referred to additional projects or activities outside the NUP project, and preferred either projects where these stakeholders work together, or if there should be several projects that a clear coordination or collaboration between these projects would occur.

While interviewees in I.R. Iran and Niger state did not specifically mention other relevant projects, for I.R. Iran the project "Emergency Support to Safer Hospitals and Settlements" overlaps to some extent. The project is funded by the Government of Japan and focuses on disaster preparedness, post-crisis recovery, and crisis risk reduction associated with natural hazards and pandemics for particularly hospitals, healthcare facilities, communities and vulnerable people. Key project stakeholders included the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development; Ministry of Health and Medical Education; Road, Housing and Urban Development Research Center; Planning and Budget Organisation; International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES); and JICA (https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/en/projects/2616/).

For Nigeria, a relevant project is "Mainstreaming energy and resource efficiency measures into building codes, building policies and building practices in Senegal, Nigeria and Cameroon" which aimed to strengthen the capacity of governmental agencies in developing energy and resource efficiency codes for buildings and developing policy guidelines for mainstreaming energy and resource efficiency in buildings, and strengthen the capacity of the private and public sector in working with building codes (permitting and enforcement). The project was funded by BMZ/GIZ, UNDP, Government of Nigeria, Government of Senegal and Government of Cameroon (https://unhabitat.org/nigeria-projects).

### 4.4.3. Planning and implementation modalities, including working arrangements and how they may have affected the effectiveness of the projects

Working arrangements differ between the countries and are influenced by local structures and also local interests. For example, the local project manager in Niger State was not affiliated with a state government ministry or department. In Myanmar, the project team was largely external, i.e. from UN-Habitat, but in the Ministry of Construction, a high-ranking official was interested in the project and understood the importance of National Urban Policy. In I.R. Iran, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MoRUD) was also strongly involved and interested in the project. This also meant that in I.R. Iran and Myanmar, the government wanted to be more involved in project-related decisions than in comparison to Niger State, which influenced implementation modalities. It cannot be absolutely concluded that one is better than the other, but the political structure and political will need to be taken into account when implementing the project, undertaking activities and workshops, implementing demonstration projects, etc.

More centralized governance structures can imply that a participatory process mostly means that general information regarding the NUP is disseminated to the public rather than that public input is thought.

Overall, the combination of local UN-Habitat staff with local project managers in (or outside) government was assessed as successful by the interviewees. The collaboration meant that UN-Habitat could provide technical assistance and advice, while the overall process was a local process with local stakeholders discussing priorities of the NUP/SUP together, which in turn meant that the policy responds to the local context and that stakeholders feel ownership of the policy.

### 4.4.4. How were social inclusion issues of gender equality, youth, human rights and climate change integrated in the project

Social inclusion issues of gender equality, youth, human rights and climate change were integrated into the design, planning and implementation, reporting and monitoring of the project through its discussion in the different phases of the project and the reference to the New Urban Agenda and SDGs. While all NUP/SUP documents deal with climate change explicitly in a specific section and with goals and priorities, the other cross-cutting issues came out particularly in the demonstration projects. A large part of the demonstration projects took place in informal settlements, and others included urban reforestation for climate change mitigation, and empowering youth living with disabilities.

With regard to climate change, the I.R. Iran NUP and SCS comprises the policy "Employing effective measures to foster climate change mitigation and adaptation" (Policy 4) with 13 sub-policies and relation to smart cities through the opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through smart technologies. It also contains the policy "Transition towards Water Sensitive Urban Development through an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)

approach" (Policy 11) with 8 sub-policies and relation to smart cities. The draft Myanmar NUP entails the policy theme "Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction" (Policy Theme 8). The Niger State SUP contains the priority "Urban resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation" (Priority 9) and the priority "Resilient infrastructure and services" (Priority 8).

Most interviewees agreed that climate change was sufficiently considered in the documents and project. However, one interviewee felt that climate change should be more fundamental in the NUP/SUP. As mentioned in section 4.4.2 the documents do not have specific sections on vulnerable groups and poor, human rights, women and youth, but consider them under other topics and themes, mostly under land governance, housing, and vulnerable areas/informal settlements. This is a similar finding to the overall NUPP evaluation which discovered that slum upgrading and climate change were the most conspicuous topics, with less engagement with other cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, youth and the elderly, and the disabled (UN-Habitat 2022c). The interviews suggest to some extent that the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, youth, and vulnerable groups might be better suited to local projects and the implementation phase than a specific consideration in the policy document. Or, put another way, these issues are considered in thematic issues such as informal settlements rather than as overall cross-cutting issue. This suggests that there is a focus on urbanization issues in the process, and that cross-cutting issues need to be brought in through thematic issues.

With regard to the project itself, several interviewees mentioned that a large part of the workforce in the project was female, also in higher management positions. One interviewee also mentioned that for some of the social inclusion issues UN-Habitat consultants were able to bring those topics clearer to the fore in the policy dialogues and in the NUPs/SUP and SCSs.

# 5.  Evaluative Conclusions

This evaluation of the "NUP and Smart Cities Strategies" project affirms the essence of a multi-level policy dialogue to develop a national urban policy and the positive role that the presence and support of UN-Habitat can play in this process. The development of national urban policies and smart city strategies can assist in understanding and addressing opportunities and challenges presented by (rapid) urbanization and in bringing different stakeholders together to understand the breadth of issues and opportunities, develop pathways for positive outcomes of urbanization and establish an ownership of the policy and its subsequent actions.

This evaluation supports findings of reviews of the overall NUPP, that contexts and governance structures of countries matter in the development and implementation of urban policy (UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance 2014, UN-Habitat 2022c). The three countries and state undertook the same processes but in different ways. In Niger State, the participatory process involved a number of town hall meetings with the community, while the policy dialogues in Myanmar and I.R. Iran focused more on stakeholders in government and on a larger regional and national level. While NGOs and the local level have also been involved, the larger part of the dialogue involved government and larger organizations. These differences are based in different governance structures in the three countries/state. Therefore, having frameworks and normative guides for NUP development and its process that assist with policy formulation without prescribing certain content or structures is useful and countries need to adapt this process to their context, governance structure and also to their urbanization issues and topics. For example, I.R. Iran adapted the topic areas of the NUP according to the urban issues identified. Thus, this evaluation underscores the need to support the development of urban policy in ways that can be applied in different contexts such as through supporting developing evidence bases, supporting multi-level dialogue and also knowledge transfer.

The purpose of a Theory of Change approach in evaluation is to test the assumptions that link the range of tools and content to the expected outcomes and impacts. For this evaluation, the key links tested were the connections between the activities (content), to the three expected accomplishments and outcomes of the project which underpin the goal of long-term outcomes for urban policies and the impact of the overall NUPP (see Figure 1).

**The three expected accomplishments of the project are:**

- Enhance capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies.

- Increase centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies.

- Provide augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. (UN-Habitat 2017)

The insights drawn from the document analysis, interviews, focus groups and survey conducted for this evaluation indicate that the three expected accomplishments have been achieved and do also impact on the three objectives of:

- ✓ Strengthened institutional capacity including adoption of NUP and Smart Cities Strategy

- ✓ Improved inclusiveness and participation of stakeholders in NUP process

- ✓ Improved exchange between countries and adaptation of NUP process to local needs.

The objective of 'Improved acceptability of the benefits of sustainable urbanization development amongst key stakeholders for the overall NUPP (see UN-Habitat 2022c) has not been tested/ assessed in this evaluation, as the countries and state involved in the project have already been interested in developing national urban policy as they had approached UN-Habitat for support. However, it was still mentioned in the interviews that the project has been useful for bringing the importance of urban issues and the benefits of a national or state urban policy into the awareness of a broader range of stakeholders. The evaluation has affirmed the importance and the suitability of the activities (the content) in order to achieve enhanced capacity, knowledge centralization and knowledge sharing and peer learning. Interviewees and focus group participants mentioned how multi-level policy dialogues and the establishment of advisory boards and steering committees assisted in increasing the (human and institutional) capacity and knowledge of stakeholders, and that study visits, international conferences and further ways of exchange (such as online project meetings and the EGM) supported knowledge exchange between the participating countries, the donor and countries which were able to learn through the international conferences.

Furthermore, interviewees and focus group participants emphasized that the demonstration projects were useful and a key element of the project. As also pointed out in the review of the overall NUPP implementation of the policy is an important part of the debate and sometimes also where the process gets stuck (UN-Habitat 2022c). This means that after the formulation of the policy, it is sometimes difficult to find a starting point for implementation, to organize the financing of implementation projects, and to keep the momentum going. Having the demonstration projects as one part of the project which shows how implementation can be undertaken and highlights the benefits of urban policy to the community was seen as highly beneficial. One interviewee stated that the advantage of the demonstration projects is that they are tangible and also measurable, and other interviewees echoed this sentiment. It is important, however, to provide a clear relation to the national or state urban policy of those demonstration projects, as otherwise there is a risk that while they are perceived as useful and necessary projects they are not connected to the overall topic of urbanization and the need for a policy on this. In other words, it is useful to start implementation through the demonstration projects during the NUP/SUP formulation phase as it has been done in this project rather than waiting until the policies is finalized, while it is also important that the demonstration projects are only one element of the overall project, i.e. clearly related to NUP/SUP and its formulation.

Capacity development sessions and seminars, technical assistance and the establishment of datasets and indicators were also mentioned in the interviews, albeit to a lower extent. In the survey, workshops on preparing a NUP/Smart City Strategy Action Plan and the Guidance Note for identifying demonstration projects were considered between extremely useful and slightly/moderately useful.

This shows that these activities have their part to play in the NUP and SCS development, and seem to be considered a useful and also necessary basis, while activities, such as policy dialogues, exchange visits and demonstration projects are more 'out of the ordinary' and take this basis a step further and the discussion and policy development out to other stakeholders than urban planners and government employees. Overall, it is the combination of all of these activities that support a successful policy development.

With this, the project has also worked towards the five pillars in promoting urban policy: knowledge creation, urban policy-making capacities, in-country support, monitoring progress against global agendas and providing a platform for dialogue on urban policy (UN-Habitat et.al, 2019). Monitoring progress against global agendas is a step that will be fulfilled more clearly in the next phases of the NUPs/SUP and SCSs in the countries and state, as only one of them has already developed an implementation plan.

The links between national urban policy and the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement underpin the importance of urban policy and have been identified and emphasized in the NUPs and SUP that have been developed.

Cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, gender equity, and youth, received different attention in the urban policies and smart city strategies and the implementation of the project. While climate change and its impacts were covered by distinct policies and/or objectives in the policy documents, gender equity and youth received somewhat less attention. Nevertheless, urban issues impacting on gender equity and youth were still mentioned in different parts of the policy documents.

Furthermore, as interviewees mentioned, there was an improved gender balance in the project itself, with staff and stakeholders in the countries often being women. Also, the youth were involved to some extent through the policy dialogue. Overall, these cross-cutting issues could potentially be highlighted or discussed to some further extent in subsequent projects that support national urban policy development. However, this might also be a case of contextualization and perceptions of problems.

The evaluation has shown that the pathway from content to outcomes in the Theory of Change diagram in Figure 1 occurs, and that the developed urban policies and smart city strategies aim and work towards the long-term outcome of more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change (United Nations n.d.).

While the impact of those policies cannot be assessed yet, the projects have supported improved policies, plans and designs, and has to some extent started the implementation of the policy.

The evaluation has also shown, as have other reports before, that political will and interest in urban policy and smart cities are necessarily key for the development and particularly the implementation of the NUP/SUP and SCS. This includes political continuity or a bi-partisan support. While this cannot be influenced by UN-Habitat or the broader NUP programme, the approach of a broad stakeholder engagement and participatory approach can help in establishing a broader support of the national/ state urban policy and smart city strategy, including bi-partisan and community support, which in turn can help to keep the momentum even if government or stakeholders in government lose interest or new governments or stakeholders come in.

# 6.  Lessons Learned

This chapter indicates the lessons learned based on the results from the document analysis, interviews, focus groups and the survey.

## 6. 1.  ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

There has been a consistent involvement of many staff in the project which was an important asset for the project. However, there was also, as with any project, issues to do with staff fluctuation, both within UN-Habitat and in the participating countries. This fluctuation involves the challenge of avoiding losing knowledge. To ensure knowledge retention, a clear recording system of the process is useful, to enable new staff to easily understand what activities have been undertaken and what has been decided with regard to the project. The reporting system of the project already works in this direction, but as one interviewee commented a more detailed system for project staff within UN-Habitat would be useful.

According to the interviews, the budget of the project was sufficient. An important element was that there was some flexibility in the budget when required; the COVID-19 demonstration projects being the most obvious example. However, one interviewee also mentioned that due to bureaucracy sending money to beneficiary countries sometimes took a long time, which was mostly an issue for the COVID-19 demonstration projects, as they were relatively short-term. Overall, project delivery was not affected; however, this may have led to some demonstration project ideas not having been followed up further. One interviewee mentioned that an important element

for beneficiaries was that the funding from external donors gave some autonomy for the project work and hence avoided local bureaucracy and financial discussions.

UN-Habitat headquarters being the lead agency was different from other UN projects, where generally regional offices are more involved. It was seen as beneficial by research participants and also made the organization of the global exchange element of the project easier. Having a UN-Habitat staff member in the country that was specifically working on the project was also considered advantageous, as this helped to build stronger relationships with local stakeholders. Overall, UN-Habitat's expertise and advisory capability in the development of NUPs were viewed as highly useful and received buy-in from participants.

Access to and cooperation with government staff and officials in the countries was crucial for UN-Habitat staff. One interviewee commented that closer embeddedness, for example, by being located within the relevant ministry, would have facilitated cooperation and collaboration even more. However, another interviewee commented that not being affiliated with a ministry was also useful when working with other stakeholders outside of government.

## 6. 2.   CONTEXTUALIZATION

As has been pointed out by other publications on the NUPP, national urban policies need to be adapted to the urban issues, priorities and needs of the respective country, which is why the NUPP does not provide prescriptive frameworks for the development of NUP/SUP. This importance of contextualization was also emphasized by interviewees. For example, I.R. Iran adapted the suggested content of the NUP to respond to the identified urban issues. Due to that need for contextualization, elements of the project have also worked differently in the three countries. For example, several interviewees mentioned that the demonstration projects worked very well in Niger State due to the mobilization of communities through the participatory dialogue, while in other countries, government changes or bureaucracy made the implementation a bit more challenging. In Myanmar, the grassroots empowerment has worked well (although due to the political challenges and not from the beginning of the project). In I.R. Iran, the ownership of the process through government was very strong, i.e., the government was very interested and involved in the project. While this strong involvement seemingly conflicts with the statement by one interviewee that the Iranian government is not interested in urban policy, the difference between these statements is that while the government is involved in the current project, the interviewee meant that there is no interest in implementing the planning

policies, as there have been several previous urban policies or strategies which have not been implemented. This also shows how perceptions of activities can be different between stakeholders.

Additionally, the political structure and interest influence who and which government level or which ministry needs to be approached for the development of urban policy, and, in this case, for involvement in the project by UN-Habitat, and then which stakeholders to approach for the participatory approach. The evaluation has shown that in some countries the government wanted to be more involved in project decisions than in other countries. This has also influenced implementation modalities. It cannot be said that one is better than the other, but the political structure and political interest need to be considered when implementing the project, undertaking activities and workshops, implementing demonstration projects, etc.

Similarly, Smart City Strategies have to be adapted to the different needs and capacity for smart cities in the different countries. While for some countries, electricity generation through solar panels is an important element due to current unstable electricity, for others, other topics are more important, such as public participation or transparency, as can be seen in the SCSs developed in this project.

## 6. 3.  POLITICAL INTEREST, CONTINUITY, AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP

While it is not strictly a responsibility of UN-Habitat and cannot be influenced by the project, the evaluation has shown – as have other NUPP reports before – that political will, political interest and also political continuity has a crucial impact on the development of NUP/SUP and SCS. The influence of political continuity was most obvious in Myanmar where due to the coup in 2021 the NUP and SCS only exist in draft form and at present there is no further cooperation with the current Myanmar military government as it is not recognized as the legitimate government by the UN. However, the influence of political will and interest have also been mentioned by interviewees for other countries. One interviewee reported for example that the interest of the Niger State government in the NUP had become less towards the end of the project, and that they felt that it was important that the local communities supported the NUP development and demanded action from state government. Another interviewee stated that they felt that the Iranian government needed to be more strongly committed to solving urbanization issues and to a more participatory process of planning. Political will and interest furthermore affect implementation, as funding needs to be provided to implement the policy.

As changes in government can and will happen, bi-partisan support and broad stakeholder involvement and support of the NUP/SUP are central. This can be supported by UN-Habitat through connecting with key decision makers from the outset, and potential further mechanisms that encourage the interest of national political representatives, such as evidence on positive outcomes through NUPs and on national urbanization issues.

Another option is for the respective governments to align the policy into legislation with legal force to help implementation and stability. Furthermore, increasing public awareness and understanding of the need for and benefits of national urban policies has the potential to improve political will and buy-in from locals.

The evaluation has shown that local champions are central to the success of the NUP/SUP development process. These are local individuals who are involved in and support the project. They can be located in national, state, or local government, but also outside government. These local champions know the context of the country, know stakeholders, can speed up the NUP/SUP formulation process, and push for certain topics and priorities. Thus, local development of the NUP/SUP, i.e. coordination by a local person and through multi-level policy dialogue, assists in a successful policy formulation and particularly supports the ownership of the policy. Interviewees expressed the view that external consultants writing a policy or also supporting the process, as it was often done in the past, will not achieve as much ownership as a locally organized development process. Yet, in some situations it may be necessary to hire external consultants if local capacity is low. In such cases, there is an imminent need to develop local capacity in the long term. If those external consultants organize a comprehensive policy dialogue and involve local officials and policy makers, they can also achieve buy-in and support a good process. This role of technical advice and supporting dialogue and process has also been fulfilled by the project coordinators from UN-Habitat.

The National Urban Committees or Advisory Boards to the NUP/SUP development also involve local stakeholders, assist with the centralization of knowledge and can provide additional perspectives outside of traditional bureaucracies.

Through the involvement of local stakeholders in the development of the process, a high ownership for the NUPs/SUP has been developed. This ownership extends to different local levels. For example, in Niger State, the local community (i.e. outside of local government) was involved in the policy dialogue and participatory process and thus also feels ownership, if not for the actual policy then for the ideas and problem identification that went into it.

This has been enforced through the demonstration projects.

While the NUP/SUP refers to urban policy at the national or state level, local government can be involved in the dialogue in order to hear their concerns, issues and ideas for the national or state policy. How this involvement can work depends on the governance structure. One interviewee pointed out that even if local government is not involved in the formulation of the NUP/SUP, they need to be involved in the dissemination of information and subsequently also in the implementation.

## 6. 4. TIMING AND FLEXIBILITY

With a focus on ownership of the NUP/SUP and SCS, their development cannot be rushed, as participatory processes are necessary to develop and support ownership by local communities and stakeholders, and also to understand the urban problems at the local, state and national level. Participatory processes will be different in different countries. Within the project, this has led to some parts of the project needing more time than planned in some countries. Thus, the management had to adjust to different timings of the development of reports and draft policies in the participating countries. Therefore, some sort of flexibility in the timing was needed.

The lesson is that there needs to be a combination of milestones and some flexibility for achieving those milestones.

The management of the project also had to adjust to the major challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and its health risk and subsequent travel restrictions. This was done by moving knowledge sharing activities online, such as the EGM, and also by introducing the COVID-19 demonstration projects. While a project cannot necessarily plan for such shocks, this event highlighted the importance of being flexible and planning for flexibility when planning projects.

## 6. 5. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the developed urban policies and smart city strategies was mentioned by participants as an important next step and a challenge, with some mentioning that some further support for implementation would be beneficial after finalizing the policies and SCS to ensure implementation is started.

While implementation is not strictly UN-Habitat's responsibility and the project has focused on the development and formulation of urban policy and smart city strategies, some support for putting policy into action has been provided through the demonstration projects.

Furthermore, implementation will be a focus of phase 2 of the project, in which Iran and Niger State will participate, while Myanmar's participation is still on hold due to the current political situation.

Most research participants were very supportive of the demonstration projects, seeing them as a valuable and efficient type of activity, as they were very tangible and had led to clear outcomes on the ground, which often catered to youth, poor, and vulnerable groups at local levels and/or were related to climate change adaptation or mitigation.

They were also seen as raising awareness of NUP/SUP and urban issues. As one interviewee put it, because demonstration projects tend to be more bottom-up, they can create local constituencies for the NUP/SUP and SCS. However, demonstration projects in their nature tend to be more focused on material conditions than policy development and coordination, so it is important to draw a clear connection between the NUP/SUP and the demonstration project.

## 6. 6.  SMART CITIES

The development of a smart city strategy was considered useful as a longer-term strategy in order to understand how urbanization issues and opportunities can be responded to or supported through smart technologies, how to support capacity through the smart cities concept, and to be prepared for future opportunities and project suggestions by development partners. The interviews and focus groups have shown that not everyone sees the Smart City Strategy as a central element of a NUP or SUP, but participants acknowledged that it is useful to think about the role smart technologies can play in urban policy and in urbanization. One example of this is the opportunity to digitize land and land ownership,

which can then support raising equitable taxes and financing infrastructure development at local and metropolitan scales.

The normative guide for the development of a smart city strategy was reported as useful. However, it was also mentioned by participants that there are still different understandings of what a smart city is and that many stakeholders still focus on a technology-centered understanding rather than a human-centered smart city. Publishing the smart city strategy guide on the UN-Habitat website could assist in disseminating knowledge about human-centered smart cities further.

## 6. 7.  PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The knowledge exchange was a highly valued element of the project. Interviewees and focus group participants reported that the international conferences and the exchange visits were particularly beneficial. Most of the survey's respondents who participated in the country exchange visits also assessed them as 'very useful' or 'extremely useful'. Other peer-to-peer learning exercises, such as the

regular project online meetings where the countries could exchange their experiences, were also rated as fruitful. These were mentioned less often in the interviews, potentially because they are less 'high-profile' than the visits and conferences and potentially also because online formats provide a less informal exchange and are thus a bit less intensive and extensive.

For example, the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) that was moved online due to the COVID-19 pandemic was considered slightly, very, and extremely useful by survey respondents that had taken part. Yet, the advantage of online formats is that more people can take part, as there are fewer costs and less time involved in participation, with costs and time away from work as a deterrent to attendance—a point that has also come up in the recent evaluation of the overall NUPP (UN-Habitat 2022c). Furthermore, two interviewees suggested the development of an online exchange platform as a useful element.

Thus, a combination of participation in international conferences (i.e., ICNUP or WUF), exchange visits, and online learning through meetings as well as platforms or databases seems to be most promising.

An additional point that was made in relation to peer-to-peer learning was that while the participating countries were able to learn from Korea and each other, they are now also examples for other countries who can learn from their experience, and hence the project expanded peer-to-peer learning to other countries.

## 6. 8. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

For the cross-cutting issues of gender equity, youth, human rights, and climate change, climate change was the most prominent issue, with all three NUPs and SUPs comprising a specific section on climate resilience or climate change adaptation. Gender equity, youth, the poor, the disabled, and more broadly vulnerable groups were mentioned in policy documents, mostly in the sections on informal settlements, housing, and/or land governance. Only the Niger State SUP mentions human rights explicitly. Interviewees pointed out that the cross-cutting issues of gender equity, youth, vulnerable groups, and also climate change were addressed in the demonstration projects, with different groups being involved in those projects. One interviewee suggested that issues of gender equity, youth, and vulnerable groups can be addressed more easily on the local level and through implementation.

One interviewee also mentioned that the policy dialogue provided an opportunity to initiate a discussion on the political approach to informal settlements in Myanmar and to achieve a change in the approach.

# 7. Recommendations

The following discussion sets out the six recommendations that could be used to inform the development and implementation of future NUP funded projects.

## 7. 1.  FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

A frequent recommendation from the evaluation is to allow for the time that a participatory process needs. This improves ownership of the urban policy and smart city strategy as more voices are heard and considered and as more stakeholders, including those outside government, know about the policy and understand the importance of responding to urbanization issues, as is also acknowledged in the NUP Guiding Framework (UN-Habitat 2015). Yet, it is still important that a project plan with milestones exists in order to avoid the process losing momentum and going nowhere. Therefore, deadlines for certain project milestones (such as the feasibility report, diagnosis report, etc.) in combination with sufficient flexibility to allow for local discussions, consultations, and the building of a supportive project constituency as well as responses to unforeseen events (such as a global pandemic) provide a useful approach to support the success of NUP/SUP and SCS formulation.

For example, regular online meetings between beneficiaries, UN-Habitat, and the donor(s), as they have been conducted in the 'NUP/SUP and Smart Cities' project, can assist with flexibility and adaptability as country needs can be directly discussed and responded to. Similarly, regular reporting shows how different countries are progressing and what the potential barriers or challenges to the process are. Thus, while milestones in combination with the technical advice and organizational support provided by UN-Habitat are central elements for the success of NUP/SUP and SCS formulation, flexibility and adaptability to adapt the project to local circumstances are also crucial. This also includes some budget flexibility with regard to what funds are used for, as has been shown in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related demonstration projects.

## 7. 2. FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

A second recommendation arising from the evaluation is the high value of knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning for the countries involved and also for other countries as they can learn from the experiences of the participating countries. While research participants assessed face-to-face knowledge exchange through international conferences and exchange visits as extremely useful, there is also a case for online exchange and learning. The face-to-face visits were outstanding for research participants as special events, but online events and meetings also supported knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning. In the current NUP/SUP and Smart Cities projects, some of the exchanges had to be moved online (e.g., the expert group meeting), and there was also peer-to-peer learning through online project meetings where beneficiaries could discuss their experiences and progress. In addition to those meetings, two interviewees suggested the establishment of an online platform where information could be stored and experiences exchanged and which could also be extended to stakeholders and practitioners outside of government. This suggestion is similar to recommendations that have emerged in the review of the overall NUP program, such as the establishment of a policy and evaluation library and expanded e-learning (UN-Habitat 2022c, p. 71). Thus, for future NUP-funded projects, a combination of face-to-face and online knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning would be a promising pathway, allowing for direct personal exchange as well as enabling a larger number of stakeholders to participate as costs of travel and longer time away from work are not an issue for online events and platforms.

The three pilot countries in this program could facilitate knowledge management regarding results and lessons learned from the implementation process in a number of ways. First, there is the opportunity for online events in which the countries can present on the implementation program and the benefits and outcomes that have been achieved. Such events could be recorded for future reference. Second, it would be desirable for a permanent repository of project reports and additional collateral to be posted in an accessible location on the internet, such as the UN-Habitat website, so that these are available on an ongoing basis for future reference. Third, there is the potential for events to be held that bring together participants from the three project countries to share knowledge with the opportunity to also have the involvement of wider sets of interested parties, including countries that are future participants in further NUP projects, as has already happened at the World Urban Forum 11. This could include leveraging existing UN-Habitat schedules of events such as the World Urban Forum or the General Assembly meetings, or it could include working with other significant international agencies that hold major forums on urban topics with open presentation schedules. For example, each of UCLG, ICLEI, or C40 regularly holds major international events, including at the regional scale. It would also be valuable to test with the countries themselves what forums for knowledge management would be most appropriate to their needs given the country context, institutional landscape, and technical and civic capability.

## 7. 3.  FURTHER THEMATIC APPROACHES AND ENTRY POINTS

While smart cities are a thematic approach that the participating countries were interested in, and which is acknowledged as useful in order to understand future opportunities and requirements for smart technologies, some research participants mentioned that further thematic approaches could be useful entry points for other countries. Therefore, future NUP funded projects could also support the inclusion of other thematic approaches and with that an additional focus in the NUP/SUP formulation phase.

This could be dependent on interests and needs of the participating countries in a project, or a NUP-funded project could clearly focus on a specific thematic approach, as the current project has done with the smart city strategy. Possible thematic approaches mentioned in the interviews and focus groups were housing provision, informal settlements, and specific environmental crises.

## 7. 4.  ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A further recommendation arose during the interviews and focus groups, hinting that participatory engagement with local communities to gauge needs for urban infrastructure, services, and amenities is important to generating support. Using the NUP/SUP as a means of asking communities what they want and engaging in dialogue about priorities was considered a central element for success. This also includes data collection and analysis to better understand urban issues and reflect them back to local communities.

This responds to the need for broad stakeholder involvement in order to encourage broad support of the NUP/SUP and political will. While the exact form of participation will depend on governance structures in the country, further NUP-funded projects should aim to provide for the engagement of local communities, for example in a manner similar to the town hall meetings that were undertaken in Niger State.

## 7. 5.  IMPLEMENTATION AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

A topic area that was important to research participants was the implementation of the developed policies and strategies. While implementation is external to the NUP programme and UN-Habitat's remit and the objective of the current project was to support the formulation of the policies and strategies, and not their implementation, it is obviously a vital topic for the countries and for the success of the NUP/SUP.

The current project has responded to this crucial area with the element of demonstration projects, which are tangible projects on the ground responding to priorities and goals identified in the developed NUP/SUP and SCS. The evaluation has shown that stakeholders within the countries and from UN-Habitat considered the demonstration projects a central part of the project, as they raised awareness for the NUP/SUP in the community and showed possible pathways for implementation.

Thus, a future NUP funded project should consider including demonstration projects. One interviewee suggested that demonstration projects could be implemented even earlier in the process, such as during the sensitization and diagnosis phase. Another interviewee suggested providing funding for more demonstration projects as they considered them a highly successful element for raising awareness.

One question that might need to be considered is whether there is a risk of losing the connection to the NUP or SUP. While the demonstration projects had to be based on the developed national urban policy and urban priorities, there is a risk that communities and beneficiaries of the project will experience it as a humanitarian or development aid project and will not understand the connection to urbanization issues on the national (or state) scale.

As one interviewee commented, the distribution of PPE, which was part of the COVID-19 demonstration projects, may not have had a clear connection to urban policy for the stakeholders and beneficiaries involved.

The NUPP is a program for urban policy on the national and subnational level in order to raise awareness among national governments that the benefits of urbanization can be better achieved with a national and subnational policy. The question that may need to be discussed is how particularly local levels below the subnational level, which is usually the state level (i.e., local government or communities), can be involved so that the focus on the *national* and *subnational* response does not get lost.

Apart from the demonstration projects during the project, one interviewee suggested additionally that further support for implementation after the NUP, SUP, and SCS have been adopted would be beneficial to keep the momentum going. This could be further advice on how to secure funding for implementation, identify priorities and projects that can achieve some first results quickly, and develop an implementation plan. These would be the steps that are necessary for the three participating countries, i.e. Iran, Myanmar, and Nigeria, now and are addressed to some extent by including Iran and Nigeria in phase 2 of the project (Myanmar's participation is on hold due to the political situation).

## 7. 6.  SCALING UP AND REPLICABILITY

UN-Habitat and partners should give due consideration to the issues identified in implementing the current project and craft future interventions to address these issues. In particular, there is a challenge with scaling up interventions beyond the three countries involved in the evaluated project. There may be an advantage to more countries being involved in demonstration and pilot projects each round in terms of cross-country knowledge exchange and learning. However, this may require greater coordination.

The potential for regionally framed programs could also be considered so that nearby countries with similar national and urban characteristics could be supported in NUP development and cross-national learning. This would require careful selection to ensure conducive political contexts.

It is appropriate that the general NUP Theory of Change be applied across different countries to ensure coherence and continuity of the program across countries and over time.

However, the TOC should be updated following evaluations of previous projects to incorporate lessons learned in implementation and recommended enhancements to programs. The TOC should also be applied in a way that is able to account for national differences in geographical, social, economic, urban, and political contexts. A universal, overarching theory of change may not be necessarily applicable in specific country contexts. Accordingly, it would be necessary to undertake consultation with any potential program and project partners in advance of the finalization of the terms of reference for any given project to scope whether the theory of change will be applicable in that context and address how the question of overall program coherence plus sensitivity to local context is handled effectively. One option is to have a set of overarching program objectives while also having a flexible set of objectives that allow for national differences. In particular, the Theory of Change should be sensitive to the governmental and political context of the country, given that political factors, especially

political will, may exert a determining influence on how NUP is able to be developed in that country. The question of ensuring accountability for NUP implementation processes remains challenging, especially in national contexts where there is political disruption and transition. Ideally, NUP projects would have clear and accountable project leads who take responsibility for development of the project and the implementation of policies arising from the project. However, transparency and accountability may not always be feasible in every country's context. Therefore, it is desirable that in addition to a clear lead institution there is a reference body made-up of relevant governmental industry and non-governmental stakeholders who are able to provide further guidance and feedback on project or program implementation. Such a reference body might include sub-national or local governments, additional central or subnational government agencies with relevance to urban issues, non-government and civil society organizations relevant to urban questions and, where appropriate, international advisory and aid agencies.

## 7. 7.  REPORTING AND HANDOVER

A further recommendation arising from the evaluation is that clearly defined reporting and archiving processes are beneficial to allow for easy handovers when staff or other project partners leave, as is often the case in policy projects.

This would also allow for retracing certain discussions and decisions in hindsight, even if the staff and stakeholders involved have left.

# 8. Appendix

## 8. 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Project Management**

The management of the project is within the Policy, Legislation, and Governance Section (PLGS) of the Urban Practices Branch (UPB), with the involvement of country-based focal points.

**Supervision:**

The consultant will report to the Section Chief of the PLGS and the Chief of the UPB.

**Mandate, Purpose, Objectives, Scope of the Evaluation**

This evaluation is mandated by both the donor, Korea, and UN-Habitat through the cooperation agreement (MOU). It is also in line with the UN-Habitat evaluation policy (2013) and the Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework (2016).

The evaluation is intended to provide NUP partners and UN-Habitat and its governing bodies with an independent and forward-looking appraisal of the project's operational experience, achievements, opportunities, and challenges based on its performance and expected accomplishments.

What will be learned from the evaluation findings is expected to be used to inform the development and implementation of future NUP-funded projects.

The evaluation seeks to serve the purposes of accountability for results achieved as well as enhancing learning that would improve current and future NUP development and implementation. The specific objective of the evaluation is to assess the project's performance during the 2017—2021 period and make recommendations for the next steps in the implementation of the national urban policy and the New Urban Agenda in the three countries.

**Specifically, the evaluation will:**

- Assess the performance of the program in terms of the extent to which it achieved planned results at the expected accomplishments (outcomes) and output levels;

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and coherence of the projects with other policies and programs related to NUPs;

- Assess and enhance the technical and institutional capacities of national, sub-national, and local governments to strengthen their national urban policy-making processes and increase awareness among countries in the region of tools, frameworks, procedures, and best practices in national urban policy-making. This will entail analysis of the delivery of outputs, the achievement of outcomes, and long-term effects.

- Assess the planning and implementation modalities, including working arrangements, and how they may have affected the effectiveness of the projects;

- Assess how social inclusion issues of gender equality, youth, human rights, and climate change were integrated into the projects;

- Identify lessons and propose recommendations for the implementation of the national urban policy and the New Urban Agenda in the three countries, in terms of what should be done and what needs to be done to effectively implement, promote, develop, and monitor UN-Habitat's support to national and local authorities in formulating and implementing national urban policies;

- The evaluation findings, when used by UN-Habitat management and the project team, the donor, and other key stakeholders, including governing bodies and member states, describe what was achieved and what was learned from the project.

This evaluation covers the whole period of the project's implementation, from its start in 2017 to 2021, and geographically covers three countries where the project was implemented: Iran, Myanmar, and Niger State (Nigeria).

**Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions**

The project team, together with the Independent Evaluation Unit, has proposed evaluation questions organized around the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and impact outlook.

The evaluation questions will be assessed to supplement the specific objectives of the evaluation. The evaluation team should build on these questions to develop an evaluation matrix with evaluation questions, key stakeholders, and data collection sources.

**Relevance**

- To what extent is the project consistent with relevant national policies, strategies, and national development plans?

- To what extent is the implementation strategy responsive to the SDGs, NUA, UN-Habitat Strategic Plans, UN-Habitat's national urban policies, and its strategies on human development priorities for vulnerable groups and the poor, human rights, women, and youth?

- To what extent are the project's intended outputs and outcomes relevant to the needs of the target beneficiaries?

- What was UN-Habitat's comparative advantage in implementing the NUPs compared with other UN entities and key partners?

**Efficiency**

- How well was the project designed and implemented, and what have been the most efficient types of activities implemented?

- How efficiently were the inputs (financial and human resources), partnerships, policies, and implementation strategies used to achieve the planned outputs?

- To what extent were the institutional arrangements adequate for achieving the expected accomplishments? What types of (administrative, financial, and managerial) obstacles did the project face, and to what extent has this affected the project's delivery of outputs and achievement of the expected accomplishments?

- What types of products and services did the project provide to beneficiaries through the activities implemented? What kinds of changes have occurred as a result of the products and services provided?

- To what extent was the project delivered in a cost-effective manner?

**Effectiveness**

- To what extent did the project achieve its planned results, and how did UN-Habitat contribute towards achieving these results?

- To what extent were the resources used to implement the project justified in terms of delivering on the expected accomplishments?

- What were the major factors that influenced the achievement of the expected accomplishments (outcomes)?

- To what extent have national and local stakeholders been involved in the design and implementation of the project?

- To what extent and in what ways has the ownership by local stakeholders impacted the effectiveness of the project?

- To what extent has the management of the project learned from and adjusted to changes during implementation?

- How effectively have UN-Habitat and other implementing partners credibly monitored the implementation of the project, using the indicators of achievements to provide evidence on performance and flag any necessary adjustments to improve delivery of the project? How effectively was the project engaging with countries where it was implemented to achieve the desired outcomes of the project?

- To what extent were UN-Habitat's cross-cutting issues of gender, youth, climate change, and human rights integrated into the design, planning, and implementation, reporting, and monitoring of the project?

**Impact Outlook**

- To what extent has the project attained or not attained (or is expected to attain) its goal and objective and expected accomplishments (short, medium, and long-term) for the targeted beneficiaries, participants, whether individuals, communities, institutions, partners, etc.?

**Sustainability**

- To what extent have local stakeholders been able to design, implement, and sustain activities implemented during the project?

- To what extent did the project engage the participation of beneficiaries in its design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting?

- To what extent will the in-country activities be replicable or scaled up at national or local levels or encourage further collaboration between stakeholders?

**Coherence**

- Was the project coherent and implemented in synergy with other programs with similar objectives?

- Was the project coherent or complemented by other donors' development interventions?

## 8. 2. QUESTIONNAIRES

### 8.2.1. Survey

1. Which of the following best describes the organization you work for and its jurisdiction?

    - Government, national

    - Government- subnational

    - NGO—global

    - NGO: national

    - Development agency, global

    - Development agency, national

    - Private Sector

    - Other

2. What is your position within your organization?

Text:

3. In terms of years, for how long have you been working in positions relating to national urban policy?

Text:

4. Which best describes the geographic area of your work?

    - I.R. Iran

    - Myanmar

    - Nigeria

    - Global

    - Asia and the Pacific

    - Africa

    - The Arab States

    - Other, please specify

5. What is your opinion of the performance of UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy program?

Matrix, 0-100 on performance

- Overall effectiveness

- Relevancy

- Impacts

- Efficiency

- Return on investment

6. How has the NUP program performed in addressing the following cross-cutting issues?

Likert scale: far below standard to far above standard

- Human rights

- Gender equality

- Youth and the elderly

- Climate change

7. How has the NUP program performed in addressing the following themes?

Likert scale: far below standard to far above standard

- Economic development

- Spatial structure

- Human development

- Environmental sustainability

- Climate resilience

- Other (text)

- What themes do you see as most important for the future development of the NUP program?

Likert scale: from not at all important to most important

- Economic development

- Spatial structure

- Human development

- Environmental sustainability

- Climate resilience

- Other:

8. Do you have other recommendations for the future development of the NUP program?

Text:

9. How useful was the "Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Nigeria)" program for developing, monitoring, or evaluating NUPs?

Likert scale: from not at all useful to extremely useful,

- The program overall

- Country exchange visits

- Workshops on preparing a NUP/Smart City Strategy Action Plan

- Expert Group Meeting (EGM) (webinar)

- Guidance Note for Identifying Demonstration Projects

- Support for the COVID-19 demonstration project

- Other (text)

10. Do you have any comments on the resources and programs mentioned before? For example, their usefulness, recommendations for improvements, or additional requirements

Text:

11. What are the greatest challenges for implementing NUPs at the national level? Please select all you regard as challenges.

- Insufficient financial resources

- Insufficient human resources

- Policy silos and institutional fragmentation

- Lack of technical expertise

- Lack of political will or policy continuity

- Other (text)

12. Were there any issues with the NUP's development not being consistent with other national policies or development programs?

Text:

13. Which stakeholders were involved in the development of your country's NUP?

Text:

14. Do you have any suggestions for how the program could be improved to better respond to the needs of countries developing NUPs?

Text:

15. Do you have an example of a success as a result of the NUP pilot phase? Please provide details.

Text:

16. In addition to this survey, RMIT is looking to contact respondents for two purposes:

- To gather further information regarding your example of a success arising from the NUP program from the previous question,

- For an interview covering similar questions to this survey, but in more detail.

Please indicate for which of these purposes you consent to being contacted:

1. Further information regarding your NUP example

2. An interview regarding the NUP programme

3. I do not consent to be contacted.

Please provide the following email address:

Text (email validation)

## 8.2.2. Interviews

Framework for a semi-structured interview Additional questions were asked to extend some responses, and others were omitted as the interview proceeded. Questions differed to some extent between beneficiaries and other stakeholders,

**Preamble:**

You have been invited to participate in this interview because you have expertise and interest in UN Habitat's NUP Programme and can assist with the background research for this project.

The research project is being conducted by RMIT University on behalf of the United Nations Habitat Programme. The research will review the contribution of UN-Habitat's work at national and sub-national levels in relation to the "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Nigeria)" This research will result in the production of a regional NUP assessment report that describes and analyzes key aspects of the pilot phase project.

_____

**Questions:**

1. Please describe your current role in and experience with the NUP program and the "Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries (Iran, Myanmar, and Nigeria)" project:

2. To what extent has the project led to changes in policymaking in your country?

3. Would you say it has increased the capacity of sub-national and national governments for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national urban policy and the development of smart city strategies?

4. Would you say it has increased the centralization of knowledge and tools for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national urban policy and the development of smart city strategies?

5. To what extent has the project influenced political commitment on urban issues and improved cooperation between different stakeholders in your country?

6. What were the major factors that influenced those changes? What were the barriers? (e.g., institutional arrangements, UN Habitat's work, funding)

7. How has the project approach created better opportunities for assessing the impact on vulnerable groups (e.g., women, youth, the poor, the disabled)?

8. What has been the role of UN Habitat's units, sections, and regional offices in this?

9. What has been the impact of the project on cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, and climate change as included within the overall NUP process?

10. To what extent have you or other stakeholders in your country been involved in the design and implementation of the project? What did the cooperation look like?

11. What have been the key lessons arising from the project and its implementation?

12. Can you give me an example of where this project has worked really well? What do you think makes it work well in this case?

13. Can you give me an example of where this project hasn't worked very well? Why is it not working well in this case? (Probe to see if the problem is that it is not being implemented well or if the theory of change is not working as expected.)

14. Do you have any other observations or comments about the project or the NUP program in general?

15. Have you received any feedback from the beneficiaries in relation to the project?

## 8. 3.  DOCUMENTS FOR THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

### 8.3.1.  Documents on NUPP

National Urban Policy Programme Evaluation Report 2014-2021 (UN-Habitat 2022c)

Global State of National Urban Policy 2021 Report

Global State of National Urban Policy 2018 Report

National Urban Policy Data Base 2018

Habitat III, Policy Unit 3, Policy Paper on National Urban Policy

UN-Habitat's Strategic Plans 2014-2019 and 2020-2023

National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework

How to Formulate a National Urban Policy

National Urban Policy Feasibility Guide

Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide.

Strengthening Policy for Young Women in the changing world of work

Evolution of National Urban Policies

National Urban Policy Platform (website: *https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/national-urban-policy/*)

Report of the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum

NUPP Communication Strategy

NUPP Partnership Strategy

NUPP Resource Mobilisation Strategy

### 8.3.2.  Global documents for the pilot phase project

Draft 2022 NUP Final Report

The Korea NUPP WUF 11 Activities Synthesis Report

WUF 2022 presentation on NUPP 2014-2021 Evaluation

NUPP Impact Story Booklet

2020 Annual Report

2018/19 Annual Report

2017 Annual Report

Smart City Strategies Guide

Guide for identifying demonstration projects

Demonstration project report (COVID-19)

Exchange visit booklet (2022)

Exchange visit booklet (2019)

Exchange visit narrative report (2019)

MOU between UN-Habitat and MOLIT

Concept Note NUPP and Smart Cities Project

Concept Note Knowledge Sharing Expert Group Meeting

ICNUP Report 2019

ICNUP 2017 Conference Agenda

ICNUP 2017 Outcome Brief, ICNUP 2017 Proceedings

### 8.3.3. Documents for I.R. Iran

NUP and Smart City Strategy document – final version (English and Persian)

WUF 2022 presentation

Iran Second Demonstration Project – Narrative Report

Smart City Technical Report (Content analysis of smart city documents and interviews, Smart City Strategic Plan)

Inception report

Diagnostic Report

Iran National Urban Policy Issue Papers (in NUPP Korea Exchange Visit Narrative Report 2019)

Urban National Policy Notes for Islamic Republic of Iran

Advocacy Material of Iranian NUP and SCS

NUP and SCS Submission Letter

Letter from Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, ensuring participation in Phase 2

### 8.3.4. Documents for Niger State

Niger State Subnational Urban Policy

Niger Smart City Strategy

Niger State Urban Policy Law

Final Diagnostic Report

Final Feasibility Report

Final Policy Note

Revised Report for Policy Dialogue

WUF 2022 'Networking event' presentation (smart city strategy and demonstration project)

WUF 2022 Demonstration project presentation

WUF 2022 SUP process presentation

Details of tree planting project

Niger State Urban Support Programme (NSUSP)

*https://nigerstateurbanprogram.wordpress.com/*

### 8.3.5. Documents for Myanmar

Draft NUP

Draft Smart City Strategy

Draft NUP Implementation Plan

Final Report Demonstration Project: Geospatial Mapping and Improvements

Inception Report Demonstration Project: Geospatial Mapping and Improvements

Demonstration Project: Basic Infrastructure Improvement Toolkit

WUF 2022 presentation

Myanmar NUP booklet

National Urban Policy Framework (2017)

NUP Diagnostic Paper (2016)

National Urban Policy Note (2014)

Spatial Planning Platform Presentation from WUF10 (Abu Dhabi 2020)

## 8. 4. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS (AFFILIATIONS)

**Affiliations of interviewees**

- UN-Habitat HQ (5 interviewees)
- UN-Habitat Myanmar (2 interviewees)
- UN-Habitat I.R. Iran
- UN-Habitat Niger State
- UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- Niger State, Ministry of Land and Housing (2 interviewees)
- Senior Urban Policy Expert/Consultant (2 interviewees)
- Korea Research Institute for Humans Settlements
- Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (3 interviewees)

**Affiliations of Focus Group Participants**

- UN-Habitat HQ (2 Interviewees)
- UN-Habitat Global Solutions Division
- UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa
- UN-Habitat Myanmar
- UN-Habitat I.R. Iran
- UN-Habitat Niger State
- UNDP
- Cites Alliance

## 8. 5. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RELATED OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

The project set three Expected Accomplishments and individual outputs and activities to achieve them. The following table is adapted from the final report of the project.

| Expected Accomplishment (EA) | OUTPUTS | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| **EA1:** Enhanced capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national urban policy (NUP and SUP) and develop smart city strategies. | | |
| **1.1** | Development and (partial) implementation of National Urban Policy in each pilot country | Formation of one in-country NUP Advisory Board, per pilot country |
| | | Completion/revision of one NUP Feasibility Policy Note for each pilot country |
| | | Completion of one NUP Diagnosis Clinic to enhance stakeholder capacity and assist with developing the policy priorities for the diagnosis paper and the Formulation phase |
| | | Completion of one Diagnosis paper for the development of the National Urban Policy, per pilot country |
| | | Formulation of National Urban Policy |
| | | Implementation of National Urban Policy through demonstration projects |
| **1.2** | Development of smart city strategy in each pilot country | Data collection to support elaboration of Smart City strategy |
| | | Formulation of Smart City strategy |
| | | Identification of demonstration projects for the implementation of NUP and smart city strategy |
| **EA2:** Increased centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. | | |
| **2.1** | Development of toolkits to support the monitoring and evaluation of NUP | Completion of case studies on M&E of NUP |
| | | Development of toolkit on M&E for NUP |
| **2.2** | Development of annual project reports | Collection of report data from each pilot country |
| | | Development of annual report for each pilot country |
| **2.3** | National Urban Policy Programme knowledge management and sharing plan | Elaboration of a knowledge management and sharing action plan |
| | | Implementation of a knowledge management and sharing action plan |

| **EA3:** Augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy (NUP and SUP) and smart city strategies. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **3.1** | Organization of International Meetings (Forum, Seminar, EGM) on National Urban Policy | Development of Meeting concept and programme |
| | | Organization of Meeting sessions |
| | | Completion of Meeting Report |
| **3.2** | Exchange visit to learn from the Korean experience with NUP | Development of exchange visit programme |
| | | Administrative organization of exchange visit |
| | | Preparation of exchange visit report |
| **3.3** | Completion of NUP stakeholders' workshops | Creation and validation of list of stakeholders, per pilot country |
| | | Development of guidance tools for workshops |
| | | Development of programme agenda and supporting tools for workshops |
| | | Data collection in preparation of consultative workshops |
| | | Administrative organization of workshop series |
| | | Facilitation of workshops |
| | | Preparation of workshop reports |

# 9.  References

Hohmann, R.P. (2017). 'National Urban Policies: a policy lever to foster a New Urban Agenda?' Raum Planung, vol. 193, No. 5.

Holland, B. (2015). 'Typologies of national urban policy: A theoretical analysis'. Cities, vol. 48, pp.125–129.

Kundu, D., Sietchiping, R. & Kinyanjui, M. (2020). Developing National Urban Policies. Singapore: Springer.

Lucks, D. & Bwira, J. (2020). Final Evaluation of the Implementation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme Strategic Plan 2014-2019. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

OECD (2020). Cities Policy Responses. Paris: OECD.

OECD & European Commission (2020). 'Cities in the World: A new perspective on urbanization'.

OECD; UN-HABITAT; UNOPS (2021). 'Global State of National Urban Policy 2021: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Delivering Climate Action', Paris: OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/96eee083-en.

Rogers, Patricia (2014). Theory of Change. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.

Seto, K.C., Güneralp, B. & Hutyra, L.R. (2012). 'Global forecasts of urban expansion to 2030 and direct impacts on biodiversity and carbon pools'. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 109, No. 40, pp.16083–16088.

UNDESA - United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.A/420). New York: United Nations.

UN-Habitat (2015). National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat (2018). UN-Habitat Evaluation Manual. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat (2019). Korea Exchange Visit Booklet: National Urban Policy Programme; Smart Cities Korea Visit. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat (2021a). Myanmar National Urban Policy Draft. Internal Document.

UN-Habitat (2021b). Myanmar's Smart City Strategy Draft. Internal Document

UN-Habitat (2022a). Project Brief for Evaluation of "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and

Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)". Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat (2022b). 2017 - 2022, National Urban Policy Programme Final Report - I.R. Iran, Myanmar, Nigeria. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat (2022c). National Urban Policy Programme - Evaluation Report. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat (n.d.). Quick guide for integrating smart city strategies in National Urban Policy. Unpublished Guiding Framework

UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance (2014). The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat & Government of Niger State (2021). Niger State Urban Policy 2021. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat & Government of Niger State (n.d.). Niger State Smart City Strategy. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat & Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (2022). I.R. Iran. National Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy Document. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance (2019). The National Urban Policy Programme Overview. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

United Nations (n.d.). SDG 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Accessed on 15 December 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

United Nations (2016). 'The New Urban Agenda'. Habitat II. Accessed on 15 December 2022. <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>.

United Nations Statistics Division (2020). 'SDG Indicators - 11 Sustainable cities and communities. Accessed on 15 December 2022. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/goal-11/>.

# Evaluation Report 2023/03

# Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries: I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria"

This Evaluation Report presents an assessment of the Korea-funded project titled "National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies" carried out between 2017 and 2022. This pilot phase of the NUPP was implemented in three countries: Islamic Republic of Iran, Myanmar and Niger State, Nigeria. The main target audience for the evaluation report includes the donor (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Republic of Korea), the three beneficiary countries, UN-Habitat and other partners. The report also serves as a key reference point of information for other governments, policymakers and urban professionals among other urban development stakeholders.

The report provides an in-depth analysis of the implementation process, comparing the expected and actual goals, and noting the gaps for the three countries individually and for the overall programme. It also expounds on challenges encountered, lessons learned, and suggests mitigation strategies to improve future NUP or related projects. This evaluation was carried out by the team of researchers from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) from Australia, with the support of UN-Habitat.

UN-HABITAT