



EVALUATION OF PROJECT FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITIES TO FORMULATE AND ADOPT HOUSING AND SLUM UPGRADING STRATEGIES

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Acknowledgements

Author: Ilde Lambrechts

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AoC	Agreement of Cooperation
CBOs	Community-based Organisations
CDU	UN-Habitat's Capacity Development Unit
DG	Development Goal
EA	Expected Accomplishment
HAP	Habitat Agenda Partners
HSUB	Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch
IADGs	Internationally Agreed Development Goals
GA	General Assembly
GC	Governing Council
GHS	Global Housing Strategy
GSS2000	Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000
LDC	Least Developed Country
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NHC	National Housing Committee
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PAG	Project Approval Group
ROAF	Regional Office for Africa
RBM	Results-Based Management
the Account	the 9th Tranche of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA)
The Agency	UN-Habitat
the Strategy	the Global Housing Strategy
TOC	Theory of Change
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)
PSUP	Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNHRP	UN Housing Rights Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTEXT

The evaluation covers the activities of the Project ‘Strengthening National Capacities to Formulate and Adopt Housing and Slum Upgrading Strategies’. The Project is financed by the Development Account for an amount of USD629.000 and focuses on advocacy and capacity development for housing governance in six sample countries.

The project enables the practical rollout of UN-Habitat’s Global Housing Strategy (GHS). It draws on global processes to formulate housing and slum upgrading strategies and implement the GHS at country-level. The GHS seeks to readdress issues at global and country levels, mainly in the critical developing regions, where inequalities and urban poverty are more manifest and have had a greater impact on access to adequate and affordable housing. At the global level, it is expected that the GHS approach results not only in the repositioning of housing within the global contemporary debate on economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive cities, but also on critical outputs such as a shift in thinking and practice; stronger policy frameworks; systemic reforms promoted; strengthened linkages of housing with other parts of the economy; and decentralization of housing production and delivery systems.

The Project targets developing regions with the most pressing challenges concerning housing development in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific. Demonstration projects were implemented in Afghanistan, Lesotho, Mozambique, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Zambia. The Project also adopted a regional approach to capacity building by undertaking regional workshops.

The development objective is “reduced unmet housing demand and half of the slum population at the national level has access to adequate housing”.

The Project’s objective is to “enhance the capacity of national and local authorities of selected Member States to formulate and implement effective, rights-based, gender responsive and results-based national housing policies and strategies”.

The Project’s expected accomplishments are: EA1 Establishment and strengthening of National Habitat Committees for formulating and implementing sustainable and inclusive housing, slum upgrading strategies and/or policies; and EA2 Commitments from additional countries through the target regions to the principles of the GHS for inclusive, right-based, gender-responsive, results-based sustainable housing and slum upgrading.

THE EVALUATION

UN-Habitat is undertaking this evaluation in order to assess the performance of the Project and measure to what extent it has been relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable. The evaluation assesses changes at outcome level and the emerging impact to identify key learnings for the implementation of future projects. The evaluation is providing an independent and forward-looking appraisal of the Project’s operational experience, achievements, opportunities and challenges based on its performance and expected accomplishments. Future Development Account-funded projects are expected to take the learning from the evaluation – among other sources of information - into account during implementation. This is a centralized evaluation, commissioned by UN-Habitat and managed by the Evaluation Unit. The evaluation is carried out by a consultant evaluator, Ms. Ilde Lambrechts, with logistical support from the Housing Unit of the Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch and in consultation with the members of the Evaluation Reference Group.

Evaluation Approach and Methods

The evaluation follows the evaluation norms and standards of the United Nations System and is in line with the UN-Habitat's Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Manual.

The evaluation combines (i) the 'theory-of-change approach' that outlines the results chain and is integrated into the programme and the projects' respective log-frame with the (ii) the 'systems approach' that assesses nonlinear and complex urban development processes by placing the development intervention in its broader context.

The objective of this Project and therefore the focus of this evaluation is capacity development. To better understand what worked well and what did not into reaching the project objective, the evaluation articulates 'capacity development' in the log frame by showing (i) the institutional change objectives and (ii) the intermediate capacity outcomes into reaching the project objective.

Data collection

Data for this evaluation was collected through: (i) literature review, analyses of the project documents and other documents from project partners and other stakeholders; and (ii) semi-structured interviews in person in Nairobi, and by Skype or phone with key stakeholders, namely project personnel and their consultants, and beneficiaries namely national authorities.

Limitations to the Evaluation included:

(i) Because the interventions undertaken in each of the countries are limited in scope and budget, the evaluated activities might not attain the critical level of change that would allow a meaningful analysis of its contribution; (ii) no field missions could be undertaken; (iii) flaws in the log frame hamper the application of the theory-of-change and; (iv) capacity development involves many external factors that are influential, which makes it difficult to analyse the attribution of interventions to the achievement of the project objective.

SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS

Achievements

The Project addressed all the necessary intermediate capacity outcomes towards strengthening national authorities and other stakeholders by (i) raising awareness, (ii) enhancing knowledge and skills and (iii) improving collaboration and coordination. It especially achieved the first two outcomes, as setting up coordination and implementation mechanisms turned out to be challenging.

EA1 'Review and formulation of policies and strategies', however, is an activity and not an outcome. Housing frameworks were supported in all the target countries. EA2 'Commitment from additional countries through the target regions to the principles of the GHS'. The Project supported Habitat III Prepcom meetings, but the evaluation could not demonstrate the merits of the Project into achieving regional commitment towards the GHS principles.

The Project achieved all the required intermediate institutional change objectives. It (i) strengthened stakeholder ownership as governments now prioritise housing, (ii) improved the efficiency of policy instruments and (iii) improved the effectiveness of government organizational arrangements by advising on restructuring the housing sector. The Project's prime focus and success was on the objective (ii) improving the efficiency of policy instruments.

The Project achieved its objective. It especially strengthened national authorities in formulating the housing framework, while implementation remains a challenge.

Alignment between the Project and the Account Guidelines

The Project was 'demand' driven in the six target countries. The success of the Project is closely related to the relevance of its objective of 'adequate housing for all' in all countries while benefitting to a large extent from the Global Housing Strategy. The Project supports the achievement of the SDGs and SDG 11.1 in particular. It supports the achievement of the New Urban Agenda by supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, enabling engagement of stakeholders and undertaking capacity building that is an important means for implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The relevance of capacity building in housing

The Project well fits the 9th Tranche Account theme of 'supporting Member States in designing and implementing strategies and policies towards sustainable, equitable and inclusive development'. It also fits the Account's overall objective of 'enhancing capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the UN Development Agenda' as housing is one of these priorities and captured under SDG 11.1.

Results Chain

Although the Project addressed all capacity outcomes and change objectives, these are not systematically addressed in the Project design and are not sufficiently articulated in the results chain. This was to the detriment of (i) implementation prospects of downstream housing initiatives and (ii) measuring the outcomes and impact of the Project.

Change strategy

The process of drafting the frameworks was used as a catalyst for capacity development. Also, the target countries were satisfied as they now have a tangible document that can help to align stakeholders and source funds. The Project change strategy assumes that the capacity built and the documents produced will trigger a process of change that will realize "adequate housing for all". However, this 'trickle down' effect is debatable.

Project ambition and selection procedures

Considering the limited budget and time frame, this Project was overambitious at Project design stage in the number of countries that it served and the capacity development objectives at the regional level.

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