

Naryn

Kyrgyz Republic

2023-2024

Enhancing Resilience through Integrated Spatial and Investment Planning

Capacity Building Report



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AKDN
AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



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Capacity Building Report

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)

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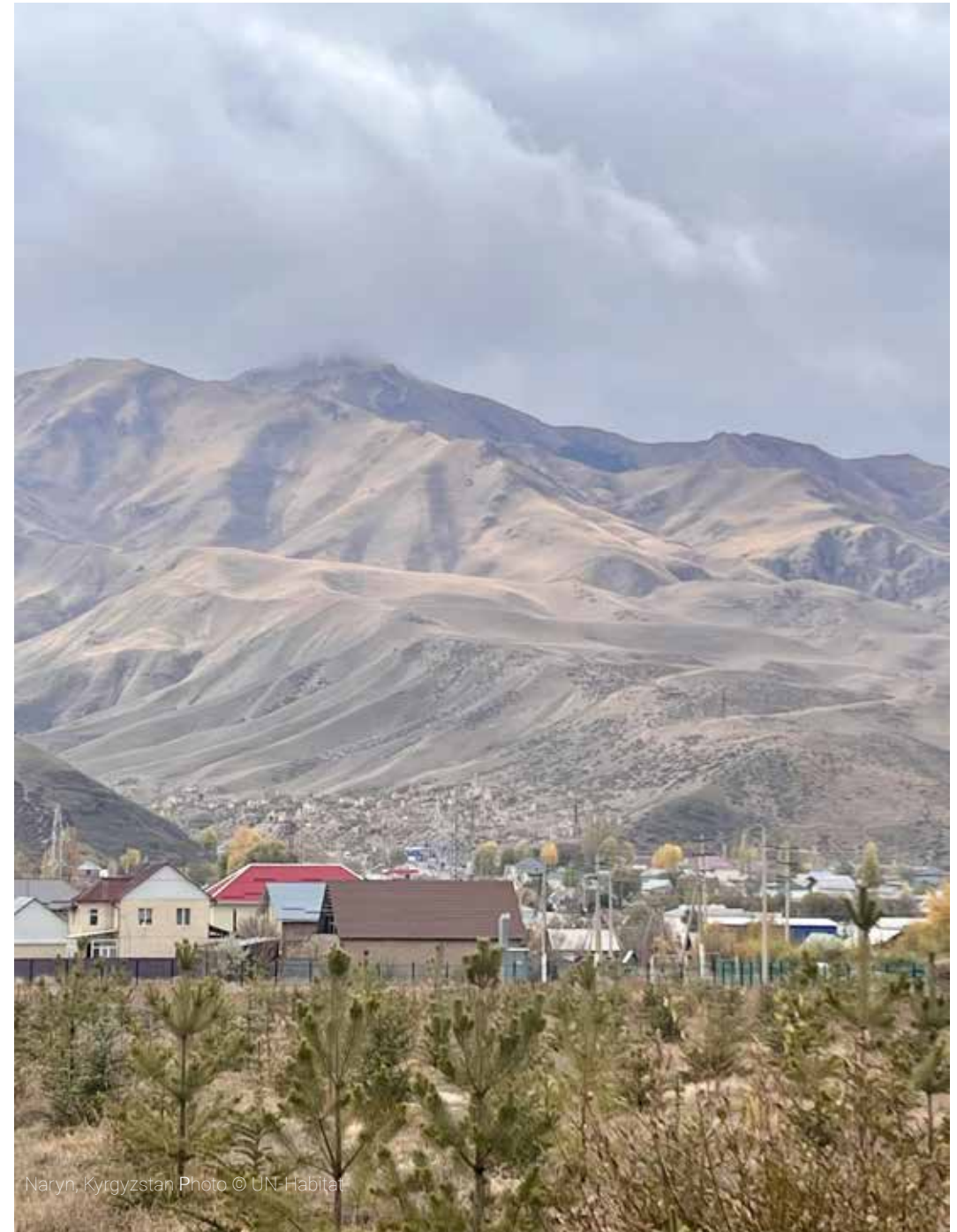
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Introduction

As part of its support to the Naryn Urban Resilience Programme, UN-Habitat developed a capacity building component of work to embed knowledge and learning activities in the project methodology and contribute to a long-term sustainable and resilient future for Naryn. Building capacities with local stakeholders forms an important part of strengthening the likelihood of implementation, management, scaling up and replication beyond the project. To achieve the objectives and visions Naryn has set out for itself, this capacity contributes to strengthening skills, knowledge and know-how so that sustainable, resilient and inclusive urban development can be accelerated in Naryn.

The strategy for the capacity building activities in the project is informed by three overarching considerations, aligning with the overall UN-Habitat approach:

1. Adopting an inclusive, integrated approach as is underlined in UN-Habitat's processes and methodologies
2. Emphasising resilience-framed topics and aspects of urban development
3. Responding to local needs that are identified collaboratively through observation and discussion.



Naryn, Kyrgyzstan. Photo © UN-Habitat

The Role of Capacity Building in Resilient, Sustainable Development

To sustainably address the challenges of urbanisation and reduce the risks posed by natural disasters and hazards, it is essential for institutions responsible for leading sustainable development to possess the relevant skills, knowledge, competencies, and tools. Capacity building and training are critical enablers in this process, empowering municipalities, government authorities, and officials to drive developmental progress while adopting a long-term perspective that ensures sustainable outcomes for future generations.

Naryn stands at a pivotal point, with significant opportunities to advance urban development in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Enhancing the technical expertise and skills of institutions and key stakeholders is a foundational step to optimise the replication, scaling, and implementation of resilient and inclusive approaches. Strengthening this capacity enables local institutions to better integrate strategic frameworks and principles into both planning and processes, aligning Naryn's development trajectory with its goals while embedding its priorities within global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda.

Through a focus on capacity building, Naryn can ensure that its institutions and communities are well-equipped to address challenges holistically and implement solutions effectively. This, in turn, maximises benefits

on the ground, laying the foundation for resilient urban development practices that not only meet today's needs but also anticipate and adapt to future challenges.

Conversely, the absence of sufficient capacity carries significant risks. Without adequate planning, preparation, and integration, interventions may fail to meet sustainable development objectives, resulting in poorly maintained or short-lived initiatives. Such outcomes can inadvertently burden the city, its people, resources, and institutions, undermining long-term progress and resilience.

Resilience, as defined by global best practices, encompasses the capacity of people, organisations, and systems to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and thrive in the face of immediate and chronic stresses. It also involves adapting to changing dynamics while addressing existing social and economic inequalities to improve community well-being. By focusing on capacity building, Naryn ensures that its institutions are prepared not only to manage current challenges but also to thrive amid evolving conditions, securing sustainable growth and resilience for years to come.

Capacity building, therefore, is not just an enabler but a cornerstone of Naryn's development strategy. It strengthens local competencies to align with global sustainable development priorities while ensuring impactful and long-lasting benefits on the ground.

Through this investment in knowledge and skills, Naryn is well-positioned to achieve its vision of becoming a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban centre.



Figure 1: Building local competencies through targeted capacity building Photo © UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat's Integrated, Evidence-Informed Approach

Aligned with the technical components of the project, UN-Habitat's approach to capacity building in Naryn follows an integrated, evidence-based methodology. This ensures that capacity-building efforts are both responsive to local needs and supportive of sustainable outcomes.

In collaboration with planning processes within UN-Habitat's framework, the capacity building component is structured around three key steps:

- 1) **Identifying and Understanding Local Needs:** This forms the foundation for targeted interventions.
- 2) **Defining Tailored Approaches and Activities:** Activities are designed to address the identified needs.
- 3) **Selecting Appropriate Modalities:** The most suitable mechanisms and tools of learning are chosen to implement these activities.

The team took an integrated perspective, embedding capacity building throughout the project process and across its various phases to ensure consistency and strengthen the linkages between capacity building and technical work, enhancing the impact of both components. As highlighted in the previous section, these complementary workstreams are designed to reinforce each other, creating a cohesive approach that optimises the project's overall outcomes.

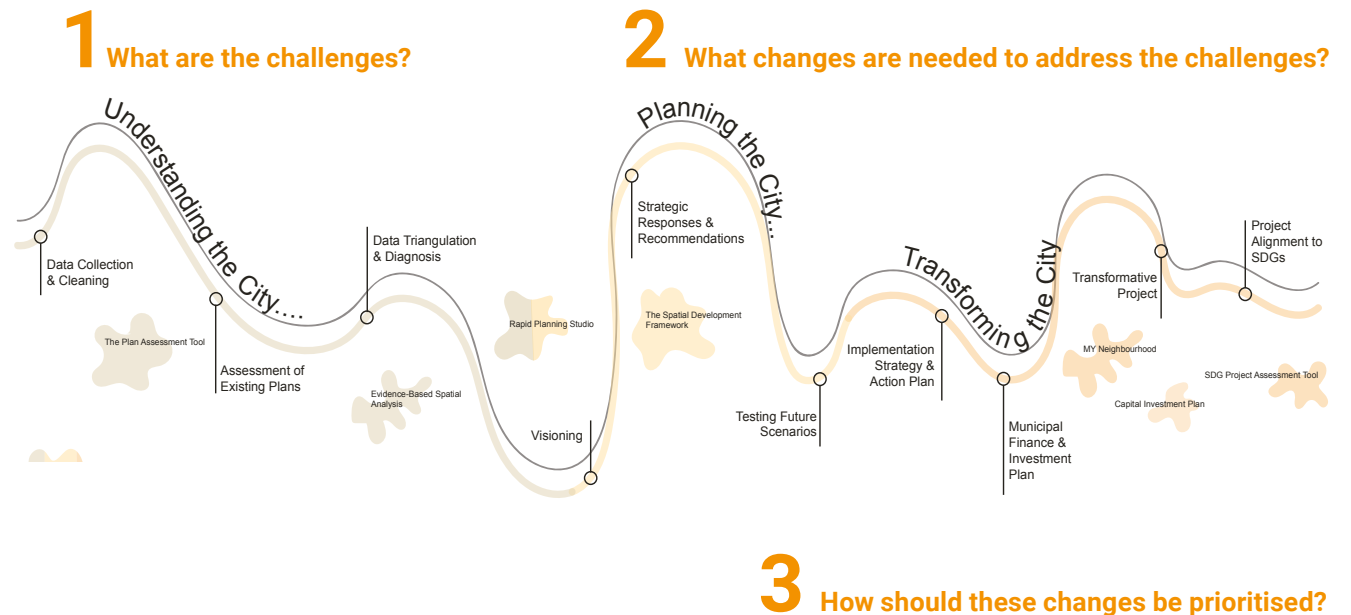


Figure 2. Aligning capacity building with UN-Habitat's integrated approach

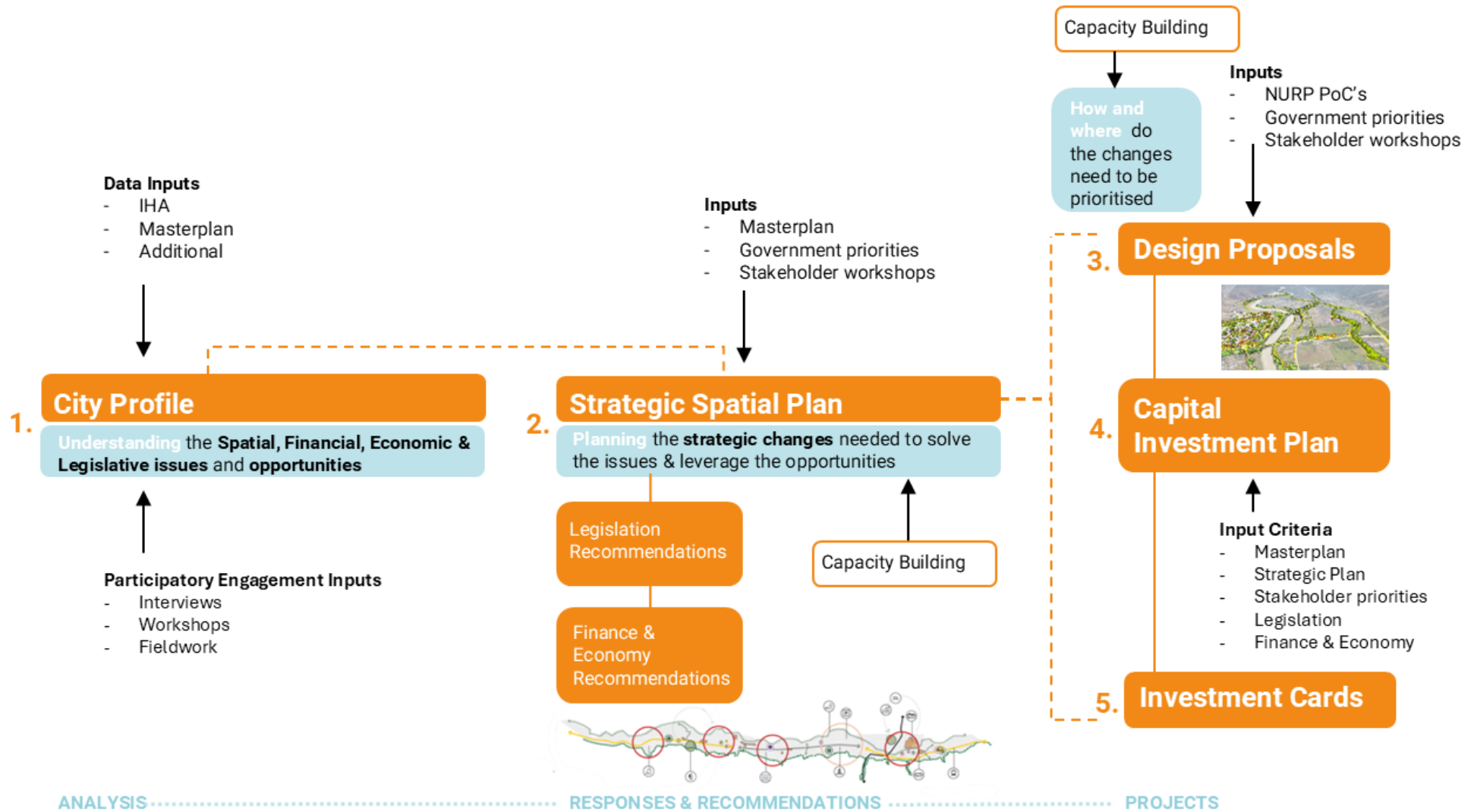


Figure 3. Project framework showing interrelation between phases, inputs, outputs, and outcomes

Developing an Adaptive and Targeted Capacity Building Plan

Identifying Needs Through Consultation and Observation

UN-Habitat's work commenced with an inception phase, during which existing data was assessed for an initial understanding of Naryn's context and the challenges it faces. In October 2023, the team undertook their first field mission to Naryn, building upon the existing data and context, while also collecting additional information to comprehensively diagnose the issues and opportunities in the town. This included an assessment of the capacity building needs.

The engagements prioritised dialogue and discussion, providing stakeholders from sectors and institutions an opportunity to share their experiences and insights on various matters. These included the types of projects and interventions planned or ongoing, barriers to developing or implementing projects, mechanisms for coordinating and collaborating across departments, sectors, and levels of government, methods for engaging communities, and mechanisms for project implementation and maintenance, among other relevant topics. This pinteractions helped develop a more holistic understanding of the challenges facing Naryn, forming the basis for the design of sustainable, resilient, and inclusive initiatives.

Establishing a Framework for Adaptive Capacity Building

Through these engagements, the team identified three key areas for capacity strengthening in Naryn:

- 1. Enhanced Knowledge and Information:** Increasing understanding of relevant topics and their areas of impact.
- 2. Technical Skills Development:** Building the ability to apply knowledge effectively, replicate successful approaches, and scale up sustainable best practices.
- 3. Strengthened Coordination and Collaboration:** Improving mechanisms for effective engagement and collaboration among key stakeholders.

These identified needs formed the foundation for defining three key outcomes, which provided a framework for designing and delivering capacity building activities in Naryn.

Outcome 1

Enhanced technical knowledge on key identified topics and areas of impact

Outcome 2

Enhanced skills to replicate, scale-up and implement sustainable, resilient and inclusive approaches for urban development

Outcome 3

Increased capacity across key stakeholders to collaborate effectively to achieve sustainable and resilient outcomes in the city, region and country

Defining the approach

To ensure that capacity building effectively addresses Naryn's context while being practical and adaptable, the design and delivery of activities align with four criteria:

1. Alignment with Project Stages and Outputs

Capacity building activities are aligned with the overall project stages and deliverables. This ensures that knowledge transfer is practical and directly tied to the project's objectives, enabling a "learning-by-doing" approach. Stakeholders are actively engaged while also embedding sustainable principles into their work. This approach enhances technical expertise through hands-on, relevant learning experiences.

2. Participatory and Mixed Learning Modalities

A blended learning approach combines participatory methods with theoretical concepts applied to practical exercises. This keeps stakeholders motivated and engaged while tailoring the content to meet local needs. The combination of theory and practice strengthens understanding and ensures that capacity building efforts are both impactful and actionable.

3. Integrated Approaches

Reflecting UN-Habitat's integrated approach, the capacity building incorporates learning across urban planning, finance and economy, and legislation. This fosters holistic thinking among stakeholders and builds a contextual understanding of how these sectors interconnect. The integrated approach promotes sustainable, resilient, and inclusive outcomes by encouraging stakeholders to address challenges collaboratively and comprehensively.

4. Contextual Relevance and Local Applicability

Above all, the approach is designed to respond to Naryn's specific needs, focusing on learning that is both contextual and actionable. By addressing the town's particular challenges, the capacity building equips stakeholders with the technical and strategic capabilities necessary to implement localised solutions and sustain long-term progress.

The capacity building approach was shaped by four key considerations:

- Aligning activities with project stages and outputs for practical learning
- Ensuring a mixed modality of learning, and encouraging participation and engagement throughout
- Strengthening capacity across urban planning, finance and economy, and legislation
- Responding to local needs and tailoring to context

Crafting an Adaptive Capacity Building Plan

By integrating local needs, anticipated outcomes, and the defined approach, a capacity building plan was developed to guide the delivery of activities effectively.

The activities were structured to align with the project processes and delivered through three modalities:

- 

Training format workshops to increase capacities of participants around specific topics
- 

Participatory format workshops to encourage participation and discussion from various stakeholders
- 

Knowledge sharing to encourage peer-to-peer learning

Capacity Building 1

Project Stage


Inception

Project kick-off, validating the data and identifying additional data to initiate city assessment and diagnosis and stakeholder engagement

Thematic Focus

Data validation and mapping

Activities

 Introduction to integrated and evidence-based spatial planning

 Community engagement

 Validation workshops

 Technical workshops

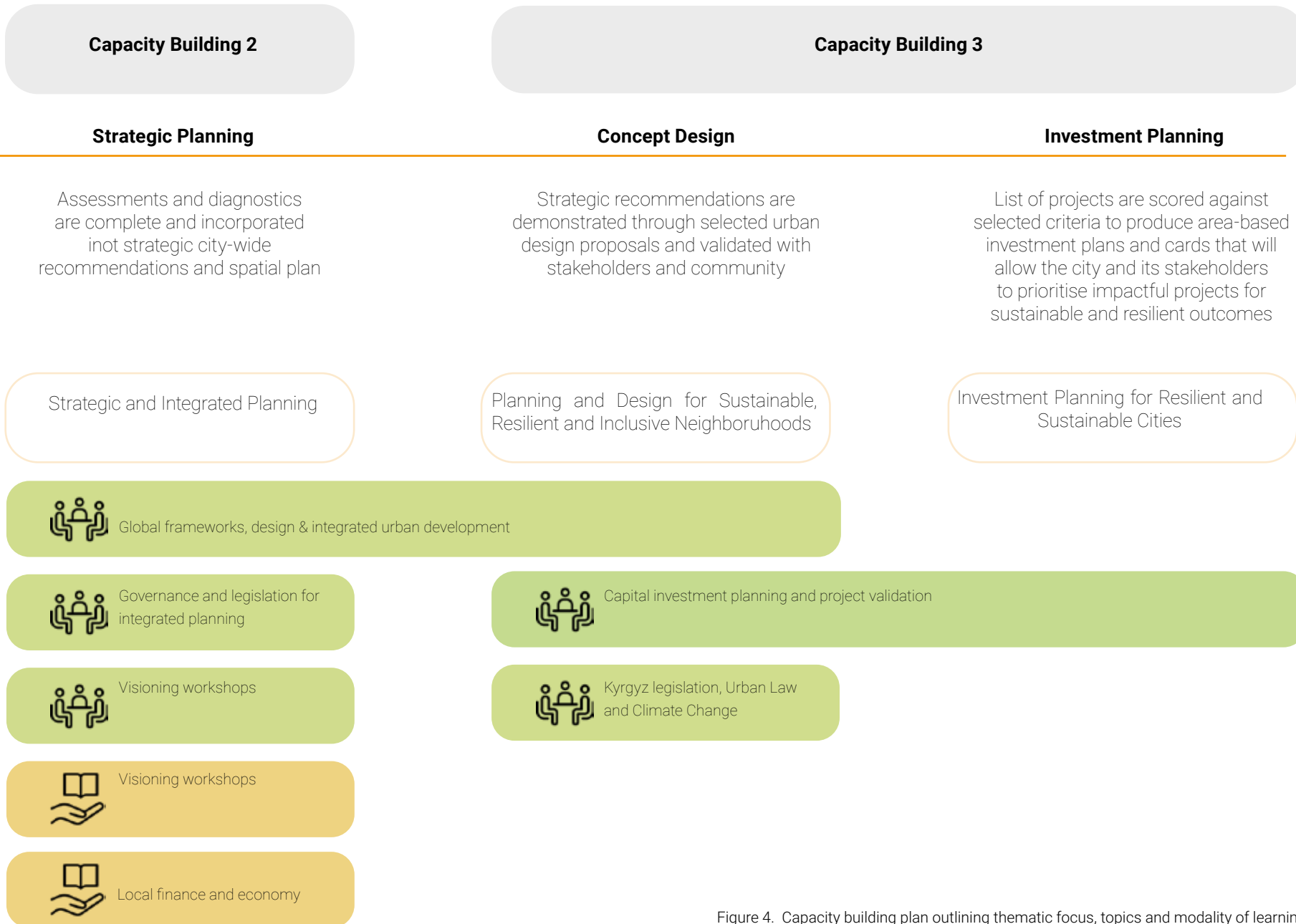


Figure 4. Capacity building plan outlining thematic focus, topics and modality of learning

Implementation of Activities



Global frameworks, design and integrated urban development

Overview

An introduction to sustainable global goals and design and development principles and their applicability for local, regional and national planning contexts. The session drew upon an understanding of the opportunities of localising these goals and principles to embed knowledge of the importance of integrated approaches to transform existing planning practices. The session also included a rapid diagnosis of the challenges faced in the national planning system as a means to generate discussions and ideas to overcome these challenges and help participants identify the opportunities that are possible when planning is addressed in an integrated way. Using Naryn as an example, participants immersed in a participatory exercise to workshop the interconnected issues and an appropriate, localised response in relation to the existing legislative environment.

Participants

Kyrgyz Union of Architects, Planners, Architects, University of Central Asia, UN-Habitat

Insights

The insights were observed at two levels. For local planners, architects, and professionals, the session provided a deeper understanding of the interconnected challenges within the planning sector, while introducing how global principles of design and sustainable development can be applied to enhance the benefits and impact of planning efforts. For the UN-Habitat team and the project, the session offered valuable insights into the specific challenges faced in Kyrgyzstan in pursuing sustainable, resilient, and integrated planning and design. These were instrumental in shaping the strategies, vision, and project list for Naryn, aligning with the project's participatory planning goals. Additionally, the session revealed a gap in awareness of UN-Habitat, its role, and principles, which not only helped refine future engagement approaches but also highlighted the need to strengthen understanding of how global goals and priorities can support local ambitions. This gap presents a potential area for further capacity building and training.



Photo © UN-Habitat



Governance and legislation for integrated planning in Kyrgyzstan

Overview of content

The training focused on introducing participants to global urban planning principles and their translation into national, regional, and local planning policy and practices. The session aimed to build understanding of integrated planning methodologies and the importance of shifting existing practices in the national planning system to align with modern development needs. Findings from the assessment of Kyrgyz legislation were shared, identifying bottlenecks in the national planning system. The training also provided a platform for practical exercises, using Naryn as a case study to facilitate dialogue on overcoming these planning challenges.

Participants

Kyrgyz Union of Architects, Planners, Architects,
University of Central Asia, UN-Habitat

Insights

The training on governance and legislation focused on enhancing participants' understanding of how global urban planning principles are translated into national, regional, and local planning decisions in Kyrgyzstan. It identified key legislative bottlenecks in the national planning system, particularly the challenges faced by new practitioners with limited capacity and engagement, which can affect all phases of the planning process. Through discussions, participants proposed solutions to overcome these obstacles, including improving capacity at various levels of government and fostering better coordination among stakeholders. The session also highlighted the importance of integrating planning methodologies across governance levels, advocating for a shift in current planning practices to ensure more inclusive, strategic, and efficient urban development in Naryn and beyond.



Photo © UN-Habitat



Visioning workshops

Overview

These participatory workshops brought together participants including government officials, sector specialists, local civic society organisations, students and youth, and project partners to discuss visions for Naryn. It provided an opportunity to exchange ideas for Naryn's future, focusing on addressing the city's challenges and identifying opportunities for growth. The cross-sectoral grouping encouraged participants to think about Naryn's unique characteristics in an integrated way with shared knowledge and expertise, and created a platform for exchange and brainstorming of potential projects and initiatives.

Participants

Naryn Municipality officials; Local civil society organisations, NURP partners, UCA, Students

Insights

The workshops generated insights with common themes and priorities across groups:

Branding Naryn: There was strong consensus on developing a unique brand for Naryn, encompassing its agricultural products, culture, and heritage, to position the city as a regional hub for local goods and tourism.

Expanding the Logistics Hub: Participants shared a vision to expand Naryn's logistics infrastructure, improving connectivity to regional and international markets, crucial for economic growth and trade.

Building a Skilled Labour Force: A focus emerged on enhancing local workforce capacity through skills and training programmes, supporting both the local economy and the city's development.

Environmental Protection and Tourism: A key theme was the integration of environmental protection with tourism development. Sustainable practices like planting and land preservation were seen as essential to sustainably enhancing Naryn's tourism potential.



Visioning workshops

Overview

The participatory vision workshops included a segment on knowledge sharing, where participants were introduced to international best practice examples of economic visions that have successfully driven sustainable city growth. This session aimed to inspire participants by showcasing proven strategies from other cities and how these could be adapted to Naryn's context.

Insights

The session increased awareness of international cities and towns that have integrated economic visioning with sustainable development. Participants gained insights into innovative approaches to urban growth, including sustainable infrastructure development, green industrial solutions, and inclusive economic planning. These examples provided inspiration for adapting global best practices to Naryn's development strategy.



Photo © UN-Habitat





Local finance and economy

Overview

The session on local finance and economy focused on a SWOT analysis and knowledge sharing. Participants examined Naryn's financial systems, identified obstacles, and reviewed relevant best practices. The session deepened understanding of Naryn's financial challenges while fostering collaboration between experts and UN-Habitat to address them effectively.

Participants

Naryn Municipality officials with finance and economy expertise; AKDN representatives, UN-Habitat

Insights

Key insights included a clearer understanding of financial barriers, such as limited resources and inefficiencies, along with potential improvement strategies drawn from best practices. Participants shared expertise while allowing UN-Habitat to gather critical data for further analysis, supporting ongoing efforts to enhance Naryn's financial resilience and sustainability.



Photo © UN-Habitat



Capital investment planning and project validation

Overview of content

The workshop focused on identifying and detailing projects across various thematic areas. Guided by the UN-Habitat team, participants were encouraged to think critically about how proposed projects might impact neighbouring activities and respond to identified needs. Discussions centred on prioritising projects with catalytic potential that could generate broader benefits for Naryn's development. This interactive process fostered cross-sectoral dialogue and a comprehensive understanding of challenges and solutions.

Participants

Government officials and representatives from the Mayoral Office, Community Members, AKDN, UN-Habitat

Insights

The workshop offered insights into thematic collaboration and project prioritisation. Participants worked together to refine project ideas, considering their potential to address multiple challenges and benefit neighbouring activities. Discussions also revealed gaps in awareness of interconnected issues among sector specialists, highlighting the value of clear data visualisation to support decision-making. The exercise underscored the importance of prioritising catalytic projects that align with Naryn's development goals. The findings from the workshop were considered for the next stages of the project to compile project lists, identify demonstration sites, and plan strategies for integrated capital investment.



Photo © UN-Habitat



Photo © UN-Habitat



Kyrgyz legislation, urban law and climate change

Overview

The workshop presented key findings and recommendations from UN-Habitat's analysis of national urban laws and building codes. Using the Urban Law Module of the Law and Climate Change Toolkit, the session provided a detailed overview of the legislative landscape and highlighted areas for improvement to align with sustainable and resilient urban development goals. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback to inform the finalisation of the analysis and recommendations.

Participants

State Department Institute of Urban Planning and Architecture, UCA, AKDN, UN-Habitat

Insights

The workshop emphasised the need to align Kyrgyz legislation with international urban planning and sustainability standards. Participant feedback offered valuable insights into the practical application of laws and building codes, ensuring the recommendations are relevant. The session also highlighted the importance of stakeholder collaboration to address legislative gaps and support resilient urban development. for collaboration among stakeholders to address legislative gaps and promote resilient urban development.

Conclusion

The capacity building initiatives undertaken as part of the Naryn Urban Resilience Programme (NURP) have laid a foundation for enhancing the city's resilience and sustainability. Through a series of workshops, training sessions, and collaborative exercises, key stakeholders from various sectors—including local government, community representatives, and international experts—have worked together to identify challenges, explore solutions, and define actionable steps to drive Naryn's urban development towards a more sustainable future.

The capacity building activities have achieved several important milestones. First, they have fostered a deeper understanding of the interconnected challenges facing Naryn, particularly in areas such as governance, finance, urban planning, and environmental management. The sessions encouraged participants to think critically about how projects can address multiple challenges, benefit neighbouring activities, and integrate the needs of various sectors. They also highlighted the importance of aligning local planning and development practices with global frameworks for sustainability, resilience, and inclusive growth.

Key insights from the workshops revealed several areas for further development. These include the need for stronger cross-sectoral collaboration, clearer data visualisation tools for better decision-making, and a more comprehensive understanding of the financial barriers limiting Naryn's growth.

Recommendations

Moving forward, several key recommendations have emerged to ensure long-lasting resilience and sustainability in Naryn:

Conduct a Training Needs Assessment (TNA):

A more detailed assessment of capacity building needs is necessary to further define specific skills gaps and target areas for improvement. This will ensure that future training is closely aligned with Naryn's evolving challenges and opportunities.

Align with the NURP Capacity Building Program:

Future capacity building efforts should build on the foundation laid, ensuring a unified approach to resilience and sustainability across all stakeholders.

Incorporate Recommendations from the Strategic Plan:

The recommendations from the capacity building activities should be incorporated into the implementation of the Naryn Strategic Spatial Plan, which has been developed by UN-Habitat. This will ensure that the insights gained through the workshops are reflected in the town's long-term development strategy, guiding local government actions and future planning processes.

Use Investment Cards as a Guide for Prioritisation:

The investment cards developed through the workshops should serve as a valuable tool for prioritising projects, identifying demonstration sites, and guiding capital investments. These cards can also guide authorities on where capacity needs to be built, and collaboration strengthened to ensure that resources are directed towards the most impactful projects

with a long-term vision of sustainability for Naryn.

The capacity building activities have not only contributed to enhancing the knowledge and skills of key stakeholders but have also helped shape a shared vision for Naryn's future. By building on these foundations and following the recommendations outlined above, together with those included in the project's planning and investment planning documents, Naryn can continue to move towards a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive future, effectively addressing both current and future challenges.



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