

# 2023 CAMBODIA COUNTRY REPORT

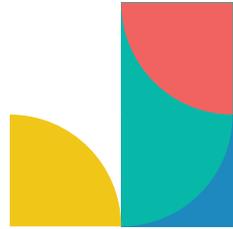


*Building places that we all call home*

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# URBAN CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES



## Key issues

In Cambodia, the development gap between urban and rural areas has given rise to a high level of rural-urban migration. By 2030 it is projected that one third of the Cambodian population will be living in cities. Urban growth is concentrated in the capital of Phnom Penh and five secondary cities (population over 100,000) including Sihanoukville (port and tourism), Battambang (agri-business) and Siem Reap (tourism).

While Cambodia's socio-economic performance has been steadily progressing due to rising foreign direct investment and economic transformation from agrarian to industrial economy, risks of environmental degradation and Cambodia's vulnerability to climate change and other external shocks (COVID 19 pandemic, natural disasters, economic crisis) continue to be a major problem to accelerate progress towards the achievement of sustainable development goals.

## Managing Urbanization

Urbanization in Cambodia poses many challenges such as pollution and securing the access to decent jobs, affordable housing, and other basic services for the urban inhabitants.

Capacity gaps of cities to manage urbanization despite policy framework in place and governance reform, along with the absence of an integrated and robust urban data repository, need to be addressed.

In addition, with the rise of financial investment in Cambodian cities, ensuring that economic benefits and other development gains are distributed evenly across the population is of importance.

## Climate Change Vulnerability

Cambodia has a low carbon profile, however, due to its geography and low adaptive capacity, Cambodia remains extremely exposed to the impacts of climate change such as extreme weather events. Women are especially more vulnerable to the effects of climate change and scarcity of natural resources.

Support to scale up the climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts to increase resilience across all sectors, is called for.

## FACTSHEET



The total population of Cambodia is 16.6 million. 39% of the population lives in urban areas <sup>1</sup>



Cambodia's domestic rural-urban migration is high at 64%, and young (20-34 years old) <sup>2</sup>



39.7% of the urban population lives in slums. <sup>3</sup> Share of households living below the updated national poverty rate is at 17.8% and 22.8% in urban and rural areas respectively <sup>2</sup>



Despite increases in WASH coverage, Cambodia is off-track to achieve universal basic water supply and sanitation by 2030 <sup>2</sup>



Cambodia is frequently affected by floods. The large-scale flash floods in 2020 and 2021 affected up to 175,900 and up to 28,500 families respectively <sup>2</sup>



Forest cover has decreased from 57% in 2010 to less than 47% in 2018, and less than 10% of its forests and protected areas are under community management <sup>2</sup>

# THE 18 CAMBODIAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## UNDAF KEY RESULTS

UN-Habitat Country Manager is a member of the United Nations Country Team and various Technical Working Groups. The **United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023** is well aligned with the national objectives the Royal Government of Cambodia and has facilitated progress towards sustainable development goals.

UN-Habitat especially contributed to **Outcome 5 - "Managing Urbanization"** of the 2019-2023 UNDAF:

*By 2023, all women and men living in urban areas, including those marginalized and vulnerable, enjoy a safer, more secure and healthier life, utilizing quality public and private services, and benefiting from improved urban governance informed by their voice and participation.*

UN-Habitat **enhanced the capacities of sub-national administrations and relevant stakeholders** to promote public participation in the management of sewerage and wastewater treatment systems in Cambodia, fostering the development of infrastructure, urbanization, and sustainable national economic development, through the development of the **"Guideline on Public Participation Promotion on Wastewater Management Services at the Subnational Level"**.

UN-Habitat contributed to **green building** in poor urban communities in Sihanoukville, where a total of **186 households (881 people)** have been supported directly through **cooking stoves, home solar, and fan solar options**, while approximately **10,000 people** in the communities and vicinity, especially children and women, benefited from **street solar and solid waste management**.

UN-Habitat supported **capacity building and awareness raising on solid waste and resilient house construction techniques** in the urban communities of Kep and Preah Sihanouk Provinces.

# OUR VALUED DONORS AND PARTNERS

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Adaptation Fund

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Asian Development Bank

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Cities Alliance

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Green Climate Fund

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Japan

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Kingdom of Sweden

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United Kingdom

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Republic of Korea



United Nations Development Programme

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United Nations Environment Programme

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United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction (MLMUPC) is the Government focal Ministry to UN-HABITAT, which has been engaged in various inter-governmental meetings, including the Governing Council meetings and the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APCHUD).

UN-Habitat is also working with the local government and other development partners to assist Cambodian communities in need, ensuring no one is left behind.



**In the future, we would like to seek more support from UN-Habitat and continue this project. [...] By doing so, we will be able to help more people with resilient and affordable houses. Step by step, and together, we can help our people in need.**

**H.E. Hak Sokmakara**  
Deputy Governor of Tboung Khmum Province



# UN-HABITAT IN CAMBODIA

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

UN-Habitat has been actively supporting Cambodia since 1996 with technical assistance in WASH initiatives, disaster risk reduction post-disaster reconstruction, affordable and resilient housing, slum upgrading and urban poverty reduction, urban upgrading and urban poverty reduction, urban planning and management, and urban climate change adaptation among others, strengthening Cambodia's institutional capacity and empowering vulnerable communities.

The work programme of UN-Habitat is implemented through four domains of change that are complemented by cross-cutting issues.



**Domain of Change 1: Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban rural continuum**



**Domain of Change 2: Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions**

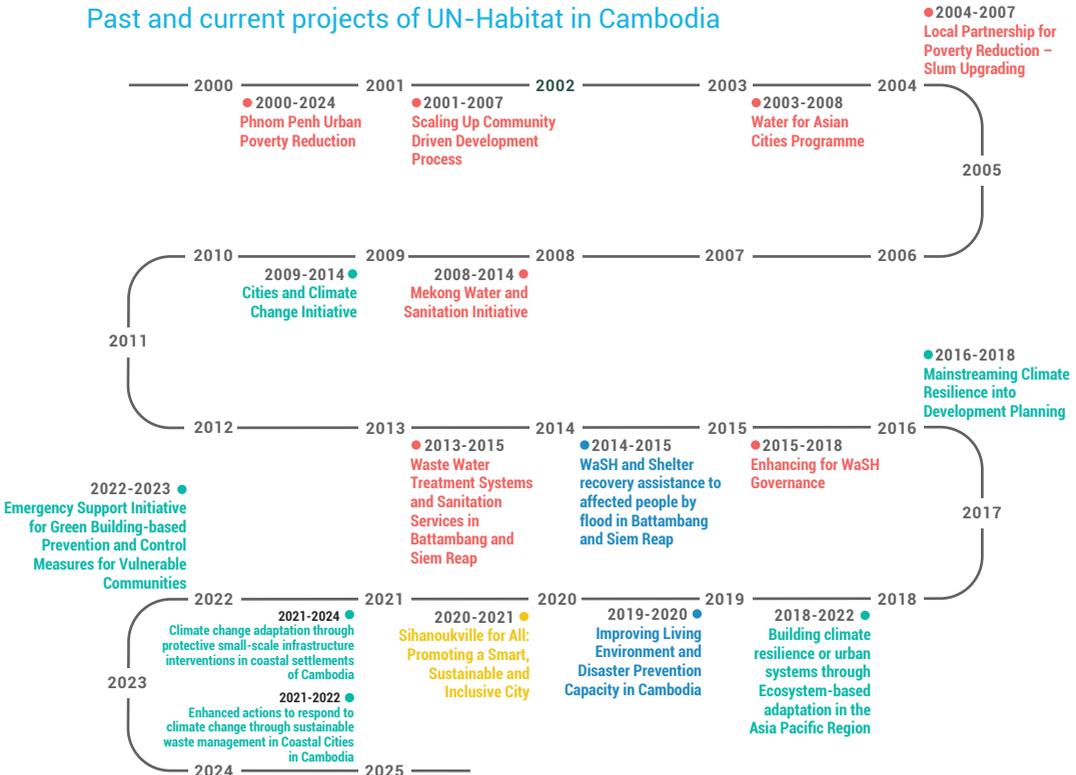


**Domain of Change 3: Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment**



**Domain of Change 4: Effective urban crisis prevention and response**

## Past and current projects of UN-Habitat in Cambodia





## Domain of Change 4: Effective urban crisis prevention and response

### Resilient recovery and reconstruction that empowers the vulnerable and promotes community ownership

In 2018, tropical storm Son-Tinh caused flooding that affected 62,317 households with 16 deaths and 5,398 households' evacuations. UN-Habitat supported by funding from the Government of Japan assisted recovering communities in heavily impacted Tboung Khmum District. Project for Improving Living Environment and Disaster Prevention Capacity in Cambodia follows People's Process which increases community ownership in delivering safe and resilient shelter for the affected communities.

Women played an important role in post disaster recovery and in community mobilization for advancing housing construction. 56% of the community development committee are women, promoting gender equality throughout the whole project. Other components of the project were improving the WASH condition of the communities through community awareness training and installment of latrines, and enhancing disaster preparedness through workshop on integrating DRR element into local planning for the authorities.

**202** resilient houses with sustainable and affordable materials

**172** workers trained on resilient construction method

**70** national and sub-national government officials developed capacities in DRR

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Close to **10,000** people have received assistance

As we (community people) live in several different villages, we never knew each other before. But now, we're getting to know each other. We talk to each other, and borrow and exchange materials as well. Now, it is also easier for us to express opinions. When we are in solidarity with others in the community, we can gain a lot of benefits. Together, we'll try to be well prepared for future disasters.

Ms. Duth Chundy  
A beneficiary of the project

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## PROJECT PROPOSAL

# Increasing Climate Resilience through Small-scale Infrastructure Investments and Enhancing Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable Communities in Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces



### PARTNERS

Adaptation Fund, Ministry of Environment Cambodia, National Council for Sustainable Development, Provincial Department of Environment, Kampot and Koh Kong Provincial Administrations, NGOs, Community Based Organisations and citizen/women groups in target communities



### ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$10,000,000



### TIME FRAME

4 years



### LOCATION

Kampot and Koh Kong Province



### TARGET BENEFICIARY GROUP

Vulnerable coastal communities of target districts/cities in Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces, Cambodia



### SDGS ALIGNMENT



### ALIGNMENTS WITH NATIONAL OR SUB-NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Aligned with (adaptation) priorities of key policies, among which are the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014 - 2023, and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 2030 Royal Government of Cambodia

## Context

Cambodia is ranked as one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in Southeast Asia. Its vulnerability is coupled with an agrarian-based economy, inadequate human and financial resources, insufficient physical infrastructure, and limited access to technologies, deeply impacting Cambodia's ability to manage climate impacts and recover from climate-related disasters.

Between 1991 and 2014, Cambodia experienced climate change-induced floods and storms which resulted in significant losses, with the deaths of over 1,500 people and economic losses amounting to more than US\$235 million. Two-thirds of the loss could be avoided with improved policies, investment to adapt to climate change, and measures to climate-proof infrastructure where possible. In addition, there is a growing risk that severe weather events will continue to impact Cambodia, affecting the achievement of its main national development priority.

Coastal zones are among the most vulnerable in the country. In the Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces, climate change-induced hazards such as continuously rising temperatures, extreme rainfall, flooding, droughts, and sea-level rise pose a significant threat to their marine coastal areas and their population, such as food insecurity, detrimental health concerns, and increased scarcity of water resources.

Additionally, the agriculture and tourism sectors that the two provinces are highly dependent on are severely impacted by climate variability and change, reversing economic growth, exacerbating poverty, and undermining future prosperity. It is also estimated that climate change could reduce the GDP of Cambodia by 2.5 percent by 2030 and by almost 10 percent by 2050.



## Purpose

To support climate resilient and adaptive development and increase capacity for climate variability/change adaptation of target communities living in Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces.

## Description

In total the selected districts have 102,759 females, 98,796 males and the total population is 201,555. The proposed project will benefit 60,104 females, 57,856 males and the total population being 117,960, which is 58.5 percent of the total population of the selected districts.

This project is organised under three (3) strategic components:

Component 1: Increasing coping capacity by promoting climate resilient small-scale infrastructure.

Component 2: Adapting to current impacts of climate change through recovery of coastal ecosystems, and livelihood improvement and diversification.

Component 3: Building capacity and knowledge sharing to reduce vulnerability to climate change.

## Strategy

The project was designed upon a wide range of consultation processes at different levels: governmental stakeholders, decision-makers, technical professionals, and community representatives, ensuring that the project is fully aligned with the priorities of its stakeholders and beneficiaries and can address the gaps in adaptation and community needs in facing climate challenges.

The actions proposed are a set of soft and hard measures to ensure that resilience at the household and community level is strengthened sustainably. The soft measures, for example, awareness raising and capacity building, focus on addressing capacity needs and gaps in adaptation measures that can reduce vulnerability to climate change and increase coping capacity. All soft measures are designed to support, enhance, and sustain the hard investments that the project will make. The hard investments made by the project will all be in small-scale protective infrastructure and ecosystems.

Through previous development interventions of UN-Habitat, it has been recognized that increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable communities is through a participatory, community-led process, based on local priorities, needs, knowledge, and capacities, which can then empower people to cope with and plan for the impacts of climate change.





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The proposed project mainly intends to factor in the potential impact of climate change on livelihoods and vulnerability to disasters by using local and scientific knowledge of climate change and its likely effects. Emphasis will be given to local knowledge including information about trends and changes experienced by communities themselves and strategies these communities have used in the past to cope with similar shocks or gradual climatic change.

In addition, the proposed Project will work with the underprivileged e.g., women, older persons, disabled, who are much more vulnerable in terms of obtaining access to safe drinking water (women carry the main responsibility in the provision of water needs of the family) and being subjected to the loss of livelihoods due to climate change.

The project will adopt a gender-sensitive approach with women's full participation in decision-making, implementation, and developing skills through training with the intent of empowering and building resilience. The participatory approach adopted will ensure not only active engagement but also empowerment of these groups. Moreover, the project will also ensure that risk assessments are informed by the gender analysis and that gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed in activities.

### Expected Accomplishments

- ▶ Increased adaptive capacity of built infrastructure and communities to withstand extreme weather and climate variability and change.
- ▶ Improved conditions of coastal ecosystems and income diversification of vulnerable communities have enhanced the resilient capacity of these communities.
- ▶ Improved effectiveness of climate adaptation planning/implementation to increase coping capacity to address climate variability/risk reduction, and to sustain/scale-up actions for transformative adaptation interventions at the local level.

# Institutional Capacity Development for the Housing Sector Assessment and Slum Upgrading & Regularisation (HSASUR) Initiative, Cambodia



## PARTNERS

General Department of Housing (GDH) of the Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC), Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF), Development Partners, Community Development Foundation (CDF)



## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$1,199,975



## TIME FRAME

12 months (Housing Sector Assessment) and 18 months (Slum Upgrading and Regularisation)



## LOCATION

Housing Sector Assessment in 27 municipalities and Slum Upgrading and Regularisation in Siem Reap, Banteay Mean Chey and Battambang Provinces



## TARGET BENEFICIARY GROUP

Over 3 million residents of the cities particularly the low-income and vulnerable groups (Housing Sector Assessment) and most disadvantaged vulnerable informal settlement communities in the 3 selected provinces (Slum Upgrading and Regularisation)



## SDGS ALIGNMENT



## ALIGNMENTS WITH NATIONAL OR SUB-NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Aligned with the priorities of key policies, among which are the Cambodia National Housing Policy 2014, Cambodia National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 (NSDP)

## Context

One of the issues arising from Cambodia's rapid development and transition has been its urban housing challenge, resulting from a combination of natural population growth, compounded by rapid migration.

The 2014 National Housing Policy reports 'a need for roughly 1,000,000 new homes by 2030, and not considering the current housing deficit'. UN-Habitat reported that in 2016, 55% of the urban population live in slum conditions. The figures are contested as it lacks a national declaration or statutory definition of slum conditions and or adequate information on the rapidly changing housing situation in urban areas nationwide.

Additionally, apart from the capital Phnom Penh, where the Capital Administration in 2018 reported 205 informal settlements with up to 17,000 families, limited information is available on the number of settlements, resident families, and conditions in the other 26 municipalities. These figures are also likely to exclude poor migrant families who frequently remain unrecognized by local authorities.

The government developed a broad National Housing Policy (NHP), Strategy, and Action Plan in 2014 to meet the growing urgent need for a range of serviced, affordable and climate-resilient housing types in urban areas. However, responsible actors and stakeholders are confronted with knowledge, information, and capacity gaps and deficiencies to design, manage, and monitor quality housing delivery services to advance the housing sector, as well as lacking the experience in addressing slum upgrading and regularisation issues.



## Purpose

To develop and support the institutional capacity development for housing sector assessment and slum upgrading & regularisation (HSASUR) initiative in Cambodia, to contribute to evidence-based National Housing Policy implementation.

## Description

The two broad components of the project are outlined below:

Component 1: Housing Sector Assessment

Component 2: Slum Upgrading and Regularisation

## Strategy

The project will adopt a coordinated, holistic, and consolidated approach with mixed methods to build institutional and organizational capacities. The approach will be based upon a participatory methodology for a systemic analysis of housing issues related to access to land, housing, infrastructure, financing, and other fundamental inputs for the realization of inclusive, sustainable, and adequate housing for all.

It will engage one of the leading Civil Society Organisations working on slum and informal settlements issues and which uniquely has representation in all 27 municipalities of the country, the Community Development Foundation (CDF) who can interact and facilitate community engagements.



Capacity development will be through experiential approaches (i.e. learning and innovation by doing). External technical support for developing the Housing Information Management System will be procured to develop, support, and maintain the system in the short term while institutional capacities are built.



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The project will identify areas with the potential greatest impacts for the pilot slum upgrading and regularization project and employ a joint people-centered design with the communities and local authorities to ensure that their priorities are met. It will also be jointly monitored by the communities and local authorities, enhancing their sense of ownership. Documentation of the processes undertaken will be kept for knowledge sharing and management.

## Expected Accomplishments

- ▶ Evidence-based data for policy reforms, formulation processes, and interventions to advance the National Housing Policy goals and objectives in particular for the vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Methodology and tools for housing planning
- ▶ Increased institutional capacities at national levels to establish, structure, operate, and maintain a "cloud-based" Housing Information Management System (HIMS) and increased institutional capacities at sub-national levels to gather and apply the information.
- ▶ Increased institutional capacities for slum upgrading and regularisation.

## National Urban Policy Programme, Phase Two: Scaling up People-Centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies



### PARTNERS

Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MoLIT) of the Republic of Korea, Preah Sihanouk Provincial Administration in consultation with the National Smart City Steering Committee, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction (MLMUPC), Ministry of Interior, and other development partners



### ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$2,000,000



### TIME FRAME

4 years



### LOCATION

Preah Sihanouk Province



### TARGET BENEFICIARY GROUP

Population in Preah Sihanouk especially the vulnerable communities



### SDGS ALIGNMENT



### ALIGNMENTS WITH NATIONAL OR SUB-NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Aligned with the priorities of key policies, among which are the New Urban Agenda, the Cambodia Rectangular Strategy, National Strategic Development Plan, Cambodia Digital Government Policy, and Policy on Land Used Planning of Preah Sihanouk Province

## Context

Due to its rapid development trajectory and strategic location, the development of Preah Sihanouk Province as a model multi-purpose special economic zone is at the core of the national strategy and policies with the following strategic development priorities: (1) Smart and sustainable city; (2) World-class coastal tourist destinations and facilities; (3) Industrial innovation center; (4) Modern logistics hub; (5) International financial center.

UN-Habitat and OHCHR, under the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Cambodia, carried out a joint project called “Sihanoukville for All: Promoting a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive City,” which was implemented from August 2020 to December 2021. This project has a people-centered approach with a focus on the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable people and a strong human rights dimension.

The Smart City Steering Committee established by the Royal Government of Cambodia has called for UN-Habitat’s technical and financial assistance on smart city development in Cambodia. “Cities for All: Inclusive, Smart, and Sustainable Urban Development in Cambodia” was proposed by UN-Habitat and UNOPS and funded by UNTFHS to support the Royal Government of Cambodia to address the needs and challenges of urban citizens, particularly vulnerable communities by applying human security principles, to build more innovative, inclusive, and sustainable cities in Cambodia.



## Purpose

This programme aims at promoting a people-centred smart cities approach through National Urban Policies. It will ensure the increased focus on mainstreaming sustainable and inclusive digital transition in high-level political forums.

It will utilize, leverage, and enhance UN-Habitat's people-centred smart cities flagship, to build next generation of Smart Cities Strategies integrated within NUPs to be more advanced.

## Description

Within this NUPP Phase II, a review of existing urban policies and related documents at the national and sub-national level would be a first step to recommend further action to mainstream the smart city approach for Preah Sihanouk Provincial land management policy. Capacity building and mainstreaming of people-centered smart city is needed for Government Officials and relevant stakeholders in Preah Sihanouk Province and at the National level

The project is composed of the following components:

Component 1: Mainstreaming of the people-centred smart cities approach into NUPs and/or sub-national urban policies in Cambodia and sub-national regions by the national and local governments.

Component 2: Capacity building of policymakers and stakeholders to facilitate the territorial dimension of urban innovation and steer digital transformation in NUPs/SUPs.

Component 3: Application of innovative approaches and technologies in urban interventions while considering the people-centered dimension of National Urban Policy.

Component 4: Improving knowledge creation and sharing, and enhancing global awareness of experiences on the nexus of NUP and people-centered smart cities approaches and models.

## Strategy

The people-centered smart cities framework of UN-Habitat presents a holistic approach to developing smart cities that leverages data, technology, and services to empower people and improve their quality of life.

The framework rests on five pillars: Community, Digital Equity, Infrastructure, Security, and Capacity. Each pillar consists of core values, key activities, and recommended actions compiled from international best practices in government, the private sector, and civil society. These activities are outlined in a series of playbooks that help local governments develop smart cities for people that are more inclusive, safe, and sustainable when taken together.





The project shall engage all stakeholders and encourage them to think and engage with innovative ideas to achieve sustainable urbanization through innovation in all the interventions.

The project shall also apply both digital and non-digital mechanisms including digital technologies and new technical approaches as well as dynamic partnerships while adopting innovative design, implementation efficiency, and inclusiveness to maximize the impact in their respective project contexts.

Additionally, the project design and implementation will build on the operational experience and lessons learned from past projects and NUPP phase one and draw lessons from recent targeted guidance developed by UN-Habitat on National and Sub-national Urban Policies, legislation, and governance.

## Expected Accomplishments

- ▶ Mainstreaming of people-centered smart cities approach into NUPs and/or sub-national urban policies
- ▶ Increased capacity of policy makers and stakeholders to facilitate the territorial dimension of urban innovation and steer digital transformation in NUPs/SUPs.
- ▶ Urban interventions that apply innovative approaches and technologies while considering the people-centred dimension in National Urban Policy.
- ▶ Improved knowledge creation and sharing, and enhanced global awareness of experiences on the nexus of NUP and people-centred smart cities approaches and models.



**UN-HABITAT**

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
PROGRAMME CAMBODIA**

6th Floor, Room 627, Building A,  
Phnom Penh Center  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

☎ Tel: 023 860 926

✉ Email: [vanna.sok@un.org](mailto:vanna.sok@un.org)

