



**2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Project
“Fostering COVID-19 recovery
and SDG implementation
through local action in
Asia-Pacific, Arab
and African countries”**

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

June 2024

2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Project
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implementation through local action in Asia-
Pacific, Arab and African countries”**
(PDF-SDG-2021-05)

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

JUNE 2024

The Mid-term external evaluation was conducted by Matteo Belletti.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any involved organization.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
UMF	Urban Monitoring Framework
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IP	Implementing Partner
MLG	Multi-level governance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia
UN-Habitat ROAS	Regional Office Arab States
UN-Habitat ROAP	Regional Office Asia Pacific
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VSR	Voluntary Subnational Review
WUF	World Urban Forum

1. INTRODUCTION

FOSTERING COVID-19 RECOVERY AND SDG IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH LOCAL ACTION IN ASIA-PACIFIC, ARAB AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES

PROJECT REFERENCE NO.	PDF-SDG-2021-05
LEAD UN ENTITY	Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat
PARTNER IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) United Nations Economic Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA) United Cities Local Governments World Secretariat (UCLG) Local 2030 Coalition
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	\$ 2,284,084.05
START DATE	April 2022
DURATION (MONTHS)	36 months

The 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Project “**Fostering COVID-19 recovery and SDG implementation through local action in Asia-Pacific, Arab and African countries**” (PDF-SDG-2021-05) is led by UN-Habitat and funded by 2030 Agenda Sub-fund of the Peace Development Fund. The partner implementing entities are: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), United Cities Local Governments World Secretariat (UCLG) and the Local 2030 Coalition. The project started in April 2022 and is expected to end in March 2025.

The main objective of its action is to promote inclusive post-pandemic recovery and advance the localization of the SDGs in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the Arab States.

Specifically, the project aims at:

- Strengthening the capacities of Local and Regional Governments to develop Voluntary Local Reviews and localize the SDGs to advance the post-pandemic recovery process (Expected Outcome 1),
- Enhancing multilevel governance and interlinkages between local and national governments as well as regional and international processes on SDGs implementation and COVID-19 recovery (Expected Outcome 2).

The project is articulated around six key components:

- (i) Technical support to cities, centred around the following main outputs: rolling out of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework; elaboration of Voluntary Local Reviews; implementation of the SDG Cities programme cycle.
- (ii) Regional processes: establishment of the Mayors’ Academy process in each region; creation of an online SDG Localization platform in each region.
- (iii) Normative development: SDG Localization-COVID-19 Recovery Tool Development.
- (iv) Multilevel governance: strengthening of multilevel governance arrangements for the SDGs.

- (v) Capacity building for local and national officials: training of public officials; VNR-VLRs Studios
- (vi) Global and regional advocacy processes: global and regional advocacy roadmap.

Its implementation is grounded on a territorial approach to sustainable development and the principles of the [New Urban Agenda \(NUA\)](#).

The main beneficiaries of the project are Local and Regional Governments of nine pilot countries and specifically of nine pilot cities:

- AFRICA: Nakuru (Kenya); Kyebi (Ghana); Kanifing (The Gambia).
- ASIA PACIFIC: Surigao City (Philippines); Chandragiri (Nepal); Udon Thani, (Thailand).
- ARAB COUNTRIES: Ramallah (Palestine); Irbid (Jordan); Hay Ennour (Tunisia).

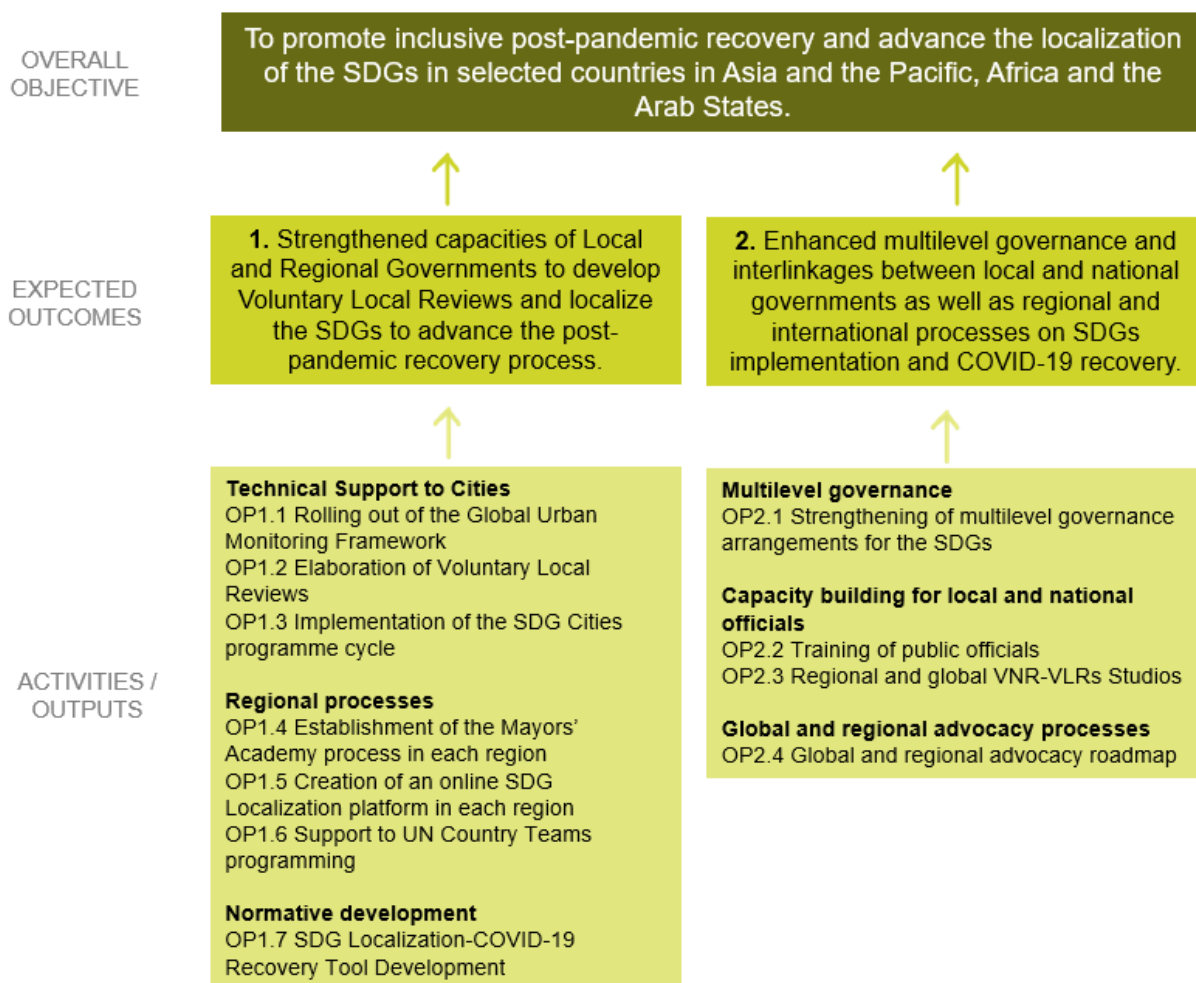
In February 2024, UN-Habitat **selected an external consultant to conduct the Mid-term evaluation of the project** and report on the findings and recommendations. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the processes and achievements of the project in the period April 2022 to April 2024 focusing on both its general implementation as well as progress in each of the nine pilot countries/cities.

2. THE PROJECT

2.1. The project logic

Figure 1 below describes the intervention's causal logic in the form of a Results Chain, a schematic illustration of how change should logically occur in the particular context of the intervention. It aims to describe what the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Project “Fostering COVID-19 recovery and SDG implementation through local action in Asia-Pacific, Arab and African countries” does, and how its intervention is expected to lead to the desired outcomes, by means of several intermediate consequential steps.

Figure 1 – Project Results Chain



Source: Author's elaboration

2.2. Main stakeholders and target groups

The project engages **multiple stakeholders globally**, by promoting collaboration between UN-Habitat HQ and Regional and Country Offices, the other implementing partners – UNDESA, UNESCAP, UNECA, UNESCWA, UCLG – and the nine pilot countries/cities, with their government authorities.

Table 1 maps the roles of these stakeholders in the project, in order to clarify the terms and objectives of their involvement. The evaluation consulted all the identified stakeholders as key informant, by administering ad hoc data collection tools.

Table 1 - Stakeholders mapping

	STAKEHOLDER	INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT	PROJECT PARTNER	TARGET GROUP
DONOR	2030 Agenda Sub-fund of the Peace Development Fund	Donor		
IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme)	<i>Lead UN entity</i> - Project Management team and implementing staff	●	
	UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)	Implementation of project activities at the global level and in Africa	●	
	UNESCAP (United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific)	Implementation of project activities in Asia Pacific	●	
	UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)	Implementation of project activities in Africa	●	
	UNESCWA (United Nations Economic Commission for West Asia)	Implementation of project activities in Arab States	●	
	UCLG (United Cities Local Governments World Secretariat)	Implementation of project activities at the global level	●	
	Local 2030 Coalition	Implementation of project activities at the global level	●	
PILOT COUNTRIES / CITIES	Project implementing focal points / coordinators (in the pilot countries/cities)	Project's focal points in each pilot country/city	●	●
	UNRCOs in pilot cities and their UNCT members	Supporting the implementation in pilot countries	●	
	Local and Regional government authorities	Main target of the activities and project partners	●	●
	National government authorities	Main target of the activities and project partners	●	●
	Other <u>main</u> national / local stakeholders (i.e., local community, civil society)	Secondary target of the activities		●

Source: Author's elaboration

3. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

3.1. Scope and purpose of the evaluation

The project is being implemented between April 2022 until March 2025. The overall purpose of this external Mid-term evaluation is to assess the processes and achievements of the project, covering the period from the commencement of the project until April 2024, and to provide lessons learned for the remaining implementation activities.

This external Mid-term evaluation assesses the programme' design, scope, implementation status and the capacity to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs. Furthermore, it assesses the preliminary indications of potential impact and sustainability of results including the contribution to capacity development and achievement of sustainable development goals. Finally, the evaluation analyses lessons learned, challenges faced, and best practices obtained during implementation period which will inform the second phase of implementation (2024-2025).

All nine pilot countries involved in the project, focusing specifically on the targeted pilot cities in each country – Nakuru (Kenya), Kyebi (Ghana), Kanifing (The Gambia), Surigao City (Philippines), Chandragiri (Nepal), Udon Thani (Thailand), Ramallah (Palestine), Irbid (Jordan), Hay Ennour (Tunisia) – have been included in the study. The data collection involved all relevant actors: project participants, implementing partners, public authorities in pilot countries/cities, and other key stakeholders.

3.2. General and specific objectives of the evaluation

This Mid-term external evaluation contributes to **three general objectives**:

1. Learning.
The evaluation aims at supporting the implementing partners in learning from the project experience in order to be able to improve their ongoing and future interventions in this field and support institutional learning.
2. Capacity-building.
By involving project staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders in every step of the study, the evaluation aims to contributing to the capacity building process started by the project.
3. Accountability.
The evaluation aims at contributing to account to the project team, the management and staff of implementing entities, the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Management Unit, other key stakeholders involved and the beneficiaries on the outcomes and on the use of funds.

The **specific objectives** of the Mid-term evaluation are to:

- i. Assess the performance of the project in terms of its progress towards the achievement of results at the outcome and output levels, using indicators of achievement.
- ii. Assess the **compliance of the project to the OECD-DAC criteria**, by country and at the aggregate level, namely:
 - **RELEVANCE** (i.e., the extent to which the project design and objectives **respond to the needs of the target groups** of beneficiaries and to the priorities of the local/global partners and institutions involved, and whether they continue to do so if circumstances change).
 - **COHERENCE** (i.e., the extent to which **the project activities are consistent with one another** and coherent to the priorities identified by the project [*internal coherence*], and the extent to which **the project is complementary and coordinated with other actors' interventions** [*external coherence*]).
 - **EFFECTIVENESS** (i.e., the extent to which the project is achieving, or is expected to achieve, its **outputs, results and objectives**, including any differential results across groups).

- **EFFICIENCY** (i.e., the extent to which the project is delivering results in an **economic and timely way**, by making optimal use of the available financial and human resources).
 - **IMPACT** (i.e., the extent to which the project is generating, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, **medium to long-term effects** on the target beneficiaries and on the context of intervention).
 - **SUSTAINABILITY** (i.e., the extent to which the net benefits of the project are likely to continue, **in the long term** after its completion).
- iii. Assess appropriateness of the project design, joint implementation arrangements/strategy, assess risks and how these may have impacted on the effectiveness of the project.
 - iv. Assess how cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, youth and human rights have been integrated in the project.
 - v. Identify areas of improvement, lessons and make recommendations to improve performance of the project for the remaining period of implementation.

While investigating these aspects, the evaluator has always considered during the assessment **two levels of analysis**:

- The outcomes of the project at the city and country level;
- The outcomes of the project at the regional and global level.

3.3. Methodological approach

The evaluation respects the principles of utility, credibility, independence, impartiality, transparency, ethics, and professionalism.

Based on the evaluation objectives, the external evaluator proposes a **mixed-method approach** that complements **quantitative and qualitative research methods** to produce reliable indicators that measure and assess the changes achieved and all other aspects of interest.

The evaluation strategy has been structured following a **theory-based approach**, which allows to draw conclusions about whether and how the project contributed to the observed results (see the depiction of the project's Results Chain in Section 1.1, and its Logical Framework).

Furthermore, the evaluation is **results utilization-focused**, having a **participatory and interactive approach** which aims to project target groups, implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders at local and regional levels.

Finally, the Mid-term evaluation has a specific focus on the outcomes achieved in each of the nine pilot countries/cities. By means of the field visit, the assessment has an in-depth focus on the outcomes of the project in **Kenya**. Kenya was chosen among the pilot countries because of the opportunity to conduct in person data collection activities with the project management team in Nairobi, where The United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-Habitat is based, and with the implementing staff and the project beneficiaries in the pilot city of Nakuru. During the field visit to Kenya, the evaluator conducted the data collection activities *in person*, as described in the following paragraph.

3.4. Evaluation matrix

The evaluation focuses on the following list of evaluation questions (see Table 2), which has been validated with the project team. The list originally proposed in the Terms of Reference was refined and integrated during the preparatory phase, based on the results of the desk analysis.

Table 2 - Evaluation matrix

EVALUATION QUESTION	SOURCES OF INFORMATION <i>(i.e. respondents, Tab. 2)</i>	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
1. Relevance		
To what extent did the project respond to the needs and priorities of the main beneficiaries (country, regional and local government authorities)?	Secondary data All stakeholders (Table 2)	Desk analysis Key informant interviews
How relevant is the project to the other local stakeholders (civil society) needs and priorities? Is there a specific focus on the most vulnerable categories (poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups)?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Key informant interviews
Are there any outstanding examples of how cross-cutting issues (gender equality, youth and human rights) are being successfully applied in the project?	Implementing partners	Key informant interviews
Has the relevance of the project changed since the beginning of its implementation due to external factors (e.g., pandemic, government changes, conflicts)?	All stakeholders (Table 2)	Key informant interviews
2. Coherence		
Is the project coherent and implemented in synergy with other programmes or initiatives within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund?	Implementing partners Donor	Desk analysis Key informant interviews
Were project objectives and implementation strategies consistent with and supportive of relevant UN-Habitat and other implementing partners strategies?	Secondary data Implementing partners	Desk analysis Key informant interviews
Is the project coherent with national policies and priorities? Is the project coherent with local policies and priorities?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Desk analysis Key informant interviews
3. Effectiveness		
Is the project achieving the planned outputs and outcomes as detailed in the project proposal? If there are any gaps, what are the reasons for them?	All stakeholders (Table 2)	Desk analysis Key informant interviews
What factors have contributed to achieving or hindering the achievement of expected outcomes and outputs?	Implementing partners Pilot countries / cities	Key informant interviews
Is the achievement of results and its corresponding indicators effective enough for measuring progress on specific outputs?	Implementing partners	Key informant interviews
Are the public authorities at local/national level satisfied with the support provided? Are main local stakeholders (CSO, academia, business sector) satisfied with their involvement in the activities?	Pilot countries / cities	Key informant interviews
What other actions should be considered during the implementation of the project to increase the effectiveness of its achievements?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Key informant interviews Focus group discussion
4. Efficiency		
Was the project management, coordination, and evaluation efficient and appropriate? Are there any adjustments needed?	All stakeholders (Table 2)	Key informant interviews
How does the project financial management processes and procedures affect project implementation?	Implementing partners (UN-Habitat)	
How is the project's collaboration with the government in the nine countries/ cities?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Key informant interviews
What factors are contributing to implementation efficiency?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Key informant interviews
Did the actual or expected results (outputs and outcomes) justify the costs incurred? Were the resources effectively utilized?	Implementing partners	Key informant interviews
Do project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions (funded nationally and /or by other donors)? Are there more efficient ways	Implementing partners	Key informant interviews

and means to deliver better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?		
5. Impact and Sustainability		
What range of outcomes (intended and unintended, positive or negative) is the project contributing to?	All stakeholders (Table 2)	Key informant interviews
How are capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level?	Implementing partners Project focal points Pilot countries / cities	Key informant interviews
What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of outcomes and the potential for replication of the project's approach?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Key informant interviews
What is the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of the project outcome and benefits?	All stakeholders (Table 2)	Key informant interviews
What additional support or resources may be needed to sustain the outcomes from this project, and what obstacles exist in this regard?	Implementing partners Project focal points	Key informant interviews Focus group discussion
6. Learning and capitalisation		
What are the main lessons learned?	All stakeholders (Table 2)	Key informant interviews Focus group discussion
Are there good practices inherent to the project which could be useful to share beyond the project context?	Implementing partners Project focal points Pilot countries / cities	Key informant interviews Focus group discussion

Source: Author's elaboration

3.5. Methods and tools

To conduct the study, the evaluator applied different data collection tools, including structured tools of standardized application and unstructured tools based on qualitative techniques. The list of tools presented in Table 3 was selected after a preliminary desk analysis phase, with the aim of ensuring the proper investigation of all relevant evaluation questions (see Section 2.5) and the involvement of all stakeholders (see Section 1.2).

Table 3 - Data collection methods and tools

METHOD	TOOL	TARGET GROUP	WHEN
Secondary data analysis	DOCUMENT REVIEW of project's documentation, reports and M&E data (background information, logical frameworks, project budgets, interim financial and narrative reports, photos, monitoring data, etc.)	-	March 2024
	DESK RESEARCH of relevant national information to improve the understanding of the project background and context in each of the target countries.	-	
Key informant interviews	n. 45 KEY INFORMANTS involved by means of SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS , to gain a better understanding of the contexts of intervention, the content and approach of the project at general level and in each pilot country/city, and to collect relevant information to answer the evaluation questions. Semi-structured interviews will allow to assess to what extent the project has achieved its objectives and outcomes. 12 interviewees have been met in person during the field visit to Kenya (UN-Habitat project management team in Nairobi and implementing staff in the pilot city of Nakuru), while the remaining interviewees have been contacted online.	All stakeholders (see Table 2)	April-May 2024

Participatory methods	<p>n. 2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS with the implementing partners' focal points/coordinators – one with the main implementing partners and one with the UN-Habitat Regional and Country offices implementing staff in the 3 regions (Arab Countries; Africa; Asia Pacific) - to discuss the main preliminary findings resulting from the desk review and the key informant interviews.</p> <p>Conducted online with the focal persons/coordinators of implementing partners.</p>	Implementing partners	June 2024
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Source: Author's elaboration

3.6. Limitations of the evaluation and mitigation measure

The project presents a high level of complexity, due both to the diversity of planned activities and expected results and to the geographical coverage. Indeed, the project sees the involvement of three different levels, envisaging activities on a global scale, on a regional scale and on a national scale. Nine pilot countries have been involved, within which the project has identified nine pilot cities where activities have been concentrated. The timeline of the implementation of the activities is not the same in all countries and cities, with a couple of pilot cities that are in the final phase of development.

To overcome this complexity and to have the widest possible level of knowledge, the data collection through key informant interviews involved approximately 45 stakeholders. Among the stakeholders involved, in addition to the project staff of the lead partner UN-Habitat, there are the focal points of the main implementing partners - UNDESA, UNECA, UNESCAP, UNESCWA, UCLG -, the focal points of the implementing staff of UN-Habitat Regional and Country Offices actively involved in the implementation together with the local consultants, and finally the focal points of numerous local authorities benefiting from the project.

The key informant interviews allowed the evaluator to gather a substantial amount of information on project implementation at the local, regional, and global levels and enabled the evaluation to make some recommendations and identify good implementation practices.

Concerning the pilot country Ghana, the discussion was carried out with Martino Miraglia, Project Coordinator, as the activities in the country are still in the initial phase, with some initial outputs delivered in Kyebi. This is the reason why Ghana does not have a dedicated box of analysis within this evaluation report.

Some activities at the local and regional levels were planned for the remaining year of implementation, such as the mayor's academy, which only saw the end of the first cycle in the Asia Pacific Region as it was already in place and managed by UNESCAP before the project, will be the focus of the final evaluation. Similarly, as most VLR reports are still under development, a comprehensive and comparative review of the outputs is recommended at the final evaluation stage.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The fourth section contains the findings of the evaluation activities performed by the external evaluator, combining all the evaluation tools as introduced before.

Therefore, this section provides the analysis of the findings on all the OECD-DAC criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability.

4.1. OECD-DAC criteria analysis

4.1.1. Relevance

- Has the relevance of the project changed since the beginning of its implementation due to external factors (e.g., pandemic, government changes, conflicts)?
- To what extent did the project respond to the needs and priorities of the main beneficiaries (country, regional and local government authorities)?
- How relevant is the project to the other local stakeholders (civil society) needs and priorities? Is there a specific focus on the most vulnerable categories (poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups)?
- Are there any outstanding examples of how cross-cutting issues (gender equality, youth and human rights) are being successfully applied in the project?

Relevance to the context and to the main beneficiaries

The localization of SDGs remains a highly relevant topic, as the global targets set by the SDGs can only be achieved through initiatives starting at the local level. The project's relevance has increased since its design phase began in 2021, with the implementation of activities starting in mid-2022, following an initial coordination phase. Most activities in the pilot countries and cities commenced in 2023. Between 2021 and 2023, the context evolved, leading to modifications in some activities to maintain the project's relevance. During the Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly held in June 2023, the "[Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)" Resolution was adopted, indicating the commitment of Member States on the topic. It is also worth noting that over 300 Voluntary Local Reviews have been produced worldwide.

Initially focused primarily on supporting local governments to develop Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) as outputs, the implementing partners shifted to emphasize the process leading to the VLRs. The VLRs thus became tools for fostering collaboration between various institutions from the city to the national level, promoting multilevel governance and participatory processes with a focus on engaging local stakeholders and guiding local sustainable action. Recognizing the VLR's potential as a developmental process, rather than just a report, has increased the project's relevance.

The project is important for implementing partners as it provides another opportunity to connect with the local level, which needs clearer and more precise performance management driven by data and indicators. It also benefits the UN system by offering a chance to test the new [VLR Action-Oriented Methodology](#), along with the relevant regional VLR guidelines.

For local authorities, the SDGs localization process goes beyond the VLR report, creating many opportunities to collaborate with institutions at national, regional, and global levels. The commitment of local authorities in the pilot cities underscores the process's relevance. SDG targets and indicators are useful for local authorities as they already have local development plans that need to align with national plans, which are often aligned with the SDGs. The project is relevant as the pilot countries were selected also considering the opportunity of

synchronizing where possible the VLR processes of the pilot cities with the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes at national level, benefitting the cities in having an enabling environment support from national SDGs framework, but also benefitting the VNR from data and good practices on specific localities. Not in all countries the project has been successful in aligning VLR development with VNRs because of timelines that were different or because countries simply didn't report during these years

Globally, the project is timely, given the increased focus on SDGs localization at the international level. For instance, in the Arab Region, the first VLR was launched in Amman in 2022 as part of another project implemented by UNESCWA and Habitat. The 2030 Agenda SF project is a valuable opportunity to expand the VLR process in the Arab States region by developing VLR processes in three pilot cities, including two in Tunisia and Palestine, where VLRs had not previously been developed. In the Asia-Pacific region, there is significant momentum among states and cities to develop SDGs localization processes, also in line with ESCAP Resolution 79/7 (2023). Since the regional VLR guidelines were launched by UNESCAP in 2020, a dozen subnational and local authorities have applied these guidelines, and during the project implementation, other local authorities requested support from the implementing partners. In 2022, following the request of Member States during the 6th session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to design regional guidelines to suit the African context for VLR preparation, UNECA, UN-Habitat and UCLG Africa published the Africa Voluntary Local Review Guidelines to support the preparation of VLR by African local governments.

Involving local government authorities directly in the SDGs localization is crucial. Beyond developing VLRs, the project is relevant for its strong focus on capacity development through the VLR processes implemented at the local level, the update of online learning tools such as the [SDG Localization Learning Module 2 "Planning for Change with the SDGs"](#) – updated by UCLG and UN-Habitat in 2023 – and the VLR Massive Online Open Course, the Mayor Academies, and numerous regional and global events and initiatives. These activities are vital for capacity building and raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda, demonstrating how it can assist local authorities in their daily work and align their priorities with a global framework like the SDGs. The project is also timely because local authorities often lack knowledge and capacities concerning local sustainable development, the New Urban Agenda, and SDG localization.

The visibility and advocacy activities provided to local governments are significant added values, offering peer learning opportunities from other experiences and contexts. These moments allow local governments to showcase their challenges and learn from what other local and regional governments worldwide are doing. Networking opportunities for pilot cities to engage with other municipalities and join the broader VLR global movement are also beneficial. Furthermore, the project will develop an online SDG Localization platform in each of the three regions, with the aim to facilitate the sharing of information on the topic among stakeholders and to collect and share local level data derived from the VLR exercises in the 9 pilot cities.

Another key element of the project's relevance is the [Urban Monitoring Framework](#) (UMF) as part of the VLR process. The UMF is critical because city and locally generated data are often lacking. Identifying indicators and collecting available data through the VLR process involves various institutions at city, subnational, and national levels. The VLR process helps cities allocate funds to local priorities and enables pilot cities to discuss needs and strategic planning with national authorities and during international forums, increasing their visibility and opportunities for funding.

In terms of country selection, the project document emphasized supporting low-income countries, as most VLRs before the project were developed in high-income and upper-middle-income countries. Supporting low- and middle-income countries further increased the project's relevance. At the same time, to improve multilevel governance, the pilot cities selected have the opportunity to link their VLRs to the ongoing processes at national level, aligning with the VNRs already developed or contributing to the VNRs that are being developed by the national government authorities.

In the Arab States, implementation has effectively addressed local authorities' needs, despite differences between countries. In Palestine, despite a challenging context exacerbated since October 2023 with the Israel-Gaza crisis, the Ramallah City government has been committed to the initiative, valuing its relevance for local strategic planning, supporting the local implementing staff, and only limiting stakeholder involvement. In Jordan, the process was highly institutional, building the VLR process of Irbid on Amman's previous

experience, with substantial government involvement. Ennour, in Tunisia, a city with various socio-economic problems, took responsibility for the VLR process to demonstrate that even in challenging contexts, such a process can be undertaken and to attract government and investor attention.

In Africa, the project is highly relevant in Kenya, aiding Nakuru city and county government staff with data collection and [digital dashboard](#) creation. In Gambia, the VLR for Kanifing was completed in 2023, using mostly pre-COVID data. To ensure relevance, another VLR process was initiated in Banjul. The data collection phase is underway, which is crucial for the communities and the municipality due to the lack of updated city-level data. The mayor's strong commitment to the project and the active involvement of the Gambian Bureau of Statistics highlights its relevance. The VLR for Banjul will be useful for data collection and stakeholder engagement, helping to identify development actions aligned with other municipal strategic plans.

In Asia Pacific, the project proves relevant. In The Philippines, the government is preparing its third VNR that is to be launched in 2025, based on the Philippine development plan, a six-year plan of the current administration anchored with the SDGs. Furthermore, the VLR process proves to be relevant as it is aligned with the local budgeting process. Nepal is committed to the SDGs and the National Planning Commission is preparing the third VNR with the support of the UNCT, which will be launched in July 2024. Synchronizing the implementation of VLRs and VNR is crucial to improve multilevel governance. The project is providing an opportunity to increase coordination between the local level and the federal government, that is planning to expand the VLR movement in Nepal. Finally, the SDG localization process in Thailand is growing, with increasing interest in supporting the VLRs development, and awareness of the SDGs is becoming more widespread. The project provides an opportunity to link national, provincial, and city levels, and to emphasize the importance of VLR processes at the city level. This project can also potentially contribute to the third Thailand VNR, although the government has not yet officially committed itself. However, the UNESCAP team noted that the selection could have been more relevant to this criterion, as Thailand is considered an upper-middle-income country.

Relevance to local communities and civil society

The project's focus on stakeholder engagement during the VLR process highlights the importance of involving civil society and local stakeholders at the city level. Implementing partners, starting from UN-Habitat, emphasize this engagement and involvement of CSOs and other local stakeholders.

The VLR methodology applied in the pilot cities proposes a process of reflection, consultation, and assimilation, serving as a commitment by local authorities to their communities. This six to nine-month process requires pilot cities to engage local stakeholders, particularly the most relevant ones, with the support of local implementation teams and consultants, ensuring the broadest possible stakeholder engagement. The 2030 Agenda SF project utilizes previously developed tools and materials by the implementing partners, testing practical guidelines, especially those related to stakeholder engagement through various tools. The stakeholders that have been engaged in VLR processes range from national institutions to civil society organizations, to representatives of specific sectors and of vulnerable categories.

So far, engaging civil society organizations and other local stakeholders in the VLR processes at the city level has been proven to be crucial for achieving SDG targets locally. While sometimes overlooked by national governments, this engagement translates technical terms into practical topics, facilitating communication between civil society and government authorities despite the diverse contexts of the nine pilot cities and countries.

In different pilot cities, stakeholder engagement is enabling structured dialogue with civil society and local communities. In cities already operating through participatory approaches, involving local stakeholders in the VLR process is providing an additional opportunity for exchange and discussion. This involvement is significant not only for developing VLRs but also for raising awareness about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Regarding citizen engagement, representatives of the most vulnerable categories have also been involved in local stakeholder forums, in line with the "leave no one behind" approach. Nevertheless, the project funding

and timing do not allow for extensive local consultations by means of large scale surveys or other similar tools to potentially reach all citizens.

4.1.2. Coherence

- Were project objectives and implementation strategies consistent with and supportive of relevant UN-Habitat and other implementing partners strategies?
- Is the project coherent with national policies and priorities? Is the project coherent with local policies and priorities?
- Is the project coherent and implemented in synergy with other programmes or initiatives within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund?

Internal coherence – UN-Habitat, UN system and implementing partners

UN-Habitat has developed a comprehensive approach to SDG localization, connecting all components of SDG implementation, anchored on three main pillars: (i) the Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF); (ii) Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs); and (iii) the SDG Cities Flagship Programme. In 2022, the UN-Habitat executive director identified localizing the SDGs as one of the agency's [Priorities 2022-2023](#), alongside climate, adequate housing, and urban resilience. In June 2023, the Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly adopted the ["Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals" resolution](#), indicating that member states are committed to this topic and that UN-Habitat will support them.

The project is part of the first generation of global projects on VLR and SDG localization by UN-Habitat, alongside a similar project – [UNDA 14](#) – in Eastern European and Central Asian countries. The project aligns not only with UN-Habitat HQ but also with regional and country offices, which have increasingly shown interest in active involvement, recognizing the potential of such projects for their activities. UN-Habitat is investing in creating national SDG localization programs, supported by ongoing VLR processes in pilot countries. This strategy increasingly consolidates the idea of starting with local pilots and then expanding to broader national involvement, showcasing concrete examples of local authority support.

UN-Habitat has developed a global [platform on VLRs](#), where information on the approach used, the main resources available, and VLR reports already launched by local authority partners can be found. In addition, UN-Habitat launched with other key knowledge partners a [global initiative on multilevel governance](#), the focus of the second expected outcome of the project.

The project is the first funded by 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-fund of the [UN Peace and Development Trust Fund](#) to UN-Habitat. The main purpose of the Sub-fund is to support the work of development entities of the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The donor has, however, funded other projects in recent years with an approach that reaches down to the subnational level, involving local authorities.

The project is fully consistent with the frameworks and priorities of all implementing partners, who have past and ongoing experience in promoting SDG localization and sustainable development at the local level and have developed guidelines to support cities in creating their own VLRs.

UNDESA has created a network for SDG localization, actively engages in several projects and activities related to localization and focuses on multilevel governance among stakeholders at local and national levels. UNDESA also led the "Improved local and national government capacities for localizing SDGs progress through Voluntary Local Reviews" project funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2022. UNDESA's main responsibilities in the project, in coordination with UN-Habitat, include developing and piloting the SDG Localization-COVID-19 Recovery Tool, global VLR-VNR studios, and supporting the project implementation in The Gambia.


Since 2014, UCLG has been working with the UN system, particularly with UN-Habitat and UNDESA, to support local authorities and governments in localizing the SDGs, promoting the 2030 Agenda from the bottom up, and developing training modules. UCLG also developed in collaboration with UN-Habitat the [Guidelines for VLRs vol. 1](#) (2020) and [vol. 2](#) (2021). UCLG's main responsibilities within the project are developing online learning and capacity-building modules and the global and regional advocacy roadmap, in collaboration with UN-Habitat and other partners.

UN Regional Economic Commissions are tasked with monitoring and reporting on the SDGs, supporting national authorities in the VNR process, and applying VLR guidelines in various cities before the 2030 Agenda SF project was conceived. The Commissions have also implemented Regional fora for Sustainable Development contributing to the HLPF process led by UNDESA. UNECA launched the [African VLR Guidelines in 2022](#) together with UN-Habitat and UCLG Africa, and has worked with UN-Habitat on several localization projects in the African region. UNECA and UNDESA collaborated on the African Regional Forum, and UNECA's role in the project includes bringing localization experiences to regional and global events, contributing to the African Mayors Academy, supporting the regional SDGs platform, and developing knowledge products.

SDG localization is a key area for UNESCWA, which focuses on VLR processes and capacity development at local and national levels in the region. UNESCWA has national strategies, action plans, and policies, and the project enhances national-local policy coherence. The project aligns with the priorities of the Urban Development Portfolio. UNESCWA is leading the development and implementation the first Mayors Academy in the Arab States, selecting pilot cities, developing VLR processes at the local level, participating in VNR-VLR studies, and contributing to the regional SDG localization platform.

Over the past years, UNESCAP has implemented various initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region related to localization and the SDGs, and produced the Asia-Pacific [Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews](#). The project aligns with UNESCAP's strategy and framework, but their engagement has been limited due to management and coordination issues, which will be detailed later. UNESCAP coordinates the Asia Pacific Mayors Academy and is involved in its strengthening within the project, along with other limited activities. UNESCAP believes that full engagement and co-design of activities would have increased the application of regional VLR guidelines (e.g., by training and consultancy) and the alignment and integration of VLR-VNR in pilot countries, positively affecting project coherence at the regional level.

Relevance and Coherence - Pilot Cities/Countries Overview

Countries	
<p>Nakuru, Kenya</p> 	<p>The city board approved the project, recognizing the VLR process as an opportunity to align the city's integrated development plan and its 2050 vision with 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The local authority considers the VLR processes relevant as it is allowing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address day-to-day issues. • Identify relevant indicators to track city achievements. • Increase ownership by both the city and local community through the dashboard, a digitalized tool for "people-driven city management." • Facilitate the achievement of SDGs by linking the dashboard with the city strategic plan and vision. <p>The VLR process holds accountability not only for the city government but also for NGOs, private sectors, and third-sector organizations. Stakeholders, grouped by thematic/SDGs, shared initiatives during the second stakeholder engagement, fostering inclusivity among youth and people with disabilities. The city views the VLR process and developed dashboard as platforms for continuous participation, enabling daily input from citizens without waiting for larger stakeholder events.</p> <p>Harmonizing activities among different institutions reduces project duplication at the local level. It also builds capacities within various stakeholders, raising awareness of the SDGs and enabling citizens to monitor target indicators. The information gathered through the VLR process is valuable for Nakuru citizens, especially regarding infrastructure and basic services. Non-state actors also benefit from access to this data, understanding Nakuru's progress, trends, and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Interlinkages from national to county to city levels are significant. Harmonizing indicators in the dashboard benefits not only the Nakuru City government, but also the Nakuru County and the national government, particularly aiding the national spatial plan. Nakuru County's participation in the UN Habitat project is</p>

	<p>motivated by its desire for a digital spatial plan, aligning with other counties' plans and integrating data for decision-making.</p> <p>The VLR serves two main purposes for the County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring city and county performance, establishing baselines to track trends. • Joining a global network to exchange best practices with other cities, assessing their standing.
<p>Banjul, The Gambia</p> 	<p>The government of Gambia has introduced a new national development plan, requiring all municipalities to update their local development strategies accordingly. In Banjul, the mayor is committed to gathering data to develop the city's local development strategy, ensuring that the city has full ownership of the process. The VLR will align with Banjul's local development strategies, starting with an analysis of the municipality's priorities to identify which SDGs the VLR will focus on. This approach will also align with national goals, emphasizing a multilevel governance approach, which is often weak in many African countries. To achieve this, the implementation team is actively involving authorities at both the city and national levels.</p> <p>The implementation team is following an action-oriented VLR methodology. Based on the municipality's needs and priorities, they are drafting project proposals and policy recommendations. This level of concreteness is crucial for the city and the local stakeholders involved in the task force, as they can influence the VLR process and the future actions of the city government. The process involves government institutions, the association of local governments UCLG, UNDESA and UNECA. The stakeholder engagement, scheduled for summer 2024, will be locally driven, involving various stakeholders from the local community and CSOs. Understanding the priorities of different categories within the local communities is essential, making the engagement process pivotal for improving SDG achievement.</p>
<p>Surigao City, Philippines</p> 	<p>The city government and the mayor find the project highly relevant as they aim to achieve results aligned with the SDGs framework and to report the impact with a focus on the SDG framework, making this opportunity crucial for the municipality. The project is supporting the city government in improving cooperation at the local and national levels, but enhancing their knowledge by sharing experiences with other pilot cities at regional and global levels would be beneficial. Prioritizing projects and programs aligned with the SDGs and monitoring progress and achievements at the city level are essential. Currently, the data banking is not connected to the SDGs, but this project will help align the dataset.</p> <p>The project is relevant as local governments like Surigao City need assistance to achieve the SDGs and localize them at the city level. This kind of project is very useful for cities that require additional knowledge. It will become even more relevant with the action points and program recommendations included in the VLR document. Surigao is a pilot city, and the same VLR process can be replicated in other pilot cities in the Philippines. In Surigao, it was easier to integrate the project as it was not packaged as a standalone project but as part of the city's existing budgeting process. The municipality already has the information and data but is not using the SDGs lens to analyze it. This approach, not only mainstreaming the SDGs within the plan but also the budget, positively involved the municipality and local stakeholders.</p> <p>The project is also significant for CSOs, as they are part of the VLR process. The city is seeking their support in developing the VLR. Currently, there are over 70 organizations divided into 5 sectoral groups, actively participating in the project. Several partner agencies and civil society organizations are part of the VLR process. For the community, the workshop focused on identifying development gaps and the priorities of local community stakeholders, which will also contribute to the VLR.</p> <p>The country is preparing its third VNR, based on the Philippine development plan, a six-year plan of the current administration anchored with the SDGs. The development plan includes indicators for achievement levels in the form of results matrices, at both national and subnational levels, and these indicators are also aligned with the SDGs. While the Philippines reports on only six SDGs at the national level, at the local level, they expect to report on all SDGs.</p> <p>The full onboarding of the national government remains a significant gap in the project. Coordination has been with the regional officers of national government agencies, but there is no guidance for national government agencies on their specific roles, causing a disconnect at the subnational level. This is an area that needs improvement. In the Philippines, only two cities have a VLR; Surigao will be the third. One of the project's goals is to demonstrate effective vertical engagement.</p>
<p>Chandragiri, Nepal</p> 	<p>The project is highly relevant to stakeholders at both the national level, such as ministries, and the local level, including municipalities. Nepal is committed to the SDGs and, in collaboration with the National Planning Commission, UNCT has been supporting the preparation of the third VNR, which will be launched in July 2024. Synchronizing the implementation of VLRs and VNR is crucial to create interlinkages between national and local levels. This involves providing feedback to the National Planning Commission and communicating with RCOs to understand how to integrate the VLRs and localization agenda within the VNR process. The project has arrived at an opportune time, aligning with the government's commitment to the SDGs.</p> <p>Nepal operates under three levels of governance: national, provincial, and 753 local governments, which include both rural and urban municipalities. The 3-tiered government system was established in 2017, and several institutions within local and provincial governments are still becoming fully operational. The working modalities of local governments need to be improved, particularly in terms of capacity building. Some municipalities have started coding their budgets with SDGs, integrating them into their municipal budgeting. The Ministry of Federal Affairs coordinates all local governments, while the Ministry of Urban Development is the focal point for this project. There is close coordination in the VLR process with the federal government</p>

and relevant ministries. These ministries plan to expand the VLR movement in Nepal, which has just begun. To enhance the project's relevance, efforts are underway to develop a common template that will be available to other local governments, facilitating the linkage between VNRs and VLRs.

Local authorities often lack the technical capacity and know-how to integrate SDGs into their budgeting, local policies, and plans. The VLR process implemented by the project provides necessary support for the municipalities to understand their progress towards achieving the SDGs and to align their annual budgets with SDG targets. This includes identifying targets and establishing a monitoring mechanism, capabilities they previously lacked. Thanks to the project, municipalities are becoming more knowledgeable and committed. The VLR process, which is almost complete in Chandragiri, is not only important for SDG localization but also useful in stimulating local government improvements.

While the local government organization is strong in planning, the connection between the municipality and the local community still needs strengthening. Engaging the local community to discuss the SDG status for the VLR process allowed municipality members to connect with civil society and community members, making them aware of both their needs and the government's commitment to achieve the SDGs. NGOs and development partners sometimes do not fully understand the relevance of VLRs for localizing SDGs and helping local governments develop sustainable plans and strategies. Raising awareness among local governments is essential. The project builds consensus between civil society and local government, making the VLR process very relevant for the municipality. The goal of the VLR is to engage with vulnerable categories within the municipality, and through the VLR and the action plan, the city government hopes to be able to provide more support.

UN-Habitat also organized a national-level awareness event to disseminate the importance of VLRs and the VLR methodology, engaging academia, professional bodies, and associations of municipalities to generate interest in the VLR process.

Udon Thani, Thailand



The SDG localization process in Thailand is growing, with increasing interest in supporting the VLRs development, and awareness of the SDGs is becoming more widespread. It is beneficial for the country to have been selected as a pilot country for this project, as it provides an opportunity to link national, provincial, and city levels. This project can also contribute to the third Thailand VNR. It is fully aligned with government strategies and interests, particularly the objective of aligning the SDGs with local planning. There has been positive engagement at the national level, with interest from the Ministry of Interior and direct involvement of National Economic and Social Development Council's (NESDC) International Affairs and Urban Development Divisions. NESDC will pilot the UMF as monitoring tool for the National Economic and Social Development Plan. At the national level, different ministries have different roles, and it is still unclear which ministry is responsible for VLR implementation at the city level. The Ministry of Interior is responsible for provincial-level and subnational review, while UNDP is working with the provincial level in Thailand, supporting several provinces in SDG localization. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is more focused on SDGs at the international level. This project is relevant for coordinating between different ministries and agencies and for emphasizing the importance of VLR processes at the city level. For UN-Habitat, the project aligns well with the UN Sustainable Country Framework.

The project began in Thailand in June 2023. Prior to this, in 2022, UN-Habitat's Country Office worked to strengthen multilevel governance in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior. Seventy-six governors signed a collaboration agreement that includes SDG localization. UN-Habitat presented the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF), and national institutions recognized its importance as a national tool for Thailand. UNDP is localizing SDGs in 15 provinces across the country, with a significant amount of data collected at the provincial level. The VLR process for Udon Thani Municipality came at the right time, given the national context and the interest from Ministry of Interior, NESDC, and UN agencies as UNDP.

The staff of Udon Thani Municipality was not familiar with the VLRs before the project. They were invited to a workshop in Bangkok where UN-Habitat explained its relevance. The VLR process is crucial for the city government as it helps them understand SDG achievements at the municipal level. It assists in municipal planning, evaluating the municipality's strengths and weaknesses in terms of sustainable development, and monitoring achievements using available data. The process is also relevant for developing recommendations to improve SDG achievements.

In conducting the VLR process, the municipality can analyze data and indicators, benchmarking against other relevant national and provincial information. Engaging civil society in the process is important, as information from citizens is vital for the VLR and city planning.

Ramallah, Palestine



There is good alignment with the cooperation framework between the UN and the government in Palestine. The prioritization of SDG localization makes the Ramallah VLR a potential entry point for the VNR in Palestine. While a new cabinet is in place at the national level, the local implementing team has not yet had the opportunity to engage with them, despite good collaboration with the National Statistical Office. Collaboration with Ramallah Municipality is a continuous process for UN-Habitat, not solely based on the VLR process. This aligns with UN-Habitat's strategy in Palestine, contributing to SDG localization in Ramallah and aligning with national, governorate, and local priorities.

Ramallah Municipality is the first in Palestine to undertake a VLR process, highlighting the city's challenges and prospects. The city government aimed to focus on SDGs within their strategic planning and monitoring but lacked the tools and capacities to evaluate their performance against the SDGs framework. The project team reviewed Ramallah City's strategic and planning documents, including the recently approved Strategic Plan 2023-2026, which also focuses on the SDGs. The VLR process is seen as a continuation of the city's

strategic planning, aiming to link different planning processes, identify gaps, and determine what the municipality can do within policy and financial constraints.

The ongoing war and continuous Israeli occupation, with its associated restrictions, also affect Ramallah. The Government of Palestine is not transferring financial resources to the municipality. In Ramallah, the VLR report itself is less important than the process leading to it. This process is significant as Ramallah represents a small beacon of hope for other Palestinian cities. In addition to the VLR process, Ramallah has developed a resilience plan, demonstrating the city's capabilities despite the current situation.

The VLR process faced operational constraints due to the ongoing war in Gaza, preventing a wide participatory approach. However, the team utilized existing mechanisms, such as the community committee, and conducted individual interviews with several stakeholders. Since Ramallah City's Strategy 2023-2026 was developed based on extensive stakeholder engagement prior to the Gaza war, the team used notes from those meetings to inform the VLR process. There is a strong culture of public participation in Palestine, particularly in Ramallah, where civil society is extensively involved in municipal activities.

While local-level consultation is important, it is also crucial to involve national ministries and agencies, considering national priorities. Local municipalities should be more proactive in engaging with the national level, alongside the association of local authorities, which focuses on the interests of all Palestinian municipalities.

Irbid, Jordan



Irbid was selected due to the municipal government's keen interest in developing a VLR. The process commenced with the mayor and local council members expressing their willingness to participate in the project. Municipal government representatives have been actively involved from the outset to underscore the VLR's significance for aligning with Agenda 2030. Prioritizing the VLR process is crucial for Irbid Municipality, as they seek to track progress and achievements in sustainable development. Concurrently, the municipal government is crafting Irbid's new strategic plan and exploring ways to integrate the VLR process into this document. At the national level, there is an SDG workplan in place to localize the 2030 Agenda, and the project team is collaborating with the Department of Statistics.

The Irbid VLR will be the second VLR in Jordan after Amman, emphasizing the importance of coordination with national-level entities. During the VLR process, collaboration with various ministries was pivotal. Government support is essential for securing project funding and aligning local strategies with national ones. The VLR holds significance as it enables alignment of projects across various themes with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Progress in this regard is evident through achievement indicators. As a tool, the VLR will be instrumental in establishing priorities based on the city's context.

The VLR process is relevant as it sheds light on the city's situation, focusing on the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable segments and involving civil society actors. The municipality often employs a participatory approach, engaging local stakeholders. The VLR process guides stakeholders' workshops to better understand societal needs. Careful attention has been paid to meeting the needs and priorities of all stakeholders involved. Through workshops and bilateral interviews, efforts are made to comprehend the investments already made in Irbid by different stakeholders and to recommend further support for the city and local stakeholders. The analysis considers the needs of the most vulnerable groups, with certain SDGs serving to mainstream their vulnerabilities. There is a hope to extend processes to involve the most vulnerable groups more deeply and directly, requiring additional time for community-level awareness-raising and engagement.

Hay Ennour, Tunisia



Tunisia has produced two VNRs, in 2019 and 2021. As the UN-Habitat Country Office discussed with HQ and UNESCWA, they decided in 2022 to develop a VLR for Ennour. Ennour was chosen for the VLR due to its unique context, facing various socio-economic challenges.

The VLR process in Ennour spanned two years, beginning with collaboration with a mayor and concluding with a secretary-general due to administrative changes mandated by the government. Despite a governmental system crash in Tunisia in March 2023, with the dissolution of all municipal administrations, work on the VLR continued with the involvement of both local and national authorities. The governor of Kasserine is planning to present Ennour's VLR at the HLPF, underscoring the process's relevance. Capacity-building was a significant aspect of the project, conducted through several workshops, leading to the creation of a core group of volunteers to support the process. There was also a notable impact on awareness raising at the local level. The local government now possesses a document with more than 40 suggestions for potential projects to enhance urban development in Ennour.

The team's actions align with Ennour's urban development strategy, integrating indicators and testing the UMF locally. This coherence extends to Tunisia's national priorities, as highlighted in the 2021 VNR, where informal settlements were a focus. With Tunisia set to develop a new VNR in 2025, ensuring alignment with Ennour's VLR becomes crucial. Ennour's strategic development plan, nested within Kasserine city, underscores SDG 11 as a priority. Throughout the VLR process, engagement with local and national stakeholders exemplifies effective multilevel governance.

Enhanced visibility at national and international levels is a key benefit for Ennour's population, facilitated by the VLR process. Civil society plays a pivotal role, especially given shifts in local democracy processes. Involving appropriate CSOs in high-density municipalities like Ennour poses challenges but is essential for maintaining relevance. While additional budgeting is necessary for proper visualization to reach vulnerable groups, the participatory approach ensures their needs are addressed. Further steps, such as focus groups, will directly involve vulnerable populations, addressing issues like accessibility for people with disabilities.

4.1.3. Efficiency

- Was the project management, coordination, and evaluation efficient and appropriate? Are there any adjustments needed?
- How does the project financial management processes and procedures affect project implementation?
- How is the project's collaboration with the government in the nine countries/ cities?
- What factors are contributing to implementation efficiency?
- Did the actual or expected results (outputs and outcomes) justify the costs incurred? Were the resources effectively utilized?
- Do project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions (funded nationally and /or by other donors)? Are there more efficient ways and means to deliver better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?

The 2030 Agenda SF project is one of the UN-Habitat-led global projects on SDG Localization, conceived in 2021 and launched in 2022. At the time of its design, the internal coordination within UN-Habitat, including HQ, Regional Offices, and Country Offices, was not as robust as it is now. The project has significantly benefited from improved internal coordination after an initial alignment phase, addressing differences in knowledge and skills among implementing staff across the three regions.

A strong value-added of the project – but also characterizing its complexity – is the involvement of five implementing partners – two global (UNDESA and UCLG) and the three UN Regional and Economic Commissions – and the fact that the project requires activities to be implemented at three levels: global, regional, and pilot countries/cities.

The strong alignment necessary due to this complex governance structure has been causing delays in the start of project activities, leading to a delay in budget expenditure during the first year. The project operates in nine countries with a budget of \$2,284,084.05. Below are the expenses and utilization rates at the end of the first year of implementation (March 31, 2023) and the end of the second year (March 31, 2024).

Table 4 – Expenditure and utilization rate

Total project budget (a):	\$ 2,284,084.05
Expenditure to 31.03.2023:	\$ 164,527.53
Utilization rate - 31.03.2024:	7.2 % of the total project budget
Expenditure to 31.03.2024:	\$ 855,896.13
Utilization rate - 31.03.2024:	37.47 % of the total project budget

Source: Project progress reports

Each region and country partners have different sizes and capacities, with varying types of coordination with UN-Habitat HQ. In Asia-Pacific, the project relies heavily on the coordination of the UN-Habitat Regional and Country Offices, with ROAP coordinating the financial transfer directly, which is a positive development, demonstrating mutual trust and alignment at all levels of implementation with UN-Habitat HQ, ROs and Cos. Equally smooth is the arrangement in the Arab States region, with an open and continuous dialogue between UN-Habitat HQ and ROAS, including the Country Offices, enabling HQ to support local implementation activities consistently. This internal coordination within UN-Habitat, and with UNESCWA at the regional, national, and local levels, adds significant value. In Africa, UN-Habitat HQ maintains a direct lead in implementing activities at the pilot country and city levels, with active involvement from HQ staff members in supporting processes in Kenya, The Gambia, and Ghana, and collaboration with local consultants and UNECA

for regional activities. Collaboration with UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa is mainly linked to the political dimension of the project, including engagement with local and national elected representatives. In general, the proximity between the implementing team and the local level can enhance the impact and sustainability of the project's actions, achieving the desired outputs and outcomes effectively and efficiently. However, HQ maintains a strategic management of the activities by sharing guidance to ROs and COs for them to take the leadership on country and regional processes. The project's potential is clear to the UN-Habitat RO and COs, as it allows them to position themselves more firmly with local partners and stakeholders.

As described previously, the project involves a significant number of main global and regional implementing partners with extensive experience in the project's main topics: SDG localization and VLRs. The coordination system should have been better structured from the outset to ensure clarity regarding the roles and budgets of each implementing partner. This aspect of the project has been a learning process for the lead partner. The limited clarity led to tensions between the lead partner and UNESCAP, the UN Regional Economic Commission responsible for supporting activities in Asia-Pacific. This caused difficulties in working harmoniously between UN-Habitat and UNESCAP in the Asia-Pacific region, unlike the efficient cooperation seen in other regions.

The regional tension arising from unclear roles prompted UN-Habitat HQ to decide against establishing a global project coordination mechanism. Instead, Habitat HQ project staff created three regional coordination mechanisms. Regional coordination, with bi-weekly meetings in the Arab States region and monthly meetings in Asia Pacific (between UN-Habitat RO and COs), proved efficient and effective to be on track in project implementation and in ensuring proper exchange and updates on the processes implemented in the region. UNESCWA and UNECA have been involved since the beginning of the project activities, and UNESCWA participated actively in the development of the implementation timeline and in establishing the regional coordination mechanism. However, the absence of periodic global project meetings hindered the creation of a cohesive global coordination within the UN system to support local levels on SDG localization and VLRs in terms of technical aspects, capacity development, and resources. UNESCAP did not sign any UN-UN agreements, as they were not satisfied with the clarity on roles and responsibilities and understanding of interaction among all implementing partners. UNESCAP staff complain that they have had little or no involvement in budgeting and in several activities from an early stage, such as the development of VLRs in pilot cities in Asia Pacific.

Nevertheless, technical-level coordination ensured exchanges between countries from different regions, and bilateral relations between UN-Habitat and other main implementing partners are considered positive and efficient by interviewees. Financial management decisions were also seen as efficient, such as UNDESA's ability to directly access UN-Habitat project funding to facilitate financial transactions and administrative efforts, or such as the open budget modality adopted by UNESCWA and Habitat ROAS that allows to decide in a cooperative manner how to allocate the regional fundings. Despite the challenges and some issues, the collaboration among multiple implementing partners – primarily between UN-Habitat, UNDESA, and UCLG, but also between UN-Habitat HQ and Regional Offices, UNESCWA and UNECA – has enabled better coordination of project activities and shared organizational planning related to SDG localization, avoiding duplication of efforts and leveraging knowledge documents already developed.

The coordination with the local authorities in pilot countries and cities is proving to be positive, thanks to the active involvement of UN-Habitat Country Offices and of VLR and SDGs consultants at local level with previous experience. The creation of VLR Taskforce at city level with the active participation of focal points from city governments and other local and national institutions is ensuring the ownership of local authorities and allowing the project to receive full collaboration from their side.

The financial management of the project has been complex due to the number of stakeholders involved, but no significant issues have arisen. Approximately 65% of the budget is allocated for implementation at the regional and country levels. The main challenge is the division of the budget among various implementing entities, including UN-Habitat ROs, the UN Regional Economic Commissions, and Country Offices. This has been leading to dissatisfaction by UNESCAP, which felt insufficiently involved in budget related decisions during the project inception and implementation.

The budget for implementing staff at the country level is about \$35,000-45,000 each. The lead partner UN-Habitat allocated a larger budget for the VLR report output than typically required for an individual city partnership in previous project, considering the number of internal and external partners involved. Despite differences in context and capacity among pilot countries, the overall budget has proven adequate for the planned activities. From an implementation perspective at the pilot country/city level, providing a single tranche for activity implementation would have been more effective, especially in Asia-Pacific. However, spreading the budget across multiple tranches has allowed for the consolidation of internal relationships within UN-Habitat, involving RO and CO colleagues more structurally, and fostering a more structured engagement with local partners and stakeholders. With regard to the budget foreseen at pilot country level, the staff of the regional and country offices state as an indication for future projects that the working time required for coordination has been underestimated.

Table 5 - Budget implementing partners – October 2023

Budget implementing partners – October 2023	
UNDESA	UNDESA budget on activities that are shared with UN-Habitat HQ
UCLG	87.954 USD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 2.2 Training of public officials: 39.954,00 + 36.000,00 • Output 2.4 Global and regional advocacy roadmap: 12.000
UNESCWA	127.090 USD total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 1.4 Establishment of the Mayors' Academy process in each region: 47.520,00 + 25.000 = 72.250 • Output 1.5 Creation of an online SDG Localization platform in each region: 15.840 + 25.000 = 40.840 • Output 2.3 Regional and global VNR-VLRs Studios: 6.000 • Output 2.4 Global and regional advocacy roadmap: 8.000
UNECA	34.000 USD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 2.3 Regional and global VNR-VLRs Studios: 17.000 • Output 2.4 Global and regional advocacy roadmap: 17.000
UNESCAP	UNESCAP budget is zero because they have not signed the UN-UN agreement and they agreed to redistribution of regional resources to UN-Habitat's Regional Office at the project's start.

Source: Project budget – October 2023

4.1.4. Effectiveness

- Is the project achieving the planned outputs and outcomes as detailed in the project proposal? If there are any gaps, what are the reasons for them?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or hindering the achievement of expected outcomes and outputs?
- Is the achievement of results and its corresponding indicators effective enough for measuring progress on specific outputs?
- Are the public authorities at local/national level satisfied with the support provided? Are main local stakeholders (CSO, academia, business sector) satisfied with their involvement in the activities?
- What other actions should be considered during the implementation of the project to increase the effectiveness of its achievements?

Table 6 - Project's Logical Framework (last update from 4th Progress Report - 30 March 2024)

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline	Current value	Targets	% achievement
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	EO1 Strengthened capacities of Local and Regional Governments to develop Voluntary Local Reviews and localize the SDGs to advance the post-pandemic recovery process	IA 1.1 All nine pilot cities develop a Voluntary Local Review as tool of choice to monitor and report on their SDG progress	0	2	9	22%
		IA 1.2 All nine pilot cities collect data and develop indicators to monitor the SDGs utilizing the Global Urban Monitoring Framework.	0	9	9	100%
		IA 1.3 All nine pilot cities develop or update their city development strategies based on the SDG Cities Programme cycle	0	2	9	22%
		IA 1.4 All nine pilot cities develop a pipeline of project proposals	0	2	9	22%
		IA1.5 One tool to facilitate the connection between SDG localization-COVID-19 recovery is developed based on the experience of the pilot cities.	0	1	1	100%
		IA 1.6 CCAs and UN programming in each pilot country are informed by VLRs and local data	0	9	9	100%
		IA 1.7 All the three regions (Asia-Pacific; Arab States; Africa) have a Mayors Academy	0	1	3	33%
		IA 1.8 All three regions (Asia- Pacific; Arab States; Africa) develop an online platform on SDG localization	0	0	3	0%
	EO 2. Enhanced multilevel governance and interlinkages between local and national governments as well as regional and international	IA 2.1 National arrangements for SDG implementation are strengthened or created in each of the participating countries, compared to the levels measured at the beginning of the process	0	9	9	100%
		IA 2.2 Number of participating cities with institutionalized mechanisms for inclusive participation of civil society in urban planning and management.	0	8	9	89%
IA 2.3 At least 100 local and national officials and stakeholders are trained on SDGs localization in each region.		0	537	100	537%	

processes on SDGs implementation and COVID-19 recovery.	IA2.4 Local officials from all nine pilot cities participate in VLR-VNR Studios.	0	6	9	67%
	IA2.5 The preparation of VNRs in all pilot countries is informed and strengthened by VLRs and local data.	0	4	9	44%
	IA 2.6 Local and National officials from the pilot countries participate in at least one regional or global event per year.	0	138	-	-
	IA 2.7 At least 3 sessions organized in the context of main regional and global events feature dedicated discussions on the topic of SDG localization.	0	34	3	1133%

		Status	Comment
ACTIVITIES	OP1.1 Rolling out of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework	Completed	Data collection finalized or UMF rolled out in all 9 pilot countries
	OP1.2 Elaboration of Voluntary Local Reviews	In progress	2 completed (The Gambia, Kanifing; Tunisia, Ennour), 7 ongoing
	OP1.3 Implementation of the SDG Cities programme cycle	In progress	2 completed (The Gambia, Kanifing; Tunisia, Ennour), 7 ongoing
	OP1.4 Establishment of the Mayors' Academy process in each region	In progress	1 completed (Asia Pacific), 2 ongoing (Africa, Arab States)
	OP1.5 Creation of an online SDG Localization platform in each region	In progress	3 ongoing (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Arab states), 1 completed (global)
	OP1.6 Support to UN Country Teams programming	In progress	9 ongoing
	OP1.7 SDG Localization-COVID-19 Recovery Tool Development	Completed	Enhanced VLR for Green and Resilient Recovery and Transition
	OP2.1 Strengthening of multilevel governance arrangements for the SDGs	In progress	1 completed (The Gambia, Kanifing), 8 ongoing
	OP2.2 Training of public officials	In progress	537 stakeholders trained
	OP2.3 Regional and global VNR-VLRs Studios	In progress	4 VNR-VLRs studios
	OP2.4 Global and regional advocacy roadmap	In progress	34

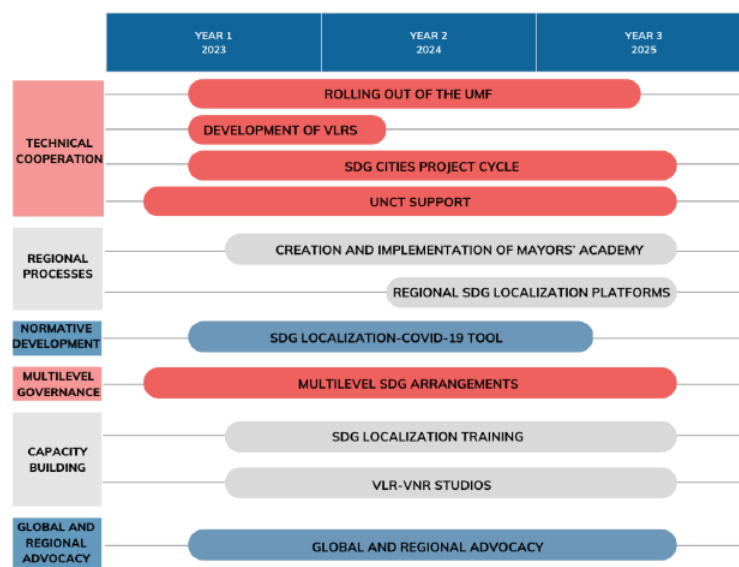
The analysis draws on:

- The achievement of indicators as defined in the Logical Framework;
- Conceptual content analysis of the data collected through semi-structured interviews to main stakeholders and beneficiaries;

The analysis of the effectiveness of the intervention was conducted by assessing the degree of achievement of the expected results, through the indicators and related targets monitored via the internal monitoring work carried out by UN-Habitat. This work was then enriched with the information obtained from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews addressed to the project stakeholders.

With regard to the achievement of the indicators, after the first two years of implementation, the project is progressing in reaching the targets set for the achievement and output indicators of Expected Outcome 1 “Strengthened capacities of Local and Regional Governments to develop Voluntary Local Reviews and localize the SDGs to advance the post-pandemic recovery process”. Some of the targets have been already achieved, such as the rollout of the UMF in the nine pilot cities and the development and online launch of the learning Tool Enhanced VLR for Green and Resilient Recovery and Transition. With regard to Expected Outcome 2 “Enhanced multilevel governance and interlinkages between local and national governments as well as regional and international processes on SDGs implementation and COVID-19 recovery”, the achievement of targets indicators is even more advanced. In fact, most of the expected targets were reached according to the official project monitoring, although training and advocacy activities are still ongoing.

Figure 2 - Planned activities



Source: UN-Habitat project summary

EO1 Strengthened capacities of Local and Regional Governments to develop Voluntary Local Reviews and localize the SDGs to advance the post-pandemic recovery process

Regarding the implementation of VLR processes, the project is effectively achieving the desired results. In all pilot countries and cities, the expected outcomes will be reached, with the presentation of VLR documents having already taken place or scheduled for 2024. The VLR of Kanifing, Gambia, was finalized in 2023, while Ennour's VLR in Tunisia was finalized and approved by the city council and all stakeholders in May 2024. As the remaining VLR reports are still under development, a comprehensive and comparative review of the outputs is recommended at the final evaluation stage.

Ghana presents an exception, as UN-Habitat sought to coordinate with the Ghana SDG Cities project to avoid overlap with existing initiatives. This coordination proved challenging as the SDG Cities project delayed the

start of implementation, being still in its preparatory phase. Only a few activities have initiated in the pilot city Kyebi, among which: the data collection, coordination for enhanced multilevel governance arrangements with the National Development and Planning Commission (NDPC), and organization of a training workshop in partnership with the IPs. The further process in Kyebi is set to take place by Q3 of 2024 with a plan to expedite implementation for timely achievement of the project objectives by 2025.

As envisioned by the Action-oriented VLR methodology, the developed documents include project proposals for cities, formulated during the VLR implementation processes based on identified city priorities. Data collection has been completed as part of the VLR process in Kenya, Gambia (Kanifing), Tunisia, Nepal, and Palestine. The UMF has been officially rolled out for data collection in Ghana, Jordan, Thailand, the Philippines, and Gambia (Banjul). Data collection has been more challenging than expected, primarily due to the lack of available data at the city level, despite the positive involvement of local government departments and national or subnational government institutions. Data gaps at the city level was the main limiting factor the project faced, which also made it complicated to carry out some analyses within the VLR processes.

The project also developed new materials, such as the [Enhanced VLR for Green and Resilient Recovery and Transition learning tool](#) created by UNDESA, which includes recommendations and action points for making VLR, now available as an e-learning course. Additionally, will benefit from the updating of the [SDG localization module](#), first launched in 2018 by UCLG and UN-Habitat, that will be used to complement trainings of national officials. Another key material developed as part of the project is the [Action-oriented VLR methodology](#) by UN-Habitat, based on their past and current experiences in supporting local government authorities in VLR development.

In the Arab States, the Mayors Academy is in the design phase, with content development completed under the leadership of UNESCWA and UN-Habitat ROAS. The call for applications for the first edition in 2024 was launched at the beginning of 2024. The project team is finalizing the selection of the first cohort of mayors, followed by the roll-out of the academy. The Academy will hold its first in-person meeting with all selected mayors, and the WUF12 in Egypt (November 2024) will be an occasion to award certificates to the mayors. The city manager of Ramallah and the mayor of Irbid, two of the project's pilot cities, applied for the 2024 Mayors Academy. The Mayors Academy in Asia-Pacific has been active for years, and the project has provided additional resources for an already successful initiative in the region. The 2023 cohort of the Asia Pacific Mayors Academy concluded successfully, and the 2024 Academy class is underway since April 2024.. In Africa, the Mayors' Academy will take a streamlined form, integrated with the UNECA and UN-Habitat's capacity-building offerings for local governments. UNECA and UN-Habitat are planning to launch a first session during the Africa Urban Forum in September 2024 to train 30 mayors on "Investing in Expanding Cities: Spatial Data for Sustainable and Resilient Futures". The session will also be an opportunity to ECA to launch its Urbanization Portal, where they plan to integrate SDG localization platform for the Africa region.

UN-Habitat's [Global SDG localization platform](#) was launched in June 2023. Regional platforms are yet to be developed, but they will be linked to the global one to ensure coherence and consistency while facilitating cross-regional learning and cooperation.

The project team is coordinating activities with the UNRCOs/UNCTs to ensure that the project results align with the UN framework in each pilot country and that localization components are included in the United Nations Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) at the country level.

EO 2. Enhanced multilevel governance and interlinkages between local and national governments as well as regional and international processes on SDGs implementation and COVID-19 recovery.

Depending on the existing multilevel arrangements in the countries, national and subnational governments are closely involved in developing the VLRs in the pilot cities. This process is a cornerstone for the ongoing effort to scale up at the national level. Several national institutions – ministries and agencies – are actively involved

in supporting the VLR processes in the pilot countries, with some focal points from these institutions being members of the local VLR task forces.

The VLR processes are coordinated with the national governments in the nine pilot countries, and the governments have shown interest in further applying the VLR process. In Nepal, the project team was asked by the line ministry to develop a national template for preparation of VLRs at the municipal level. Coordination efforts to strengthen VNR-VLR linkages with the national focal point organizations for upcoming VNR development are in place in all pilot countries. Closer coordination is ongoing in Kenya and Nepal, as both will submit their VNRs in 2024, but also in Palestine and Jordan, where the preparation of the VNR started even though it will not be completed in 2024. Within the VLR processes, stakeholder engagement has been effective and commendable given the available human and financial resources. Community engagement expectations were exceeded thanks to the dedicated work of local implementing teams, COs staff, consultants, and the commitment of many municipal partners, starting with local authorities. Local governments successfully engaged civil society organizations and other local stakeholders within their territories. However, broader engagement of citizens and local communities was limited by the project's timeline and the limited financial resources at the city level. Overall, the project represents a positive opportunity for local authorities, providing tools and methods to actively involve local stakeholders in the development planning processes.


In terms of capacity building, the project has been successful so far. Project partners have planned and delivered training on SDG Localization, VLRs, and Multilevel Governance, reaching 537 beneficiaries across three regions (Arab States, Asia-Pacific, and Africa). The work on capacity building and training has been mainly led by HQ, UNDESA, and UCLG. The implementing partners organized workshops based on the developed knowledge materials. The benefit of capacity building is its scalability potential, as it employs a training of trainers approach, working with people at the municipal level.

Regarding advocacy, the project has an ongoing advocacy plan aimed at involving local and regional governments and pilot cities in regional and global events, as well as engaging them in VLR-VNR studios at both levels. With most pilot cities concluding the VLR process, it will be easier to involve them in these advocacy activities. The collaboration with UN regional economic commissions and UNDESA for VLR-VNR studios has been positive. National and regional advocacy is mainly conducted by Regional Offices with support from UN-Habitat HQ and the UN Regional Economic Commissions.

UN-Habitat facilitated the participation of representatives from pilot cities and countries in relevant regional and global events, such as World Urban Forum 11, High-Level Political Forums 2022 and 2023, the 9th African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (2023), and the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2023. A total of 138 local and national government representatives from the pilot countries have been mobilized to participate in such initiatives. Furthermore, 34 sessions were organized in the context of major regional and global events, featuring dedicated discussions on SDG Localization.

The next advocacy steps for 2024 include HLPF in July, and the World Urban Forum 12 in November. VLR-VNR days will be organized during the HLPF 2024 with support from UNDESA and UCLG, in coordination with the regional commissions, to help mobilize countries. UN-Habitat is planning to organize a World VLR workshop at the World Urban Forum, engaging all pilot cities to showcase their VLRs. The aim is to bring forward the experiences of the pilot cities, as by November, most will have their VLRs finalized, allowing them to exchange practices with other stakeholders.

Effectiveness - Pilot Cities/Countries Overview

Countries	
Nakuru, Kenya 	The Nakuru VLR process commenced in mid-2023, following approval by the Nakuru city board. The Habitat HQ team directly manages the activities, supported by a VLR expert consultant. Alongside the city manager, the team formed a task force, identifying key stakeholders to invite as members. Within the task force, some members handle data collection and analysis, while others engage local stakeholders and implement activities. Each prioritized SDG at the city level has a dedicated coordinator within the task force, acting as the main contact point. The Nakuru County government is also involved. The task force operates on two levels: the city manager and sector-specific personnel. Working groups consist of individuals knowledgeable about available data sources.

Many of the data utilized by the team were updated by the government in 2022. All data must originate from authentic sources, either government-based, corroborated by statistical bureaus, research data adopted by the government, or directive data as part of the Vision 2030 implementation. Several task force meetings have taken place during the VLR process.

The first local-level output has been the data report. Subsequently, the team organized two stakeholder consultations to consolidate the VLR process and review the collected data. A comprehensive list of local stakeholders, interested in city development and research, was compiled with the support of the Nakuru County government. The first stakeholder meeting in December 2023 had over 50 participants, while the second meeting in March 2024 involved 72 local stakeholders. The increase in participation indicates effective stakeholder engagement in Nakuru.

Given the difficulty local stakeholders and citizens face in accessing data in hard copy, the team assisted the city government in developing a digital dashboard. The main strategic documents, including the Nakuru Integrated City Development Plan and Nakuru Vision 2050, were digitized along with the VLR. The city government aims to use the dashboard as a tool for citizens to monitor the city's performance. The dashboard is designed to be user-friendly, allowing the public to comment on and review the data and analyses.

Next steps include refining the SDG discussion paper and making recommendations to help Nakuru City secure funding for future initiatives. Starting in May 2024, the focus will shift to drafting the VLR report, concentrating on the seven prioritized SDGs.

Key operational challenges:

- Accessing data could have been challenging without the involvement of focal points from national, subnational, and city institutions. Despite this, data gaps at the city level remain a significant challenge.
- Linking Nakuru City's VLR exercise with the Kenyan VNR requires the use of government-approved data. Communication with the national level is difficult, as the VNR process is centralized by the national government.

Banjul, The Gambia



Regarding Kanifing, the process concluded at the end of 2022, and the VLR of Kanifing was finalized in early 2023. The project achieved its main deliverable in Gambia with the launch of the Kanifing VLR report in 2023. Through this process, Kanifing LGA identified gaps and challenges for future local planning cycles, aligning with the SDG Cities programme cycle.

The VLR process in Kanifing included the following activities: analysis of city planning documents with an SDG perspective, community consultations, and data collection of pre-COVID-19 government data. Despite some administrative issues with local experts and the limited context knowledge of the local implementing team, which opted to develop a technical document with minimal political involvement, the VLR for Kanifing was successfully developed.

Given these difficulties, a second VLR process was initiated in Banjul. Currently, the project in Banjul operates through Habitat and UNDESA, supported by a team of local consultants, including a VLR coordinator and a local expert. Coordination between UN-Habitat, UNDESA, and UNECA has been effective despite none of the main implementing partners having a Country Office in The Gambia. This unique approach, compared to other pilot countries, caused some delays in implementation to align the entire team. Despite these delays, the VLR process in Banjul is progressing. The UN-Habitat HQ team and other implementing partners are supporting the project, with coordination calls organized every two weeks with the local team of consultants. The outputs are expected to be reached, and the process completed by the end of 2024.

The management structure includes: a coordination group (local consultant and coordinator, UNECA, UNDESA, UN-Habitat); a task force with members from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Administration, Ministry of Sport, Gambia Port Authority, Banjul City Council, Physical Planning Agency, Gambia Bureau of Statistics, Banjul Youth Community, Women Counsellor, Center for Research and Policy Development, Ministry of Health, Association of Gambia NGOs; and a stakeholders' forum.

The implementation in Banjul began earlier, in 2023, but face-to-face activities and the planning and contracting process started in 2024. Data collection is the main activity currently being undertaken, following the launch of the local task force at the end of January 2024. An event was organized at the beginning of February 2024 with the mayor's office to explain the process and objectives, along with individual meetings with task force members. Consultants are finalizing data collection, aiming to obtain the most updated data, which is being validated with the Gambia Bureau of Statistics in May 2024. The implementing partners are directly engaged, supporting the local team with data selection. The local implementing team is striving to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process, particularly in the consultation forum, to address the needs and priorities of local communities.

Key challenges:

- Due to a lack of capacity for VLR development and technical/digital skills, the implementing partners decided to hire a VLR coordinator.
- Data availability is limited. The local team, with the mayor's assistance, was able to hold meetings with the Gambia Bureau of Statistics. Initially, the local consultants provided outdated data from 2010, necessitating a re-analysis to select more recent indicators, updated to 2022.

<p>Surigao City, Philippines</p> 	<p>The VLR process in Surigao City is still in its initial phase. In April 2024, the project and VLR process were presented to the Mayor and the head of the city department, highlighting the aim of assisting the city in drafting the VLR. SDG Localization and the VLR process have also been introduced to city government officials, department heads, and community stakeholders – including representatives of indigenous communities, CSOs, and elected village chiefs – through a workshop led by UN-Habitat. National authorities preparing the VNR also participated, among which the Department of Interior and Local Government is supporting local governments in localizing the SDGs. UN-Habitat also shared several documents with city officials to raise awareness of the VLR process.</p> <p>The city government lacked the capacity to align data with the SDGs, but the Mayor has shown strong commitment to integrating SDG principles into the city planning reports of each department. The Mayor recently established a technical working group by official mandate. This group includes representatives of local stakeholders who will conduct consultations to understand the needs and priorities of different sectors within the community. In June 2024, the team is expected to present data gathered by the city planning office based on the SDGs. Following this, they will analyze the data and provide recommendations. The Mayor, who reports on the city's situation every July, aims to present some preliminary findings from the VLR process in July 2024.</p> <p>Positive factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating to local stakeholders that the SDGs are not just a UN compliance process but a framework for sustainable development where all stakeholders can have an impact. The VLR and SDGs should be viewed not as new concepts but as a structure for enhancing existing municipal activities. • The municipality's interest in applying the SDG framework. Municipal ownership is crucial for a smooth process and to ensure long-term sustainability.
<p>Chandragiri, Nepal</p> 	<p>The main goal of the local team in Chandragiri is to prepare the VLR, prioritizing 5 SDGs, and enhance the local government's capacity in preparing the VLR, as well as in data and reporting mechanisms. City-level data collection in Chandragiri Municipality was carried out until February 2024, based on the SDG indicators adapted by the National Planning Commission (NPC) of Nepal. The selection of indicators was based on the relevant indicators from Nepal's 2020 Voluntary National Review, which are applicable to city-level data collection and analysis. Out of the 17 SDGs, the city focuses on five prioritized SDGs.</p> <p>The data collection process included a participatory approach through ward-level consultations. Four community consultation workshops were organized, with active participation from approximately 250 community members, municipal executives, ward-level political leaders, and local officials. In terms of stakeholder engagement, Chandragiri experience stands out among the pilot cities for its ability to involve a larger number of local community stakeholders in the VLR process.</p> <p>At the local level, there were some gaps in data management due to the lack of a systematic organization focused on SDG. Each department had its own data system, and the integration of data within the municipality was lacking, causing data gaps and difficulties in data interpretation by different municipal officials. The local implementing team focused on integrating and interpreting data, supporting city officials, and improving the situation.</p> <p>The national government, through the Ministry of Urban Development, is also involved. Even at the national level, an integrated data system is lacking, so the VNR preparation for 2024 did not have all data updated. Significant work was required for data cleaning and integration between ministries.</p> <p>Coordination with the main stakeholders has been very smooth, with a focal person at the municipal level helping to organize all activities. Coordination with the national government has also been smooth, with a focal point selected to cooperate with UN-Habitat in coordination efforts.</p> <p>At the municipal level, there is satisfaction with the support received in preparing the VLR. They are also preparing an action plan to implement the VLR and achieve the SDGs by 2030. Public authorities are encouraged by their involvement in the VLR process, having previously lacked a data management system. The municipalities are now developing their capacity to integrate their existing data system.</p>
<p>Udon Thani, Thailand</p> 	<p>The VLR process in Udon Thani City is progressing well, and the VLR report is expected to be ready by July 2024. Udon Thani was chosen as a pilot city due to its readiness to engage in the project, which has enhanced its effectiveness. A national scale consultation on VLR-VNR linkages and multilevel governance, is also planned in Thailand, with UN-Habitat acting as a connector between various government agencies and international agencies, such as UNESCAP and UNDP. UN-Habitat's ROAP coordinates directly with HQ, which has fostered trust between the regional and country offices.</p> <p>Technical support to the city includes the rollout of the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF), which is functioning effectively at the country level. Regarding the global SDG City program, the project in Udon Thani focuses on the action-oriented component, analyzing local development plans and proposing recommendations. The drafting of the VLR is progressing well. The consultant's previous experience with VLR, selected on UNESCAP's recommendation, has facilitated smooth interactions with the city government, and the national government's endorsement of the city has further streamlined the project. Despite efforts, coordinating with a large number of municipal stakeholders from different sectors requires considerable time and has proven challenging.</p> <p>Data collection is exceeding expectations, although attempts to involve the provincial statistical office have been unsuccessful. Key positive factors include the full engagement of the city government from the initial</p>

	<p>phase, explaining the relevance of the VLR process, making the city itself the owner of the process, and providing background knowledge about the SDGs and VLR. Learning and understanding the project at the municipal level have been crucial.</p> <p>To further increase awareness and gather more information, several municipality stakeholders and other local stakeholders were involved in consultations. Udon Thani has a municipal council committee with elected members and panels with community members and youth, and the team has organized consultations with the private sector. Due to some data gaps, community surveys were administered by UN-Habitat and the municipality through community leaders, and several interviews were conducted with local community representatives, including elderly people. Community leaders were invited to discuss the survey results. Stakeholder engagement has allowed the team to gather information about the city's needs and priorities and ideas from local communities. Civil society engagement has been a key factor in the process's effectiveness, and the team is updating local stakeholders on the ongoing development of the VLR report.</p>
<p>Ramallah, Palestine</p> 	<p>Despite the political unrest and escalation of conflict in Palestine, project activities are proceeding with strong engagement from local and national authorities, supported by UN-Habitat and IPs teams. In September, the implementing team scheduled a letter of intent with Ramallah city for October 2023, the month when the ongoing war with Gaza began. The local government is actively involved in the localization process, demonstrating high ownership and commitment. The association of municipalities in Palestine is interested in developing a Voluntary Subnational Review (VSR), starting with the Ramallah VLR pilot experience. The VNR is expected to be released in 2024, but due to the conflict is probably going to be delayed.</p> <p>This joint project involves UN-Habitat HQ and UNESCWA as the main IPs. HQ is channeling funds to the regional level through UNESCWA, which has a memorandum with UN-Habitat ROAS. The team has managed to deliver results cost-efficiently, with contributions from the UN-Habitat Country office and the municipality. The selected expert's previous experience on the topic has been beneficial, and the Country Office's autonomy has been advantageous in leading the process. Coordination has been positive, with bi-weekly meetings to share information. The local team has received excellent support from UNESCWA and UN-Habitat for implementation in Palestine.</p> <p>The VLR process in Ramallah is low-profile, as the city has requested reduced publicity and community engagement, working with selected stakeholders. The process is a collaborative effort between the municipality, UN-Habitat, and other local stakeholders. All meetings are hosted at the municipality, and the agenda is shared with all stakeholders, with UN-Habitat providing technical support to the municipality. Given the context, the process has placed a particular focus on data collection within the SDG framework.</p> <p>The process is achieving the expected outputs. The team is preparing for the final step of presentation and discussion with the municipality, but details of the entire process have been shared step by step with municipal representatives. Priorities were selected bilaterally, but final reflections are still pending. Discussions involve prioritizing the SDGs and listing the most relevant ones considering the law, resources, and structure of services.</p> <p>Some SDGs lack data for measuring achievements at the city level, which is a key challenge in Ramallah. Data is essential for the VLR process to explain the context, identify priorities, and monitor the city's achievements. All stakeholders recognize that this is a step in a longer process and emphasize the importance of future commitment to public data collection.</p> <p>Data availability is a national-level issue in Palestine, not related to the capacities of Ramallah city officials, and aligning indicators between national and local levels is challenging. The UMF provides a good framework, and the team has been able to identify different layers of Ramallah. The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics is responsible for SDG-related data collection at the national level and also elaborates data at the governorate level, focusing specifically on SDG 11 at the local level, with Ramallah City as a pilot. The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics is working with UN-Habitat to identify and fill data gaps. The team has also conducted on-the-job training, which helped in identifying proxy indicators.</p>
<p>Irbid, Jordan</p> 	<p>Greater Irbid Municipality is set to conduct the second VLR in Jordan, following the successful experience of Greater Amman Municipality. The national government showed interest in developing another VLR, leading to Irbid's selection. The municipality officials had participated in several trainings with UCLGs and was already familiar with SDG localization, but lacked the resources to draft the VLR.</p> <p>In October 2023, after selecting a VLR expert consultant, the team began collecting information and established a technical committee within the municipality, appointing a focal point. In December 2023, an inception workshop was organized to raise awareness among the VLR technical committee and gather their perceptions on SDG localization. Meanwhile, dialogue with main stakeholders commenced to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, involving national, subnational (Irbid governorate), and local levels. The consultant made several visits to discuss the VLR process with the city team. After reviewing documents and available data, a prioritization process was conducted with the committee to select the priority SDGs for Greater Irbid Municipality. The VLR development process is almost complete, with the consultant currently working on data analysis. The team expects to launch the VLR by September 2024.</p> <p>Throughout the process, there has been continuous dialogue at national and local levels with UN-Habitat RO, CO, and UNESCWA. Engagement with national governmental entities has been progressing, thanks to the development of the Irbid VLR. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), the Ministry of Local Administration (MOLA), and the Department of Statistics (DOS) are members of the VLR Technical Committee. Jordan has become a hub for exchanging best practices at the regional level,</p>

	<p>involving other implementing partners. As part of the national multistakeholder dialogue in Jordan, they developed the first VLR-VNR studio of the Arab states, focusing on the Irbid VLR process.</p> <p>Data collection has been the main challenge in Irbid, similar to the challenges faced during the first Jordan VLR in Greater Amman Municipality. Although Amman has an urban observatory and a city and villages development bank, they lack updated data. For the Greater Irbid Municipality VLR, the team is working with a five-year timeframe, which has proven very challenging despite the engagement of different institutions and agencies. The team utilized data sources provided by UN-Habitat, municipal statistics, GIS data (including building layers and thematic maps), data from relevant ministries, and other necessary sources.</p> <p>Greater Irbid Municipality's focal point and officials are satisfied with the support received. It is important to ensure that all city departments understand the SDGs and the indicators to foster greater ownership and awareness of the ongoing VLR process.</p>
<p>Hay Ennour, Tunisia</p> 	<p>In Tunisia, the VLR of Ennour has been reviewed and finalized. The process was conducted in close coordination with the Kasserine provincial government and relevant national government institutions, including the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Ministry of Equipment's Direction of Housing Department, and the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the latter being the focal point for the SDGs in Tunisia. As the VLR process concluded, stakeholders recognized that VLRS represent an innovative approach to strengthen disaggregated information and data on development at the local level. Additionally, Ennour's VLR process emphasized multi-stakeholder collaboration, particularly youth engagement, in data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Ennour was selected as a pilot city due to its specific socio-economic characteristics – it belongs to one of the poorest regions of Tunisia, bordering Algeria, in a very challenging context – and because of previous discussions with UN-Habitat's SDG Cities project. Ennour officials were keen on developing the VLR, having already collected data from the previous project, and needed technical support. Midway through the process, the national government eliminated the municipal level in Tunisia, leaving no institution to work with local governments. The VLR process has thus been a means to continue working on data and technical matters. The Ministries of Local Governments and Housing are interested in piloting the VLR process in other cities.</p> <p>The local implementing team began involving civil society and the mayor. The process was launched in Ennour in March 2022, and until November 2022, the team primarily focused on data collection, identifying available data and gaps. They gathered geographic data by involving local stakeholders. By February 2023, the team had mapped stakeholders and engaged in initial discussions at the local level. By May 2023, they had completed the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. When local data were unavailable, they collected qualitative data through participatory methods. In June 2023, after organizing the collected data, the team involved the National Institute of Statistics to verify the data's relevance and ensure no significant data were missed, receiving confirmation of the positive work done. A second discussion with stakeholders was held to discuss the results and finalize the VLR document, which was officially launched in May 2024.</p> <p>The process was supported by 18 volunteers from the local municipality. Throughout the process, they organized numerous workshops with regional and local services, aiming to work efficiently with minimal costs. The process was highly participatory, involving youth and piloting tools such as the City Scan Tool. Civil society was involved at three main points: initially, to confirm the selected priorities for Ennour as they needed to focus on specific SDGs; secondly, to collect data participatorily, allowing CSOs to interpret the collected data and confirm ongoing analysis; and thirdly, to identify possible actions to improve the situation regarding the prioritized SDGs and to discuss the feasibility of project proposals.</p> <p>Data collection was the main challenge. The lack of municipal-level data in Tunisia, particularly for new communes like Ennour, posed significant challenges, as most data in Tunisia are available at the regional or governorate level. The team overcame this challenge by involving stakeholders and identifying proxy indicators. Local stakeholders confirmed that the analysis reflected reality during stakeholder consultations.</p>

4.1.5. Impact

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What range of outcomes (intended and unintended, positive or negative) is the project contributing to? • How are capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level? |
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The impact criterion was analyzed by listing the main outcomes the project is achieving at the level of pilot cities and countries, at the regional level, and at the global level. These outcomes are contributing and have the potential to further contribute to significant medium to long-term effects in terms of SDG localization.

Outcomes at Pilot City/Country Level

- **VLR Processes and SDG Engagement:** So far, one of the main outcomes of the VLR processes in the pilot cities has been the creation of interest towards the SDGs within city planning processes. The project highlights the importance of using the VLR output as an exercise to be integrated into the planning processes of pilot cities. The project extended beyond city governments, engaging various local stakeholders with varying results. For example, Nakuru City (Kenya) developed a digital dashboard that has attracted significant interest, while political ownership in Tunisia elevated Ennour to a national level in project-related themes. Overall, there has been a positive impact, with national governments and institutions recognizing the project's local achievements, though levels of acknowledgment and integration vary.
- **Multilevel Governance:** There is increased national interest in SDG localization and participation in high-level initiatives, emphasizing the importance of this approach. Strengthening linkages between local and national levels is essential for obtaining data and statistics from national institutions, promoting collaboration among stakeholders at different levels to address data gaps.
- **Data:** The project has motivated efforts to fill data gaps at local level, providing a common framework and strengthening capacity in target groups. The project, without a budget for new data creation, focused on existing data, reinforcing collaborations between city governments and national or sub-national institutions. This approach highlighted differences between national and local contexts and the challenge of finding updated data. Despite data gaps at the city level being a primary limitation, the project initiated a reflection process at the statistical level with local and national authorities, although there wasn't a focus of building capacities related to data creation at city level.
- **Strengthening Local Government Capacities:** Efforts are underway to improve local governments' data and monitoring systems and their capacity to engage local stakeholders and civil society. The UN-Habitat HQ, in collaboration with the other implementing partners, is transferring knowledge and capacities to enable Regional and Country Offices in pilot countries to continue similar activities post-project, involving other local authorities to scale-up the results achieved and supporting the pilot cities, ensuring the sustainability of the VLR processes developed thanks to the project.
- **Increased Awareness:** Awareness about SDG localization is growing at both local and national government levels. The value lies not only in the VLR report but also in the increased awareness and the importance of informing local planning processes focused on SDGs. Despite scarce data at the city level, the data collection process sought available quantitative or qualitative data to inform and monitor city-level development, potentially leading to data-based policy recommendations.
- **Priority Actions:** The project facilitates creating linkages between city governments and local stakeholders for identifying priorities and possible actions at local level. By the project's end, VLRs and capacities will be established, though the impact still remains uncertain. Moving forward from identifying priority actions at city level to implementation remains a challenge, particularly regarding budget allocation, limiting the potential impact of the VLRs due to the lack of financial resources.
- **Impact on Local Governments:** The project has enabled local governments to gain recognition both at national and international level through their involvement in the VLR global movement, allowing pilot cities to align their strategic plans to the SDGs framework. The targeted local authorities are now aware of the potential impact of SDG localization processes for their cities and communities.
- **Systematic Stakeholder Engagement and Cooperation:** Efforts to increase cooperation across pilot countries and especially across regions include bringing representatives to VLR-VNR studios and regional forums to exchange experiences. Although stakeholder engagement occurs in workshops, there is a need to make this process more systematic and robust, giving opportunities to discuss about technical issues.

Outcomes at Regional Level

- **Growing Interest in SDG Localization:** SDG localization is gaining traction in the three target regions - Africa, Arab States, and Asia Pacific. This is partly due to the Project, which is demonstrating to pilot cities the potential of the VLR process. Other cities are expressing interest in receiving support for similar initiatives to develop VLRs.
- **Technical Workshops and Peer Learning:** Technical workshops organized at the regional level are proving beneficial in exchanging experiences among pilot cities and other cities with VLR process experience, enhancing local authorities' ownership of the project. The exchange of practices is expected to increase further once all Mayors Academies are fully operational in their respective regions. VLR-VNR studios have generated significant interest at both political and technical levels among the involved local authorities. While the benefits to cities participating in such initiatives are clear, the actual impact of peer learning among local authorities will need to be evaluated at a more advanced stage, once the VLR processes are concluded.
- **Strengthening Competencies and Positioning of Local Implementing Team:** Ongoing interregional exchanges among local implementing staff, within UN-Habitat and with local consultants, have facilitated continuous sharing of practices and addressing emerging challenges. UN-Habitat Regional and Country Offices have also enhanced competencies and positioning in SDG localization through collaboration with implementing partners. The local staff recognize the potential of this process and are highly committed. HQ has organized three trainings for ROs and COs. Additionally, HQ engages in bilateral conversations with them whenever needed.
- **Institutionalizing Relationships with Implementing Partners:** The project has provided an opportunity for UN-Habitat and its Regional Offices, where actively involved, to strengthen and institutionalize relationships with numerous implementing partners, leading to the sharing of shared work plans at both regional and global levels.

Outcomes at Global Level

- **Networking and Advocacy:** The project is facilitating the organization of several online and in-person meetings and exchanges focusing on SDG localization and VLRs. These opportunities allow implementing partners and interested stakeholders to strengthen advocacy processes at the global level and influence political decisions.
- **Enhanced Collaboration with Global Partners:** Collaboration on SDG localization and VLRs between UN-Habitat HQ and global implementing partners such as UNDESA and UCLG has significantly improved, leading to shared workplans.
- **Knowledge Development:** The project has led to the development of knowledge documents and online training modules, which will be utilized by implementing partners to educate local stakeholders. These resources will be utilized within the Project, for instance during the Mayors Academies, as well as on other occasions external to the Project.
- **Testing of New VLRs Action-oriented Methodology:** The Project has enabled the testing of a new action-oriented VLR methodology with nine pilot cities. The methodology has proven to be helpful and capable of achieving the desired results. UNDESA expects that the project will serve as an opportunity to systematically localize SDGs with the involvement of local authorities, initiating a process that can involve a greater number in the years to come.

4.1.6. Sustainability

- What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of outcomes and the potential for replication of the project's approach?
- What is the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of the project outcome and benefits?
- What additional support or resources may be needed to sustain the outcomes from this project, and what obstacles exist in this regard?

Global sustainability is tied to localization as an increasingly recognized approach to delivering the SDGs. There is a general growing awareness about SDG localization in pilot cities and countries. This heightened awareness contributes positively to the sustainability of the results achieved by the project.

The potential for sustainability at the local level is clear, driven by the strong ownership and commitment demonstrated by the pilot cities. The dedication of mayors and city governments to integrate the SDG framework into local development processes has enabled local implementing project staff to support local authorities in aligning the developing VLRs with existing strategic planning documents. This alignment at the city level will ensure that strategic planning processes continue to be viewed through an SDG lens in the future.

The positive results that pilot cities are achieving is inspiring similar processes in other cities within the pilot countries. Several cities have requested information on how they can be supported in developing their own VLRs. The project's scalability is high, but expanding the VLR process to more cities and countries will require additional resources. Anchoring local processes to national ones through a multilevel governance approach, as seen in the nine pilot countries, will further enhance sustainability, as institutionalizing the process at both local and national levels is crucial.

The knowledge built and strengthened at local and national levels, supported by implementing partners, VLR expert consultants, and the development of knowledge materials and learning tools, will remain with local authorities' staff and with UN-Habitat Country offices staff directly involved in the project.




The project has focused heavily on knowledge and capacity strengthening at various levels. However, the skills developed may not be entirely sufficient for all pilot cities to continue independently. While it is not guaranteed that local authorities will update the VLRs in the coming years, linking VLRs and SDGs to numerous urban planning processes at city and national levels increases the chances of sustainability. Hence, involving the national level, which is being pursued in all countries, is essential. VLRs have also been presented as monitoring tools for local authorities to further enhance sustainability.

The project's implementation shows that the VLR processes and capacity development components are complementary. The learning tools created and converted into online modules will remain available to those already involved in the project and those who will engage in similar initiatives in the future.

The project represents an initial step in reflecting on statistical processes with local and national authorities, but no capacity was developed for creating new data. Addressing this data gap in future projects will require budgets for establishing data environments and building the capacity of government authorities.

As a seed funding project, it is useful for attracting new funds to scale up VLR processes to other cities, potentially leading to a second phase of the project. Future steps should include implementing the actions identified by the VLR processes to meet city priorities and securing diverse funding sources to ensure priority actions do not remain merely on paper but are translated into practice.

Impact and Sustainability - Pilot Cities/Countries Overview

Countries	
<p>Nakuru, Kenya</p> 	<p>Generated outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the project, collecting data from various institutions posed challenges. However, ongoing VLR processes notably improved collaboration. The involvement of representatives from diverse agencies and institutions in the Nakuru City VLR task force streamlined data access. • Heightened awareness regarding SDG localization and the VLR process has been achieved among city government officials, local agencies, institutions, and stakeholders. • The Nakuru City has become part of the global VNR movement, positioning itself as a pilot in Kenya for supporting VNR efforts. City focal points actively participate in national, regional, and global events, facilitating knowledge exchange among cities. • The digital dashboard, a key output of the Nakuru City VLR process, enables stakeholders to comprehend how city plans contribute to SDG targets. It aligns development plan indicators with VLR indicators, fostering citizen-government accountability. UN-Habitat plans to develop a dashboard checklist based on Nakuru's experience. • Stakeholder consultations have yielded valuable suggestions from the local community, leading to the identification and future implementation of key actions. Increased stakeholder awareness of SDGs through engagement demonstrates the added value for Nakuru City government. • Nakuru County's establishment of a GIS center for the entire county promises improved integration of information from all departments, including urban centers like Nakuru City. • Improved data availability and clarity of indicators aligned with UN goals benefit not only Nakuru City but also the Kenyan Bureau of Statistics and the other 24 urban centers within Nakuru County. <p>Sustainability Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the sustainability of the VLR process necessitates its integration into the strategic framework of the city government. In Nakuru, alignment of VLR and SDGs with the local integrated plan and with Nakuru Vision 2050 ensures continuous monitoring of performance. • Challenges arise due to the weak recognition of cities and municipalities as robust third tiers in Kenya's governance structure, hindering data availability and responsibility attribution. Nakuru's case highlights the importance of recognizing city management at governmental levels. • Sustaining the task force, comprising committed members, beyond the project duration presents an opportunity to institutionalize ownership of the dashboard and VLR process among stakeholders. • The dashboard's role as a tracking and monitoring tool, as well as a platform for citizen feedback, underscores its significance. Capacity building efforts and potential support from partners like UN Habitat will aid in autonomous dashboard management and data updates by the city government. • While the city can allocate funds through the county government, additional support from national development agencies is crucial for implementing priority actions. Enhanced data availability empowers the city to pursue alternative funding sources.
<p>Banjul, The Gambia</p> 	<p>Generated outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has significantly increased awareness levels, extending beyond the national level to the city and stakeholder levels in Banjul. Taskforce members now demonstrate an improved knowledge of SDGs, showcasing dedication to both the topic and the VLR process. • Capacity limitations pose a significant challenge. While the expertise of the consultant team has been strengthened, similar efforts are underway to enhance the skills of local officials. Further capacity building for both consultants and local stakeholders remains key. Despite material, data, and methodological support from implementing partners, the absence of a country office for UN-Habitat and UNDESA in The Gambia necessitates predominantly online engagement. • Stakeholder engagement emerges as crucial, initiating discussions not only on SDGs but also on multilevel governance between the city and national levels. • Data gaps present a major challenge, albeit efforts to overcome them are underway by actively involving diverse stakeholders and institutions in the taskforce. Progress is evident, with the team striving to acquire more recent data beyond 2018, pre-COVID-19. There's a collective endeavour to establish a robust database aligned with SDGs and UMF indicators. While the GBO lacks city-level disaggregated data for every indicator, the VLR serves as a pilot, garnering interest from the GBO itself regarding the outcomes of the process in Banjul.
<p>Surigao City, Philippines</p> 	<p>Generated Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing capacity building at the city and community levels remains key, with a particular focus on enhancing the monitoring and reporting system. Presenting the SDGs baseline of both the city and the community during workshops underscores the initiative's commitment to bolstering local capacities. The establishment of a technical working group further facilitates capacity enhancement at the local level. • Engaging with government officials on different targets and indicators presents an opportunity to expand their perspectives beyond routine tasks. <p>Sustainability Measures:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal-level commitment is pivotal for sustaining results and ensuring the continuity of the VLR process at the local level. With elections scheduled for the next year in Surigao City, transcending political dynamics becomes imperative to seamlessly integrate the VLR process into the city's regular reporting mechanism. • The sustainability outlook appears promising, as the VLR process is poised to become integrated into the mainstream processes and reporting mechanisms of the city. There's optimism regarding the VLR's potential to feature prominently in budgetary considerations, signaling a departure from being viewed as a standalone process to becoming an integral component of planning and budgeting.
<p>Chandragiri, Nepal</p> 	<p>Generated Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building among municipality stakeholders and increased awareness at the municipal level have been prioritized. • Significant improvements have been made to the data system, with a notable commitment from municipality toward enhancing data system capabilities. • Exposure to networking opportunities and global best practices through a newly established platform is expected to foster more sustainable commitments among mayors. • Action plans are being implemented in collaboration with municipalities, which are now gearing up to align their projects with their budget allocations. <p>Sustainability Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis is placed on replicating VLR processes in other municipalities beyond the pilot city. The Ministry of Urban Development has tasked UN-Habitat with developing a template for all local governments to prepare their own VLRs. This initiative aims to provide guidance on data interpretation and reporting, with the Chandragiri process serving as a pilot. Capacity building support, particularly for the municipal officials, is deemed essential. • Extensive awareness campaigns are necessary at the local level across multiple municipalities to align with national aspirations, as many have limited knowledge of 2030 Agenda and its implementation. Collaboration with other projects is sought to support municipalities in this endeavor. • Data systems in countries like Nepal lack integration, even at the national level. Efforts are needed to assist national and municipal governments in integrating their data systems and interpreting available data. Flexibility in VLR development is crucial, recognizing that not all cities can achieve the same standards. • A robust and integrated database is essential for understanding and monitoring progress. Addressing data inconsistencies and creating metadata for municipalities are identified priorities to support effective data usage and analysis at various government levels.
<p>Udon Thani, Thailand</p> 	<p>Generated Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project facilitates improvements in city government management, enabling better decision-making and showcasing achievements at the national and provincial levels. • Enhanced collaboration between different municipal sections, divisions, and provincial agencies is observed, particularly in addressing data gaps. Increased awareness of the VLR process at the provincial level is noted. • Municipal staff involved in the project experience capacity enhancements, equipping them with skills in data analysis and statistics. Access to indicators aids in informed decision-making, with a focus on standardizing local and global indicators for future planning. • Capacity building for NESDC staff through online meetings with UN-Habitat is one of the outcome of the project. NESDC's support in creating a database of 30 cities based on the UMF network is significant. NESDC staff have also been involved in the selection of indicators for Udon Thai municipality. • Multistakeholder engagement emerges as a key outcome at the local level, although greater time and resources would enhance involvement, particularly from the private sector. • Strengthening the capacities of UN staff in regional and country offices is crucial for ensuring project impact and sustainability over time, with potential for replication. <p>Sustainability Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable impact hinges on the city's ability to continue data collection based on selected indicators post-project completion. • The project's methodology and approach offer opportunities for scaling up and replication in other cities, supported by concrete options for continued work with additional funding. • National consultations serve as milestones for national agencies to contribute, provide feedback, and address gaps. Increasing the engagement with partners like UNESCAP and the UNCT, including UNDP, can foster long-term project sustainability, improving collaboration within the UN system in Thailand. Broader and closer engagement of the national government, particularly the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is desirable given growing interest in the topic.
<p>Ramallah, Palestine</p>	<p>Generated Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent approval of Ramallah's 2023-2026 strategic plan aligns favorably with the VLR process, enabling city government representatives to better connect strategic planning with SDGs.



The VLR provides specific data, enhancing the city's awareness of sustainable development achievements and priorities.

- Ramallah's commitment to SDGs has evolved into a more strategic approach, bolstered by improved data collection capacities. Collaboration between the city sustainable development unit and experts to develop monitoring and evaluation guidelines, informed by the VLR process, underscores efforts to establish clear indicators for assessment.
- The project has not only raised awareness about SDGs but also enhanced capacities for VLR development and data collection, fostering a greater willingness to cooperate with other Palestinian cities.
- The importance of obtaining more city-level data to address data gaps has been emphasized, prompting ongoing efforts to bridge these disparities. Attention to neighborhood-level needs is viewed as a positive practice. The project is a first step to help addressing the data gap at Ramallah city level, the city officials will need to continue working on it, focusing also on innovative data sources.

Sustainability Strategies:

- VLR serves not only as a reporting mechanism but also as a declaration of commitment to SDGs, fostering dialogue on sustainable development.
- Recognizing the importance of data, discussions are underway regarding the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system to report on the impact of implemented services and activities.
- The VLR process necessitates continuous citizen engagement through face-to-face meetings and public forums, alongside a complaints system for service improvement. Efforts to engage stakeholders at local and national levels position Ramallah as a pioneer city in Palestine and the region, enhancing sustainability prospects despite national-level challenges.
- Financial constraints, restrictions on fund transfers from national to city levels, and economic contractions due to conflict pose external challenges to sustainability beyond the municipality's control.

**Irbid,
Jordan**



Generated Outcomes:

- The project has significantly increased awareness and capacity within the municipal team, with 80% of participants initially unaware of SDGs and Agenda 2030 localization. The initial focus has been on building knowledge and capacities at the municipal level, discussing approaches and methodologies to develop the VLR, and aligning with previously developed VLR methodologies at the Arab States level.
- By identifying indicators, the project aids the municipality in monitoring progress and enhances local capacity to understand Agenda 2030. The VLR process in Irbid has served as an opportunity to raise awareness and build knowledge about SDGs and Agenda 2030.
- At the regional level, bi-weekly meetings with other involved countries facilitate the exchange of practices, address challenges, and build capacities at both regional and global levels. This offers the municipality a platform to share knowledge about data and dashboards.
- The VLR process stands out as a key achievement of this project, representing an ongoing learning process. It mainstreams outcomes into local plans and strategies, measuring municipalities' progress towards achieving SDGs.
- The project has enhanced collaboration between ministries and created actionable recommendations that benefit not only Greater Irbid Municipality but also national decision-makers.
- Following the experiences in Amman and Irbid, there is increased recognition at the local level regarding the importance of SDG localization. Stakeholder meetings now show greater awareness and recognition of the significance of SDG localization.

Sustainability Measures:

- The project appears sustainable due to strong political will at both technical and high levels. However, sustainability will largely depend on continued political willingness and leadership. Institutionalizing the processes and ensuring that the entire city, not just one party, owns the VLR process is key. Establishing mechanisms to monitor achievements and testing the knowledge transferred to local authorities will further enhance sustainability.
- The municipality's technical staff is committed to continuing work with the SDGs framework. The team has begun working on metadata to understand the framework better and to independently continue the methodology.
- The VLRs of Greater Amman Municipality and of Greater Irbid Municipality, plus the national government's commitment to SDG localization bolster the sustainability of VLR processes at the country level.
- Raising awareness about SDG localization among the broader population is crucial. Simplifying messages about the SDGs through campaigns and making the VLR more visually engaging would help reach wider audiences and demonstrate the benefits of VLR processes for vulnerable people and local communities.

**Hay Ennour,
Tunisia**

Generated Outcomes:

- CSOs and the municipality are now more aware of the SDGs, the priorities at the municipal level, and the priority actions that could help meet prioritized SDGs.



- There is a increased awareness across different levels about the importance of localizing the SDGs.
- Significant progress was made despite data gaps by constructing data through an open data platform provided by UN Habitat, with assistance from youth trained within the project.
- Multilevel governance has been effective despite institutional changes, emphasizing the importance of connecting processes at different levels. Engaging the governor of Kasserine from the beginning increased awareness and commitment to the process.

Sustainability Measures:

- Ensuring sustainability is challenging due to the volatile political context in Tunisia. With the dissolution of Ennour commune following the national administrative reform, maintaining the document's sustainability is difficult. The sustainability would have been higher if the initiating municipal council remained. Nonetheless, the project is leveraging all opportunities to promote the VLR process implemented in Ennour.
- Replicating the VLR process is crucial for enhancing sustainability at the national level. Replicability with other local authorities increases awareness and attention on SDG localization and the VLR movement.
- Each region in Tunisia has a development office. For UN-Habitat Tunisia, it could be useful to sign an MoU with the five regional offices to continue these discussions and to develop VLRs with other local authorities.
- There are opportunities to attract investments from the private sector. It is important to invest in finding more UN agencies and donors to increase collaboration.

5. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This section presents the conclusions, key recommendations and main lessons learned from the Mid-term evaluation activities of the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Project “Fostering COVID-19 recovery and SDG implementation through local action in Asia-Pacific, Arab and African countries”.

5.1. Conclusions

The relevance of the project within the international context is high, with SDG localization increasingly central within the UN system along with the booming VLR global community and movement. The project is significant in addressing the needs and requirements of local and national government authorities involved in pilot countries and cities, thanks to the various implemented activities. The relevance for pilot cities is notable, as they are afforded the opportunity to develop their own VLR processes (with the support of local implementing teams and guidance from VLR and SDGs expert consultants), aligning them with their strategic planning documents. The VLR is pertinent not just as a document but primarily as a process, fostering collaboration among city governments, sub-national entities and national institutions, while also facilitating alignment at regional and international levels with other local authorities participating in the VLR movement. Additionally, VLR processes are relevant as they provide an opportunity for pilot cities to implement a participatory approach with key local stakeholders, engaging with their local communities and identifying emerging needs.

Coherence is maintained both in terms of the implementing partners involved and the pilot countries and cities. Locally, the project is acting in alignment with the development strategies of pilot cities, integrating VLR with them. At the national level, the project seeks to act as consistently as possible with SDG localization processes, implying alignment with existing VNRs, thanks to the linkages created between pilot cities and national institutions.

Regarding the implementation system, the project presents numerous complexities. Apart from the global component, there are components strongly tied to the three involved regions and particularly to the pilot countries and cities. The project is managed by UN-Habitat HQ in collaboration with various implementing entities, each with its functions. In addition to UNDESA and UCLG, whose roles could be described as cross-cutting across regions, project partners also include the UN regional economic commissions, UNECA, UNESCAP, and UNESCWA. Moreover, UN-Habitat HQ, in implementing activities in Asia Pacific and Arab States, heavily relied on its Regional Offices, which in turn actively worked with their respective Country Offices in implementing numerous activities at the level of pilot countries and cities.

Due to the project's large number of implementing partners and significant differences in terms of coordination, financial management, and implementation among regions and sometimes even from one country to another, there has been limited clarity regarding the roles of each partner (both at the regional and pilot country/city levels) during the project design phase or at least during the initiation of activities. This limited clarity has had repercussions in terms of coordination, especially in the Asia Pacific, and has not been resolved during the first years of implementation, also due to the shifting of the coordination focus from the global level to the regional one in all regions, and the consequent lack of global coordination meetings among the main implementing entities.

In terms of coordination and financial management, the project currently involves regional-level coordination systems, with the engagement of UN-Habitat HQ and their respective Regional and Country Offices for Asia Pacific and Arab States. For the Africa Region, HQ directly manages the implementation. Moreover, at the country level, the implementing teams (with the involvement of the respective Country Offices and, when necessary, the Regional Offices) coordinate smoothly with the focal points of the cities and other local and national institutions involved. Regarding the involvement of UN economic commissions, UNECA is actively involved in coordination for the African region, while UNESCWA is actively involved in coordination and financial management for the Arab States. Due to the aforementioned issues, UNESCAP is having limited to

none involvement in coordination and activities in the three pilot countries in Asia Pacific. Despite these difficulties, regional-level coordination is allowing for the achievement of expected results.

In terms of implementation, despite the complexity of the organizational structure, the project is achieving satisfactory results at various levels, albeit with some variations. Overall, from the analysis of the Logical Framework and qualitative analysis of conducted interviews, it is evident that the project is progressing effectively, and after the first two years of implementation, it is advancing towards the targets set for the achievement and output indicators. Regarding VLR processes, two cities (Ennour, Tunisia; Kanifing, Gambia) have already finalized the document, concluding their respective processes. As for the remaining cities, the processes are ongoing, with some at the final steps and others in the initial phase. Additionally, within the project, it was decided to implement a second VLR process in Gambia, involving the city of Banjul as well. Regarding the achievement of global outcomes, the project has developed the learning Tool Enhanced VLR for Green and Resilient Recovery and Transition and the Action-oriented VLR methodology, but has also contributed to update the SDG Localization Learning Module.

Thanks to its implementation structure spanning from the global level to the city level, the project is contributing to several outcomes. Capacity building and awareness regarding VLR processes and SDGs localization have increased, primarily among the staff of pilot cities and involved national institutions, as well as among Country Offices staff and implementing teams in different countries. In fact, through the creation and sharing of knowledge materials and technical support from the main implementing entities, the project is making an impact in this regard, as stated by numerous stakeholders involved in the activities, further contributing to the sustainability of the achieved results. Furthermore, in the pilot countries, thanks to the enhanced relations between city officials and national institutions staff due to VLR processes (with involvement even extending to having focal points from certain national institutions in the technical working groups of pilot cities), the project is contributing to increased collaborations between local and national levels, with positive implications in terms of multilevel governance.

The project's implementing partners are also involved in organizing numerous advocacy events, both globally (HLPF, WUF) and regionally (Regional Sustainable Development Forums), where representatives from pilot countries and cities are presenting VLR processes and the results achieved. The cities themselves are engaged in technical workshops at the regional level to exchange practices and challenges, fostering peer learning. As for regional outcomes, the project has contributed to the continuation of the Mayor Academy, already present in Asia Pacific at the beginning of implementation, and to the establishment of Mayor Academies in Arab States (first cohort of mayors in the summer of 2024) and in the Africa region.

Globally, the localization of the SDGs is becoming increasingly significant, enhancing the sustainability prospects of the initiative and the results achieved. Awareness of SDG localization is growing in pilot cities and countries thanks to the project. At the local level, the commitment of mayors and city governments has enabled alignment of VLRs with existing strategic plans, ensuring long-term integration of SDGs. The success in pilot cities is inspiring similar processes in other cities, indicating high scalability, though additional resources are needed. The project's knowledge and capacity-building efforts, while significant, may not be sufficient for all cities to continue independently. Institutionalizing the process at local and national levels is crucial. VLRs serve as effective monitoring tools for local authorities, contributing to sustainability. The project has laid the groundwork for future data development and capacity building, highlighting the need for further funding to expand VLR processes and implement identified priorities.

5.2. Lessons learned and good practices

This sub-section presents the main lessons learned and good practices identified by the Mid-term evaluation, with potential use and applicability to broader audiences beyond the intended primary users of the evaluation, the lead partner and the implementing partners.

- The VLR action-oriented methodology allows for tailoring to the specific needs of cities, aligning with the SDG localization. Moreover, the approach used by the project ensures that VLRs are seen not

only as an output, but as a process at the local level, with a focus on political ownership, capacity building and awareness-raising, data collection, and stakeholder engagement.

- It is crucial to have a capacity-building component with the support of implementing partners like UCLG and UNDESA, strengthening the capacity not only of targeted city and national institutions officials but also of COs and local implementing staff.
- Foster strong relationships with municipal stakeholders by involving municipal authorities through a dedicated team and committee, which has proven to be effective in garnering support.
- Prioritize the localization of processes by involving local stakeholders and communities and understanding their needs. Enhancing localization represents a crucial opportunity at the municipal level to showcase initiative achievements and address societal needs effectively.
- Establish partnerships with national and local governments, emphasizing the importance of securing the full buy-in of mayors or equivalent officials at both technical and political levels.
- The VLR process in pilot cities has benefited from using established methodologies and practical guidelines, providing a systemic process. It is important to offer a common implementation process adaptable to different contexts, ultimately allowing for city-specific adaptations.
- Emphasize the significance of capacity strengthening processes for both city and country officials' teams, as well as for project implementing staff at Country Offices and engaged consultants. The guidance provided by experts from implementing partners and the resources developed by them, both within and prior to the project, serve as valuable assets for local staff, ensuring enhanced project impact and greater sustainability of achieved outcomes.
- The exchange of practices and experiences between pilot cities at the regional level works very well, as the project is effective on a regional scale. Cities are satisfied because they are part of a global movement, with opportunities to present their experiences at advocacy events.
- When discussing SDG localization, having a top-down management approach for a global-scale project is neither feasible nor appropriate. Closer coordination from UN-Habitat HQ to local levels is necessary for a tailored implementation, giving more responsibility to RO, COs and local implementing team. The project proved to be effective in this, also strengthening capacities of local staff, which is beneficial in terms of sustainability and replicability in other cities.
- The project established regional coordination mechanisms to implement activities in target countries and cities, as well as at the regional level. Most staff from the implementing partners indicated that the regional coordination proved to be effective and efficient. This should act as a supplementary to global coordination mechanism, not as a substitute.
- Successful trust-building among implementing partners at the regional level, involving UN Commissions, UN-Habitat Regional Offices, and national implementing staff, led to smoother budget and planning processes.
- Complex SDG localization initiatives require a smooth project design and enhanced communication and transparency in decision making, which lead to more effective implementation.

5.3. Recommendations

This sub-section provides the main recommendations, addressed to the recipients of the mid-term evaluation, the lead partner and the implementing partners. The recommendations relate both to the evaluated project and to future similar initiatives.

Enhancing Project Management and Collaboration

- Better define project governance and decision making, engaging implementing partners in the co-design of the project's activities and budget prior to submission. An improved clarity of the roles of all

implementing partners and various UN-Habitat offices at the regional and country levels could have facilitated the creation of a global framework, which was hindered by differing viewpoints.

- Along with the regional coordination mechanisms that proved to be effective within the project, given its global scale, it is advisable to hold periodic global meetings among implementing partners at least every six months (provided that the project document refers to bi-monthly meetings) to strengthen the network and share project updates. This project could benefit from better coordination to regularly convene implementing partners.
- Promote multi-agency collaboration on SDG localization at regional and country levels to avoid reliance on a single agency as the sole implementer. Collaborative efforts can provide clarity to counterparts in countries and cities, as well as enhance effectiveness and consistency. Indeed, while the "One UN" approach, with coordinated efforts from United Nations Country Teams, is highly valued, it requires sustained effort.

Project Potential and Long-Term Impact

- The project has immense potential for working on SDGs at the local level through VLR processes and stakeholder engagement. To make it transformative in the long term, it needs to be anchored in a broader system. While strategic plans focusing on SDGs at the city level are beneficial, there must be a way to influence national policies and secure funding for SDG initiatives. The MLG process should aim to institutionalize these processes at both the city and country levels, especially by anchoring VLR processes to VNR cycles.
- Financing is crucial to ensure that the outcomes of the VLR process are concrete and transformative, making a real difference at city level.

Data

- Increase collaboration and coordination with national and regional institutions, particularly for data collection. It's crucial to clearly identify the project's target audience to construct accurate indicators.
- The project's objective is to check the availability of local data, revealing a significant data gap. Local data is fundamental for improving SDG localization. Accelerating data collection using new technologies and involving youth and citizens is essential to reflect the local situation accurately.
- In none of the pilot cities new data were created, with the process relying only on existing data. Participatory processes helped bridge the data gap partially, but resources were lacking for new data creation. Addressing the data gap at the city level requires creating new data, which is a long and costly process. Although it was known from the start that new data creation would not be feasible, a spin-off project could focus on data creation to elevate assessment and monitoring.

Municipalities and Local Stakeholders Engagement

- Provide concise explanations of methodologies and approaches to city officials to streamline the implementation process, considering their time constraints. Ensure that the VLR process is deemed relevant for a city by demonstrating its usefulness and securing full ownership of the project. To integrate the VLR with the action plan, municipalities should take concrete actions, emphasizing the importance of action-oriented VLRS as suggested by UN-Habitat.
- Ensure the presence of a proficient technical team in each pilot city capable of engaging with municipal staff to ensure their awareness and full commitment to the project, facilitating data collection and stakeholder engagement.
- Showcase international cases, such as the Nakuru dashboard, to inspire municipalities about the opportunity. Peer presentations have proven to be particularly effective in this regard. Organize workshops with peer learning exercises, bringing pilot cities together to facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building. These workshops should be organized both globally and regionally.

- Ensure the participation of high-level political or technical representatives in advocacy and exchange events on a case-by-case basis to enhance stakeholder engagement and support. Involve pilot cities in high-visibility events once VLR processes are underway or completed to overcome their initial knowledge limitations.

ANNEX 1 – List of stakeholders interviewed and documents reviewed

Name	Role/Organisation	Contact
Donor		
Annamaria Scuderi	2030 Agenda Sub-fund of the Peace Development Fund	scuderi@un.org
UN-Habitat		
Martino Miraglia	Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat, Project Coordinator	martino.miraglia@un.org
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Milan Bagale	UN-Habitat focal point for the project - Nepal	milan.bagale@un.org
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Mejdi Frihi	UN-Habitat Country Office - Tunisia	
Other implementing partners		
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Omar Siddique	UNESCAP	omar.siddique@un.org
Sukaina Al Nasrawi	UNESCWA	al-nasrawi@un.org
Pilot countries - Africa		
The Gambia		
Juliet Mekone Sale	Local Coordinator - Regional Director for West Africa, UCLG Africa	jmsale@uclga.org
Sait Matty Jaw	Local Consultant - Executive Director of the Center for Research and Policy Development (CRPD)	saitjaw@gmail.com
Kenya		
Name	Role/Organ.	Contact
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Pilot countries – Asia Pacific		
Nepal		
Pratap Chhatkuli	VLR Team Leader (Consultant)	paruchhatkuli@gmail.com
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Philippines		
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Vudhidej Chamnikij	NESDC – International Affairs Division and urban development division	
Chanakod Chasidpon	NESDC – International Affairs Division and urban development division	
Pilot countries – Arab States		

Jordan		
Reem Halaseh	SDG Localization Expert (Irbid VLR Consultant)	reem.halaseh@undp.org
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Irene Saadeh	Ramallah City - head of sustainable development unit	i.saadeh@ramallah.ps
Tunisia		
Walid Bel haj ali	VLR Expert	

Project documents reviewed

- General project documents (DoA and budget)
- 1st progress report - 01.04.2022 - 30.09.2022
- 2nd progress report - 01.10.2022 - 31.03.2023
- 3rd progress report - 01.04.2023 - 30.09.2023
- 4th progress report - 01.10.2023 - 30.03.2024
- Global Urban Monitoring Framework guide (2022)
- Action-Oriented Voluntary Local Reviews methodology (2024)
- Learning Tool “Enhanced VLR for Green and Resilient Recovery and Transition”

ANNEX 2 – Agenda field visits

Kenya – Nairobi and Nakuru

Day 1 – April 29th

- Flight Florence - Nairobi

Day 2 – April 30th

- Martino Miraglia interview - General Programme implementation + Ghana
- Gaia Neal Aggarwal and George Wasonga interview – project implementation Nakuru
- Claudia Garcia Zaragoza Interview – HQ focal point Arab States and Asia Pacific + Capacity building
- Nagwa Lachine UN-Habitat RO Arab States (online)
- TEAM MEETING – project update + SDG Localization Framework

Day 3 – May 1st

- Travel Nairobi – Nakuru

Day 4 – May 2nd

- Macharia Thang'wa and Kamau Kuria David interview - County Government of Nakuru
- Gitau Thabanja and Festut Bor interview – Nakuru City
- Travel Nakuru – Nairobi

Day 5 – May 3rd

- Telman Maharramov interview - Africa - The Gambia
- Marta Rodó Masriera interview - Advocacy Engagement

Day 6th – May 4th

- Flight Nairobi - Florence

