

Evaluation Report 2022/5



National Urban Policy Programme
EVALUATION REPORT 2014-2021

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National Urban Policy Programme - Evaluation Report

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National Urban Policy Programme

EVALUATION REPORT

Summary

The challenges and opportunities presented by urbanization are motivations to both promote and strengthen urban policy. Effective planning of urban development, coordinated through national urban policy, provides a basis for ameliorating the effects of economic disadvantage, climate change and sustainability, and can promote a more equitable and inclusive society.

The economic benefits of agglomeration, where productivity increases through the close interaction of people, business and institutions and infrastructure, can overcome the disadvantages of large cities, such as congestion and pollution, through sound urban policy. Along with the rapid rate of urbanization over much of the world in recent decades, these insights provide the basis for UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy Programme.

APPROACH AND METHODS

This report provides the outcomes of an evaluation of the National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) since 2014, undertaken in 2020 and 2021 by RMIT University. The methods and approach used to undertake the evaluation were founded in the Theory

of Change, which is focused on the impact of policy given the goals, inputs and actions related to its implementation. This was undertaken through four methods of data collection and analysis:



1. Document analysis of key policies and programme activities of UN-Habitat and the NUPP.



2. A survey of stakeholders and programme participants, including representatives from governments, development agencies, academia and consultancies.



3. Interviews with a representative sample of NUPP programme participants drawn from the survey responses.



4. Analysis of available internet data regarding access to and reporting on NUPs.

The interview and survey respondents were from different regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America, as well as informants with a global perspective of the National Urban Policy Programme.

Additional analysis of the internet presence of the programme was also undertaken to provide insights into the extent of its reach and engagement.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation has assessed that the NUPP is **highly relevant** to contemporary urban challenges and has been effective in raising awareness of the need for national level policy to manage urbanization. The programme was also seen as efficient by approximately 58 per cent of survey respondents. However, varying political will and ensuring policy continuity at the national level were highlighted as the major challenges for the NUP programme, while recognizing that UN-Habitat has limited direct influence over national responses.

These issues were discussed in the interviews with key NUPP informants, which highlighted the difficulty urban policy practitioners faced in gaining support from ministries and government departments for the implementation of urban policy agendas.

Regional differences in the identification of major challenges for national urban policy were also evident in the evaluation survey responses:



- **Economic development** is a priority for African respondents.



- **Environmental sustainability and climate resilience** were the priorities for Asia and the Pacific respondents, and for those from Latin America and the Caribbean.



- **Climate resilience and, to a lesser extent, economic development and environmental sustainability** were priorities for Europe and North America.



- **Human development** was identified as a priority for the Arab States.



- Respondents with global experience in the NUPP identified **environmental sustainability** as a priority.

The survey showed that participants from national governments have found the NUPP normative guides to be the most useful, while respondents from development agencies and the consulting sector considered the NUPP conferences to be their preferred aspect of the programme. The regional and organizational differences identified in the evaluation suggest improvements for the delivery of the NUPP. Establishing regional communities of practice to collaborate on shared circumstances and responses, and whether the resources expended on global conferences could be better allocated to lower-cost methods of knowledge transfer.

The use of webinars during the 2020 pandemic has indicated that they may be an effective alternative to in-person conferences by making the sessions more accessible and less costly for participants. However, there remains a need for in-person conferences, for governments and other stakeholders to meet and to connect with financing institutions. The recommendation to provide a greater focus on the tools preferred by national respondents based on their circumstances also reflects the primary purpose of the NUPP in supporting the development of national urban policies.

The interviews indicated two contrasting perspectives of the National Urban Policy Programme. Respondents with experience of developing urban policy within their nation were positive in their view of the programme, highlighting the usefulness of the guides, the knowledge transfer resulting from working alongside UN-Habitat on urban policy, and the imprimatur added to the process by the links to global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda. The survey results showed that most respondents had at least a somewhat positive view of the NUPPs achievement across a range of cross-cutting issues, including economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

In contrast, informants with a multi-national view of the programme were less positive about the impact of the programme, questioning its implementation and unilateral remit. This may be the result of such informants having less to do with the applied task of managing urbanization. These contrasting perspectives indicate that while the scope of the impacts may be limited, where the programme has informed country-level it has been largely effective, particularly when direct support to countries is provided by UN-Habitat. This underscores the recognition of the role that development partner organizations such as UN-Habitat have in assisting countries localize and implement global agendas such as the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

LESSONS LEARNED

This evaluation has identified key lessons for the NUPP, which respond to the evaluation objectives of identifying changes in policymaking, political commitment to addressing urban issues and recommendations to increase the impact of the programme.

While the NUPP was generally well-regarded by participants in the evaluation process, the main lesson arising from this evaluation is that affecting change in policymaking and engendering political commitment to national urban policy is a significant challenge.

As emphasized throughout this evaluation, these issues fall outside the direct remit of the NUPP, but at the same time are crucial to the programme's capacity to achieve sustainable urbanization. The recommendation to develop a stronger evidence base for the many benefits of national urban policy responds directly to this lesson.

The programme was found to have had some impact on urban issues, including economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

The cross-cutting issue that stands out as an area of importance and for greater focus within the NUPP is climate change and the associated issue of environmental sustainability.

The programme was also seen to have been effective in promoting slum upgrading and dealing with informal settlements.

The evaluation has identified actions to increase the programme's impact. These include:



- A greater emphasis on including policymakers in the NUP processes, to increase understanding and support for urban policy. The development of an evidence base to support advocacy would also provide additional support in advocating for the programme.



- Increasing the opportunities for countries with similar urban policy needs and circumstances to share experiences and insights. This could include communities of practice for knowledge transfer, whether based on regions, stages of development or systems of government, as well as to draw on a library and evidence base for NUP.



- Investigate additional forms of distributed and online education systems related to NUP, to increase the distribution of well-informed urban policymaking capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcomes of the evaluation provide the basis for the following three recommendations for the National Urban Policy Programme:

1. Build and develop a stronger evidence base and policy library to inform urban policy formulation and to support the advocacy for implementation of urban policy.
2. Focus on the knowledge sharing and transfer opportunities provided through the programme to support communities of shared needs and experience.
3. Consider extending the online education and training for NUPs, to distribute the knowledge and understanding of urban development contained within the National Urban Policy Programme to a wider audience, and thus develop institutional and human capacities.
4. Increase the emphasis on implementation throughout the NUP development process, to address the challenges identified in this evaluation.
5. Enhance the current suite of tools and guides available to include information on pandemics, resilience and establishing indicators for NUPs. Wider dissemination of the programme and its guides may be facilitated by translating materials into more languages.
6. Consider transferring NUPP from being a UN-Habitat programme to being part of its core activities, to reduce funding uncertainty and ensure the ongoing promotion of NUPs as a response to global urbanization issues.

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1. Introduction

The world is rapidly urbanizing and by the middle of this century 55 per cent of the global population will be living in cities. This urbanization has also occurred in the context of rapid population growth, with world's population nearly doubling over the past 40 years (OECD & European Commission 2020; UNDESA 2018). Aggregate growth in urban population masks the different scales and trajectories of urbanization across the world.

Much of the population growth is occurring in the large metropolitan areas, although in Africa and South Asia high rates of population growth are translating into new and small metropolitan areas, albeit with impacts on biodiversity and carbon storage as city footprints expand (Seto, Güneralp & Hutyra 2012). While this indicates a steady rise in urbanization in recent decades, the longer-term impact of 2020's COVID-19 pandemic on people and cities may influence urbanization rates, as well as perceptions of government and an increase in environmental awareness (OECD 2020).

Increasing urbanization underscores the importance of cities due to their effect on the economic, social and environmental circumstances of nations. As a result, well-functioning cities also provide opportunities to address issues such as inequality, poverty, disease, climate change and disaster resilience.

The economic importance of cities in modern economies is attributed to the benefits of agglomeration; the increased productivity that results from the specialization of people and industry

in dense areas and the knowledge crossovers between them. These benefits include the exchange of information and ideas in formal and informal settings, access to markets, better matching of labour to work and shared infrastructure (Scott 2006). Cities are also seen as fostering innovation and their growth provides the basis for increasing local provision of goods and services and thus the opportunity for further innovations as new combinations of industries and ideas converge (Jacobs, 2016). However, the growth of cities is also associated with dis-economies of scale, as pollution, congestion and crime may increase with population rise (Duranton & Puga 2004). The balance between benefits and disadvantages of urban growth provides a rationale for urban planning (Kundu, Sietchiping & Kinyanjui 2020).

As a recent United Nations report states:

How we plan and develop our urban areas, infuse infrastructure and services, mitigate risks and respond to the needs of growing populations determines the long-term prosperity of cities and their people (United Nations Statistics Division 2020).

With regard to these complexities, the OECD (2014a) has proposed how to 'get cities right': cities need to be seen functional regions; the strategic focus needs to shift from problems to opportunities; a wide range of issues needs to be considered in developing urban policy; and integrated approaches should be taken to cross-cutting issues.

UN-Habitat has led the development of urban policy guidelines and implementation at the international level, with the National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) central to these efforts. In total, UN-Habitat's NUPP tools, guides and approaches have been used in 40 different countries and 162 NUPs were included in a global review 2021 (UN-Habitat, 2021a).

The NUPP, as addressed in this report, responds directly to the need to 'get cities right', providing a framework and process for developing strategic urban plans to not just meet the challenges of urbanization, but to realize the benefits that urbanization can bring for human growth.

1. 1. NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

National urban policy (NUP) is defined as:

A coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate, government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term (UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance 2014, p. iii).

There are two aspects to national urban policy: it is a process for development, implementation and monitoring as well as the policy outcome of that process.

In addition, NUPs address a specific set of objectives:



- Identification of urban development priorities towards socially and economically equitable and environmentally friendly urban and territorial development



- Guidance on the future development of a national urban system and its spatial configuration, concretized through national and regional spatial plans for territorial development



- Enhanced coordination and guidance actions by national actors, as well as all levels of government in all sectors



- Increased and more coordinated private and public investments in urban development and consequent improvements in the following key areas: productivity of cities, inclusiveness and environmental conditions, subnational and local governments, financial flows, urban planning regulations, urban mobility and urban energy requirements, and job creation (UN-Habitat 2015a, p. 7)

These objectives are realized through “the identification of problems and/or opportunities, the establishment of goals, the delegation of roles, and the ability to monitor and evaluate the success of the policy” (UN-Habitat 2015a, p. 8).

While sharing this broad scope, there is great variation in the composition and intent of NUPs reflecting the different environmental, social, economic and political circumstances of nations.

1. 2. THE NATIONAL URBAN POLICY PROGRAMME

The NUPP is the vehicle for facilitating the implementation of NUPs, supporting sustainable urbanization and the related global urban agendas: the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development

Goals and the Paris Agreement. It is a joint initiative of UN-Habitat, the OECD and Cities Alliance, and the programme was launched in 2016 (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019).

The NUPP is based on five pillars that provide a basis for fostering knowledge and capacity in urban policy. The five pillars are:



- To enhance knowledge (creation, exchange and management) on NUP



- To help increase the capacity (human, financial and institutional) of policy makers



- To provide country support for NUP-making processes (on demand)



- To monitor the progress of NUP



- To provide a platform for dialogue and advocacy at all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019, p. 2).

UN-Habitat's role in the NUPP has been to assist countries with policy development and implementation processes. Countries in which UN-Habitat is currently active are presented below (Figure 1). The distribution of these activities, which are most prominent in developing regions of the global South, indicates that support tends to be provided in countries that have less internal capacity in the development of urban policy. The policy process is also supported by funding and policy experts from international development agencies.

For example, the recently adopted NUP of Serbia was supported by the German development agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure 2019). In other cases, UN-Habitat has worked with stakeholders such as the Cities Alliance.

56 UN Member States Supported by UN-Habitat with their NUP Process



Figure 1. Where UN-Habitat is working

The NUP and NUPP are discussed further in Chapter 2 of this report

Source: <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/national-urban-policy/>
Map: © OpenStreetMap contributors.

1. 3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The report provides an evaluation of the overall impacts of UN-Habitat's NUPP since 2014. The evaluation is distinct from previous assessments that have analysed NUPs as developed and implemented in 150 countries (UN-Habitat & OECD 2018; UN-Habitat 2021a; UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance 2014). The evaluation includes a review of previous reports and academic literature to provide a baseline and context for the assessment.

This baseline has been used to: assess the programme against and provide lessons and recommendations for UN-Habitat, including for future work; be a foundation for assessing the achievements, results and impact; and enhance the learning, centres of excellence and knowledge of the programme's stakeholders.

1. 4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Including this introduction, this evaluation report comprises seven chapters, plus appendices and references. The subsequent chapters are summarised below.

- 2 ▪ The second chapter provides an overview of National Urban Policy and the program that is implementing the policies.
- 3 ▪ Chapter three sets out the approach to the evaluation, including the theory of change that informs the evaluation, and the methods and scope for the data collection. The principal methods used were a survey of NUPP participants and extended interviews with programme stakeholders, which was supplemented with analysis of internet data.
- 4 ▪ Chapter four sets out the main findings of the evaluation, including the results from the survey of NUPP participants and the insights from the extended interviews. The chapter commences by analysis of the survey data to address the main aspects of the programme evaluation: performance, challenges, themes and issues, future development and wider lessons for the programme. This is followed by the internet data analysis and interview outcomes, which provides qualitative data that addresses the programme performance in more detail.
- 5 ▪ Chapter five extends the results included in Chapter four to provide the conclusions drawn from the evaluations.
- 6 ▪ Chapter six addresses the lessons learned through the evaluation, including the programme's impact on policymaking, political commitment to urban policy and key themes and challenges for the NUPP.
- 7 ▪ Chapter seven is the concluding evaluative chapter, setting out the six recommendations for addressing the issues and opportunities for the programme identified by undertaking the evaluation.

The final two chapters are the appendices and references. The appendices include the terms of reference and the survey and interview questionnaires.

2. Overview of the National Urban Policy Programme

To provide a basis for the evaluation of the NUPP, this chapter provides a summary of NUP and why its implementation is an important global initiative. This includes previous studies of NUPs and the processes for their development, and an overview of the NUPP and its implementation.

In total, 56 countries were supported by UN-Habitat in NUP development in 2020, indicating both the breadth of NUPs being undertaken and the importance of the NUPP in supporting sustainable urbanisation globally (UN-Habitat 2020e).

2.1. NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

As set out in the introduction of this report, NUPs are the result of government-led processes to develop visions and goals to “promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term” (UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance 2014, p. iii). The NUP is both a process - which is necessarily inclusive of representatives from a wide range of society - and a policy outcome that addresses urbanization from a national perspective. Thus, NUPs are necessarily broadly defined and the NUPP does not provide prescriptive frameworks for their development, as countries need to respond to their circumstances (Hohmann 2017; Holland 2015).

The 2018 Global State of NUP report distinguishes between explicit and implicit NUPs, depending on the way these policies are organized at the country level.

Some countries are considered to have explicit NUPs as they operate a policy that is directly described as a “National Urban Policy” or similar title. In 2020, 88 countries were considered to have explicit NUPs. Other countries may have a suite of policies that fulfil the requirements or have the features of a NUP as expected by UN-Habitat’s guidelines but these are not consolidated within a single policy. A recent study identifies important differences between explicit and other NUPs, as explicit NUPs have a clearer vision and put greater emphasis on integration, cross-sectoral policy coordination and a system of cities approach. In comparison, other NUPs are less strategic in outlook, with greater emphasis on engagement, participation, coordination and implementation mechanisms (UN-Habitat, 2021).

Turok and Parnell (2009, pp.159-161) list six arguments for NUPs in addition to the needs resulting from increased urbanization, which reinforce the importance of national government in urban policy:

1. Central governments provide a long-term and strategic perspective for the risks and opportunities presented by urbanization.
2. Central governments have command of financial, bureaucratic and policy levers to foster urban development, with consideration of the needs and requirements of the nation's system of cities.
3. Cities make important contributions to productivity and employment growth, particularly as economies transition to higher order, service-based economies
4. The concentration of population and economic activity in cities provides for economies of scale in infrastructure provision, such as public transport, ports, power generation and cultural institutions. Investments in infrastructure also act as a signal to the private sector, facilitating further economic development.
5. Cities are "crucial sites of social, political and cultural interaction and fusion" (Turok & Parnell 2009, p. 161), which makes them both sites of innovation and likely locations of unrest as a result of the interactions of people from a wide range of backgrounds, particularly as mobility and migration has increased.
6. Given the concentration of people and activity in cities, addressing urban non-renewable resource use is central to mitigating environmental degradation and climate change. Cities are also at risk from natural disasters, a problem made worse in situations with limited resources.

UN-Habitat (2019a) has listed more than 20 reasons why NUP matters, providing further support for the multi-faceted outcomes from a co-ordinated approach to urban policy, including governance, inclusion and equity, economic benefits, urban development, community engagement and the support of global urban agendas.

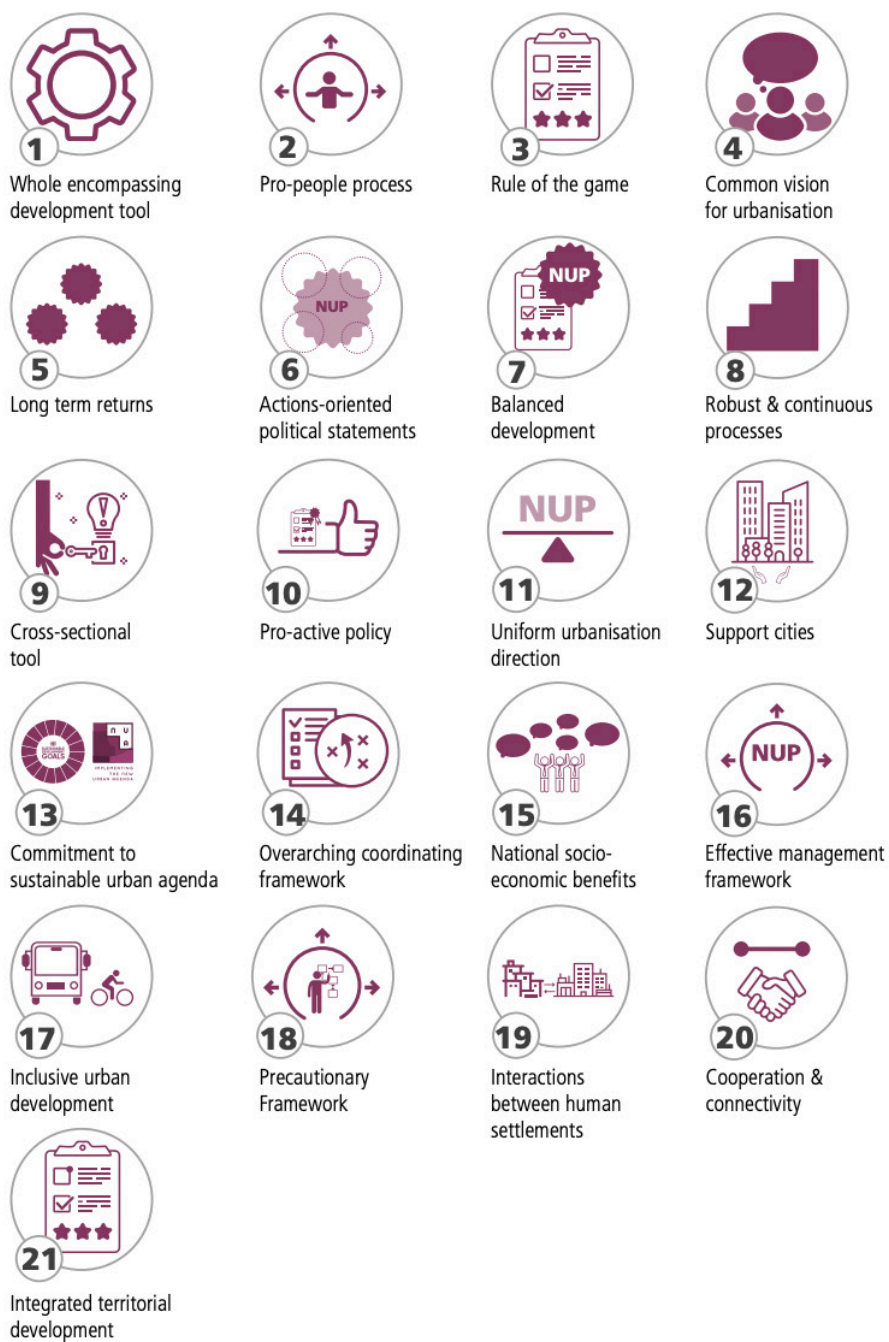
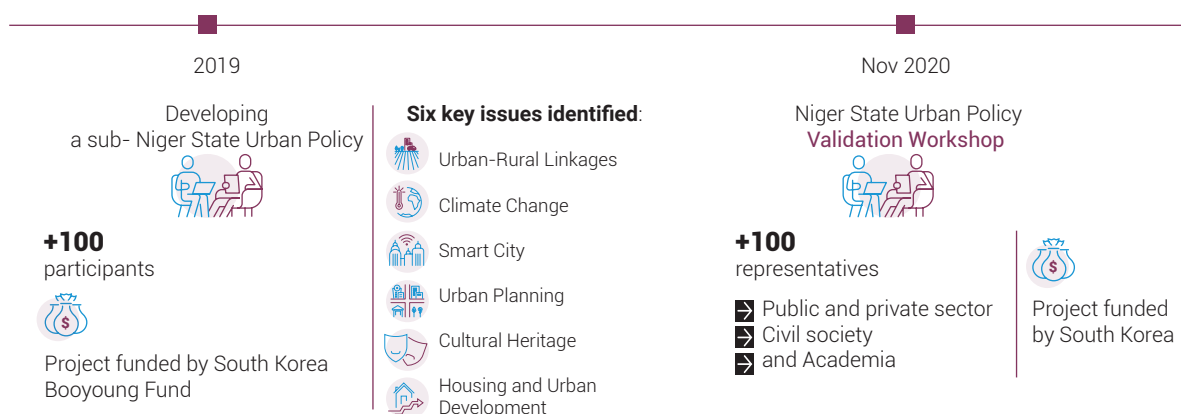


Figure 2. The 20+ reasons NUP matters

Source: UN-Habitat 2019a, p.7.

While NUPs affirm the importance of national governments in realizing the benefits of urbanization, the important role of local government is also recognized in the programme as urban policies at the national level provide a framework for coordinated implementation by local governments. This supports the need for sub-national urban policy as instruments for the implementation of NUPs in order to achieve urban development and governance goals, such as

decentralization, promoting regional development and addressing regional inequities, providing place-specific policy and addressing governance shortfalls (UN-Habitat 2020d). As such, subsidiarity and the appropriate distribution of funding to local authority are crucial to the implementation of the NUPP (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2017, p. 49).



Box 1. Niger State and Zanzibar Urban Policy

UN-Habitat and the Niger State Government met with more than 100 representatives from the public and private sector, civil society and academia to discuss and validate the draft Niger State Urban Policy in November 2020. The policy, funded by South Korea as part of UN-Habitat's three countries (Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria) National Urban Policy Programme, addresses issues specific to the State and its development of sustainable cities, such as financing, management and governance, public spaces, disaster management and active transport.

Zanzibar, Tanzania, is in the process of developing a sub-national urban policy, with support from South Korea's Booyoung Fund and the United Nations Development Account that focuses on urban-rural linkages. Group sessions were held in 2019, where the more than 100 participants identified six key issues: urban-rural linkages; climate change and environment (risk mitigation and resilience); smart city, technology and innovation; urban planning, mobility and governance; cultural heritage and tourism; and land, housing and urban development.

These country examples are part of the UN-Habitat programme, *Leaving No Place Behind: Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages in Africa*, which addresses the divide between rural and urban communities through NUPs by way of Expert Group Meetings (UN-Habitat n.d.b).

In effect, NUPs are complementary to the countries' local urban policies and planning, providing strategic vision and frameworks to guide sustainable urban development (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019). It "consists of reviewing and facilitating from the national level in order to allow policy and planning to succeed at the regional and local levels" (UN-Habitat 2015a, p. 11). It has also been argued that NUPs can result in more sustainable and equitable outcomes for systems of cities and settlements, but local policy is required for these results to be achieved in cities (Schindler, Mitlin & Marvin 2018).

The benefits of NUPs can be seen as reinforcing the agglomeration benefits associated with cities, as well as minimizing dis-economies of scale. Agglomeration economies result from formal and informal exchanges of information, the enhanced links between supply and demand in production networks and markets, and the better matching of people to employment in what are referred to as thicker labour markets (Duranton & Puga 2004; Scott 2006). While urbanization is not synonymous with agglomeration (Turok & McGranahan 2013), these benefits can be seen in the role of NUPs providing opportunities for interaction and information exchange, fostering innovation, and the efficiencies of shared infrastructure. Dis-economies of scale include pollution, congestion and higher costs of living, and they increase as cities grow, which is an argument for growing mid-sized cities (Camagni & Capello 2014). These dis-economies of scale can be mitigated by good urban policies through integrated land-use and transport planning, infrastructure provision and affordable housing policies.

Box 2. French urban policy, non-explicit.

France does not have an explicit NUP but has a suite of urban policies framed by the National Sustainable Development Strategy. As a result, coordination of activities across tiers and functions of government is an important aspect of how urban issues are dealt with in France. Cities are prominent within the country's policies and there is an emphasis on funding local government and engaging with the community to implement the broader urban policy objectives. Subsidiarity is evident within the French urban planning and policy system, however the system is seen as complex due to the overlap of sector-based authorities with responsibilities such as greening, mobility, housing, economic development and the environment (Huybrechts 2020). As the Global State of National Urban Policy 2020 states, in France:

... urban policy is inter-ministerial, partnership-based, contractual and participatory in its approach, decentralized and deconcentrated in its implementation, in the integration of the social, urban and economic dimensions within the city contract and the setting up of citizens' councils.

France is an example of how the fundamental elements of an NUP can result from coordinated policies and agencies within a country, without an explicit NUP. Such an approach however requires a high degree of sophistication in policy coordination to ensure all necessary elements of NUP are sufficiently addressed.

2.1.1. The NUP process

The NUPP is “an instrument for guiding sustainable urban development in a country” (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2017, p. 2). It is a normative programme that advocates to, and works with, countries to recognize the benefits of well-managed urban development and implementation of urban policies through engaging with the processes for NUP formulation.

The development of an NUP has been identified as involving five phases: feasibility, diagnosis, formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Figure 4). The phases overlap and it is recommended that the development follows a “reflective and iterative policy process” (UN-Habitat 2015a, p. 10). There are three further key thematic areas or “operational enablers” of NUPs - urban legislation, urban economy and urban planning and design - which “play key roles in promoting more sustainable, prosperous and productive urbanization (UN-Habitat 2015a, p. 11).



Figure 3. The national urban policy process

Source: UN-Habitat (2015a, p. 10)

The three elements that encircle the five phases in the diagram are referred to as the ‘key pillars’ – participation, capacity development and acupuncture projects - and are considered throughout the NUP development process. In addition, there are five principles that guide the NUP process:

- Iterative and forward thinking, with clearly defined long-term and short-term goals.
- The process must result in a policy that is implementable, including having the necessary financial resources, human and institutional capacities, legislative framework, coherence with existing policy and stakeholder support.

- The policy should be 'joined up', crossing institutional boundaries to address the substantive challenges and opportunities that result from urbanization.
- It should be based in relevant and up-to-date evidence.
- It should be action-oriented (UN-Habitat 2015a).

NUP development is also expected to be participatory, with national and local government and ministries supported with input from the private sector, civil society organizations, research and academic institutions (UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance 2014).

The establishment of participatory and inclusive processes is the first step in the NUP process and a central element of the feasibility phase, which also identifies the problems and challenges for the NUP process (UN-Habitat 2018).

The five stages of the process are, in summary:



- **Feasibility Phase:** This phase is essential for determining the viability of NUP while providing the framework and direction for its development and implementation. It is crucial for making sound decisions and setting directions.



- **Diagnosis Phase:** This phase provides a detailed understanding of the local context, policy problems and opportunities, clarifies the policy goals and maps out key stakeholders.



- **Formulation Phase:** This phase allows for mapping of what will occur between the definition of the policy problem(s) and the attainment of the policy goal. It is a phase in which policy options and goals are evaluated.



- **Implementation Phase:** During this phase, the policy proposal and plan completed during the formulation phase will be translated into actionable items. This phase also ensures that all stakeholders have the capacity (human, financial and institutional) to implement the policy as planned.



- **Monitoring and Evaluation Phase:** This should not be regarded as the "last" phase in the NUP process. Monitoring should be undertaken throughout the implementation of the policy. The evaluation is an opportunity to review the gains made and evaluate any shortcomings. Lessons learned from an evaluation of outcomes and process can feedback into the policy cycle and promote an iterative policy design (UN-Habitat 2019a, 2015a).

Previous studies of the NUPP have distinguished between countries at the pre-implementation feasibility and diagnosis phases, and those that have progressed further to the formulation phase and beyond (UN-Habitat & OECD 2018; UN-Habitat 2021a).

Box 3. The five pillars of the NUPP

The development and promotion of NUPs is based on five pillars, that provide a basis for fostering knowledge and capacity in urban policy. The pillars of the NUPP are:

To enhance knowledge (creation, exchange and management) on NUP at all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. The programme will encourage countries' and cities' peer-to-peer learning and exchange of good practice, while addressing local contexts. Through these knowledge-based activities, the programme supports evidence-based NUP making processes.

To help increase the capacity (human, financial and institutional) of policy makers at the national and sub-national level to develop and progressively implement urban policies, particularly in the form of NUP, by providing a platform for capacity development activities.

To provide country support for NUP making processes (on demand), to ensure involvement of all relevant stakeholders (ministries, subnational governments, civil society etc.) and participatory processes as appropriate.

To monitor the progress of NUP in its role as part of the monitoring process of the New Urban Agenda / Sustainable Development Goals, through a global review and country specific reviews on NUP.

To provide a platform for dialogue and advocacy for all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders to network and engage in developing and implementing NUP. The platform can engage in advocacy activities through periodic global/regional/national/sub-national forums with a broad base of stakeholders in order to communicate the importance of NUP and its ability to initiate dialogue on how to better manage urbanization (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019, p.2)

As the five pillars of the NUPP state, the transfer of knowledge is central to achieving the global aims of the programme. This enables countries and urban policy practitioners to learn from others' experiences and improve the outcomes of the policy formulation process. An example is the NUP South Korean exchange visits programme, which included Iran, Myanmar and Niger State, Nigeria. The exchange had the objectives of augmenting policy-making capacity, sharing knowledge and preparing action plans for implementing projects, and following the visits to South Korea the three participating countries had progressed towards NUP and smart city policies (UN-Habitat 2019d). Programmes such as this exchange provide further support for Turok's (2015, p. 364) conclusion from a review of NUPs in sub-Saharan Africa:

There are many uncertainties about how to influence urban development in the context of scarce resources and weak institutions. There is little established knowledge about what interventions are most effective, and in what combination and sequence. This calls for greater creativity and experimentation, as well as learning from other countries about what can be done. Building confidence and expertise by getting started on tangible projects has proved important where political support is ambivalent. International agencies can help to sponsor new initiatives, pool knowledge and spread good practice.

Turok's insights are widely applicable; there is a need for experimentation in order to inform pathways towards sustainable urbanism and there are benefits for countries to gain by drawing on the experiences and experimentation of others. By reflecting, comparing and drawing lessons from NUPs in comparable countries, this conclusion also implies that these insights are likely to be of greater benefit when drawn from countries of comparable stages of development.

The urbanization and development conditions, and thus policy priorities, of countries can also be seen as broadly specific to their regions of the world. Europe and the global North have been predominantly urban since the late nineteenth century. Urbanization has been rapid across much of Asia in the second half of the twentieth century, while many African nations are undergoing a similar process of rapid urbanization and this continent is expected to be the primary source of growth in urbanized populations in the coming years. There are also variations between countries within these broad characterizations of urbanization trends, as Kundu et al. (2020, p. 443) observe: Germany is contending with population decline while France's urban policy addresses urban expansion and the associated environmental issues. Holland (2015) provides a theoretically based alternative categorization of NUPs using three policy spectrums to identify similarities and policy options for urban policies and reflect the ideologies of governments: people versus place-based policies; social versus economic policies; and public or private led. While this form of categorization is not prominent in the NUP literature, it does suggest a way to consider the relationships between urban policies and how countries can draw on the experience of others with similar policy intent in their NUP formulation process.

The NUP objectives and pillars are clearly defined within UN-Habitat guides, resources and assistance materials and those of associated development agencies, but necessarily result in different application depending on the country. As a result, NUPs reflect the national social, economic and institutional contexts and frameworks that they are implemented within. The following section provides more detail on the range of tools of resources produced by UN-Habitat to support countries through the NUP process, as well as other forms of urban policy development.

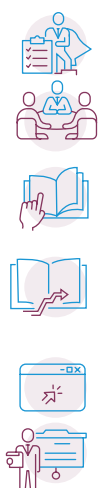
2. 2. THE NATIONAL URBAN POLICY PROGRAMME

UN-Habitat facilitates and advocates for the development and implementation of NUPs through the National Urban Policy Programme. The NUPP was launched in 2016 as a collaboration between UN-Habitat, the OECD and Cities Alliance, but each of these organizations has a longer engagement with

national urban policy development and evaluation. In addition to in-country support, UN-Habitat provides tools and resources to inform NUP processes, as well as a platform to exchange information and experiences of the policy process, including the website and a range of forums and conferences.

2.2.1. NUPP tools and resources

The NUPP is supported by a suite of tools and resources developed and made available by UN-Habitat and its policy partners, which are a fundamental aspect of the programme and support meeting its objectives. The tools and resources include:



- Normative guides on formulating and monitoring NUPs.
- International conferences on NUP.
- Regional reports, that review NUPs in regions such as Asia and the Pacific or Africa, for example.
- Thematic guides for key policy areas for NUPs: urban-rural linkages, climate change and slum upgrading, for example.
- The NUP website, which includes the urban policy platform and NUP database.
- NUP e-learning course and learning materials

The Urban Policy Platform website¹ is the gateway to most of these tools and resources, and introduces the programme and its purpose. The website includes the normative guides, previous programme evaluations, regional reports and the national urban policy database, and examples of reports produced through NUP formulations. It also includes the NUP e-Learning Course, which has three modules that provide an overview of NUPs and their role in sustainable urbanization, the processes of formulation, assessment and review, and intersections with other sectors and policy areas.

The normative guides are a primary source of information and instruction for NUPP participants. Examples include:

- National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework
- How to Formulate National Urban Policy
- National Urban Policy Feasibility Guide
- Monitoring National Urban Policy: A Guide.

¹ <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/national-urban-policy/>



The Guiding Framework is an introduction to the intent and methods of the five phases of NUPs set out in feasibility, diagnosis, formulation, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation. The Guiding Framework also lists five key principles for NUPs: iterative and forward thinking, implementable, joined up and inclusive, evidence based, action oriented (UN-Habitat 2015a). Other normative guides focus on specific aspects of the NUPP. ***How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide*** sets out the essential questions that should be addressed prior to commencing the policy process, including the major policy areas and evaluation and monitoring (UN-Habitat 2019b).

The ***National Urban Policy Feasibility Guide*** lays out the initial steps for formulating the NUP, including nine priority functions. These functions include building consensus, the rationale for the policy, the role of governments, research institutions and the media, a plan for the policy process and a risk mitigation strategy (UN-Habitat 2018a). Another example is ***Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide***, which argues for the importance of tracking progress and results to provide the basis for iterative improvements and accountability (UN-Habitat 2020a).

The thematic NUP guides address salient and common issues to be addressed by NUPs, such as climate change, slum upgrading and prevention, urban-rural linkages and public open space. The thematic guides are typically short with a clear focus on the topic at hand, to support their inclusion within NUP formulation processes. The content of the thematic guides is discussed in detail in Section 1.

A series of regional reports describe and review NUP efforts across five global regions: Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, Latin America and Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe and North America.

The reports include both short and extended case studies of urban policies and NUPs within the regions, as well as an overview of urbanization and associated policies. The exchange of knowledge is a pillar of the NUPP (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019), and the regional reports contribute to this through their consolidation of information regarding similar or comparable countries.

International conferences are a primary tool for the exchange of knowledge of NUPs and the formulation processes. The first World Urban Forum (WUF) was held in Nairobi in 2002 and the eleventh will be held in Katowice, Poland, in 2022.

The WUF is attended by representatives from governments, academia, civil society and the private sector and the forum addresses key issues associated with urbanization. International Conferences on National Urban Policy (ICNUP) were held in Incheon (South Korea) in 2015, Paris (France) in 2017 and Nairobi (Kenya) in 2019. The overall objectives of the 2019 conference in Nairobi, for example, included sharing recent experiences and good practices, engaging with stakeholders and increasing political commitment to promote NUPs (UN-Habitat 2019c). These conferences have attracted sizeable speaker lists and audiences, and have been an important mechanism for signalling

the importance of NUP, disseminating policy and practices advice, and sharing experiences in NUP formulation and application. The ICNUPs have often been undertaken in conjunction with other NGO and governmental partners, which offers a valuable chance for countries to showcase their leadership in NUP, while providing a normative signal to others that NUP is important and beneficial. Urban policy has also been a topic under consideration at other international conferences, such as Habitat III and the World Urban Forum. Indeed, UN-Habitat and its partners have been active in using these global events as platforms for advancing the NUPP agenda.

2.2.2. Thematic focus areas

NUPs provide the basis for addressing key themes emerging from urbanization in a single, coherent and coordinated policy instrument. The three overarching themes for NUPs are urban legislation, urban economy and urban planning and design (UN-Habitat 2015a). A key benefit of NUPs is that they act as a lens for national governments to consider how policies impact cities and their rural peripheries across different sectors and urban themes (OECD 2015). The wide thematic and sectoral focus in national urban policies also provides coordination for implementation within cities (Ahrend 2017).

There are five key themes in NUPs that were included in the 2018 and 2020 global reviews of the NUPs: economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

In the 2018 review, such themes were not directly addressed in all NUPs included in the evaluation (UN-Habitat & EOCED 2018); economic development,

spatial structure and human development were included at extensive or moderate levels in more than 60 per cent of the 108 NUPs reviewed. Environment sustainability was included in more than half of NUPs, although with a lower proportion of extensive levels of attention. Climate resilience was the least present, with only approximately 10 per cent assessed at extensive and 20 per cent at moderate levels of inclusion. Within these results there was regional variation. For example, 61 per cent of Asia and the Pacific NUPs included extensive spatial planning attention, compared to 23 per cent in Africa. Also, none of the 14 Latin America & Caribbean countries were considered to have given extensive attention to climate change in their NUPs, compared to 16 per cent in Europe and North America (*ibid.*).

The 2020 review of NUP found similar levels of inclusion of these key themes, with a notable increase in the inclusion of climate resilience, increasing to 46 per cent of countries assessed to have moderate or extensive consideration of this issue (UN-Habitat 2021a).

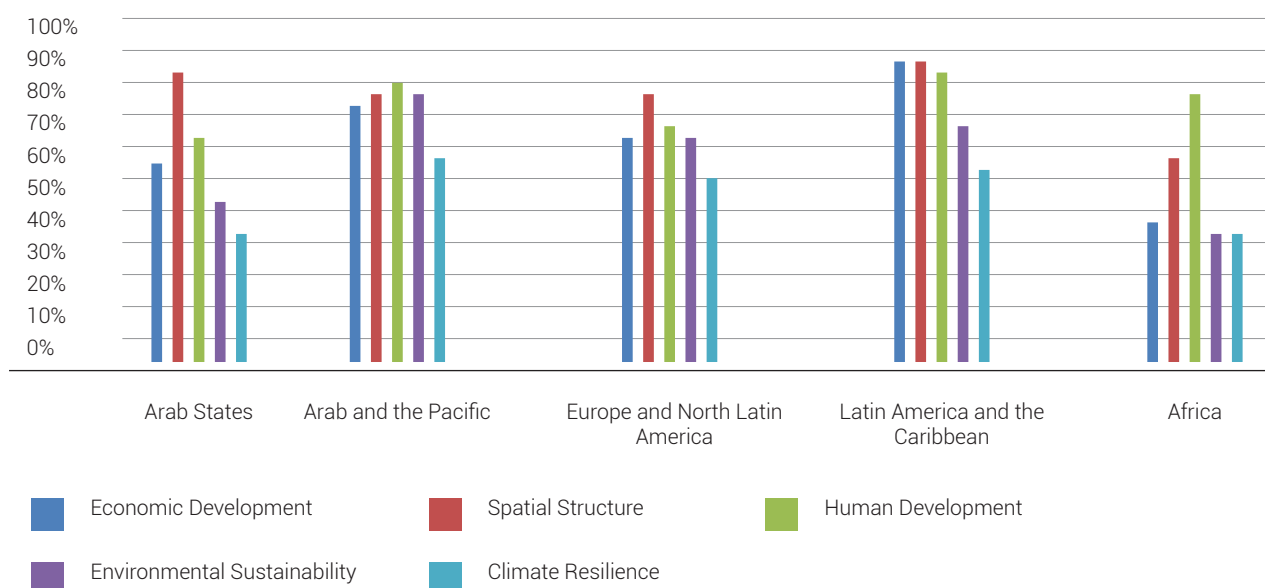


Figure 4. Moderate to extensive attention to themes of NUPs per region

Source: UN-Habitat 2021a

In addition to these broad thematic inclusions within NUPs, assistance with policy development has been provided through the development of thematic guides by UN-Habitat, including the need to ‘mainstream’ urban-rural linkages, slum upgrading and prevention, public open space in urban development and importantly given the above results, addressing climate change.

NUPs have been recognized as a key tool for climate change mitigation and adaptation due to the global trends towards increased urban population and thus sites of intensive carbon emissions, as well as the risks associated with climate-related disasters. Therefore:

To rise to these challenges will require coordination and alignment mechanisms across different levels of government in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate policies at the city level. In this regard, a national urban policy can be a key instrument to coordinate national and local climate policies for the implementation of the Paris Agreement achieved at COP21 (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2017, p.26).

In addition to the Paris Agreement, NUPs also provide the basis for addressing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (see also Section 1).

In addition to the considerations of climate change in NUPs, UN-Habitat (2016a) also provides recommendations for climate mitigation through low-carbon development, adaptation through building resilience and addressing urban climate governance.

Low-carbon development mitigates climate change due to the emissions associated with aspects of urban development and living, such as buildings, transport and waste management, with improvements to existing urban forms and functions as well as new developments. Climate resilience is defined as “the capacity of cities (individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems) to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of stress and shocks, and even transform when conditions require so” (UN-Habitat, 2015b; p.147), and is required as a result of the forecast increase in sea-level rise, flooding, heat waves and water scarcity. Urban climate governance includes collaborative action between levels of government, building resources and institutional capacities, promoting public awareness of the issues and ensuring NUPs are consistent with national policies for addressing climate change.

The promotion of urban-rural linkages in the New Urban Agenda and the NUPP is a recognition that not everyone lives in cities, the need for inclusiveness in urban policymaking, the role of rural areas in providing for cities, and the strong connections between cities and their peripheries (UN-Habitat 2020b, 2017b). Issues include the development gap between rural

and urban areas, the role of infrastructure that provides urban-rural connections, the impact of unplanned urban growth on rural land, and the influence of rural-urban migration on urbanization. Urban-rural linkages cut across the five NUP themes of economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience by promoting the inclusion of representatives and rural considerations in urban policy development, to result in a coordinated and cohesive policy for the functional area, not just the city itself (Ahrend, 2017).

Slum upgrading and prevention responds directly to Sustainable Development Goal 11, **Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**, and in particular target 11.1: “By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums” (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). NUPs support slum upgrading, the process of improving, formalizing and incorporating informal settlements into a city, by providing a policy framework and coordinating tool, which reinforces and is reinforced by city slum upgrading policies (UN-Habitat, 2016b), as represented below (Figure 6).

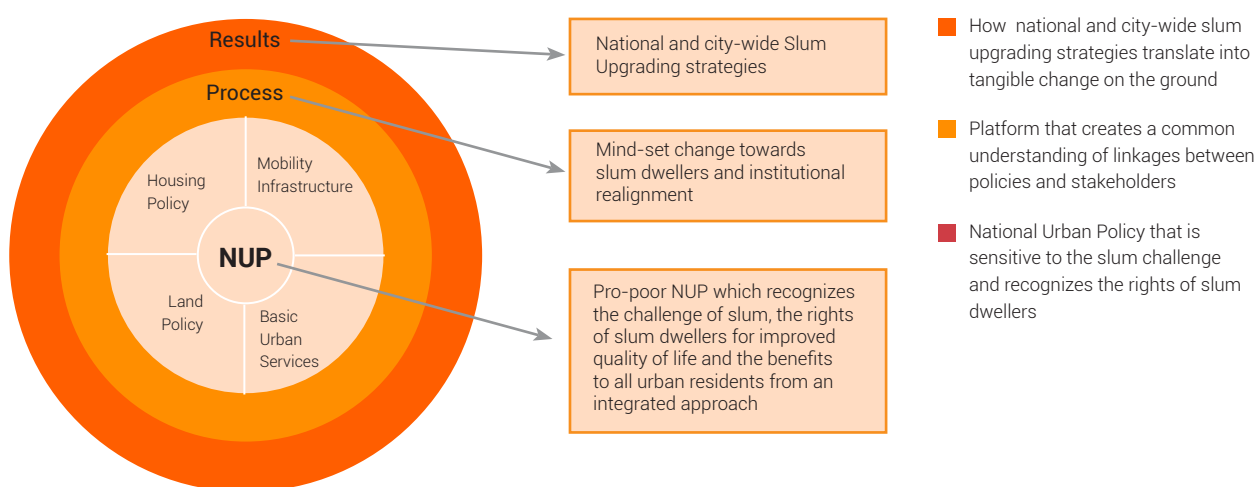


Figure 5. The associated impacts of national urban policy

Source:(UN-Habitat 2016b, p. 5).

A central aspect of mainstreaming slum upgrading and prevention in NUPs is the inclusion of the views of slum dwellers in each of the stages of the development process, from feasibility through to monitoring and evaluation. In addition, it is recommended that NUPs prioritize the impact on slums and slum dwellers in policy formulation.

A final theme for NUP mainstreaming is public open spaces, as they are “key assets for a city’s functioning and have a positive impact on its

economy, environment, safety, health, integration and connectivity” (UN-Habitat, 2020c; p.12), as represented below (Figure 7). Public open space includes streets as well as other public spaces, and thus when poorly planned it can affect the functioning of a city and increase inequality. The broad recommendation is for 45 to 50 per cent of a city’s land area be public open space, although many cities do not meet this standard, particularly in the global South.

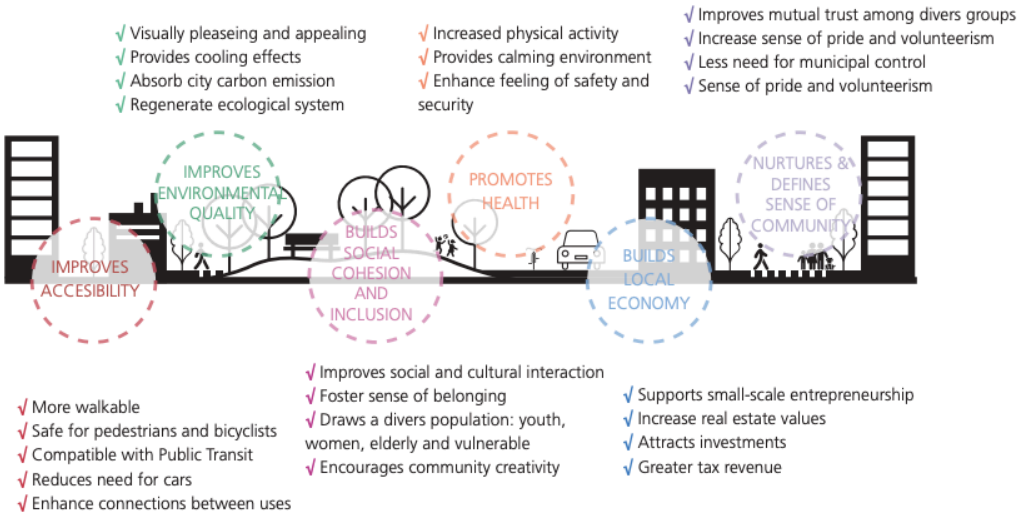


Figure 6. Benefits of public spaces to cities
 Source: UN-Habitat (2020d, p. 12)

Like the other themes included in this section, the mainstreaming of public space in NUPs provides a framework and impetus for implementation in city planning and urban policy development. Public open space provision also contributes to sustainable, equitable and inclusive cities, and is similarly dependent on institutional, technical and financial

capacities for implementation. It is also of note that the thematic areas for mainstreaming respond to the three main themes of NUPs - urban legislation, urban economy and urban planning and design - by setting out key aspects of cities and their functions that need to be addressed.

Box 4. Global State of National Urban Policy 2020

Concurrent to this report, UN-Habitat undertook a country-based review of the NUPP through a survey of 82 countries that have participated in the programme, more than half of the countries that were assessed to have a NUP.

Key conclusions from the research included:

There is diversity of NUPs across countries, reflecting the different priorities and societies that they operate within.

The most frequently cited outcome expected from NUP was “balanced territorial and urban development in a country”, selected by 45 of the 82 survey participants. Within NUPs, policy coordination, strategic vision and integrated territorial perspective were the most frequently observed characteristics.

Recurrent themes identified within NUPs were basic urban services, sustainable mobility and risk-sensitive land.

Lack of financial and human resources were seen as major challenges for countries implementing NUPs. On the other hand, stakeholder engagement was seen as important in the process of developing and implementing NUP.

Input from national data agencies, along with research institutes, provided an important evidence base for NUPs.

Relations between tiers of government were important in enabling the NUP process, such as legislative and constitutional frameworks, fiscal transfers between tiers, local government capacities and the provisions for democracy and transparency.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are used to improve NUPs, to improve the coordination between tiers of government within countries, and to inform budget allocations and funding.

NUPs play an important role in countries' response to and monitoring of global agendas, in particular, for fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda.

Climate change mitigation or adaptation was found to be included in 80 per cent of NUPs. However, there is a need to develop expertise in the connections between urban policy and climate change mitigation, as well as coordination mechanisms between tiers of government.

2.2.3. Links to global agreements

The NUPP is an element of and aligns with global agendas that unite nations in meeting challenges of climate change and sustainable development. Such alignment is central to the development of the overarching New Urban Agenda (Kinyanjui 2020). In particular, the NUPP serves as a multi-dimensional mechanism for the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2016; p.41).

The connection between urban policy and sustainable urban development is clear, as:

... in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and other global development agreements and frameworks, we have reached a critical point in understanding that cities can be the source of solutions to, rather than the cause of, the challenges that our world is facing today. If well-planned and well-managed, urbanization can be a powerful tool for sustainable development for both developing and developed countries (United Nations, 2017; p.iv).

The shift in focus from cities as a source of global challenges to providing opportunities to address global issues is central to the NUPP as a normative agenda for urban policy.

The importance of the development of NUP policies and processes in recent years is also underscored by the programme's relevance to global agendas that include urban issues within their remit, as it can "structure and organize urbanization and its value as a tool to capitalize on the opportunities" (Kundu, Sietchiping & Kinyanjui 2020, p.4).

While most countries have urban policies in some form, the coherent and strategic national framework provided by a NUP is seen as vital in linking those policies to, and achieving, the goals included in global agendas (OECD, 2017).



SDG 11: Cities and human settlements

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), each with implications for cities and urban policy. Goal 11: ***Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements*** is of particular relevance given its focus on urban issues (Habitat III Policy Unit 3, 2016). SDG 11 includes 10 indicators and 12 targets set out below, which indicate the connection between SDGs the objectives of NUP listed in Section 1.1 of this report.

Box 5. Box 5: SDG11 - Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, SDG 11 is the most relevant to NUP.

The 10 indicators included in SDG 11 are:

1. By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
2. By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older people.
3. By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.
4. Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.
5. By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths, the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.
6. By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.
7. By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women, children, older people and people with disabilities.
8. Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.
9. By 2020, 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, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.
10. Support least-developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings using local materials.

Source: (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017)

The New Urban Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, also aligns with NUP, through the shared promotion of sustainable urban development and integration with the SDGs. The New Urban Agenda is based on five drivers of sustainable urban development:

1. Embracing urbanization at all levels of human settlements; more appropriate policies can take advantage of urbanization across physical space, bridging urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and assist governments to address challenges through national and local development policy frameworks.
2. Integrating equity to the development agenda. Equity becomes an issue of social justice, ensures access to the public sphere, extends opportunities and increases the commons.
3. Fostering national urban planning and planned city extensions.
4. Deciding how relevant Sustainable Development Goals will be supported through sustainable urbanization.
5. Aligning and strengthening institutional arrangements with the substantive outcomes of Habitat III, to ensure effective delivery of the new Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2016).

NUP particularly responds to the third driver, as urban planning can help to “end poverty and hunger, reduce inequalities, promote economic growth, achieve gender equality, improve health, foster resilience and protect the environment” (United Nations 2017, p.1). Within the United Nations, UN-Habitat has led the development of urban policy guidelines and implementation, with the National Urban Policies Programme central to these efforts.

The NUP programme also supports the Paris Agreement for a low carbon future, an outcome of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21). The Paris Agreement brings together nations under one agreement to “undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so” (UNFCCC 2018).

The Paris Agreement does not directly address urban issues but, given the extent and rate of increase of urbanization, the outcomes of the agreement cannot be met without addressing the sustainability of our cities. The direct link to NUPs is through the inclusion of climate change as a central theme, although it was the least frequently included of the five themes in the 2020 review of the programme, with less than 15 per cent extensively addressing the issue. NUP also supports the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which aims for “substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries” (UNDRR, 2015, p.12).

Box 6. NUPs in Africa

Banduako, Annan-Aggrey & Arku (2020) reviewed and analysed the content of the NUPs of eight African countries: Malawi, South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria. The focus of the analysis was on themes addressed in the context of urban challenges in Africa and on how the NUPs addressed the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The NUPs assessed indicate that there is an increasing awareness of the challenges presented by rapid urbanization in Africa, with a noted focus on social and economic issues. However, there was much less reference to climate change and sustainability found in the NUPS analysed.

The Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda are addressed in the NUPs, as indicated by the citation from the Ugandan policy:

The SDGs provide an opportunity for Uganda to bring all stakeholders together to decide and embark on new paths to improve the lives of people in urban areas, and to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by creating mechanisms to ensure good urban governance (Government of Uganda 2017, cited in Banduako et al., 2020; p.7).

While these positive attributes of the NUPs were noted, the issues highlighted in the review were the translation of the plans into implementation and actions, and the different outcomes from consultant-led processes. Implementation was seen as a particular shortcoming, as only Ghana's NUP had an associated action plan. Policies developed by international consultants were found to be more likely to be 'flowery' and reflect global norms rather than detailed responses to local issues. Other issues identified were the lack of funding for infrastructure and the need for institutional reform.

3. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

This evaluation assesses the changes or impacts as a result UN-Habitat's work on NUPs through the NUPP. The purpose is to provide a review of the achievements, results and impact of the NUPP for reporting to key stakeholders. In addition to this purpose, the evaluation will also contribute to the

continuing development and improvement of the NUPP and UN-Habitat's work in this area.

The target audience for this evaluation is UN-Habitat, NUP financial partners and other key donors, UN-Habitat governing bodies and the general public.

3.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

Within this overarching purpose of informing the work of UN-Habitat and the NUP programme, the detailed objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To determine to what extent identified changes in policy making have been initiated at global, regional, national and sub-national levels, and can be attributed to the NUPP, particularly its:
 - a. toolkits
 - b. policy frameworks
 - c. programmes
 - d. projects
 - e. capacity development
6. To determine to what extent UN-Habitat's NUP approach has influenced political commitment on urban issues at global, regional and country levels, and assist selected countries to deliver on such commitments.
7. To determine how the NUP approach has created better opportunities in assessing the impact on vulnerable groups (e.g., women, youth, the poor, the disabled), including the needs of local governments and civil societies while engaging units, sections and regional offices at UN-Habitat.
8. To assess how other thematic areas, including cross-cutting issues (gender, youth and climate change), are engaged within the overall NUP process.
9. To identify lessons and recommend how the UN-Habitat NUP approach and related work can be enhanced to increase impact.

3. 2. SCOPE

The scope of this evaluation of the NUPP since 2014 is limited to the perceptions of programme participants, sourced through lists of attendees of previous NUPP-related events as described in 3.3.2. This is supported by the review of NUPP included in Chapter 2 of this report and an analysis of internet search results and document access. This method of participant recruitment resulted in a broad range of participants from different regions as well as backgrounds: government, development agencies, NGOs, consulting and academia. By only including participants with a direct engagement with the NUPP, the evaluation is predominantly based

on the perspectives of people whose primary role is related to urban issues and policy. Therefore, the evaluation did not include wider assessments of the programme and its outcomes, particularly government ministers responsible for implementing urban policy. The survey and interviews that form the main approach to this evaluation also mean that the evaluation is of the programme in general, rather than a review of specific examples of the programme and its implementation. Future evaluations may provide additional recommendations and insights by addressing these gaps in the scope.

3. 3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Previous reviews of the NUPP have been based on the formulation and implementation of NUPs within countries, with a focus on themes, impacts and governance with countries' urban policies. This report takes a new approach, by evaluating the programme and its role in promoting the benefits as a global policy initiative. Rather than reviewing and analysing the contents of NUPs, the insights and knowledge of practitioners and urban planners with experience of the programme have been used to provide insights into the effectiveness of the programme and its tools. This was supported by an evaluation of internet search results and access to documents on the NUPP website.

The review uses the theory of change approach to policy evaluation, which tests the connections between the elements of the programme and their efficacy in achieving its goals. This testing was undertaken through two data collection methods, a widely distributed survey and extended interviews.

3.3.1. Approach: Theory of Change

The evaluation of the NUP programme was undertaken by using a Theory of Change approach, which is "an articulation of how and why a given intervention will lead to specific change" (Stein & Valters, 2012; p.2). Evaluating the effectiveness of policy using the Theory of Change is framed by considering the impact of policy given the goals, inputs and actions related to its implementation (Rogers, Patricia, 2014). That is, the Theory of Change provides an explanation of a programme's impact from the chain of results of stages in the policy formulation and implementation phases.

The Theory of Change used to underpin this evaluation is depicted in Figure 6, drawing on the evaluation of the UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2014-2019 for the long-term goals and impact of the programme, the UN-Habitat Results-Based Management Handbook for expected accomplishments (EAs) and the

National Urban Policy Programme Overview for the Pillars or Objectives and Content (Lucks & Bwira 2020; UN-Habitat, 2017a; UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance, 2019). The assumptions, as indicated by the arrows in the figure, indicate how the specific actions, or content, that comprises the NUPP are related.

Just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and other human settlements with adequate infrastructure and universal access to employment, land and basic services, including housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport (Lucks & Bwira, 2020).

The survey and interview design applied this Theory of Change by asking respondents about the efficacy of the programme and its actions. The survey focused on the **content** aspects of the NUPP within the Theory of Change, to provide a foundation for the analysis

The diagram shows the purpose and objectives of this evaluation, particularly how the tools, resources and guidance provided through the NUPP have contributed to the overarching goals of the programme and UN-Habitat's remit of:

of the pillars and outcomes in the interviews. In this way, the approach enables the attribution of benefits as a result of the normative work undertaken by the NUPP (UNEG Impact Evaluation Task Force, 2013).

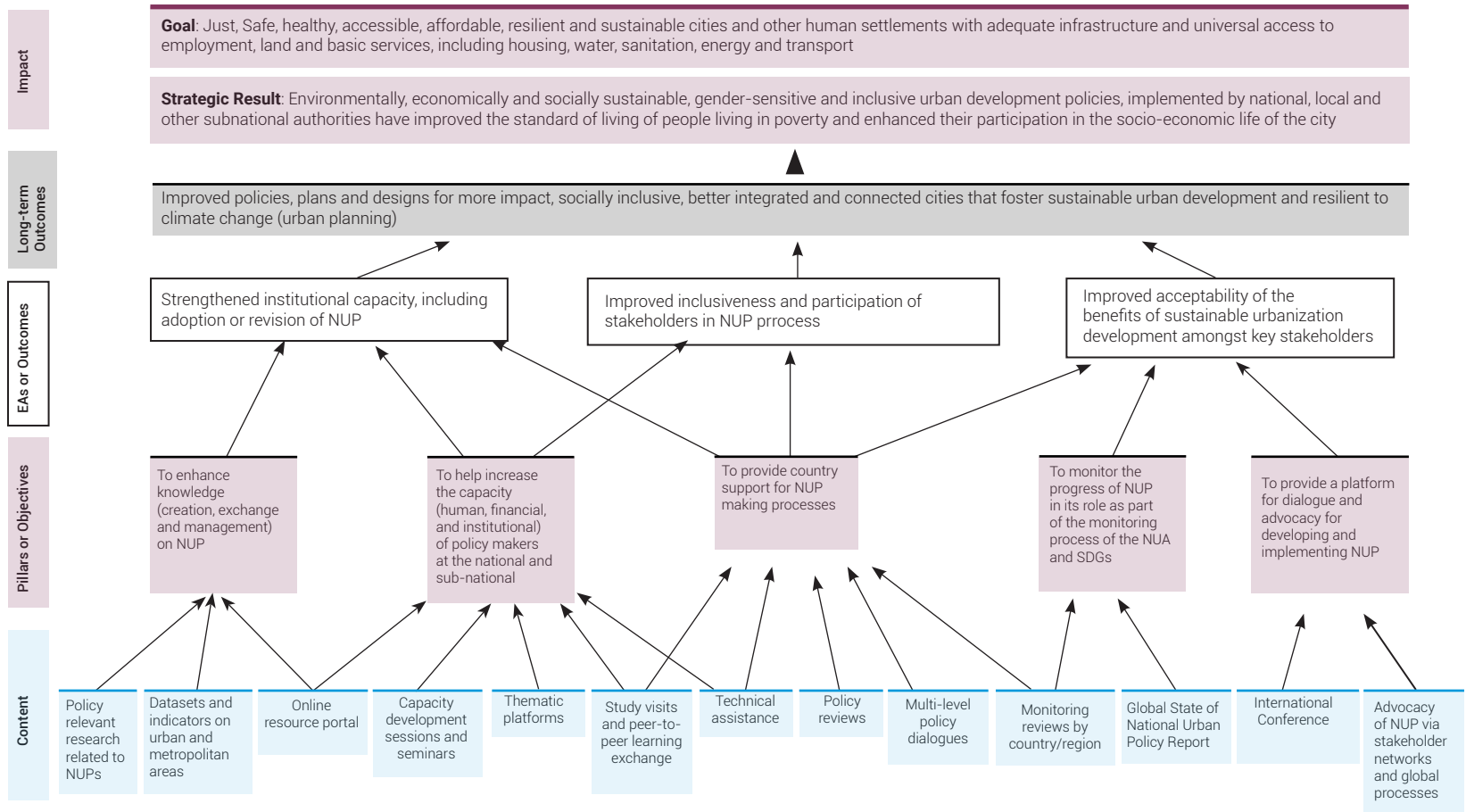


Figure 7. Theory of Change – NUPP

Sources: *Final Evaluation of the Implementation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme Strategic Plan 2014-2019* (Lucks & Bwira. 2020; p.6) - Impact, Long-term Outcomes; *UN-Habitat Results-Based Management Handbook* (UN-Habitat, 2017a; p.46)– Expected outcomes; *National Urban Policy Programme Overview 2019* (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019)– Pillars, Actions.

3.3.2. Data collection methods

Data for the NUP programme evaluation was collected through three methods: a survey distributed to NUP stakeholders; interviews drawn from the same group of stakeholders; and an evaluation of internet search results and document downloads related to the NUPP.

The combination of methods provides a broad overview of the effectiveness of the NUP programme through the survey and in-depth reflections on the programme and future developments through the interview process. Detail on the methods used for these processes is provided below. The survey and interview questionnaires are included in Section 8 of this report.

Survey

The survey was distributed to 929 potential respondents collated from contact lists supplied by UN-Habitat of participants at previous UN-Habitat events and seminars. The first email regarding the survey was sent from RMIT University with a follow-up email a week later from UN-Habitat. The emails included a link to the survey, which was administered through RMIT University's Qualtrics survey software license, which provides secure data storage. The survey was undertaken in accordance with RMIT University's guidelines and protocols for the conduct of ethical research, including review by an expert panel prior to deployment.

A total of 107 survey responses were received, with consent to participate provided as the first question of the survey. Basic demographic information was collected, including professional experience. The respondents indicated a spread of tenures of employment in urban policy as well as genders, as shown in Figure 7 below. In total, 40 per cent of respondents were female, comparable to the 44 per cent of female respondents from the distribution list.

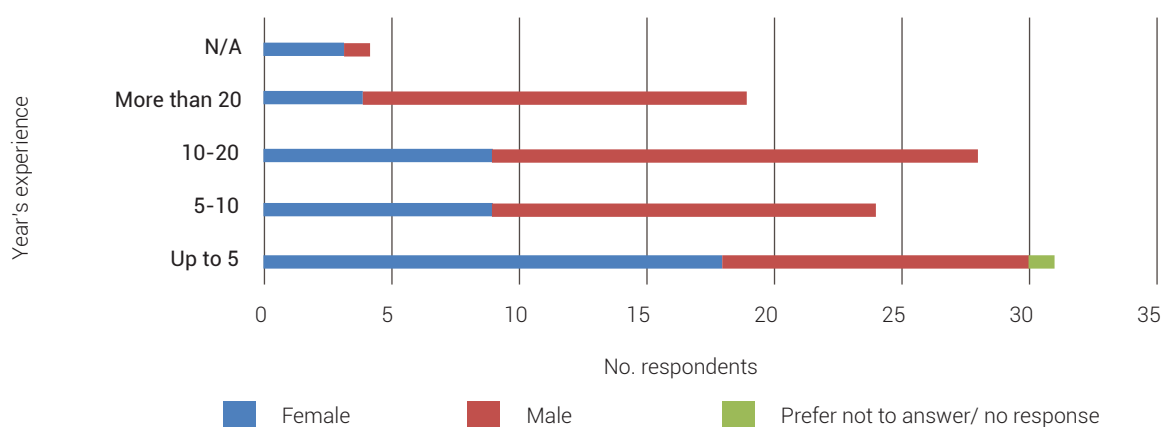


Figure 8. NUPP evaluation survey responses – gender and professional experience

There was a wide distribution of responses with regard to types of organizations and jurisdictions; there was a skew towards respondents from Africa, a result of the national government and

NGO responses from that region, but other regions were largely representative of the number of NUPs identified in them, as reported in the *Global State of National Urban Policy 2021* (UN-Habitat, 2021a).

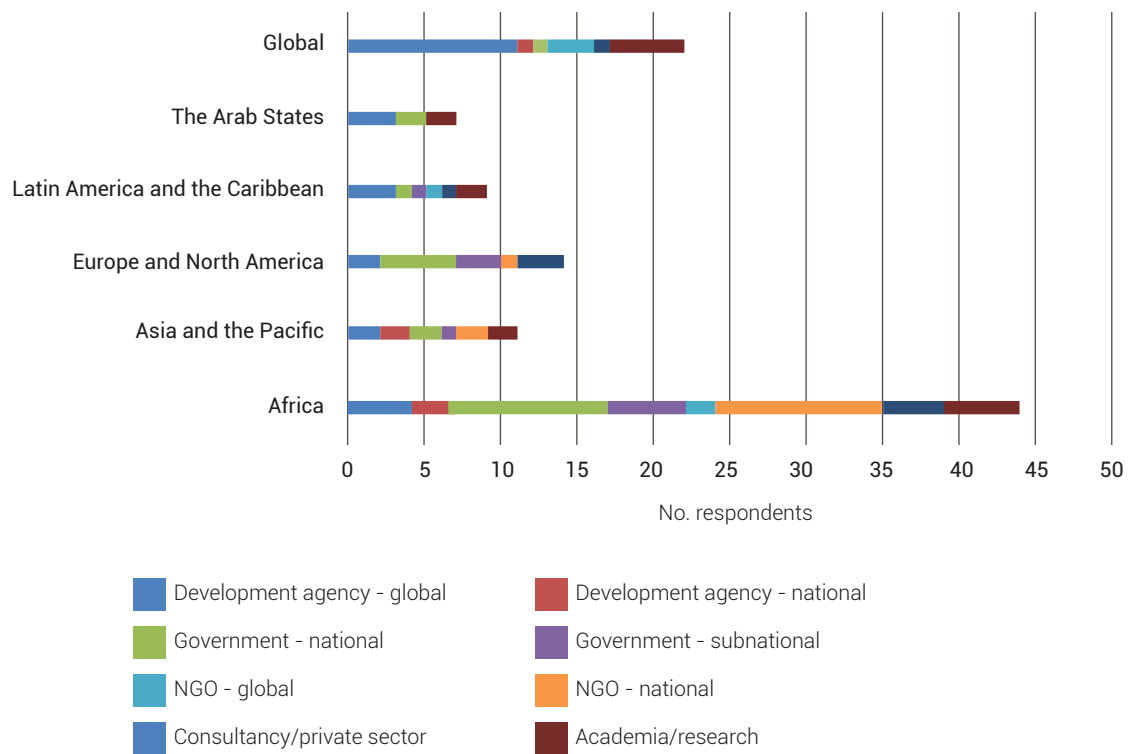


Figure 9. NUPP evaluation survey responses - region and organization category

As Figure 9 indicates, 44 per cent of the survey responses were from Africa. This is likely to skew the results of the survey towards the prevailing issues for NUPP in that region, as well as their experiences of the NUPP. The impact of this skew is taken into account in the analysis of survey results by disaggregating key results by region and by noting the impact where relevant.

The respondents also indicated a wide range of positions within their organizations, with a predominance of senior roles, inferred from titles. 'director' or 'head' was included in 28 responses, an additional seven included 'manager', and four listed themselves as 'secretary general'.

There was also strong participation by urban specialists, as 16 included 'urban' in their role description.

The survey sample and its composition provided confidence in the results: 107 responses from a population of 929 gives a confidence interval of +/- 8.29 per cent at 95 per cent confidence for a 50 per cent result. However, not all respondents answered every question; in a regional analysis, low numbers for the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean indicated less certainty about results from those regions.

Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to provide further elaboration of the evaluation Theory of Change, particularly regarding the assumptions connecting the pillars or objectives to the expected actions and long-term outcomes. The interview questions were based on the outline for Theory of Change based post-implementation reviews listed by Funnell & Rogers (2011, p.124):

- Can you give me an example of where this project, programme or policy is working really well? What does it look like when it works really well? What do you think makes it work well in this case?
- Can you give me an example of where this project, programme or policy is not working very well? Why is it not working well in this case? (Probe to see if the problem is that it is not being implemented well, or if the Theory of Change is not working as expected).
- What have been the impacts from this project, programme or policy?
- What is it about the project, programme or policy that you think makes a difference?

The schedule of questions is provided in Section 8.2 of this report.

Interview subjects were sourced from survey respondents who indicated a willingness to participate in an interview. Further interview subjects were also chosen as representative key informants from their organizations, based on their in-depth knowledge of and experience with the NUP programme. More potential participants were approached than accepted for interviews, due to a combination of availability, expertise and willingness constraints. Due to RMIT University's human research ethics requirements for this project, interview subjects cannot be identified or made identifiable through the information provided in this report, nor can their interview material be quoted directly.

The 15 interview subjects provide a range of perspectives on the programme:

- Six from national organizations, seven from global organizations and two with a background in both.
- Three were from academia, five were from development agencies, three were from government agencies and two had experience in both academia and government.
- Four had knowledge of the programme in the Asia Pacific, two in Latin America, two in Europe and North America and three in Africa. Four had a global perspective of the programme, and another three had a global aspect to their experience with NUPP as well as within their region. There were no interview respondents from the Arab States.

Interview subjects were also chosen as representative key informants from their organizations, based on their in-depth knowledge of and experience with the NUP programme.

The interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams teleconferencing software and in English. Notes on responses were taken during the interview and form the basis of this report on the interviews.

This evaluation was undertaken with consideration of human research ethics, as administered by RMIT University. Research ethics provides the rules for engaging with participants, including how they are recruited, what information they are provided with before commencing, how consent to participate will be communicated and obtained, the rights and responsibilities of participants and how the information will be used. The consent provided for this evaluation means that participants cannot be identified, either directly or indirectly, and without direct quotations.

Internet and Web Analysis

An internet search using the Google search engine for the exact phrase "national urban policy" was carried out, and results between 1 January, 2015 and 18 February, 2021 provided 110 results, with 78 distinct results once repeated links and non-relevant or out of scope links were removed. The search was also restricted to English language results, which can be expected to result in a skew towards anglophone countries.

The Urban Policy Platform website of the NUPP - urbanpolicyplatform.org - tracks data for the documents stored within it, including the likes, downloads and views from users accessing this information. This data provided insights into user demand for various materials and documents, allowing patterns over time to be observed.²

2 It is possible to 'like' a document on the Urban Policy Platform without downloading or viewing it, therefore it is possible that likes outnumber views or downloads, as is the case for the *NUP Feasibility Guide and Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policy*.

4. Main Findings

The Habitat NUPP supports sustainable urbanization at the national level in United Nations Member States, while also coordinating such efforts to achieve global social and environmental objectives as discussed in Chapter 2. This section reports the outcomes from the evaluation methods, including the viewpoints of participants in the NUPP programme of the past decade, via a survey and interviews.

The survey data provides wide coverage of people engaged with the NUPP, including respondents with experience in all five of the regions used in previous evaluations, and draws from a wide range of organizational types, as reported in Section 3.1.2.

The data provides an overview of the programme's performance in key themes and issues, as well as priorities for the future.

The second method used in this evaluation of the NUPP was interviews with experienced practitioners and programme partners. The extended responses from interviewees with a range of backgrounds and experiences provides insights into the assumptions outlined in the Theory of Change, particularly the connections between NUPP content and its three expected outcomes: building institutional capacity, inclusiveness and participation, and acceptability of the benefits of urban policy.

4. 1. PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Survey respondents were asked to provide a rating between 0 and 100 of the NUPP in five main measures: overall effectiveness, relevancy, impacts, efficiency and return on investment. The results, as shown in Figure 9 below, indicate that the programme

is considered to be more relevant than the other indicators of performance. For all performance measures, the NUPP scored on average at least at 50 per cent, with effectiveness and relevancy assessed at 62 per cent and 72 per cent respectively.

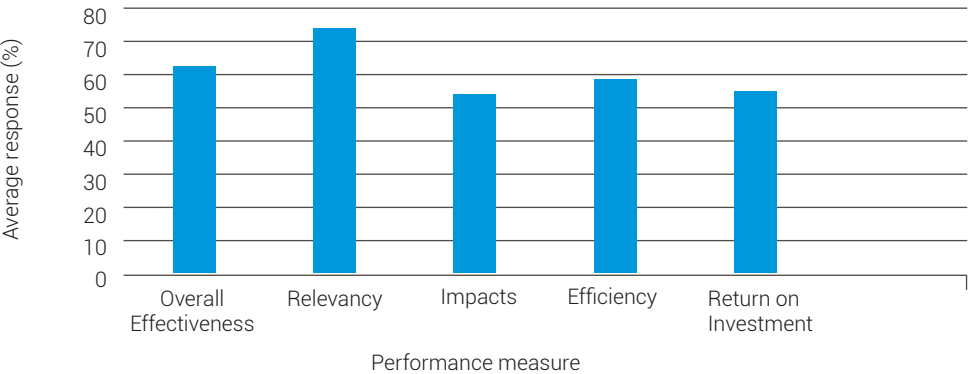


Figure 10. NUP overall performance

The respondents' view that **relevancy** is the most highly regarded aspect of NUPP performance is underscored by standardizing the responses to indicate the variations from each respondent's average across the five categories: the

standardization method is explained in Box 7 below. Figure 10 shows that respondents consider the programme more relevant and, to a lesser extent effective, than achieving impacts, efficiency or return on investment.

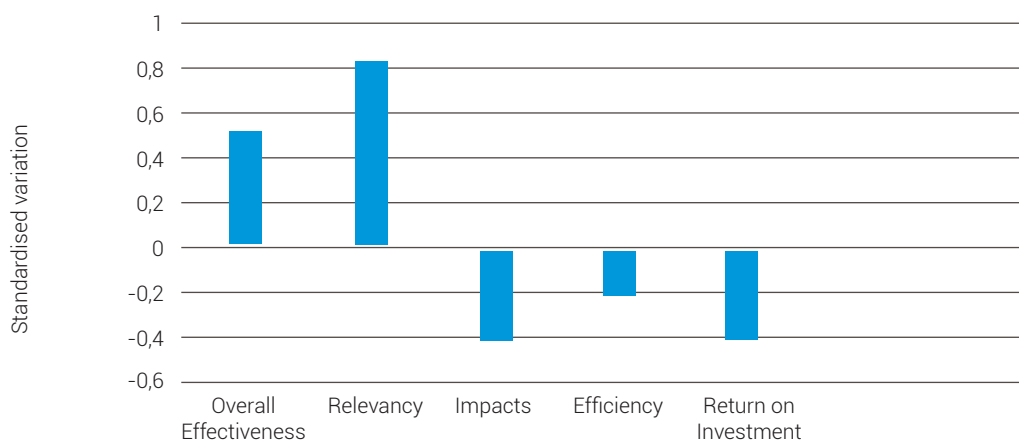


Figure 11. Overall NUPP performance – standardized

Box 7. Survey data standardisation

Standardization is used to enable comparison of different datasets; by fitting results into normal distribution patterns, it highlights variations from the average results. In the data analysis in this report, it is calculated by dividing the value of each result minus the average by the standard deviation.

For this report, each respondent's data is standardized, resulting in a measure of prioritization of the categories being assessed: overall effectiveness, relevancy, impacts, efficiency and return on investment, seen in Figure 10 above. The averages of the standardized data per region, or in some cases organization type, are then calculated to provide comparisons of the results by each subset of the sample. As standardization is a measure of variation around the average, it only provides relative importance within each group rather than an absolute measure to compare across groupings.

Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States' responses regarding the overall performance of the NUPP were higher than other regions: the Arab States by 9.5 per cent and Asia and the Pacific by 12.7 per cent. The only region with a notably lower perception of overall programme performance was Europe and North America, at 6.5 per cent lower than the overall average.

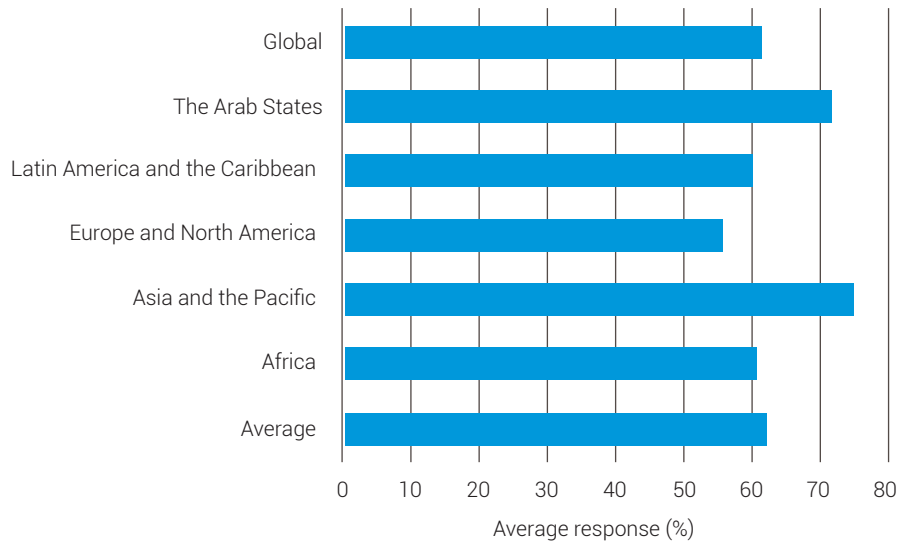


Figure 12. Overall performance by region

The standardization of the data included in Figure 12 provides insights into the programme’s performance across the regions. **Relevancy** was the highest of the five categories in each of the regions, but **impacts** received the lowest standardized rankings in three

regions – Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, and global respondents – and **return on investment** in the other three – Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and North America.

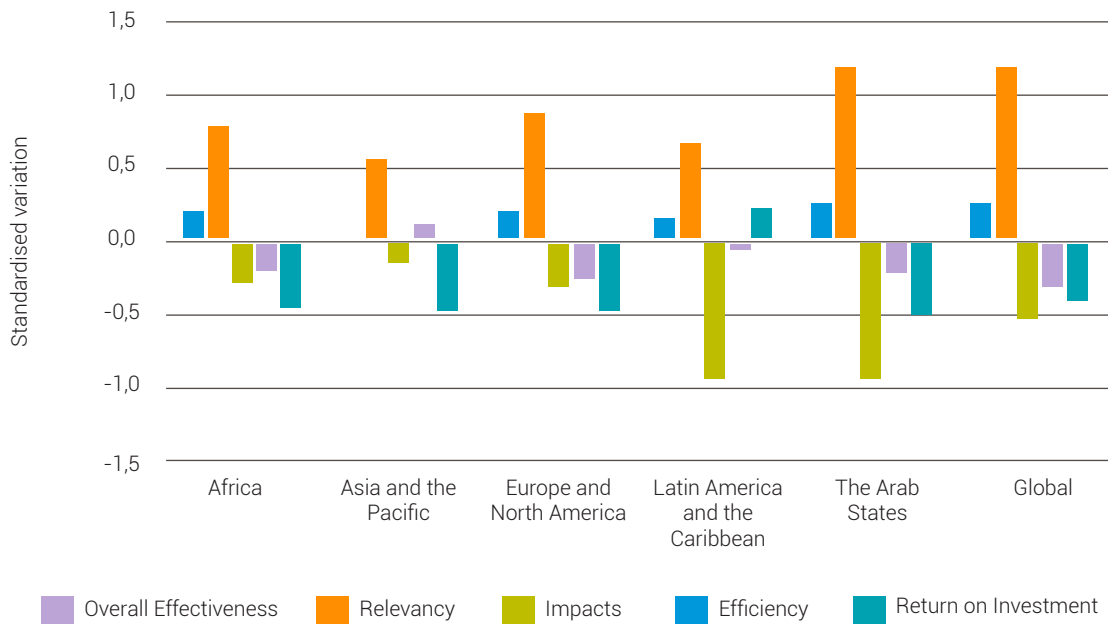


Figure 13. Performance by region – standardized

The results from this section of the survey indicate that the NUPP is well-regarded by its constituent community, with an **overall effectiveness** rating of 62 per cent. The high ranking of **relevancy** affirms that survey respondents recognized the importance of the NUPP in addressing urban challenges, but there is scope to improve implementation in order to meet these challenges. Survey respondents provided lower scores for **impacts, efficiency and return on investment**. It is possible to interpret this result such that survey respondents recognized the overall effectiveness and relevance of the NUPP given that much of the global activity was aimed at raising awareness of NUP and its importance to sustainable urbanization. However, the tangible outcomes of NUPP are likely to be less globally visible as they have to be applied at the individual national or sub-national scale, and involve the complex and sometimes laborious task of policy formulation and implementation. This means that while the salient aspects of the NUPP are apparent to respondents, the tangible impacts are less visible. This is not a criticism of the NUPP or UN-Habitat – implementation of NUP is the responsibility of national governments over which UN-Habitat

has only influence, not control. Nonetheless the weaker scores for impacts, efficiency and return on investment suggest these areas deserve additional attention in the future development of the NUPP, for example through greater post-hoc reviewing and dissemination of NUP efforts and achievements by nation states.

In addition to survey scores, additional comments provided by respondents also highlighted implementation and processes as issues to contend with. A development agency worker recommended that the time required to complete the five-stage process is too long, and a consulting planner suggested that the programme could benefit from being more process driven. Similarly, a director from a national government department stated that the NUPP is important, but implementation is difficult. Other respondents provided comments in support for the programme and its impacts, but also noted the complex and sometimes confounding range of local issues to be contended with, including political concerns, community buy-in and the need to promote the programme widely. These insights are developed further in the following discussion of challenges.

4. 2. CHALLENGES

The survey asked what the greatest challenges for implementing NUPs at the national level are, with 94 responses received. Almost 80 per cent of respondents indicated that **lack of political will/policy continuity** was a challenge for the implementation of NUPs, with **policy silos and institutional fragmentation** the second greatest challenge, with 66 per cent. It is important to note that these are challenges for proponents of NUPs within their jurisdictions, rather than challenges within the strict purview of the NUPP.

Insufficient financial resources was seen as an issue by 62 per cent of respondents, but only a third saw human resources and technical expertise as challenges for implementation.

These results suggest that problems of implementation of NUP do not lie with UN-Habitat or the NUPP. Rather they are a consequence of political attention to urban policy issues and the commission of resources to develop and implement policy.

Indeed, that respondents identified technical expertise as only a minor problem with application of NUP suggests that the support provided by the NUPP has had a positive effect on NUP formulation capacity.

It also suggests that implementation plans and the mapping and linking of financial stakeholders should be a priority in the NUPP process.

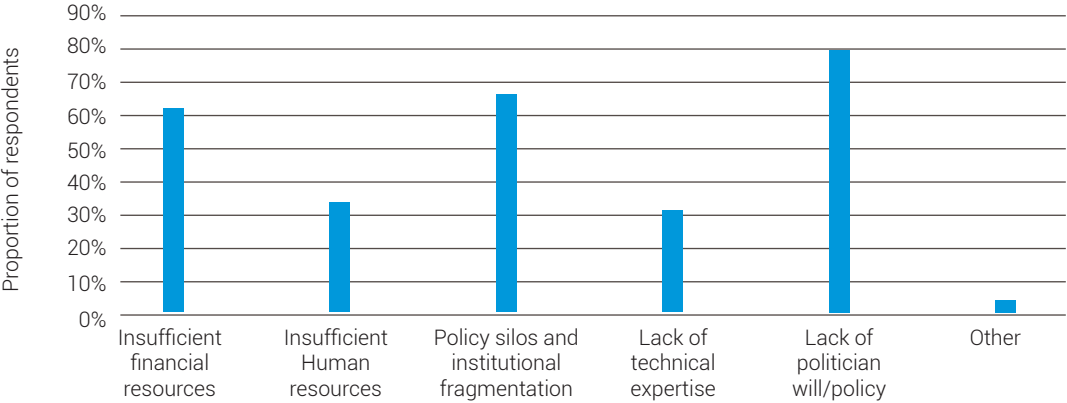


Figure 14. Challenges for implementation of NUPs

There was variation in the challenges identified by the regions that the respondents work in, as shown below in Figure 14. All respondents from the Arab States identified *lack of political will/policy continuity* as a challenge, as did 88 per cent of respondents from Africa. *Lack of technical expertise* was also seen as major challenge by respondents from the Arab States; at 83 per cent this score

was more than double other regions' responses, however the data indicates this is a minor challenge in Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean. *Policy silos and institutional fragmentation* was remarkably consistent across the regions, with response rates ranging from 62 per cent in Europe and North America to 68 per cent in Africa.

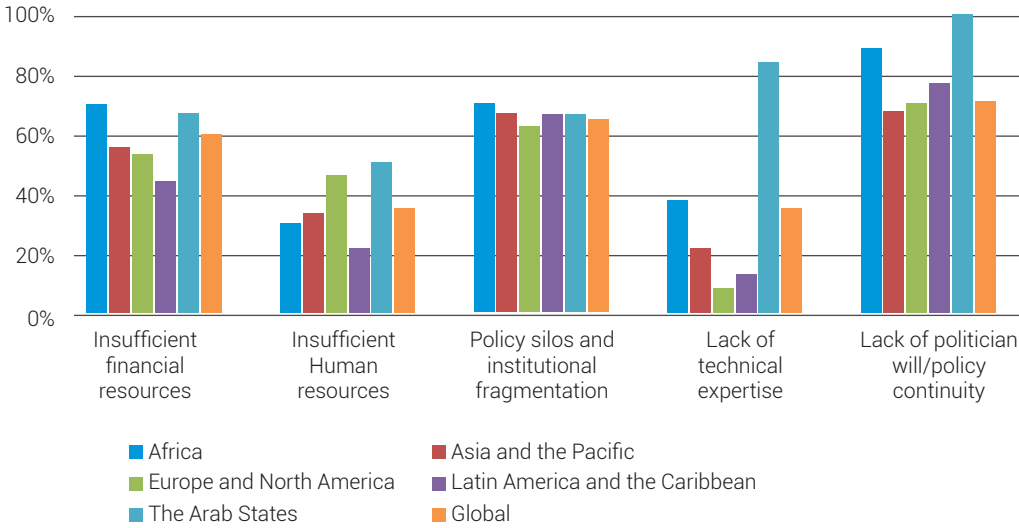


Figure 15. Challenges for implementation of NUPs by region

The Arab States and Africa were the two regions with higher reporting of challenges. The main challenges for Africa were identified as *lack of political will/policy continuity* and *insufficient financial resources*, and for the Arab States the key problems are *lack of political will/policy continuity* and *Lack of technical expertise*. Respondents with a mainly global scope to their NUP participation were broadly in line with the averages of other regions, suggesting the result of a wide view of the programme.

When considered by categorised type, the salient results are that respondents from Consultancy/private sector identified the two governance categories as the major challenges: *lack of political will/policy continuity* and *policy silos and institutional fragmentation* (Figure 15). Subnational government and global NGO respondents were more likely to indicate that *insufficient financial resources* were a challenge, no doubt reflecting the challenges these organizational types face in undertaking policy formulation and implementation. Development agencies of both national and global scope were the least likely to identify *insufficient human resources* as a challenge.

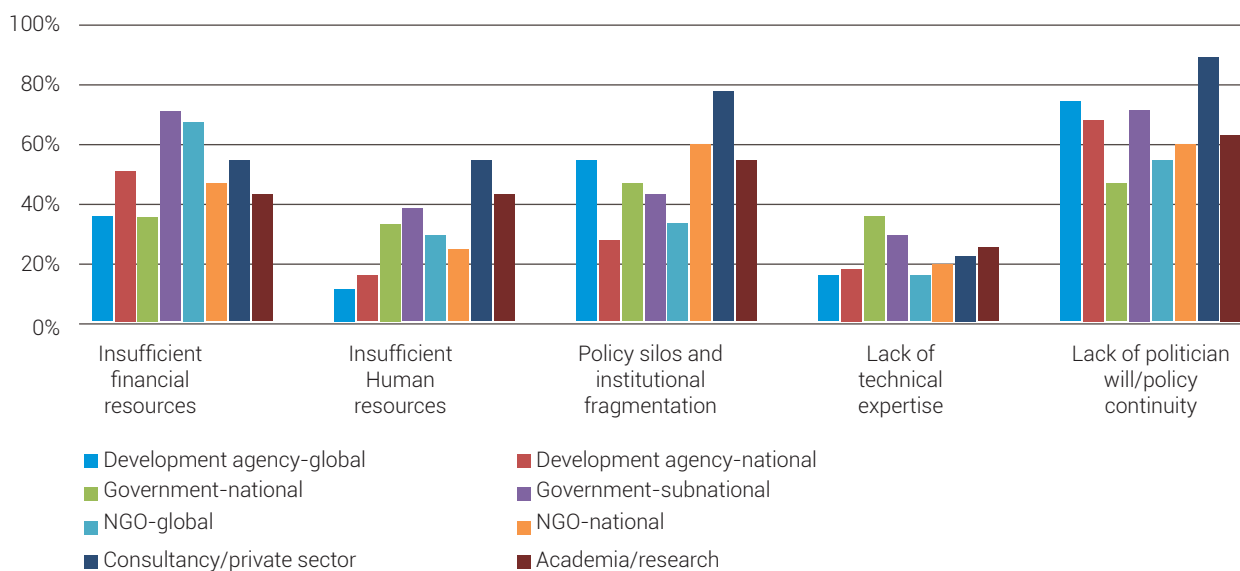


Figure 16. Challenges for implementation of NUPs by organisation category

It is problematic that the *lack of political will/policy continuity* is seen as the most pervasive challenge facing the NUPP, as political will is central to overcoming the other issues identified. If national governments recognize and respond to the need to develop urban policy, then it is more likely that financial and human resources will be allocated to the issues, as well as addressing policy silos and the need for technical expertise.

It is the observation of the evaluation team that while UN-Habitat can encourage national take-up of NUP and influence the trajectory that formulation takes, it cannot be held responsible for either of these factors in favour of national governments. Indeed, it is notable that UN-Habitat has taken efforts to include national representatives, both political and technical, in the many conferences, workshops and other NUPP activities it has operated since 2012.

Box 8. NUP Bottlenecks – 2019 ICNUP, Nairobi

Participants at the 2019 International Conference on National Urban Policy were asked for their top two bottlenecks affecting the implementation of NUPs in their country. The main responses were:

- Poor coordination national/ sub-national/ local governments (39 per cent)
- Lack of solid institutional framework (16 per cent)
- Weak institutional capacity (13 per cent).
- Insufficient financial resources (12 per cent)

Lower-ranked results related to civil society participation, legal and regulatory frameworks and insufficient human resources (UN-Habitat 2019c, p.11).

The different categorizations mean these results are not directly comparable to the survey outcomes, but overall, the indication is that it is issues relating to national governments that are a major challenge in NUP formulation.

4. 3. THEMES AND ISSUES

The five key themes promoted for NUPs are economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Evaluation survey respondents were asked how the NUP programme performed in addressing these themes, with the results shown in Figure 16. For all themes, the majority of responses were 'meets standard' or better, including notable proportions above and far above standard. In contrast, a minority of respondents considered the NUPP as below standard or far below standard.

The greatest percentage of 'far below standard' recorded was 6 per cent of respondents for **climate resilience**, however this should be contrasted with **environmental sustainability** which received the highest percentage of 'far above standard' responses, at 6 per cent. Overall, these scores can be interpreted as validating the NUPP in terms of thematic foci and performance, while signalling that some components, particularly climate resilience, deserve greater attention in future.

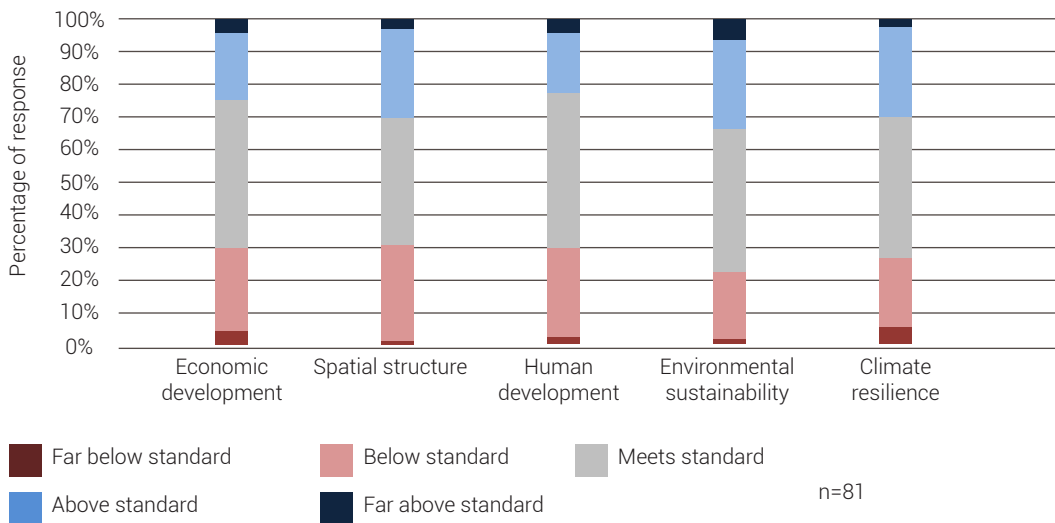


Figure 17. NUP theme performance

By allocating a score of 5 to a 'far above standard' response down to a score of 1 for a 'far below standard' response, averages can be compared and data summarized for comparison. There was variation between the regions in their responses: Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean were highest on average at 3.3, while Africa was the lowest at 2.8. The other three regions of operation averaged 3.0, equivalent to 'meets standard'. Standardization has been used again, as shown in Figure 17, to highlight the variations in perceptions of performance within each region's

context. Europe and North America reported lower standards for **economic development**, but higher for **environmental sustainability**. Asia and the Pacific respondents reported lower standards for **human development** than other themes, but somewhat higher for **spatial structure**. Respondents from the Arab States viewed **spatial structure** and to a lesser degree **economic development** as meeting higher standards than average, but much lower for **environmental sustainability**. African respondents saw **environmental sustainability** as the main area of achievement.

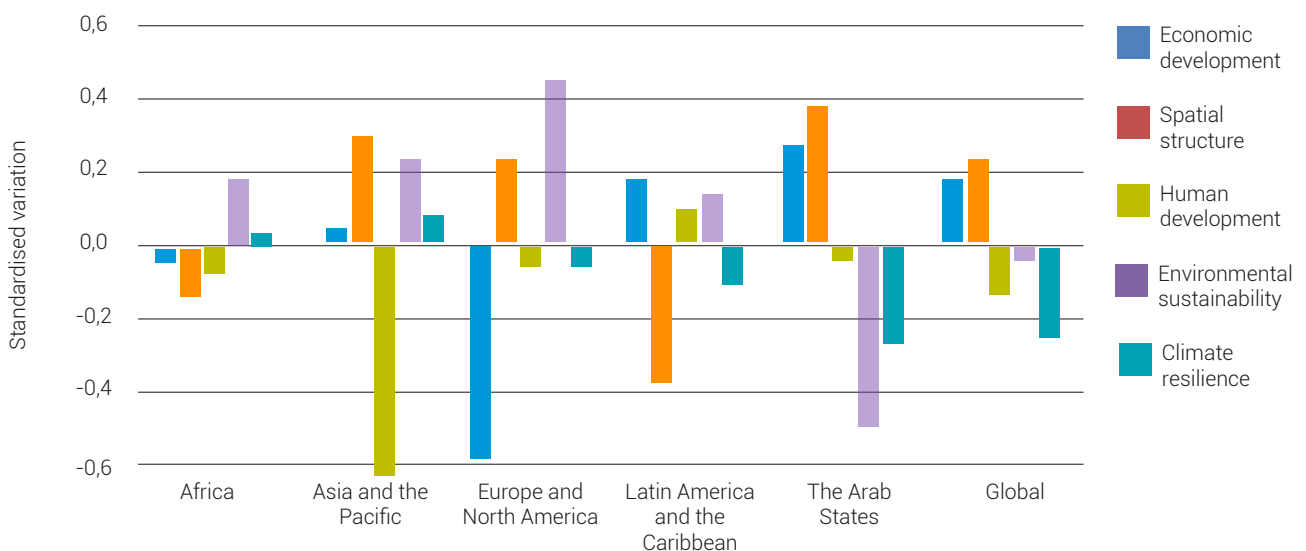


Figure 18. NUP theme performance by region – standardized

Cross-cutting issues are pervasive challenges that need to be addressed across policies for different sectors: examples include gender equality and environmental sustainability (OECD, 2014b).

The responses were predominantly 'meets standard' across the eight main cross-cutting issues addressed within NUPs, and for all issues more than 50 per cent of responses were 'meets standard' or better (Figure 18).

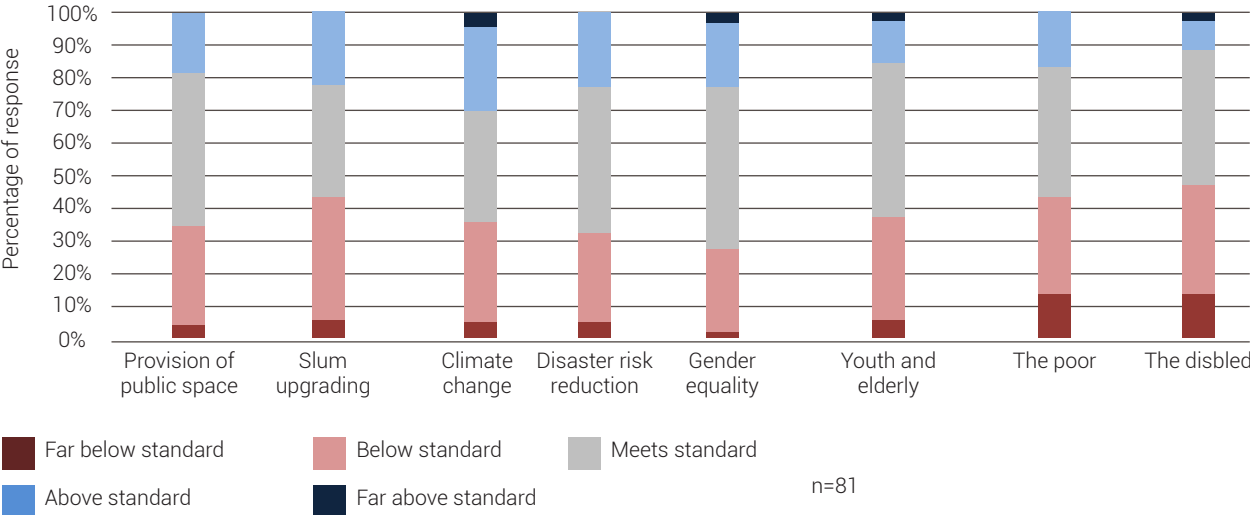


Figure 19. Addressing cross-cutting issues

The responses regarding *climate change* were the most evenly balanced, with approximately a 30 per cent in 'below', 'meets' and 'above' standard and the remainder split between the extremes of the scale. The two cross-cutting issues that were most frequently considered to 'far below standard' were *the poor* and *the disabled*, while *slum upgrading* also received more 'below standard' than 'meets standard' responses. Together, these results indicate a need for a greater emphasis on socio-economic disadvantage within future urban policies and the

activities of the NUPP, in order to more decisively address SDG Target 11.1: "By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

Further analysis by region indicates few variances in the responses regarding the cross-cutting issues, although respondents from Africa generally reported lower standards than other regions, while Asia and the Pacific reported higher responses.

4. 4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Respondents were asked for their views on the importance of future development for the five key themes introduced in Section 2.2.2. As shown in Figure 19, further development of each of the five themes was seen as at least 'very important', with at least 70 per cent of responses at this level or higher. There were no responses of 'not at all important', and *spatial structure* received the most 'slightly

important' responses, which may reflect that it is already well-developed within the NUPP, as indicated by the Global State of National Urban Policy, 2020. Economic development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience received the highest total of very important and extremely important scores, suggesting potential for the NUPP to develop these themes further.

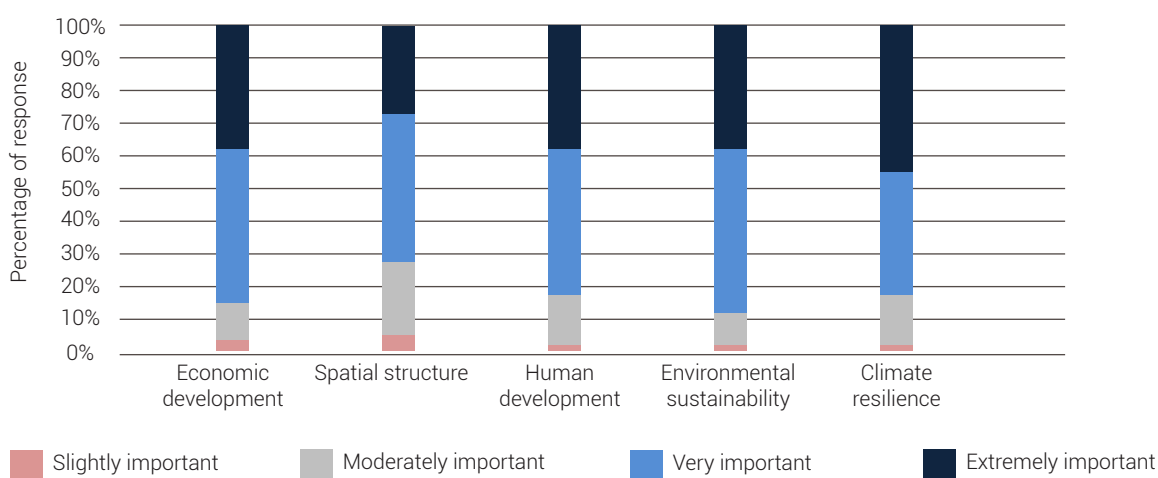


Figure 20. Development priorities for NUPP

In order to identify which of the five themes are viewed as the most important, standardization has been applied to the results, again using the 5 to 1 scale for 'extremely important' to 'not at all important' to collate the results. As shown in Figure 20, the overall priorities for development in the NUPP are *environmental sustainability* and *economic development*, with less focus recommended on *spatial structure* in particular.

Within the separate regions, there was a strong recommendation for *climate resilience* and *environmental sustainability* in Latin America and the Caribbean, with support to a lesser degree in these categories from Asia and the Pacific and Europe and North America. *Human development* is a priority within the Arab States and *economic development* in Africa. Those with a global focus to their experience with NUPP indicated that *environmental sustainability* should be a priority for future development.

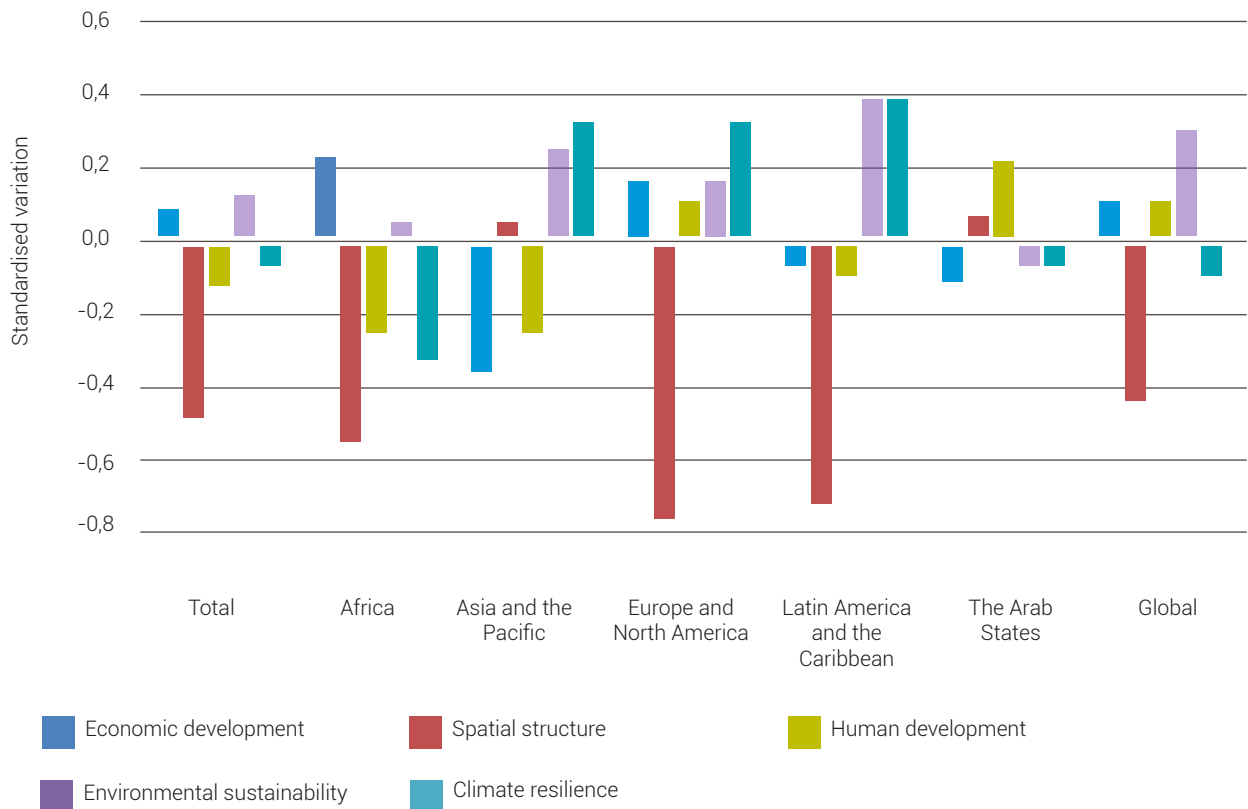


Figure 21. Development priorities for NUPP – region, standardized

The responses from Africa, which were the most numerous, have impacted on the prioritizations, lifting **economic development** and reducing the overall recommendation for **climate resilience**. In addition to the need to address climate change due to the global threats it poses, the strong preference for **climate resilience** in three of the regions indicates that it should be seen as a priority for development, along with **environmental sustainability** and **economic development**.

There was broad agreement that further development of **spatial structure** was the lowest priority when data was standardised by organization type, as indicated in Figure 20.

There was also less agreement on the need to develop **environmental sustainability**. However, no consensus was evident across the other categories. Consultancy/private sector and national government respondents were proponents of **climate resilience**, while national and global NGOs nominated **human development** as their priority, as indicated below. The sample does not allow for cross-referencing between regions and organization type; for example Figure 20 indicates the Arab States' concern for **spatial structure**, yet it is not an evident concern for any of the organizational types. The implication is that NUP priorities need to be understood in both regional and organizational contexts.

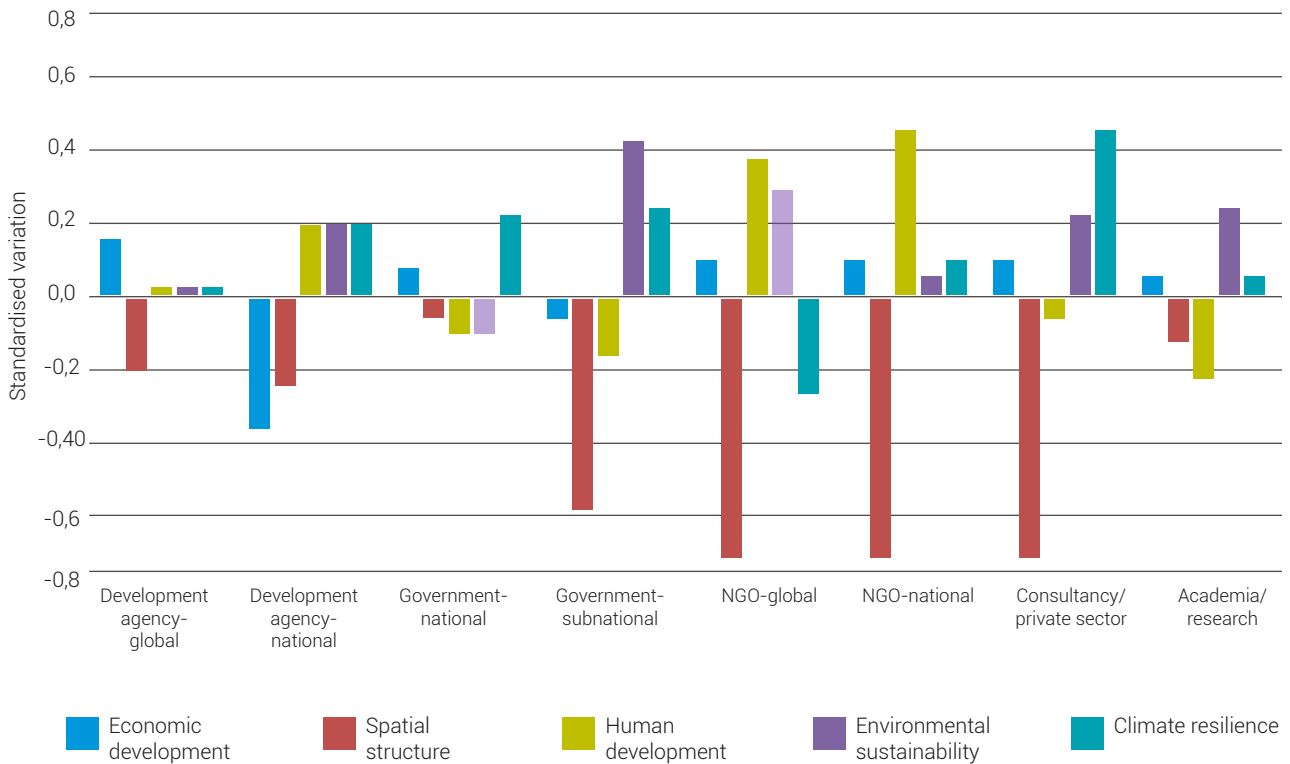


Figure 22. Development priorities for NUPP – organization type, standardized

Additional recommendations

In addition to the five thematic areas for development, respondents were asked for suggestions on NUPP focus in forthcoming years. The responses covered a range of themes associated with urban issues, policy and governance. Several respondents also recommended revisiting the programme and its priorities and challenges in light of the impact of COVID-19 on cities, a process that has already started in the OECD (2020). This also accords with the NUP formulation process being structured in a way to capture local circumstances and varies from country to country (UN-Habitat 2019b).

Although national governments are the lead agency for the development of NUPs, a greater focus on bottom-up policy processes was also evident in the recommendations, including a greater engagement with local and sub-national governments as well as communities in creating responses to urban issues. This indicates that part of UN-Habitat's role in offering technical expertise is to promote the development of policies that include the views and needs of countries' full range of urban areas, as seen by the examples of Zanzibar and Niger State in Section 2.1.

Associated with recommendations for wider engagement were suggestions that there needed to be more education for people to understand urban issues, both as part of general education and information distributions, as well as the technical, university-level training and research programmes. Technical training requirements were seen as important by respondents who undertake NUPP work in Africa. UN-Habitat (2018b) has established a three-hour e-learning course to provide an introduction to NUP, the five phases of development and its thematic application. Given the complex array of issues and themes presented by urban policy and urbanization, the potential to extend this education and training offer, including formal qualifications, should be investigated further.

Other respondents provided thematic expansions, such as the need to include the informal economy with NUP processes and the need to reaffirm the importance of existing themes such as slum upgrading, the impact of violence on cities and their residents, intermediate cities and the connection to rural areas, migration patterns, climate change and environmental issues. One respondent recommended digital transformation as a policy area for development within the NUPP. The survey did not indicate whether respondents had taken into account existing thematic guides published by UN-Habitat, or other materials.

What can be broadly referred to as in-country issues were prominent in respondent considerations, perhaps reflecting that many of the respondents participated in the NUPP on the basis of domestic concerns. In addition to the bottom-up processes discussed above, the need for a greater focus on implementation, and the human and financial resources required to develop and implement NUPs were referred to by respondents. There is a relevant question as to where the boundaries of NUPP fall in relation to general urban policy and planning activities below the national level. The NUPP has a focus on national level policy, supported by coordinated sub-national policy, while the comments from survey respondents do not make such a delineation between national and city-level policy. The tension between the specific priorities in individual countries and the global programme for urban policy is also evident. Most in-country respondents are likely to be motivated by their interest in resolving urban problems in their own country. By contrast, many of the consultants and officials involved in international organizations who participated in the NUPP are less likely to be focused on specific in-country problems. A benefit of a global approach is the sharing of experiences, and one recommendation was for greater emphasis on this aspect of the programme. This would most efficiently be done via online resources, given the costs of accessing NUPP events under contemporary COVID restrictions.

4. 5. TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Survey respondents were presented with a list of tools used in the NUPP programme and asked to identify which they were experienced with and their usefulness. The list included:

- Normative guides (National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework, How to Formulate National Urban Policy: A Practical Guide, Monitoring National Urban Policy: A Guide, etc.)
- Regional reports (Asia & Pacific, Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa etc.)
- Thematic guides (urban rural linkages, climate change, public space, slum upgrading, etc.)
- International conferences on NUP (Incheon, 2015; Paris, 2017; and Nairobi, 2019)
- Urban policy platform NUP website with NUP database
- NUP e-learning course and learning materials
- Other

Respondents provided feedback on one of the tools, with 82 responses received in total. **International conferences** and **normative guides** were the most frequently chosen, with 24 responses for each. **International conferences** received the most 'extremely useful' responses, with six, as well as a further 13 'very useful' responses. **Normative guides** received 13 'very useful' responses, but also nine 'moderately useful'. Fourteen respondents indicated that **thematic guides** are either 'extremely useful' or 'very useful', from a total of 16 responses.

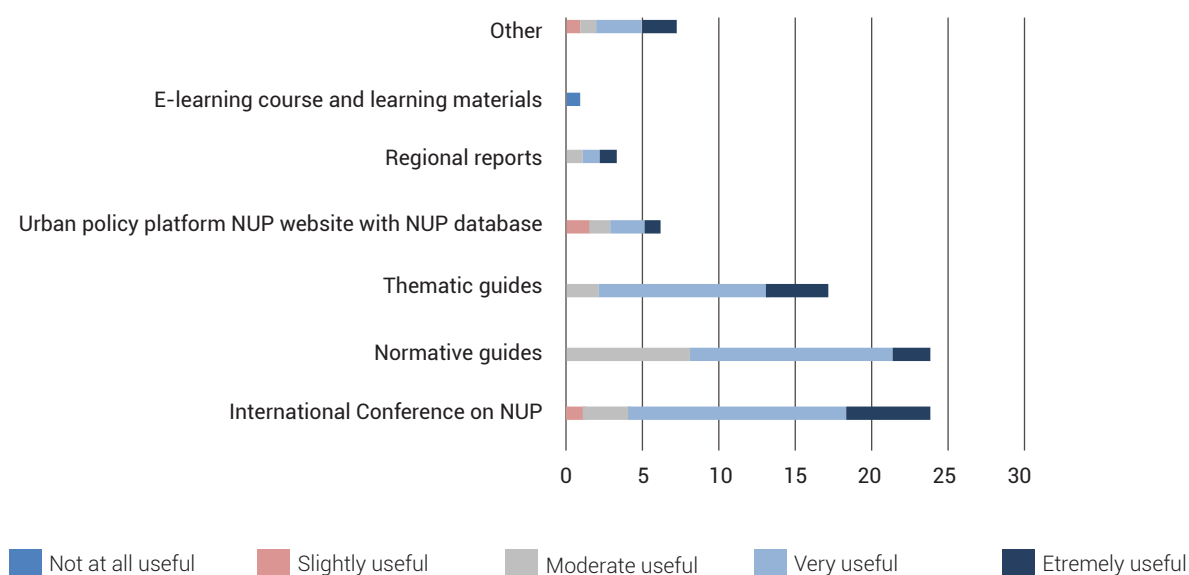


Figure 23. NUP tools and resources

Of the *other* responses, five indicated all or several of the tools, with three indicating that they were 'very useful', and one each for 'extremely useful' and 'moderately useful'. The other two indicated guidance from other multilateral institutions was 'slightly useful', and UN-Habitat previous works in my country were 'extremely useful'.

The results indicate both the usefulness of and preference for *international conferences* to foster the development of NUPs and the overarching programme. *Normative guides*, such as National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework, How to Formulate National Urban Policy: A Practical Guide, Monitoring National Urban Policy: A Guide, were also prominent in the respondents' selection, with 24 respondents indicating they were at least 'moderately useful'. A further 16 responses indicated that the *thematic guides* were useful, with 14 respondents indicating that they were 'very useful' or 'extremely useful'. There was also variation in the selections by organization type, between *international conferences* and *normative guides*.

Global development agencies found *international conferences* particularly useful, with seven 'very useful' and one 'extremely useful' response, while six national government respondents indicated that *normative guides* were 'very useful' and one other 'extremely useful'. An interpretation of these results is that elements of the NUPP community find different tools useful: it is to be expected that national governments indicate that guides to developing urban policy are the most useful. Similarly, the opportunity to exchange information at *international conferences* can be expected to be more important to globally orientated development agencies. One respondent did comment that the guides are "too textual and theoretical".

Additional comments from respondents on the tools and resources included that they were both "quite sufficient" and "very insufficient" in their support of the NUPP. Specific tools recommended to be developed included responses to pandemics and resilience, and indicators to track the progress of NUPs. One respondent suggested that materials needed to be made available in more languages, to support the dissemination of the programme.

Increasing the exchange of information was also recommended, including connection between experts, networks and others engaged in urban policy making and global initiatives such as the New Urban Agenda. Respondents from an academic background also noted that the wide range of urban systems and characteristics amongst countries means that countries could benefit from exchanges between countries of similar circumstances. This would enable countries to place their NUPs in wider contexts and draw from others' experience in policy and capacity development. The South Korea exchange visits, discussed in Box 1 of this report, provide an example of the benefits of exchanges for the NUPP and its participants.

While conferences may not be possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, at least in the short term, the indication is that they are a valued and useful tool used by NUP practitioners and policymakers. NUP conferences were seen as a forum for engaging with urban policy makers and a source of information about the process. In particular, one planner from a national government noted that the quality of materials provided at these conferences provided a rich resource. Second to the human interaction and opportunities to develop networks and share knowledge afforded by conferences are the normative guides.

The normative guides are instructional, in-depth and practical, and include *National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework, How to Formulate National Urban Policy: A Practical Guide, Monitoring National Urban Policy: A Guide*. This does not mean the other resources are not useful but reflects the focus in this evaluation on the programme and its effects, rather than the contents of urban policies.

It is notable among the participants that *e-learning course and learning materials* did not receive many responses, even though education and training was recommended as a priority by survey respondents. The survey design did not allow for iterative querying of responses, so it is not clear whether this low engagement with the e-learning course and learning materials was due to the mode of delivery or whether the subject matter reflected the concerns of respondents.

This is a question that deserves further investigation, given the increased experience of online seminars and workshops during the pandemic and the prospect of higher costs and reduced willingness to travel post-pandemic (e.g. Pearson et al., 2021). The limitations on global conference or workshops include travel restrictions due to COVID and the costs of hosting such events, which need to be assessed against the potential for guided, sequenced training that e-learning courses may offer, including peer-learning among course participants. An e-learning programme could be designed, for example, to assist a cohort of NUP policy officials to undertake joint online learning across the globe in conjunction with their in-country NUP policy development work.

4. 6. WIDER LESSONS AND EXAMPLES

Respondents were given an open-ended opportunity to provide insights into their lessons and examples from and for the NUPP. In general, the responses affirmed the key outcomes from the analysis in the preceding sections of this report, including the programme's relevancy, the challenges presented by political will, multiple forms of stakeholder engagement and the benefits of exchange between practitioners and those working within the programme and on the development of NUPs. Due to the restrictions in direct quotes from the survey discussed in Section 3.1.3, this section provides an overview of the responses.

One respondent from a development agency provided a concise and pertinent summation of the purpose and benefits of the NUPP and urban policies, outlining both the need for planned urbanization to

realize the benefits of agglomeration and the positive role of urbanization in national socioeconomic development. One consulting planner noted the effectiveness of the NUPP in fostering socioeconomic development within countries, but that more work is required to ensure that the benefits of the NUP are distributed throughout the population.

A range of examples showed how the NUPP had influenced urban policy processes and outcomes. Several respondents noted that their country had started or completed NUPs and others indicated that their urban policies had been developed with reference to NUPP tools and resources. The NUP themes of urban-rural linkages, climate resilience, public open space, disability and welfare, and slum upgrading were also provided as examples of successes attributable to the programme.

These examples indicate the distinction between the aggregated view of NUPP impacts in Section 4.1 and the positive view of the programme's impacts in specific cases.

A respondent from academia also referred to the relevance of the programme as the basis for extending the reach of the programme. This formed the basis for their arguing that the NUP formulation process needs to include all levels of government, as they can all benefit from the resulting policy. The respondent also noted that NUP development is a long-term process, particularly if the result is to be meaningful, and that persistence is required. In addition to recommendations for engaging with government at a 'high level' and 'above ministerial level', others referred to local government being involved in the NUP process. More than just engaging with governments, political will is the greatest challenge facing the NUPP and achieving the benefits attributed to urban policy. A consultant responded that commitment from government is crucial to successful NUPs; without such commitments, the process may be useful, but is unlikely to be implemented and is thus an 'academic exercise'.

Similar sentiments regarding engagement were provided by using the broader term of 'stakeholder'. A respondent from a national government stated that stakeholder engagement is critical in both formulating and implementing NUPs (as advised by much of the NUPP guidance). Another respondent, from a global development agency, noted that it was also important to prepare for NUP processes by undertaking a wide public awareness campaign to inform different stakeholders on the importance of urban policy and the process. This need to widely communicate the purpose and benefits of NUPs was noted by two government representatives from planning departments, referring to the importance of "sharing knowledge" in their responses. One example provided indicated the programme had the positive effect of increasing the awareness of urban issues in national stakeholders, and there were two examples of the overarching principles of the NUP and the New Urban Agenda in developing planning policy for their sub-national region. Together, these examples show that the impact of the programme is wider than the direct outcome of NUP formulation following the guidelines established by UN-Habitat.

4. 7. THE WORLD WIDE WEB PRESENCE OF THE NUPP

The objectives or pillars of the NUPP include knowledge creation and transfer, increasing human capacity and to provide a platform for dialogue. Therefore, the programme's presence on the world-wide web provides some indication of the reach of the programme with reference to these objectives.

The presence of materials on the internet over a five-year period is not a particularly robust form of assessing information transfer, access and impact, but it does support the evaluation of these objectives. The information presented here supports the outcomes of the survey by providing supporting supplementary data and insights.

4.7.1. Search results

The results for the Google engine search for the exact phrase “national urban policy”, as described in Section 3.3.2, provided 110 results in English, with 78 distinct results once repeated links and non-relevant or out of scope links were removed. The results, categorized by the national or other focus of the link and the broad type of publication are provided in Table 2.

As would be expected, the combined UN-Habitat, Cities Alliance and OECD were responsible for the greatest number of search query links, with 14 of these; they included a range of reports and guides

related to the programme as well as other stories. The results indicate interest in the programme in countries that were progressing towards an NUP during the period between 2015 and 2020, such as India, Ghana and Liberia, although other countries undertaking NUPs may be communicating in languages other than English or through social media platforms that are not included in Google searches. There has also been interest from a range of sectors in Australia, where there has been debate about the impacts of urbanization and NUP following implementation in 2011 and subsequent abandoning of a policy in 2013.

Table 1 Search results, National Urban Policy from 2015 on

	Government	Development Agency	Academic	Consult./ Industry Assoc.	Total
UN-Habitat/ Cities Alliance/ OECD		12	2		14
Global		2	2	4	8
Australia	3		4	5	12
Bangladesh		1			1
Canada			3		3
Egypt		1	1		2
Germany		1			1
Ghana	1	1		3	5
India	2		1	4	7
Ireland				1	1
Italy				1	1
Japan			1		1
Jordan		1			1
Liberia	1	1		1	3
Mexico			1		1
Myanmar		2			2
Pakistan			1		1
Palestine		1			1

Philippines			1		1
Poland	1	1			2
Rwanda			1		1
South Africa	1				1
Spain				1	1
Uganda		1	1		2
United States			3	1	4
Vietnam		1			1
Total	9	26	22	21	
		Total			78
		Repeats			16
		Out of Scope			16
		Search Results			110

4.7.2. Document access

The Urban Policy Platform website of the NUPP - urbanpolicyplatform.org - tracks data for the documents stored within it, including the likes, downloads and views from users accessing this information. This data provides insights into user demand for various materials and documents, allowing patterns over time to be observed (Figure 23).³ The most viewed and downloaded of the documents on the NUPP site were normative guides: *Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide* and *National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework*.

The third most viewed document is the 2014 report *The Evolution of National Urban Policies – A Global Overview*, with 301 views since its publication in 2014. These documents are also available for download on partner websites, which were excluded from this analysis.

The data suggests there was an initial surge in use of the NUP documents between 2014 and 2016 as the NUPP generated awareness among NUP stakeholders. The next surge in use was with the release of the report on monitoring and evaluation in 2020, suggesting this was a timely publication in relation to the cycle of NUP development initiated in 2014-2016.

³ It is possible to 'like' a document on the Urban Policy Platform without downloading or viewing it, therefore it is possible that likes outnumber views or downloads, as is the case for the *NUP Feasibility Guide and Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policy*.

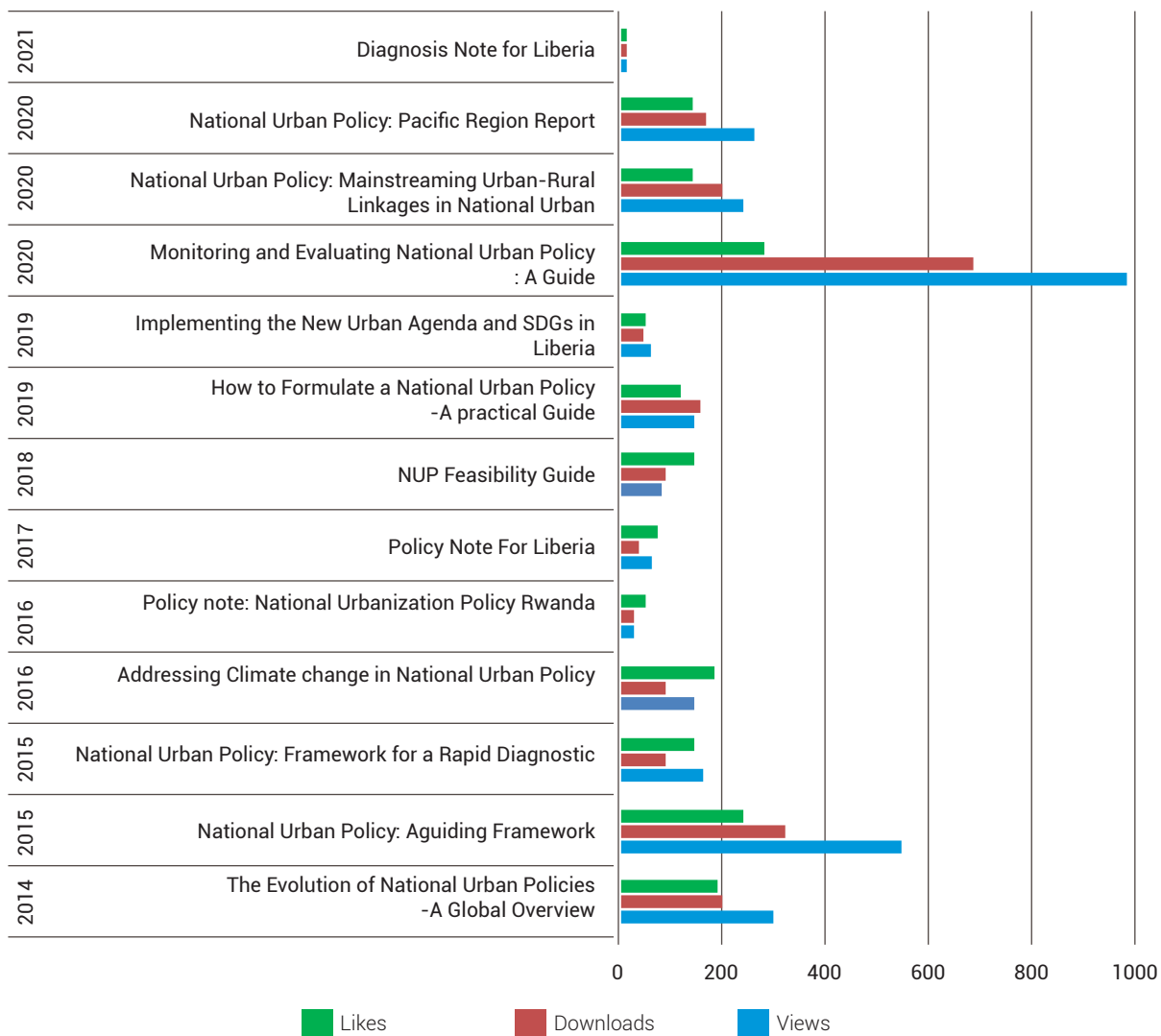


Figure 24. Urban Policy Platform document access data.

The high number of views, downloads and likes for reports released in 2020 in comparison to similar documents released in previous years does suggest that some traffic to these documents may have resulted from the pandemic and people working from home.

While the support for the normative guides amongst survey respondents is evident in this access data, there has been limited access and engagement with the examples of NUP provided on the Urban Policy Platform for Rwanda and Liberia.

The interviews for this evaluation provided support for more examples of the programme and NUP to be provided on the Urban Policy Platform website, as discussed further in Section 4.9. The comparatively low access data for these documents should not be seen as a deterrent to the publication of more examples, as it is likely that programme participants will look to specific examples related to their situations.

4. 8. INTERVIEWS

This section provides insights from the interviews conducted for this evaluation. It sets out how perspectives were dependent on whether the interviewees had national or multi-national experience of the NUPP, followed by examples of where the programme had been seen as effective.

4.8.1. National and multi-national respondents

There was a notable difference in the views on the programme from respondents from within countries to those with a wider or global connection to the NUPP. Those participating from within country systems of urban policy and government were more likely to have a positive view of the programme and its impacts than respondents with a global perspective on the programme. The contrast between the two sets of respondents indicates that where the NUPP has been implemented, it is viewed positively, albeit with concerns regarding political will and implementation (which are not directly UN-Habitat's responsibility). The positive view from within countries could be a result of the method for recruiting respondents, as those who have engaged with the programme and have had a positive experience may be more likely to complete the survey and indicate willingness to be interviewed.

Respondents with global perspectives, such as international development organizations and academics, were more critical of the programme's impact, drawing on experience and understanding of urban issues and policy responses in different contexts. Such people may be more likely to adopt critical rather than pragmatic views, in contrast to country respondents who see the NUPP as helping to solve pressing policy problems. Rather than an assessment of the impact of the NUPP from within a country formulating urban policy, this cohort of respondents provided an assessment of the wider efficacy of the programme and its approach to urban issues and policymaking.

The critiques from global or multi-country perspectives were predominantly that the impact was minimal outside countries where UN-Habitat had direct involvement, and that greater contextualization of the programme and its materials was required, to suit different development, capacity and political situations within countries. While the promotion of urban policy, knowledge transfer and technical and thematic guides were seen as positive contributions from the NUPP, there were recommendations for fundamental changes to the programme and its operation. One respondent suggested the programme should concentrate on pilot projects that provide a strong evidence base for NUP, another suggested that rather than being a programme dependent on funding to continue operating, the NUPP should become a core component of UN-Habitat standard operations. This would remove the funding uncertainties associated with being a programme of work and embed support for urban policy within UN-Habitat's main activities.

4.8.2. Examples and references

The interview participants with direct experience in NUP formulation referred to drawing on examples from other countries to inform their own processes. In addition, they considered that creating a greater resource or library of policy and successful intervention examples would help to inform countries undertaking an NUP.

Many interviewees specifically mentioned drawing on the examples of a wide range of NUPs and urban policies in operation: Malaysia, Germany, South Africa, Serbia, Malaysia, China, Ghana and Columbia. Others highlighted good or interesting examples of urban policy and legislation, such as Brazil's urban policy, the extensive legislation in Mexico, and recently formed urban policies in Kenya and South Africa. One interviewee pointed to the example of the urban-rural linkages in China presented at a conference as a valuable insight for their own country's NUP development. For some of these examples, the respondents were not sure that the outcomes were a direct result of the NUPP, but in these circumstances there was support for the wider importance of urban policy and its promotion, whether via the United Nations system, UN-Habitat specifically, or other individual or networks of global advocacy and advisory organizations.

4.8.3. Expected accomplishments

The main purpose of the interviews undertaken for this NUPP evaluation was to test the assumptions linking the five pillars of the programme to the expected achievements:

- Strengthened institutional capacity, including adoption or revision of NUP
- Improved inclusiveness and participation of stakeholders in NUP process
- Improved acceptability of the benefits of sustainable urbanization development amongst key stakeholders (UN-Habitat 2017a, p.46).

This section of the evaluation assesses the NUPPs achievements in these three areas, including reference to the outcomes from the survey to support interview material.

4.8.4. Institutional capacity

The positive impact of the programme on institutional capacity was described by interviewees who had experience in developing a NUP for their countries, particularly when that policy formulation process was supported by the presence of UN-Habitat. Respondents also noted that local policymakers learnt from working alongside experienced urban policymakers and improved their capacity for future policy exercises. This implies a positive capacity building outcome from NUPP. One interviewee with multi-national experience of the programme had observed the increased importance of urban issues within ministries as a result of the NUPP, suggesting that policy and political will was strengthened.

The positive response from national government interviewees to the NUPP normative guides also indicates that they are benefiting from the increased urban policy capacity offered by the NUPP. This process of knowledge transfer was not regarded as positively in the interviews when consultants provided support for NUP development, as they were seen as more likely to be less engaged with local issues and institutions and perhaps had a less direct stake in the outcomes. Interviewees also noted the lack of value in employing external consultants in countries with high levels of policy capacity; one interviewee from a country with well-established urban planning institutions saw little value added by external consultants in their policy formulation. While consultants may provide an on-demand resource for NUP processes, particularly in countries with limited endogenous capacity, the fewer longer-term benefits of capacity building and knowledge transfer indicate a need for alternatives. This raises an interesting question of how UN-Habitat should use consultants. There is a need to think through ways of linking in-country officials working on NUP formulation and implementation and consultants working across countries.

Conferences such as the World Urban Forum are a prominent part of the NUPP and serve as an avenue for knowledge transfer and thus capacity building. Interviewees who had attended conferences generally saw them as useful, particularly the reporting on countries' experiences and progress, as well as the opportunity for direct exchanges with peers. However, the survey results indicated a higher perception of the benefits of conferences among the global development community than those working in national governments. There was a view that conferences with a narrower scope, whether regional or thematically focused, would be more useful for practitioners than global conferences. The costs associated with attending conferences was also raised, including the time away from work, which may be a deterrent for practitioners from developing countries in particular.

The NUPP conferences were viewed as valuable in developing networks and knowledge transfer, but some interviewees queried whether less resource-intensive avenues could provide better network and knowledge outcomes at lower cost and without the emissions associated with international travel.

The direct impact on countries' financial resources of the NUPP was acknowledged, particularly where UN-Habitat was providing direct support for policy formulation. However, of more importance is the capacity for the programme to leverage further funding support from governments and other agencies for urban policy development and institutional capacity building. Two interviewees had used the NUPP as the basis for successfully advocating the need for government funding of national urban policy development, and underscored value of the weight that the standing and reputation of UN-Habitat, as a global programme, added to their arguments.

Interviewees with a multinational perspective questioned the impact of the NUPP on institutional capacity, particularly in countries where UN-Habitat was not directly involved in the policy process. This contrast between global operatives and those with in-country experience indicates that where the programme is implemented, it does have an impact on urban policy capacities, but methods for a wider distribution of the benefits should be considered.

4.8.5. Inclusiveness and participation of stakeholders

Participatory planning and the inclusion of stakeholders in urban policy has become a standard practice in urban policy formulation processes, not just within the NUPP. This is seen as central to the aims of the NUPP.

Addressing the challenges of urbanization in a sustainable and equitable manner requires a cross-sectoral approach to urban policies and increased vertical and horizontal coordination. Facilitating collaborative efforts among all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders through national urban policies (NUP) is critical to make this happen (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance 2019, p.2).

This importance was affirmed by the interviewees. In addition to setting out the case for inclusiveness, this implies that the individuals and institutions that could be considered as urban policy stakeholders are broad to the point of limitless, and thus ill-defined. As a result, interviewees' responses covered a variety of different stakeholders: sub-national governments, government departments, peak industry organizations, businesses and communities.

Stakeholder participation was seen to have influence on the NUP process in a number of ways. One respondent from a national planning department saw the NUP as a result of pressure from sub-national governments and peak industry organizations who wanted greater focus on urban policy to manage metropolitan population growth. Other respondents indicated that including stakeholders from across tiers of government and ministries was important for accepting the process and its outcomes, particularly as in many cases these elements of nations' systems of government were responsible for implementing the NUP.

Engaging the private sector and communities was also seen as important in generating an understanding of the importance of urban policy and well-planned cities, as well as creating pressure for urban policy processes through democratic processes. The inclusion of urban issues in education systems was also seen as a way to foster greater engagement with NUPs and urban policy by developing a greater public understanding of the challenges and opportunities that are associated with urbanization. Holding national urban forums as part of the early diagnostic phase of the formulation process, as encouraged by UN-Habitat NUP guidance, was noted by some respondents as a useful vehicle for stakeholder participation.

Box 9. National Urban Policy Development for Liberia

Liberia is a country with a rapidly increasing urban population that is projected to almost triple by 2050. Liberia's cities, particularly outside the capital of Monrovia, suffer from poor infrastructure and unplanned urbanization. The country started an NUP process in 2015 and held three national urban forums until 2019 to inform the development of the policy, which provided the opportunity for a range of stakeholders to engage with issues and begin formulating policy responses. As Deputy Minister for Administration in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Mr. Momolu Johnson stated in addressing the third national urban forum: "We need to urgently engage in strategic planning to progress the country's urban agenda. This national urban policy is timely and will assist us in putting in place necessary measures to move the country in a positive direction" (UN-Habitat, n.d.c).

This process has led to the recent publication of the *Diagnosis Note for Liberia*, which draws on the outcomes of the national urban forums and the feasibility phase to progress towards a NUP. The diagnosis note sets out the policy priorities for legislation, economy, finance, decentralization, the environment and climate change (UN-Habitat, 2021b). The Liberian experience indicates the importance of the national urban forums as a platform for consultation and engagement with NUP formulation.

For this report, each respondent's data is standardized, resulting in a measure of prioritization of the categories being assessed: overall effectiveness, relevancy, impacts, efficiency and return on investment in Figure 10 above. Then averages of the standardized data per region, or in some cases organization type, are calculated to provide comparisons of the results by each subset of the sample. As standardization is a measure of variation around the average, it only provides relative importance within each group, rather than an absolute measure to compare across groupings.

Engagement with tiers of government and ministries and input from the private sector, civil society organizations, research and academic institutions is embedded in the NUPP (UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance, 2014; UN-Habitat, 2018). As a global organization, UN-Habitat is also better placed to work with national governments to facilitate NUP processes and the urban policy community through conferences and other channels of knowledge transfer, rather than to have direct responsibility for wider engagement. This is a further example of the challenge discussed above, as a limitation of the programme's normative nature. The guides produced by UN-Habitat include the importance of stakeholder participation, yet it was widely seen as a factor limiting the impact of the NUPP. Stakeholder participation within countries is difficult for UN-Habitat to influence as such engagement remains the prerogative of national governments. Nonetheless, UN-Habitat can provide an important influencing and advisory role to national governments in relation to stakeholder engagement in NUP formulation.

4.8.6. Acceptability of the benefits of urban policy

The benefits of urban policy were widely accepted by the interviewees, who considered that raising awareness of urban issues was an aspect of the NUPP that had performed well. While the NUPP was not seen to be leading the discussion about urban policy in all circumstances – over the past two decades many urban voices have emerged – it played an important role by informing these debates through its channels for knowledge transfer and, in some instances, had translated into policy outcomes. The NUPP was however viewed as the principal global initiative to support national level urban policymaking, though other global organizations were recognized as undertaking comparable initiatives in their own networks.

The links between NUPP and global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, as well as being a United Nations initiative, are important aspects of the programme.

Connections to global goals provides an important basis for advocating the benefits of urban policy as a mechanism to achieve the goals, particularly via complementarities and in countries that have made commitments to these goals. Examples were provided by interviewees where advocating for urban policy had been leveraged from government commitments.

An important caveat on this aspect of the evaluation is that the interviewees were drawn from people who had previously engaged with the NUPP and so are likely to have interest and background in urban issues. It is also likely that urbanists will be more likely to accept the benefits of urban policy and see that others accept benefits of the policy within their sphere. However, the challenge of translating this acceptance into policy, a recurrent theme in this evaluation, indicates that this acceptance may not be as great in ministries and governments where urban policy needs to be assessed alongside other, competing demands.

4. 9. SUMMARY

The survey of NUPP participants and stakeholders has provided insights into the NUPP as perceived by those engaged with it as both a policy and a process. In the main, respondents were positive about the programme, indicating that its focus on urban issues is relevant and is effective overall. Variables such as impact, efficiency and return on investment were regarded as having attained a lower level of achievement. The gap between relevancy and other measures can be seen as an argument for continuing to develop the programme, to reduce the gap between relevancy and impact in particular, though it deserves reiteration that the NUPP cannot directly affect in-country NUP performance.

The political and governance aspects of NUPP and its implementation were seen as the greatest challenge for the programme. In particular, **lack of political will/policy continuity** is widely seen as the greatest challenge, noting that this is taken as a reference to political will at the level of the country initiating or maintaining a NUP, not at the level of United Nations' political support for UN-Habitat or for the NUPP. Political will also makes meeting other urban policy challenges more difficult, including increasing financial and human capacities for policy processes as well as resulting policy and its implementation.

The differences in challenges between regions supports the recommendation for regional variation in the NUPP.

- **Economic development** is a priority for African respondents
- **Environmental sustainability** and **climate resilience** are the priorities for Asia and the Pacific respondents, and for those from Latin America & the Caribbean
- **Climate resilience**, and to a lesser extent, **economic development** and **environmental sustainability** are priorities for Europe and North America
- **Human development** is a priority for the Arab States
- Respondents with global experience in the NUPP identified **environmental sustainability** as the priority

As the NUPP is a normative agenda based on encouraging countries to adopt urban policies due to the benefits of well-functioning urban systems, engendering political will and policy continuity could be viewed as a priority for the future development of the programme. However, this is more than a technical question and would require further consideration within both UN-Habitat and the wider United Nations system. This would also affect another recurrent theme in this evaluation, the need for a greater focus on implementation of NUPs. Political will continues to be required at national and sub-national levels to translate policy recommendations into tangible outcomes and impacts.

The indication from the survey data is that ongoing development of the **spatial structure** elements of the NUPP is not a priority. However, there is variation between regions, as well as organization types, as to what themes and challenges require emphasis as the NUPP develops. This variation in themes and issues between the five regions and global operators indicates that a path to improving the outcomes of the programme is to provide more region-specific information and opportunities for knowledge transfer.

The low numbers of respondents from the Arab States (5), Latin America & the Caribbean (8) and Asia and the Pacific (7) provides some uncertainty regarding these results, but it does suggest different priorities for development across the regions.

A key purpose of the survey was to test the connection between the NUPP's content and the five pillars or objectives as depicted in the Theory of Change (Figure 6):

- Knowledge creation, exchange and management
- To provide country support for NUP-making processes
- Increase the capacity (human, financial and institutional) of policy makers
- To monitor the progress of NUP
- To provide a platform for dialogue and advocacy (UN-Habitat et al., 2019; p.2)

The survey respondents were particularly positive about the role of *international conferences* and the *normative guides* as NUPP tools. It is also of note that respondents from national governments identified *normative guides* as being the most useful of the tools, while global development agencies selected *international conferences*. This suggests that there are two key audiences seeking differing types of support from the NUPP. These tools have direct connections into the five pillars, providing knowledge and support, as well as opportunities for developing human capacity in urban policymaking and policy platforms. Survey respondents also offered recommendations for a greater focus on the sharing of knowledge within the NUPP, indicating that participants see particular value in knowledge exchange in meeting the programme's objectives.

The survey data also provides insights into the expected achievements of the NUPP included in the Theory of Change. The challenge of *lack of political will/policy continuity* aligns with the outcome of 'improved acceptability of the benefits of sustainable urbanization development amongst key stakeholders', as well as 'improved inclusiveness and participation of stakeholders in the NUP processes'.

While the strengthened institutional capacity, the third outcome, was also evident in the survey responses, the engagement with stakeholders and multiple tiers of government was widely seen as a priority for the NUPP.

The interviews provide support for the assumptions set out in the Theory of Change in Figure 6, indicating that there are links between NUPP content and the expected accomplishments of institutional capacity, inclusiveness and participation, and the acceptability of the benefits of urban policy. In general, interviewees who had experience of work associated with the NUPP in their country reported that the programme had influenced urban policy and provided impetus for discussion of urban issues.

However, responses from interviewees with a wider view of the programme indicated that while these outcomes may be observable in countries that have participated in the NUPP, the impact may be limited in other countries. This is a positive finding that suggests that where UN-Habitat has applied NUPP 'treatment' to a country, its NUP performance increases.

To draw these different observations together, the programme is effective when and where it is implemented, particularly with direct support from UN-Habitat, but when considered from a global perspective the impact is limited – with current resourcing, UN-Habitat cannot be everywhere and

do everything for NUP. For the NUPP, this raises important questions about its remit and focus as a global initiative with wide implementation and, if this is continuing, how to best extend the geographic scope of its impact.

5. Evaluative Conclusions

This evaluation of the NUPP affirms the importance of urban policy and its role in sustainable, equitable and inclusive societies. Rapid urbanization in the developing world presents challenges and opportunities for national governments to realize economic development outcomes alongside addressing climate resilience and environmental sustainability. In much of the global North, where high proportions of urbanized populations are long-standing, better planning can also address emerging inequalities and can embed systems and infrastructures that address global agreements and national commitments. The links between the NUPP and the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement underpin the importance of the programme and urban policy, giving weight to advocacy and policy development.

As an earlier review of NUPP concluded, the circumstances and contexts of countries matter in the development of urban policy (UN-Habitat & Cities Alliance, 2014). This observation is the basis for NUPP as a process for policy formulation rather than a prescription. The evaluation underscores the need for the programme to consider how to support the development of urban policy in ways that reflect ranging contexts and capacities, through stronger evidence bases and new forms of knowledge transfer that focus on the needs of in-country practitioners.

The purpose of a Theory of Change approach to programme evaluation is to test the assumptions that link the range of tools and content included in the NUPP to the expected outcomes and impacts. For this evaluation, the key links tested were the connections between the programme content, through the programme pillars to the three expected outcomes that underpin the goal of long-term improvements to urban policies, which, as depicted in Figure 6 on page 28, are:



- Strengthened institutional capacity, including adoption or revision of NUP



- Improved inclusiveness and participation of stakeholders in the NUP process



- Improved acceptability of the benefits of sustainable urbanization development amongst key stakeholders

The insights from the survey and interviews conducted for this evaluation indicate that these are important issues for the global adoption and improvement of urban policy, whether at the national or subnational levels. The importance of urban policy in addressing global agendas and cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, environmental and natural disaster resilience, slum upgrading and inclusive economic development, is evident in the high rating for the programme's relevance and positive perceptions of the programme in the interviews. However, the evaluation has introduced questions of the assumptions or links between the programme content, the five pillars and the outcomes listed above. In particular, the evaluation has affirmed the importance of the five pillars in promoting urban policy: knowledge creation, urban policy-making capacities, in-country support, monitoring progress against global agendas and providing a platform for dialogue on urban policy (UN-Habitat, OECD & Cities Alliance, 2019).

The Global State of National Urban Policy 2021 reported that the number of explicit NUPs increased from 76 to 88 between 2018 and 2020, and there had been progress of NUPs through the five phases of policy formulation (UN-Habitat, 2021). This provides some evidence of NUP adoption and revision, that countries are moving through the process, developing and refining urban policies. The data collected for this evaluation indicates that the impact on the development of urban policies is wider than the reported explicit NUPs, as some respondents indicated the use of NUPP guides and

materials to inform policy development, without explicit or obvious reference to the UN-Habitat process in the completed documents. There were also examples where the NUPP had led to a wider range of stakeholders participating in the urban policy discussions, and they had been an important support in advocating for adoption of NUPs and in addressing global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

The evaluation has produced evidence that the pathway from content to outcomes in the Theory of Change diagram in Figure 6 occurs, and that urban policy makes important contributions to social, environmental and economic goals. While not within the scope of the NUPP, the evaluation has also raised questions about the capacity for a normative programme reliant on advocacy to have direct influence over policy formation in national governments and within policy and planning systems. This insight is supported by the major challenge for the programme being political will on the part of national governments, recognizing that this is not a responsibility of UN Habitat. The survey and interviews were undertaken with people engaged with urban issues across a wide spectrum of national and global, public and private sector organizations and can be expected to understand and recognize the benefits of NUP and the associated programme. The challenge of political will can be understood as the impact of the programme having to compete with other government issues and priorities when it transfers from planners and urbanists to ministers with a wider purview.

6. Lessons Learned

This chapter combines the outcomes of the surveys and interviews to indicate the lessons learned in response to three objectives for this evaluation:

- Determine to what extent identified changes in policymaking have been initiated in countries and can be attributed to UN-Habitat's work on NUP, particularly in its approach, toolkits, policy frameworks, programmes, projects and capacity development
- Determine to what extent UN-Habitat's NUP approach has influenced political commitment on urban issues at global, regional and country levels and assisted selected countries to deliver on such commitments
- Identify lessons and recommend how the UN-Habitat NUP approach and related work can be enhanced to increase impact

6. 1. POLICY AND POLITICAL IMPACTS

In the main, the NUPP was well regarded by respondents to the survey and in the interviews. The programme was seen to be addressing the important issue of urbanization, particularly in regions of rapid urbanization such as Africa. The range of technical guides and frameworks and the opportunities for face-to-face knowledge transfer provided at NUPP conferences were widely seen as useful and effective aspects of the programme, as indicated both by the survey responses and in the interviews. The presence of UN-Habitat was seen as an important mechanism for enhancing the impact of the programme, with countries in East Africa, as well as the Philippines and Afghanistan specifically noted amongst the 56 supported by UN-Habitat as having benefited from the technical assistance afforded (UN-Habitat, 2020e).

The transfer of technical knowledge as a result of local people working on projects alongside UN-Habitat also adds to the capacity-building aspects of the NUPP. Normative guides and conferences were the most highly regarded tools associated with the NUPP, with national governments' preference for the normative guides a strong finding from the survey responses. This is clearly an element of the NUPP that should be amplified further. In addition to the global conferences on NUP and the World Urban Forum, the role of national urban forums in gaining support for and understanding of urban issues and policy amongst stakeholders was seen as important by interviewees.

While the benefits of UN-Habitat in-country presence were noted, the impact extends beyond direct interventions for those countries that have commenced or completed the five phases of the NUP formulation process. As indicated in other evaluations of the NUPP (UN-Habitat, 2018, 2021a), there are many countries with a form of national urban policy that do not explicitly refer to the NUPP. The technical and thematic guides have been used to inform specific aspects of urban policy in countries that have not taken up the formulation process, and representatives from planning departments and ministries indicated that their work has been influenced by the knowledge gained through interacting with the programme and participants in its various activities. An additional indirect benefit of the NUPP is its usefulness in gaining the attention of policymakers in considering urban issues as well as the overarching global agendas that the NUPP contributes: the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. As a global programme under the auspices of UN-Habitat, along with Cities Alliance and the OECD, the NUPP gives weight to arguments regarding countries' need to address urbanization as part of a response to climate change and other cross-cutting issues. These diffuse impacts are both a strength of the programme, indicating a wide reach and positive influence on urban policy, as well as a weakness for formal evaluation as the extent of this type of influence is difficult to substantiate.

The evaluation has also brought to light the difference between influencing planners and those interested in urban issues with influence on policy. The survey indicated that ***lack of political will/policy continuity*** and ***policy silos and institutional fragmentation*** were prominent challenges for the NUPP.

A recurring theme in the interviews, particularly amongst those who work in national urban planning bureaucracies, is that while they recognize the importance and relevance of the NUPP, garnering support from decision makers in government is difficult. This can be exacerbated by the tendency for new governments to discard policies of previous governments, a particular problem given the long-term nature of urban policy, as well as the time taken to undertake the five-phase NUP formulation process. This insight is supported by the survey results indicating that the programme is more highly regarded for its relevancy than its impact, as discussed in Section 4.1. This aspect of the evaluation also needs to be considered in light of the method used to conduct the evaluation - that the majority of respondents are from within the urban policy domain and thus see urbanization as an important issue, but when taken to politicians, who are likely to have a wider remit, policy and investment recommendations need to be considered against other priorities.

Such findings suggest that further attention should be given to the question of generating political will. UN-Habitat leaders may wish to consider further mechanisms through which national political representatives can be encouraged to undertake NUP formulation, including ongoing engagement with key decision makers and funders throughout the five phases of the NUP process. As indicated in the interviews, this becomes a greater challenge due to the outcomes and considerations of urban policy impacting across ministries in many countries, indicating the need to advocate to multiple ministers and government departments to support implementation. This also indicates the need for an evidence base to support advocacy for NUP, to highlight the benefits across different aspects of urban policy.

Included in this wider impact on policy and politics is the development of capacities to advocate for, undertake and implement urban policies. While financial capacity was seen as a barrier to implementation, particularly in Africa, this was mitigated by the role of projects funded by the World Bank and other aid organizations. The human or technical capacity was also seen to be enhanced by such projects through knowledge transfer via the NUPP. The transfer of knowledge and thus the building up of human capital in countries where UN-Habitat has established offices was seen as a positive outcome, but there was some evidence that where funding agencies provided consultants to assist with the project, little knowledge transfer occurred in African and European examples mentioned in interviews.

The pathway to political and policy impact via planning bureaucrats and academia may be seen as a dilution of the NUPP's impact on urbanization. However, this assessment should also be made in the context of a normative programme, based on encouragement and reasoned argument for NUP, and as such it should be expected that impact of the programme is more in influencing policy than direct impacts and NUPs compliant with the normative guidelines.

6. 2. THEMES AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES.

The survey results show that most respondents had at least a somewhat positive view of the NUPPs achievement across a range of issues, including economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience. On the cross-cutting issues, more than half of respondents indicated that the programme was considered to have at least met the expected standard.

While not every participant in the surveys and interviews saw the programme as influential as a result of the lack of substantive policy impact, this view does not take into account the positive impacts of the NUPP reported by respondents from diverse organizational and geographic positions.

To reflect on the Theory of Change depicted in Figure 6, this evaluation indicates that the tools, guides and in-country activities that contribute to the NUPP are having mixed effects on the three outcomes. There is an indication that the programme and associated efforts are increasing the awareness of the benefits of sustainable urbanization amongst key stakeholders, and that more stakeholders are participating in urban policy processes. However, the expected outcome that the programme will result in strengthened institutional capacity, including adoption or revision of NUP, has been achieved to a lesser degree given the narrow focus on NUPs. A wider perspective of policy impacts as a result of the NUPP would be included in the indirect policy outcomes as a result of planners engaging with the guides and tools, and the transfer of knowledge through conferences and other means.

The cross-cutting issue that interviewees indicated required further emphasis was climate change; more survey respondents indicated that the performance of the programme in this aspect was below rather than above standard. The implication is that while climate resilience - and the closely associated environmental sustainability - are prominent aspects of the programme, more could be done to address these issues.

Slum upgrading and dealing with informal settlements was seen as a theme that the NUPP had impacted on. One interviewee noted the challenge of aging populations in association with slum upgrading, and another participant cited the connection between rural-urban migration and informal settlements. While interviewees from developing countries see slum upgrading primarily as a major issue, it was also raised by one practitioner from a more developed country, who noted the circumstances were different in their national context compared to developing countries at the focus of the slum upgrading initiatives, but the programme and conferences had been sources of information to deal with the issue.

Other than slum upgrading and climate change, there was little engagement with other cross-cutting themes in the interview process, such as gender equality, youth and the elderly, the disabled and provision of public space. One interviewee reported that an outcome of an NUP diagnostic process had been to identify health care as a priority, and another highlighted public health in urban policy, indicating the capacity for the programme to include a multitude of perspectives on urban conditions and development. It is also of note that the review of document access in Section 4.7.2 indicates that the normative guides are more widely accessed than the thematic guide.

6. 3. CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

The evaluation of the NUPP has provided a range of recommendations to improve the programme, its impact and urban policy in general.

6.3.1. Political will and implementation

The two major challenges identified with the NUPP were political will and implementation. These are not strictly UN-Habitat's responsibility, but they have important consequences for the NUPP. Political will and implementation can be seen as related, in that if adequate political will was applied to urban policy, implementation would likely be less of an issue. Planners in national bureaucracies reported preparing urban policies, but that ministers and decision makers failed to support further development or proceeding with actions recommended in planning exercises. There are also circumstances where departmental structures meant that NUPs 'fell through the cracks' between ministries of housing and infrastructure, for example.

In other instances, NUP formulation processes led to recommendations outside of what could be considered as core urban policy areas such as health. As noted previously, this issue may be addressed by developing an evidence base across topics and themes to encourage national policymakers from a range of ministerial responsibilities to undertake NUP development, while also noting the difficulties in doing so.

There was a view expressed by interviewees that greater emphasis on connecting with the key decisionmakers in government from the outset is integral to success in NUP formulation and implementation. UN-Habitat's position in the global development community is an important aspect of engendering greater support from within national governments and their key decision makers.

Increasing the advocacy and engagement with decision makers and extending the participation further out from the international planning and urbanist community may improve the implementation of the programme and engender greater political will. Other respondents recommended increasing public awareness and understanding of the need for and benefits of national urban policies, to foster political will through democratic processes.

The challenge of engendering political will for urban policy is also related to the structures of governments and ministries within countries. Interviewees noted the different roles and levels of importance of NUPs in federated and unitary systems of national governments. The limited role of the national government in Sweden's urban planning system was one example, and in Germany and Australia the role of national government is largely related to funding. In governments, ministerial structures were also seen as a factor in the implementation of NUPs, as some countries do not have a specific urban development ministry and the wider policy scope of NUPs are beyond the remit of housing departments, for example. From a political perspective, changes of government also impact on implementation when new governments reject old policies and initiatives, particularly when changes of government also represent ideological shifts.

6.3.2. Contextualization of NUPP

The NUPP is a global programme, promoting urban policy development to enable cities to prosper as a result of increasing urban populations. The programme provides a five-phase process for the formulation, evaluation and monitoring of national urban policies, rather than a prescriptive set of policies for implementation. While the procedural nature of the NUPP implies that it is applicable in most countries and circumstances, respondents

indicated that the programme could benefit from providing guidance in developing urban policy with a greater account of the context in which it was to be implemented. The differences between the institutional, infrastructural and socio-economic capacities and circumstances between countries means that the programme has to be adaptable.

The difference between the needs of developing countries and others is also apparent in Figure 20, where survey respondents working in Africa indicated that economic development was the most important future development of the programme, while those from other regions were more likely to prioritize environmental and climate issues. The institutional and human capacities in countries is another consideration, with planning and urban policy systems in governments a factor in NUP development and implementation. The priorities and policy requirements of countries such as Liberia, where there are no cadastres to support zoning systems and or property rates to finance local government (UN-Habitat 2021b), are different to those for a country such as Serbia, where there is a long history of urban planning and policymaking (Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, 2019). Countries with unitary systems of government where urban policy is within the national government's remit will also have a different focus than in federated systems, such as Germany, the United States and Australia, where urban issues are devolved to sub-national governments and where state-based urban policies may be more important than national ones.

In response to these observations of the need to contextualise the programme, there were recommendations for instituting communities of practice that provide opportunities for knowledge transfer, whether based on regions, stages of development, or systems of government.

The development of a library of NUP policies and evaluations as an evidence base, as discussed above, would also be useful in enabling countries to draw from those that have been successful in dealing with similar issues and opportunities associated with urbanization. The UN-Habitat urban policy platform website currently hosts a list of NUPs and links to the corresponding documents, but participants noted the temporary nature of policy documents. Changes of government, ministerial restructures and policy updates mean that valuable urban policy resources may not be readily available through internet searches and saved website links become inactive.

6.3.3. Questions of depth and scope

A fundamental question for the NUPP that this evaluation raises is whether the programme is too broad in its scope and ambition. Respondents with experience of deep engagement with the programme within countries and their urban policy processes were positive about the programme. The issue is whether a narrower focus on countries that need support in developing urban policy, particularly in countries undergoing or projected to undergo rapid urbanization, may be a more fruitful use of resources, also noting that countries learn from others that have progressed further with their NUPs and urban policy, such as the South Korea exchange programme (UN-Habitat, 2019d). This could be a potential refinement of future versions of the NUPP.

The relative lack of engagement with themes outside of climate change and slum upgrading in the interview process, as well as in the document access data, also indicates that in most instances programme participants and those engaging with the information and knowledge base are primarily concerned with the central issues associated with urbanization.

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, the elderly and the disabled are important and should not be excluded from consideration in urban development processes, but the question is whether the programme would be better served by concentrating resources on the central purpose of positive urbanization outcomes.

An alternative way forward would be to reconsider the range of knowledge transfer systems and programme content in light of the questions of the distribution of the impacts. The difference in views on global conferences between representatives from national governments and global agencies is of note because an essential element of the programme is the capacity within countries. As some interviewees noted, the costs and time away from work associated with global conferences was a deterrent to attendance. Whether knowledge transfer and communities of practice may be more cost effectively fostered through other mechanisms needs to be considered, both from the perspective of costs of global conferences to UN-Habitat as well as to programme participants. While the NUP e-learning programme was not ranked highly in the survey, some indicated the need for more learning opportunities. Digital platforms for knowledge sharing has potential as a means of advancing the NUPP, and further research into an appropriate format and preference for formal qualifications or informal learning would provide further indication of how to further develop NUP education and training. For example, a free massive, open online course, known as a MOOC, could be devised in which urban professionals from countries undertaking NUP are supported through online coursework while also applying that knowledge in the real-time NUP formulation (or review) process they are working on; this could both build capacity and share knowledge. It would likely require UN-Habitat to partner with a university with experience in online course delivery.

7. Recommendations

The following discussion sets out the six recommendations for enhancing the NUPP. The recommendations respond to the importance of evidence in policy development, knowledge transfer with those in similar circumstances, and increasing the reach of the NUPP.

Recommendation No. 1: Policy Library and Evidence Base

A frequent recommendation from the evaluation was to develop an evidence base of effective NUP policies. The benefits of such a resource are two-fold: first, it provides examples of urban policymaking that can be used to inform how other countries formulate policy; and it can be used to advocate for NUPs to governments and decision makers by providing examples of benefits and outcomes. This function could be extended on the Urban Policy Platform to include functionalities such as a global map with links to examples, possibly in association with in-country contacts for more information. Closely associated with the recommendation for an evidence base was the development of a policy and evaluation library. While the Urban Policy Platform currently provides a database of NUPs, part of these recommendations is to shift from a database that records links and create a library that stores documents in pdf form, as links become inactive over time and as a result of change of governments and ministerial restructures.

Recommendation No. 2: Communities of Practice

A second recommendation arising from the evaluation was to arrange communities of practice in the NUPP, either regionally focused or issue specific. While the programme is globally focused, groups of countries are dealing with, or have dealt with, similar ranges of issues and thus could benefit from more intensive collaboration and knowledge exchange opportunities. The survey results that show different priorities across the regions further support this recommendation. One interviewee suggested that the operation of the programme should be devolved to national governments and ministries to facilitate direct knowledge transfers. Consideration could also be given to platforms for peer-to-peer learning, instituting communities of practice amongst practitioners, not just between organizations and government departments.

Recommendation No. 3: Expanded e-Learning Provision

Many of the objectives of the NUPP could be fulfilled by extending the e-learning provision for national urban policy. The current NUP e-learning course provides a three-hour introduction, additional courses and materials, and is a cost-effective method for increasing human capacity in urban policy making. Participants in this evaluation noted that the costs and time away from work were deterrents to attending conferences and could particularly impact on the ability of those from developing countries to attend. In addition to lower costs per participant,

it would also reduce the emissions as a result of international travel and would be more productive in developing urban policy capacity.

An expanded e-learning could also provide an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and experiences in urbanization with people from other countries, through peer-to-peer learning and the use of case studies and fulfilling the NUPP's knowledge transfer objective.

One possibility is a massive open online course (MOOC) for urban policy. A MOOC would provide education opportunities to urban policymakers in developing countries that do not have well-established tertiary education provision in the field. As an example, the *Ethical Cities: Shaping the Future of Your City* MOOC, developed by the United Nations Global Compact Cities Programme and RMIT University during 2017-2021, has been undertaken by more than 4,000 people⁴ (<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/ethical-cities>). This MOOC covers challenges facing cities and ethics as they apply to cities and their governance. It is a successful mechanism for building urban policy capability. The insights from this MOOC could be readily applied to an NUP training MOOC. Establishing an NUP MOOC is not a simple task however and requires resourcing, intellectual capability and knowledge in NUP, and a suitable technical platform and expertise. However, much of the cost of a MOOC is in its establishment; once the course and platform are established though, the costs of repeated future delivery are considerably reduced.

.....
4 <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/ethical-cities>

Recommendation No. 4: Planning for Implementation

A major issue identified within this evaluation is for the implementation of NUPs, indicated by challenges such as the *lack of political will/policy continuity, policy silos and institutional fragmentation* and *insufficient financial resources* discussed in Section 4.2. As emphasized throughout this evaluation, this issue is external to the NUPP and UN-Habitat's remit, however, consideration should be given to advocating to key decision makers throughout the five phases of NUP, developing implementation plans and identifying financial stakeholders. As the interviews indicated, part of the issue is that, in some countries, urban policy does not fall under the auspices of a single ministry, therefore engaging a wide range of stakeholders is required to mitigate the challenges associated with implementation.

Recommendation No. 5: NUP Development Tools

Participants in the programme suggested additional tools to support the NUPP. This included thematic guides to address pandemics and resilience, as well as to advise on indicators to track the progress of NUPs. In addition, there was a recommendation that NUP materials should be translated into more languages to extend the reach of the programme.

Recommendation No. 6: Embed NUP in core UN-Habitat Operations

A final recommendation arose in the interviews and reflected on the position of the NUPP in UN-Habitat. As a programme, the continuation of the NUPP is dependent on funding from partner organizations, which creates uncertainty regarding its future. Therefore, it was suggested that NUP should become a core component of the work of UN-Habitat, embedded within its activities.

8. Appendices

8. 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for this evaluation were:

- Develop appropriate methodologies and tools for evaluating the NUP portfolio performance in addition to preparing a time-bound evaluation plan
- Analyse UN-Habitat's work on NUP since 2014 (including the quality and quantitative of the products, norms and tools produced) and review the contribution of UN-Habitat's work at global, regional, national and sub-national levels
- Assess the performance of UN-Habitat portfolio on NUP by analysing the effectiveness, pertinence, efficiency, impacts, return on investment (ROI) (e.g. the multiplier effect of its investment and the resources leveraged to support NUP processes and beyond)
- Assess NUPs inclusion of cross-cutting themes (such as the mainstreaming guides in NUP including public space, slum climate change, etc.) and the usefulness and adoption by countries in their NUP process
- Assess pilot projects and actionable activities and responses that stem from the NUP process and the needs that have been met
- Outline the key findings of the evaluation along with lessons learned, challenges, best practices and recommendations.
- Prepare recommendation and action plan for future work on NUP with a focus on strengthening the implementation of acupuncture projects and new policy initiatives while mitigating possible challenges
- Produce recommendations and an action plan for advancing the NUP portfolio in the context of SDG approval, UN-Habitat 2020-2023 Strategic Plan and the new organigram
- Review and co-draft a policy note for Liberia as a case study
- Review draft of the 2020 Global State of National Urban Policy

8. 2. SURVEY

NUP Experience

1. Which of the following best describes the organization you work for and its jurisdiction:

- Government - national
- Government- subnational
- NGO - global
NGO - national
Development agency - global
- Development agency - national
- Other

2. What is your position within your organization?

Text:

3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (text)

4. In terms of years, for how long have you been working in positions relating to national urban policy?

Text:

5. Which best describes the geographic area of your work?

- Africa
- Asia and the Pacific
- The Arab States
- Europe and North America
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Global

6. What is your opinion of the performance of UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy Programme?

Matrix, 0-100 on performance

- Overall effectiveness
- Relevancy
- Impacts
- Efficiency
- Return on investment

7. Do you have any comments regarding the effectiveness of the NUP Programme?

Text:

8. Which of the following tools have you used for developing, monitoring or evaluating NUPs?

- National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework
- How to Formulate National Urban Policy: A Practical Guide
- Monitoring National Urban Policy: A Guide
- NUP database
- NUP regional reports
- NUP examples and country reports
- Urban Policy Platform NUP website
- NUP Learning Manual: Participant Learning Resource Guide
- NUP e-learning course
- Other (text)

9. How useful were the tools selected above for developing, monitoring or evaluating NUPs?

Likert scale: *Not at all useful to extremely useful*,

Only tools selected above listed

10. Which of the following thematic guides have you used for developing, monitoring or evaluating NUPs?

- Mainstreaming Urban-Rural Linkages in National Urban Policies
- Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policies

- Supporting National and City-wide Slum Upgrading and Prevention
- National Urban Policies Driving Public Space Led Urban Development
- Increasing Social Inclusion Through National Urban Policy
- Other

11. How useful were the thematic guides selected above for developing, monitoring or evaluating NUPs?

Likert scale: ***Not at all useful*** to ***extremely useful***,

Only tool selected above listed

12. How could the guides and materials be improved, or is there a need for additional materials?

Text:

13. What are the greatest challenges for implementing NUPs at the national level? Please select all you regard as challenges.

- Insufficient financial resources
- Insufficient human resources
- Policy silos and institutional fragmentation
- Lack of technical expertise
- Lack of political will / policy continuity
- Other

(Note – links to question in the GSNUP 2020 country survey).

14. How has the NUP programme performed in addressing the following cross-cutting issues?

- Likert scale: ***Far below standard*** to ***far above standard***
- Provision of public space
- Slum upgrading
- Climate change
- Disaster risk reduction
- Gender equality
- Youth and the elderly

- The poor
- The disabled
- Other (text)

15. How has the NUP Programme performed in addressing the following themes?

Likert scale: *Far below standard* to *far above standard*

- Economic development
- Spatial structure
- Human development
- Environmental sustainability
- Climate resilience
- Other (text)

16. What themes do you see as most important for the future development of the NUP Programme?

Likert scale: Not at all important to most important

- Economic development
- Spatial structure
- Human development
- Environmental sustainability
- Climate resilience
- Other:

17. Do you have other recommendations for the future development of the NUP Programme?

Text:

18. Do you have an example of a success as a result of the NUP Programme? - Please provide details

Text:

19. What have been the key lessons arising from the NUP Programme and its implementation?

Text:

20. In addition to this survey, RMIT are looking to contact respondents for two purposes:

- To gather further information regarding your example of a success arising from the NUP Programme, from the previous question.
- For an interview covering similar questions to this survey, but in more detail.

Please indicate for which of these purposes you consent to being contacted for:

1. Further information regarding your NUP example
2. An interview regarding the NUP Programme
3. I do not consent to be contacted

Please provide an email address:

Text (email validation)

8. 3. INTERVIEWS

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

Preamble:

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

The research project is being conducted by RMIT University on behalf of UN-Habitat. The project investigates the current status and effectiveness of national urban policies (NUP).

The research will analyse UN-Habitat's work on NUP since 2014 (including the quality and quantitative of the products, norms and tools produced) and review the contribution of UN-Habitat's work at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. To enable this improvement, research and benchmarking of current policy activity and knowledge is required. This research will result in the production of a regional NUP assessment report that describes and analyses key aspects of national urban policy and its effectiveness.

This research is being conducted by RMIT University on behalf of UN-Habitat.

-
1. Please describe your current role in and experience of the NUP Programme:
 2. To what extent has the UN-Habitat's work on NUP supported or led to changes in policy making in countries?
 3. How has the NUP impacted the human, financial and institutional capacities in countries?
 4. Has the NUP Programme been effective in advocating for and increasing the knowledge of NUP and its benefits?

Prompt for key themes and cross-cutting issues: climate change, gender, the poor, the disabled, slum upgrading.

5. What are the effective or ineffective channels for transferring NUP knowledge and experiences?
6. To what extent has UN-Habitat's NUP Programme influenced political commitment on urban issues at global, regional and country levels and assisted selected countries to deliver on such commitments?

Particularly, SDGs, Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework (and other global agendas).

7. What have been the key lessons arising from the NUP Programme and its implementation?
8. How can the impact of the NUP Programme be improved or extended?

9. Can you give me an example of where this project, programme or policy is working really well, or not so well? Why do you think this is the case?

Probe to see if the problem is that it is not being implemented well, or if the Theory of Change is not working as expected.

Prompt for pilot projects and actionable activities and responses.

10. Do you have any other observations or comments about the NUP Programme?

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A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world

The movement of millions of people from urban to rural areas is ideally managed through a national urban policy, through which governments set out their path for effective urban development in which the challenges of climate change, economic development, environment protection and quality of life are met with adequate resources, finances and capacity.

UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy Programme has played a central role in working with governments to develop policy and implementation processes - their national urban policy - and offers tools, guides and training among the many resources it incorporates.

In 2020, 56 countries were supported by the agency in NUP development.

This evaluation features input from a range of NUPP stakeholders who have provided critical feedback on many aspects of the programme's aims, ways of working and, importantly, its effectiveness. The evaluation includes lessons and recommendations for UN-Habitat, including for future work, and assesses the achievements, results and impact of the programme overall.

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