

a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world.

EUROPEAN UNION FUNDING TO UN-HABITAT
2020-2025



UN-HABITAT

EUROPEAN UNION FUNDING TO UN-HABITAT, 2020-2025

Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) 2025

All rights reserved

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA

Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)

www.unhabitat.org

Disclaimer. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries regarding its economic system or degree of development. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations and its member states.

Contents

Introduction	1
Key Features of European Commission funding	2
UN-Habitat in Europe: Advancing Sustainable Urban Futures	4
Phase 2 of Urban 2030	4
Strengthening Partnerships: UN-Habitat Projects and the Global Gateway Initiative	5
Partnership Implementing the New Urban Agenda (PINUA) in Kenya	5
Go Blue Result Area 2	6
Trade and transport improvement: E-mobility for 2 and 3 wheelers in Tanzania	7
Rebuilding Communities: UN-Habitat Urban Recovery Projects	8
Housing, Land and Property Rights for displaced Syrians	8
Support for Urban Recovery and peacebuilding in western Ninewa, Iraq	9
Quality Urban Development for Sustainable Interventions for Jerusalem's Old City	10
Advancing Inclusion: UN-Habitat Projects on Migration and Displacement	11
Securing Land Rights for Gender-Safe Informal Settlements in Afghanistan	11
Strengthening the resilience of local communities (Burkina Faso)	12
Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation in Iraq	13
Ciudades Incluyentes, Comunidades Solidarias	14
Building a Greener World: UN-Habitat and the European Green Deal	15
Nô Misti Disinvolvimentu Local in Guinea-Bissau	15
European Union Water Operators' Partnerships Programme (EU-WOPs)	16
Looking Forward	17

Introduction

Urbanisation is one of the defining megatrends of our era—unstoppable, irreversible and rapidly reshaping our world. Europe's biggest urban growth occurred during the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, and today 74% of EU residents live in cities and urban areas. While driving economic growth, urbanisation has also caused inequality, housing shortages, and infrastructure strain, which the EU addresses through the Cohesion Policy and initiatives such as the Urban Agenda for EU, and the Affordable Housing Plan.

In many other parts of the world, rapid urbanisation is a current reality, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South and East Asia. While as few as 30% of the global population lived in urban areas in 1930, this will reach 67% by 2050. When well managed, cities can drive major social, economic and environmental gains. Around 80% of global GDP is generated in urban areas. Cities are also key to implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Effective urban policies, urban and territorial planning, infrastructure investment and institutional capacity at national to local levels, are key to achieving positive impacts of the urbanisation megatrend. Yet, when absent, challenges of inequality and environmental degradation in urban settings are often stark.

While in absolute terms poverty has reduced in the last two decades, inequality has risen in 75% of cities. Informal settlements and slums, now home to 1.1 billion people, are a visible manifestation of urban poverty and exclusion, impacting disproportionately on the rights and living standards of women. An estimated 2.8 billion people lack access to adequate housing, secure land, and basic water and sanitation services.

Climate change intensifies urban challenges. Urban areas consume around 75% of global energy and generate roughly 70% of the world's greenhouse gases. They face the most severe climate impacts, including flooding, extreme heat and water scarcity—especially in poorly planned neighbourhoods—leading to health crises, displacement and livelihood disruption. Urban expansion erodes forests and farmland, and reliance on fossil fuels drives harmful air pollution. At the same time, migration, including rural-urban movement and forced displacement, adds further pressure on cities, with displaced people increasingly seeking durable solutions and self-reliance in urban settings.

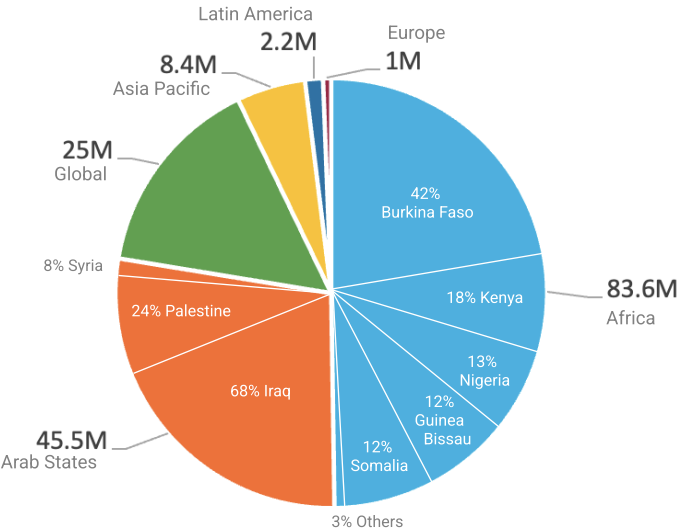
Aligned with the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020–25 charted pathways to realise the transformative potential of sustainable urbanisation to tackle these challenges and advance the SDGs. It focused on four interconnected areas: reduced spatial inequality and poverty; increased shared prosperity; advanced climate action and a sustainable urban environment; and strengthened crisis prevention and response. UN-Habitat supported this by applying expertise on policy, urban territorial planning, governance and finance, and strengthening global partnerships.

During this period, the EU remained a key partner in the context of urban crisis and climate resilience, with projects in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East supporting housing, secure land tenure and essential services. The EU's Global Gateway initiative emerged as a framework for large-scale transformative infrastructure. UN-Habitat complemented this through multi-scalar planning to ensure Global Gateway investments effectively reach the local level, and by strengthening collaboration with European IFIs.

This brochure provides an overview of EU/UN-Habitat partnership during the 2020-25 Strategic Plan Period. It concludes by introducing UN-Habitat's forthcoming Strategic Plan 2026–2029, which renews the organisation's focus on housing, land and basic services, in the response to persistent inequalities, intensifying climate pressures and rising urban crises affecting cities worldwide, while highlighting prospects for continued partnership.

Key Features of European Commission funding

2020-25 EC funding to UN-Habitat regional distribution, EUR



UN-Habitat received EUR 165.8 million from the EC over the past six years.

The largest share of the European Commission’s funding to UN-Habitat between 2020 and 2025 went to projects in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for around half of the total, largely through major country allocations such as Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau and Somalia.

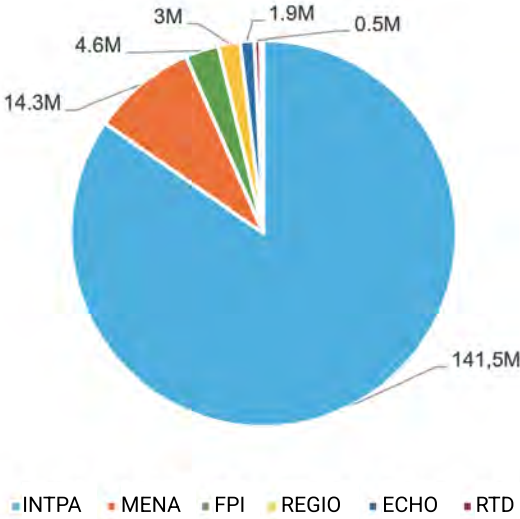
The Arab States received just over a quarter of the funding (28%), primarily for work in Iraq, Palestine and Syria. The remaining share was directed to global programmes (15%) and initiatives in Asia-Pacific countries such as Myanmar and Afghanistan (5%). Smaller amounts were dedicated to projects in Latin America (1.5%) and Europe (0.5%).

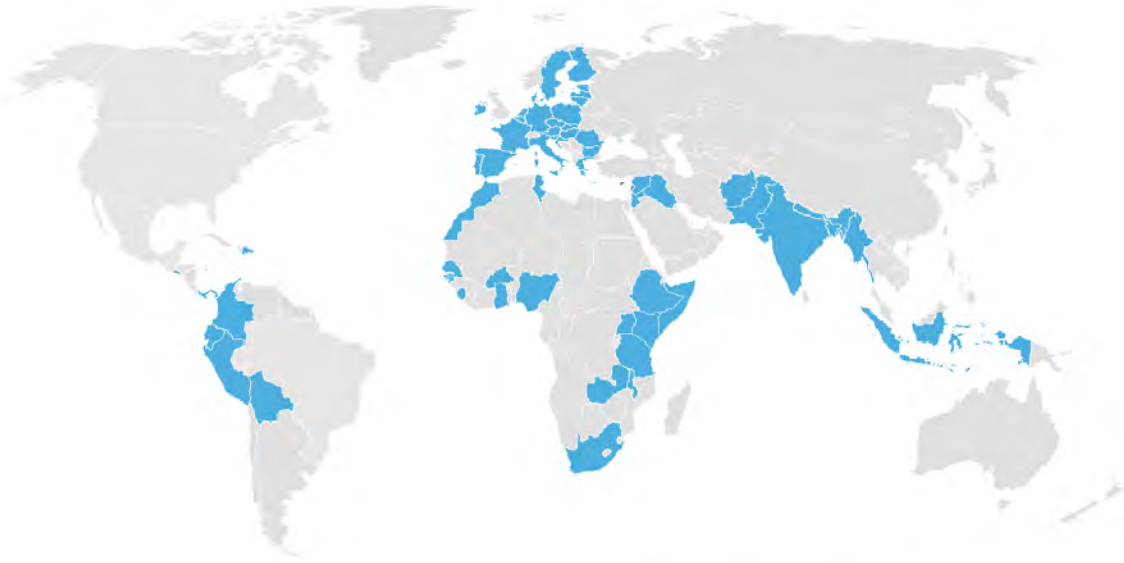
Within the European Commission, funding to UN-Habitat came from several key departments.

The Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG-INTPA) was the largest contributor (85%), followed by the Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG-MENA) with 9%.

Smaller amounts were contributed by other Directorates-General, namely the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) (3%), Regional and Urban Policy (DG-REGIO) (2%), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO) (1.2%), and Research and Innovation (DG-RTD) (0.3%).

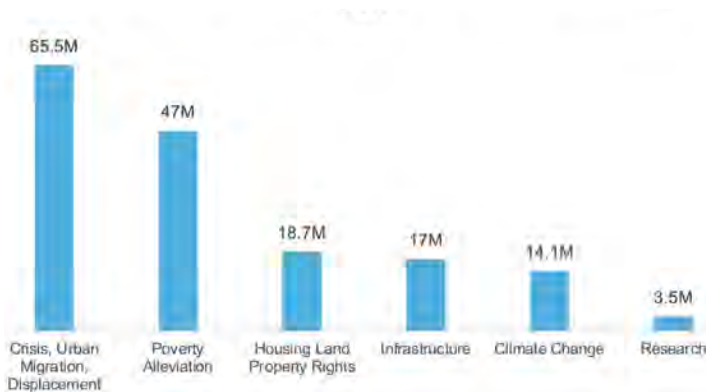
2020-25 EC funding to UN-Habitat by Directorate-General, EUR





A global coverage with a focus on Africa

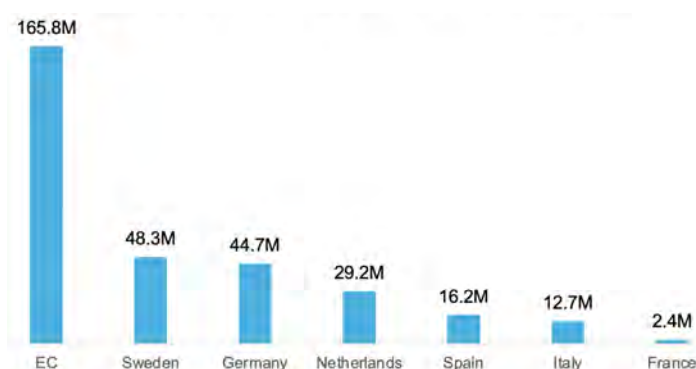
2020-25 EC funding to UN-Habitat, thematic distribution, EUR



Most activities funded by the EC from 2020 to 2025 were linked to addressing crisis, migration and displacement (40%) in urban areas, with a focus on urban planning, housing, and access to basic services. These activities mainly took place in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Colombia.

Work on poverty alleviation (28%) was mainly global, focusing on water utilities in Africa and Asia and slum upgrading in the ACP countries. Projects on Housing, Land and Property Rights (11%) focused on Iraq, Syria and Palestine. Infrastructure development projects (10%) were funded in Burkina Faso. Climate change projects (9%) focused on resilience-building in Myanmar and Kenya, while research (2%) was conducted at the global level.

2020-25 EC and EU Member States funding to UN-Habitat, EUR



Contributions from EU were complemented by EUR153.5 million from European Member States, bringing the overall European contribution from to EUR 319.3 million. The European Commission contributed the biggest part of European funding to UN-Habitat (52%), followed by Sweden (15%), Germany (14%), Netherlands (9%), Spain (5%), Italy (4%), and France (1%).

The following sections highlight examples of projects undertaken by UN-Habitat in partnership with the European Commission.

UN-Habitat in Europe:

Advancing Sustainable Urban Futures

The New Urban Agenda is a UN-adopted framework guiding sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development, endorsed by all 193 UN Member States in 2016 to harness the transformative potential of urbanisation for sustainable development. The European Commission has actively supported its implementation through the following commitments: Delivering the New Urban Agenda through the Urban Agenda for the EU; Developing a global, harmonised definition of cities; Fostering cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development; Scaling up EU support for sustainable urban development in partner countries via Global Gateway; Fostering 100 European "hubs of innovation" for green/digital transitions, and launching the New European Bauhaus as a global cultural movement for sustainable, human-centred design.

In 2025, the European Commission proposed a new EU Agenda for Cities and launched the European Affordable Housing Plan. UN-Habitat's Brussels office has supported these commitments by providing technical input, convening expert dialogue, and promoting the work on global platforms, including the World Urban Forum.

FEATURED PROJECT

Urban 2030

Urban 2030 is a collaboration between UN-Habitat and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG-REGIO) to enhance methodology and data collection for monitoring urban development. Aiming to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in cities, the collaboration focuses on methodology and indicators that measure access to affordable housing, green public spaces, public transport, and urban land consumption.

Research was undertaken, expert group meetings were convened and recommendations were jointly developed on topics such as:

- Transport Performance Indicators (2022)

- Population, Built-up Area and Urbanisation Projects (2023)

- Land Use (2023)

- Urban Crisis Monitoring (2024)

In support of the EU Affordable Housing Plan in 2025, the collaboration focused on:

- Housing Indicators and Data for Policy Development in the European Union and globally

- Housing Indicators and Policies in the EU

Strengthening Partnerships: Bringing the Global Gateway Initiative to cities

The Global Gateway Initiative aims to mobilise strategic investments in sustainable infrastructure, strengthen partnerships, and promote resilient, inclusive development. Its 360° approach ensures investments align policy, finance, and implementation for greater impact. Major infrastructure investments drive urbanisation, which can exacerbate inequality and environmental degradation if poorly planned, but can generate growth, jobs, and resilience when well managed. For example, when corridor investments are integrated with strategic infrastructure investments in cities, economic value chains can be unlocked, attracting further private-sector partnerships and generating decent jobs. The Cities and Regions Forum - Localizing the Global Gateway (Brussels, Dec 2025) reaffirmed this transformative potential. In line with EU's Green Transition objectives, the Global Gateway could also be harnessed to support achieving UN-Habitat's strategic priorities of scaling up investments in sustainable urban water supply, waste management, transportation, and affordable housing - improving quality of life for all.

FEATURED PROJECT

Partnership Implementing the New Urban Agenda (PINUA) in Kenya

Project Background

Kenya faces a housing shortage of around 2 million units. Annual demand is 250,000 new homes, but only about 50,000 are delivered, most unaffordable for the average Kenyan. Despite a strong tradition of savings cooperatives, with the country having 175 Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) with 3.4 million members and assets over US\$12 billion, this capital is not yet being used to create affordable housing at scale.

Building on existing community construction practices and mainstreaming community-led infrastructure, PINUA makes housing affordable and sustainable at scale by developing and testing replicable models for:

- Cooperative-led social rental housing through microfinance
- Incremental low-cost housing using local and green materials

- Financing informal settlement upgrading

Project Progress

PINUA pilot projects will directly benefit 100,000 residents. In keeping with the Global Gateway approach, these models provide pathways for IFIs engagement for scaling-up impact. Currently, the EIB and AFD are engaged.

On completion of the pilots in 2028, the three models will be central to Kenya's affordable housing strategy and will be implemented at scale with the support of European IFIs and European de-risking instruments.

PINUA thus demonstrates the potential for the Global Gateway Initiative to engage in the housing sector, noting the scale of demand across Africa and in other regions, and will provide investment models that could be replicated in several countries.

FEATURED PROJECT

Trade and transport improvement: E-mobility for 2 and 3 wheelers in Tanzania

Project Background

Despite East Africa's growing electric-mobility innovation, Tanzania's emerging EV market remains constrained by a limited number of start-ups, inadequate infrastructure and technical capacity, and the absence of supportive policies, incentives, and financing mechanisms.

Building on the EU Horizon project SolutionsPlus, this initiative aims to strengthen Tanzania's e-mobility sector and develop a sustainable urban mobility plan that supports cleaner transport, improves air quality, and advances climate goals. The project will demonstrate the potential to scale up the electrification of urban mobility in Africa through the Global Gateway Initiative.

Project Progress

An e-mobility skills assessment is underway in Dar Es Salaam with local stakeholders,

including universities, companies, and garage workers, to identify gaps in the sector. Women's participation has also been examined. This is being followed by local skills training for the manufacture of electric two- and three-wheelers and charging stations, ensuring alignment with EU and global standards. In parallel, a city-level sustainable urban mobility plan is underway, integrating e-mobility with land-use planning.

In support of strengthening institutional frameworks and private sector engagement, local authority staff attended Africa E-Mobility Week to gain insights into the mobility landscape and bring this knowledge back to Tanzania. Furthermore, the Belgian partner institution, Enabel, is supporting EU private sector engagement by launching calls for companies to support e-mobility start-ups, where they will be supported by European investment de-risking instruments.



Local youth learning how to repair electric tuk-tuks during a hands-on workshop.

FEATURED PROJECT

Go Blue Result Area 2 - Connecting People, Cities and the Ocean

Project Background

Kenya's coastal communities face growing environmental and economic pressures, as rapid urbanisation, habitat loss, and declining ocean health threaten local livelihoods and ecosystems.

The Go Blue Programme supports a sustainable blue economy across six coastal counties: Lamu, Kilifi, Kwale, Tana River, Mombasa, and Taita Taveta. It is implemented by UN-Habitat, UNEP, GiZ, AICS (Italy), Camões (Portugal), and Expertise France, and demonstrates the potential for scaling up Global Gateway investments in coastal regions, for transformative environmental, economic and social impacts.

Project Achievements

On UN-Habitat's side, the programme strengthened solid waste management in Taita Taveta through a waste audit and strategy, including the creation of a licensed Material Recovery Facility in Chakaleri. It also formalised the Taita Taveta Waste Actors Association and created over 85 green jobs.

Go Blue also revitalised public spaces such as Mazingira Park in Kilifi and the King Fahd waterfront in Lamu. Co-designed with communities and built using sustainable materials, these spaces now provide safer recreational areas, support local businesses, strengthen cultural identity, and improve urban resilience.

In Mombasa's Mikindani area, the programme established a nature-based wastewater treatment system. A constructed wetland now filters effluent before it reaches Tudor Creek and provides irrigation water for 50 nearby farms, demonstrating a scalable, low-cost solution for wastewater management.



Community participatory mapping and planning workshops in Hola

One of Go Blue's key achievements was the development and validation of the first Integrated Land–Sea Planning Guidelines for Coastal Kenya, now guiding county planning and the national Marine Spatial Planning framework. Lamu, the first county to develop a County Spatial Plan, also leads in integrating land–sea planning, setting a model for future coastal and national planning.

Go Blue also established GIS data hubs in all six counties, trained technical teams, and carried out ecosystem service valuation, climate vulnerability assessments, and comprehensive coastal data mapping. Counties now have access to robust datasets to support decision making.

Rebuilding Communities: UN-Habitat Urban Recovery Projects

Global crises are increasingly complex, interconnected, and urban, with inequalities and unplanned growth heightening risks for the urban poor and displaced. Humanitarian action grounded in a strong shared understanding of the urban context, and supported by empowered local authorities, can transition more effectively into recovery and development.

Urban Profiling, which maps vulnerabilities, needs, capacities, services, and infrastructure functionality, helps target support. Building on this, inclusive recovery plans can link immediate relief with long-term strategies to rebuild infrastructure, restore services, integrate displaced populations, and strengthen resilience. Local authorities often require technical assistance to manage these transitions. In conflict-sensitive areas, dialogue and social cohesion can be fostered through place-making and tactical urbanism.

FEATURED PROJECT

Urban Recovery and Housing, Land and Property Rights Support for Syria

Responding to mass destruction of Syrian cities and internal displacement, UN-Habitat produced Urban Profiles of over 90 cities and towns. This multi-layered spatial analysis of population dynamics, damage, and functionality of infrastructure, services and service providers enabled the production of evidence-based, multi-stakeholder urban recovery plans which guide critical actions to support survival and recovery.

Following the fall of the Assad regime, around 1.2 million Syrian refugees and 2 million IDPs have returned but many face barriers due to lack or loss of property documentation. The Joint Programme on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) improves land records and provides legal assistance, dispute resolution, and institutional capacity for more inclusive and sustainable recovery.

130 laws were translated and critical reforms are being supported. 30 guidance notes have

been produced and a digital application developed to support HLP claims. Several organizations supporting refugees and displaced people have been trained, including 14 in neighbouring Iraq and Lebanon, and a forward-looking technical plan has been developed to improve the quality of property information and ease dispute resolution. Already 27,600 claims have been supported safeguarding the rights of 64,000 people; awareness campaigns have reached around 345,000 people, while continued emphasis on efficiency has brought the cost of each HLP claim down to \$29.

These combined efforts build the groundwork for return, restitution, and dispute resolution - improving both the system and access to rights - ultimately support long-term recovery for displaced Syrians.

FEATURED PROJECT

Support for Urban Recovery and peacebuilding in western Ninewa, Iraq

Project Background

The 2014 conflict with Daesh displaced more than 6 million Iraqis, including 275,000 Yazidi people. After the war, returnees faced destroyed infrastructure, severe housing shortages, lost livelihoods, and complex legal disputes over property rights.

The project enabled voluntary, safe, and dignified returns by improving living conditions, revitalising livelihoods, and protecting property rights for vulnerable populations in the districts of Sinjar, Ba'aj, and Tel Afar, with a combined population of 235,000.

Project Achievements

The project successfully combined physical reconstruction with essential legal and economic support to help stabilise the region.

On the infrastructure side, 323 core housing units were built, war-damaged homes were rehabilitated, and water access was

“Here on my land, hope has returned to me. I have planted trees and created a small garden, and I can witness their growth. I am incredibly satisfied with my new house and grateful to all those who participated in this charitable endeavor.”

Barakat Murad Khalaf
Returnee

improved for 3,000 residents. Two marketplaces were revitalised with 24 new shops, public spaces were restored benefiting 6,500 people, and four primary schools serving more than 800 students were rehabilitated.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the initiative provided vocational training to 1,200 women and men, strengthened property rights by issuing 4,000 occupancy certificates, assisted 1,050 returnees with compensation claims, and trained 183 government officials in housing rights management.



Children attending classes at one of the newly developed and renovated mixed schools.

FEATURED PROJECT

Quality Urban Development for Sustainable Interventions for Jerusalem's Old City - Rehabilitation for Revitalization (QUDSI-R4R)

Project Background

The old city of Jerusalem, inhabited by Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and Armenian communities, holds exceptional cultural and historical significance. Still, its built heritage is increasingly deteriorating. The project fostered social and cultural cohesion and created jobs while rehabilitating historic buildings.

Project Achievements

A comprehensive master study on site-specific rehabilitation needs and business potential was completed, providing essential urban planning data to guide the effective implementation of 13 rehabilitation projects.

One such project, the Dar Al-Consul Complex, was rehabilitated by UN-Habitat. Dating back to medieval times, it now houses a culturally

inclusive community centre on the ground floor and 40 affordable housing units with shared community spaces on the upper level.

The Complex has expanded its activities to include art exhibitions, workshops, edutainment programmes, concerts, and school events. Over the past three years, it has welcomed an average of 1,900 gallery visitors, 1,200 event participants, and more than 150 students annually.

To support implementation and build local expertise, 15 training sessions were delivered for young professionals on safety, disaster risk management, heritage conservation, XR technology, and entrepreneurship. To date, 35,000 Palestinian residents of the Old City have benefited from these improvements.

Adventures and Tales at Dar Al-Consul Summer Camp

As part of the QUDSI-R4R Project, the Dar Al-Consul Complex hosted the "Adventures and Tales at Dar Al-Consul" Summer Camp from June to July 2024, aiming to strengthen community ties.

The camp engaged over 2,000 schoolchildren, aged 7 to 14, from five civil society organisations, introducing them to Jerusalem's history. Activities included a historical video presentation, a treasure hunt, the assembly of a life-size Jerusalem Arch embroidered with traditional symbols, and an interactive educational session on the city's heritage.



School children after completing the assembly of the Jerusalem Arch at the Dar Al-Consul Summer Camp.

Advancing Inclusion: UN-Habitat Projects on Migration and Displacement

Migration is a defining feature of the 21st century, driven by conflict, environmental degradation, climate change, poverty, and spatial inequalities. Many migrants move to cities seeking safety, services, and better livelihoods, but this influx strains host communities and local governments, leading to service gaps, health risks, safety concerns, and environmental stress. As forced displacement rises, urbanization will accelerate. Local governments and key stakeholders need stronger support to manage this growth effectively. With adequate planning and capacity, urban areas can provide shelter, services, and safety for all residents while harnessing the social and economic opportunities migration brings.

FEATURED PROJECT

Securing Land Rights for Gender-Safe Informal Settlements in Afghanistan

Project Background

Afghanistan's prolonged displacement crisis has forced over 2.5 million people into informal settlements, where families without formal Housing, Land and Property (HLP) documentation face a constant risk of eviction. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable, experiencing heightened risks of gender-based violence due to the lack of safe and accessible public spaces.

Project Achievements

Through agreements with the government and participatory planning processes, the project secured tenure for 39,518 residents across six informal settlements in Kabul and Herat.

The project also delivered safer, more inclusive public environments. Widespread street lighting in two areas has improved women's safety at night and extended market operating hours.

In Mahale Qandahariha (Herat), a newly constructed bus station with separate waiting areas has reduced harassment risks for women. In Karte Maiwand (Herat), the construction of a 165-metre school wall and a new Social Centre has increased safety for 300 students and enhanced social inclusion opportunities for 500 women.

By creating gender-safe public spaces, the project has provided women with secure areas to socialise, a critical intervention in contexts where women are often excluded from public spaces.

“With the Social Centre, we women can finally take part in social decisions. Seeing other women learn and share ideas inspires me.”

Sharifa
Resident

FEATURED PROJECT

Strengthening the resilience of local communities in the face of massive population displacements and the COVID-19 pandemic (Burkina Faso)

Project Background

Since 2015, conflicts have displaced around 1.9 million people in Burkina Faso, forcing many to settle on the outskirts of small cities with limited access to adequate housing, water, education, and healthcare.

By providing suitable housing, essential services, and public spaces, the project improved living conditions for vulnerable host communities and displaced populations in the secondary cities of Kaya, Kongoussi, Tougouri, and Dori.

Project Achievements

Through inclusive urban planning processes, involving local authorities, host communities, and displaced populations, the four secondary cities developed integrated expansion plans. These enable the cities to accommodate population growth sustainably, ensuring even, equitable access to basic services and avoiding slums. Following this, the project delivered 312 houses for 1,800 people, four health facilities, two classrooms, and two reading rooms. Water access was expanded through four water towers and 19 standpipes, reaching around 100,000 residents.

In addition, 120 residents participated in workshops on income-generating activities, and 8,000 took part in gender-based violence prevention sessions.

A key outcome was a shift in the approach of local authorities towards displaced people. Previously considered temporary, internally displaced persons are now recognised as residents and fully included in urban planning and service provision.

This project shows that, with the right support, cities can provide durable solutions for displaced populations, fostering social inclusion and self-reliance. Building on this success, in 2025 the European Commission funded UN-Habitat with a further EUR 31 million to scale up the approach in Burkina Faso and Mali, in partnership with UNHCR.



Inauguration of one of 19 water fountains that now brings safe water to people in Burkina Faso.

FEATURED PROJECT

Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT): Towards Decent Work and Affordable Housing in Iraq

Project Background

Decades of conflict and displacement in Iraq have left many families unable to return home due to damaged housing and limited economic opportunities. In cities such as Mosul and Ramadi, the shortage of safe, affordable housing and decent work continues to hinder sustainable returns and local recovery.

In response, the BEIT Project, implemented with the Government of Iraq, the ILO, and the ITC, aims to create decent work through the housing sector while increasing access to affordable, climate-responsive homes. Pilot initiatives are currently underway in Mosul and Ramadi.

Project Progress

UN-Habitat has secured sites for new housing developments and obtained commitments from local municipalities to provide essential utilities. Building on this foundation, gender-

inclusive design workshops ensured housing solutions meet household needs while remaining affordable and environmentally sustainable.

To date, 1,660 people have benefited from green, affordable housing, and over 100 individuals have been trained in construction skills and climate-adaptive retrofitting, advancing both housing provision and decent job creation in Iraq.

Building on these pilot results, the project supported the Government of Iraq in developing the National Housing Policy 2025–2030. The policy prioritises job creation through the construction sector and provides a framework for scaling up the delivery of decent, affordable, and environmentally sustainable housing to address the country's substantial deficit while expanding employment opportunities nationwide.



Youth participants receiving on-site training in construction techniques as part of the BEIT project.

FEATURED PROJECT

Ciudades Incluyentes, Comunidades Solidarias

Project Background

Since 2015, 7.7 million Venezuelans have migrated across Latin America and the Caribbean, placing significant pressure on host cities and pushing many displaced people into areas with limited housing, services, and employment.

Jointly implemented with IOM and UNHCR in 10 cities across Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago, the project deployed participatory urban planning to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen local governance, and support the social and economic inclusion of host and displaced communities.



Teacher Nelson Pájaro supports 23 children in Bucaramanga in an open classroom developed by Ciudades Incluyentes.



The Manuela Beltrán Community Center in Cúcuta has been restored and now functions as an inclusive public space.

Project Achievements

The project developed Urban Inclusive Markers to map and measure the city's level of inclusion and identify priority areas for action.

These insights guided the preparation of 32 tactical urbanism projects, including pocket plaza upgrades, community gardens, floor and mural painting, and small-scale public infrastructure improvements, co-created by displaced and host communities to foster inclusion and mutual respect.

In parallel, the project implemented 253 territorial intervention plans, which are targeted actions to improve specific neighbourhoods or districts. It also supported 19 inclusive urban policies, carried out 230 community activation activities, and hosted more than 60 training sessions on topics such as digital skills, productivity, and access to housing. Overall, the project benefited over 162.000 people.

Building a Greener World: UN-Habitat and the European Green Deal

Urban areas generate around 71–76% of energy-related CO₂ emissions and are highly exposed to sea-level rise, flooding, storms, and extreme heat. With over 90% of major cities located on the coast, infrastructure and livelihoods face growing risks. The urban poor – over a billion people living in slums and informal settlement – are hit hardest. Many cities struggle to act effectively due to policy gaps, outdated regulations, limited capacity, and low public awareness. Rapid urbanisation is also accelerating biodiversity loss, further increasing vulnerability. Strategic, compact urban planning can reduce resource use, limit land take, and protect ecosystems whose services, such as flood regulation, strengthen climate resilience.

FEATURED PROJECT

Nô Misti Disinvolvimentu Local: Improving urban governance and access to basic services for green and inclusive local development in Guinea-Bissau

Project Background

Guinea-Bissau is urbanising rapidly, with 45.9% of its population - around 979,000 people - now living in urban areas. Rural–urban migration is heavily concentrated in the capital, Bissau, where unplanned expansion is driving the growth of informal settlements and accelerating environmental degradation.

Secondary cities could play a key role in alleviating urbanization pressure from the capital, while generating jobs, enabling adequate living standards, and distributing urban benefits across the national territory. However this potential is undermined by weak urban governance, poor coordination across government institutions, and limited technical capacity for urban and territorial planning and service delivery.

Project Achievements

Under the EU Green Inclusive Cities Initiative for Guinea-Bissau, the *Nô Misti* project has strengthened urban governance and advanced more inclusive, climate-resilient

cities by improving policy frameworks, building institutional capacity, and delivering pilot actions in five cities.

Technical support was also provided for major Global Gateway investments, including the Baloma pier in Bolama and urban development in Buba and Gabú. Technical assistance for major Global Gateway projects was complemented by quick impact projects including the renovation of four local government buildings with accessible ramps, solar panels and upgraded IT systems, and the revitalisation of three public spaces in Bissau.

Community engagement has been central. Practical training and workshops, particularly engaging young girls, supporting the co-creation of greener public spaces, community clean-ups and neighbourhood mapping to make cities more liveable and inclusive.

The success of this project in localizing the Global Gateway was highlighted at Forum of Cities and Regions for International Partnerships (Dec 2025).

FEATURED PROJECT

European Union Water Operators' Partnerships Programme (EU-WOPs)

Project Background

The European Union Water Operators' Partnerships (EU-WOPs) programme was launched in 2020 to strengthen the capacity of water operators in developing countries. It is linked to the EU's Green Deal, in particular its objectives on clean water provision and water protection.

The programme's goal is to reinforce local water and sanitation service providers through peer-support partnerships, in which experienced water utilities mentor local providers to improve management, financial sustainability and technical operations. The programme also provides investment to local water utilities.

Project Achievements

The initiative is hosted by the Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance with support

from the Government of Germany, which, over the past 15 years, has assisted more than 700 utilities in 117 countries, reaching 58 million people and leveraging investments exceeding US\$1 billion.

With EU support through the EU-WOPs initiative, 35 utilities in 20 developing countries across Africa, Asia, the Arab States and Latin America have been directly supported through partnerships with European utilities, and a further 20 partnerships are currently under way.

Underscored by human rights frameworks, the programme emphasises the role of digitalisation, transparency and investment readiness. With European IFIs increasingly engaged, EU-WOPs presents an opportunity for scaling up through the Global Gateway initiative.

Turning Waste into Watts: How a Zambian Water Utility Is Powering Sustainability

Amid Zambia's escalating energy crisis, the Luapula Water Supply and Sanitation Company (LpWSC), working in collaboration with German utilities, has developed a system to generate electricity from methane captured during the decomposition of sewage sludge at its new wastewater treatment facility in Mansa. This innovation provides reliable on-site power while significantly reducing methane emissions.

By converting sludge into organic fertiliser, the initiative also supports local agriculture, protects waterways and reduces the risk of waterborne diseases. In addition, the project has created new jobs and helped to build a skilled local workforce in green technologies.



Jane Mulenga, a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, oversees the machinery that converts waste into electricity.

Looking Forward

2026–2029 Strategic Plan

UN80, launched by the United Nations in March 2025, aims to make the organisation more agile, integrated and effective in responding to global challenges. UN-Habitat's 2026–2029 Strategic Plan aligns with broader UN-system efforts to advance: (a) equitable, inclusive prosperity; (b) preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction; and (c) environment and climate action.

In these three impact areas, the Plan places emphasis on expanding access to **adequate housing, land, and basic services**, in cities and human settlements, to improve lives – especially of those living in slums, informal settlements, and crisis-affected areas. Its implementation will rest on: a) Integrated spatial planning, management, investment, and finance; b) Participatory, multi-level governance; c) Knowledge, data, digitalization, and capacity-building; d) Partnerships, coalitions, advocacy, and communication; and e) Effective resource mobilization.

The strategic plan provides the opportunity to explore partnership with the EU in the following areas:

Europe Housing

In Europe, UN-Habitat will build on its ongoing support for the EU Affordable Housing Plan and explore opportunities to transfer good housing practices between Europe and other regions, strengthen the role of cooperative housing in ensuring permanently affordable housing and promote housing and settlement development in the context of strengthening the integration of marginalized groups.

EU Accession Countries Territorial cohesion and housing

UN-Habitat will use its Spatial Development Framework tools in EU accession countries to analyze territorial disparities and guide development and investment strategies for the most left-behind areas, helping prepare for future Cohesion Policy funding. It will also support housing policy and institutional reforms aligned with the EU Affordable Housing Plan.

In Ukraine, UN-Habitat will continue supporting housing strategies, strengthening local government capacity for recovery planning, and contributing to the Housing and Urban Codes. It also proposes assisting in preparing a national spatial development plan to guide strategic infrastructure investments that speed up recovery and reconstruction, and better position Ukrainian cities within European economies and value chains.



MENA Region Equipping cities for refugee return and investment partnerships

In the MENA region, particularly post-conflict settings, UN-Habitat will continue building institutional capacity at local and regional levels to plan and deliver basic services equitably, ensure adequate housing, and secure tenure for all, especially displaced populations, facilitating refugee return and durable solutions. The Arab Land Initiative, which promotes good land governance and effective land administration, can also help advance investment partnerships under the Pact for the Mediterranean.

International Partnerships Enhancing the role of cities to provide solutions for migration and displacement, supporting the localization of Global Gateway investments and integrating cities within corridor developments

In Africa, in line with increasing trends of forced displacement due to conflict and climate change, UN-Habitat will continue to support cities to provide durable solutions and foster migrant inclusion through participatory planning for housing, community infrastructure and services, and by strengthening their financing. UN-Habitat's expertise in own source revenue, budgeting and local financial accountability enables displacement affected cities to transition from reliance on grants to generating their own revenues and benefiting from available finance.

In Africa and Asia, UN-Habitat will explore how its EU-supported work to enable bankable, pro-poor provision of urban water and sanitation services, and sustainable urban waste management can be scaled up through IFI engagement and contribute to the Global Gateway's efforts to promote a resilient green transition. UN-Habitat will also explore how its EU-supported efforts on sustainable urban transport can be scaled up within the Global Gateway's Transportation portfolio. Furthermore, by deploying its expertise in spatial data and urban analytics, territorial and urban planning, and multi-level governance, UN-Habitat will promote the strategic role of cities associated with EU supported corridors developments in generating economic value chains and enhancing private sector engagement, leading to the creation of decent jobs and strengthened resilience.

A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world



UN-HABITAT



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya

unhabitat-info@un.org

www.unhabitat.org