



UN-HABITAT EVALUATION BRIEF

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative

Evaluation Report 2/2012

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Climate change induced by rising levels of global warming will put cities at risk by exacerbating existing environmental, economic and social problems as well as giving rise to greater vulnerability of cities to climate change-related natural disasters. Among the most affected is the world's urban poor in developing countries.

The Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) was launched by UN-Habitat in August 2008 to address the effect of climate change on cities in developing countries. In the four years since its inception, CCCI has expanded and evolved, widened the geographical scope and expanded the range of capacity development approaches in order to support local authorities in addressing climate change. From the original four cities, CCCI is now active in more than 40 cities in countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. At the same time, the focus of activities have broadened from building resilience to climate change, to helping cities to take stock of their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and formulate low-carbon growth strategies. The initiative has also produced normative outputs such as development of global tools and taken on an expert role, for example, to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Two phases of the Initiative have been completed; the third is currently under implementation. The Government of Norway has been the main donor supporting the Initiative since its launch.

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation was to assess achievements to date while planning for a systematic expansion of activities to enhance synergy between normative and operational activities, and to explore how to engage more constructively with key actors on policy issues.

The evaluation was conducted as part of the formal monitoring and evaluation activities of the Initiative.

2. EVALUATION PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was undertaken between January and December 2012. It was conducted by an evaluation team of consisting of Mr. Tom Wolters (team leader) and three national consultants, Mr. Diego Carrion Mena (Ecuador), Mr. Eddie Nsamba-Bayiiya (Uganda) and Mr. Thilak Hewawasam (Sri Lanka). The evaluation was managed by the Urban Planning and Design Branch with technical support from the Evaluation Unit.

The present evaluation covers CCCI activities funded by the Government of Norway and activities funded by other sources, such as the United Nations Development Account, as well as activities funded by the Cities Alliance and implemented jointly by the World Bank, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat.

The evaluation had two specific objectives: To assess whether the implementation of the Initiative is on track, what problems or challenges have been encountered and what if any corrective actions are required and; to guide CCCI to achieve sustainable results as it expands and deepens activities related to cities and climate change. The assessment of CCCI was based on evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

A mixed methods approach was used for the evaluation of review of relevant documentation, interviews with CCCI and other staff, assessment workshops with key stakeholders and questionnaires submitted to selected CCCI partner organizations and institutions and three in-depth country level assessments as well as field visits to the cities of Sorsogon, the Philippines and

Kigali, Rwanda. The draft evaluation report was revised based on feedback from UN-Habitat staff and comments received at a CCCI Partners' meeting held in September 2012 and comments from the World Bank.

Time and resource constraints for conducting the evaluation limited the ability to capture all relevant information on projects implemented in roughly 20 countries during the period evaluated. At project scale, the extent and quality of data, indicators and documentation varied greatly depending on local conditions and resources.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

Achievements

- The Initiative has with a relatively small budget developed into a multi-regional project, with guiding and advocacy functions at all levels. The support extended has included assistance to the formulation of climate change assessments and action plans, facilitating national-local dialogue on supporting legislation, promoting national and regional networks to exchange lesson learned, capacity-building and the formulation and implementation of demonstration projects.
- City-level activities has been on climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction and building disaster resilience, taking into account that many cities are located in areas prone to climate change-related disasters and marginalized urban poor that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and lack the resources to cope with them.

Relevance of the CCCI

- CCCI is highly relevant in addressing the important role that cities have to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation by focussing its assistance on small and medium-sized cities.
- The Initiative is relevant as a coordinating mechanism for activities under Focus Area 2: Participatory Urban Planning, Management and Governance of the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan MTSIP).
- CCCI addresses the urban poverty dimension, previously overlooked in climate change-related programmes at the national and local levels and is focused on multi-sector urban planning and management.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

- The net core budget for Phase I and Phase II (which ended in December 2011) was approximately USD 5.48 million and was provided by the Government of Norway. Resources mobilized at global level, including the Government of Norway for the period 2008 to 2015 (for Phase I-III) amounts to a total of USD 17.90 million.
- The project is managed by a small Project Management Unit based in the Urban Planning and Design Branch, assisted by a part-time Nairobi-based technical support team with further support provided by the regional offices. The management and support structure has functioned well and has been efficient in its use of available resources. Its staff capacity is however being overstretched due to the rapid expansion of CCCI.
- CCCI has been able to make notable progress towards achieving targeted outcomes by disseminating tools, methodologies and knowledge gained on key technical issues.
- Forty-eight regional and national networks have begun to address the issues of cities and climate change and five countries have approved national climate change policies that address the urban and local government dimension of climate change and the responses to it.
- By bringing an ever increasing number of cooperating partners into the CCCI process, the Initiative has also contributed to greater understanding of the role of cities in climate change.
- CCCI has been instrumental in injecting the urban dimension into climate change policies, by-laws and

related instruments, particularly at the national and levels. It has proven to be effective in supporting cities to formulate action plans and strategies and assisting in their implementation as well as built capacity amongst local officials and other stakeholders through training institutes.

- CCCI has successfully raised the awareness of local authorities and various stakeholders at the grassroots level with regard to climate change and built the capacity of urban professionals to deal with the local planning and management challenges posed by climate change.
- A key component of CCCI is the national-local policy dialogue, which brings together all major actors, including donors. There is a need to expand and deepen the process across all the countries partnering in this Initiative. This will be vital for institutionalizing support for policy reform, leading ultimately to concrete change at the local level through remedial interventions.

Impact and Sustainability

- The evaluation indicates that more effort is needed to strengthen interaction and cooperation of the different networks established. The reform of policies and their application will be another important factor.
- The mainstreaming of CCCI capacity-building tools and the inclusion of climate change into normal planning practice would be a significant step for sustainability. However, such new planning practice must contain a long-term time horizon and be flexible so as to allow it to take into consideration changing parameters.

4. MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

Project Design

- Output targets need to have realistic targets. Modifications during implementation due to changing conditions have to be reflected in a formal project revision, including adjustments to the logical framework (logframe) matrix if found necessary.

Project Management

- A rapidly expanding project can be a heavy burden on the limited capacity

of core staff and other technical staff assigned to it on a part-time basis. Managing this increasing workload requires optimising both capacity and expertise, prioritizing activities, fully utilizing the capacities of regional offices and the systematic engagement of outside experts on strategic direction.

- A fast growing project such as CCCI requires an adequate communications strategy and information plans to improve lines of communication with partners, other key stakeholders.

CCCI Networking

- Building effective networks requires appropriate management mechanisms and adequate technical staff to support the Project Management Unit of CCCI. Given the growing number of cities and partners in the Initiative, alternative models for participation and networking may have to be considered.
- Participation of the private sector in CCCI has been very limited despite the acknowledged importance of the private sector for the formulation and implementation of local climate change action plans and their proposed remedies.

Knowledge Management

- With ever-increasing number of participating cities and documented city experiences in addressing the challenges of climate change, the knowledge derived from these experiences is steadily and efficient ways of storing, managing and disseminating this, as well as controlling and standardizing its quality.
- CCCI is fast on the way to potentially becoming a knowledge management hub, which could ultimately lead to it becoming a clearance house.

Policy Change

- Participation by cities is primarily driven by the desire to reduce their risk to climate change-related natural disasters.
- There are increasing calls by participants in major international meetings for disaster-reduction strategies and climate change adaptation. Responding to all of this may require shifts in the policy direction of CCCI and greater

collaboration with the Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and others to elaborate joint strategies.

Funding

- Financing city-level climate responses is a major challenge, especially as it may include financing costly infrastructure.
- Although partner surveys indicate that securing finance for climate change risk mitigation projects is fast becoming a matter of priority, it is still difficult to secure funding for smaller and secondary cities from funds and financial institutions.
- In 2012, CCCI established a partnership with the Cities Development Initiative for Asia, a non-profit entity financial advisory service, to prepare number of project proposals for submission to donors and financial institutions for funding.

Cross-Cutting Issues

- Work incorporating cross-cutting issues has been mostly normative. It includes a gender issues checklist in Nepal, case studies on decentralization in Namibia and Sri Lanka and youth awareness campaigns, most notably a “youth caravan” to raise climate change awareness during the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in South Africa.

5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include as a specific output in CCCI Phase III the establishment of a cities and climate change thematic network hub under CCCI management.
- Given limitations in funding, the project should allocate available resources strategically in the most efficient and effective way with core funds used to initiate activities, support normative activities and knowledge management and mobilize additional resources, including co-funding from third parties to deepen and widen CCCI activities in the regions and cities.
- Strengthen the governance structure in Phase III by establishing an advisory body which should take the form of an Advisory Council to provide advice on a wide range of policy and technical issues. Its membership should include CCCI’s key partners, experts and others from whose advice CCCI may benefit.
- Develop an overall CCCI strategy and management plan which can also serve as a framework for regional strategies, provide parameters for the functioning of the CCCI partners’ network and be a point of reference for the work of the Advisory Council. The overall strategy should include a communications strategy and dissemination plan.
- To be a global programme with multi-regional coverage, strategic effort should be made to establish presence in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and Arab States.
- Explore whether the Cities and Climate Change network hub could include a clearance house or “One-Stop Shop” for knowledge management on cities and climate change.
- Explore the possibility of a greater role for UN-Habitat’s regional and country offices in supporting CCCI, including, inter alia, assistance in mobilizing additional resources.
- Plan for social and economic impacts of CCCI interventions on local communities during project design and apply appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools at both project and sub-project levels.
- There is a need for innovative and more flexible planning approaches that recognize uncertainty and changing parameters posed by climate change and disaster risks.