

United Nations Development Account

Terminal Evaluation of UNDA Tranche 12 Project 2023P
“Inter- regional cooperation for the implementation of the New
Urban Agenda”

2020-2023



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Evaluation conducted by: Mr. Hugo Navajas*



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This evaluation report was commissioned by the Independent Evaluation Unit. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report are those of the external evaluation consultant and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UN-Habitat.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of South East Asia Nations
CLUP	Comprehensive Land User Plan
CSO	Civil society organization
ECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America & Caribbean
ERG	Evaluation Review Group
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia & Pacific
ESCPWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
IEU	UN-Habitat Independent Evaluation Unit
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MIDUVI	Ministry of Urban Development & Housing (Ecuador)
MINURVI	LAC Forum of Ministries and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urban Development
NHUDSP	National Housing and Urban Development Sector Plan (Philippines)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NSDF	National Spatial Development Framework (Lesotho)
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan (Lesotho)
RC	Regional Commission
ROAf	UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa
ROAP	UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia & Pacific
ROAS	UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States
ROLAC	UN Regional Office for Latin America & Caribbean
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UMF	Global Urban Monitoring Framework
UN	United Nations
UNCHS	United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat)
UNDA	UN Development Account
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
VLR	Voluntary Local Report
VNR	Voluntary National Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

This report presents the terminal evaluation of UNDA Tranche 12 Project 2023P: Inter- regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The project was jointly implemented by UN-Habitat and the Regional Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean (ECLAC) as the co-led entities, in collaboration with other Regional Commissions – ESCAP, ECA, ECE and ESCWA. The project was implemented between April 2020 and June 2024 in nine target countries and related cities which were located in areas of the five United Nations Regional Commissions. The project's USD 1.526 million budget was financed under the UNDA 12th Tranche, for specific implementation of activities, some of which were regional and interregional.

The project had the overall objective of improving capacities among the selected countries and cities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban-related SDGs with strengthened inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing. Three expected outcomes were to contribute to achievement of the overall objective and were led by designated implementing partners as follows:

- Strengthened capacities of national/city policymakers and stakeholders to develop coherent urban plans and evidence-based urban policies (*Regional Commissions*)
- Enhanced capacities of national and city stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and report on progress in implementing the NUA (*UN-Habitat*)
- Enhanced inter-regional cooperation, South-South learning, and sharing of NUA implementation experiences (*ECLAC and UN-Habitat*)

The terminal project-level evaluation was commissioned by Independent Evaluation Unit, UN-Habitat and conducted by an international evaluation consultant, Mr. Hugo Navajas. The assessment of the work of the Regional Commissions, which was commissioned by ECLAC, was a crucial input to evaluation., which was conducted in the months of May to September 2025.

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND INTENDED USERS

The evaluation serves dual purposes of accountability and learning. From an accountability perspective, the evaluation assessed whether the project achieved its planned results. From a learning perspective, the evaluation assessed what worked and what did not work.

The evaluation assessed the performance of the project and the extent to which it has been relevant, coherent, efficient, effective, and its sustainability as well as emerging impact; capturing lessons learnt and providing recommendations for improving future similar projects. It also assessed the appropriateness of the design, implementation strategy, working modalities and coordination. It identified key lessons and provided recommendations for UN-Habitat and Regional Commissions.

In terms of scope the evaluation covered the implementation period from the start of the project in April 2020 up to June 2024. It covered UN-Habitat's work to achieve outcome 2 and part of outcome 3; and the work of Regional Commissions to achieve outcomes 1 and 3. Geographically, it covered all nine countries with their corresponding cities - Ecuador (Quito), Costa Rica (San José), Cuba (Havana), Jordan (Amman), Morocco (Agadir), Cambodia (Battambang), Philippines (Naga City), Kazakhstan (Almaty), Lesotho (Maseru), Cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental safeguards were considered during data collection, analysis and reporting.

This evaluation results, lessons learned and recommendations will inform key stakeholders of the evaluation, who are The UNDA Management Team, UN-Habitat, ECLAC, ECE, ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Due to resource and time constraints the evaluation was conducted remotely and relied on the desk review relevant documents, including the Final Narrative Project Report and Regional Assessment of the work of the Regional Commissions – as well as interviews with UN-Habitat and ECLAC focal points. Remote interviews with key national/city participants were planned but a minimum sample was not identified in spite of requests, arguing that this would be the same key stakeholders the assessment of the regional Commissions had contacted and it will be duplication and waste of time to key stakeholders. The evaluation was based on the criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact Outlook, Sustainability and Cross-Cutting Issues. The main limitation to the evaluation was limited access to key stakeholders. This limitation restricted to gain first hand information and gaining insights on achievements of the project across several countries in different regions, of different contexts.¹ However, through annual reports and workshop reports there was evidence of stakeholders engagement validated through government counterparts at national and subnational levels, specifically in Cambodia and Philippines.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS.

Achieving planned results

The project implementation was guided by Results Framework which was assessed to be satisfactory. Its outcomes and deliverables were based on realistic expectations with measurable performance indicators. The Results Framework and outcome indicators were adjusted to specific national and city contexts at an early stage, through gap analysis exercises and stakeholder consultations that culminated in country action plans that guided implementation. The country work plans were aligned to the specific urban development contexts, raising the project's relevance and effectiveness. This also contributed to early country ownership and commitment by government authorities.

In terms of implementation strategy, adaptive management was key to manage expectations and deliver outputs across the nine-countries and cities. Implementation strategies were adjusted to national and city contexts with early gap assessment exercises that fed into the design of country work plans. Project support was often designed to build on country initiatives, providing entry points on which to develop activities and make better use of available resources. This approach raised the project's coherence at country level, encouraging commitment and ownership despite the project's modest budget. Country selection was critical to the project strategy. In terms of achieving results, overall, and to greater extent, the project achieved what was planned.

Performance of the project based on the evaluation criteria

Relevance: In design and implementation strategy, the project was highly relevant to the needs and priorities of countries and cities, and coherent with the programme priorities of implementing partners. Project relevance was strengthened by the country selection process and early adjustment of the Results Framework to national/city contexts. The project's interventions supported urban policy and planning processes, developed urban databases and monitoring frameworks, guided Voluntary Reporting. Experiences and good practices were shared at national urban forums and regional learning events. These activities supported both in-country urban development and management, as well as global monitoring and reporting on NUA / SDG 11 implementation.

Coherence: The objective and approach were consistent with the programmatic priorities of UNDA, the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat. In target countries, the project established linkages with other initiatives that were implemented by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat. This provided “entry points” on which to

¹ Extensive stakeholder consultations and training events were held by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat at national and sub-national levels at many of the project sites. However, participants were not available for interviews during the evaluation.

build activities, and contributed to the efficient use of resources. Implementation partners communicated with the UN Resident Coordinator in all countries, with examples of coordination in Morocco, Jordan and the Philippines. Coherence with national and city urban policy and planning frameworks was reflected in country action plans, cross-sector consultative processes and policy recommendations, and the provision of instruments and tools to assist policy implementation, i.e. land value capture, urban transformation financing.

Effectiveness: The project was assessed to be satisfactorily effective. Outputs were fully delivered and outcomes achieved in a majority of target countries and cities. The project contributed to the integration of NUA concepts within national/city urban policies and plans and provided policy recommendations and instruments that were viewed as “actionable” by recipients. Databases were developed and indicator systems adopted that are based on UN-Habitat’s Global Urban Monitoring Framework. This is expected to enable consistent and comparable monitoring of NUA implementation and urban performance over time. Cross-sectoral consultations brought diverse urban actors together – in some cases for the first time – to build consensus around sustainable urban development priorities. These contributions are reflected in tangible deliverables that include Voluntary Local Reports (VLRs) on NUA implementation; land value capture and urban financing instruments; the use of NUA /SDG 11 indicators to guide urban and land use development plans; and the development of parallel initiatives such as Smart Cities. An Urban and Cities Platform was established by ECLAC in the Latin & America region that houses an urban observatory, updated databases and provides virtual forum; to date the Platform has received more than 1 million visits.

Efficiency: The project was very efficient in the use of financial and in-kind resources - both monetary and in-kind, and moderately so in terms of consistency with implementation and budget delivery timelines. The 12th Tranche funds were earmarked in their entirety for implementation activities, and the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat assumed management, coordination, monitoring and reporting functions internally. In-country implementation relied on national consultant expertise with external technical backstopping, and often built on existing policy planning, NUA and SDG localization processes (in addition to parallel initiatives such as Smart Cities). This enhanced the project’s ability to deliver outputs and results in a cost-effective manner. Conversely, the project faced difficulties in general terms with meeting the planned implementation timelines, and was extended for a six-month period. By the project’s completion, a 95% implementation rate was achieved by the implementing partners and most of the budget had been spent. Delays of project completion were attributed to changes of cities of implementation as was the case in Morocco and effects of COVID 19 among other factors that were external to the project.

However, this did not reflect unsatisfactory performance by the implementing partners, which faced challenges in ensuring consistent implementation timelines by five implementing entities in nine project sites that were dispersed across five regions. Inter-regional coordination and monitoring were complex given the project’s multi-level structure. Despite time and paperwork needed to actively monitor a geographically dispersed USD 1.5 million project, ECLAC continued to produce annual progress and financial reports, yet faced difficulties in obtaining timely information from implementing partners.

Impact outlook: Expectations of impact in the project’s design were realistic and consistent with the scale of intervention and resources. The project improved the enabling conditions and capacities for sustainable urban development planning, monitoring and reporting to move forward in target countries. The assistance delivered has incorporated NUA concepts into urban policies and plans, provided policy instruments that are applied in several countries, and created frameworks to monitor NUA progress and urban performance consistently over time. As was noted, the project raised the profile of the NUA and strengthened its strategic positioning at policy levels in target countries. From a Theory of Change perspective, these achievements are the “intermediate states” that enable actual impact. Project initiatives under the first and second outcome components may contribute to

measurable urban impact, to the extent that NUA-influenced policies and plans are implemented and urban monitoring frameworks sustained. However, the likelihood of impact is conditioned to a large extent by contextual factors that are external to the project.

Sustainability: The project focused on developing capacities for sustainable urban development planning, and for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NUA and urban-related SDGs. There is a moderate to high likelihood of sustainability to the extent that the policies or plans that incorporate NUA concepts are implemented, and that good practices – cross-sectoral planning, inclusive consultations, urban performance monitoring – are incorporated to mainstream frameworks. The 18 months that have lapsed since the project's termination has provided adequate time for the transfer, consolidation and appropriation of project results. A better understanding of the present status of key country initiatives is needed to reliably assess post-project sustainability.²

The fundamental question is whether the capacities that were strengthened are capacities that are being applied. The project made a good start in this respect: Project approaches were designed to integrate learning and practice. Capacity building for NUA and SDG monitoring encompassed the actual stages of data collection, processing and analysis. This has led to the adoption of urban indicators and formulation of VLRs, VNRs and other assessments on urban performance. Voluntary reporting and cross-sector consultations have informed national and city urban policy and plans. Cross-sectoral planning and inclusive consultations were encouraged in all countries. The evaluation was unable to determine the full extent to which project results and practices have been “mainstreamed” at country or city level, beyond specific examples that are mentioned in this report. In all countries, sustainability is conditioned by contextual factors that are external to the project. In Ecuador, for example, post-project sustainability is low at national level due to government and policy changes – including the downgrading of MINUDVI – yet Quito municipality continues to support NUA initiatives. Countries that have direct UN-Habitat or Regional Commission representation are likely to be better placed to assist the consolidation of project results.

Cross-cutting issues: Gender equality, human rights and social inclusion were not explicitly addressed by the project's design or implementation approach. Exceptions were found in the VLRs of Agadir and Amman, which were formulated with an over-arching gender dimension. There were also indirect linkages in the sense that inclusive and cross-sectoral planning is a central element of the NUA approach that was pursued under the first project outcome. The project enabled the formulation of informed recommendations to national / city urban policies and plans that include social housing and other components that target disadvantaged groups.

² There are indications that post-project support is continuing in some cases, for instance ESCAP's technical assistance to Cambodia's National Smart City Strategy and NUA localization in the Philippines.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions address the main evaluation questions that are raised in the Terms of Reference:

- The project's interventions supported urban policy and planning processes, developed urban databases and monitoring frameworks, guided by national and local voluntary reviews in countries and cities where the project was implemented. Experiences and good practices were shared at national urban forums and regional learning events. These activities supported both in-country urban development and management as well as global monitoring and reporting on New Urban Agenda, SDG 11 and other Urban related SDGs implementation.
- The project objective, outcomes and implementation approaches were responsive to the urban needs and priorities of target countries, and to the programme priorities and country initiatives of implementing partners.
- The project demonstrated effectiveness in delivering planned results. Project outputs and outcomes were fully achieved at most project sites.
- The project has enhanced enabling conditions for the planning, implementation and monitoring of NUAs and sustainable urban development policies in the target countries and cities.
- Inter-regional coordination and monitoring were challenged by the complexity and geographic dispersion of the project.
- Project resources were used efficiently, with adaptive management applied to different and evolving country/city contexts.
- There are encouraging examples of post-project sustainability and replication in several countries.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

- The project's design and implementation arrangements were drivers of relevance and effectiveness, and offer guidance to future inter-regional projects that work in different urban and policy environments.
- Adaptive management was applied intelligently during the project's inception phase, through gap assessments and the adjustment of the Results Framework to national and city contexts. This represented a good practice that should be incorporated to the project cycle and replicated in future initiatives.
- The country and city selection process contributed to the project's cost-effectiveness and ability to deliver results.
- There are potential diseconomies of scale when establishing monitoring and coordination frameworks for inter-regional or global projects with multiple implementing entities at different sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to UN-Habitat and Regional Commissions:

Recommendation 1: Similar Future UNDA projects should benefit from formalized coordination matrix and clear Headquarters regional reporting lines.

Responsible entities: UN-Habitat, UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Short-term (within the next six months)

Recommendation 2: *Track the evolution of country initiatives supported by the implementing partners to document post-project results and emerging impacts, and to better understand the dynamics of managing NUA processes.* Although 18 months have passed since the project's termination, an ex-post understanding of the ultimate results and impacts of project interventions is lacking. Tracking the major changes that emerge over time – approvals of new policies and legislation with NUA elements, new VLRs and VNRs, impacts of urban policy implementation – may underscore the strategic contributions of NUA processes to national and city urban policy planning.

Responsible entities: UN-Habitat and UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Medium-term (within the next year)

Recommendation 3: *Systematize and replicate good practices drawn from the project's design and implementation arrangements, for future regional /inter-regional initiatives that encompass different implementing entities and dispersed project sites.* Several examples are mentioned in the report: The adaptation of the Results Framework to country action plans, reliance on national consultants with technical backstopping by implementing partners, low overhead costs. These practices have enabled a flexible implementation approach of high relevance and coherence that was also cost-effective and delivered results. There were encouraging examples of collaboration between UN-Habitat and Regional Commissions that can be built on. All of these practices are potentially useful for future regional or inter-regional initiatives that engage various (non-resident) implementing agencies and project sites with moderate allocations.

Responsible entities: UN-Habitat, UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Short-term (within the next six months)

Recommendation 4: *Implementing partners should capitalize on the project's demonstration value and strengthened positioning of the NUA, to replicate project initiatives on a wider scale.* This is already happening to some extent as a result of the project's demonstration value, through the reported replication of NUA planning and monitoring, VLR and VNR processes in other countries of the regions. A framework for UN-Habitat – Regional Commission collaboration should be systematized from the project experience and promoted as an international support vehicle for advancing country and city sustainable urban development agendas (NUAs and SDG 11 included). This could open new possibilities, as noted in the case of China's Silk Road development initiative or African countries that are close to ex-Soviet republics that support NUAs. The publication of project case studies of NUA implementation offers excellent material from which to begin draw methods and approaches that have delivered results, strengthened capacities and encouraged commitment in different urban contexts.

Responsible agencies: UN-Habitat, UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Medium-term (within the next year)

Recommendation 5: *Future initiatives and resource mobilization efforts should draw on the comparative advantages of the project implementation modality, promoting integrated "packages" of technical assistance to assist NUA implementation and other sustainable urban development processes.* To the extent that future NUA support is brought down to local levels – as foreseen by a new interregional project proposal that is under discussion – the approaches applied will need to strengthen the project's capacity to generate change processes with limited funds and intermittent external support. While localized NUA support will need to rely on the expertise of national consultants and local actors, in-country technical accompaniment and backstopping by the implementing agencies will be fundamental to guide the implementation of city / local-level processes and for quality assurance. Opportunities for horizontal collaboration within regions based on country progress should also be explored.

Responsible Agencies: UN-Habitat, UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Long-term (based on the findings drawn from Recommendations 2 and 3)

Recommendation 6: *Ensure that future country interventions are supported with adequate technical oversight and in-country presence. The role and capacity of implementing partners to accompany and support in-country implementation needs to be considered at the design stage – more so if localized interventions are planned - and remedial measures considered.* UN-Habitat played a comparatively smaller project role than the Regional Commissions, reflecting budgetary allocations to different outcome components. Although substantial technical and capacity building support was delivered towards the second project outcome, UN-Habitat's presence at country level was inconsistent and conditioned by workloads, proximity and resource availability. For example, UN-Habitat assumed a lead implementing role and facilitated the work of Regional Commissions where there were country offices and teams (Philippines, Morocco, Ecuador). Conversely, there was less presence in countries that lacked direct representation and relied on regional offices; for example, the inter-regional advisor assigned to Kazakhstan was unable to visit the country during the project's implementation.

Responsible Agencies : UN-Habitat Regional Offices

Timeframe: Short-term (within the next six months)

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) commissioned the terminal evaluation of United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project 2023P, titled “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)”. The project was part of the UNDA projects approved for the tranche 12. It was jointly developed and implemented by UN-Habitat and the five Regional Commissions (ECLAC, ECE, ESCWA, ECA and ESCAP). UN-Habitat and ECLAC co-led the implementation, with ECLAC being responsible for coordinating the regional commissions. The project was approved with a total budget of USD 1,526,262 and implemented during the period of April 2020 through June 2024.

The project’s objective was to improve capacities of selected countries and cities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban-related SDGs while strengthening inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing the project was approved with evaluation framework. The regional commissions were to commission national evaluations, which were to be coordinated by ECLAC. The overall project evaluation was to be managed by UN-Habitat and conducted by an international evaluator, building on national evaluation reports and compiling findings into a comprehensive project evaluation report.

This terminal project evaluation assesses the work carried out by UN-Habitat and builds on the assessment of the work of the regional commissions. The assessment was commissioned by ECLAC as end-of-cycle project review of the work carried out by the five Regional Commissions under the 2023P project. The evaluation serves dual purposes of accountability and learning. It was carried out in the month of April through August 2025 by Independent Consultant Mr. Hugo Navajas.

The target users of the evaluation report are management and staff of the project’s implementing entities (including all regional commissions and relevant country offices of ECLAC, ECE, ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA), the UNDA Management Team (DA-MT) and other key stakeholders who were involved in the implementation of the project.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 BACKGROUND

In the UN System, UN-Habitat has the mandate to support Member States in the development of sustainable cities and human settlements through its normative and operational work at the global, regional, national and local levels. It also leads and coordinates the monitoring of and reporting on global progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11).³ Similarly the UN regional commissions play a vital role in promoting sustainable development, facilitating regional cooperation and supporting Member States in implementing global agendas.

Recognizing the critical need for action on pressing urban issues, national government representatives attending the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito in 2016, adopted the New Urban Agenda, in which the links between urbanization and development and the crucial need for inclusive and sustainable urban growth are emphasized. The ambitious 2030 Agenda, adopted a year before the New Urban Agenda, is a global initiative with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals aim to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth, social inclusion, environmental protection, fostering peace and inclusive societies through a global partnership, with a primary commitment of leaving no one behind.

The focus on cities in global development agendas such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), has evidenced the role of cities in driving sustainable development. Cities are the

³ Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

epicenter of economic growth and are catalysts for innovation and change. They host the necessary political institutions and governance mechanisms to promote the changes needed to accelerate sustainable development. However, their potential can be easily lost in the absence of holistic and cross-sectoral integrated planning and decision-making processes and effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation systems at all levels to ensure that progress is tracked, and results are accounted for and reported as appropriate. Similarly, the progressive potential of urbanization can equally be lost in the absence of socially inclusive urban plans and policy decisions that foster well-being and leave no one behind. It means, the extent to which the urban potential can be harnessed relies strongly on the capacity of national and local governments to develop strategies that include cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder integration and operate on multiple levels and scales of intervention.

During the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development⁴ which is the central United Nations platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), meeting held in New York in July 2018, the Executive Secretaries of the five United Nations Regional Commissions and the Executive Director of UN-Habitat agreed to strengthen collaboration and coordination among their entities for enhanced global implementation of the NUA in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

The UNDA is a capacity development programme of the United Nations Secretariat aimed at enhancing the capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the UN development agenda. UNDA projects are funded from the regular budget. The Account supports the implementation of projects of five UN Secretariat entities (UN-DESA, UNTCTAD, UNEP, UNODC and UN-Habitat) and the five UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA).

Through this project, UN Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat sought to increase policy coherence amongst member States across [five](#) regions and promote improved capacities of institutions and other agents of change in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. This required integration of regional, national, and local dimensions through a variety of activities including: (i) building capacity of national and local level decision makers to develop cross-sectoral and integrated urban action plans for the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the NUA and localization of SDGs; (ii) establishing mechanisms for sharing of information and successful practices combining global relevance with regional pertinency; and (iii) facilitating an inclusive process of regional monitoring and reporting on sustainable urbanization frameworks.

The project was implemented in nine target countries across five regions, in one city in each of these countries (Ecuador - Quito, Costa Rica- San Jose, Cuba - Havana, Cambodia - Battambang, Philippines – Naga City, Jordan-Amman, Morocco-Agadir, Kazakhstan-Almaty, and Lesotho-Maseru). The planned results of the project were to: (i) improved capacity among national and local policymakers and decision makers in selected countries to develop cross-sectoral and integrated urban plans and coherent urban policies for sustainable urban development in line with the implementation, monitoring and reporting requirements for the NUA and localization of the SDGs; and (ii) increased inter-regional cooperation and sharing of best practices allowing for the regionalization and subsequent localization of globally set urban agendas and commitments.

The selection of participating countries was based on expressed demand from national governments, aligned with existing regional cooperation frameworks, and strategic relevance with each region. Countries had requested technical assistance to mainstream the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and strengthen urban policy, planning, and monitoring frameworks. The selection reflected opportunities for on-going collaboration, such as existing MoUs, leadership roles in regional bodies and readiness to engage in pilot initiatives. The selected project sites covered a range of urban contexts with different socio-political, economic and demographic characteristics. All were predominantly urban or undergoing rapid urbanization, with the associated opportunities and challenges: Transitions from agriculture-based economies towards informal service sectors; the expansion of urban peripheries, often unregulated; increased demand for basic and social services; youth unemployment and pockets of urban poverty.

⁴ At the 2018 “High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.”

All the target countries and cities faced knowledge gaps that resulted from the limited availability of urban and spatial statistics, or of indicator systems on which to track city performance. These limitations had bearing both on the coherence of national and city urban policymaking and planning, and on their capacities to monitor and report on the NUA or SDG 11 to global levels. Most countries and cities had engrained tendencies towards sector or department-driven urban policies and plans. The project justification was largely based on the premise that the progressive potential of urbanization cannot be realized in the absence of integrated, cross-sector planning and decision-making, or in the absence of socially inclusive plans and policy decisions.⁵

2.2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The project's overall objective and expected outcomes and indicators of achievements are presented in table 1. Detained Logical Framework Matrix in Annex 2 of the report.

Table 1. Project objective expected outcomes

Project's overall objective	Expected Outcomes	Indicators of achievement
Improved capacities of selected countries and cities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban-related SDGs with strengthened inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing	Expected Outcome 1 Strengthened capacities of national and city level policymakers and stakeholders including NGOs, private sector, academia, and representatives of vulnerable groups in target countries and cities to develop coherent national/ city urban plans and evidenced based urban policies.	1.1 At least 1 cross sectoral urban development policy, strategies, plans or measure is inclusively formulated or reviewed in each target countries. 1.2 National Action plans for the implementation of cross-sectoral urban development policies, measures or actions developed in 7 out of 9 project target countries with participation of relevant stakeholders. 1.3 At least 7 out of 9 the target cities have utilized improved urban planning tools, mechanisms and knowledge platforms in their strategies to promote sustainable urban development and aligned of the national action.
	Expected Outcome 2 Enhanced capacities of national and city level stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA (including the Quadrennial reporting for 2022) and achieving sustainable urban development to inform regional and global monitoring and reporting	2.1 At least 7 of the 9 target countries city level data is used for national integrated planning for sustainable urbanizations. 2.2 At least 7 out of 9 target countries have established inclusive mechanisms to produce data and reports on sustainable urbanization
	Expected Outcome 3 Enhanced inter-regional cooperation south-south	3.1 Virtual Platform to share experiences and practices within the LAC region is developed and functioning with content provided by Member

⁵ Project document, pg. 2

	and triangular learning and sharing of implementation experiences related to the implementation of the NUA	States (national and city). 3.2 At least 7 out of the 9 target countries or cities participate in inter-regional knowledge and practice platforms for global NUA and SDGs monitoring and reporting.
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The responsibility of the implementation of outcomes was distributed to different implementing entities. Regional Commissions had the responsibility for strengthening urban policy and planning coherence under Outcome 1. The UN-Habitat managed capacity development for NUA monitoring, evaluation and reporting for Outcome 2. Outcome 3 focused on inter-regional learning and dissemination of experiences, and was jointly led by ECLAC and UN-Habitat. The project was guided by an inter-regional Results Framework, which was adopted to national or city urban contexts through in-country gap assessment missions and the discussion of finding.

2.3 PROJECT STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIVITIES

The project was broad but remained focused to main deliverables of the Results Framework of the project. (Annex Annex 2 to the report). Adaptive management was key to manage expectations and deliver outputs across the nine-countries and cities. Implementation strategies were adjusted to national and city contexts with early gap assessment exercises that fed into the design of country work plans. Project support was often designed to build on country initiatives, providing entry points on which to develop activities and make better use of available resources. This approach raised the project's coherence at country level, encouraging commitment and ownership in spite of the project's modest budget.

The project Results Framework did not foresee direct, transformative impacts. Expectations were adjusted to the scale of intervention and centered on improving capacities and enabling conditions for sustainable urban development to move forward at national and city levels. Project interventions sought to influence systemic and institutional dimensions by promoting integrated planning across sectors, generating “actionable” policy recommendations and tools, and developing urban databases and indicators to better monitor urban performance. From a Theory of Change perspective, the project outcomes were closer to the “intermediate states” that provide the enabling conditions for impacts to occur.

Sustainable urban development was presented as an integrated, cross-sector process. The Voluntary Reporting on NUA progress and several urban policy assessments were guided by consultations with broader range of urban actors, both within and outside government. The project approaches served different levels: the initiatives that supported urban policy coherence and monitoring capacities have informed national development and city plans while also raising adherence to NUA reporting in advance of the 2026 Mid-Term Review.

Country selection was critical to the project strategy. The distribution of a modest budget among six entities. Countries and cities were selected where conditions for achieving results were in place, through consultations with Regional Commissions and the regional UN-Habitat offices. An important consideration was the existing level of momentum towards implementing NUA, SDG 11 or other initiatives such as Smart Cities.

2.4 BENEFICIARIES AND TARGET COUNTRIES

The project was implemented in nine targeted countries and cities across five regions: Quito, Ecuador; San Jose, Costa Rica; Havana, Cuba; Agadir, Morocco; Amman, Jordan; Battambang, Cambodia; Naga City, Philippines; Almaty, Kazakhstan; and Maseru, Lesotho.

The main project beneficiaries were national and city government urban development ministries and agencies linked to national and city government in the target countries. They represented the primary country partners and conduits for implementation, and recipients of project assistance (Table 3). Other beneficiaries included other government entities with cross-sector planning mandates, which participated in integrated policy and planning discussions, NUA / SDG 11 monitoring, and other project initiatives. In several cases, e.g. in Agadir and Amman, other stakeholders including academia, private sector, and international organizations that were participated in the development of VLRs. Urban actors were consulted for inclusive planning exercises that helped to build consensus around sustainable urban development priorities, informing national and city planning frameworks. The categories of project beneficiaries, their role and the benefits that were derived are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The categories of project beneficiaries, their role and the benefits.

Stakeholder Focus Groups: Direct Beneficiaries	Stake in the Project and Level of Influence	Project Benefits
National government agencies and institutions with urban development and cross-sectoral policy planning mandates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main project partners and recipients of technical support at national level. • Access to urban policy planning frameworks and decision-making, and to relevant government institutions and stakeholders. • Main channel for implementing national NUA processes, formulating VNRs, and influencing national urban development policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened policy and planning coherence with the application of integrated, cross-sectoral approaches for sustainable urban development. • National urban databases with performance indicators and improved NUA/ SDG monitoring and reporting capacities. • Enhanced knowledge and contact networks through participation in regional learning events and exchanges. • Access to regional virtual platforms with databases and a user forum (LAC)
City government agencies and institutions with urban planning and development mandates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main project partners and recipients of technical support at municipal level. • Access to city urban policy planning and decision-making, and to relevant urban institutions and stakeholders. • Main channel for implementing city NUA processes, formulating VLRs, and influencing city urban development policies and plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and planning coherence through inclusive, cross-sectoral approaches to sustainable urban development. • City urban performance indicators, databases and improved NUA/ SDG monitoring and reporting capacities. • Enhanced knowledge and contact networks through participation in regional learning events and exchanges • Access to regional virtual platforms with databases and a user forum (LAC)

<p>Non-governmental organizations, institutions, associations and networks supporting sustainable urban development in target countries and cities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs, urban institutes, civil society associations and different urban actors participated in training events, integrated planning exercises and NUA/SDG monitoring. • Their engagement in project activities was crucial for demonstrating inclusive, integrated urban development planning. • Project Focal Groups or Steering Committees were created in some countries/cities with advisory and oversight functions, i.e. Cuba, Philippines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion in NUA consultations and integrated planning processes with inputs to government policy levels. • Consensus-building on urban needs and priorities • Support for parallel initiatives, i.e. Smart Cities, urban platforms and advocacy • Capacity building on urban indicators and NUA/SDG monitoring • Access to regional virtual platforms with databases and a user forum (LAC)
<p>UN Regional Economic Commissions and UN-Habitat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project implementation, coordination, monitoring and financial management at inter-regional, country and city levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced strategic positioning of NUAs in country urban policy and planning frameworks, with opportunities for replication • Coherence with urban policy and programme priorities • Support to ongoing initiatives in target countries and cities • Strengthened country/regional presence as drivers of sustainable urban development • Documentation of knowledge products and good practices for dissemination • Opportunities for collaboration between implementing entities

2.5 PARTNERS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The project was implemented by UN-Habitat and ECLAC as co-lead implementers in partnership with the other Regional Commissions. – ECA, ESCWA, ESCAP and ECE. Although the project was guided by the common project document, results framework, and shared expected outcomes, each Regional Commission developed and implemented activities in alignment with national priorities, internal work plans and specific urban development context of the participating countries and cities. **Table 3** – shows Regional Commissions lead implementing roles in selected countries and cities of different entities

Table 2 : Implementing entities responsible for target countries and cities

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecuador (Quito) ▪ Costa Rica (San Jose) ▪ Cuba (Havana)
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jordan (Amman) ▪ Morocco (Agadir)
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cambodia (Battambang) ▪ Philippines (Naga City)
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kazakhstan (Almaty)
ECA (Economic Commission for Africa)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesotho (Maseru)

Source: The Assessment report of the work of the Regional Commissions for UNDA Project – 2023p ,Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, July 2025.

Implementing partners were responsible for specific project components. The Regional Commissions led the strengthening of policy and planning capacities under the first outcome, while UN-Habitat implemented capacity building for NUA monitoring, evaluation and reporting towards the second. The third outcome component was focused on regional and inter-regional learning and dissemination, jointly led by ECLAC and UN-Habitat. Management, coordination and administrative costs were assumed internally by implementing partners for their initiatives. Although bi-monthly meetings of the partners were initially scheduled, the logistical difficulties of bringing participants together –with different country contexts and work plans – lowered the scope and depth of inter-regional coordination or monitoring. The DA Programme Management Team had the responsibility of overseeing the entire UNDA portfolio and had little direct interaction with the project.

Project implementation strategies were adjusted to specific national and city urban contexts through early gap assessments that were fed into the design of national work plans. These adjustments were based on needs and gap assessments that were conducted at an early stage, with the involvement of key country partners that led the national execution of activities. Table 3 lists the principal national and city entities that supported project implementation in the target countries.

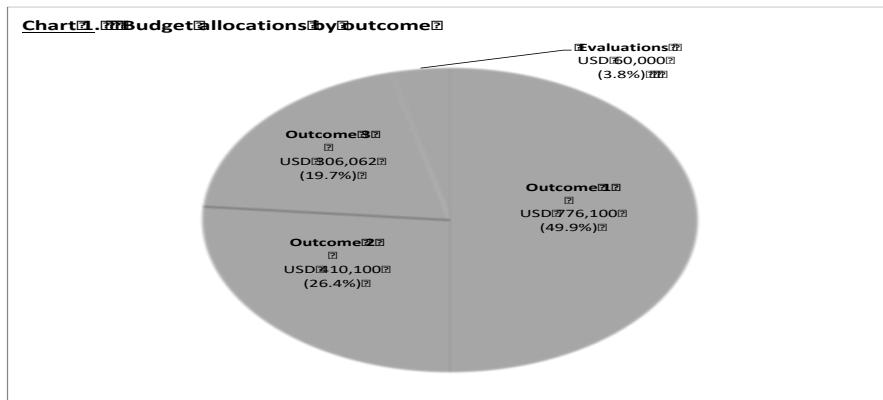
Table 3: Key project stakeholders in target countries

Latin America & the Caribbean	
Costa Rica:	Ecuador:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements • Municipal Government of San José 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Government of Quito • Quito Public Housing and Habitat Company • Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Secretariat of Habitat and Territory • Metropolitan Public Company of Habitat and Housing
Western Asia	
Jordan:	Morocco:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESWA • UN-Habitat • Ministry of International Cooperation and Planning (MoPIC)\' • Ministry of Local Administration • Greater Amman Municipality • UCLG-MEWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESWA • UN-Habitat • City Government of Agadir • UCLG-MEWA <p>Various stakeholders were engaged in the implementation process including UN entities, Academia, civil society among others.</p>
Asia & Pacific	
Philippines:	Cambodia:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development • Department of Interior and Local Government • Naga City Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of the Interior • Battambang Provincial Hall • Focal Group Representatives
Central Asia	
Kazakhstan:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Government of Almaty - Department of Digitalization • Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry 	
Africa	
Lesotho:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Government of Maseru • Ministry of Planning • Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship 	

2.6 RESOURCES

The approved UNDA funding for the project under the 12th Tranche totaled USD 1,526,262. The entire UNDA contribution was allocated for in-country implementation, with the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat providing internal coordination, monitoring and financial management with direct technical support from their regional offices and UN-Habitat – Nairobi.

23. The project component under the first outcome – strengthening capacities for coherent urban planning and evidence-based urban policies – was implemented by the Regional Commissions and received almost half of the total budget allocation. The second outcome component to improve NUA monitor and reporting capacities was led by UN-Habitat and received slightly over one-quarter of the budget. Approximately 20% of the budget was allocated to regional learning and exchanges under the third outcome, which was jointly implemented by ECLAC and UN-Habitat. Finally, a small allocation was earmarked for evaluations.



Source: Based on budget data of the Project Document

Among the project budget lines, almost one-third of the budget was allocated to “consultants and experts”. This was followed by “workshops and study tours” that received approximately one-quarter of the total budget. Project lines were revised periodically, both globally, regionally and at country level, in response to evolving contexts and adaptive management needs. Table 4 shows the financial allocations by budgetline.

Table 4. Financial allocations by budget line

Budget Line Description	Budget Allotment (USD)
Other staff costs - General temporary assistance	\$ 65,000.00
Consultants and experts	\$ 499,000.00
Travel of staff	\$ 250,000.00
Contractual services	\$ 245,262.00
General operating expenses	\$ 69,000.00
Supplies and materials	-
Furniture and equipment	-
Workshops / Study tours (Grants and contributions)	\$ 398,000.00
Total	\$ 1,526,262.00

Source: Project Document

The Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat contributed in-kind resources, technical assistance and backstopping support for the management, administration and monitoring of their initiatives. In addition to demonstrating institutional commitment, these contributions enabled the full use of project funds for direct implementation.

Additional cash and in-kind contributions were mobilized during implementation from the following sources:

- The European Union EURO Clima programme provided ECLAC with a USD 37,200 cash contribution to fund the LAC Urban and Cities Platform (*Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades*).
- GIZ provided ECLAC with in-kind support valued at USD 54,732 to develop the LAC Urban and Cities Platform (*Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades*).
- UN-Habitat's SDG Localization Unit supported the formulation of VLRs in the West Asia region with in-kind technical staff assistance valued at USD 30,000

2.7. LINKS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The project objective and outcomes were aligned with and contributed to urban-related SDGs. The project was directly aligned with SDG 11 “Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities” through its support for NUA implementation, SDG localization, and monitoring/reporting on NUA and SDG 11 indicators. This supported both national and city urban policy planning, as well as reporting on NUA and SDG 11 progress to global frameworks.

The project's design aimed to contribute to several SDG 11 targets:

- *Target 11.3* “Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- *Target 11.6* “Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management”.
- *Target 11.A* “Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”
- *Target 11.B* “Substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters.”

In addition, the first and second project outcomes had direct relevance to SDG 17 “Partnerships for goals” and the following target in particular:

- *Target 17.4* “Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development”
- *Target 17.18* “Enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high- quality, timely and reliable data”.
-

2.8. INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Innovative approaches were used for the project's implementation at country level, and to its implementation arrangements. The implementation approach was incremental and adjusted to different national and city contexts within the parameters of the Results Framework. Implementation arrangements relied to a large extent on the contracting of national urban consultants, with technical backstopping by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat.

The project carried out early in-country gap assessments with discussions of findings that generated inputs for country action plans. This represented an effective use of the inception stage. Some of the implementation approaches were innovative to the contexts in which they were applied. Sustainable urban development was consistently promoted as an integrated, cross-sectoral and inclusive process. The formulation of VLRs, VNRs and other deliverables involved consultations with government and other urban actors at national and city level.⁶ Capacity development was applied to the production of tangible products: NUA implementation “roadmaps”, Voluntary Reporting on NUA progress, urban monitoring databases and indicators, policy and technical contributions to national and city plans. From a Theory of Change perspective, the three project outcomes showed complementarities and causal linkages (vertical and horizontal) in design that were mutually reinforcing.

3. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND QUESTIONS

3.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The TOR clearly specified the purposes, objectives and scope of the evaluation. It serves purposes of accountability and learning. From accountability perspective, the evaluation assessed whether the project achieved its planned results. From a learning perspective, the evaluation assessed what worked, what did not and why. The findings, lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluation will inform the key stakeholders of this evaluation, who are the UNDA Management Team, UN-Habitat, including its regional offices and relevant country offices, ECLAC, ECE, ECA, ECE, ESCAP and ESCWA and key participating national and city institutions. Objectively the evaluation assessed the performance of the project and the extent to which it was relevant, efficient, effective, coherence, sustainability and impact outlook. It assessed: The appropriateness of project design, implementation strategy and results by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat at outcome and results levels.

- The project performance in terms of its relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and emerging impact.
- The appropriateness of implementation modalities, coordination, partnerships and how they have influenced achieving results.
- The effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on project performance and learning from the challenges faced.
- Social inclusion issues of gender equality, human rights, youth, disability, as well as how environment issues were integrated in the project.
- Identified lessons learned, good practices and recommendations for improving UNDA projects of similar nature and context

3.2 EVALUATION SCOPE, CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation scope covers the implementation period from January 2021 to June 2024 in the nine selected countries and cities: Quito, Ecuador; San Jose, Costa Rica; Havana, Cuba; Agadir, Morocco; Amman, Jordan; Battambang, Cambodia; Naga City, Philippines; Almaty, Kazakhstan; and Maseru, Lesotho. Regional and inter-regional activities are also considered. The evaluation encompasses the performance and contribution of UN-Habitat and the Regional Commissions towards the achievement of expected outcomes.

The evaluation’s Terms of Reference specified criteria and guiding questions to be answered by evaluation, and to aid in formulating evaluation findings. Much of the data was collected for these questions from the Final Narrative Project Report and ECLAC’s regional Assessment of the Work of the Regional Commissions, in addition to annual progress reports and other relevant documents. Table 5 shows the evaluation criteria and chosen evaluation questions.==

⁶ ESCWA has also noted the alignment that was achieved between the VLR and the VNR in its initiatives.

Table 5. Evaluation criteria and guiding questions

Criterion	Evaluation questions and sub-questions
<i>Relevance</i>	<p>1. To what extent were objectives and outcomes of the project consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country and city needs, and implementing partner priorities to strengthen coherent policies and approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda?</p> <p>1.1 Was the implementation strategy responsive to SDG 11 and the NUA, and were assumptions and risks adequately considered?</p> <p>1.2 To what extent results framework of the useful in supporting the planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation of the project.</p> <p>1.3 To what extent were monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the project timely, meaningful, and adequate?</p> <p>1.4 What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?</p>
<i>Coherence</i>	<p>2. To what extent was the project coherent with other relevant projects in the target countries implemented by other actors?</p> <p>2.1 How well did the project work with the UN Resident Coordinator system and UN Country teams in the target countries and cities to ensure coherence and added value?</p> <p>2.2 What were the synergies and inter-linkages between this project and other projects carried out by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat?</p>
<i>Effectiveness</i>	<p>3. To what extent did the project achieve its planned results of improved capacity among the national and local policy makers and decisions makers in the target countries and increased cooperation and sharing of best practices allowing for the localization of SDGs and NUA?</p> <p>3.1 To what extent were the national and city level institutions and stakeholders strengthened to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA achievement of SDGs in the target countries and cities?</p> <p>3.2 What extent did the project enhance the inter-regional cooperation and sharing of implementation experiences related to implementation of the NUA?</p> <p>3.3 How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?</p> <p>3.4 To what extent were beneficiaries and partners satisfied with project's results achievement?</p>

<i>Efficiency</i>	<p>4. How well was the project managed in terms of resources, timeframe for delivery and adjustments due to demands of evolving contexts?</p> <p>4.1 To what extent did the project's governance, management and coordination structures enable or hinder the planning, implementation, monitoring and ongoing adjustments to the project implemented by the six entities?</p> <p>4.2 What type of activities, products and services did the project provide to beneficiaries?</p> <p>4.3 Were the resources effectively utilized? To answer this question, the consultant will need to look at the in-kind and staff resources that were made available for the project (beyond the \$1.52 million from the DA) by each of the 6 implementing entities, and their partners.</p> <p>4.4 How did the project financial management processes and procedures affect project implementation?</p>
<i>Impact outlook</i>	<p>5. What difference did the project make?</p> <p>5.1 What is the overall impact of the project (directly or indirectly), planned or not planned?</p> <p>5.2 What positive changes did the project make at institutional, city and national levels?</p>
<i>Sustainability</i>	<p>6. Will the benefits of the project last?</p> <p>6.1 To what extent did the project build capacity and ownership of the stakeholders that contribute to sustainability?</p> <p>6.2 To what extent will the project be institutionalized at city and national levels?</p>
<i>Cross-cutting issues</i>	<p>7. To what extent were cross-cutting issues of gender, human rights, environment and disability considered and appropriately integrated into in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?</p>

4. METHODOLOGY

The Terminal Evaluation followed UNDA guidelines that are aligned with UNEG standards. The evaluation was home-based and relied on (i) the review of relevant project documentation – the project document, final narrative project report, regional assessment of work done by the Regional Commissions, and other relevant documents; (ii) online interviews with the UNDA Project Management Team, ECLAC and UN-Habitat focal points within the Programme Division and Regional Offices. The data collected from the desk review and feedback received from implementing partners was analyzed and emergent findings systematized. Data collection was focused on the evaluation criteria and guiding questions contained in the Terms of Reference.

The evaluation was implemented in the following stages:

Preparatory Phase (April W2 - W3): Initial meetings were held with the UN-Habitat Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) for briefing purposes, in preparation for the TE. IEU and ECLAC created a OneDrive folder with project documentation that was made available to the evaluator.

Inception Phase (April W4 –June W2): The evaluator conducted an initial review of the project documentation – encompassing the project document, final project report, regional assessment of work done by the Regional Commissions, progress reports and other relevant documents – from the data base that was made available. Information gaps were identified and additional or updated documents were received in the course of the evaluation. An Inception Report was produced that represented the first evaluation deliverable, outlining the methodological approach, timelines and deliverables based on the Terms of Reference. The inception phase was extended due to delays in receiving documentation and securing interviews with some of the implementing partners.

Data Collection Phase – In-depth Desk Review (June W2 – W4): The inception stage was followed by a more in-depth and comprehensive desk review of documentation that looked at specific country and city initiatives, and the products that were delivered.

Data Collection Phase – Online Interviews (June W3 - July W3): The desk review was followed by online interviews with focal points of the UNDA Project Management Team, UN- Habitat Programme Division and Regional Offices, and ECLAC. These interviews provided insight into over-arching aspects that have influenced performance – management and coordination, monitoring, administrative efficiency – as well as the challenges that were faced at country level, and likelihood of post-project continuity and replication. Interviews were scheduled according to staff availability. The evaluator was unable to schedule interviews with target country and city focal points.

Analysis of Data and Formulation of Draft TE Report (July W1 - 4): The data collected from the desk review and interviews with implementing partners was analyzed and emergent findings documented. Data analysis and findings were developed according to the evaluation criteria and UNDA reporting format. The analysis was qualitative and descriptive to a large extent, based on the available information. The assessment of effectiveness included quantitative assessments of outcome achieved against outcome target indicators.

A draft Terminal Evaluation Report was reviewed by UN-Habitat's Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). Its finalization was postponed to accommodate late interviews with regional UN-Habitat focal points.

Adjustment and Finalization of the Terminal Evaluation Report (July W4-August W2). The comments and suggestions received from the IEU and ERG will be addressed by the evaluator and reflected in the final draft of the report.

The scope and depth of the evaluation was affected by some limitations. The evaluation approach that was outlined in the Inception Report foresaw online interviews with a representative sample of national and city government focal points, and/or country focal groups. The planned sample was intended to encompass two country focal points (national and city-level) in one country per region (with the possibility of reaching two countries in the LAC region given the larger sample). The sample would have enabled the evaluation to reach 50% of the target countries, in addition to interviews with implementing partner focal points.

This did not work out however. The evaluator requested contact information from the regional UN-Habitat and Regional Commission focal points (by e-mail). However, the limited feedback received did not allow for a

minimum interview sample. The lack of response is likely to reflect the 18-months that had lapsed since the project's termination, and a decline in communications with country participants. Several examples of beneficiary satisfaction are documented in ECLAC's regional assessment report. However, they are based on secondary information in the Regional Commissions assessment report. The lack of direct input from country or city-level informants restricted the triangulation of data. As a result, data collection and (much of) the evaluation analysis is conditioned by the narrative of the implementing partners. This was a major methodological limitation that prevented the triangulation of findings from different focus groups. The evaluation considers that the data that is reported in the project documentation and regional assessment are reliable and based on actual delivery in target countries and cities.

The ERG requested that the evaluation not duplicate interviews with Regional Commission participants that had recently responded to ECLAC's regional assessment. Interviews were secured with representatives of the UNDA Project Management Team, UN-Habitat's Programme Division, and its regional offices for Africa, Asia & Pacific, and Europe (that oversaw UN-Habitat's activities in Kazakhstan). These interviews gave insight into the overarching aspects of management, coordination and administration, the challenges that were faced, and recommendations for future improvement.

5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1. PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT IN ACHIEVING PLANNED RESULTS

The TOR required the assessment of the design, implementation strategy and achievement of results by the joint effort of the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat. Although the project Results Framework had no transformative impacts *it was assessed to be satisfactory. Its Outcomes and deliverables were based on realistic expectations with measurable performance indicators.* As noted by one of the Regional Commission respondents, the project was ambitious but not too ambitious. It was formulated with consideration of available resources and assumed a supportive, facilitative role involving a combination of national consultants and international expertise. The Results Framework and outcome indicators were adjusted to specific national and city contexts at an early stage, through gap analysis exercises and stakeholder consultations that culminated in country action plans that guided implementation.

A key strength of the Results Framework was its adaptability. The project was guided by an overarching Results Framework with shared goals across regions. The country work plans were aligned to the specific urban development contexts, raising the project's relevance and effectiveness. This also contributed to early country ownership and commitment by government authorities.

In terms of implementation strategy, adaptive management was key to manage expectations and deliver outputs across the nine-countries and cities. Implementation strategies were adjusted to national and city contexts with early gap assessment exercises that fed into the design of country work plans. Project support was often designed to build on country initiatives, providing entry points on which to develop activities and make better use of available resources. This approach raised the project's coherence at country level, encouraging commitment and ownership in spite of the project's modest budget. Country selection was critical to the project strategy. In terms of achieving results, overall, to greater extent the project achieved what was planned. Table 6 below shows what was planned at objective and outcome level and what was actual achievement rating.

Table 6: Performance of what was planned and achieved at outcome level.

Key	Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not achieved	
Project's overall objective	Expected Outcomes	Indicators of achievement	Actual achievement	Assessment of achievement
Improved capacities of selected countries and cities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban-related SDGs with strengthened inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing	Expected Outcome 1 Strengthened capacities of national and city level policymakers and stakeholders including NGOs, private sector, academia, and representatives of vulnerable groups in target countries and cities to develop coherent national/city urban plans and evidenced based urban policies.	1.1 At least 1 cross sectoral urban development policy, strategies, plans or measure is inclusively formulated or reviewed (when existing) in each target countries.	<p><u>Latin America & the Caribbean</u>, ECLAC implemented a comprehensive capacity-building program, benefiting over 300 individuals. Cross-sector urban policies, strategies and their relevant components were reviewed with Gaps Assessment methodologies and adopted. ECLAC contributed to the development of new urban policies and strategies.</p> <p>In Costa Rica: <i>Política Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano 2018-2030</i> was revised. The project provided technical support to design the policy component on Public Land Banks.</p> <p>In Cuba: The different components of Cuban Urban Policy (<i>Ley de Ordenamiento Territorial, Urbanístico y Gestión del Suelo, Esquema Nacional de Ordenamiento Territorial</i>, and the State NUA Implementation Plan) were reviewed. The project contributed to the regulations of regulations of the first territorial planning law in the country, gave technical assistance for the inclusion of land management and financing instruments.</p> <p>In Ecuador: <i>Agenda Hábitat Sostenible del Ecuador 2036</i> was reviewed. ECLAC provided technical inputs to develop the new 2023-2036 National Urban Policy.</p> <p><u>Western Asia</u>, cities like Amman (Jordan) and Agadir (Morocco, voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) were released. They were first pioneer cities in the Arab region and Northern Africa respectively to release their VLRs. The VLRs contributed to advancing local-national policy coherence.</p>	Achieved

		<p><u>Asia and Pacific,</u></p> <p>In Philippines to support the development of policy recommendations to enhance the integration of the NUA across multiple levels of government. In addition the project created a platform for multiple stakeholders and government departments to report the progress on the implementation of the NUA, contributed to preparation of the Philippine's NUA country report.</p> <p>In Cambodia, UN-Habitat and ESCAP supported the development of the National SMART City Strategy. At regional level, the project provided a platform for policymakers and experts from various countries to share experiences on NUA implementation and SDGs localization, fostering cross-border collaboration and enhancing peer- to- peer learning and exchanges.</p> <p>In Central Asia, with the support of UNECE the City of Almaty, Kazakhstan developed a smart city profile. Building on the city profile, Almaty prepared and launched its first VLR.</p> <p>In Africa ECA carried out the capacity assessment and action planning process, which informed the development of National Development Plan (NDP) guidelines in Lesotho.</p>	
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		<p>1.2 National Action plans for the implementation of cross-sectoral urban development policies, measures or actions developed in 7 out of 9 project target countries with participation of relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p><u>Latin and the Caribbean</u> the Action Plans for the 3 countries of LAC were completed and validated by each National Government.</p> <p>In Costa Rica: The National Action Plan to develop a public land bank for housing and urban renewal projects was carried out jointly by ECLAC, the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements and Municipality of San José. The Plan was validated by national and local government authorities.</p> <p>In Cuba: The National Action Plan to regulate the Law of Territorial Planning, Urban Development, and Land Management, and urban regulations for the historic Habana Vieja sector, was developed by the National Institute of Territorial and Urban Planning (INTOU) with ECLAC support. The Plan was validated by INTOU and the National Focal Group.</p> <p>In Ecuador: The National Action Plan to implement adequate housing objectives under Ecuador's National Urban Policy was developed by ECLAC and validated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.</p> <p><u>Western Asia</u></p> <p>In Jordan: The VLR of Amman was successfully conducted and has informed Amman's Master Plan, Amman Green City Action Plan, and Amman Resilience strategy. The simultaneous development of the VLR for Amman and the second VNR for Jordan allowed for cross-referencing and validating data, ensuring coherence between national and local development priorities, thus supporting effective multi-level governance systems and contributing to policy coherence for sustainable development, as demonstrated by Jordan's active participation in regional and international forums.</p> <p>In Morocco: Agadir's VLR was prepared in parallel to the municipal 2023-2027 action plan, which highlights the city's commitment for national-local policy coherence. The VLR has been complemented by several localized SDG specific initiatives in the city and highlighted the city's aspiration to become an inclusive, smart, sustainable, and resilient city which is highlighted through SDG specific initiatives done in the city.</p>	Achieved
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			<p><u>Asia & Pacific</u></p> <p>In Philippines: The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development's National Housing and Urban Development Sector Plan (NHUDSP) translates the national NUA into specific actions. The “Policy Recommendations on Strengthening the Integration, Implementation and Monitoring of the Philippine New Urban Agenda” developed under the project has provided guidance to enhance integrated actions, multi-sector support and financing.</p> <p>In Cambodia: The Ministry of Interior (MOI) chairs the national Smart City steering committee and developed a National Smart City Roadmap to guide policy, programs and projects across the country. Smart City Policy Recommendations that were formulated through the project were a key contribution to this process and were expected to feed into a National Smart City Strategy in 2024.</p> <p><u>Central Asia</u></p> <p>In Kazakhstan: The Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry applied United Smart Cities global KPIs to develop a national system of Smart City indicators that was introduced country-wide.</p> <p><u>Africa</u></p> <p>In Lesotho: A cross-sector action plan was formulated based on capacity and gap assessments conducted by the project, to assist the implementation of urban priorities under the National Strategic Development Plan.</p>	
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		<p>1.3 At least 7 out of 9 the target cities have utilized improved urban planning tools, mechanisms and knowledge platforms in their strategies to promote sustainable urban development and aligned of the national action.</p>	<p><u>Latin America & Caribbean</u></p> <p>In San José (Costa Rica): A cross-sector Action Plan to classify public land was validated by municipal government and the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements, and is being applied in the central districts of San José.</p> <p>In Havana (Cuba): A cross-sector Action Plan for La Habana was finalized and validated by the <i>Oficina del Historiador</i> in charge of Habana Vieja and Local Focal Group (with municipal and national government agencies and academic institutions). The Plan contains local financing and planning instruments, strategies to build tax culture, and guidelines to implement part of the National Action Plan.</p> <p>In Quito (Ecuador): The project provided training to technical staff and members of the municipal council on land value capture in support of Metropolitan Quito's Land Use Plan. ECLAC also supported the Metropolitan Public Company of Habitat & Housing in revising guidelines and transitioning towards becoming a more significant housing actor in Quito.</p> <p>Western Asia</p> <p>In Amman (Jordan): The VLR of Amman was prepared in collaboration with Greater Amman Municipality and SDG-specific data collected by the Amman Urban Observatory. The data collection process also included a triangulation with national-level data and qualitative approaches was employed to address obstacles such as quantitative data gaps and discrepancies. National-level data served to depict the broader context of the city, while qualitative approaches including stakeholder consultations, surveys, and informal interviews provided insights into Amman's actions for SDGs and the situation of population groups at risk of exclusion, ensuring comprehensive coverage and validity in the data analysis for the VLR.</p> <p>In Agadir (Morocco): The collection and validation of data for Agadir's (VLR) employed a participatory approach, engaging key stakeholders including the VLR technical team, the municipality, and partners such as the Haut-Commissariat au Plan (HCP). Strategies to overcome challenges stemming from the</p>	Achieved
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		<p>unavailability of an Urban Observatory in Agadir and limited access to high-quality urban and SDGs data were addressed within the VLR. These strategies likely involved collaborative efforts to enhance data sharing and coordination among stakeholders, capacity-building initiatives to improve data collection and analysis skills, exploration of innovative data collection methods such as crowdsourcing, and advocacy for increased resources to support regular data inquiries and the development of an Urban Observatory. Ultimately, these strategies aimed to facilitate a comprehensive review of Agadir's performance against SDGs and draw valuable lessons for future urban development planning and monitoring.</p> <p><u>Asia and the Pacific</u></p> <p>In Naga City (Philippines): Naga adopted SDGs as a performance monitoring indicators for its Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). The City implemented the VLR process in 2021 in alignment with the ESCAP regional guidelines. The project demonstrated how the NUA can be implemented within local development planning, using the Naga City experience, and the link between SDG 11 and NUA indicators/monitoring during the VLR process.</p> <p>In Battambang (Cambodia) joined the ASEAN Smart Cities Network in 2023 and was designated as a smart city. Battambang's Provincial Hall participated in roundtable discussions and the development of national policy recommendations for smart cities. Overall, the project demonstrated how smart cities are a key entry point for implementing the NUA in Cambodia, with need to continued capacity building and knowledge exchange at local and national levels.</p> <p><u>Central Asia</u></p> <p>In Almaty (Kazakhstan): Technical guidance provided to the City Government of Almaty and Government of Kazakhstan offered inputs to city planning documents on the topics of urban mobility, housing, digitalization. The city department of digitalization has developed further programmes using the profile outcomes.</p>	
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			<p>Africa</p> <p>Maseru (Lesotho): Led by the Ministry of Development Planning, a cross-sector Action Plan was formulated to assist the implementation of urban priorities under the National Strategic Development Plan.</p>	
	<p>Expected Outcome 2</p> <p>Enhanced capacities of national and city level stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA (including the Quadrennial reporting for 2022) and achieving sustainable urban development to inform regional and global monitoring and reporting</p>	<p>2.1 At least 7 of the 9 target countries city level data is used for national integrated planning for sustainable urbanizations.</p>	<p>The target indicator was achieved in Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Morocco, Jordan, Lesotho, Philippines and Cambodia. During the implementation period, UN-Habitat promoted the data collection and the need to set up urban observatory. As part of the process, the workshop on reporting tools for monitoring the implementation of the NUA and SDG was opportunity to engage with the local officials and to identify the most important indicators that can be measured and reported on.</p> <p>Latin America & Caribbean</p> <p>In Costa Rica: The first VNR was formulated for the 2016-2021 period with broad stakeholder representation encompassing 103 organizations. The VNR includes data for 76 NUA indicators. The Min of Housing & Human Settlements is making arrangements to update the Report in 2026.</p> <p>In Cuba: The project helped to develop a methodology for managing degraded, precarious, and informal neighbourhoods in Cuba. Support was given to SDG monitoring and reporting. Training was given to technical staff on sustainable urban development in relation to the “State Plan to implement the New Urban Agenda”, reaching 15 municipalities within the La Habana metropolitan area. Territorial contributions to finance municipal projects were promoted, and a communications program established to disseminate implementation of the NUA. A workshop to exchange experiences in preparing VNRs was held between Cuba, Colombia, and Mexico in 2021</p> <p>In Ecuador: An important output was the 2016-2021 Progress Report on the Implementation of the NUA. This critical document involved high-ranking national and city officials who attended the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in 2022. It was shared on the Virtual Platform of the Urban Agenda., and is reported by the project as a</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

		<p>“foundational step” towards integrated planning. An online course on “Planning for urban transformation” was attended by 50 Ecuadorian officials, of which 35 were certified.</p> <p><u>IAsia and the Pacific</u></p> <p>In Philippines: Capacity building on the Urban Monitoring Framework was provided for its use in Philippine context. NUA indicators were being defined by the National Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development to use its reporting. These indicators were being integrated into the midterm report of the Philippine NUA that is scheduled for 2025.</p> <p>In Cambodia: A rapid needs assessment and consultations were conducted with representatives at national and subnational levels. The assessment results highlighted the need to create greater awareness and capacity building around NUA and Smart Cities. This has led to subsequent meetings and discussions.</p> <p><u>Central Asia</u></p> <p>In Kazakhstan: Indicators for city-level NUA monitoring were defined with facilitation by the project team, but had not been applied in planning and monitoring within the project duration.</p> <p><u>Western Asia:</u></p> <p>The VLRs of Amman (Jordan) and Agadir (Morocco) were developed based on reliable quantitative and qualitative data gathered through documentary data collection, interviews. The data was validated in the process of the triangulation across various sources. The indicators of SDG targets were used in many instances and in case of unavailability of data proxies were used. In the case of Amman, the Amman urban observatory played a core role in leading the VLR development process. A VLR committee was formed including members from the different entities involved. The series of workshops held related to the data collection processes constituted a capacity building process. This has strengthened the capacities of members of the committee to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA.</p>	
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			<p>In Agadir, data collection was led by the municipality of Agadir and reached all relevant stakeholders. Weekly meetings were held on the data being collected in the presence of the members of the VLR committee. This led to strengthening capacities at local and national levels to monitor and evaluate NUA implementation.</p> <p>Through the project the NUA crash course and its illustrated handbook produced by UN-Habitat were translated to Arabic and turned into an e-learning course in an attempt to institutionalize the knowledge and increase its accessibility to local authorities in the Arab region.</p> <p>Africa</p> <p>In Lesotho: Capacity development workshops for Maseru local authorities and technical staff to support data collection and VLR preparation were completed from August to November 2022.</p>	
		2.2 At least 7 out of 9 target countries have established inclusive mechanisms to produce data and reports on sustainable urbanization	<p>Latin America & Caribbean</p> <p>In Cuba: A NUA Implementation Workshop aimed at 15 municipalities of Habana and was attended by decision-makers, officials and urban specialists. Cuba's NUA Action Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers as a State Plan and a national report on the NUA's implementation in Cuba between 2016-2020 prepared with participation of different government and civil society stakeholders. Experiences in the transformation of neighborhoods and capture of land value based on a public good were shared. A first Regional Workshop for Exchange of Experiences was held in preparation of the VNR with the assistance of Cuba.</p> <p>In Ecuador: Support was given to municipalities in preparing VLRs via webinar. Local government experiences of the region were shared. The webinar was attended by 38 participants from various municipal governments of Costa Rica, Cuba and Ecuador. A workshop on “Reporting tools for monitoring the implementation of the NUA and SDG” was attended by officials of Quito Municipality, and used to present the Urban Monitoring Framework, Urban Inclusion Marker and best practices on urban observatories.</p>	Achieved

		<p>In Costa Rica: A National Urban Forum titled “Informal Settlements: Comprehensive Habitat Management and the Right to the City” was held in San José to exchange good practices, and to promote strategic cross-sector and inter-institutional alliances. The Forum underscored the need to generate data for informed decision-making, and different actors committed themselves to updating urban and territorial information.</p>	<p>Asia & Pacific</p> <p>In Philippines: The VLR was completed using local and multi-sectoral data. DHSUD was in process of refining its selection NUA indicators and connecting to UN-initiated reporting frameworks. Both activities will ensure that NUA and SDG11 are included in national and local reporting processes.</p> <p>Cambodia: The project’s support to knowledge transfer of NUA and Smart Cities contributed data and policy guidance on smart cities and sustainable urban development but did not reach the systems used for data collection and application.</p> <p>Central Asia</p> <p>In Kazakhstan: The Almaty Smart Sustainable City Profile significantly improved the city's capacity for data collection and analysis. A capacity-building online meeting was held to exchange city experiences on localizing SDG indicators and aligning them with city priorities. In addition, a NUA Data Assessment and Collection workshop introduced stakeholders to the NUA, Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF), and urban observatories. Participants assessed the feasibility of integrating the globally approved UMF methodology and evaluated the ability of subnational/urban entities to compile the relevant data. SDG-related data available from the Bureau of National Statistics was identified that could serve as proxies for relevant UMF indicators. A set of UMF baseline indicators was generated. Stakeholders collected and assessed value-based urban data, and consultations held to validate the baseline indicator database. This process contributed to an extent to the Almaty Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process that followed.</p>	
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			<p><u>Arab States</u></p> <p>In Amman and Agadir: The Amman Urban Observatory led data collection for Amman's VLR. In Agadir the data collection process was led by the municipality of Agadir. Both cities developed SDG briefs for each selected goal, aligning them with local development priorities. This effort raised stakeholder awareness and established a baseline for relevant indicators. The data provided the foundation to monitor progress toward SDGs and the NUA. A virtual training session on "Urban monitoring framework and voluntary local reviews in the Arab region" was held to improve the capacity of local authorities to participate in VLRs.</p> <p><u>Africa:</u></p> <p>In Lesotho Data analysis and validation workshops were held for localized monitoring and reporting of NUA and SDG indicators, bringing together cross-sector ministries to create a sustainable urban monitoring system for Maseru city. The workshops strengthened the capacity of Maseru city to produce disaggregated SDG and NUA data to report on and inform policy. Maseru urban and city data estimates were produced using the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) and SDG indicator frameworks. City implementation teams validated baseline data and produced a UMF data report on progress in implementing the NUA.</p>	
	<p>Expected Outcome 3</p> <p>Enhanced inter-regional cooperation south-south and triangular learning and sharing of implementation experiences related to the implementation of the NUA</p>	<p>3.1 Virtual Platform to share experiences and practices within the LAC region is developed and functioning with content provided by Member States (national and city).</p>	<p><u>Latin America and Caribbean:</u> A regional urban platform was developed and is online in Spanish and English: https://plataformaurbana.cepal.org</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

		<p>3.2 At least 7 out of the 9 target countries or cities participate in inter-regional knowledge and practice platforms for global NUA and SDGs monitoring and reporting.</p>	<p><u>Latin America & Caribbean</u></p> <p>Cuba: Cuba participated in the First Regional Workshop for Exchange of Experiences for the preparation of the National Voluntary Report of the New Urban Agenda. Participation in 2023 workshop “Reporting tools for monitoring the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals”/</p> <p>Ecuador: Organization of workshop for “Reporting tools for monitoring the implementation of the NUA and the SDG” in 2023, attended by 45 officials of the Municipality of Quito with participants from Cuba and Costa Rica.</p> <p>Western Asia and Africa:</p> <p>Jordan: The development process of the VLR of Amman was highlighted in different venues. In 2021, the process was explored at a roundtable focused on VNRs and Voluntary Subnational Review (VSR) follow-up and the evaluation of the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>Morocco: Agadir’s VLR was highlighted as an example of good practice at an event on “Regional action for supporting SDG localization and urban resilience” held on 8 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, during the second UN-Habitat assembly. In 2023, both Amman and Agadir were highlighted as good practices in a plenary session of AFSD23 focused on “New inclusive and sustainable pathways for cities (SDG 11)”.</p> <p>Jordan & Morocco: Participation (with Lesotho) in an online event for Urban October on Evidence-based Decision Making for Urban Change: Global Data Tools in Action in Africa and West Asia.</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific</p> <p>Philippines & Cambodia: A side event at the Asia Pacific Forum in Bangkok enabled participants from Battambang to listen to experiences of other cities in NUA and Smart Cities monitoring, reporting, and implementation.</p>	Achieved
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5.2 PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT BASED ON EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.2.1 RELEVANCE: The relevance of the project was assessed to be highly satisfactory

(i). Relevance to needs and priorities of participating countries, cities and implementing partners

The project objective and outcomes were consistent with beneficiary requirements, country and city needs, and implementing partner priorities. Project relevance was strengthened by country selection and the early adjustment of the Results Framework to national and city contexts. The project was relevant in design and approach both to the programmatic priorities of the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat, and to urban policy and planning needs across the country and city sample. Relevance was strengthened at an early stage by in-country gap analysis, consultation and adjustment of work plans, has been important for encouraging the commitment of Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat, and project ownership among among national and city government partners.

According to the findings of the Final Project Report and Regional Assessment, the various project Interventions were highly relevant across the target country and cities. This is confirmed by the evaluator's interviews with UN-Habitat and ECLAC participants. The project supported policies and legislation that included urban finance in Cuba, housing and land governance in Costa Rica, Smart Cities in Cambodia and Kazakhstan, and cross-sector urban policy frameworks in Jordan, Philippines, Lesotho and Ecuador. Project initiatives were often supportive of ongoing policy reform and addressed specific capacity needs, facilitating broader stakeholder consultations that informed urban policies, planning and monitoring. Relevance was also strengthened by the selection of countries and cities that were in process of implementing NUAs, localizing SDGs or implementing other sustainable urban development initiatives with assistance from the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat, or had requested technical assistance to mainstream the NUA and strengthen urban policy frameworks and monitoring.

A key driver of relevance was the smart use of the project inception phase. The early scheduling of in-country gap assessment missions and discussion of findings, fed into the design of country work plans that were adjusted to specific urban contexts. In addition to strengthening project coherence, these actions encouraged the commitment and “buy in” of national and city authorities to the project.

(ii). Relevance to Country and City Needs and Priorities

The project was relevant to urban needs and policy priorities in the target countries. Examples of relevance and coherence were found across the spectrum. At the time of the project’s approval, ECLAC had been assisting urban policy and legal reform processes on land governance, housing policy with capacity building in Cuba, Ecuador and Costa Rica. In Ecuador, project activities were built around those of UNDA project “Monitoring and reporting on human settlement indicators in Africa and Latin America.” Ecuador had approved a National Territorial Plan, and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI) was in process of developing an urban agenda aligned with the “Regional Action Plan for Implementing the New Urban Agenda”. Costa Rica was in process of implementing its 2012-2040 Housing and Human Settlements Policy and the recently completed National Land Use Planning Policy (PNOT) with urban components. Its Ministry of Housing & Human Settlements presided the Forum of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urbanism of Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI). Cuba had adopted and was implementing the 2017-2036 NUA National Action Plan, which had been formulated through the Institute of Physical Planning. The land value capture and urban financing tools that were developed by ECLAC supported recently-approved legislation on Territorial and Urban Planning and Land Management.

In the Arab and North Africa regions, Jordan had recently formulated its first National Urban Policy, which presented a coherent and holistic vision of the country's urban development. Morocco had adopted ambitious urban-upgrading programs and national plans such as the 2004-2010 Cities without Slums initiative. In Asia & Pacific, the Philippines had approved the 2017-2022 New Urban Agenda and 2018-2023 National Urban Development & Housing Framework that lay out strategies to achieve the goal of a "Better, Greener, Smarter Urban Systems in a More Inclusive Philippines". A Department of Human Settlements & Urban Development was created to lead their implementation. Cambodia had one of the highest urban population growth rates in Asia and was in process of implementing decentralization and de-concentration reforms that strengthened local government attributions. Within Africa, Lesotho's capital Maseru concentrates almost half of the country's population. The government adopted a Decentralization Policy and was in process of formulating a National Strategic Development Plan that addressed these issues.

(iii). Consistency with Implementing Partner and Donor Priorities

In concept and approach, the project was consistent with the policy and programme priorities of UNDA, the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat, and supportive of on-going initiatives that were being implemented in the target countries. The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) is a capacity development programme that aims to enhance developing country capacities in priority areas. It is implemented by 10 entities of the UN Secretariat. This project as implemented by the five (5) Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat. SDG monitoring and reporting is a priority area of DESA's Statistics Division, and the project offered opportunities to advance in this area, while encouraging collaboration between UNDA implementing entities in line with the "Delivering as One" mandate.

The project concept was borne from the consensus between the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat's executive levels to strengthen inter-regional collaboration for the implementation of the NUA, at the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The project provided opportunities to build on and expand their urban initiatives in the regions: UN-Habitat was supporting the cities of Amman (Jordan) and Agadir (Morocco) to monitor and report on urban SDGs and the NUA, the former through Jordan's Urban Observatory. ESCAP had been assisting Battambang (Cambodia) and Naga City (Philippines) with SDG localization, data collection and integrated urban planning. UNECE had prepared a Country Profile on Kazakhstan's Housing Sector that provided baseline data and indicators. UNECE and ESCAP had received government requests for assistance in promoting sustainable urban development. In Africa, Lesotho had solicited ECA support to operationalize the NUA and incorporate sustainable urban development within the upcoming National Development Plan. Project activities in Lesotho enabled the pilot application of the "Harmonized Regional Framework for the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting of the New Urban Agenda in Africa" that was supported by ECA and endorsed by the African Union. Costa Rica's Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements presided the Forum of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urbanism of Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI) and worked closely with ECLAC and UN-Habitat. Some countries were in process of organizing National Urban Forums or implementing Smart Cities initiatives that offered synergies with project initiatives.

Another indicator of relevance is the continuity and replication of initiatives beyond the project period. In this regard, project experiences have since led to the expansion or replication of NUA implementation, monitoring and reporting processes, both within target countries, i.e. Kazakhstan, Philippines, and in the region, i.e. ex-Soviet republics in Central Asia.

(iv). Responsiveness to the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11

The project was highly relevant to the need for improved NUA and SDG 11 monitoring and reporting, and in positioning the NUA within national and city urban policy frameworks. All of the implementing partners supported common programme objectives and had worked towards advancing the NUA in their regions, directly or indirectly. On a global level, UN-Habitat served as focal point for the implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11. In the Arab region, ESCWA was mandated to support member countries in NUA and SDG implementation under the Doha Declaration for implementing the 2030 Agenda (at ESCWA's 29th Session). Before the project's approval, most of the Regional Commissions had received requests or were assisting countries in their regions on topics related to the NUA and SDG11. UNECE had received requests to support national government agencies and municipalities with NUA implementation and SDG monitoring. ESCAP was already assisting Battambang (*Cambodia*) with SDG localization and data availability..

The implementing partners – UN-Habitat in particular - shared concerns about the low level of country responsiveness and reporting to the NUA. Country reporting on NUA progress was below expectation - only 43 responded for the first Inception Report – and there was need for improvement in advance of the global 2026 Mid-Term Review. These concerns were directly addressed by the project objective and second expected outcome, which foresaw enhanced national and city stakeholder capacities to monitor, evaluate and report on progress in implementing the NUA and achieving sustainable urban development. Under the second outcome, UN-Habitat led the collection and analysis of data and capacity building activities that enabled reporting on NUA and SDG indicators, complementing the work of the Regional Commissions towards the first outcome. The gap assessments, NUA/SDG monitoring support and voluntary reporting (VLRs, VNRs) that were supported by the project have informed urban plans and policies at national and city level. Several interviewed respondents considered that the project had raised the profile and strategic positioning of the NUA within national and municipal policies and planning frameworks.

(v) Monitoring and reporting on project implementation

According to the project document⁷, monitoring was to be led by ECLAC and UN-Habitat in collaboration with the other Regional Commissions. The implementing partners were to review the implementation strategy and progress to ensure that outputs were in accordance with the expected outcomes.

The project's monitoring arrangements contained the following provisions:

- Regular team progress meetings would be scheduled at least every two months among project management and implementing partners. This would provide a regular opportunity to gather performance information and compare plans with actual activities and budget execution.
- Project management information and communication system such as Slack or Asana were to be used by all implementing partners to ensure that relevant information is shared in a timely manner.
- Implementing partners as well as beneficiary countries and cities would share the progress of project implementation and the results of activities and events.

The planned monitoring framework was partially implemented. This was influenced by the project's geographic dispersion and complex institutional arrangements. Project initiatives interacted with different urban contexts, capacities and timelines. In-country monitoring was conducted by the implementing Regional Commission and regional or country UN-Habitat offices. With exceptions – UN-Habitat and ESCAP in the Philippines, UN-

⁷ Project document, Monitoring and Evaluation, pp. 37-38

Habitat ROAS and ESCWA in Jordan and Morocco – implementing partners tended towards parallel management, coordination and budgeting. There were few joint reviews of progress, monitoring among the implementing partners outside of occasional virtual meetings or inter-regional events. Annual progress reports were prepared by ECLAC that adequately described the status of planned outputs and outcomes. Receiving data from the implementing partners for annual reporting was often a time-consuming process. The Final Project Report remained in draft form for an extended period beyond the project's termination.

Applying a global monitoring framework for a project of diversity, dispersion and budget was probably not feasible from a benefit-cost perspective. Logistics was an impediment and getting the partners together became a challenge. The planned bi-monthly meetings were initially constrained by COVID-19 and quarantine measures, and afterwards by the difficulties of scheduling meetings with participants across a 12-hour timeline. As a result, there was less monitoring of the overall project implementation at an inter-regional level, and more of a tendency towards in-country monitoring by the implementing partners, feeding information to ECLAC for the annual progress reports. The gap assessments and adjustment of work plans and deliverables to specific contexts also led to the inclusion of new performance indicators that varied across countries. The time and effort required to monitor or coordinate activities dispersed across nine countries, for the modest budget amounts involved, discouraged more intensive approaches.

5.2.2 COHERENCE

The evaluation assessed the coherence of the project as satisfactory

(i). Coherence with relevant projects implemented by other actors in the target countries.

The project implementation partners communicated with the UN Resident Coordinator's office in all target countries, with examples of more substantive coordination in approximately one-third of the countries. Coordination with the country UN offices varied on a case-by-case basis. In all countries, briefings on project activities were held with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office. More substantive collaboration was noted in Jordan, where the Resident Coordinator's Office recurrent meetings included discussions on the VNR and the VLR. In Lesotho, the Resident Coordinator's Office assisted data collection, gap analysis and stakeholder consultations for Maseru City. In Kazakhstan, the RCO participated in the planning and collection of data for the Global Urban Monitoring Framework and national NUA reporting. The Resident Coordinators in the Philippines, Jordan and Morocco were supportive towards the project, and participated in VLR launches as well as other key project events.

There were strong project linkages with other initiatives implemented by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat in target countries and cities. The project activities often built on prior or ongoing sustainable urban development initiatives that were implemented by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat in target countries. In other cases, the project responded to specific government requests for assistance with NUA implementation and SDG monitoring. Several examples are mentioned in the report: UN-Habitat assisted Amman (*Jordan*) and Agadir (*Morocco*) to monitor and report on urban SDGs and the NUA. Agadir's VLR process Agadir was linked to UN-Habitat's national SDG Cities Flagship Programme. ESCAP had assisted Battambang's Provincial Hall (*Cambodia*) and Naga City (*Philippines*) with SDG localization and data availability. UNECE had promoted Kazakhstan's Smart Cities programme, and prepared a Country Profile of the housing sector that offered baseline data and indicators to build on. ECLAC and UN-Habitat were working with Costa Rica's Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements in its presiding role with the Forum of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urbanism of Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI). All of these initiatives were supportive of project outcomes and in many cases have advanced through the project. Since its termination, project experiences have encouraged other NUA implementation, monitoring and reporting activities, both in country i.e. Kazakhstan and Philippines, and to other Central Asian countries and ex-Soviet republics with ESCAP and ECE.

5.2.3 . EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the project as satisfactory.

Both the Final Narrative Report and ECLAC's assessment of the work performed by the Regional Commissions found that the project had delivered substantive results that were supportive of urban policies and plans. The project contributed to the development of actionable policy outputs, cross-sectoral consultations, NUA monitoring and reporting, and the localization of NUA / SDG11 indicators. These contributions are reflected in key deliverables that include Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in Amman (Jordan), Agadir (Morocco) and Naga City (Philippines); land value capture and urban financing policy instruments in Cuba and Costa Rica; the adoption of NUA / SDG 11 indicators within city and land use plans in Naga City, Surago (Philippines), Amman (Jordan) and Almaty (Kazakhstan); and the development of Smart Cities initiatives (Kazakhstan and the Philippines). The approaches used across the project sites were participatory and brought government and non-governmental stakeholders together; in Costa Rica 103 organizations were consulted to formulate its first VNR and collect data for 76 NUA indicators. In spite of initial COVID-19 disruptions and the constraints encountered in some countries, the project was generally effective – at times very effective - in delivering results with modest resource allocations.

(ii) Contribution to capacities for coherent national/ city urban plans and evidence-based urban policies

Under the first outcome component, the Regional Commissions assumed a lead implementing role in several countries. This was influenced by the component's larger size in terms of scope and budget, and by the more consistent presence of Regional Commissions in several countries compared to the regional UN-Habitat offices that faced staff limitations and relied on extra-budgetary funding. In spite of the smaller scale of intervention, UN-Habitat's contributions were key towards reaching the second outcome.

There were a number of contributions towards the first outcome. In Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC has played an important role in shaping urban policy frameworks, raising awareness on urban finance and land management, and translating normative frameworks into actionable instruments. In Cuba and Costa Rica, technical assistance was given to develop land value capture and other financing tools; these tools directly supported the implementation of Cuba's recently approved Law of Territorial Planning, Urban Development and Land Management. At regional level, the creation of the virtual Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades (Urban and Cities Platform) generated a space for exchange and dissemination that has received over 1 million visits. Implementation was affected by political turnovers in Ecuador and logistical difficulties in Cuba, whereas project initiatives continued through a change of government in Costa Rica.

In the Asia and Pacific region, ESCAP and UN-Habitat contributed to better urban governance by facilitating institutional collaboration, providing capacity building, and generating policy outputs that supported the integration of NUA across sectors. Recognized contributions include the strengthening of inter-ministerial coordination and the development of actionable policy recommendations and instruments. In the Philippines and Cambodia, project outputs have been followed with actions that indicate government commitment to sustainable urban development. In Cambodia, the project was positioned within the unfolding Smart Cities agenda as an entry point for implementation. In the Philippines, Naga City completed a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) and adopted SDG indicators to monitor its Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). At national level, the formulation of "Policy Recommendations on the Strengthening the Integration, Implementation and Monitoring of the Philippine New Urban Agenda" included a set of recommendations that are being used to guide the integration of the NUA into national urban policies. Workshops were held to raise understanding of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework and its relevance to the Philippines.

Country and city representatives participated in South-South exchanges and learning events. At a "Regional Learning Exchange for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda", jointly sponsored by ESCAP and UN-Habitat at the 10th Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Forum (2023), project participants made contact with other urban colleagues and specialists, broadening perspectives through exposure to different country and city experiences. In-country assessments and stakeholder consultations have provided inputs to national urban policies and city plans; Cambodia's national government has since requested further technical support from ESCAP to implement the NUA.

The successful implementation of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in Amman, Jordan and Agadir, Morocco were key project results for the Arab and North Africa regions. Both were “firsts” in their regions and have a high demonstration value for other countries. VLR processes served to build awareness and capacity improve local coordination and inform urban planning. Both cities advanced in localizing SDGs within their urban plans, and in monitoring and reporting on NUA and SDG indicators. The data and findings of Amman ‘s VLR have also informed its Sustainable Cities programme. Project effectiveness in Morocco was reportedly constrained by more limited data infrastructure, procedural delays, and moving the target city from Rabat to Agadir.

In Central Asia, project support to Kazakhstan built on ECE’s work with the emergent Smart Cities programme, and the formulation of a Country Profile on Housing with ECE/ITU KPI indicators. These were complemented by UN-Habitat’s Global Monitoring Framework, leading to the adoption of 91 U4SSC KPIs that have been used to evaluate Almaty city’s performance, track progress towards SDG indicators, and create a national system of Smart Cities indicators through the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation, and Aerospace Industry,

In Africa, ECA supported the Lesotho government and City of Maseru in designing a cross-sectoral action plan that informed Lesotho’s National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) and the preparation of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP III). The integrated framework for urbanization is reported to have resonated with NSDP’s emphasis on balanced urbanization, inclusive growth and infrastructure. Mechanisms were proposed to strengthen urban data, planning and policy coherence across ministries and municipal councils.

(iii). Contribution to strengthened national and city capacities to monitor, evaluate and report on progress in implementing NUAs and urban SDGs.

The project strengthened national and city-level stakeholder capacities to collect data, monitor and report on the implementation of NUAs and SDGs. This was an important result that was addressed under the second project outcome - led by UN-Habitat – and carried benefits at different levels: The collection and analysis of data for NUA and SDG indicators informed urban policies/plans and underscored the importance of cross-sectoral approaches, supporting VLR processes that were implemented under the first outcome. Indicators based on UN-Habitat’s Global Urban Monitoring Framework (GMF) were adopted by government agencies to monitor urban development and land use plans, and are being used by the Sustainable Cities programmes in Kazakhstan and Jordan. The adoption of ITU/KPI indicators modeled around the GMF is expected to improve the consistency and comparability of city/national NUA monitoring and reporting, in advance of the 2026 Mid-Term Evaluation.

(iv). Contribution to inter-regional cooperation and the sharing of experiences related to NUA implementation and monitoring.

Under the third project outcome, country participants engaged in regional workshops, forums, webinars and virtual platforms on topics that addressed NUA implementation, monitoring and reporting. These offered additional opportunities to exchange experiences, broaden contact networks and share good practices. Most countries were able to participate in regional forums, either directly or through the presentation of NUA experiences and case studies. National and city participants in Latin America & Caribbean were connected through a virtual platform that was established by ECLAC.

Within a modest budget allocation, complementary funding and in-kind support from the Regional Commissions, the project was able to support South-South exchanges and cross-country peer learning. The 2023 Asia-Pacific Urban Forum enabled national and city participants from the Philippines and Cambodia to interact with counterparts from other countries, broadening perspectives and contacts through the sharing of experiences. Another important regional event was the 2022 “Regional Learning Exchange for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda” that was part of the 10th Asia Pacific Forum, which brought together policymakers, technical

expertise and national implementers from both countries and others of the region. Lesotho, Jordan and Morocco participated in an online event on “Evidence-based Decision Making for Urban Change: Global Data Tools in Action in Africa and West Asia” during the 2022 Urban October event that was organized by UN-Habitat to promote sustainable urban development.

In Latin America & the Caribbean, the “Reporting tools for monitoring the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs” workshop was attended by national and municipal officials from Cuba, Costa Rica and Ecuador (the host country), in addition to participants from Honduras and Colombia. The workshop was used to identify a consistent set of measurable NUA indicators for monitoring and reporting. The role national urban observatories – that were being developed in several countries - and use of different monitoring tools were also considered. The workshop was attended by a large delegation of Quito municipal officials, in preparation for its VNR process. The Regional Commissions organized an event at the 2022 World Urban Forum on "Fostering SDGs Localization and NUA Implementation through Strengthening the Capacities of National and Local Authorities in Urban Planning to Enhance Resilience and Strengthen Recoveries from the COVID-19 Pandemic."

Project case studies and good practices were shared at regional and global events and virtual platforms. The formulation of Agadir’s VLR was presented as a best practice at the 2nd UN-Habitat Assembly in Nairobi (2023), in COP and at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development in 2023. The Amman VLR was highlighted at the AFSD in 2023 and 2025. It was also highlighted at the High Level Political Forum in New York in 2022 and in 2023. Ecuador’s “Report on the Implementation of the NUA” 2016-2021” has been uploaded to the Virtual Platform of the Urban Agenda as an example of integrated planning.

A key contribution to regional exchange and learning in Latin America & the Caribbean is the Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades (Urban and Cities Platform) that was created and is hosted by ECLAC. This virtual platform was established to generate and share national and city urban data, monitor the implementation of the NUA and urban-related SDGs, and to generate a space for the discussion and exchanges of experiences on sustainable urban development. The *Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades* is composed of an Urban Observatory that collects data on policies, plans, legislation and NUA/SDG indicators; and a Virtual Forum for discussion and networking on urban issues. The Platform has a wide range of users across the region and has received over 1 million visits.

(V). Effectiveness of Project Strategies and Tools

The implementation arrangements, approaches and tools that were used in target countries and cities have been fundamental drivers of project effectiveness. The implementation approach was incremental and adapted to different contexts, within the strategic direction and key deliverables established by the project Results Framework. The concepts and approaches used were innovative in several countries. Sustainable urban development was presented as an integrated, cross-sectoral process. The formulation of VLRs, VNRs and other deliverables were guided by consultations with a wide range of urban stakeholders at national and city level. Government officials, urban specialists, academia and civil society organizations were brought together to discuss relevant urban issues and proposed actions. These consultations have served various purposes – constructing shared visions and “roadmaps” for NUA implementation, informing national and city urban plans and policies, building technical capacities to monitor urban performance, and improving country monitoring and reporting on NUA implementation.

Project support at national and city level were often designed to complement ongoing initiatives that were implemented by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat. This provided the project with “entry points” on which to develop activities and make better use of available resources. Part of the project rationale was to contribute to the advance of country NUA implementation and NUA/SDG monitoring processes through UNDA

implementing partners, building on the assistance that was already being provided (described in Sections 1.3 and 2.1). This was a determining factor in the selection of target countries and cities and has served to improve the project’s “fit” to different settings, often raising the combined momentum of linked initiatives.

The country and city selection process was key to the project’s cost-effective implementation. The criteria for selecting target sites was a contributor to efficiency, yet was also fundamental to deliver results within the available budget and timeframe. The availability of USD 1.5 million to fund activities by six implementing entities across nine countries called for realistic expectations. There was need to focus the limited resources on countries where results were possible, as opposed to starting new processes “from scratch”. Consultations held with UN-Habitat Regional Offices and Regional Commissions led to the identification of countries and cities where impacts could be generated, consistent with their own initiatives and programme priorities.

Project design was ambitious but not excessively so. The expected outcomes and performance indicators contained in the Results Framework were feasible and based on realistic expectations. The project’s design was well crafted and did not propose results or impacts that were outside its capabilities. The implementation strategy was pragmatic, incremental and adaptive rather than frontal – organizing urban forums and platforms, generating operational policy instruments, developing monitoring databases and indicators, building stakeholder consensus on urban policy and planning priorities. Although a Theory of Change model wasn’t prepared at the project’s design stage, the planned deliverables and outcomes were viable, articulated by causal linkages and not subject to unrealistic assumptions. By the end of the project, the different outcome indicators had been fully achieved in most cases.

The project’s Inception Phase was used to adjust the global Results Framework to different national and city contexts. The combination of in-country assessment exercises and analysis of findings led to country work plans that were focused on current needs and priorities, encouraging country “buy in” and ownership at an early stage. One of project strengths was its ability to accommodate different initiatives, timelines and dynamics across the project sites, without undermining its strategic direction, expected outcomes or main deliverables. With variations across the country and city sample, there was consistency in the delivery of technical support to assist the implementation of NUA processes, build capacities for NUA monitoring/reporting and SDG localization, and cross-sector consultative processes that engaged government and other urban actors. To a large extent, project coherence was enhanced by fielding in-country gap assessment missions at the inception stage, and discussing the findings with country counterparts. Project relevance was additionally strengthened by the knowledge brought by implementing partners with prior or ongoing activity in target countries. These factors encouraged national and city government commitment in most countries, and a sense of ownership that is reflected in the expansion or replication of initiatives in some regions.

The project was designed to encourage joint implementation and collaboration between implementing partners. Several examples of coordination and collaboration were noted at country level that were supportive of the UN Delivering as One concept, and may offer insight for future inter-agency projects. While there was clear tendency towards parallel financing and implementation, there were also examples of cooperation: UN-Habitat ROAS and ESCWA pooled funds and shared expenses for the formulation of VLRs, SDG localization and the development of Practical Guidelines for VLRs in the Arab region. The project also helped to strengthen collaboration between UN-Habitat and ESCAP in the Philippines: The UN-Habitat country office in Manila hosted the project, and a UN-Habitat specialist was seconded to ESCAP to support its activities.

There were also examples of complementarities in the work of different implementing entities. The indicators and databases that were developed for NUA and SDG monitoring have also supported city planning and urban policy implementation, in several cases informing Voluntary Reporting. In Lesotho, ECA created national implementation teams for gap assessments and cross-sector policy analysis that were also participants in NUA monitoring and reporting initiatives led by UN-Habitat. Indicators for measuring urban performance that had been developed by Regional Commissions (for example ECE's Country Profile on Housing in Kazakhstan) were harmonized with UN-Habitat's Global Urban Monitoring Framework. Since the project, UN-Habitat has invited ECE and ESCAP to assist the formulation of a sustainable urban development program for Turkmenistan.

(vi). Beneficiary Satisfaction with the Project⁸

Overall beneficiary satisfaction is reported in the regional assessment of work done by the Regional Commissions, and by the Final Project Report. The satisfaction is high in relation to the quality of the technical assistance provided and the manner in which it was delivered.

Below are several statements of beneficiary satisfaction with the project results:

- Key informants across countries have emphasized the value of ECLAC's technical assistance in translating global commitments and normative frameworks into actionable instruments, and pointed to increased institutional awareness of urban finance and land management strategies.
- Regarding ECLAC's role in supporting Ecuador's Ministry of Urban Development & Housing (MIDUVI) in drafting the National Urban Policy, several informants expressed that the technical quality and structure of the policy would not have been possible without the support of the project.⁹
- An ESCAP participant in Philippines noted that one of the main outcomes was "being able to use this process to ensure that the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development gathered insights and inputs from other ministries regarding the implementation of the NUA and incorporated them into the country report".¹⁰
- Following the needs assessment exercise in Cambodia, local government partners recognized the need for further guidance at national level to support the implementation of smart cities. According to an ESCAP participant, "...They explicitly said [...] they wanted to see the implementation of NUA through smart cities".¹¹
- According to another ESCAP officer, south-south exchanges and workshops in the AP region enabled country and city representatives to "...really able to engage, get a broader perspective, development perspective, and also learn from other countries and what they were doing".¹²
- As described by ESCWA in relation to its work in Agadir, "the partnership model allowed us to bridge implementation gaps without losing credibility with local authorities."¹³

There was general satisfaction among implementing partners with the project's performance and the results that were achieved. The project's interventions in the target countries were often supportive of ongoing initiatives implemented by the Regional Commissions or UN-Habitat. This has contributed towards their own strategic and programme objectives, in several cases (ESCAP, ECE, ECLAC) reinforcing their regional and country presence as urban actors.

⁸ This section is based on reported beneficiary satisfaction. The evaluator was not able to identify a minimum sample of national or city focal points to interview.

⁹ "Assessment of the work of the regional commissions under the Development Account Project 2023P "Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda", p. 12

¹⁰ Idem, p. 25

¹¹ Idem, p. 23

¹² Idem, p. 25

¹³ Idem, p. 16

5.2.4. EFFICIENCY

The efficiency of the project was assessed as moderately satisfactory.

(i) Management of resources, timeframes and adjustment to evolving contexts

The project's governance and management enabled the efficient use of resources, delivering products and services across 9 countries with total budget of USD 1.5 million. By building on the ongoing initiatives of implementing partners, and adjusting work plans to different contexts through gap assessments, the project was cost-effective in its use of resources. Another contributing factor was the reliance on national consultants to implement project activities, contracted by the Regional Commissions or UN-Habitat. This enabled fluid support and economized the budget. However, some informants considered that the assistance given would have benefited from a mix of national and international perspectives, or a greater circulation of urban specialists between countries. However it is not clear if the available project budget would have supported this.

The Regional Commissions assumed the lead implementing role in most countries. This reflected project budget allocations towards the first outcome, greater availability of core resources, and more consistent country presence. In comparison, the consistent country presence by regional UN-Habitat offices was constrained in some cases by staffing limitations, workloads, and reliance on extra-budgetary funding. This was mostly felt in countries that did not have UN-Habitat offices, i.e. Kazakhstan. For example, the UN-Habitat country teams in the Philippines, Ecuador and Morocco were pivotal in facilitating the project's implementation and assisting Regional Commissions. In spite of these limitations, UN-Habitat's contributions were key to reach the second outcome.

Financial delivery was moderately satisfactory. By the end of the project's extension, most of the total budget had been spent.¹⁴ An overall implementation rate of 95% was achieved with the initial allocation of USD 497,800. The Regional Commissions tended to manage significantly larger budgets than UN-Habitat, reflecting project allocations towards the first outcome and the inclusion of core resources. In comparison, UN-Habitat managed a smaller budget and was reliant on extra-budgetary funding.

Table 7. Total expenditure (USD) and financial delivery by Implementing Partners

Implementing Partner:	Final Expenditure	Financial Implementation Rate (Actual/Programmed Expenditure)
ECLAC:	USD 353,947	97%
ECA:	USD 154,370.11	95%
ESCAP:	USD 166,439.70;	82%
ESCWA:	USD 190,309.89	96.7%
ECE:	USD 91,466	100%
UN-HABITAT:	USD 497,800	95%

Source: Final Project Report

¹⁴ Final Project Report

A strength was the project's ability to adjust to different contexts. This began at the inception stage. The early gap assessment missions, discussion of the findings and formulation of country work plans were important measures that were supported during implementation by adaptive management. The Final Project Report¹⁵ lists a number of challenges that were faced by the project – COVID 19, budgetary limitations, political staff, political turnover, slow processes and logistical difficulties – that were mitigated by management measures and budget revisions.¹⁶

Adherence to consistent project delivery timeframes has been a challenge The project was initially scheduled to end in May 2023 but received a no-cost 6 month extension until December. Different capacities and other enabling conditions between countries and cities were a challenge for consistent and timely execution. Considering the challenges, a six-month project extension for a project of this complexity is not excessive. Likewise, inter-regional monitoring and coordination was complex due to the dispersion of project sites and funding involved. There was in-country monitoring and coordination by implementing Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat regional offices. However, the direct involvement of UN-Habitat at country level was in some cases limited – or absent – due to staff and budget limitations; in most cases project support was delivered through national consultants.

(ii). Activities, products and services provided by the project to beneficiaries

The strategic direction of the project Results Framework was balanced with adaptive management and responsiveness to country and city contexts. The project was able to deliver a consistent set of products and services that were aligned with the project outcomes, while responding to different urban issues in 9 countries.

The products and services that were provided can be grouped into the following categories:

- Policy inputs and instruments in support of national urban policies and city planning, i.e. support to National Development and National Urban Plans, design of land value capture and financing tools in Latin America & the Caribbean.
- Capacity building to strengthen NUA and SDG monitoring and reporting, with support to data collection and analysis.
- Adoption of ITU/KPI monitoring and reporting indicators, based on the Global Urban Monitoring Framework.
- Formulation of VLR and VNRs that document country and city progress and challenges in implementing the NUA.
- Facilitation of cross-sector urban assessments and stakeholder consultations at national and city level.
- Participation by country representatives in national and regional forums and learning events that addressed NUA implementation, NUA / SDG monitoring and reporting, and exchanges of experiences.
- A regional virtual platform for Latin America & the Caribbean (*Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades*) that includes an urban observatory, databases, and an online forum.
- Support to other sustainable urban development initiatives such as Sustainable Cities in Kazakhstan and the Philippines.

¹⁵ Table 4 – Challenges and Actions, *Final Project Report*

(iii). Efficiency of resource utilization

Resources were efficiently used, as evidenced by the range of deliverables across the 9 countries with a USD 1.526 million budget. In this regard, the project was cost-effective and benefited from the absence of budget allocations for overhead costs and a reliance on national consultants for country implementation. The project budget was fully earmarked for direct implementation. Adjustments were made to COVID 19 and to evolving circumstances at country and city level with adaptive management and budget revisions. Revisions to budget lines included increased allocations for contractual services and operating expenses, with reductions for workshops/study tours and staff travel.

Table 8. Summary of revisions to the project budget

Budget Line	Description	Budget Allotment (USD as per project document)	Revised Allotment (revised total by object class)	Difference
015	Other staff costs - General temporary assistance (GTA)	\$ 30,000	\$ 93	\$ 29,907
105	Consultants and experts	\$ 217,000	\$ 218,337	\$ (1,337)
115	Travel of staff	\$ 84,000	\$ 40,744	\$ 43,256
120	Contractual services	\$ 38,000	\$ 118,050	\$ (80,050)
125	General operating expenses	\$ 20,000	\$ 28,927	\$ (8,927)
130	Supplies and materials	\$-	\$-	\$-
135	Furniture and equipment	\$-	\$-	\$-
145	Workshops / Study tours (Grants and contributions)	\$ 150,000	\$ 78,949	\$ 71,051
Total		\$ 539,000	\$ 485,100	\$ 53,900

Source: Final Report Budget Annex – Cumulative Reporting

Although resources were efficiently managed, the challenges of ensuring consistent levels of implementation delivery across the nine project sites proved difficult. This had repercussions on financial delivery. At project completion most of the funds had been spent with a remaining unspent balance. (Section 4.1). It should be noted that during the project's implementation, additional funding was mobilized to support regional and country activities, in particular for the Latin America & Caribbean region through ECLAC:

- The European Union EUROClima programme provided ECLAC with a USD 37,200 cash contribution to fund the LAC Urban and Cities Platform (*Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades*).
- GIZ provided ECLAC with in-kind support valued at USD 54,732 to develop the LAC Urban and Cities Platform (*Plataforma Urbana y de Ciudades*).
- UN-Habitat's SDG Localization Unit supported the formulation of VLRs in the West Asia region with in-kind technical staff assistance valued at USD 30,000. UCLG-MEWA joined forces with UNESCWA and UN-Habitat on the deliverables of this project

In-kind contributions by the implementing partners added to the efficient use of resources. UN-Habitat and the Regional Commissions in particular devoted staff time to gap assessments, stakeholder consultations and the preparation of country work plans. The Regional Commissions contributed parallel financing from their core budgets. According to interviewed implementation partners, monitoring and financial reporting were complex and time-consuming for the limited amount of money and activity that were involved.

(iv) Project financial management processes and procedures

Financial management was satisfactory, and delays or critical issues were not reported nor were raised by the interviewed UN-Habitat and ECLAC focal points. This is a positive finding. Managing project budgets over 9 countries was a cumbersome task for ECLAC and UN-Habitat that required periodic adjustments to budgets and work plans as noted above. Disbursements to target countries were overseen by the UN-Habitat regional focal points and disbursed through the UN-Habitat and ECLAC offices. Critical delays or other issues related to financial disbursement or reporting were not reported nor were they raised by interviewed UN-Habitat and ECLAC respondents that were involved in the project's management.

5.2.5 IMPACT OUTLOOK

(i). Overall project impact

Impact expectations contained in the project's design were realistic and consistent with the scale of intervention and available resources. The Results Framework did not foresee transformative impacts. Expectations were centered on improving country conditions and capacities for sustainable urban development implementation, monitoring and reporting in the target countries. In a Theory of Change analysis, these would represent the “intermediate states” or enabling conditions for impacts to occur. The assistance given informed urban policies and plans, and technical instruments were developed to assist their implementation, i.e. land financing and land value capture tools in Cuba and Costa Rica. It is likely that various project initiatives may contribute indirectly to measurable impacts in urban performance, to the extent that the country policies and plans that were supported are assigned resources and implemented.

The project is considered to have played an important role in raising institutional awareness of the NUA, informing urban policies and plans, and strengthening national capacities for monitoring and reporting on the NUA. This narrative is present in internal project documentation and was supported by interviews with implementing partners: Project approaches were adapted to specific national and city contexts at the inception stage. In all countries the project generated opportunities for cross-sector stakeholder consultations and policy analysis. Technical continuity was strengthened in target countries by the project's linkages and collaboration with ongoing initiatives.

(ii). Changes generated at institutional, city and national levels

Project initiatives have served as catalysts of urban policy reform and strengthened positioning of the NUA. This started with early country gap assessment exercises that informed policies and built a consensus around key urban needs and priorities. The findings and data derived from NUA monitoring and Voluntary Reporting (VLRs, VNRs) have been incorporated to national and city planning frameworks and programmes in Costa Rica, Cuba, Philippines and Kazakhstan. One of the substantive changes to which the project has contributed is the strengthened positioning and increased attention given to NUA and sustainable urban development approaches (and indicators) in country and city policy agendas. The project demonstrated different approaches towards the NUA that have operational value and are replicable in other context. The development of policy instruments and tools for land value capture and urban financing have contributed to better implementation of national urban policies and land use legislation.

The project's core message of sustainable urban development as an integrated, cross-sectoral undertaking was a driver of change. The project enabled consultations, forums and learning events that engaged a broad range of urban actors; in some countries this was a novel exercise. It is likely that the integrated participatory approaches that were introduced or strengthened by the project will be continued in at least some countries.

5.2.6. SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the project was assessed to be satisfactory.

(i) Relation of capacity building and country ownership to sustainability

The project was focused on capacity development for sustainable urban development planning, and for implementing, monitoring and reporting on NUAs and urban-related SDGs. Likewise, the implementation approaches that were used by the project encouraged country ownership at an early stage in most countries. Capacity development was central to the project's objective and outcomes. The early scheduling of in-country gap assessment missions, stakeholder consultations and adjustment of project work plans to specific urban contexts, were key to generating high-level government commitments and country ownership.

Sustainable urban planning and NUA monitoring capacities were strengthened at national and city levels, as evidenced by deliverables generated towards the first and second outcomes. Capacity building and training activities were applied and designed to generate tangible deliverables in support of sustainable urban development policymaking and planning. National and city government focal points, representatives of relevant sectors and other urban actors were brought together to generate National and Local Voluntary Reports, build NUA monitoring indicators, and provide urban policy recommendations from an integrated perspective. The applied focus of the project's capacity support is likely to have encouraged more capacity retention among participants.

(ii) Likelihood of continuity and institutionalization of results at national and city level

Project capacity building initiatives were supportive of national and city urban policy and planning processes, and appear to have a moderate to high likelihood of sustainability, to the extent policy recommendations are adopted and monitoring is continued. The fundamental question is whether the capacities that were developed will be capacities that will be applied. Capacity development approaches linked learning to practice, producing deliverables as the different initiatives unfolded. Capacity building for NUA and SDG monitoring encompassed actual data collection, processing and analysis. These activities led to the formulation of indicator systems, VLRs and other assessments of urban performance that were fed into national and city urban policies and plans. These included Costa Rica's National Urban Development Plan, Cuba's national territorial and urban legislation, Ecuador's National Urban Policy, Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan, the Philippine's National Housing and Urban Development Sector Plan, Amman's Master Plan and Green City Action Plan, and the Agadir Municipal Action Plan. The linkages that were established with government policymaking and planning frameworks – and the approached demonstrated - may raise the likelihood that they will be continued.

Because capacity building was applied and often led to tangible deliverables, there is likelihood that some of the demonstrated approaches - urban performance monitoring, cross-sector planning, NUA reporting – will be sustained over time. There are some indications that this is happening: In the LAC region, the Urban and Cities Platform that is hosted by ECLAC continues to provide urban data and a virtual forum for urban practitioners and specialists. Policy recommendations and instruments that were developed in Cuba, Costa Rica (i.e. land value capture and financing) and Jordan (through Voluntary Reporting) have been incorporated into national and municipal policy frameworks.

There are indications that some of the project's initiatives are expanding or being replicated within target countries and in the region. In the Philippines, the project's experience in Naga City was replicated and expanded in the municipality of Surigo, which recently completed its own VLR and applies SDG indicators to monitor city land use plans (and their budgets). There have also been “spillover” effects in Kazakhstan and other countries of Central Asia: Kazakhstan's First National Urban Forum was recently held at in a secondary city (Kyzylorda) with topics encompassing inclusive urban planning, climate adaptation, digitalization of urban management, and mechanisms for financing urban transformation. This followed a National Urban Forum that had taken place in Georgia. Other NUA and NUF initiatives were foreseen in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kirghistan with assistance from ESCAP and UN-Habitat. Amman's VLR was the first in the Arab States region and has since been followed by support requests from other cities of the region.

5.2.7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The evaluation assess cross-cutting issues as unsatisfactory.

Gender equality, human rights and social inclusion were not explicitly considered in the project's design or implementation strategies. There were indirect linkages to the extent that inclusive planning is a central element of the NUA that was promoted under the first outcome component. The project offered recommendations to national and city urban policies and plans, of which several include social housing and other components that target disadvantaged groups. The VLR's developed for Amman and Agadir were reported to have included a crosscutting gender dimension.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: *The project objective, outcomes and implementation approaches were responsive to the urban needs and priorities of target countries, and to the programme priorities and country initiatives of implementing partners.* The project supported urban policy and planning processes at national and city levels by facilitating cross-sectoral consultations, contributing technical assistance and developing operational policy instruments. Project outcomes linked “upstream” and “downstream” interests: The integrated approaches, urban vision and monitoring frameworks aimed to improve urban policy coherence at national and city levels, and also contributed to global NUA and SDG 11 reporting. The project has strengthened the NUA's positioning at policy levels in target countries.

The project design and approaches showed high levels of coherence with ongoing policy processes, initiatives and projects in the target countries. Coherence was strengthened by the targeting of countries and cities with ongoing activity and momentum, where results could be achieved within the available timeframe and budget. Project linkages with ongoing policy/planning exercises, NUA processes and parallel initiatives that were supported by implementing partners, i.e. Smart Cities, offered “entry points” to build on and enabled the cost-effective use of budgetary resources. (*Linked to Section: 5.1 “Relevance”*)

Conclusion 2: *The project demonstrated effectiveness in delivering outputs and planned results. Project outputs and outcomes were fully achieved in most project sites.* NUA implementation processes were activated or reinforced through cross-sector consultations, policy advice and Voluntary Reporting. Country capacities were developed to collect data, monitor and report on the implementation of NUAs and urban-related SDGs. The project's capacity building activities have led to tangible results that include urban monitoring databases and indicator frameworks, Voluntary Reporting, and more coherent urban policies and plans that incorporate NUA concepts as well as policy instruments (urban financing, land value capture) to assist their implementation. Country focal points had opportunity to attend national and regional learning events that broadened perspectives and contact networks. The creation of a virtual urban platform for the LAC region offers important knowledge contributions that have utility beyond the project horizon. (*Linked to Section 5.2 “Effectiveness”*)

Conclusion 3: *The project enhanced the enabling conditions for sustainable urban development in the target countries and cities.* Impact expectations were realistic and consistent with the scale of project interventions and available resources. The implementation strategies sought to build on existing country initiatives and momentum. The project supported integrated, cross-sector planning and consultations that have informed urban policies, enabled NUA reporting, and improved urban monitoring frameworks. The likelihood of direct impact will depend on the extent to which these policies and plans are implemented; on the consolidation of integrated, cross-sector policy planning within mainstream frameworks; and the continued monitoring of urban performance and NUA progress. (*Linked to Section 5.5 “Impact Outlook”*)

Conclusion 4: *Inter-regional coordination and monitoring were challenged by the scale and complexity of the project.* The provisions that had been made in the project document were difficult to implement in practice. Project activities at national and city-level responded to different urban contexts and were based on country work plans with different timelines and indicators. Country initiatives were implemented in parallel with little interaction between them outside of learning events. This lowered the comparability of progress between the project sites. Planned virtual meetings of implementing partners were difficult to organize given the dispersion of participants with different time zones. The paperwork and effort required to track the progress of a USD 1.5 million project across nine countries and cities were not feasible. Getting implementing partner feedback for annual reporting proved to be time-consuming. Given the constraints, ECLAC’s inter-regional coordinating and monitoring roles were focused on annual reporting and work planning; the coordination and monitoring at country level were assumed by the implementing partners for their initiatives. The over-arching, inter-regional framework that was initially planned was found to be unfeasible from a benefit-cost perspective. (*Linked to Sections 5.1 “Relevance” and 2.5 “Key Partners and other Stakeholders”*)

Conclusion 5: *Project resources were used efficiently, with adaptive management applied to evolving contexts.* Resources were efficiently used as evidenced by the range of outputs that were delivered across nine target countries with a USD 1.52 million budget. Overhead costs were minimal: The 12th Tranche funds were allocated for country implementation in their entirety. The implementing partners assumed the internal management, coordination and monitoring of their initiatives (while reporting to ECLAC for annual progress and financial reports). Between 85 – 100% of the funds allocated to Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat had been spent by the end of the project. Adaptive management was applied through country work planning and budget revisions. However, ensuring consistent timelines and delivery schedules across nine project sites was difficult and the project was extended by six months. At the end of the extension, the project had spent most of the total budget. (*Linked to Section 5.4 “Efficiency”*)

Conclusion 6: *There are examples of post-project sustainability in several countries.* The continuity or expansion of project-supported initiatives is conditioned by external factors. Although the evaluation was not able to contact country stakeholders, interviews with UN-Habitat and ECLAC focal points indicate that NUA processes and related sustainable urban initiatives are being consolidated and expanded in some target countries, i.e. Costa Rica, Jordan, Philippines, Kazakhstan, or replicated within regions, i.e. VLR processes in Central Asia and Arab States. In other cases, i.e. Ecuador, sustainability is weakened by political turnover and policy changes (*Linked to Section 5.6 “Sustainability”*).

7. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Lesson and description	Details
<p>Lesson 1: The project's design and implementation arrangements were drivers of relevance and effectiveness and may offer guidance to future inter-regional projects that address different national or local contexts.</p>	<p>Time and effort were devoted to the project design and subsequent adaptations of the Results Framework to different country contexts. This was critical for project coherence and the delivery of results across dispersed project sites with limited resources.</p>
<p><i>Description:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project design was ambitious but realistic in relation to the scale of intervention and budget. The expected outcomes and performance indicators contained in the Results Framework were feasible and based on realistic expectations. The strategic direction of the project Results Framework was balanced with adaptive management and responsiveness to country and city contexts. Upstream-downstream dynamics were well integrated. Project outputs and deliverables from the three components showed causal linkages and were connected to common results chains, raising their aggregate effect. Country initiatives were implemented in parallel with opportunities for collaboration between partners. This provided the implementing entities with greater ownership and control of their initiatives without undermining the project's strategic direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project approach was incremental and catalytic. Interventions were supportive of ongoing policy and planning processes, and often used ongoing initiatives as “entry points” to build upon. This enhanced the project’s relevance to specific urban contexts across the target countries, and the cost-effective use of budget resources. Implementation arrangements were cost-effective. The project relied on national consultants with technical backstopping support from the implementing partners. The project budget was largely earmarked for in-country implementation. Project management, coordination, monitoring and financial management were assumed by the implementing partners. There was complementarity between initiatives implemented at national and city-level initiatives, ie. VNR/VLRs, data bases and indicators for urban monitoring, Capacity building for improved policy and planning coherence under Outcome 1 was directly complemented by the development of databases, monitoring indicators and Voluntary Reporting under the second outcome. The third outcome provided opportunity to document, disseminate and build on these experiences through regional events and virtual forums. Technical support for sustainable urban development policymaking/planning at national and city levels served to improve NUA / SDG 11 monitoring and reporting to global monitoring frameworks.

<p><i>Context and relevant details:</i> The practices described are mainly relevant to the project design and inception phases.</p>	
<p><i>Context and relevant details:</i> The practices described are mainly relevant to the project design and inception phases.</p>	
<p><i>Details on the lesson/practice and way in which it was learned, including available evidence:</i> The lesson is based on the findings of the Final Project Report and Regional Assessment of the work of the Regional Commissions, and on interviews with UN-Habitat and ECLAC focal points</p>	
<p>Lesson 2. The project inception phase was used effectively for adaptive management, adjusting the implementation of the Results Framework to national and city urban contexts. This represented a good practice that should be incorporated the project cycle and replicated in future initiatives.</p>	<p>Having country and city-specific work plans were important to respond to needs and priorities that had been identified by gap assessments, within the parameters of the Results Framework.</p>
<p><i>Description:</i></p> <p>Pre-implementation gap assessment missions were conducted in each country. The findings were socialized with national and city partners, and provided inputs for the design of work plans that were contextually relevant. Project implementation was guided by specific country work plans and action plans.</p>	<p>The early assessments enabled the project to adjust inter-regional work plans and deliverables to specific country/city needs and priorities, within the strategic direction of the Results Framework. Gap assessment findings were socialized with national and city partners, assisting the identification of priorities and formulation of project work plans.</p>

<p><i>Context and relevant details:</i> The practices described are relevant to the project’s inception or “start up” phase, following approval and the selection of target countries.</p>	
<p><i>Details on the lesson/practice and the way in which it was learned, including available evidence:</i> The lesson/good practice is based on the findings of the Final Project Report and Regional Assessment of the work of the Regional Commissions, and on interviews with UN-Habitat and ECLAC focal points.</p>	
<p>Lesson 3. The country and city selection process contributed to the project’s cost-effectiveness and ability to deliver results.</p>	<p>The project was ambitious yet realistic. There was recognized need to build on existing country initiatives to achieve results with the available resources. The selected countries offered baseline levels of momentum and relevant activities – national and city urban planning processes, NUAs, SDG localization, Smart Cities – for the project to build on.</p>
<p><i>Description:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries selection was consulted with UN-Habitat Regional Office and Regional Commission Focal Points. Selection was focused on countries with ongoing sustainable urban initiatives and policy formulation processes that offered entry points to build on and make effective use of available resources. • Several project initiatives were linked to ongoing country activities by implementing partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection of countries with ongoing initiatives and policy momentum provided the project with “entry points” on which to develop activities, and enhance coherence with national/city contexts. The project did not have to start implementation “from scratch”, which enhanced its ability to deliver results with the available resources. • The project’s links with other country initiatives supported by implementing partners, contributed to their internal programmatic priorities and encouraged institutional commitment.
<p><i>Context in which learnings were obtained and relevant contextual details:</i> Country selection was consulted with UNDA and implementing partners during the design phase. The approach that was used may be relevant to other inter-</p>	

<p>regional projects to ensure that enabling conditions for achieving of results are in place.</p>	
<p><i>Details on the lesson/practice and way in which it was learned, including available evidence:</i> The lesson/good practice is based on information provided during interviews with UN-Habitat and ECLAC focal points.</p>	
<p>Lesson 4. An inter-regional coordination, monitoring and oversight framework was not viable due to the project's complexity, geographic dispersion, and scale of activity and budget.</p>	<p>There are potential diseconomies of scale when establishing monitoring and coordination arrangements for inter-regional or global projects that involve implementing entities at different sites. Project initiatives were largely country-driven by the implementing partner and based on country action plans. The effort, delays and paperwork of tracking outputs and expenditures by five entities across nine project sites for a USD 1.5 million project were not cost-effective. Monitoring and coordination were assumed internally by the implementing entities for their initiatives, and data shared with ECLAC for annual project reporting.</p>

<p>Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring consistent project delivery and timelines across multiple project sites was challenging. The project was extended by six months and did not expend the full budget. The Monitoring Plan outlined in the project document was partially implemented. Bi-monthly virtual meetings were initiated and gradually discontinued due to the logistical difficulties of bringing the partners together. The number of implementing entities and different country/city work plans raised the complexity of monitoring implementation across the project sites. The paperwork and effort required was excessive in relation to country budgets and the scale of activity. ECLAC faced difficulties in ensuring timely reporting by implementing partners. This may have been influenced by the modest amounts of money that were allocated for in-country implementation, as well as staff turnover within the implementing entities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and coordination bring benefits yet also carry costs. While such arrangements are required in project design, there are potential “diseconomies of scale” in devoting time and resources to oversee dispersed country initiatives that are largely self-driven. Given these constraints, interregional coordination focused on annual monitoring and reporting and intermittent virtual coordination meetings. In this case, the monitoring and coordination of country initiatives was largely assumed by the implementing entity.
<p><i>Context in which learnings were obtained and relevant contextual details:</i> The lesson comes from the time, effort and paperwork required for monitoring the project initiatives of various partners across different countries, with different dynamics and timelines.</p>	
<p><i>Details on the lesson/practice and the way in which it was learned, including available evidence:</i> Interviews wECLAC focal points ECLAC staff responsible for inter-regional project management.</p>	

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Future similar UNDA projects could benefit from formalized coordination matrix, established at the design stage of the project; with clear Headquarters-Regional reporting lines. Inter-regional coordination was complex given the project's multi-level structure. Coordination meetings of implementing partners were discontinuous and country initiatives were largely country-driven.

Responsible entities: UN-Habitat and Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Medium-term (within the next year)

Recommendation 2: Track the evolution of country initiatives supported by the implementing partners to document post-project results and emerging impacts, and to better understand the dynamics of managing NUA processes. Although 18 months have passed since the project's termination, an ex-post understanding of the ultimate results and impacts of project interventions is lacking. Tracking the major changes that emerge over time – approvals of new policies and legislation with NUA elements, new VLRs and VNRs, impacts of urban policy implementation – may underscore the strategic contributions of NUA processes to national and city urban policy planning.

Responsible entities: UN-Habitat and UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Medium-term (within the next year)

Recommendation 3: Systematize and replicate good practices drawn from the project's design and implementation arrangements, for future regional /inter-regional initiatives that encompass different implementing entities and dispersed project sites. Several examples are mentioned in the report: The adaptation of the Results Framework to country action plans, reliance on national consultants with technical backstopping by implementing partners, low overhead costs. These practices have enabled a flexible implementation approach of high relevance and coherence that was also cost-effective and delivered results. There were encouraging examples of collaboration between UN-Habitat and Regional Commissions that can be built on. All of these practices are potentially useful for future regional or inter-regional initiatives that engage various (non-resident) implementing agencies and project sites with moderate allocations.

Responsible entities: UN-Habitat and UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Short-term (within the next six months)

Recommendation 4: Implementing partners should capitalize on the project's demonstration value and strengthened positioning of the NUA, to replicate project initiatives on a wider scale. This is already happening to some extent as a result of the project's demonstration value, through the reported replication of NUA planning and monitoring, VLR and VNR processes in other countries of the regions. A framework for UN-Habitat – Regional Commission collaboration should be systematized from the project experience, and promoted as an international support vehicle for advancing country and city sustainable urban development agendas (NUAs and SDG 11 included). This could open new possibilities, as noted in the case of China's Silk Road development initiative or African countries that are close to ex-Soviet republics that support NUAs. The publication of project case studies of NUA implementation offers excellent material from which to begin draw methods and approaches that have delivered results, strengthened capacities and encouraged commitment in different urban contexts.

Responsible agencies: UN-Habitat and UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Medium-term (within the next year)

Recommendation 5: *Future initiatives and resource mobilization efforts should draw on the comparative advantages of the project implementation modality, promoting integrated “packages” of technical assistance to assist NUA implementation and other sustainable urban development processes.* To the extent that future NUA support is brought down to local levels – as foreseen by a new interregional project proposal that is under discussion – the approaches applied will need to strengthen the project’s capacity to generate change processes with limited funds and intermittent external support. While localized NUA support will need to rely on the expertise of national consultants and local actors, in-country technical accompaniment and backstopping by the implementing agencies will be fundamental to guide the implementation of city / local-level processes and for quality assurance. Opportunities for horizontal collaboration within regions based on country progress should also be explored.

Responsible agencies: UN-Habitat and UN Regional Commissions

Timeframe: Long-term (based on the findings drawn from Recommendations 2 and 3)

Recommendation 6: *Ensure that future country interventions are supported with adequate technical oversight and in-country presence. The role and capacity of implementing partners to accompany and support in-country implementation needs to be considered at the design stage – more so if localized interventions are planned - and remedial measures considered.* UN-Habitat played a comparatively smaller project role than the Regional Commissions, reflecting budgetary allocations to different outcome components. Although substantial technical and capacity building support was delivered towards the second project outcome, UN-Habitat’s presence at country level was inconsistent and conditioned by workloads, proximity and resource availability. For example, UN-Habitat assumed a lead implementing role and facilitated the work of Regional Commissions where there were country offices and teams (Philippines, Morocco, Ecuador). Conversely, there was less presence in countries that lacked direct representation and relied on regional offices; for example, the inter-regional advisor assigned to Kazakhstan was unable to visit the country during the project’s implementation.

Responsible agencies: UN-Habitat Regional Offices

Timeframe: Short-term (within the next six months)

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMINAL EVALUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT- 2023P “INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA: 2020-2023”

1. INTRODUCTION

These Terms of Reference (ToR) concern the Terminal Evaluation of the UNDA project 2023P-Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The project was part of the UNDA projects approved for the 12th Tranche (2020-2023), with a total cost of US\$ 1,526,262. It was jointly implemented by United Nations Regional Commissions (ECLAC, ECE, ESCWA, ECA, ESCAP) and UN-Habitat. ECLAC and UN-Habitat were co-led agencies in the implementation, which started in January 2021 and ended around June 2021. The project was approved with evaluation frameworks. The regional Commissions were to commission national evaluations using national evaluators. These national evaluations were to be coordinated by ECLAC. The overall evaluation of the project was to be managed by UN-Habitat and conducted by an international evaluator, building on national evaluation reports and compiling findings into a comprehensive evaluation report of the project. This plan was later adjusted by the project managers, due to financial constraints, to an assessment of the work of the Regional Commissions conducted by a consultant coordinated by ECLAC.

The project aimed at increasing policy coherence amongst member States across the regions to promote improved capacities of institutions and other agents of change in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda by . (i) building capacity of national and local level decision makers to develop cross-sectoral and integrated urban action plans for the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the NUA and localization of SDGs; (ii) establishing mechanisms for sharing of information and successful practices combining global relevance with regional pertinency; and (iii) facilitating an inclusive process of regional monitoring and reporting on sustainable urbanization frameworks.

The primary audience of the evaluation are management and staff of implementing entities, member States, strategic Development Partners, and other key stakeholders. The primary end users of the evaluation are the UNDA Management Team (PMT), respective implementing project offices, implementing entity management, and collaborating development partners.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) was established by the General Assembly in 1997 and is funded from the UN regular budget. The objective of the UNDA is to fund capacity development projects in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda that benefit developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The UNDA supports the implementation of projects of five UN Secretariat entities (UN-DESA, UNTCTAD, UNEP, UNODC and UN-Habitat) and the five UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA). The UNDA projects are implemented in tranches and this project under evaluation is part of the projects approved under the 12th tranche.

The focus on cities in recent international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (with the inclusion of SDG 11 in particular) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), has placed urban areas at the forefront of the global developmental agenda. Cities are the epicentre of economic growth and are catalysts for innovation and change. They house the necessary political and governance institutions to promote the changes needed to accelerate sustainable development. With over 50% of the world’s population residing in urban areas, cities are in a pivotal position to enable structural change required to move from the unsustainable production and consumption patterns that are prevalent in current development models to a more sustainable form of development.

If well managed, cities have a tremendous catalyst capacity to facilitate setting up redistribution mechanisms, controlling positive and negative socio-economic and environmental externalities, ensuring equal access to benefits and opportunities, and thus reducing poverty and inequalities. However, the potential of cities and urban areas may be easily lost in the absence of holistic and cross-sectoral integrated planning and decision-making processes. This also requires effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation systems at all levels to ensure that progress is tracked, results are accounted for and review mechanisms are put in place as appropriate.

During the HLPF meeting held in New York in July 2018 the Executive Secretaries of the five United Nations Regional Commissions and the Executive Director of UN-Habitat committed to promoting collaboration and coordination between their entities for a more effective global implementation of the NUA. Through this project, they sought to increase policy coherence amongst Member States across the regions and promote improved capacities of institutions and other agents of change in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project was designed to be piloted in nine target countries across the globe, in one city in each of the selected countries. Table 1 below outlines the planned project objective and outcomes. The Global Generic Results Framework is attached to this TOR as Annex 1. UN-Habitat was responsible for the achievement of outcome 2 while the Regional Commissions were to achieve Outcome 1 and 3. The budget for the project totalled US\$1,526,262. Progress reports were to be prepared on yearly basis.

Project Objective: Improved capacities among the selected countries and cities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban-related SDGs with strengthened inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing.
Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities of national and city level policymakers and stakeholders, including NGOs, private sector, academia, and representatives of vulnerable groups in target countries and cities to develop coherent national/ city urban plans and evidenced based urban policies.
Outcome 2: Enhanced capacities of national and city level stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA (including the Quadrennial reporting for 2022) and achieving sustainable urban development to inform regional and global monitoring and reporting.
Outcome 3: Enhanced inter-regional cooperation south-south and triangular learning and sharing of implementation experiences related to the implementation of the NUA.

3.1 Key partners and stakeholders involved

Apart from implementing agencies, the project was to involve key stakeholder groups in sustainable urban development at national and city level, including regional and global development partner networks, such as local government associations, coalitions of city mayors as well as other constituency-based networks, the private sector, civil society and academia. In particular, the main stakeholders were Local and subnational governments, regional and multilateral organizations (Forum of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urbanism of Latin America and the Caribbean (MUNURVI), the African Union, the Arab League, Ministerial Committee ECE, the European Union, the ASEAN Secretariat), local authorities at municipal level and regional local governments.

3.2 Management and coordination of the project

During the implementation period of 2021-2024, the project was to be coordinated jointly by UN-Habitat, through the Global Solutions Division with direct engagement of relevant regional and country offices. The work of the Regional Commissions was coordinated by ECLAC.

Countries and corresponding cities where the project was implemented

Table 2 below outlines regions, selected countries and their respective cities where the project was piloted.

Region	Country	City
Latin America and the Caribbean region	Ecuador	Quito
	Costa Rica	San Jose
	Cuba	Havana
Asia and the Pacific Region	Cambodia	Battambang
	Philippines	Naga City
Central Asia Region	Kazakhstan	Almaty
Arab Region	Jordan	Amman
	Morocco	Agadir
Africa Region	Lesotho	Maseru

4. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION

4.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation serves dual purposes of accountability and learning. From an accountability perspective, the evaluation will assess whether the project achieved its planned results. From a learning perspective, the evaluation will assess what worked, what did not work, and why, and provide credible and reliable evidence to targeted users of the evaluation to improve project design and delivery of similar future projects. The results of the evaluation will inform the key stakeholders of this evaluation, who are The UNDA Management Team, UN-Habitat (including all regional offices and relevant country offices), ECLAC, ECE, ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA.

4.2 Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation will assess the performance of the project and the extent to which it has been relevant, efficient, effective, and sustainable as well as assess changes at outcome level and emerging impact; capturing lessons learnt and providing recommendations for improving future similar projects. The performance will relate to planned results and how they have been achieved globally, in the five regions and in nine selected countries and cities. Specifically, the evaluation will:

- Assess the appropriateness of the design, implementation strategy and achievement of results by the joint effort of the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat at the outcome and output levels of the project. This will entail analysis of planned versus achieved results.
- Assess the performance of the project in terms of its relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and emerging impact.
- Assess the appropriateness of implementation working modalities, coordination, partnerships and how they contributed to achieving results.
- Assess the effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on the projects' performance and specific learnings from the challenges faced by the project implementation and management in the context of the pandemic.
- Assess how social inclusion issues of gender equality, human rights, youth, disability, as well as environment issues were integrated in the and impacted by the project.
- Considering the intended users of the evaluation, to identify lessons learned and provide recommendations for improving UNDA projects of similar nature.

4.3 Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover the whole implementation period from the start of the project in April 2020 up to June 2024, It will cover aspects of UN-Habitat work to achieve outcome 2 and build on the end-cycle assessment report covering the work done by the regional commissions to achieve outcomes 1 and 3. This end- project evaluation will be conducted by an international evaluator and the resulting evaluation report will follow UNDA format. The evaluation, should be evidence-based , conducted systematically and objectively as possible to answer evaluation questions organized around the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, effectiveness, effectiveness, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The evaluation will integrate the UN cross-cutting priorities of human rights, gender, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability as cross-cutting concerns throughout its methodology, analysis and all deliverables including the final report. The evaluation will also apply the principle of leaving no one behind throughout its scope.

5. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The terminal evaluation is mandated by The Development Account Programme and by UN-Habitat Management and it should be carried out in line with the [UN Development Account Evaluation guidelines \(2019\)](#) and the [UN-Habitat Evaluation policy \(2024\)](#), taking into consideration the DA Guidance Note on Planning and Conducting Terminal Evaluations of 12th Tranche Projects.

Table 3, below outlines suggested evaluation questions and sub-questions organized around the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues. The consultant should elaborate on the suggested questions through the evaluation matrix.

Criterion	Evaluation questions and sub-questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To what extent were objectives and outcomes of the project consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country and city needs, and implementing partners priorities to strengthen coherent policies and approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda?▪ Was the implementation strategy responsive to SDG11 and NUA, and were assumptions and risks adequately considered?▪ To what extent results framework of the useful in supporting the planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation of the project.▪ To what extent were monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the project timely, meaningful, and adequate?▪ What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To what extent was the project coherent with other relevant projects in the target countries implemented by other actors?▪ How well did the project work with the UN Resident Coordinator system and UN Country teams in the target countries and cities to ensure coherence and added value?▪ What were the synergies and interlinkages between this project and other projects carried out by the Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To what extent did the project achieve its planned results of improved capacity among the national and local policy makers and decisions makers in the target countries and increased cooperation and sharing of best practices allowing for the localization of SDGs and NUA?▪ To what extent were the national and city level institutions and stakeholders strengthened to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA achievement of SDGs in the target countries and cities?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What extent did the project enhance the inter-regional cooperation and sharing of implementation experiences related to implementation of the NUA? ▪ How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project? ▪ To what extent were beneficiaries and partners satisfied with project's results achievement?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well was the project managed in terms of resources, timeframe for delivery and adjustments due to demands of evolving contexts? ▪ To what extent did the project's governance, management and coordination structures enable or hinder the planning, implementation, monitoring and ongoing adjustments to the project implemented by the six entities? ▪ What type of activities, products and services did the project provide to beneficiaries? ▪ Were the resources effectively utilized? To answer this question, the consultant will need to look at the in-kind and staff resources that were made available for the project (beyond the \$1.52 million from the DA) by each of the 6 implementing entities, and their partners ▪ How did the project financial management processes and procedures affect project implementation?
Impact outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What difference did the project make? ▪ What is the overall impact of the project (directly or indirectly), planned or not planned? ▪ What positive changes did the project make at institutional, city and national levels?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will the benefits of the project last? ▪ To what extent did the project build capacity and ownership of the stakeholders that contribute to sustainability? ▪ To what extent will the project be institutionalized at city and national levels?
Cross-cutting issues	To what extent were cross-cutting issues of gender , human rights, environment and disability considered and appropriately integrated into in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?

6. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

6.1 Approach

The evaluation should be conducted in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for evaluation, ensuring independence, credibility, utility and adhering to the highest possible professional standards. The consultant is also required to comply with UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

As requirement for project evaluations of the UNDA, use of the Theory of Change Approach, guided by the results framework of the project should be applied to demonstrate how the project was supposed to achieve its results. Also, the Context Input Process Product (CIPP) approach should be used to assess project implementation structures, procedures, collaboration, coordination, partnerships and targeted beneficiary needs. Not compromising independence principle, the evaluation should be consultative and engage the participation of a broad range of stakeholders. It should be gender and human rights responsive and conducted in a transparent manner.

Due to limited resources for this evaluation, the International consultant will utilise a synthesis of assessments conducted by the Regional Commissions. The Regional Commissions will commission regional assessments coordinated by ECLAC. In inception phase, there should be agreement on stakeholders groups to be interviewed and on how the regional commissions assessment report will feed into the comprehensive evaluation report.

6.2 Methods

The evaluation should use various methods to collect data, including:

Review of key documents: The International evaluation consultant will conduct a desk review of relevant documents, including UNDA project guidelines, project documents, progress reports, meeting notes, UN-Habitat work programmes and assessment report of the work of the regional commissions produced by a consultant coordinated by ECLAC, etc.

Key informant interviews and consultation. Interviews will be carried out remotely with key stakeholders, including those with the decisions on the project, those with direct responsibilities - project teams and some intended beneficiaries. An interview protocol to cover key evaluation questions will be developed in appropriated languages.

Questionnaires/ Surveys: These could be administered to two key groups: 1) Implementing partners -targeting project teams and those involved in planning and implementation of the project; 2) national and city beneficiaries in countries where the project was implemented.

The international consultant is required to develop detailed methodology in the inception phase of the evaluation.

7. STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT

It is expected that this evaluation will be participatory, providing for active and meaningful stakeholders involvement. Key stakeholders will be kept informed of the evaluation process including design, information collection, and evaluation reporting and results dissemination. Key stakeholders will be involved either directly through interviews, survey or group discussions or they will be given the opportunity to comment on the evaluation deliverables.

8. EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The independent Evaluation Unit will manage the evaluation process, ensuring that the evaluation is conducted by a suitable international evaluation consultant, providing technical support and advice on methodology, explaining evaluation standards and ensuring they are respected, ensuring contractual requirements are met and endorsing all evaluation deliverables (TOR, Inception Report; draft and final evaluation reports), sharing the evaluation results, supporting use and follow-up of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

The Project team of UN-Habitat and ECLAC will be responsible for providing information, documentation required as well as providing contacts of stakeholders to be engaged with for provision of evaluation information. They will also provide feedback and comments on preliminary evaluation findings, lessons learned the recommendations.

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established to oversee the evaluation process with members from the Project team, the Evaluation Units of implementing agencies. Responsibilities of the ERG will be:

Participating in meetings of the reference group; Reviewing and providing inputs on the key evaluation products: TOR, Inception report and draft evaluation report; and Participating in validation meeting of the final evaluation report.

The International evaluation consultant will be responsible for responsible for conducting and reporting of this project evaluation. He will build on the assessment of the work of the Regional Commissions and compile findings into a comprehensive report

9. PROVISIONAL WORK SCHEDULE

The evaluation will be conducted during the period of April to June 2025. The table 3 below indicates timelines and expected deliverables for the evaluation process.

Item	Description	Timeframe
1	Recruitment of the International evaluation consultant	March – April 2025
2	Inception phase, including formal document review, development of inception report	May -July 2025
3	Data collection phase and report writing and reviews	July- Aug 2025
4	Final report and adoption	September 2025

10 KEY DELIVERABLES

The three main deliverables for this terminal evaluation are:

Inception report (Max. 15 pages). The consultant is expected to review relevant documents and develop informed inception report, detailing how the evaluation is to be conducted, what will be delivered and when. The inception should be prepared following the format of UNDA requirements for inception reports for project evaluations as detailed in Annex 4 on page 39 of the UNDA project evaluation guidelines of October 2019.

Draft evaluation report(s). The consultant will prepare and deliver the draft evaluation report(s) using the DA project evaluation report template. The draft report should contain an executive summary that can act as standalone document. The executive summary should include an overview of what is evaluated, purpose and objectives of the evaluation and intended audience, the evaluation methodology, most important findings and main recommendations. The draft report will be shared with the ERG and ECLAC, for inputs and comments.

Final evaluation report should not exceed 40 pages (including Executive Summary but excluding annexes). In general, the report should be technically easy to comprehend for non-specialists, containing detailed evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations. The consultant should deliver the final evaluation report after incorporating all inputs and comments from ERG on the draft report.

10. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND WORK EXPERIENCE OF EVALAUTOR

The evaluation will be conducted by an international evaluation consultant. He/she must have 10 years of proven work experience in evaluating project/programmes and should have knowledge of Results-Based Management and strong methodological and analytical skills. He/she should have proven competencies in qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

In addition, the consultant should have:

- Knowledge in UN system and its accountability framework.
- Extensive evaluation experience with ability to present credible findings derived from evidence and putting conclusions and recommendations supported by evidence of findings.
- Knowledge and understanding of UN-Habitat and Regional Commission mandates and their operations
- Knowledge and experience of evaluating projects of the global nature
- Advanced academic degree in political sciences, communication, information technology, sociology or another relevant field.
- Fluent in English and Spanish. French and Arabic are added advantage.

ANNEX 2. PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

<p>Objective: Improved capacities of selected countries and cities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban-related SDGs with strengthened inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing</p>		
Outcome – OC1 (implemented by the Regional Commissions in their respective regions) Strengthened capacities of national and city level policymakers and stakeholders including NGOs, private sector, academia, and representatives of vulnerable groups in target countries and cities to develop coherent national/ city urban plans and evidenced based urban policies.	<p>IA 1.1 At least 1 cross sectoral urban development policy, strategies, plans or measure is inclusively formulated or reviewed (when existing) in each target country</p> <p>IA 1.2 National Action plans for the implementation of cross- sectoral urban development policies, measures or actions developed in 5 out of 9 project target countries with participation of relevant stakeholders</p> <p>IA 1.3 At least 7 out of 9 of the target cities have utilized improved urban planning tools, mechanisms and knowledge platforms in their strategies to promote sustainable urban development coherent and aligned to the National Action Plan.</p>	<p>Policy/plans/action documents that specify cross-sectoral policy coherence</p> <p>Action Plan/ implementation documents that specify how to implement cross-sectoral policies</p> <p>Questionnaire for target city officials after capacity building and advisory missions City Platform and/or planning documents</p>
<p>OP1.1 Kick off meetings conducted in the regions covered by ECLAC, ECE/ESCAP, ECA, and ESCWA, with the selected countries to confirm target cities. Rapid training needs assessments at national level is performed to identify priority areas for support. Each RC will organize their respective regional kick off meeting and one UN-Habitat staff will participate and support the rapid training needs assessment.</p>		
<p>OP1.2 Kick off meetings conducted, and rapid training needs assessments performed in each of the selected cities with relevant local and national stakeholders to identify priority areas for support and establish a work plan for technical assistance. The respective Regional Commission will organize and document the meetings with the relevant national and local stakeholders, ensure commitments for the next steps in the work plans, and set up a communication mechanism with relevant stakeholders to continue throughout the project.</p>		
<p>OP1.3 Regional methodologies/ guides developed to support policy-makers in developing vertically and horizontally integrated coherent policies to foster sustainable urban development. Each region will develop its own methodology/guide while ensuring coherence with those developed in the other regions. ECLAC will coordinate virtual meetings to help ensure coherence among the documents and sharing of lessons learned. The methodologies will be tested through implementation of national/ local level activities and updated upon completion of the national/ city level activities. Additionally, these methodologies will serve as valuable content for the regional platforms in Outcome 3.</p>		

OP1.4 A policy coherence workshop conducted in each of the target countries and each of the target cities with policymakers and stakeholders (including representatives from all relevant sectors) to strengthen capacities in the design and development of sustainable and inclusive national and city urban policies and plans, in line with the NUA. The workshops will facilitate the development of national level and local level sustainable urban policies, plans, projects, programmes and/or initiatives. The Methodology/ guide developed in OP1.3 will be presented and discussed during the national workshops. These workshops will provide a forum for enhanced multi-actor, multi-sectoral and multi- level (national, local) coordination and collaboration.

OP1.5 Two advisory missions conducted by Regional Commissions to each of the countries and cities to support the design and if possible, the implementation, of the national level and local level sustainable urban policies, plans, projects, programmes and or initiatives developed in OP1.4. It is expected that countries and cities will develop action plans to guide the implementation of the policies, plans, projects, programmes and or initiatives. The first advisory mission will take place by the second year of the project to help follow-up on commitments and plans made in OP1.4. The second advisory mission will take place after implementation of the respective country and city action plans has begun to ensure backstopping and assistance for challenges encountered during the implementation process.

OP1.6 Regional meetings conducted in each of the regions covered by ECLAC, ESCAP, ECE, ECA and ESCWA (with representatives from countries beyond the target countries) to share lessons learned from the project and share the methodologies/guides developed, with a view to promote further awareness and scale up of results. These meetings will be organized as a side event/ in conjunction with a larger regional meeting (i.e. the sustainable development Forum or MINURVI general assembly in ECLAC and similar meetings in the other regions) so as to reduce costs. This activity also contributes to OC3.

Outcome - OC2 (Implemented by UN-Habitat in the five regions and globally) Enhanced capacities of national and city level stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress in implementing the NUA (including the Quadrennial reporting for 2022) and achieving sustainable urban development to inform regional and global monitoring and reporting	IA 2.1 In at least 7 of the 9 target countries city level data is used for national integrated planning for sustainable urbanization	National planning documents and statistics VNRs and other local and regional data platforms of the UN System 'Local2030' where available.
	IA 2.2 At least 7 out of 9 target countries have established inclusive ¹⁹ mechanisms to produce data and reports on sustainable urbanization	Country urbanization data and reports, VRNs Planning documents for data collection mechanisms

OP2.2 Workshops conducted by UN-Habitat with national level and city level stakeholders to build capacities in data collection/identifying urban trends and issues for monitoring and reporting on sustainable urban development. These may include Training of Trainers based workshops and inform regional reporting on SDG 11 and the needs assessment outcome. Workshops also adapt implementation tools to specific local or national contexts and NUA are tailored to the specific data and monitoring needs of each country and city based on the priorities set in OP1.2 and the needs identified in OP2.1. Monitoring and reporting is a key element of formulating urban policies/strategies/action plans formulation, and this will link with work in OC1.

OP2.3 Advisory missions conducted to target countries and cities to follow-up on the outcomes of OP2.2 and support countries and cities in monitoring and reporting on sustainable urban development. It is expected that this will contribute to the production of capacity building tool(s) as well as city-level and national reports on sustainable urban development which will then feed into regional reports such as the voluntary SDG11 report and regional 'State of Cities' reports. Additionally, this data will feed into the virtual platforms developed in OC3.

<p>Outcome - OC3 (implemented jointly by all partners)</p> <p>Enhanced inter-regional cooperation south-south and triangular learning and sharing of implementation experiences related to the implementation of the NUA.</p>	<p>IA 3.1 A virtual platform to share experiences and practices within the LAC region is developed and functioning²⁰ with content provided by Member States (national and city level)</p>	<p>Virtual site for the LAC platform Website traffic statistics and downloads Review of platform content</p>
	<p>IA 3.2 At least 7 out of the 9 target countries or cities participate in inter-regional knowledge and practice platforms for global NUA and SDGs monitoring and reporting</p>	<p>Database of stakeholders and partners and platform participants; outcome of webinars, EGMs, Platform e- forum</p>

Output 3.1 Online Urban Platform Developed (virtual forum and learning centre) in the LAC region, to house the collection of instruments, practices and initiatives implemented in line with the New Urban Agenda and Regional Action Plan for Implementing the New Urban Agenda and promote dialogue and sharing of experiences between stakeholders. These will be identified through a desk review of current national level practices and throughout the implementation of the project as a result of the LAC in- country and city level work. This platform will be a dynamic, interactive and user-friendly database designed to promote south-south exchanges and learning, and to conduct follow-up to the implementation of the NUA and PAR in the LAC region. The platform will serve an important role in facilitating the data collection and analysis for the VNRs and will link with the development of NUA Platform being designed by UN-Habitat. They will serve as pilots and examples for other regions.

Output OP2.1 Training needs assessment performed, and a workshop conducted by UN-Habitat in each of the regions to present and review capacity development tools for national and regional level monitoring and reporting on Sustainable Urban development. It is expected that these workshops will result in the identification of key themes and issues to be focused on in OP2.2 and OP2.3. This activity also contributes to OC3.

Output 3.2 Inter-regional webinars and EGMs with project partners and expert stakeholders to analyse and exchange on regional and local data, trends and successes in implementation of NUA, using Voluntary National Review and other available means. This will provide for regional inputs to global reporting and monitoring, including the 2nd Quadrennial Report and SDG mid-term review. It will also serve as an exchange to harmonize between and enhance the use of regional knowledge platforms designed in the LAC and Asia-Pacific regions, possible other regions at a later stage and the global NUA Platform.

Output 3.3 Carry out three side events during global level meetings (such as the HLPF and WUF) to present program progress and ultimately results and findings to additional member states, and for each region to share experiences, and regional reports with one another, feeding to global reporting.

ANNEX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

General Documentation:

1. Project Document: 2023P Inter-regional Cooperation^[L]For the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda
2. Final Project Report and Budget Annex: 2023P Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, 2024
3. Regional Assessment of the Work of the Regional Commissions: 2023P Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (ECLAC)
4. Annual Progress Reports 2021-2023 Inter-regional Cooperation^[L]For the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda
5. PPT Regional Learning Exchange (2023)
6. Methodology for the Formulation of Integrated Urban Policies (IUP), CEPAL
7. Metodología para la Formulación de Políticas Urbanas Integradas (PUI): acercándonos al cómo y con qué' Proyecto: Guía metodológica para el desarrollo de políticas urbanas integradas ALC, P. Bravo
8. Integrated Urban Policies Methodology: Summary and PPT
9. Concept Note: CDTU Involvement in Inter-regional Cooperation for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (UNDA 12T)
10. UNDA 12T NUA Implementation: Concept Note: OP2.3 Knowledge Management Component (Compendium of Case Studies)

Country Documentation:

Cambodia:

Project Sheet - Inter-regional Cooperation^[L]For the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda: Cambodia

Costa Rica

Estrategia Banco de Suelos, CEPAL, MIVAH

Implementacion de Estrategias de Politicas Urbanas Integradas 2023 – 2036 , CEPAL/OTU
Gap Analysis Report

Cuba

Plan de Accion Nacional, VF,CEPAL

Acta Reunion Validacion del Plan

Gap Analysis Report

Ecuador

Introduccion Vivienda Adecuada

Analisis Vivienda Adecuada

Plan de Accion, Chillogallo

Lineamientos para la Incorporacion del Derecho a la Vivienda Adecuada en una Politica Urbana Nacional,
CEPAL
Gap Analysis Report
Jordan
Amman Letter of Support (2020)

Kazakhstan:
UNDA 12T NUA Implementation: Almaty/Kazakhstan Workplan
Draft UN-Habitat Workplan
Gap Analysis Report

Lesotho:
Inter-Regional Cooperation for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda: Review and validation of Policy and Data Assessment and Action Planning Workshop (2022)
Cross-Sectoral Action Plan for the Implementation of Urban Priorities of the National Development Strategy-Lesotho (ECA)
Inception Meeting Report (2020)
Ppt Cross-Sectoral Approach (2020)
Meeting Minutes – Development Account Tranche Joint Project on the Inter-Regional Cooperation for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa
ECA_UN-Habitat Collaboration Note DA 12 Implementation (2020)
Philippines:
Project Sheet - Inter-regional Cooperation^{for} For the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda: Philippines

ANNEX 4. LIST OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED/CONSULTED

UNDA:

Martin Kraus, Senior Programme Officer, Programme Management Team

UN-Habitat:

Martin Barugahare, Chief, Independent Evaluation Unit
Eric Kaibere, Associate Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Unit
Alexander Kikenya, Consultant in Independent Evaluation Unit

Paula Pennanen-Ribeiro, Deputy Director, UN-Habitat New York Office
Rafael Tuts, Director UN-Habitat Global Solutions Division
Wandia Riunga, Inter-regional Advisor, ROA
Nagwa Lachine, Inter-regional Advisor, ROAS
Ana Bernal, UN-Habitat Office for Andean Countries – Colombia
Monica Laverde, UN-Habitat Office - Ecuador
Soukaina Ait El Qadi, Programme Officer, UN-Habitat Morocco
Katja Schaefer, Inter-regional Advisor, UN-Habitat Office for Europe
Christopher Rollo, Country Programme Manager, UN-Habitat Country Office - Philippines
Larisa Togonon, Programme Officer, UN-Habitat Country Office – Philippines

ECLAC:

Sandra de Freitas Manuelito, Chief, Programme Planning & Evaluation Unit
Fiona Littlejohn-Carrillo, Division of Sustainable Development & Human Settlements
Diego Aleustia, Head, Division of Sustainable Development & Human Settlements