

National Urban Policy Programme, Phase 2

Mid-term Evaluation Report



Scaling up People Centred Smart Cities through
National Urban Policies

National Urban Policy Programme, Phase 2
Mid-term Evaluation Report

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Evaluation Report 2026/10

National Urban Policy Programme, Phase 2

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**Scaling up People Centred Smart Cities through
National Urban Policies**

Executive summary



This mid-term evaluation report is the outcome of the assessment of the Second Phase of the Korea-funded National Urban Policy Program (K-NUPP), from 2022 to the end of 2025. The evaluation of the program has resulted in recommendations for the next steps in K-NUPP Phase 2 and informs the ongoing conceptualisation of K-NUPP Phase 3. The evaluation has been informed by document analysis and interviews with stakeholders and participants in the project.

The evaluation is framed by the criteria defined by UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy 2024: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and coherence. Attention has also been given to housing, which has been proposed as the focus of subsequent phases of K-NUPP. This mid-term evaluation also informs the final evaluation of the of K-NUPP Phase 2, to be undertaken in 2027.

The mid-term evaluation of the K-NUPP Phase 2 finds that the project is valued by project participants from UN-Habitat headquarters and the representative countries. However, as the project progresses towards its conclusion at the end of 2027, greater emphasis is needed on activities that address the strategic aims of the project and the National Urban Policy Programme's unique focus on promoting national urban policy formulation and implementation.

Successes from the project to date include:

- » Four national urban policies and one subnational urban policy approved in participating countries. One national urban policy to be completed in 2026.
- » The implementation of demonstration projects in I.R Iran, Myanmar and Niger State have benefited thousands of urban residents through access to renewable energy and improved sanitation.
- » Opportunities for knowledge exchange, development of communities of practice and networks, resulting in the enhancement of policy capacity within participating countries.
- » The development of guides and tools to support urban policy processes and people-centered smart cities.

These successes inform the positive evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 2 summarised in the table below. The evaluation finds that the project is achieving at least 'good' results against all criteria compared to the expectations at mid-term set out in the project plan, and 'excellent' in efficiency and impact.

Project Successes



5 Urban Policies Approved



Impactful Local Projects



Strengthened Policy Capacity



Practical Guides & Tools

K-NUPP Phase 2 evaluation matrix

Criterion	Rating	Successes/positives	Challenges
Relevance	★★★★★	» Implementation of policy » Demonstration projects » Alignment with global agendas - SDGs » Attracting additional funding	» Changes of or in government, government commitment » Focus on national scale policy » Increase focus on cross-cutting themes required
Efficiency	★★★★★	» Spending focus on implementation delivering positive outcomes » Leveraging funds with other sources » Outcomes from demonstration projects	» Budget constraints » Reliant on unpaid work » Outcomes and efficiency reliant on political will
Effectiveness*	★★★★★	» Improved government processes in urban projects » Adaptability in adversity	» Adaptability may reduce focus on strategic project aims » Country variations: capacity, internal dynamics, » Resource limitations
Impact*	★★★★★	» Stakeholder support » Increased capacity for policy development » Increased awareness of urban policy benefits » Flow-on benefits to non-participant countries	» Improve processes for recording impacts » Measurement of urbanisation
Sustainability*	★★★★★	» Government engagement and ownership of urban policy » CO and government collaboration	» Changes of or in government » Political will » Staff turnover, lost knowledge
Coherence	★★★★★	» Leveraging of other funding to support projects » Collaborations with other agencies and ministries » Climate change action	

GOOD



VERY GOOD



EXCELLENT



* Denotes limited evaluation possible at project mid-term



In addition, the following recommendations for K-NUPP Phase 2 have emerged from the evaluation:

- 1 Transition to a project management approach that embraces strategic flexibility in response to external circumstances and the development and sharing of internal knowledge and experience to inform as the project progresses. This includes:
 - a. Revisiting the Theory of Change for K-NUPP Phase 2 to inform implementation.
 - b. Recognising that not all country implementations will be successful in developing urban policies, and to structure K-NUPP projects to include components that may support sub-program success opportunities.
- 2 As the Phase 2 countries begin the implementation of demonstration projects and the project enters its final phases, ensure that actions are contributing to programme aims:
 - a. The development and implementation of national urban policies, and promoting their sustainability after the project's completion in 2027.
 - b. Addressing cross-cutting themes in implementation, addressing the needs of women, children the elderly and the disabled.

It is recommended that regular reporting and the assessment of initiatives includes requirements to address strategic project aims and cross-cutting themes.
- 3 Begin an evaluation of qualitative and empirical methods for measuring urbanization to inform implementation in current K-NUPP participants, and for adoption by potential Phase 3 participants. Data collection should be designed to inform NUP development and long-term outcome evaluation. Establishment of a shared data platform for participant countries should be considered.
- 4 Systematise a method for capturing and publicising indirect benefits that arise from the K-NUPP project, most notably the transfer of urban policy knowledge and practice to non-participant countries, and would inform stronger advocacy and visibility initiatives.
- 5 Include participants from country government ministries and other national stakeholder groups in the final evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 2. This may include building country self-evaluation activity into the project. Extending participation would provide new and important perspectives on the project, as well as inform responses to the recurring of political will in NUP processes. It is recommended that Country Offices begin developing databases of potential participants in the final evaluation.

In addition, the evaluation provides the following recommendations for a potential K-NUPP Phase 3:

- 1 A thematic focus on housing is widely supported and should be pursued but be bounded by the contribution of NUPs to housing questions, their relation to UN-Habitats' cross-cutting themes, and the appropriate role of national and sub-national governments in housing. A revision of UN-Habitat NUPP materials to reflect the focus of housing should be undertaken to support this initiative.
- 2 Assessment of country technical capability to observe and monitor urbanization processes should be included at the pre-commencement of K-NUPP Phase 3 with support provided to strengthen capability and capacity, including through use of open-source datasets and platforms, and coordinated with existing UN or equivalent technical assistance programs.
- 3 Empirical methods for evaluating urbanization, such as the Degree of Urbanisation (DegUrba), should be implemented at project inception to provide baseline data.
- 4 The potential to include new countries into the K-NUPP project provides an opportunity to amplify the project's impact. Consideration should be given to:
 - a. The potential for indirect impacts and knowledge transfer to non-participant countries in evaluating potential participants.
 - b. The history, willingness and capacity of the country and its institutions for developing NUPs.
- 5 Undertake research to increase understanding of the factors that enable successful NUP development processes within countries, including institutional, political and environmental circumstances. Then, introduce technical assistance from UN-Habitat, or other relevant UN agencies, as a preliminary action, to build foundation capacity and address identified risks.
- 6 If new countries are to be included in Phase 3, undertake preparatory assessments of country capacity to participate in future K-NUPP projects prior to program implementation, to inform country selection processes, and focus on building basic capacity where it is lacking as a first intervention.

Contents

Executive summary	iv
1. Introduction	1
1.1. K-NUPP phase 2 mid-term evaluation	1
2. Background and context	3
2.1. National Urban Policies	3
2.2. Overview of the K-NUPP project	4
3. Evaluation approach and methods	10
3.1. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation	10
3.2. Theory of Change approach to the K-NUPP phase 2 evaluation	11
3.3. Methodology: document review, interviews, focus groups	13
4. K-NUPP phase 2 mid-term evaluation findings	16
4.1. Perspectives on K-NUPP program implementation progress	16
4.2. Global and national contexts	17
4.3. Participant country progress	18
4.4. Performance indicators for K-NUPP Phase 2	22
4.5. Performance of K-NUPP Phase 2	36
5. Conclusions of the K-NUPP phase 2 mid-term evaluation	42
5.1. Overall evaluation	42
5.2. Recommendations	47
6. Annex	52
6.1. Interview questions	52
6.2. Accomplishments, outputs and activities	55
References	60

Introduction

At the Habitat III conference in 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, the Republic of Korea committed to support the development of the National Urban Policy Programme and to assist countries in developing and implementing urban policy.

The Korea-funded **National Urban Policy Programme (K-NUPP)** represents a major initiative within UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy Programme, and is now in the middle of its second phase. Korea's support for this initiative is through the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT), which collaborated with UN-Habitat to implement the first pilot phase of the project 'Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries'. The purpose of the pilot project phase was to initiate and develop National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in the three participating countries, I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Niger State (Nigeria). The role of the Government of Korea in fostering NUPs is discussed further in Section 2.2.

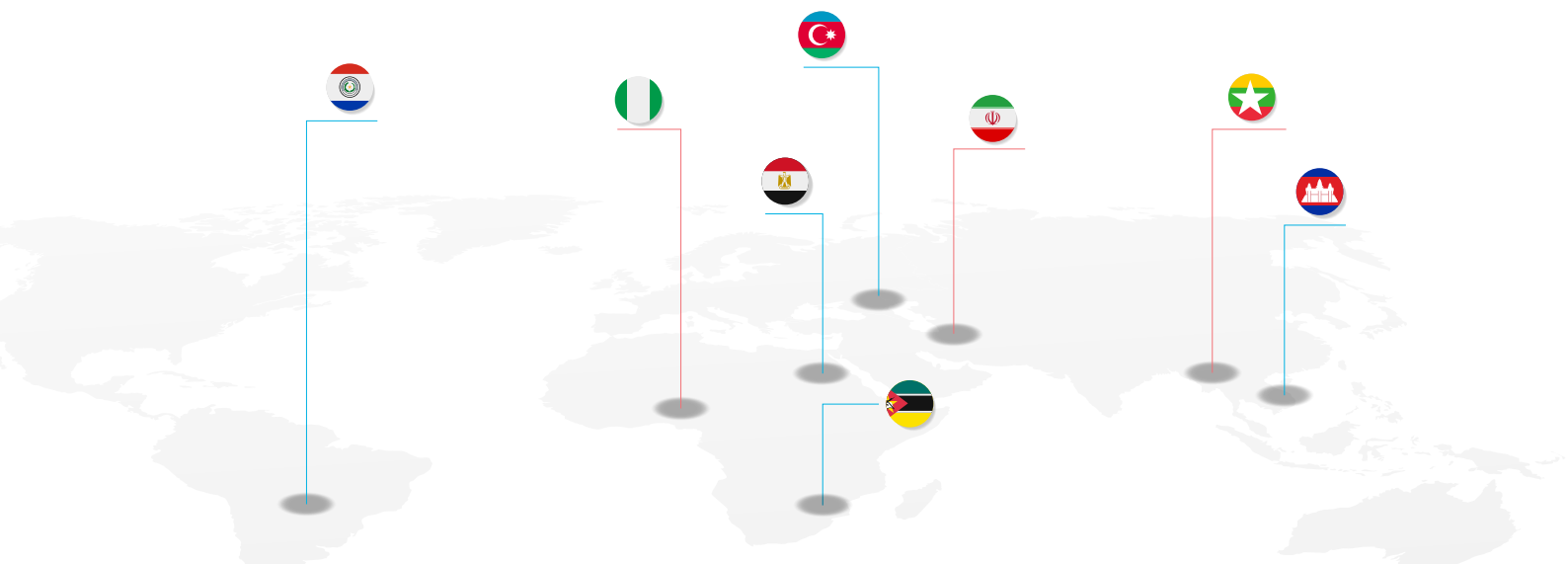
1.1. K-NUPP phase 2 mid-term evaluation

This evaluation report assesses the *second* phase of Korea-funded **National Urban Policy Programme (K-NUPP Phase 2)**, titled: **Scaling up people-centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies**. The countries participating in K-NUPP Phase 2, including the Phase 1 countries, are:

Phase 1 countries: I.R. Iran, Myanmar, and Niger State (Nigeria).

Phase 2 countries: Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Egypt, Mozambique, and Paraguay

This evaluation is a collaboration between UN-Habitat and researchers from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University Centre for Urban Research, based in Melbourne.



1.1.1. Purpose objectives and scope of the evaluation

The evaluation assesses the K-NUPP performance from 2022 to the end of 2025. The evaluation makes recommendations for the next steps in K-NUPP Phase 2, and informs the conceptualisation of K-NUPP Phase 3, currently underway.

The evaluation approach and methodology align with the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy, which provides accountability for results achieved, and learnings to improve current and future NUP development and implementation. In accordance with the policy, the evaluation provides:

...evidence-based information about results that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learnt into the decision-making process¹.

The remit for the mid-term evaluation includes strategic context, a summary and assessment of project activities, and progress towards NUP and thematic aims of UN-Habitat.

The evaluation draws on project team and stakeholder perspectives, sourced through interviews, to identify challenges and risks for K-NUPP Phase 2, and offers recommendations in response to them.

The evaluation is structured around 2 frameworks:

1. The UN-Habitat evaluation performance indicators of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and coherence of the project
2. The K-NUPP Phase II Theory of Change (Section 3.2) that sets out the relationships between project activities and the objectives, outputs and outcomes and overarching aims and goals of the National Urban Policy Programme.

¹ UN-Habitat, Evaluation Manual, 4.



2 Background and context

Urbanization increases the pressure of cities on the economic, social and environmental circumstances of nations. Well-functioning cities provide opportunities to address issues such as increased spatial inequalities, poverty, health risks, exposure to effects of climate change and disaster resilience hence the role of urban policy becomes more important (Kundu et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts have highlighted the need for urban planning even further, as slum areas and informal settlements were especially affected due to the problems of concentrated populations in close yet poor living conditions with limited governance or management (United Nations Statistics Division, 2020).

The UN-Habitat's Policy and Legislation Section (PLS) has led the development of urban policy guidelines and implementation, with the National Urban Policies Programme (NUPP) central to these efforts. The pilot phase, 'National Urban Policy Programme: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies in three selected countries (I.R. Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria)' supported by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT), Republic of Korea has supported the three countries to develop National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies. Phase 2 of K-NUPP builds on the experience of K-NUPP Phase 1 to further promote the benefits of NUPs in addressing urban challenges and opportunities from a people-centered smart city perspective.

2.1. National Urban Policies

A National Urban Policy (NUP) is defined as:

A coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term².



The UN-Habitat **NUP Guiding Framework** provides the basis for nations to develop urban policy and articulates the following important objectives of a NUP:

- » Identification of urban development priorities towards socially and economically equitable and environmentally friendly urban and territorial development;
- » Guidance on the future development of national urban system and its spatial configuration, concretized through National and Regional Spatial Plans for territorial development;

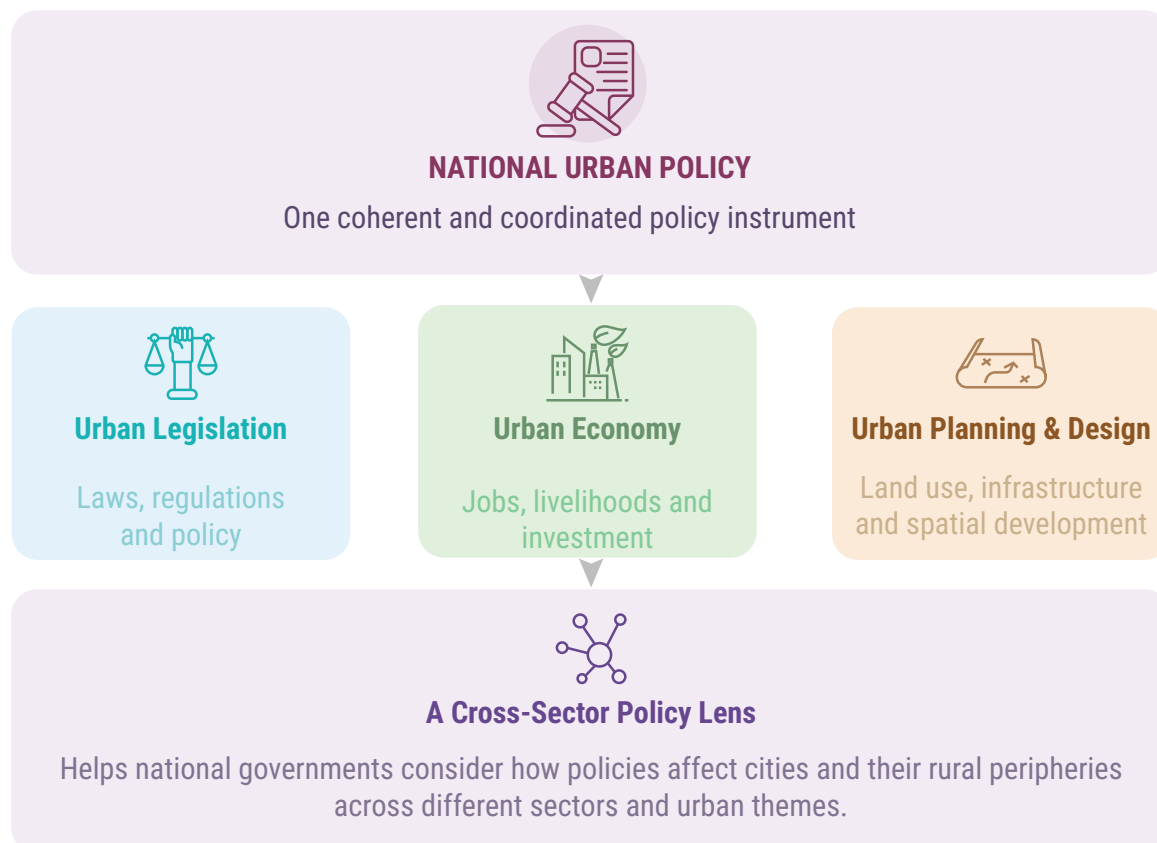
² UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance, The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview, iii.

- » Enhanced coordination and guidance actions by national actors, as well as all levels of government in all sectors; and,
- » Increased and more coordinated private and public investments in urban development and consequent improvements in following key areas: productivity of cities, inclusiveness and environmental conditions, subnational and local governments, financial flows, urban planning regulations, urban mobility and urban energy requirements and job creation ³

NUPs provide the basis for addressing key thematic issues emerging from urbanization, in a single coherent and coordinated policy instrument. The three overarching themes for NUPs are: urban legislation; urban economy; and urban planning and design⁴. A key benefit of NUPs is they provide a lens through which national governments can consider how their policies impact on cities and their rural peripheries across different sectors and urban themes, within their jurisdiction⁵.

2.2. Overview of the K-NUPP project

The support for K-NUPP by MOLIT was set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Korea and UN-Habitat, signed at the Habitat III Conference in October 2016. The K-NUPP project is managed within the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS), now Policy and Legislation Section (PLS), Global Solutions Division (GSD) of UN-Habitat, with the further involvement of UN-Habitat Regional and country offices and country-based focal points. It is implemented by UN-Habitat HQ in liaison with regional and country offices and in collaboration with respective local and national governments, and externally in partnership with organizations including the Korean Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS), the Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Cities Alliance (UN-Habitat 2022). In addition, the GIZ, World Bank, and Catalan Agency for Development have provided support to participant countries.



³ UN-Habitat, National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework, 7.

⁴ UN-Habitat, National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework.

⁵ OECD, The Metropolitan Century: Understanding Urbanisation and Its Consequences.

The first phase of the project began in 2017 and ended in 2022. It had a budget of US\$2,600,000 funded by the Republic of Korea through the MOLIT⁶. The K-NUPP Phase 2 commenced in 2022 and will run until 2027, with funding of US\$2,800,000 from MOLIT. Phase 2 includes eight countries, three pilot countries and additional five countries, and provides support for NUP development and implementation, governance systems, demonstration projects, advocacy and knowledge exchange.

2.2.1. K-NUPP phase 1 overview

The pilot phase was the **Korea-funded National Urban Policy Programme (KNUPP 1)**: Developing NUPs and Smart City Strategies, between 2017 and 2022.

These included:

The purpose of the project was to develop National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies (SCS) in the three pilot countries, Myanmar, the Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R. Iran), and Niger State (Nigeria). The project ended in June 2022, benefitting an estimated 732,600 people through the actions taken.

Outcomes and actions from the Phase 1 evaluation included the development of urban policy in each of the 3 countries. The NUP processes included the establishment of advisory boards and technical teams, and the completion of the Feasibility Policy Note, the NUP Diagnosis Clinic and the Diagnosis papers for the three participating countries. The three Phase 1 countries also developed smart city strategies as part of their NUP processes and the K-NUPP.

Demonstration projects were undertaken in each of the participating countries. The I.R. Iran K-NUPP interventions improved quality of life for 200,000 residents.

228,802 masks donated by UN-Habitat and the Republic of Korea...



...providing humanitarian support and resilient infrastructure in a COVID-19 affected vulnerable community in I.R Iran

Preparation of Advocacy and Capacity Building Package...



...reference document that informs stakeholders about NUP processes and impacts.

32,600 residents benefitting



In Myanmar, the demonstration project was an emergency response to combat COVID-19 effects in informal settlements, which distributed materials to increase resident's awareness of hygiene, prevention, its awareness and training of committee members, and provision of handwashing stations.

⁶ Mwamati et al., National Urban Policy Programme: 2017-2022 Final Report.

In Niger State K-NUPP, ten project proposals were developed to implement the urban policy, for consideration by UN-Habitat. Projects that were subsequently developed include:

The smart-meter borehole project...



...was undertaken to ensure the supply of clean water in a health facility, and also reduce the COVID-19 infection rates. Frontline health workers were also provided with PPE, including 300 hand sanitisers, 76 protective gowns and 61 face shields.

Urban Reforestation...



...for climate change mitigation (planting of 6,000 mangrove trees and 2,000 fruit trees on over 50 hectares of land). In addition, Rehabilitation of three bi-water schemes (water schemes for three small towns to enhance steady supply of clean water).

Capacity development and advocacy initiatives in the K-NUPP pilot phase featured localized trainings and workshops for the communities in participating countries where the projects were implemented. Two international knowledge exchange visits to Korea were undertaken by all the participating countries and respective government officials, in 2017 and 2019. An international conference on National Urban Policy was held, as well as participation in the eleventh session of World Urban Forum held in Katowice, Poland in 2022. The exchange visits included sessions on economic and urban development in Korea, NUPs and people-centered smart cities, and housing. An advocacy and capacity building package was prepared in I.R Iran, including an NUP and people-centered smart cities summary document, flyer, poster and an animated video clip to introduce the I.R. Iran NUP and findings in English and Persian languages.

Phase 1 of K-NUPP also supported the development of normative guides and tools to support NUPs and people-centered smart cities. In addition to the documents prepared in each of the countries, these normative products include:

- » Quick Guide for Integrating Smart City Strategy in National Urban Policy
- » Guide for Identifying Demonstration Projects
- » Communication Strategy, Partnership Strategy and Resource Mobilisation Strategy for National Urban Policy Programme

The final report and evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 1 found that the project had resulted in enhanced capacity for urban policy within participating countries, increased centralization of knowledge, and provided opportunities for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities in participating countries⁷.

⁷ Kroen and Dodson, Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries.

2.2.2. K-NUPP phase 2 overview

K-NUPP Phase 2 project, **Scaling up people-centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies**, was launched in November 2022 and will be finalized November 2027. It introduces a further five countries to the three that participated in Phase 1: Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Egypt, Mozambique, and Paraguay. The scope of the K-NUPP Phase 2 project also includes development of new or improvement of existing NUPs integrating the people-centered smart city aspects, knowledge creation, demonstration projects and monitoring the implementation of NUPs in all the eight participating countries.

At commencement, Phase 2 aimed to:

1. Mainstream the 'people-centered smart cities' approach into national and sub-national urban policies in selected countries.
2. Enhance capacity of policy makers and stakeholders to facilitate the territorial dimension of urban innovation and steer digital transformation in NUPs and SUPs
3. Implement urban interventions by applying innovative approaches and technologies while considering the people-centered dimension in National Urban Policy.
4. Improve knowledge creation and sharing and enhance global awareness of experiences on the nexus of NUP and people-centered smart cities approaches and models.

Table 1 lists the deliverables for the K-NUPP project, which are organised into outputs under the four expected accomplishments. Further detail on the expected activities to be undertaken in K-NUPP phase 2 are provided in Section 6.2.

Table 1: K-NUPP project deliverables, 2024-25

1. National and local governments mainstream the people-centered smart cities approach into NUPs and / or sub-national urban policies in selected countries and sub-national regions.

1.1 National / sub-national Urban Policies with the appropriate policy instruments to ensure a people-centered smart cities approach aligned with local priorities.

1.2 Development of people-centered smart city strategy aligned with local priorities in each pilot country

2. Capacity of policy makers and stakeholders enhanced to facilitate the territorial dimension of urban innovation and steer digital transformation in NUP / SUPs.

2.1 Development of a Practical guide on assessment and integration of people-centered smart cities, digital transformation and innovation in urban/metropolitan areas in national urban policies.

2.2 Preparation of annual international urban innovation and smart-city EGM/workshop on effective use of digital technologies in urbanization processes, including development of international guide on people-centered smart cities with key tech stakeholders

2.3 Organization of the bi-annual International Conference on National Urban Policy

3. Urban/metropolitan interventions apply innovative approaches and technologies while considering the people-centered dimension in National Urban Policy.

3.1 A guide outlining of modalities, financing and investment for implementing tangible and sustainable people-centered smart city initiatives in NUP

3.2 Completion of supported people-centered smart urban/metropolitan intervention with government and/or partners, at least 2 per pilot country

4. Improved knowledge creation and sharing, and enhanced global awareness of experiences on the nexus of NUP and people-centered smart cities approaches and models.

4.1 Exchange visit to learn from the Korean experience with NUP and people-centered smart cities

4.2 Completion of NUP stakeholders' workshops

4.3 Completion of normative products related and elaborating NUPs and people-centered smart cities

4.4 Completion of annual reports

4.5. Development of a global campaign on NUP and people-centered smart cities together with respective branches, UN-Habitat Regional Offices and partners

Source: National Urban Policy Programme, Phase Two: Scaling up People-centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies, Annex A, PRC PROJECT stage: Full Project, p.34-37.

Due to budget constraints, the smart cities approach, initiatives and activities have been repurposed in some countries. However, as discussed in Section 4.3.3 people-centered smart city initiatives have been completed as part of the K-NUPP Phase 2.

2.2.3. Previous evaluations of NUP projects

The RMIT University project team has undertaken three previous evaluations of the NUPP and as well as further NUP-related projects for UN-Habitat. The evaluations have provided broad support for UN-Habitat's work in promoting NUPs through direct project interventions, and in acting as an information exchange and store for countries to draw on to inform NUPs. This includes the range of tools and guides, the opportunities for peer-to-peer learning exchange and fostering communities of practice. The reviews have also identified recurring challenges with implementing NUPs: the political will to undertake NUPs within countries is a determinant of project success, and changes of government and ministerial restructuring can hamper progress; and, constrained resources within countries and allocated for NUP development in countries are oft-reported challenges.

The first evaluation by the RMIT University team was of NUPs in Asia and the Pacific, at a time of increasing urban populations across the region⁸. Reviews were undertaken of urban policies in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as well as major case studies in Vietnam, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Philippines, Malaysia

and Indonesia. The evaluation found the outcome of urbanization in the contexts studied had resulted in 'problems such as spatially unbalanced urbanization, with increased urban populations located to primate or major metropolitan cities; urban density such as urban slums, shared housing and inadequate infrastructure and urban service provision to meet the challenge of rapidly urbanization.

The evaluation notes the differences between the NUPs developed in the Asia and the Pacific; there is recognition of the benefits that arise from NUPs through:

... possessing a clear urban structure for urban expansion, clear statements, and plans designating what areas can be urbanized and what cannot be developed into urban zones⁹.

The RMIT University team¹⁰ undertook a global evaluation of the NUPP, from 2014 to 2021. The evaluation methods included document analysis, a stakeholder survey, interviews with project participants and global operatives, and analysis of internet data on document access. NUPs were reported to have impacted on urban issues by country representatives, including in urban and spatial issues such as economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

⁸ Ali and Dodson, National Urban Policy: Asia and Pacific Report.

⁹ Ali and Dodson, 136.

¹⁰ Denham and Dodson, Evaluation of National Urban Policy Programme 2014-2021.

The 2021 NUPP evaluation presented six recommendations to improve the programme:

- » Build the evidence base and policy library
- » Support NUP development through knowledge sharing and transfer opportunities
- » Place greater emphasis on the use of online education and training for NUPs
- » Address the challenges identified in implementing NUPs
- » Develop tools and guides on pandemics, resilience and establishing indicators for NUPs, and translate materials into more languages to increase distribution.
- » Consider transferring NUPP from an UN-Habitat programme to being part of UN-Habitat core activities¹¹.

More recently, the RMIT University team undertook the final evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 1. The evaluation of the K-NUPP Phase 1 found it had been successful, and met its objectives to:

- » Enhance capacity of sub-national and national governments in the three pilot countries to develop, implement, and monitor and evaluate national/sub-national urban policy and develop smart city strategies.
- » Increase centralization of knowledge and tools on the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of urban policy and smart city strategies.
- » Provide augmented opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning activities on urban policy and smart city strategies¹².
- » The three countries participating in Phase 1 of K-NUPP had progressed towards national or sub-national urban policies by the end of the project:
- » In I.R. Iran, the National Urban Policy was finalized and submitted to the relevant Ministry in August 2022,
- » In Niger State, the Sub-National Urban Policy was approved by the Niger State Government Executive Council as a framework to guide urban and territorial development in the state in June 2021 and presented to the advisory board and the state legislative council for final approval and enactment into law.
- » In Myanmar, an NUP had been drafted, but progress suspended due to the change of government in 2021.

¹¹ Denham and Dodson, vii.

¹² Kroen and Dodson, Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries.

A stylized illustration in light blue and teal. It features a city skyline with a tall building and a smaller house with a chimney. In the foreground, a bicycle is parked on a grassy hill. A palm tree is on the right, and a cloud is in the sky. The title 'Evaluation approach and methods' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, partially overlapping the illustration.

Evaluation approach and methods

This section of the report sets out the evaluation theoretical approach, methods, and their implementation, used to respond to the project objectives¹³.

3.1. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

As a mid-term evaluation, the assessment has been conducted with a focus on informing the remaining period of K-NUPP Phase 2, by undertaking document analysis and consulting with stakeholders and participants in the project. This review also responds to the expected outcomes of an assessment of the use of UN-Habitat evaluations which recommended midterm reviews to “help adjust some of the issues before it is too late in the evaluation process”¹⁴.

The evaluation is framed by a series of questions to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Consideration has also been given to housing, which is a prospective focus of subsequent phases of K-NUPP.

The mid-term evaluation also informs the final evaluation of the K-NUPP Phase 2, following its expected completion in 2027.

Preliminary analysis of project documents reveals some variation in the commitment to the development of people-centered smart cities initiatives within the eight participating countries, which has grounded the data collection in the activities undertaken. Experience from previous evaluations has informed the methods used in this evaluation by widening the scope of interviewees. Interviewees have been included who are not directly participating in the project, including civil society and people who were involved in K-NUPP projects but no longer do so. This adds additional perspectives to the data collected for the evaluation.

The interview questions, provided in the annex of this report, elicited insights into the impact of Phase 2 of the project, and interviewees’ recommendations for a possible K-NUPP Phase 3.

¹³ The K-NUPP project originally included a focus on people-centered smart cities, as included in indicators 2, 3, and 4. However, this element of the project has not been fully addressed in all countries due to budget constraints.[EA1.1] The indicators specifically addressing smart city aspects also address key concerns for NUPs: effectiveness of urban planning, governance, management and service delivery; urban innovations to improve social inclusion, urban environment, resilience and quality of life; and adequate financial resources to improve social inclusion, urban environment, resilience and quality of life. These aspects of NUPs have been considered in the evaluation of the eight countries participating in K-NUPP Phase 2.

¹⁴ Kamote, 2022 Annual Organizational Survey Report on the Use of Evaluations in UN-Habitat, 11.

3.2. Theory of Change approach to the K-NUPP phase 2 evaluation

The Theory of Change used in this evaluation is depicted in Figure 1. The focus of the current evaluation is how K-NUPP Phase 2 in the eight selected countries has progressed towards the intended impacts, and contributed to the objectives (pillars), outcomes (expected accomplishments) and long-term outcomes of the overall UN-Habitat National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP). The diagram reflects how the tools, resources and technical guidance provided through the K-NUPP Phase 2 contribute to the overarching goals of the NUPP. The lines in the figure indicate assumptions of project's impacts to be tested in the evaluation process, with the key aspects of the K-NUPP **content** indicated in orange. The evaluation design implements this Theory of Change by asking respondents about the efficacy of the project elements in the selected countries and its actions.

The lowest two rows of Figure 1 include the four expected outcomes and the content of K-NUPP Phase 2, which also align with the project activities listed in Section 6.2. As the connections from content flow up to outcomes, the Theory of Change illustrates the contribution of K-NUPP Phase 2 to the longer term outcomes and impact of the NUPP. The longer term outcomes are drawn from the Theory of Change use for evaluations of the NUPP and K-NUPP Phases 1, and provide the basis for assessing the contribution of K-NUPP Phase 2 to the strategic aims of UN-Habitat.

Of the four aims of K-NUPP Phase 2, the first *Mainstream the 'people-centered smart cities' approach into national and sub-national urban policies in selected countries* has been greyed out due to the reduced emphasis on people-centered smart cities (see Section 2.2.2).



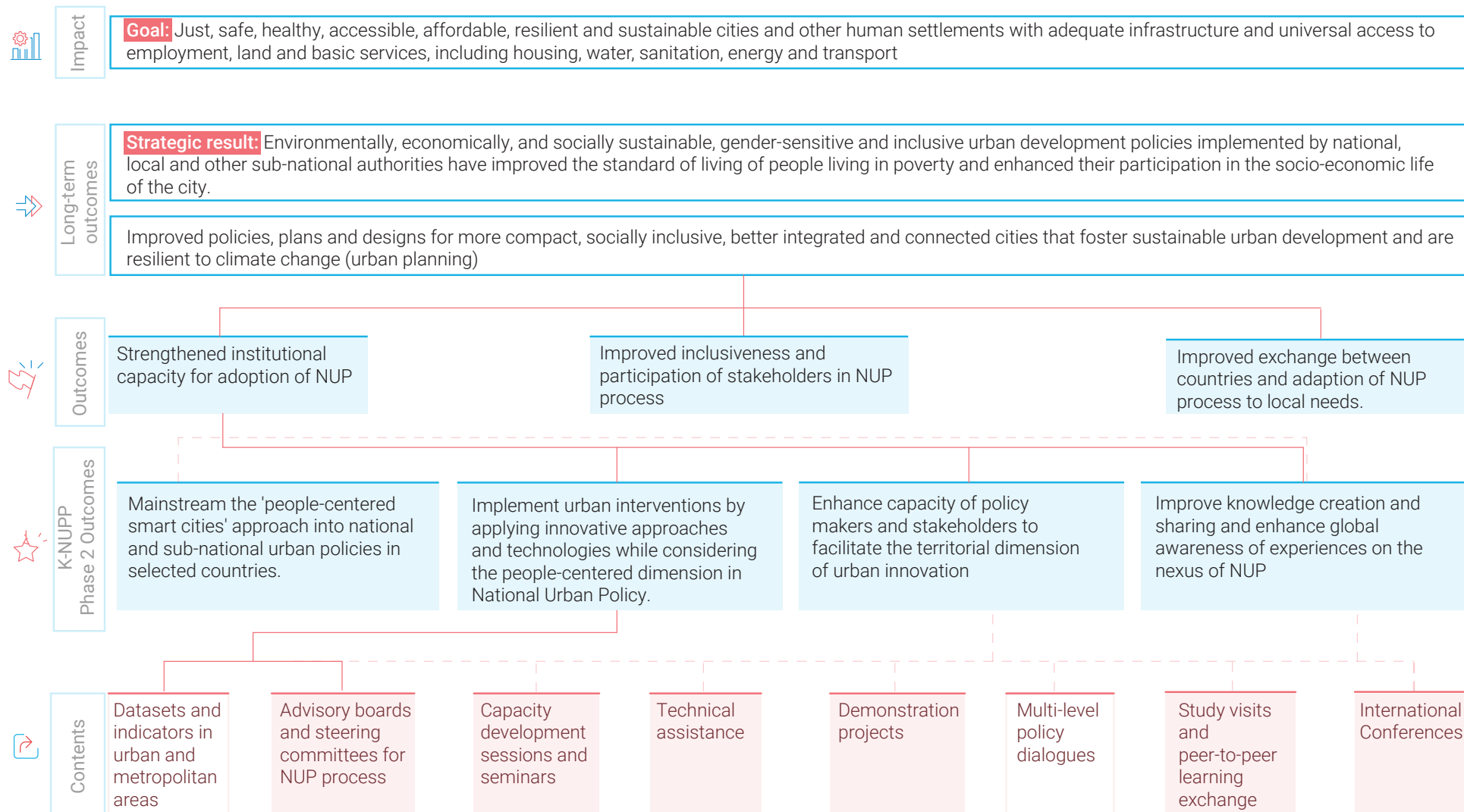


Figure 1: Theory of Change – K-NUPP

Sources: Kroen & Dodson (2023, p.8), based on UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy (2024); Final Evaluation of the Implementation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (p.6) (Lucks & Beira 2020)- Impact, Long-term Outcomes; UN-Habitat Results-Based Management Handbook (UN-Habitat 2017a)– Expected outcomes; National Urban Policy Programme Overview 2019 (UN-Habitat et al. 2019)– Pillars, Actions

The questions used in interviews with K-NUPP project participants and stakeholders are based on the outline for Theory of Change post-implementation reviews¹⁵ and in accordance with the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy¹⁶, which lists the following evaluation criteria and related questions:

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?

Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?

The evaluation analyzed what key activities have been completed (content), who was involved (institutions and individuals), whether the activities of the project resulted in the anticipated outputs, what challenges arose, whether there were any unintended consequences, and what external factors influenced the activities and outputs.

3.3. Methodology: document review, interviews, focus groups

This section of the report provides details of the data collection methods for the K-NUPP evaluation project.

3.3.1. Review of documents relevant to the project

A selection of relevant K-NUPP project documents were analysed with a focus on the project's performance, operational experience, achievements, opportunities and challenges, on a broader level as well as for each of the selected countries. UN-Habitat provided a compilation of supporting documents, and the evaluation team identified and obtained further documents from the beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

¹⁵ Funnell and Rogers, Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models, vol. 31.

¹⁶ UN-Habitat, UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy, 4–5.

The documents reviewed included:

- » Full project documents, results framework, country mini-project documents and implementation plans;
- » Annual work plan;
- » Annual monitoring reports;
- » Quarterly reports (HQ and countries) and meeting minutes;
- » Overall, NUPP evaluation report (2022);
- » Evaluation Report on K-NUPP Phase 1 (2023);
- » Publications and normative products;
- » Reviews of websites and other information available on social media and other platforms (including www.urbanpolicyplatform.org);
- » Strategic plans, as deemed relevant, such as UN-Habitat's Strategic Plans (2014-2019; 2020-2025; 2026-2029), UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy 2024 and other relevant policy documents;
- » Outreach and communication materials.

The document analysis provided detailed information to make an assessment across most of the evaluation criteria.

3.3.2. Key informant interviews

A total of 31 key informant interviews and consultations were conducted with relevant stakeholders, including UN-Habitat staff, people with an inter- or multi- national perspective of programme, and in-country representatives. The key informant interviews were conducted to obtain qualitative information on the evaluation issues, allowing the evaluation team to assess project relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness. Interviews also provided further background and detail that was not accessible through documentary sources.

The interviews were conducted online with video and audio content recorded via MS Teams videoconferencing software. Interviews were transcribed via MS Teams automated transcription technology. The interviews were analysed using the NVivo qualitative analysis software coded thematically based on the evaluation project questions.

A summary of interview participants is included in Table 2. The table shows the number of representatives from each participant country or other related organisations. The 'Other' category for country representatives includes informants who have been involved with or benefited from K-NUPP activities, but are not employed by UN-Habitat. The Other horizontal

category for organizations included representatives of organizations that have a perspective on the entire programme.

The project team faced various limitations in access to key informants, including access and contact information, wide time zone differences and availability constraints, and sensitivities in relation to participation. In particular, interviews could not be held with K-NUPP participants representing I.R. Iran due to the ongoing political challenges and the internet blockade. Of the 31 people interviewed, 22 or 71% were female, at an over-representation compared to the 53% of people included in the recruitment process were female.

Table 2: Interview participant summary

	Azerbaijan	Cambodia	Egypt	Mozambique	Myanmar	Niger State-Nigeria	Paraguay	Other	Total
UN-Habitat - Country Representatives	2	1	2	4	2	1	2		14
UN-Habitat								6	6
Other		2	1	1	1	1		5	11
Total	2	3	3	4	3	2	2	11	31

In total, 77 people were approached by the research team to participate in the evaluation process. Therefore, a substantial 40 per cent of the people on the database provided by UN-Habitat have participated in the evaluation, providing confidence in the outcomes.

3.3.3. Research ethics, participant anonymity and country findings

RMIT University adhered to Australian Government guidelines on the ethical treatment of research participants and requires all research involving human participants to be approved by an expert committee. Important issues in human ethics assessment of research projects include the potential harm to participants through the conduct of the interview as well as the disclosure of personal information,

or information that might have indirect personal or professional consequences. This project principally involved interviews with professional experts in an international policy program intervention and was considered 'lower risk'. However, the potential for harms from disclosure of personal or professional information required mitigation. Under the project arrangements between UN-Habitat and RMIT University, the identities of evaluation participants may only be revealed by the University for the purposes of restricted formal financial audit verification of the conduct of the project.

Human research ethics approval for this evaluation from RMIT University (Project ID 29987, approved 17/12/2025) provides for participant anonymity to be protected in publications arising from the research, including this report.

This requirement includes direct identification (i.e. naming of participants) and reidentification through data provided within the publication, such as role or position, country of involvement with K-NUPP and government and other in-country organisations. Reidentification is a risk due to the low number of representatives from each participant country, which ranged between 2 and 4 as shown in Table 2, excluding Iran.

The anonymity of participants is maintained through the following strategies:

1. Using interviewee reference codes with an indicator of whether their work on K-NUPP

is from a country perspective, UN-Habitat or Other, in the form *IV1 UN-Habitat, IV8 Country, or IV5 Other*.

2. Only referring to documents and other public materials for the assessment of progress in each country (Section 4.1) and using the interview material for the evaluation of the overall K-NUPP project. By not identifying the country of any participants, the possibility of identification through deduction is reduced.
3. Removing names of countries, government departments and projects and initiatives that may serve to identify participants' countries of operation.

K-NUPP phase 2 mid-term evaluation findings



This section of the report includes the main outcomes of the K-NUPP Phase 2 mid-term evaluation, including the progress and challenges reported within the formal project processes, and the results of the interviews with 31 stakeholders undertaken. It provides perspectives from participants on how the project is progressing, actions to date, challenges and outcomes. In section 4.2.1, the six performance indicators are addressed, followed by a consideration of the progress towards the intended long-term outcomes included in the Theory of Change (Figure 1).

4.1. Perspectives on K-NUPP program implementation progress

K-NUPP Phase 2 was discussed in widely positive terms across many interviews and was seen by country representatives as generally effective and meeting expectations (e.g. IV7, IV10, IV18, IV19, IV23, IV27).

Interviewees made supportive statements and reported good progress, such as:

The positive reflections on K-NUPP Phase 2 stemmed from the impacts of the demonstration projects, capacity development and the progress towards and completion of urban policies. Interviewees with a wider view of the project also reported on these positive impacts, for example:

Interviewee 1 (UN-Habitat) noted the positive impact on the lives of people within participating countries, particularly through the demonstration projects and the engagement of governments with the policy process.

Interviewee 22 (UN-Habitat) noted that four of the five additional Phase 2 countries have developed and adopted NUPs, and so the project has increased the urban policy capacity and “made robust and tangible outcomes in terms of developing and implementation of the NUPs”.



We have had ... a lot of support. And so, I think that in terms of the goals that we had in the logical framework of the project, they are almost all met (IV29 Country).



... the programme is very effective, from capacity building to infrastructure development to improving people's lives and livelihood to service delivery (IV19 Country).



this project is really directly involving so many people, and it is really impacting so many people's lives very directly, ... housing, water, sanitation, basic services all over again. And that's, really, I am being proud of this project (IV2 UN-Habitat).

IV4 (Other) considered that the development of NUPs by participating countries is “the most meaningful output”, affirming the importance of the focus on policy in project activities.

The progress of K-NUPP Phase 2 compared to the projected achievements is included in Section 6.2 of this evaluation report, drawing on the annual reports for the K-NUPP Phase 2 project. This summary of activities undertaken and their expected date of completion indicates that the project is on track to deliver the outcomes expected of the project, particularly the main outcomes of National and Sub-national Urban Policies, demonstration projects, and the preparation of guides for the implementation of people-centered smart cities.

4.2. Global and national contexts

The K-NUPP Phase 2 commenced in late 2022, in the aftermath of the period when reported COVID-19 deaths were averaging 50,000 per week globally, but were likely to be much higher due to under reporting¹⁷. Other global shocks in the intervening years have also had social and economic consequences that have made the task of reducing global poverty more difficult, including inflation, conflicts and the increasing impacts of climate change¹⁸. The effects of these

disruptions have further led to an increased awareness of supply chain vulnerabilities, and declining social cohesion and commitments to globalism¹⁹. Governments are facing fiscal constraints after the pandemic, which are exacerbated by uncertainties in international trade and energy markets²⁰. This uncertainty has also affected the United Nations overall, most notably with the withdrawal by major donors like USA in recent years²¹.

Therefore, the K-NUPP Phase 2 is being implemented during a period of global disruption and uncertainty. While the degree of impact is difficult to ascertain, it is likely that issues and challenges relating to weakening government commitment may also have been exacerbated by global turbulence.

Individually, participating countries have experienced various challenges within this period. The dynamic country-level circumstances under which K-NUPP Phase 2 has been conducted, adds complexity to this evaluation as:

More prominent are the geo-political dynamics and changes in government administration affecting countries like I.R Iran, Myanmar. These challenges have reduced the momentum of project implementation to the extent of hindering implementation of demonstration projects and often placing uncertainty of project sustainability.



I think you may find this as you run through the evaluation, that we can't really compare the countries because we're going to see a lot of differences (IV1 UN-Habitat).

¹⁷ WHO, “WHO COVID-19 Dashboard.”

¹⁸ López-Calva et al., “Post-Pandemic Trends in Extreme Poverty around the World”; UNDP, “Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19.”

¹⁹ Baquie et al., Industrial Policies.

²⁰ OECD, OECD Economic Outlook, Interim Report March 2026: Testing Resilience.

²¹ Center For Global Development, “US Funding of International Organizations Has Collapsed.”

Further conflict has occurred along the border between K-NUPP participant country Cambodia and neighbouring Thailand, with an uneasy truce in place since December 2025²². While this has not directly affected the K-NUPP it has led to diminished capacity for policy development.

Elections in Paraguay, Cambodia and Mozambique were all discussed in interviews as having some impact on the progress of NUPs and momentum of programme implementation. The difficulty of pursuing NUPs in countries that were not supporting their development was noted by several interviewees, including one reference to remaining “under the radar” (IV 2 Country) and “organizing, gathering the community, we have to be careful that we are doing all these things legally” (IV11 Country).

4.3. Participant country progress

A summary of the key activities by each country is included in Table 3, drawn from the annual and quarterly reports of the K-NUPP project.

The above discussion of global and national contexts is evident in the progress, as countries have placed emphasis on the aspects of K-NUPP Phase 2 that are most relevant and achievable in response to their circumstances. The different progress made on NUPs demonstrates the need for project operational staff to be flexible in response to circumstances, as discussed in the phase 1 K-NUPP evaluation report²³.

Table 4 summarises the challenges identified in the quarterly country reports prepared as part of the K-NUPP Phase 2 reporting process. The majority of the challenges are related to two recurring themes in the evaluation of the National Urban Policy Programme and associated projects: the commitment of government to NUPs; and the limited financial and human resources available to effectively manage an NUP process. These issues have been noted in previous evaluations of NUP projects and programmes²⁴. The table also reveals the disruptions caused by unforeseen events, including the war in I.R. Iran, which has continued, as well as the earthquake in Myanmar which occurred among other cases.



²² WHO, “Public Health Situation Analysis - Cambodia - Thailand Border Conflict.”

²³ Kroen and Dodson, Evaluation of the Programme “Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries.”

²⁴ Kroen and Dodson; Denham and Dodson, Evaluation of National Urban Policy Programme 2014-2021.

The information summarised in Tables 3 and 4 provides a foundation for the evaluation against performance indicators included in the following section of the report.

Table 3: Country progress summary table

Issue	Azerbaijan	Cambodia	Egypt	I.R. Iran	Mozambique	Myanmar	Niger State	Paraguay
NUP/SNUP	Draft NUP by mid-2026.	Land Management and Land Use Policy for Developing Preah Sihanouk Province as a Multi- Purpose Special Economic Zone 2022 – 2038	NUP finalized and launched in November 2024, translated from Arabic to English in December 2025.	National Policy and Smart City Strategy approved in 2022	Urbanization policy approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2024. Implementation plan to be developed	NUP has been drafted. Progress paused	Progress towards SNUP. Published Niger State Urban Policy: A Roadmap to Transformation	Paraguay's National Urban, Housing and Habitat Policy approved January 2024. Implementation plan being validated
Demonstration Projects	In development	Smart city projects on waste management, parking and security	In development	Implementing NUP in I.R Iran for Thriving Climate-Adaptive Cities Installing solar panels in Tehran Local capacity through vocational education	Pilot mobility project, training school-going girls on safe cycling to-and-from schools	Provision of Sustainable Solar Energy Solutions in Taung Gyi Township	Water Sanitation and Hygiene facility, Kpakungu community.	In development
Smart Cities	Capacity building; urban innovation and digital transformation	Smart City Action Plan for Preah Sihanouk Province	Inclusion of Badr Smart City in the K-City Network Programme. Included in NUP implementation	NUP and Smart Cities Strategy	Digital Urban Transformation Mapping and Assessment Report Municipal Urban Observatory in Pemba	National Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy drafted	Smart City Strategy drafted	
Conferences and forums	So far held 2 National Urban Forums, Hosted 2026 13 th WUF	National Urban Forum (NUF): Smart, Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Cities	Held one NUF, Hosted WUF 12		Hosted NUF			Hosted NUF

Sources: K-NUPP quarterly country reports, 2023-24 Annual Report, 2024-25 Annual Report.

Table 4: Summary of Country Report challenges

Country	Government	Finance and Resources			Other		
Azerbaijan	Delay in organizing Steering Committee	"Silo" attitude of government institutions Limited availability/access to data					
Cambodia	Political risks	Financial constraints	Human resource capacity issues (HR)	Limited resource mobilization			
Egypt	Shuffle in the Government	Coordination of Korea funded outcomes and country funded outcomes					
I.R. Iran	Limited availability of disaggregated data and challenges in cross-institutional coordination for the National Progress Report				War	Technical Failures	
Mozambique	Political: Inadequate cooperation of different levels of government due to October post-election period	Financial constraints					
Myanmar	Civil conflict and restricted access.				Earthquakes and aftershocks	Natural Disasters: e.g. floods or landslides.	Technical Failures
Niger State	Political challenges	Financial constraints	Resource mobilization				
Paraguay	Low Engagement of Local Governments	Financial constraints					

4.3.1. Demonstration projects

Demonstration projects represent a major aspect of the implementation of K-NUPP Phase 2. For the three countries that participated in Phase 1 of the project, demonstration projects have been a focus of Phase 2 activity, which have resulted significant benefits for their communities. The implementation of demonstration projects is a strategic priority for 2026 for the five Phase 2 countries²⁵.

4.3.1.1. Phase 1 countries

In I.R Iran, the demonstration project has delivered a solar-powered 30kW renewable energy system that comprises 40 panels each providing 720W of power. The system has provided energy to 2,250 residents of Tehran, improving capacity, productivity and climate change adaptation and resilience for the community. The project also addresses the sustainability of the energy supply by including training for 450 youths in the maintenance of the energy system.

Renewable energy was also the focus of the demonstration project in Myanmar, which included installations in four villages in Taung Gyi, Southern Shan State. The benefits of the installations were to 3,340 people who were connected to the off-grid solar system, and a further 600 households that were home to 2,376 people received solar lights. A solar powered water pump was provided to a school, along with a

solar energy system and access to digital knowledge and improved digital literacy for the students. As with the I.R. Iran project, training for the operation and maintenance of the solar facility was provided to 1,105 residents and students. In total, 7,711 people benefited from this demonstration project through access to clean energy, clean water, proper sanitation and hygiene, economic productivity, and climate resilience.

In Niger State, demonstration projects improved sanitation and hygiene in an informal settlement. The project provided two toilets and bathrooms, and a borehole to provide clean water and sanitation that was powered by a solar system. In total, 2,500 residents of the informal settlement in Kpakungu, Minna have benefited from the project, including the access to 5,000 litres of clean water per day. The project aligns with the Sub-National Urban Policy of Niger State by increasing the resilience of urban infrastructure and services.

4.3.1.2. Phase 2 countries

Phase 2 countries have been preparing for demonstration projects to implement their urban policies. For example, Cambodia's Smart City Action Plan for Preah Sihanouk Province (2025) will the implementation of people-centered smart city demonstration projects.

The following demonstration projects in development and expected to be implemented in 2025-26:

Cambodia, Preah Sihanouk Province:



- Three smart city projects:
 - » Improving Waste Management System in Sihanoukville
 - » Enhancing Provincial Capacity in Sustainable Operation and Maintenance of Smart Security, and
 - » Advancing Smart Parking for Better Mobility Intervention
- Improved access to urban basic services in informal settlements



²⁵ UN-Habitat, 2024-2025 Annual Report, National Urban Policy Programme, Phase Two: Scaling up People-Centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies.

Mozambique:



- Development of an urban observatory for Pemba Municipality
- Promoting safe urban mobility in Maputo

Azerbaijan:



- Improved accessibility to public spaces and road safety in Baku
- Student mapping projects for public spaces in Baku to support demonstration projects, in collaboration with the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy University and the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture.

Paraguay:



- Improvement of public spaces in Guarambaré

Egypt:



- Participatory upgrading of under-used plots into gender-inclusive sports and recreation areas in Alexandria
- Heritage-led regeneration of the Mamluk Desert area through small-scale public-space improvements and community-based activation in Cairo
- In Damietta, upgrading Abdel-Rahman Street with practical, low-cost interventions that organize street activity, enhance accessibility, and improve the environment for craftsmen, shop owners, and residents

Demonstration projects are a major part of the K-NUPP Phase 2 project, and as the outcomes from the projects undertaken by Phase 1 countries show, they provide substantial benefits to communities. As the Phase 2 countries move into implementation, the benefits arising from demonstration projects can expect to increase in terms of the number of beneficiaries and also, as indicated by interviewees, increase the support for urban policy processes within governments, communities and civil society. Given the importance of demonstration projects in the next stage of K-NUPP Phase 2, decisions regarding their implementation need to consider their alignment

with the strategic aims of the project as set out in the Theory of Change (Section 3.2).

4.4. Performance indicators for K-NUPP Phase 2

This evaluation uses the six standard criteria used by UN-Habitat in project assessment: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and coherence. While these criteria framed the evaluation, the assessment is partial, as they are more suited to ex-ante evaluation, particularly when considering those related to project outcomes, such as effectiveness, impact and sustainability.



...[by] choosing the cities where to pilot the demo projects or whatever decision we're making with the government, we make sure that this decision aligns with what is this thing or what is happening on ground right now (IV14 Country).



.. contributed to the overall achievement of SDG 11, contributed to our work to keep the presence, advocacy, urbanization, partnering with UN agencies and so on (IV24 UN-Habitat).

4.4.1. Relevance

The evaluation of relevance includes consistency with national policy, strategy and development priorities, responsiveness to global urban agendas, relevance to beneficiaries and the comparative advantage of UN-Habitat in implementing NUPs.

In general, the K-NUPP project is seen as having made a relevant contribution to the participating countries, through the support for policy and capacity development and the tangible or visible positive outcomes from the demonstration projects. Interviewee 5, external to UN-Habitat, argued that UN-Habitat's work on NUPs in partnership with countries is a "very constructive offering". In more detail, Interviewee 14 (Country) reported that the close collaboration with that government on project work facilitated relevance:

Interviewees 23 and 27, representing different countries, reported on the importance of urban policies in applying for and obtaining international development funding, indicating a contribution of the project to achieving national aims and the value of recognition of the project by other international funding organisations.

K-NUPP Phase 2 was also described by participants as having contributed to global agendas. For example, interviewee 24, from UN-Habitat argued that it had:

Interviewee 8 (UN-Habitat) observed the consistencies of the K-NUPP

project with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Urban Governance Lab (UGL), arguing that it is at the local or urban level that the SDGs are implemented. However, this participant also argued that there is a challenge to connect the project to local circumstances to increase its relevance to countries, to "make it real at a country level and not to be just, you know, a deliverable" (IV8 UN-Habitat).

Five of the participants reported having had an NUP endorsed by their respective governments or having made substantial progress towards having an NUP endorsed (Table 3 above). In Egypt, Mozambique and Azerbaijan for example, progress has been accelerated to meet the aims of the national governments, indicating their relevance to issues and objectives. However, the consistency of K-NUPP activity with countries' policy, strategy and development plans is contingent upon the stance of the national government towards urban policy and the work of the UN-Habitat within their countries.

Changes of government, and within government, are often detrimental to the continuity of NUP process as new ministries tend to focus on their own agendas rather than continue the work of their predecessors. As Interviewee 10 (Country) observed, "in democracy, there is rotation" and Interviewee 12 (Country) similarly noted "the constant change of government reshuffles". For example, Interviewees 23 and 25 reported difficulties in their countries emerging from a change to a new

minister responsible for urban policy, and changes to ministerial structure had led to a diminished interest in urban policy and responsibilities within one country:

The government timing and the change of mandate was really bad for us, because the last government and the Ministry, they were so much engaged with the with the urbanization issue (IV29 Country).

Participants from UN-Habitat also expanded on the issues presented by changing governments, that in the transition to new ministries and people in charge is a disruption and impedes progress as “we are discussing again from the very beginning” (IV2 UN-Habitat, also IV1 UN-Habitat).

In addition to the changing governments and responsibilities for National Urban Policy, where changes are part of democratic processes, the military coup in Myanmar, conflict in Cambodia and war against I.R. Iran have prevented progress on the NUP. Interviewee 2 (UN-Habitat) reported that the situation in these countries:

...really...challenged us, the political situation, the political sensitivity that we are having there, it's really challenging us (IV2 UN-Habitat).

Therefore, K-NUPP relevance is dependent not only on the aims and objectives of K-NUPP, but also the commitment of government towards the project, and the circumstances of the country. Interviewee 18 (Country) discussed how the political disruption in their country, and as a result of the use of consultants in drafting the NUP, weakened the connections between the government and the Country Office.

IV 15 (UN-Habitat) reported that the risks related to political change were being mitigated through:

... having our colleagues at the country level, not only country offices, having hands on information on current activities and keeping us updated on a real time basis on upcoming issues or expected challenges. For example, if maybe we are pre-empting an election to be done the next few months of next year, then we will look at activities that may be done before then, due to the pre-emption of potential delays, due to the change in government, [and] also the full advice on how to best go about it.

An issue related to relevance of the K-NUPP project is the inclusion of the sub-national initiatives in the project in Niger State, as well as Cambodia where the work is concentrated within Preah Sihanouk Province. The issue is not the quality or impact of the work undertaken in sub-national projects, but their contribution to the aims of UN-Habitat in fostering the development of **national** urban policies and localization through K-NUPP Phase 2. The underlying criteria for assessing project relevance of consistency and UN-Habitat's comparative advantage in implementing the NUPs respond to the need for alignment with the strategic purpose of K-NUPP Phase 2 and the work of UN-Habitat in promoting national urban policies.

4.4.1.1. Climate change

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are not explicit aims of the K-NUPP project, but as observed by Interviewee 4 (Other), but via the long-term planning undertaken a “country can manage and prepare for climate change”. Climate change is a significant challenge facing cities and cross cutting theme of the National Urban Policy Programme.

One interviewee reported on informal settlements and that they:

... emphasise the natural best solutions to strengthen community resilience, because they are living on the shoreline ... we really support them in terms of their resilience (IV21 Country).

Responses to climate change are evident in demonstration projects, including renewable energy projects in Cambodia, Myanmar, Niger State of Nigeria, and I.R. Iran. Also in Cambodia, the project has worked with communities on strengthening resilience to climate change, and have developed a climate response plan. In Cambodia, the project has also had a focus on resilience of in-need communities, as well as encouraging community participation in green urban space development, environment and climate change issues.

In Azerbaijan, interviewees reported on including climate change adaptation measures within the urban policy. Baku also hosted the COP 29 climate conference, which has enabled the Country Office to promote the overlap of climate change responses and urban development.

4.4.1.2. Inclusive NUP processes

Interviewees indicated that they addressed the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human Rights, young people, and marginalized communities through inclusive

consultative processes and through direct interventions in demonstration projects. For example, Interviewee 11 (Country) reported that elderly people and women were represented in their consultation processes, and Interviewee 29 (Country) reported holding 70 community meetings including 'very poor people of the neighbourhoods', which had created widespread awareness of the project.

In Mozambique, the K-NUPP resources supported a project to improve transport safety for school-going girls, and included mapping routes, and a student competition to inform implementation. Safety was also a concern for Interviewee 9 (Country):

In addition to inclusion within consultation processes, project outcomes were also inclusive by design:

In Niger State, wide and inclusive consultation processes were undertaken, including women, young people, children, even persons with disabilities, and the traditional institutions from different regions. Community engagement was undertaken in Myanmar and Mozambique, where obtaining the inputs from across society informed project actions. In Cambodia, households had been consulted with to identify the challenges to be addressed in informal settlements. However, the low representation of women in the Cambodian Government was seen as an obstacle for inclusionary processes. In Azerbaijan, students have attended and volunteered at

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The issues of gender, youth, you know, disability, I mean, all these cross-cutting issues were always very present. The urbanisation and policy and the implementation of the policy has always been trying to promote issues that, for example, promote safer cities, safer cities for women

The project has delivered tangible benefits for low-income and vulnerable communities by improving access to basic services and crisis support through demonstration activities. These interventions helped reduce immediate health and service gaps for disadvantaged groups (IV16 Other).

conferences, but as with Cambodia, the shortage of women in government has influenced the level of inclusion in this regard.

This does suggest that there has been efforts to address the cross-cutting themes of inclusion within K-NUPP Phase 2. However, it also indicates that as the project begins to focus on demonstration projects, there is a need to focus on women, children, the aged disabled in their design and implementation.

4.4.2. Efficiency

The key considerations for evaluating efficiency are cost effectiveness, project design and implementation, efficiency of activities, use of inputs, institutional arrangements, obstacles faced, products and services delivered, and changes to the beneficiaries because of the project. The assessment of efficiency in relation to outcomes, products and services delivered and changes to beneficiaries are limited due to this evaluation being mid-term, as it is too early to assess the efficiency of the development of NUPs and their implementation.

The work undertaken within K-NUPP Phase 2 was seen to be efficient by country representatives, but this is driven by the commitment to astute use of constrained budgets to deliver project outcomes. As Interviewee 9 (Country) stated:

I would say it's a relatively modest amount, which is stretched through several years. It makes it, you know, you have to use it very wisely to have impact.

Interviewee 27 (Country) considered that the funding been used efficiently with support from other sources:

I think we used it in the best way possible. And I think it is what it is ... because of the mobilisation of core resources from the country and also in-kind contributions, I think it's definitely on track and it set very solid seeds and is rooting now in the country (IV27 – Country).

Interviewee 2 reflected on how the limited budget meant that there was an impetus to rely on volunteers to realise the aims of K-NUPP, rather than employ people. As they explained:

... we're really making, sure that this project is not paying people. Paying something else, paying the process, paying the project, paying the solar panel, paying the construction, paying the whatever helpful things that we are doing ... but you will have different points of views from different people, because I'm pretty sure some people will be complaining about like, why this project is not paying me, but asking me so many work from this? (IV2 UN-Habitat).

Others noted that this approach to the resources under K-NUPP has led to decisions that affect the capacity within countries. When asked about the impact of budget constraints, Interviewee 8 (Country) replied:

... because we are aware this might be affecting the projects, that's why we need really well-designed activities and then set up the working group at a sub-national level, so that I myself only need to follow up and monitor the project. So, with limited budget rather than get not good people, we decided not to really recruit and then we used the internal staff.

Relatedly, there were views presented that the limited budget is also a constraint on the project, that the lack of resources was reducing the benefits that might result from K-NUPP Phase 2 (IV2- UN-Habitat).

IV7 (Country) noted that they had constrained their operational costs, to focus resources on implementation and training, which meant:

... it was possible to achieve significant impacts. And it was possible to, I would say this has been more, for us at least, it worked as a sort of a catalysing small fund that allowed for gathering, you know, convening partners, gathering more resources to do things that are bigger than what strictly that fund would allow (IV7 Country).

they call the local, LGA local government areas ... And we keep counting the numbers. So, this has been one of the areas where we were able to actually tie projects, changes in people's quality of life (IV1 UN-Habitat).

In summary, interviewees considered the levels of budget allocation as a significant challenge in implementing K-NUPP Phase 2, resulting in the reluctance to employ people to work on projects, but at the same time had driven project efficiencies and motivated a clear focus on delivering benefits to their respective countries.

Related to the relevance of K-NUPP to other global initiatives, Interviewee 9 noted that the project funding had made it possible to attract funding from external sources to support the policy development process.

4.4.2.1. Demonstration projects

Demonstration projects are seen as a major contributor to the efficiency of the project by many participants, who cited numbers of people who benefited for minimal costs of the intervention. For example:

... because that demonstration project of what, \$20,000 or \$15,000 actually improved the life of 20,000 people, created access to water, clean, but we actually use, I mean, you know, the thing we have done that, and we have now done that in a few cities, a few, you know, over there they call local government,

In Myanmar, the approach that they used is both giving the facilities and the vocational training ... they provided the solar panel to the schools and also to the households, and ...they delivered some vocational training how to use those appliances and why those clean energy systems are important. So, it provided not only the sustainable energy solutions, but also gave the capacity building activities so that the beneficiaries could get information and knowledge regarding the solar panel and sustainable energy that they could not only maintain the systems by themselves, but also, they could enhance their awareness regarding the sustainable modalities (IV22 – UN-Habitat).

Other participants provided similar data on the impact of demonstration projects with low costs, indicating the efficiency of these aspects of the K-NUPP project (e.g. IV2, IV15, IV19, IV22, IV27). The demonstration projects also provide a preliminary measure of the changes of lives to K-NUPP Phase 2 beneficiaries.

As this indicates, the demonstration projects provide a direct impact to beneficiaries and have been delivered in a cost-effective manner, but as discussed above resource limitations mean they are being implemented with limited employment.



4.4.2.2. Political will

Political will, which includes a range of issues relating to the commitment of governments to NUPS, is a recurring theme in evaluations of UN-Habitat projects programmes²⁶, and cuts across all performance indicators of the evaluation. It is discussed here due to the relationship between political will and the concerns for institutional arrangements and administrative obstacles within the Efficiency evaluation.

Political concerns were widely reported as a significant challenge by participants in this evaluation (e.g. IV1, IV2, IV10, IV14, IV15, IV19, IV23, IV27, IV28, IV29). As Interviewee 22 (UN-Habitat) noted, government support is essential from the initiation of the project in countries, including feasibility, diagnosis and the organisation of steering committees, but:



... if the governments are not really prepared or they are not in a proper position to make it happen the things we could do are very limited. So that is a huge kind of constraint in delivering the project as planned (IV22 UN-Habitat).

Conversely, Interviewee 15 (UN-Habitat) noted that:



So, when the government is strongly committed, there will be the annual budgetary allocations which would enable sustainable urbanization of those activities ... we're strengthening partnerships with the government (IV15 UN-Habitat).

This commitment is also evident in the financial and in-kind support from the respective governments in Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Egypt and Mozambique, which have supported additional outcomes and programme implementation.

An alternative view of the issues associated with the political will to implement NUPs was expressed by IV8 (UN-Habitat), who argued that there needs to be a greater emphasis on the understanding the political

context within countries, and its implications for the project. They also noted that there are a range of issues associated with political will:



It can be that the minister owns all the land on the edge and he doesn't want to have anything involved with it down to... ... that this isn't this isn't the most important issue for the country at that particular time, they've got they've got a conflict going on in the north and all the resources are up there... ... If there wasn't the political will, we couldn't do it (IV8 UN-Habitat).

This participant observation suggests that the challenges posed by political will can be mitigated through selection and preparation processes prior to the commencement of projects such as K-NUPP, and therefore is discussed further in Section 5.1.3.1.3.

However, as discussed above (Section 4.3.1), long term projects such as K-NUPP Phase 2 are likely to run across election cycles and are inherently at risk from disruptions and political unrest if these occur. For K-NUPP Phase 1 participants I.R. Iran and Myanmar, participation began in 2017, it is unlikely that preliminary investigations would have foreseen the circumstances of these countries. Interviewees from UN-Habitat did refer to a risk management plan and normative guides being under development, which based on the various evaluations NUPPs, should provide guidance on how to respond to changing political situations.

4.4.3. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the K-NUPP Phase 2 project is an evaluation criterion that is not generally applicable to a mid-term evaluation, due to its consideration of outcomes. For this mid-term review, the pertinent criteria are the involvement of national and local stakeholders, the capacity of management to learn from and adjust to changes during implementation, and monitoring of the project.

²⁶ See Kroen and Dodson, Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries"; Denham and Dodson, Evaluation of National Urban Policy Programme 2014-2021.

Interviewee 17 (Other) reported that their government entity had benefited from exposure to community consultation processes and scientific inputs, that in the past they “just want to make something fast and see the production”. They now see consultation as valuable in supporting effective project implementation, even if it takes more time to complete.

Working with national stakeholders is seen as a crucial aspect of the effectiveness of the project, with participants from countries reporting on instigating and participating in working groups, including smart city development (IV7), and with ministries to progress urban policy (e.g. IV9, IV12, IV23), notwithstanding the discussion above (Section 4.3.1) on the variability in national government commitment to NUPs. Connections to government are also seen as a crucial underpinning for sustainability.

Project management has adapted to several changing circumstances, which is reflected in the discussion above (Section 4.1). An example of the willingness and capacity of project managers to learn and adapt is the reduction in focus on people-centered smart cities, which was necessitated by the limited availability of resources. The response to this situation, which has de-emphasised people-centered smart cities as the project proceeds, is discussed further below. Flexibility has also been demonstrated as a factor in effectiveness at a country level, including the examples of transitioning activity to focus on subnational projects in Myanmar and Cambodia, given the politically challenging environments, by providing benefits to communities through demonstration projects and urban acupuncture. However, the extent to which such flexibility also diminishes the contribution of these projects to the overarching strategic aims of K-NUPP Phase 2 is an important consideration as the project progresses.

However, these responses to changing circumstances have not been reflected in the strategic footing of the project, including the Theory of Change for K-NUPP Phase 2. Due to the extended duration of K-NUPP Phase 2, revising project documentation and strategies considering changing circumstances (see Section 4.2) may result in effective use of resources in the final stages of the project, and provide a robust foundation for the final evaluation.

4.4.3.1. Country variations

The Effectiveness evaluation criteria include learning from and adjusting to changes during implementation, monitoring and major factors affecting the project’s progress, and major factors influencing the progress towards expected outcomes. As discussed above (Section 4.2), the variation in circumstances and progress between the eight participating countries is a challenge for evaluating K-NUPP Phase 2, and in assessing its effectiveness. Interviewee 2 (UN-Habitat) considered the main challenge for the project is that “we are collaborating with different capacities of each country’s government”, and went on to provide more detail:

[The] level of implementation amount of resources can be invested, human resource, like the capacity of human resources are varied in each of countries. So, we cannot basically say if we are having this recommendation to this country, we are not just, it's just impossible that we are having the same recommendation to [every] country, so it is a bit difficult for us, but what we are trying (IV2 UN-Habitat).

As explained by Interviewee 1 (UN-Habitat), there are advantages as well as disadvantages relating to the variation between countries:

Some have already implemented, some are on track, some are very slow. So, lesson learned, you can't expect all the countries to perform the same way at the same level. So that's one thing we are noticing. But when we designed [the project], we thought that you know, all countries were go... ...[but] in a way, it's helping because they are learning from those who are ahead and those who are behind. But we didn't design it so that they had different tiers or different levels. So that's one challenge that we are trying to mitigate in the project, to see how we can still get all the countries moving, you know, together (IV1 UN-Habitat).

The variation of countries providing the basis for learning and knowledge exchange was also noted by IV2 (UN-Habitat).

The need to address different needs and circumstances within countries was seen as creating an additional resource burden on UN-Habitat and the operation of K-NUPP Phase 2:

It is more like a Chinese medicine that every person is different, and you need really to provide that person with what is good for her or for him ... And of course, that comes at the cost. The cost of you need to dedicate more time, you need to be more or paying more attention to understand what explains the context, the situation. And we are talking about urban policy, so behind there is a lot of political economy (IV10 Country).

These variances across the countries, in terms of their initial context at the commencement of the K-NUPP project, the divergent capacities to implement the project, the dynamic internal circumstances of the country and the varying national objectives

and priorities make an objective assessment of effectiveness difficult. The K-NUPP may have been highly effective in the context of the condition of the country at the time of implementation and in light of changing circumstances and cannot easily be measured through standardised quantitative data. Untangling the multiple factors supporting or impeding K-NUPP project implementation and effectiveness is methodologically difficult.

4.4.3.2. People-centered smart cities

Mainstreaming people-centered smart cities in the participant countries' urban policies was initially the main aim of K-NUPP Phase 2, as indicated by the project title. While budgetary constraints have diminished the focus on people-centered smart cities, participating countries have continued to develop policies and demonstration projects that respond to this original aim or progressed the digitalisation of urban functions. In addition to budgets affecting the implementation of people-centered smart cities, this theme also provides an example of how the various capacities and circumstances within countries need to be taken into account:

The smart cities perspective can, in some contexts, feel somewhat removed from the most pressing territorial and social needs, especially in a country where around 35 per cent of the population lives in poverty and where both qualitative and quantitative housing deficits persist (IV 17 Country, also 10 Country).

Interviewee 27 (Country) considered the focus on smart cities as important, as "you can't stop digitalisation", but went on to argue that it is only one aspect of urbanization requiring attention alongside issues such as climate, migration, and housing. As this suggests, a broader focus on digitalisation as a cross-cutting theme or as support for efficient implementation of urban policy may be beneficial for future initiatives. This is supported by participants noted the usefulness of the smart city approach

(IV13, IV30, IV31 Country). Interview 29 (Country) considered the innovative strategy for digitalisation was a key outcome from the K-NUPP, which meant “we have this kind of little bible regarding how to do things with which actors”.

One approach to the difficulty some countries have had in pursuing smart city policies has been intervening in smart ways to develop capacities and smart provision of basic services within countries, such as when promoting household solar panel installation considering the training requirements to develop local capacity (IV15 UN-Habitat). In Mozambique, the benefits of digitalisation have been recognised through the development of an urban observatory, and similarly smart city adjacent projects such as solar energy provision in Cambodia. Such training may provide the foundation for smart city and digitalisation initiatives in future projects.

The mainstreaming people-centered smart cities was not replaced as the main aim within K-NUPP Phase 2, leaving the development of NUPs and the demonstration projects as the primary objectives of the programme. The response to the challenges countries have faced in implementing smart cities have been adjusted to, and countries have progressed smart and digital developments targeted to address,

particular needs. In the longer term, however, this adjustment may affect the assessment of the effectiveness of the project given the lack of clear objectives to measure against as discussed in Section 4.4.3.

4.4.4. Impact

This mid-term evaluation of the impact of K-NUPP Phase 2 is based on expectations of future outcomes along with the direct impacts of the demonstration projects discussed in Section 4.3.2. It is also likely that the impacts of NUPs and other policy interventions will take longer to eventuate given the timeframes of change in the patterns of urban development. This is relevant to the evaluation of the expected outcome of sustainable urban development, rather than the prosaic consideration of whether the actions listed in the project plan have been completed. As IV7 (Country) noted in relation to a demonstration project, “it’s hard to see the impact at the present time, but so far the stakeholders fully support the pilot implementation”.

With this caveat considered, it is clear from the summary in Table 3 that progress towards NUPs has been made in alignment with the project expectations where the circumstances within countries have allowed. As Interviewee 28 (UN-Habitat) stated:



... the K-NUPP initiatives in Mozambique, Egypt, and Azerbaijan have yielded positive results. In Mozambique, the NUP has gained significant momentum due to the government's strong political will, resulting in a swiftly developed draft through cross-ministry collaboration. Regarding Egypt and Azerbaijan, their NUPs were strategically aligned with the K-City Network, a Korean-funded program dedicated to formulating smart city master plans. Notably, the projects in Badr (Egypt) and the urban data platforms in Agdam and Fuzuli (Azerbaijan) successfully operationalized smart city strategies within their respective NUP frameworks (IV28 UN-Habitat).

Representatives from within participating countries provided insights into the impact of K-NUPP Phase 2. Interviewee 9 (Country) reported that the project had raised the awareness of the importance of urban policy within their government. Similarly, Interviewee 10 (Country) noted how the NUP discussions of public space “allows you to touch directly to the nerves of local democracy, institutions, communities”, generating awareness and understanding of the importance and value of urban policy.

Interviewee 29 (Country) considered that the process of undertaking K-NUPP Phase 2 had increased the capacity in their country, which was likely to result in lasting impacts, through:

... the opportunity to finish the project and to support and accompany the government until they will be independent and they will gain sustainability to manage things to things by themselves. So, this is really the biggest impact because they will be capacitated through this project in terms of how to manage the action plan, the strategy of implementation (IV29 Country).

Interviewee 31 (Country) reflected on the impact of K-NUPP Phase 2 through improving the urban policy process and the introduction of digitalisation, including:

... data for decision making, and trying to integrate all these main points across the policy framework. So, it was very helpful through the digital transformation that was one of the key transversal issues within the policy was because of this project. And it helped a lot (IV31 Country).

Interviewees 7 and 23 (Country) also reflected on the impact of the project on community consultation processes in their countries, aligning with the aim for inclusive policy development.

An important impact of K-NUPP Phase 2 has been the flow-on of program and practice knowledge to other countries, who are benefiting from progress made by participants. As Interviewee 26, who is involved in developing an NUP in a non-participating country, explained:

We use the same methodologies as for the K-NUPP. And of course, there's been... especially from the information that is coming from the different countries that is feeding into the feedback also that we're giving to [country] in terms of you know, this was a bottleneck in another country or in that sense, or this worked well or this kind of approach (IV26 – External)

Interviewee 1 (UN-Habitat) also reported impacts from K-NUPP Phase 2 on other countries, noting the importance of the work in Mozambique in providing materials in Portuguese, which has benefited other lusophone countries. They listed countries where K-NUPP Phase 2 had also subsequently influenced urban policy development: Saudi Arabia, and the lusophone Lesotho, Botswana, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau.

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[In] Cambodia, they have their land and urban housing strategy in the local language ... And then when we began, it was translated to English, that was the very first activity... so that it can reach the wider, like their bordering countries who have the same context and same challenges. So that has given us our impact (IV 15 UN-Habitat).



Data driven evidence for policy and also to include maybe the monitoring process of the implementation of the policy. So, I have seen this in quite a few countries where they say we really want to have an urban observatory ... And it helps, of course, also to see how these policies localise SDGs or help to localise SDGs and monitor [progress]. That to me is something that I have heard from quite a few countries (Interviewee 27 Country).

The benefits of translation to other languages were also noted as an impact of K-NUPP Phase 2 by Interviewee 15 (UN-Habitat).

Interviewee 27 (Country) noted that neighbouring countries were drawing on their implementation of K-NUPP Phase 2 to develop NUPs, seeking funding from development institutions and requesting technical support from Interviewee 27's country.

4.4.4.1. Data-based evidence for policy

Participants in this evaluation argued for the collection of evidence to inform and support arguments for urban policy, as well as an input to future evaluations of K-NUPP Phase 2. This included the establishment of urban observatories, for example:

In Mozambique the development of an urban monitoring framework is being implemented through the creation of urban observatories, with technical support from UN-Habitat. The observatories link urban development data with indicators of social and economic progress and support targeted investments in infrastructure and urban planning.

There was interest among evaluation participants in the Degree of Urbanization (DegUrba) method for assessing the change in urbanization in countries, which uses population in small areas for spatial categorisation of cities, towns and semi-dense areas, and rural areas²⁷.

The Earth Observation Toolkit was also noted as providing a range of approaches to measuring urbanization that may be more suited to participating countries in current and future phases of K-NUPP, depending on the capabilities, capacities and resources available.

DegUrba is based on population counts within a grid recommended to be of 1km² is size, which may be a barrier to use. Other methods use image analysis to identify settlements and other elements of urban systems, such as MASADA. Image analysis methods have been used to report on SDG Indicator 11.3.1, Ratio of Land Consumption to Population Growth Rate in the United Arab Emirates²⁸. Considering the technical, infrastructure and data requirements for these methods and their potential for implementation in the K-NUPP project is beyond the scope of this research. However attention to the technical capabilities of countries to observe urbanization patterns and processes within their country, including through open sourced and accessible datasets and platforms, could be included within further K-NUPP phases. Such technical capability would align with the digitalisation and technological innovations developed through K-NUPP by applying advanced techniques to observe and monitor urbanization.

²⁷ see Eurostat, Applying the Degree of Urbanisation; Copernicus, "Global Human Settlement - Tools - European Commission."

²⁸ UN-Habitat, "The Earth Observations Toolkit for Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements"; UN-Habitat, "Use Case UAE."

Interviewee 24 (UN-Habitat) discussed data collection and analysis at length, arguing for a greater empirical foundation for NUP related projects and for integration into the potential third phase of K-NUPP.

...if we could more picture from the spatial analysis or housing conditions, let's say, so there could be like different type of and various type of empirical studies that we would like includes and then we would like to integrate more when we are developing and implementing the NUPs in the future ...

The argument presented by Interviewee 24 included that feasibility and diagnostic stages of the NUP processes “should rely on country offices” and include a framework for analysis and evaluation to underpin advocacy for NUPs. The use of a shared framework and data platform would also assist in translating outcomes between countries and make the process more informative in future NUP processes and could be shared data available on the UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs portal²⁹.

This argument was supported by Interviewees 27 and 25. Interviewee 25 also addressed the need for longer term evaluations, which would be based on data:

... what I think would be also useful is a stock-taking exercise, let's say 5 or 10 years after a policy had been approved, to look at what has been actually the impact of a policy particularly in this realm, and particularly in countries in transformation, fast transformation.

However, consideration needs to be given to the data collected and its purpose, as mentioned by Interviewee 10 (Country), who noted that the methods need to be chosen to reflect the key policy questions, which differ between agencies within government and disciplinary biases.

4.4.5. Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with the ongoing involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the project - including in design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting – and the potential for replication and scaling up of project activities. Broadly, by considering how the project is embedded within local political and social systems, and the potential for ongoing impacts arising from the project activities. As this suggests, sustainability is both dependent on political will, and hard to measure mid-term, based on the perspectives of the interviewees years before evidence is available.

Participants argued that the development of urban policy as a lasting document and program, would provide sustainability of the outcomes (Interviewee 4 Other), while others argued that engagement with and empowerment of communities (Interviewee 7 Country) and government (Interviewee 29 Country) were important in the promotion of sustainability. However, Interviewee 7 also noted that it was too early to tell how successful this would be, given that the project is in the middle of its expected duration.

Interviewee 29 (Country) reported that the change in ministries has spread responsibility for key urban policy functions across portfolios, raising concerns for the sustainability of the project’s impacts on policy capacity and continuity (see also Section 4.3.2). However, they also argued that the substantial goodwill within the community and other organisations for urban policy countered the risks presented by government fragmentation:

everybody uses the word urbanization, and everybody talks about urbanization on the TV, radio, interviews, other ministries ... which were not much involved with the issue, ... I think that the dissemination is going so well that now really everybody knows, even at the smaller cities, you know, everybody knows that now the country has an urbanization policy (Interviewee 29 Country).

²⁹ United Nations, “Data for the SDGs.”

Interviewee 20, a country participant external to UN-Habitat, also considered the collaboration between the Country Office and government departments as a means to support sustainable outcomes. A similar view was expressed by Interviewee 13, that the sustainability was linked to government commitments to the K-NUPP objectives. This insight was extended, as they highlighted the importance of policy coherence in sustained urban policy outcomes from the project, as alignment with other initiatives provided a stronger rationale for ongoing commitment. Interviewee 13 also considered the importance of engaging with local stakeholders and developing 'steering structures' of national committees and focus groups for projects emerging from K-NUPP. The connection to local communities was also a key aspect of the sustainability of demonstration project outcomes:

One of the key things that we are monitoring is how the facility is successfully handed over to the community and how they make the strategy to maintain and operating in the future, even though after UN-Habitat's intervention has ended. So, that's how we try to monitor and how we try to ensure the sustainability ... (IV 22 – UN-Habitat).

Interviewee 22 (UN-Habitat) also argued that there is a reliance on the work of Country Offices in promoting sustainability, which again means that country contexts are an important aspect in sustainability, but that:

.... we could develop some guiding framework or related things to ensure each country office that they collaborate more ... with government related to the sustainability, how to make it sustainable (IV 22 – UN-Habitat).

Interviewee 23 (Country) had worked on previous NUP projects in their country, and the experience had left them confident in the sustainability of the project, explaining that:

I think we had more or less like a one and a half-year gap in between the previous project and this one. And you could see that things kept on moving. Maybe it's a slightly different base or whatever, but you could see that things kept on moving. There is a reasonably good continuity of the people in the ministry as well (IV 23 Country).

However, Interviewee 11 (Country) was doubtful that the project would be sustained as a direct result of the lack of engagement of the government with the K-NUPP activities.

As discussed in Section 4.3.4, there is evidence that the project is informing NUP development in countries other than the eight K-NUPP Phase 2 participants, indicating the transferability of the outcomes.

4.4.5.1. Staff retention

A key aspect of K-NUPP sustainability is the retention of staff. For governments, this is captured in the discussion of the impact of elections and ministerial staff in 4.3.2. However, evaluation participants considered that staff issues were a challenge in delivering K-NUPP Phase 2 projects. While this is to be expected over the course of a multi-year project, it is also related to resource constraints and the expectation of contributions to the project without being paid or not paid for their full contributions (IV2 UN-Habitat; see also Section 4.3.2). Interviewee 7 (Country) reported that "rather than get not good people, we decided not to really recruit and then we used the internal staff". Similar responses were reported by IV21, IV23 and IV2). As explained by Interviewee 1 (UN-Habitat), this is also due to three year employment terms for a five-year project. Interviewee 2 (UN-Habitat) reported similar issues, and reported how the turnover of staff meant that they were systematising documentation "so whoever's coming next can just automatically learn".

4.4.6. Coherence

Coherence is concerned with synergies and complementarities of K-NUPP activities with other programmes and development projects.

Interviewee 8, from UN-Habitat provided three examples of K-NUPP's coherence with other initiatives: a contribution from the project to basic housing conditions in Yangon, Myanmar; support for schoolgirls' transportation in Mozambique through the procurement of bicycles, within a larger externally funded transport initiative; and, coordination and alignment of the NUP with an EU funded project that was developing climate resilience within urban policy.

The coherence with other development programmes and interventions was most obvious through countries' use of K-NUPP funds to leverage additional resources for urban projects. For example, Interviewee 9 (Country) referred to how the K-NUPP project had underpinned approaches to other international funding bodies:

... they also brought some funding, and they agreed with us that that funding would serve to support the process of the organisation policy, you know, so everything, several stakeholders... All other resources that we were able to mobilise were put together with that with that fund.

Interviewee 23 (Country) reported that participating in K-NUPP Phase 2 meant that their ministry could:

show to its partners that they're really working very seriously on establishing all the necessary instruments, also for them to back all of the housing in urban efforts that they're promoting as part of their mandate, which in turn ... definitely supported them in mobilising resources, you know, from multilateral development banks and other agencies and other partners.

Similar examples of using K-NUPP resources in conjunction with other funds to amplify project outcomes were discussed by interviewees 9, 4, 27, 29 and 30 respectively. As discussed in Section 4.3.4, the Egyptian and Azerbaijani NUPs are to be aligned with the Korean funded K-City Network.

There were also reports of internal coherence, whereby K-NUPP Phase 2 activities were aligned with the activities across ministries:

[it is] really something like from the government overall. So we really managed to mobilise quite a few different ministries and bring them to the table in such a way that if, for example, the [environment ministry] is doing something concerning greenery, ... this is also considered as part of the urban policy implementation, and it's aligned with the policy itself (IV23 Country).

Examples of how K-NUPP Phase 2 projects were addressing climate change provided evidence of coherence, such as the funding from the European Union to develop climate action plans in Myanmar, which assisted in identifying areas needing support and the climate aspects of the drafted NUP.

4.5. Performance of K-NUPP Phase 2

The performance of the project is assessed against the Theory of Change for K-NUPP Phase 2, presented in Figure 1. The Theory of Change illustrates how the four outcomes from the project provide the bases for the long-term impacts the emerge from improved urban policies, plans and designs.

There are three principal outputs from K-NUPP Phase 2 that contribute to the outcomes of strengthened institutional capacity, improved inclusiveness and participation, and improved exchange between countries, which are summarised in Figure 2 below, which is drawn from the Theory of Change in Section 3.2.

The following discussion draws on the evaluation against performance indicators to assess progress towards the impact and long-term outcomes included in the Theory of Change.

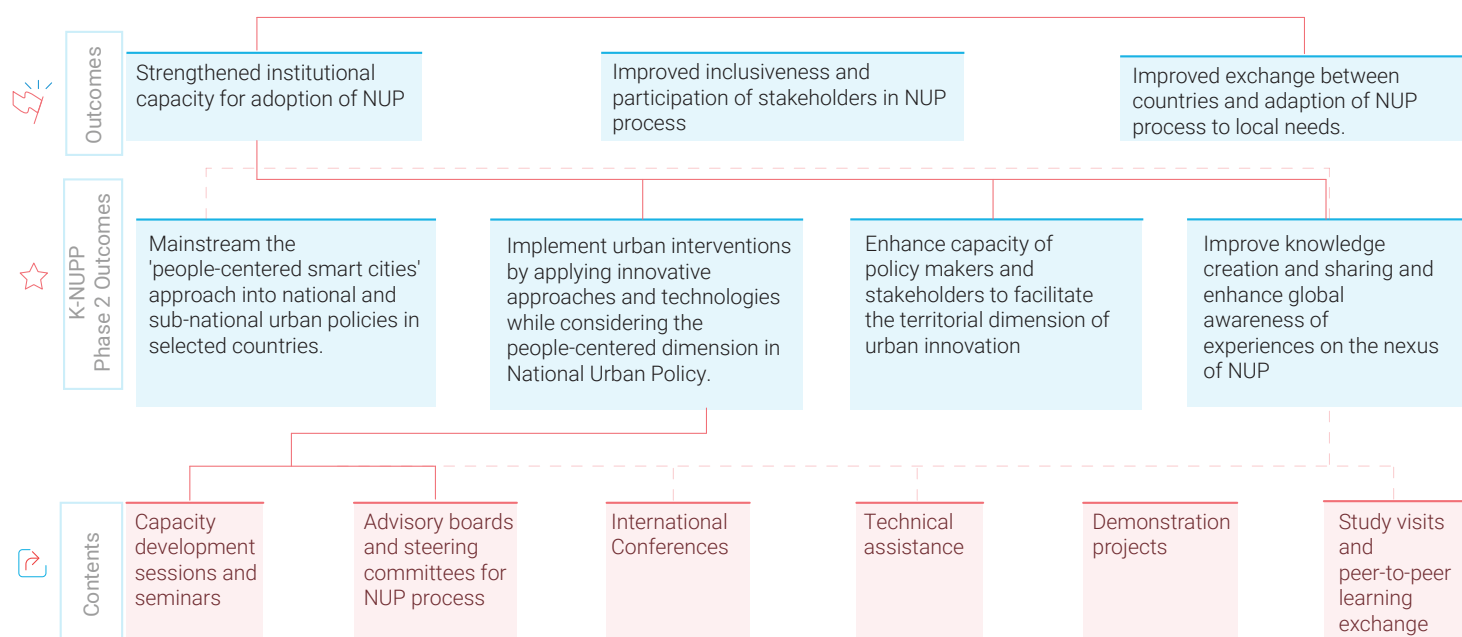


Figure 2: Theory of change mid-term evaluation extract

4.5.1. Content

Interviewees were positive in their views of the content of the project, reporting that they had benefited from the opportunity to participate in a range of meetings, conferences and capacity development sessions to support their work towards K-NUPP Phase 2 objectives. The regular meetings with UN-Habitat HQ and country offices were seen as opportunities for knowledge exchange and sharing experiences, for example:

I think this programme and project is very different from the others that we have. It has a more participatory and engagement sessions throughout the year of throughout the project, which is very, very good to see, to see the experience changing between the countries, to see what are the challenges, ... the lessons learned from other countries as well and projects to see what are the pilots that the countries are developing, which also can influence how we are thinking or bring better ideas (IV30 Country).

This view was widely shared, that 'cross learning has been something I had observed, and I felt had been very useful' (IV1 UN-Habitat).

The World Urban Forums were seen as particularly of benefit in supporting knowledge exchange and cross-learning, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Urban Forum. One participant especially commended the one-day workshop on K-NUPP at the start of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum in Cairo in 2024, for working with their policy makers in moving towards NUP implementation. However, IV25 (Country) argued that the next World Urban Forum needed to have a greater focus on policy discourse and "transmitted and filtered down to the national urban forums and more focus on policy making at that level".

Study tours, such as to China and Korea to learn about smart cities, were also seen as positive contributions to K-NUPP objectives, as IV12 reported:



The aim of the project was actually also to cascade knowledge from other countries, and this is what we implemented also at the [study tour]. So, we were looking at how we can get international experiences to be implemented ... and what is doable and what is not.

Participation in these activities is also undertaken within the limitations of the political situations in countries, such as in Cambodia where the interactions were positive but limited to local government.

Technical assistance was a valued aspect of UN-Habitat's role in K-NUPP Phase 2, as described by IV2 (UN-Habitat) who noted the importance of shared knowledge, lessons and responses to challenges. The value of technical assistance was exemplified by Interviewee 9 (Country), who considered that their ministry was:



... very appreciative of the effort that UN-Habitat put into producing that policy ... And still today, they, you know, we have a very good relationship with the government in general, but with that ministry in particular, because of all the effort that UN-Habitat made to produce the policy and provide follow-up.

Interviewee 20, a participant from a government agency in a K-NUPP participating country, is important as a representative from an urban policy institution. They were positive in their view of the role of UN-Habitat, stating that "they support you, they respond to you" while discussing the development of climate change resilience initiatives, being led by local organisations.

Demonstration projects, as discussed in 4.3.2 4.2.1 and 4.3.2.1, represent a large proportion of the activities and content of the project based on the information presented by interviewees and have contributed to the benefits attributed to K-NUPP Phase 2. Demonstration projects contribute to the programme in two main ways. First, the contribution

of demonstration projects to the K-NUPP objectives implies that they are replicable and may provide benefits in other contexts, as a contribution to knowledge sharing. Second, their contribution to the objective of enhancing the capacity of policy makers and stakeholders to facilitate the national and territorial dimension of urban policy is the primary consideration within the Theory of Change, as is taken up in the following section. Demonstration projects, especially very localised interventions, may be beneficial in their own effects and in generating public legitimacy and appetite for NUP, but may not be influential at shaping urban outcomes at national scale.

4.5.2. Objectives

There are four objectives that are intended to result from the project content discussed above: development of NUPs integrating people-centered smart cities approach, implementation of urban interventions, enhance policy-making capacity, and knowledge creation and sharing.

As discussed in 4.2, there has been some progress towards NUPs and people-centered smart city projects that include digitalisation of urban functions to varying degrees across the eight participant countries. An important consideration that emerges from the performance indicators, particularly Relevance (4.3.1) and Impact (4.3.4), is for a long-term project across eight countries with different circumstances and events what proportion of participating countries with implemented NUPs would be regarded as successful at the end of the project. Furthermore, what can be learnt from the countries that have faced insurmountable obstacles in progressing towards an NUP should be considered in the final evaluation of the project.

4.5.2.1. Capacity development

The objective for policy-making capacity emerging from the content discussed above was seen as being promoted through K-NUPP Phase 2. Interviewee 16 (Other), from a position with oversight of K-NUPP Phase 2, considered that the programme had led to

moderate improvements in policy capacity through knowledge-sharing and training, and:

Overall, it has improved technical understanding and coordination for policy development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (IV3 Other).

Interviewee 9 (Country) provided a strong statement on the impact of K-NUPP Phase 2 on their government's attention to urban issues and the production of urban policy, that it enabled them to:

...convene other partners and really move towards producing this policy... it changed the way the government looks at urbanization. It increased the sort of information, knowledge, culture around urbanization (IV9 Country).

However, Interviewee 19 (Country) reported that a new ministry had been formed in their county, but it was not in a position to implement their NUP due to human and financial resource constraints.

The outcomes from K-NUPP Phase 2 (4.3.5) are of note due to the importance of developing urban policy capacity for the sustainability of the project. Interviewee 2 (UN-Habitat) foregrounded that NUPs are government documents, and so the capacity for and ownership of policy outcomes is crucial to success and by including government representatives in the project to witness its effectiveness and encourage implementation.

It's not just about capacity of formulation, it is of more importantly, it is capacity of implementation that this project tries to develop and then encourage (IV2 UN-Habitat).

The relationship between UN-Habitat and responsible government agencies is a crucial factor in understanding the propensity of the K-NUPP Phase 2 project to strengthen institutional capacity for urban policy formation. In discussing the difficulty in developing capacity within a government not engaged in the NUP process, IV 11 (Country) observed:

... the possibilities are quite on the low side, you know, in order for them to like carry on this work, unless we have like this engagement from the government.

Framed in more positive light, interviewee 21 (Country) noted that:

.. We develop the policy, but they might face the challenges in terms of both financial and also technical capacity to implement the policy that we develop.

This interviewee noted the importance of continued engagement with countries, and the cities within them that are implementing urban policy, to building and sustain capacity and support.

There were reports of K-NUPP activities developing capacity within communities and community organisations, such as on smart cities and climate change in Cambodia. While such contributions are important benefits realised from the K-NUPP project, their potential to foster the institutional capacities to improve urban policies is attenuated due to their positions outside government.

4.5.3. Outcomes

Strengthened institutional capacity is expected to result from enhanced knowledge of NUPs, and increased human, financial and institutional capacity within participating countries, as depicted in Figure 1.

There was an argument raised by participants that the institutional capacity resulted from having a shared commitment to urban policy:

... global recognition of the tool, national urban policy ... keep it and build on it and grow it. So that's that is it capacity building in itself, isn't it? That you have something that's recognised as important that cities should do, or know how to do (IV8 UN-Habitat).

Similarly, Interviewee 22 (UN-Habitat) argued that a "robust and really important" aspect of K-NUPP Phase 2 is how the institutional framework of NUP development enables capacity development, which includes:

... support, we provide technical and normative support to the participating countries so that they could sustain that system in developing and implementing the NUPs. So, we touch the institutional framework as a whole.

Therefore, the discussion on the influence of political will in Section 4.3.2 is salient, as the focus of this outcome is institutions of government responsible for urban policy. The instances where changes in government have paused development of NUPs, and the challenges presented by staff turnovers, indicate that institutional capacity building presents a risk to the outcomes presented in the theory of change.

4.5.4. Progress towards longer-term outcomes and impact

The Theory of Change (Figure 1) depicts a logical chain of impacts from the activities implemented under K-NUPP Phase 2, to the project's intended impacts and long-term outcomes, which are depicted in Figure 3. As a *mid-term* evaluation, the principal concern is the extent of progress towards the long-term outcomes through the activities of the project discussed above.

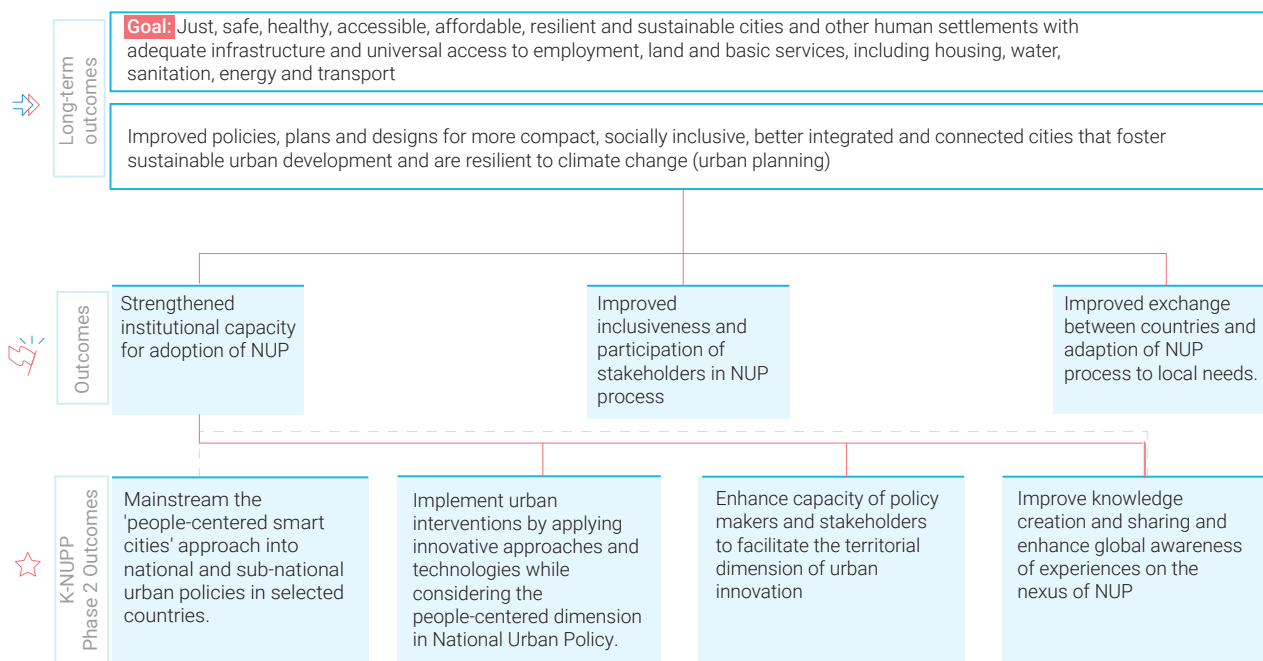


Figure 3: K-NUPP long-term outcomes and impact

This mid-term evaluation of the project demonstrates that there is progress towards the outcomes included in the Theory of Change diagram and towards K-NUPP Phase 2 aims, but progress is uneven and, in some country instances, stalled. There are also cases where project activities are not contributing to **national** urban policies, a key level of focus for the outcomes included in Figure 3 and in the overall work of UN-Habitat.

At this juncture, as work proceeds on Phase 2 of K-NUPP and preliminary discussions for a Phase 3 are underway, the connections between project content and actions, outcomes and impacts, could benefit from reaffirmation within the K-NUPP project team and participants in light of their respective contributions to the desired long-term outcomes. This is especially the case for demonstration projects, which country offices are focussing their resources on delivering and which are contributing tangible community benefits, but are not necessarily enhancing the capacity of policy makers as expected, especially at the national scale which tends not to operate ground-level local projects.

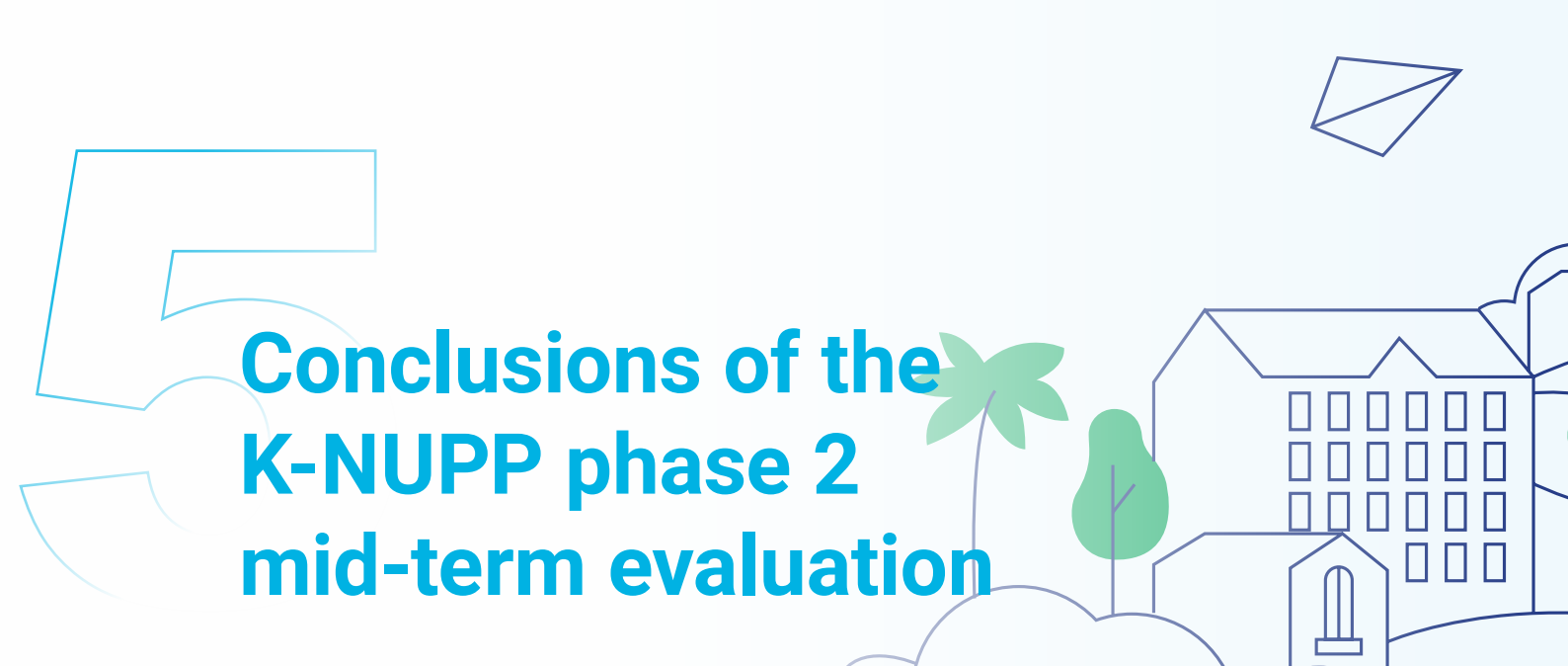
This reading of the Theory of Change assumes that NUPs are the main, and most tangible, outcome from the phases of K-NUPP, which will subsequently generate the strategic result and goal of just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and communities. While positive contributions are being realised in all participating countries, this evaluation suggests it is an appropriate time to reaffirm the project focus, in particular the commitment to national level urban policy development.

4.5.4.1. Technology and digitalization

The original project aims all referred to the people-centered smart cities focus of the original conceptualisation of the K-NUPP Phase 2. As the project proceeded, overall financial constraint and capacity constraints in some countries mean that this has not been fully integrated in all countries' projects. Therefore, this mid-term assessment of progress against aims considers progress in a broad sense, except for the first, where a consideration of smart cities is provided.

Participants generally agreed that digitalisation was a worthwhile focus for K-NUPP. Much of the work attributed to addressing the smart cities' objective could be better described as digitalisation and technological enhancements to urban systems, such as for example the installation of solar panels and urban observatories. However, there are still likely to be issues regarding capacity and resources available to support digitalisation in some countries. For example, in Cambodia it was reported that the private sector was not ready to invest in and support initiatives related to digitalisation.

There is general support for digitalisation, and the potential for technological interventions to become more cost effective over time. Therefore, consideration should be given to a theme or cross-cutting opportunity within UN-Habitat's NUP programme. Attention will need to be given to the appropriateness of alternative digitalisation options for each country's NUP development and for its wider urbanization pathway. This includes ensuring digitalisation projects are not 'one-off' or 'stand-alone' initiatives but contribute to or advance a wider developmental goal.



Conclusions of the K-NUPP phase 2 mid-term evaluation

This section discusses key insights and findings from Phase 2 of the K-NUPP project and draws general observations and local recommendations. This will include lessons learned, challenges, best practices, and recommendations to improve the delivery of K-NUPP Phase 2 and inform Phase 3.

5.1. Overall evaluation

This mid-term evaluation finds that K-NUPP Phase 2 has made a positive contribution in the participating countries, particularly when considering the unrest and turmoil experienced in recent years (Section 4.2). Given these contextual challenges, the completion of NUPs in Egypt, Mozambique and Paraguay during K-NUPP Phase 2 is considered a substantial and positive outcome.

While NUPs have been endorsed by countries and their relevant ministries, implementation plans are still in development and there is particular uncertainty with I.R. Iran. It is expected that Azerbaijan will also have an NUP in place by end-2026, meaning five of the Phase 2 countries will have completed an NUP or SNUP. On a less positive note, the National Urban Policy processes in Cambodia and Myanmar have been paused for some time and the completion within the timeframe of K-NUPP Phase 2 seems unlikely, and as a result project activity has reasonably focused on demonstration projects and sub-national interactions.

An important success of K-NUPP Phase 2 is the indirect influence on NUP development in non-participant countries like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who have engaged with project materials and beneficiaries to inform their own policy processes. This amplification of project benefits is a further contribution to the overarching aims of UN-Habitat in promoting urban policy. Instituting methods and systems for capturing the indirect impacts of K-NUPP projects would provide valuable information to support future project formulations and funding requests.

Demonstration projects are seen as tangible evidence of project impacts and success by the interviewees working within participating countries. While there are strategic considerations regarding this aspect of K-NUPP work (Section 4.4.4), the evidence suggests that demonstration projects have been successful interventions within their communities. In countries experiencing national level disruption, the application of demonstrators at sub-national levels is a principal benefit of the K-NUPP program for that country. However, matching local-scale interventions are to the national urban policy objectives that are central to the programme is an ongoing need, in order to retain programmatic focus on national-level K-NUPP interventions.

In a broader view, interviewees also considered the contributions of K-NUPP Phase 2 to global urban and sustainability agendas, most directly to SDG 11 through NUPs (Section 4.3.1). Countries reported on the use of project resources in conjunction with other international organisations, leveraging better outcomes through combined resources.

5.1.1. Evaluation matrix

The Evaluation Matrix in Table 5 provides a summary of the evidence of the performance of K-NUPP Phase 2 against the 6 evaluation criteria in Section 4.3, and taking into account the country progress

in Section 4.2. As this is a mid-term evaluation, only partial assessments of effectiveness, impact and sustainability can be made at the mid-term of the project. Taking into account this caveat, the assessment highlights the positive outcomes arising from K-NUPP Phase 2 and the substantial progress made towards achieving the aims to be realised over the five years to 2027.

The matrix uses a standard six-point scale: unsatisfactory, weak, satisfactory, good, very good, excellent.

Table 5: K-NUPP Phase 2 evaluation matrix

Criterion	Rating	Successes/positives	Challenges
 Relevance	★★★★★	Implementation of policy Demonstration projects Alignment with global agendas - SDGs Attracting additional funding	Changes of or in government, government commitment Focus on national scale policy Increase focus on cross-cutting themes required
 Efficiency	★★★★★	Spending focus on implementation delivering positive outcomes Leveraging funds with other sources Outcomes from demonstrator projects	Budget constraints Reliant on unpaid work Outcomes and efficiency reliant on political will
 Effectiveness*	★★★★★	Improved government processes in urban projects Adaptability in adversity	Adaptability may reduce focus on strategic project aims Country variations: capacity, internal dynamics, Resource limitations
 Impact*	★★★★★	Stakeholder support Increased capacity for policy development Increased awareness of urban policy benefits Flow-on benefits to non-participant countries	Improve processes for recording impacts Measurement of urbanisation
 Sustainability*	★★★★★	Government engagement and ownership of urban policy CO and government collaboration	Changes of or in government Political will Staff turnover, lost knowledge
 Coherence	★★★★★	Leveraging of other funding to support projects Collaborations with other agencies and ministries Climate change action	

* Denotes limited evaluation possible at project mid-term

GOOD



VERY GOOD



EXCELLENT



All criteria were rated as at least good, with the impact and efficiency considered to be excellent. The two criteria rated good, effectiveness and sustainability, are difficult to assess at mid-term due as they relate to longer-term outcomes of the project. However, concerns relating to these criteria were raised in the interviews, particularly the sustainability of outcomes due to the dependence on ownership of outcomes by government. Effectiveness was questioned by interviewees due to countries where progress towards an NUP had paused due to political circumstances.

5.1.2. Challenges

The challenges for implementing K-NUPP Phase 2 have been raised in previous NUP program evaluations and the final report of K-NUPP Phase 1³⁰. This includes the impacts of funding and resource limitations; staff turnover and knowledge retention; the inconsistency of political will over the duration of multi-year projects, as governments and ministries change; and the lack of resources available to implement urban policies and demonstrator projects in the long-term.

Funding was seen as a major constraint for the implementation of K-NUPP Phase 2. The funding limitations were the impetus for efficiency and collaboration, and a keen focus on maximising outcomes from in-country activities. However, there were concerns expressed that the inadequate funding was reducing the impact of the project within participating countries.

The turnover of staff is to be expected in long-running projects such as K-NUPP Phase 2 and is exacerbated by the misalignment between employment contracts and project duration. There were also instances where staff turnover was connected to the limited resources available. The impact of staff turnover is mitigated by the detailed documentation and the regular reporting mechanisms and included in the project management systems address these issues and improve handover. However, staff turnover continues to be a challenge.

Political will, or the commitment of governments to NUPs and associated projects, is an ongoing challenge. To some extent, this relates to the length of time of NUPs, and five years in the case of K-NUPP Phase 2, a period where changes to government personnel and priorities can be expected to change. On a positive note, there are examples where governments had engaged with and were taking ownership of urban policy processes as a result of collaborations with UN-Habitat country offices. These issues are also evident in the discussions on country variations, which include aspects of capacity and political situations. This could be addressed, to some extent, through placing greater emphasis by UN-Habitat HQ in the formative stages of the projects within countries.

5.1.2.1. Strategy and pragmatism

A key challenge for K-NUPP Phase 2 is to balance the response to immediate urban challenges within participating countries with the longer-term strategic aim of developing national urban policy and associated capacities.

K-NUPP Phase 2 is contributing to global goals, including SDG11 (IV24 UN-Habitat) and the promotion of NUPs, which is a core aim of the project³¹. The work of UN-Habitat can be seen as part of 'global urban governance' that facilitates flows of urban policy knowledge and practice³². However, there is a challenge in the translation of globally relevant information and initiatives into local action, from the general to the specific, at the country and sub-national scale. This is partly recognised in the Theory of Change in Section 3.2, which includes 'adaption of NUP process to local needs' as an outcome.

This tension between the national and local levels of intervention is evident in the data collected for this evaluation, revealed particularly in responses related to demonstration projects.

³⁰ Denham and Dodson, Evaluation of National Urban Policy Programme 2014-2021; Mwamati et al., National Urban Policy Programme: 2017-2022 Final Report; Kroen and Dodson, Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries.

³¹ UN-Habitat, "Overview of Korea-Funded National Urban Policy Programme (K-NUPP)."

³² Acuto, "Engaging with Global Urban Governance in the Midst of a Crisis"; Acuto, "Engaging with Global Urban Governance."

Interviewees who had been involved in implementing K-NUPP within countries related the impact of demonstration projects, including the number of people who had benefited from interventions in relation to meagre costs (see Section 4.3.2 above). While the benefits of these demonstration projects and their importance within participating countries is not in doubt, and they are responding to immediate concerns, consideration as to their contribution to the achievement of the overarching program aims of the K-NUPP to change national policy settings and capability. There is a risk that the difficulties in some countries in dealing with national-level governments - political will and appetite, governance and personnel capabilities, institutional and legislative settings, and knowledge and data availability - may lead to a pragmatic focus on local practical interventions that leave the national institutional and policy environment unchanged.

This also responds to the comparative advantages of UN-Habitat in comparison to other international development agencies, with its focus on urban planning providing long-term benefits to nations and their people, rather than the amelioration of current circumstances. The essential question for UN-Habitat and current and future phases of K-NUPP is the balance between focussing resources and actions on the long-term benefits of urban planning, that are designed to mitigate the impacts of future social and environmental on cities and people, and responding to the immediate issues within participating countries.

There is an implicit trade-off between undertaking demonstrative value at the local scale, and enhancing national capability and capacity so that the highest level of government takes responsibility for management of urbanization. Where there are deficits in national-level capability for NUP these should be targeted as primary points of intervention with elevated effort and support, except under extreme circumstances where the political context is prohibitive or hostile. Demonstration projects should continue to be a component of K-NUPP Phase 2 and future extensions or similar programs to show the benefits that can arise from systemic intervention at the local level, but these

projects should be subordinate to the achievement of national policy development objectives.

5.1.3. Lessons learned

The set of lessons emerging from this evaluation that may inform the final stages of K-NUPP Phase 2, including project flexibility, the enduring importance of knowledge exchange, the benefits of multiple perspectives on programme performance, and the need for evidence to support urban interventions.

5.1.3.1. Project flexibility

Central to the experience of K-NUPP Phase 2 over its duration has been disruption and uncertainty, including continuity of the mainstreaming people-centered smart cities theme and the various events within countries that have impeded or prevented progress. While this has been responded to with flexibility and agility at a country level, enabling beneficial outcomes through a greater emphasis on local engagement and demonstration projects, the risk over the long duration of the K-NUPP projects, is of losing sight of the strategic aim to achieve sustainable development through National and Subnational Urban Policies, and UN-Habitat's remit for promoting National Urban Policies specifically, as discussed in Section 5.1.2.1. Hence there is a need for continued focus on national-scale interventions within K-NUPP and any successor programs.

Flexibility in project planning and management would account for the strong likelihood that NUPs in all participating countries, or strategic aims such as smart cities, will not be achieved due to disruptions both global and within countries. For example, this could include the potential to cease operations in locations where progress towards NUPs has stalled and is no longer effectively feasible at the national level, and reallocate funding to support countries where resource shortages are presenting challenges to implementation. Such a shift in program operations would need to be handled sensitively and with multiple steps so that countries whose participation is at risk can be assisted to return to active participation.

A key aspect of introducing more strategic flexibility into project planning would be to establish an ongoing strategic evaluation process, with the potential to recommend changes to project activities, the Theory of Change, and revising the programme's aims, for example in response to the diminished focus on people centred smart cities. This would align with UN-Habitat's project planning guidelines, as project planning tools are "meant to be flexible working documents throughout the lifecycle of the investment, and can be adjusted or modified under certain circumstances"³³.

5.1.3.2. Importance of communities of practice and knowledge exchange

The participants in the evaluation particularly valued the opportunities presented by K-NUPP Phase 2 to exchange knowledge and experience of urban policy problems, projects and interventions. This included the regular project meetings, the World Urban Forums and other conferences, and other events such as study tours. As discussed in Section 4.5.1, these opportunities for interactions by participants are not necessarily available in other programmes and provides affirmation of the approach to managing K-NUPP Phase 2. The value of knowledge exchange and communities of practice have been identified as of value in previous evaluations, but a key lesson from K-NUPP Phase 2 is to consider how the programme can be leveraged to realise impacts in non-participating countries, as discussed in Section 4.3.4.

Participants noted the need for a more extensive approach to evaluation that extends beyond participant countries, to follow the impacts of project activities to other countries and institutions, to contribute to an evidence base for NUP projects. Also, the prospect of these impacts should be taken into account in selecting participant countries for future NUP projects and phases of K-NUPP, given the processes of policy transfer and countries with interest in developing NUPs identified within this evaluation.

5.1.3.3. Multiple perspectives

A methodological innovation in this evaluation has been to include interviews with beneficiaries and in-country collaborators in the data collection process. While only three of these interviews undertaken, they provided valuable insights from within ministries and civil society on the impact and relevance of the K-NUPP project in particular.

Consideration should be given to recruiting evaluation participants from:

- » Within countries, participants in and beneficiaries of K-NUPP interventions
- » Ministries and associated government representatives
- » Other aid and development agencies active in participant countries

This would provide insights that directly respond to the performance indicators, and provide a balance to the views from within country offices.

Snowball methods, whereby interviewees were asked to contact additional participants on behalf of the project team, have limited success due to the ethical restrictions related to participant privacy. Therefore, if external participants are to be a focus of recruitment, it is recommended that Country Officers prepare contact lists of key actors as part of the preparations for future evaluations.

An important consideration is that the extension of participation to other project stakeholders would result in additional resource requirements to undertake project evaluations, to obtain robust data across eight participant countries through interview process alone. Therefore, if a greater range of voices are to be included in evaluations surveys and workshops would be required to complete the evaluation within resource limitations.

³³ UN-Habitat, "Project Level Planning."

5.1.3.4. Evidence bases and evaluations

Previous evaluations of NUP initiatives have produced recommendations to develop the evidence base for urban policy³⁴. These recommendations have emerged from participants' identifying the usefulness of policy examples to inform their own formulations and as a foundation for advocating for urban policy with government.

The forms of evidence for urban policy discussed in this evaluation differed from previous evaluations in calling for *quantitative* evidence of urbanization processes and the outcomes of urban policy and demonstration projects (Section 4.3.4). The Degree of Urbanization (DegUrba) method was referred to in interviews with representatives from participating countries and UN-Habitat, and alternative methods including those based on satellite imagery were also identified as meriting consideration³⁵. The collection and dissemination of data could be provided by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)³⁶.

While data collection on urban growth and development would be of interest to policymakers and urbanists, there are critiques of how evidence bases become determinants in the processes they are designed to measure³⁷.

Advantages may be realised from all participants using the same methods to assess urbanization, including the economies of scale in developing multiple country systems at the same time, the benefits of shared capacity development and knowledge exchange, and the comparability of data.

However, a main finding from this evaluation, with relevance to technology, is that the project needs to be responsive to the circumstances within participating countries.

Therefore, there is a need to include assessment of the technical capabilities of countries to observe urbanization patterns and processes within their country including through open sourced and accessible datasets and platforms. This assessment should be undertaken at the pre-commencement phase with assistance provided to the country to improve capability and capacity. The support of agencies such as UN DESA should be considered in this capacity assessment and development.

5.2. Recommendations

The following section provides recommendations for the continuation of K-NUPP Phase 2. In summary, the mid-term evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 2 finds that the project is valued by project participants from UN-Habitat Headquarters, the participant countries and further stakeholders, and is achieving many of its goals under challenging conditions. However, there are a series of recommendations that should be considered as the project progresses, Ensure that project activities, and particularly demonstration projects, align with the long-term strategic aims of K-NUPP Phase 2 and UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy Programme.

³⁴ Kroen and Dodson, Evaluation of the Programme "Developing National Urban Policies and Smart City Strategies in Three Selected Countries; Denham and Dodson, Evaluation of National Urban Policy Programme 2014-2021.

³⁵ Copernicus, "Global Human Settlement - Tools - European Commission."

³⁶ United Nations, "Data for the SDGs."

³⁷ For example, Caprotti et al., "The New Urban Agenda: Key Opportunities and Challenges for Policy and Practice."

5.2.1. K-NUPP Phase 2 recommendations

The evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 2 provides the following recommendations.

1 Transition to a project management approach that embraces strategic flexibility in response to external circumstances and the development and sharing of internal knowledge and experience to inform as the project progresses. This includes:

- a. Revisiting the Theory of Change for K-NUPP Phase 2 to inform implementation.
- b. Recognising that not all country implementations will be successful in developing urban policies, and to structure K-NUPP projects to include components that may support sub-program success opportunities.

2 As the Phase 2 countries begin the implementation of demonstration projects and the project enters its final phases, ensure that actions are contributing to programme aims:

- a. The development and implementation of national urban policies, and promoting their sustainability after the project's completion in 2027.
- b. Addressing cross-cutting themes in implementation, addressing the needs of women, children the elderly and the disabled.

It is recommended that regular reporting and the assessment of initiatives include requirements to address strategic project aims and cross-cutting themes.

3 Begin an evaluation of qualitative and empirical methods for measuring urbanization to inform implementation in current K-NUPP participants, and for adoption by potential Phase 3 participants. Data collection should be designed to inform NUP development and long-term outcome evaluation. Establishment of a shared data platform for participant countries should be considered.

4 Systematise a method for capturing and publicising indirect benefits that arise from the K-NUPP project, most notably the transfer of urban policy knowledge and practice to non-participant countries and would inform stronger advocacy and visibility initiatives.

5 Include participants from country government ministries and other national stakeholder groups in the final evaluation of K-NUPP Phase 2. This may include building country self-evaluation activity into the project. Extending participation would provide new and important perspectives on the project, as well as inform responses to the recurring of political will in NUP processes. It is recommended that Country Offices begin developing databases of potential participants in the final evaluation.

5.2.2. Recommendations for K-NUPP Phase 3

In addition to evaluating progress of K-NUPP Phase 2, this project was also tasked with providing recommendations to inform a potential third phase. There is strong interest among the stakeholders sampled for participation in this evaluation for

housing to become a major focus of the project, and this is primary consideration of this section alongside recommendations on country selection and on urbanization data.

The six recommendations for K-NUPP Phase 3 are:

- 1 A thematic focus on housing is widely supported and should be pursued, but be bounded by the contribution of NUPs to housing questions, their relation to UN-Habitats' cross-cutting themes, and the appropriate role of national and sub-national governments in housing. A revision of UN-Habitat NUPP materials to reflect the focus of housing should be undertaken to support this initiative.
- 2 Assessment of country technical capability to observe and monitor urbanization processes should be included at the pre-commencement of K-NUPP Phase 3 with support provided to strengthen capability and capacity, including through use of open-source datasets and platforms, and coordinated with existing UN or equivalent technical assistance programs.
- 3 Empirical methods for evaluating urbanization, such as DegUrba, should be implemented at project inception to provide baseline data.
- 4 The potential to include new countries into the K-NUPP project provides an opportunity to amplify the project's impact. Consideration should be given to:
 - a. The potential for indirect impacts and knowledge transfer to non-participant countries in evaluating potential participants.
 - b. The history, willingness and capacity of the country and its institutions for developing NUPs.
- 5 Undertake research to increase understanding of the factors that enable successful NUP development processes within countries, including institutional, political and environmental circumstances. Then, introduce technical assistance from UN-Habitat, or other relevant UN agencies, as a preliminary action, to build foundation capacity and address identified risks.
- 6 If new countries are to be included in Phase 3, undertake preparatory assessments of country capacity to participate in future K-NUPP projects prior to program implementation, to inform country selection processes, and focus on building basic capacity where it is lacking as a first intervention.



The following sections of the report provide additional background to these recommendations, which also draw on the discussion in Section 5.1.

5.2.2.1. Housing

There was broad support for housing as a focus for K-NUPP Phase 3, in line with the UN-Habitat strategic plan. Interviewee 8 (UN-Habitat) supported the housing focus due to its global applicability, noting:

This also suggests the importance of integration within the UN-Habitat and NUP remit, through cross cutting issues. As Interviewee 17 observed, there is a need to “focus on well-located housing and urban infrastructure”, which provides a connection to urban planning. However the specific actions that national governments may take on housing need to be contextualised within the different distribution of powers between national and sub-national governments. In some nations sub-national governments, at the provincial or metropolitan level, may be better placed to deliver housing while the national government mobilises finance and shapes wider regulatory and taxation settings that influence housing. In such contexts coordination of policy and interventions between tiers of government on housing is essential.

There were other themes proposed for Phase 3 of the project, particularly the urgent need for climate change adaptation and resilience in Myanmar, and also arguments for a continuation of the smart city

focus from countries that had made progress in this area. Others argued for addressing housing issues through smart city development, drawing together the themes to allow for continued progress towards Phase 2 objectives while introducing housing under Phase 3. However, as noted in the discussion of people-centered smart cities in Section 4.3.3, these recommendations are for digitalisation and technological innovation in urban policy and management rather than the remote sensing and big data that typify smart city agendas.

5.2.2.2. Pre-project preparations

A stronger understanding of the country factors that provide a foundation for successful NUP development processes would increase the prospect of success for future initiatives. This is especially the case for countries which have not previously operated an NUP, or for which the existing NUP is weak or ineffective. Such factors to be better understood may include institutional, social and political elements including:

- » Political and social stability
- » System of government
- » Bipartisan national support for urban policy
- » Capacity of key policy institutions
- » Urban policy history and foundations (e.g., cadastre, metropolitan plans, legislation)

- » Civil society capability and voice
- » Urban data collection and availability
- » Planning and urban studies education and scholarship

Further to this, there should be greater emphasis on the preparatory work within countries, to develop capacity and an understanding of the constraints and risks related to social, economic, political and environmental circumstances, and develop project plans in response. Where capacity is weak, emphasis should be on this factor prior to dedicated NUP development activity. Promotion of the NUP e-learning opportunities offered by UN-Habitat and support offered by other UN agencies such as DESA may also assist.

5.2.2.3. Participant countries

When asked for their recommendation for a potential Phase 3, a topic of recurring discussion was the criteria for the assessment of potential participant countries.

There were suggestions for Phase 3 to include the eight participant countries of Phase 2, to continue the progress towards NUP implementation and the realisation of project goals. As discussed above, the continuation of country participation in K-NUPP projects needs to be given strategic consideration, in relation to the potential to achieve outcomes in countries where progress has stalled, and governments are not engaging in the policy process.

There were more Interviewees arguing for including more and new countries in Phase 3 of K-NUPP. As Interviewee 2 (UN-Habitat) stated, while acknowledging resource constraints:

I really believe in this project, that this project is doing something good. I want to involve more countries. I want to involve more stakeholders to learn from this project.

Interviewee 2 (UN-Habitat) also noted that more countries wanted to be involved in the K-NUPP than participated in Phase 2, arguing that this demonstrated the importance of the knowledge transfer to non-participant countries (see Section 5.1.3.1). The potential for knowledge transfer was also argued to be an important criterion for participant selection, through additional languages being used to communicate NUP development activities and outcomes, and the direct transfer of policy process and outcomes through countries of similar circumstance.

5.2.2.4. Urbanization evidence

As discussed in Sections 4.3.4 and 5.1.3.1, there is strong support for qualitative measures of urbanization to support policy and outcome evaluations. This was argued by Interviewee 24 (UN-Habitat) to be important in the conceptualisation of Phase 3, as it would provide long-term, empirical evidence.

Annex

The following sections of the report provide additional detail on the methods and evaluation.

6.1. Interview questions

Framework for semi-structured interview. Additional questions may be asked to extend responses, and others may be omitted as the interview proceeds.

Preamble:

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

background research of this project.

The research project is being conducted by RMIT University on behalf of the United Nations Habitat Programme. The research will review the contribution of UN-Habitat's work at national and sub-national levels in relation to "National Urban Policy Programme, Phase Two: Scaling up People-Centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies" This research will result in the production of a regional NUP assessment report that describes and analyses key aspects of the project.

Questions for interviews with national stakeholders:

1. Please describe your current role in and experience of the NUP program and the **National Urban Policy Programme, Phase Two: Scaling up People-Centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies** project.
2. How has your NUP progressed since the start of the K-NUPP Phase 2 and what is the current stage of the NUP process in your country?
3. What are the governance and institutional arrangements related to NUP development and implementation in your country?
4. What aspects of the K-NUPP content have you engaged with during the project:
 - a. Advisory boards and steering committees
 - b. Capacity development sessions
 - c. Technical assistance from UN-Habitat
 - d. Demonstration projects
 - e. Study visits and peer-to-peer learning exchange
 - f. International conferences
5. How effective have they been in facilitating urban policy in your country?
 - a. In relation to costs or resources?
6. Has your project faced obstacles, and how have then been responded to?
 - a) Have the people managing of the project learned from and adjusted to changes during implementation?

7. How did the project complement, or not, other urban initiatives within your country?
8. Has the project had an impact on urban policy capacity within your country?
 - a. Development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
 - b. At national and sub-national levels?
 - c. At the community levels and people's lives?
9. What has been the impact of the project on cross-cutting issues:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Human Rights
 - c. Climate change
 - d. Youth
10. What has been the role of UN-Habitat in your NUP process? How effective is it in comparison with other UN entities and key partners?
11. How effective have the project agents been in assisting the development of the NUP and smart cities in your country?

Impact Outlook

12. In your view, is the project on track to meet its goals?
 - a. What could be done to improve this situation?
13. Can you give me an example of where this project has worked really well? What do you think makes it work well in this case?
14. Can you give me an example of where this project hasn't worked very well? Why is it not working well in this case? (Probe to see if the problem is that it is not being implemented well, or if the theory of change is not working as expected).
15. If the project was to be extended, what would you recommend for a subsequent Phase 3 of the K-NUPP?
 - a. Themes and focus
 - b. Actions and inputs
16. Do you have any other observations or comments about the project or the NUP program in general?

Questions for interviews with international stakeholders

1. Please describe your role and experience of the NUP program, and your relationship to the **National Urban Policy Programme, Phase Two: Scaling up People-Centered Smart Cities through National Urban Policies** project.
2. To what extent have national and local stakeholders been involved in the design and implementation of

the project? What did the cooperation look like?

3. To what extent has the project led to changes in the capacity of sub-national and national governments for the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of national urban policy and the development of smart city strategies?
4. To what extent has the project led to changes in the centralization of knowledge and tools for the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of national urban policy and the development of smart city strategies?
5. What were the major factors that influenced those changes? What were barriers? (e.g. institutional arrangements, political, climate hazards, UN-Habitat's work, funding)
6. What have been the benefits/impact from the project for vulnerable groups (e.g. women, youth, the poor, the disabled)?
7. What has been the impact of the project on cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, and climate change?
8. Have you received any feedback from the beneficiaries in relation to the project?
9. What have been the key lessons arising from the project and its implementation?
10. Can you give me an example of where this project has worked really well? What do you think makes it work well in this case?
11. Can you give me an example of where this project has not worked very well? Why is it not working well in this case? (Probe to see if the problem is that it is not being implemented well, or if the theory of change is not working as expected).
12. If the project was to be extended, what would you recommend for a subsequent Phase 3 of the K-NUPP?
13. Do you have any other observations or comments about the project or the broader NUP program?

6.2. Accomplishments, outputs and activities

Table 6: Progress against workplan and expected accomplishments

Expected Accomplishments	Outputs	Activities	Planned Completion	Progress	Source
1. National and local governments mainstream the people-centered smart cities approach into NUPs and / or sub-national urban policies in selected countries and sub-national regions.	1.1 National / sub-national Urban Policies with the appropriate policy instruments to ensure a people-centered smart cities approach aligned with local priorities .	1.1.1 Formation of one in-country advisory board/ committee, per country in the selected regions	2022-23 Q2	4 NUPs approved (Egypt, I.R. Iran, Mozambique, Paraguay) 1 SNUP approved (Cambodia) 1 NUP on track for completion in 2026 (Azerbaijan) 1 NUP drafted (Myanmar) 1 SNUP drafted (Niger State)	2023-24 Annual Report, 2024-25 Annual Report.
		1.1.2 Review of existing/ or formulation of the NUP with people-centered smart city strategy	2022-23 Q2		
		1.1.3 Completion/revision of one NUP feasibility policy note for each country in the selected regions	2022-23 Q4		
		1.1.4 Completion of one diagnosis paper for the development/update of the national urban policy, per pilot country	2022-23 Q4		
		1.1.5 Completion of a National Urban Policy Framework per each country	2024-25 Q4		
		1.1.6 Formulation/update and validation of one National/sub-national Urban Policy	2026-27 Q2		
		1.1.7 Workshops for validation of one National/sub-national Urban Policy	2026-27 Q2		
	1.2 Development of people-centered smart city strategy aligned with local priorities in each pilot country	1.2.1 Data collection to support the elaboration of smart city strategy		1 Smart city action plan disseminated (Cambodia, subnational) 2 Smart city strategy drafted in Phase 1 (I.R. Iran, Myanmar) Digitalisation report prepared (Mozambique) Note: Reduced emphasis on people-centered smart cities	2023-24 Annual Report, 2024-25 Annual Report.
		1.2.2 Formulation of a people-centered smart city strategy			

2. Capacity of policy makers and stakeholders enhanced to facilitate the territorial dimension of urban innovation and steer digital transformation in NUP / SUPs.	2.1 Development of a Practical guide on assessment and integration of people - centered smart cities, digital transformation and innovation in urban / metropolitan areas in national urban policies.	2.1.1 Collection of data for preparation of a territorial smart city guide per region	2024-25 Q3	Guide published in 2025: International Guidelines on People Centred Smart Cities - "Smart Cities for People: empowering lives, protecting the planet, advancing prosperity".	Link
		2.1.2 Development of a joint guide for facilitation of formulation and execution of urban/metropolitan innovative interventions at the territorial level	2024-25 Q4		
		2.1.3 Capacity building workshops/trainings on NUP and digital transformation in each selected country			
	2.2 Preparation of annual international urban innovation and smart-city EGM/ workshop on effective use of digital technologies in urbanization processes, including development of international guide on people-centered smart cities with key tech stakeholders	2.2.1 Preparation of concept note the EGM/ workshop	2026-27 Q2		
		2.2.2 Identification of key stakeholders in the technology and smart city arena	2026-27 Q2		
		2.2.3 Development of meeting agenda and programme	2026-27 Q2		
		2.2.4 Organization of the meeting	2026-27 Q2		
		2.2.5 Completion of meeting report and draft guidelines on effective approaches on implementing people-centered smart cities	2026-27 Q3		
	2.3 Organization of the bi-annual International Conference on National Urban Policy	2.3.1 Preparation, organization and facilitation of the International Conference on National Urban Policy	2026-27 Q4		

3. Urban/ metropolitan interventions apply innovative approaches and technologies while considering the people- centered dimension in National Urban Policy.	3.1 A guide outlining of modalities, financing and investment for implementing tangible and sustainable people-centered smart city initiatives in NUP	3.1.1 Development of concept note for the implementation guide for all the regions		Guide published in 2025: A step-by-step guide for a “people centred” smart city strategy: A Playbook for national, regional and local governments	Link
		3.1.2 Collection of data on case studies from globally known executed smart city urban projects			
		3.1.3 Organization of a working EGM/ write-shop from all the five regions to draft the guide			
		3.1.4 Completion of meeting outcome report			
		3.1.5 Preparation of quick guide on implementation of people-centered smart urban interventions			
	3.2 Completion of supported people-centered smart urban/ metropolitan intervention with government and/or partners, at least 2 per pilot country	3.2.1 Creation and validation of list of viable public urban/metropolitan interventions for evaluation per pilot country		Demonstration projects: For implementation in 2025-26 2 in Cambodia 2 in Mozambique 2 in Egypt 1 in Azerbaijan 1 in Paraguay: Phase 1 Countries, complete: 2 in Iran 1 in Myanmar, 4 sites 3 in Niger State:	2024-25 Annual Report, p.28
		3.2.2 Development of tool for facilitation of implementation of the urban/metropolitan intervention			
		3.2.3 Development of programme of implementation, budgets, and list of stakeholders for implementation.			
		3.2.4 Data collection in preparation of implementation			
		3.2.5 Identification of demonstration projects for the implementation of people-centered NUP and smart city strategy			
		3.2.6 Preparation of implementation reports; 1 per each project	2026-27 Q2		

4. Improved knowledge creation and sharing, and enhanced global awareness of experiences on the nexus of NUP and people-centered smart cities approaches and models.	4.1 Exchange visit to learn from the Korean experience with NUP and people-centered smart cities	4.1.1 Development of exchange visit programme	2026-27 Q3		
		4.1.2 Administrative organization of exchange visit	2026-27 Q3		
		4.1.3 Preparation of exchange visit report	2026-27 Q4		
	4.2 Completion of NUP stakeholders' workshops	4.2.1 Creation and validation of list of stakeholders		2022-23 Induction workshop	2023-24 Annual Report, 2024-25 Annual Report.
		4.2.2 Development of tools for workshops		Consultative workshops - country level UN-Habitat DegUrba workshops	
		4.2.3 Development of programme agenda and supporting tools for workshops		2023-24 WUF, Egypt	
		4.2.4 Data collection in preparation of consultative workshops		Country office workshops with national and local authorities	
		4.2.5 Administrative organization of workshop series		Induction workshops	
		4.2.6 Facilitation of workshops		2024-25 UN-Habitat Assembly, Nairobi	
		4.2.7 Preparation of workshop reports		Risk Management in NUP Implementation Workshop Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All Quarterly consultations - MOLIT, participating countries, HQ	
	4.3 Completion of normative products related and elaborating NUPs and people-centered smart cities	4.3.1 Development of a Practical guide on assessment and integration of people-centered smart cities, digital transformation and innovation in urban/ metropolitan areas in national urban policies.		See outcomes under 2.1 and 3.1 Earlier publications: Addressing the Digital Divide: Taking action towards digital inclusion (2021)	Link
		4.3.2 Draft a Playbook on the development of NUP with smart city strategies for local governments, including local assessment tools.	N/A	Centering People in Smart Cities: A playbook for local and regional governments (2021)	
		4.3.3 Draft a document on NUP best practices for improving urban digital inclusion, reducing digital divides and ensuring effective service delivery.	N/A		
		4.3.4 Develop a national urban policy indicators to monitor the implementation of the SDGs, particularly related to the people-centered smart city dimension.	N/A		

	4.4 Completion of annual reports	4.4.1 Collection of report data	Annual cycle	Annual reports produced for 2022-13, 2023-24, 2024-25	
		4.4.2 Development of annual report	Annual cycle		
	4.5. Development of a global campaign on NUP and people-centered smart cities together with respective branches, UN-Habitat Regional Offices and partners	4.5.1 Development of a concept note with clear objectives of the campaign	2023-24 Q2	6 playbooks developed Online video presentation Demonstration projects - 3.2, esp. Cambodia & Mozambique Cambodia - 'Scaling up People-Centered Smart Cities through NUP	link
		4.5.2 Prepare modalities of partnership e.g. budgets on a MoU / IHA etc	2023-24 Q3		
		4.5.3 Creation of campaign materials	2023-24 Q3		
		4.5.4 Roll out activities hand in concurrence with in-country policy process	2023-24 Q4		
		4.5.5 Completion of annual progress reports on the global awareness initiative	2023-24 Q4		

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