

FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION – MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL, RURAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

Project: SAU10- 00119507 - support for national
spatial strategy 2030 in Saudi Arabia.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

CEDA	Council of Economic and Development Affairs
FSCP	Future Saudi Cities Programme
CPD	Country Programme Project
DASO	Development Authority Support Office
GIS	Geographical Information System
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
IC	Independent consultant
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MDP	Municipal Development Fund
MOH	Ministry Of Housing
MOMRA	Ministry of Municipal, Rural Affairs
MOMRAH	Ministry of Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NSP	National Spatial Planning
NSS	National Spatial Strategy
PD	Project Document
RCRC	Royal Commission of Riyadh City
RFP	Request For Proposal
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TPA	Town Planning Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nation Human Settlements Program
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The United Nations Development Programme UNDP Country Office (CO) in Saudi Arabia, hired an independent evaluator for final evaluation of its Project: SAU10- 00119507 - support for national spatial strategy 2030 in Saudi Arabia for the period 2020-2022. This final evaluation is conducted as part of a planned intervention aimed at re-positioning the project to help the MOMRAH deputyship meet its mandate. The purpose of the Evaluation of this project is to assess the progress and performance of the implementation of the project against its original purpose and objectives. The aim is, first, to inform the UNDP/UN-HABITAT and the KSA government whether the project delivered its intended objectives and achieved the desired results, (what is working well, and what needs more attention). Second, to what extent the project contributed to the priorities identified in the UNDP 2017 – 2021 CPD. Third to put on the table of both, UNDP/UN-HABITAT and Government of the KSA specific applicable recommendation for the foreseen interventions.

The evaluation based its analysis on the progress made towards the achievement of the outputs. It examined the extent to which these outputs contributed to the expected outcomes of the project for the period 2020-2022, as well as, the specific factors that have influenced, either positively or negatively, and the level of gender mainstreaming and gender equity in the formulation of the project and its operations.

The assessment combined an in-depth desk review and a large number of virtual interviews, Team and Zoom online interviews at the national, and local levels). Data collection was carried out during the period from June 19th to first week of July 2022 followed by additional interview.

The overall findings confirm that the project positively Impact on the medium- and long-term inclusive, transformed role of the MOMRAH and line ministries and authorities. Overall project components are aligned with national development priorities and sector strategies such as the MOMRAH sector strategy, NSS, and Saudi Arabia 2030 Vision on enhancing the quality of life for all and meet the needs and requirements of citizens.

UNDP/UN-HABITAT, both played a crucial role in supporting the institutional capacity performance, considering the human capacity, legal frameworks and financial aspects particularly in the implementation processes and procedures of the NSS. The provision of critical support to policy, strategy formulation was highly recognized by all stakeholders interviewed. The project clearly has promoted inclusiveness, and gender mainstreaming. Despite the emerging changes in the priorities of the national counterparts, and COVID-19 Pandemic, the cost of the project has been justified by the beneficiaries. The UNDP/UN-HABITAT team has continued to provide technical and substantive assistance.

The project logic was relevant, showing a balanced approach in terms of thematic sectoral coverage, as well as geographic focus and an appropriate emphasis was placed on engaging vulnerable groups, including women and youth. Women, youth directly targeted by some of the project outputs. These groups had been engaged through consultation workshops. Some components of project incorporated the advisory support approach.

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Relevance: The project is clearly linked to the program’s theory of change, and to the programme outputs¹. It has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcome level change. It is also visibly linked to the National Strategies as well as to the sectorial strategies of the MOMRAH, ministry of transportation and other line ministries.

Coherence: UNDP partnered with relevant United Nations agencies UN-HABITAT, drawing on their expertise in addressing the urban management, the planning reforms, revision of the planning act formulation regional and city strategies revision as well as direct advisory services in other legal aspects. Therefore, the project is critically responds to the priority changes that identified need by the partner.

Efficiency: The flexibility factor in the project implementation procedures and processes highly supported the success factors in meeting the changing environment in both internally and externally. The project was successful in supporting the establishment of an institutional framework for effective inter-organizations collaboration data collection, analysis, categorization and management of urban development aspects. Concerns about the efficiency of project support were related to implementation delays, which were sometimes attributable to the emerged challenges to the duties and responsibilities of the counterpart.

Effectiveness: The Government of Saudi Arabia is adopting the gradual implementation of the decentralization of planning, budgeting and implementation systems at regional and local levels. UNDP/UN-HABITAT shared with the target entities good practices from the world.

Sustainability: There are good examples of the integration of sustainable development principles across the project, particularly at design stage, but results were moderate due to the emerging challenges the project faced during the its implementation of the project.

The recommendations made are based on the findings related to the project achievements as out of the implementation progress of the main three specific objectives (outcomes), these are: Improved capacity for the Implementation of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS)2030, improved access to urban data between line ministries in NSS2030 platform, and Improved localizing sustainable urban development at national, regional and local authorities.

The overall rating of the project performance, using the five internationally agreed evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and a set of parameters for each criterion. A four-point rating scale is used, with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest. The overall all rating of the project is **three (3)**

Public administration support should focus more on strengthening the capacities of key institutions and related reform processes. A well-considered sector wide approach that strengthening the institutional performance capacities of municipalities should be prioritized, as it is critical for the gradual trend towards decentralized planning, budgeting and management of local development.

¹ UNDP, design and Appraisal stage quality assurance report, it is mentioned in the results and resources framework in the project document.

To ensure the sustainability prospects of capacity-development interventions, both, at individual and institutional levels, particularly in the local development finance, UNDP/UN-HABITAT should strengthen strategic linkages with relevant government ministries to ensure adequate budgetary provisions to sustain results at the end of the project implementation.

Based on concrete data, a well-considered sector wide approach to strengthening the institutional performance capacities of municipalities, for the foreseen interventions, UNDP should develop key performance indicators in the planning, budgeting, operation and maintenance and implementation areas aiming at annual measure of the municipal performance. that should be an incentive base approach for municipalities to enhance their capacities in the mentioned areas.

For an inclusive support to the gradual decentralization process, UNDP/UN-HABITAT should propose new initiatives that promote decentralization process and enhance municipal capacities., UNDP/UN-HABITAT need to capitalize on supporting municipal institutional performance capacities that strengthen the linkage between central, regional and local levels.

1. CHAPTER 1: background and introduction

The final evaluation aims at conducting an assessment, as impartially as possible. The purpose of this final evaluation of the project is being undertaken at the end of the project is to be forward looking. Accordingly it has attempt to: first, to provide an independent assessment of the project cycle and report progress under each of the three designated outcomes, to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of the UNDP/UN-HABITAT contributions to development results at the project level and the effectiveness of the UNDP/UN-HABITAT project implementation and responsiveness to the emerging needs due to merging the Ministry of Housing (MoH) with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA). Second, to assess the impact and to ensure that the project has delivered its intended objectives to inform UNDP/UN-HABTAT and the national related entities the development of further interventions related to the technical support of the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2030.

Based on the overall evaluation guidance and methodology as elaborated in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results², the Terms of References of the Final evaluation of the project, and based interviewed informants, as well as available documents, the final evaluation comprised analysis of existing sources and consultations with stakeholders. All relevant sources of information had been reviewed, such as project document, progress reports, UNDP/Saudi Arabia Country Programme Document CPD and other materials considered useful for the assessment (please See documents reviewed in the annexes). intended to cover activities whether they are achieved or likely to be achieved.

Chapter one of this report presents the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation as well as the methodology applied. Chapter two outlines the country and project context including the project related outputs of current UNDP programme in the KSA, and the evaluation methodology and insight facts about the project. Chapter three is presenting the key finding, conclusion, recommendations and lessons

2 UNDP- Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results, NY 2009
<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>

learned. The evaluation was conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Saudi Arabia, and UNDP /Riyadh country office.

1.1. country and project context

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) spans the vast majority of the Arabian Peninsula, with a land area of approximately 2,150,000 km² (830,000 sq. mi). Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East, and the second-largest country in the Arab world with a rapidly growing population of 35,013,414 in 2020 the majority of which lives in urban areas. Even though there are about 258 urban centres, the five cities of Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah, Madinah, and Dammam host 45% of the overall population, with projections of constant increases in urbanization by 2025. Such a high level of urbanization poses a host of challenges to development and its sustainability. In fact, urbanization is believed to be integrally linked to the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development; social development; and environmental protection. Challenges specific to the national context of Saudi Arabia include the increasing demand for municipal services.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed remarkable development over the decades that have positively impacted all aspects of life throughout the Kingdom. Extensive and advanced infrastructure projects have been implemented, resulting in the Kingdom moving from an underdeveloped status to a middle-income country with all the means of a promising and sustainable future. Saudi Arabia has made a major achievement with regard to the political and economic empowerment of women, who account for 20 percent of members of the Shura Council. Women voted and stood as candidates in municipal elections for the first time in December 2015. The voting age was lowered to 18 to allow for more youth participation. Twenty-one women secured municipal council seats in different regions of the country. Women’s participation in the job market is increasing, and new work opportunities have been opening in the private sector.

It is profoundly stated in the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, **Quoting:** “Our cities have grown significantly in recent decades; a growth which has been accompanied by the steady development of their infrastructure. To ensure we can continue to enhance the quality of life for all and meet the needs and requirements of our citizens, we will continue to ensure high quality services such as water, electricity, public transport and roads are properly provided. Open and landscaped areas will also be developed further, to meet the recreational needs of individuals and families.”³ Among the Vision goals by 2030 is “to three cities be recognized in the top-ranked 100 cities in the world”.

The 1st phase of the Future Saudi Cities Programme (FSCP), a project funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and implemented by UN-Habitat jointly with UNDP to support the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA) was concluded in February 2020. Over the last 6 years, this project has filled a significant knowledge gap on the Saudi planning system and produced several detailed studies of urban institutions, governance, municipal finance and spatial planning while engaging public and private stakeholders, and youth and women. The goal of the project was to review the planning system and the legal framework that governs it, recommended changes and support capacity building to strengthen the planning system

³ Vision 2030, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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with the objective to provide more liveable cities according to Saudi needs and priorities. The program built a system reform that has the following central elements of change:

- Improved coordination between development planning, the planning system and sectoral priorities
- Ensure vertical accountability between plans
- Increased systematisation should improve the ability to deliver policy through the system
- Increase horizontal (or geographic) consistency of content and processes
- Enhanced core content of plans to increase effectiveness and transparency
- In the plan approval process, provide direct funding for the implementation of catalytic elements of plans.

This 2nd phase of the project -Subject to this final evaluation-, built on the lessons learned from the 1st phase with a focus on technical support of planning reforms at the national, regional and city level. It supported the outcomes of the 1st phase through the new regional and local strategies prepared by the deputyship of town planning in addition to supporting the NSS implementation and technical support to the deputyship in Planning Act or other legal documents, based on evidence collected in the 1st phase and other MOMRA initiatives.

The project “Support for National Spatial Strategy 2030 in Saudi Arabia with a focus on technical support of planning reforms at the national, regional and city level”. In addition, the project is designed to provide advisory services in novel areas of interest to the urban planning and management sector. It is started on 10 May 2020 to the planned end on 09 November 2022. It targeted The Ministry of Municipalities, Rural areas and Housing MOMRAH in general and the deputyship of town planning in particular. It built on the lessons learned from the 1st phase with a focus on technical support of planning reforms at the national, regional and city level. The project has been designed to boost the capacity of the Government to achieve the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) along with their alignment with the Vision 2030. It has been implemented jointly by UNDP and UN-Habitat envisages the support to the NSS implementation Office, with specific focus on capacity development, Access to urban data, and localizing sustainable urban development.

Obviously, the project is aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which was developed by the UN country team in July 2016, almost at the same time with the Saudi National Vision 2030 launched in June 2016 and with the Sectorial National Transformation programme 2020. The CPD focuses on three major Pillars:

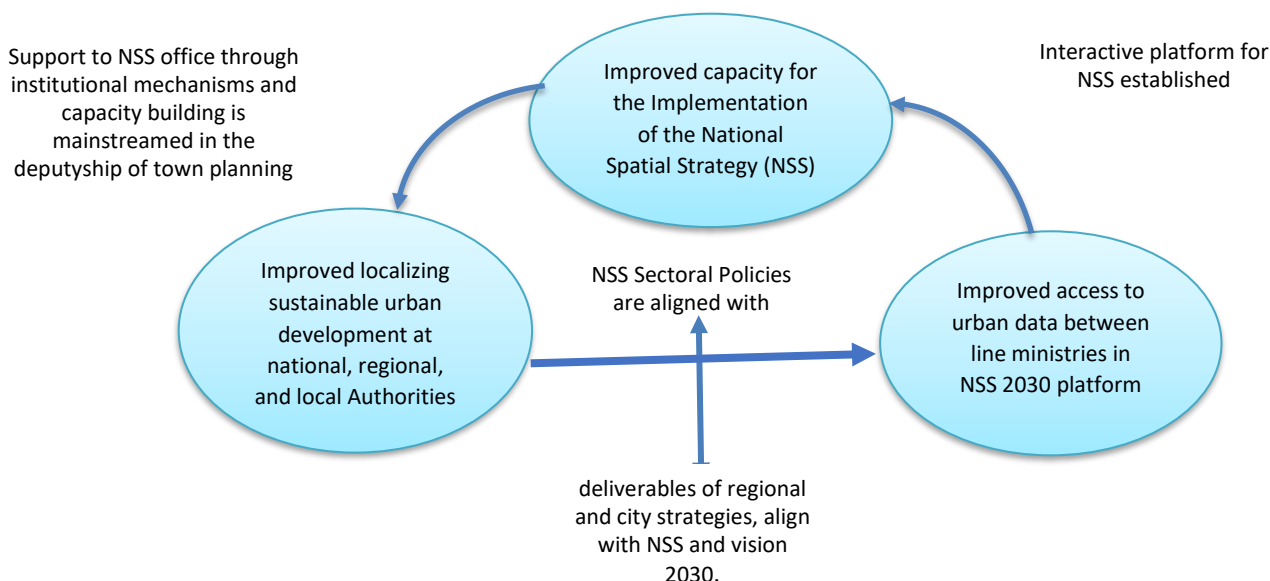
- Knowledge-based, equitable sustainable economic and social development
- Equitable, accountable, effective and efficient Public Sector
- Sustainable natural and cultural resources management

This project contributed in achieving part of the objectives of the second pillar which is Equitable, accountable, effective and efficient Public Sector

This evaluation process covered all activities held during the span of the project between (10 May 2020 to 09 Nov 2022) and highlight issues and recommendations in all aspects (technical, financial, management, structural and operational), including the effective use of resources and delivery outputs.

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In addition, the evaluation assessed how the intervention sought to mainstream gender in development efforts, considered disability issues and applied the rights-based approach.



The addressed general questions intended to capture on: what did the project intend to achieve during the period under review 2020-2022., to what extent has the project achieved (Or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives, to what extent has UNDP/UN-HABITAT been able to adapt to the emerged changes in terms of preparedness, response and recovery process, and what is the sustainability of results?

The overall Challenges occurred during the implementation of the project can be summarized as follows⁴:

- ⇒ COVID 19 Pandemic.
- ⇒ The national urban strategy has not been approved by the Council of Economic and Development to date, which has affected the implementation of some of the outputs of the national urban strategy.
- ⇒ The changes in responsibilities between the District Development Authority Support Office and the Town Planning Agency, which lead to a change in the target regions and cities that the project will serve.
- ⇒ The impact of the new priorities on the progress of the project's tasks as planned in advance (spatial planning program and urban landscape, urban code)
- ⇒ Delay in the delivery of outputs by a consortium of strategic projects advisory areas due to the change of the agreed outputs and the absence of the coalition experts in the field.

⁴ MOMRAH, Information about projects (ARABIC) support to urban strategy

1.2 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

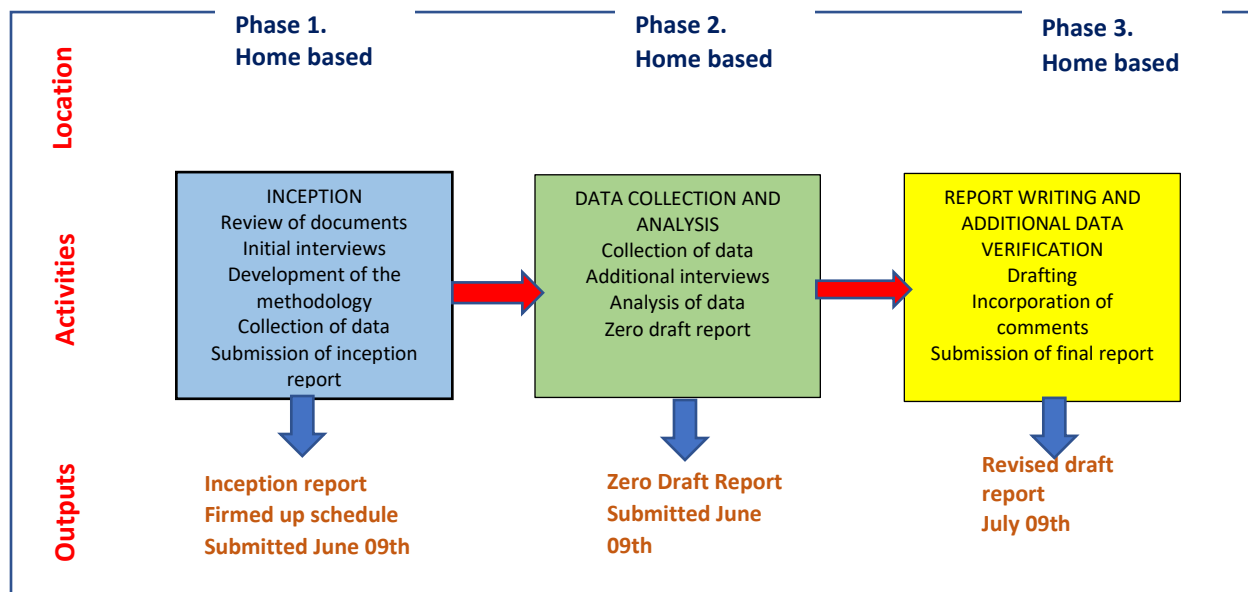


Figure 1: The process -- phases of the evaluation

The evaluator (consultant) follows the methodology as described in the Terms of Reference. The evaluation implemented in three phases - the: i) inception, ii) data collection; and iii) report writing (Figure 1).

The evaluation based its analysis on the outcomes presented by the project for the period 2020-2022. It looked at each of the planned outcomes and their respective links to the strategic objectives of the project, those are presented in the Theory of Change.

The effectiveness of the project was evaluated through the analysis of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected outputs and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the expected outcomes of the project. To better understand the project performance and the sustainability of results, the independent consultant (evaluator) examined the specific factors that have influenced the project, either positively or negatively. The capacity of UNDP/UN-HABITAT to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to national development needs and priorities was also examined. The evaluation, examined the level of gender mainstreaming and gender equity in the formulation of the project and its operations, and the results achieved

The assessment combined in-depth desk review and a large number of virtual interviews, Team and Zoom online interviews at the national, and local levels). The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project consideration of ethics. The project is guided by the human rights strategy, the engagement of the different stakeholders and addressing the needs of all beneficiaries, it ensured human rights are not violated. social inclusion had been addressed during the revision of urban planning laws and other laws.

Data collection was carried out during the period from June 19th to first week of July 2022. To answer the evaluation questions, the evaluator collected and triangulated data from the following sources:

- ☞ Document review this included a review of all relevant documentation, such as project document, project quality assurance report, Annual workplans, activity design, consolidated quarterly and annual progress reports Progress reports, programme and project quality assurance report, and financial reports for the funding analysis required as per the evaluation questions.
- ☞ Data collection and analysis; the consultant verified the data collected through, structured interview with key informant, from all involved stakeholders’ documents and reports, this ensured verification of data from the various data sources. The field visits were not conducted due to the delay in issuing the entry visa.
- ☞ Visual interviews and meetings with key stakeholders, counterpart and involved officials from MOMRAH various departments, ministry of Economy and planning, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, and mayor of AL BAHA. (Please see Annex 2)
- ☞ Semi-structured Interviews, that based on questions designed for different stakeholders based on evaluation questions around relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. (Please see Annex 2)

The principal products of the evaluation are:

An inception report that laid out the scope, methodology and workplan for the evaluation; **main evaluation report** laying out key findings and recommendations to inform the preparation of the forthcoming Interventions.

Evaluation Limitations

Due to the delay in issuing entry Visa for the consultant, field beneficiaries’ informants were not reached, related interventions were assessed based on a review of available project documentation, such as project document, progress reports and implementation plans. These were generally not readily retrievable or were of limited utility due to a focus on activity reporting. The evaluation interviews were conducted remotely, field visits were not applicable. The actual up-to date expenditure per outcome were not available.

1.3 project assessed

As part of the UNDP/Saudi Arabia Country Programme Initiatives, UNDP in May 2020, in close consultation with national /regional /global partners- such as UN-HABITAT, has developed the project document titled “support for National Spatial Strategy 2030 in Saudi Arabia” (subject to this final evaluation). The project is clearly linked to the country programme (CPD), and to the programme outputs⁵. The project was designed and organized around three specific priority areas (outcomes). The three outcomes have 17 outputs which are focused on upstream engagement with government implementing actors and institutions: Ministries, authorities, agencies, and departments (please see Annex 5). It has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcome level change and why the

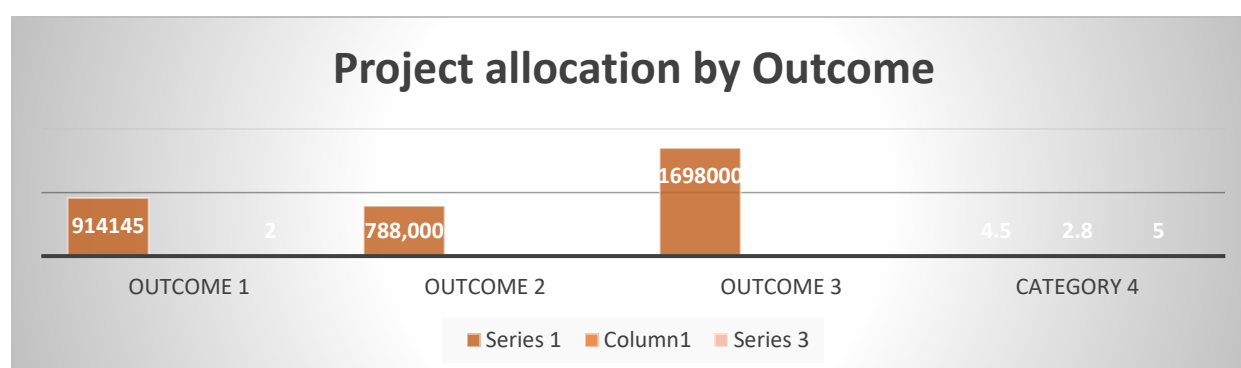
⁵ UNDP, design and Appraisal stage quality assurance report, it is mentioned in the results and resources framework in the project document.

project’s strategy will likely lead to this change. It is also visibly linked to the National Strategies as well as to the sectorial strategies of the MOMRAH, and ministry of transportation and other line ministries.

This project is the 2nd phase of the program builds on the lessons learned from the 1st phase with a focus on technical support of planning reforms at the national, regional and city level. This intended to support the outcomes of the 1st phase through the new regional and local strategies. Those should be prepared by the deputyship of town planning during the project life cycle, in addition to supporting the NSS implementation and technical support to the deputyship in Planning Act or other legal documents⁶

Aiming at supporting the institutional performance sustainability of the deputyship, this project has been designed to boost the capacity of the government to achieve the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) along with their alignment with the Vision 2030. It particularly envisages the support to the NSS implementation Office established inside the deputyship of town planning with specific focus on the following outcomes:

1. Improved capacity for the Implementation of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS)2030
2. Improved access to urban data between line ministries in NSS 2030 platform
3. Improved localizing sustainable urban development at national, regional and local authorities.



As the project design indicated that, women, youth will be directly targeted by some of the project outputs. These groups were engaged through consultation workshops. (Found in the project document). Outputs and indicators of the results framework include explicit references to gender equity, and specific indicators measure and monitor results to ensure women are fully benefitting from the project. The gender strategy addressed through the focus of UNDP/UN-HABITAT in ensuring that the issue is well addressed in the TORs for the strategies for both regions and cities as well as all the process and milestones to realize those strategies. When giving recommendations to urban planning laws and other laws, the project should also consider giving gender inclusive recommendations. Also, the gender component and analysis will be accommodated in the new guidelines that will be prepared. The focus on attracting both females and males in workshops and capacity building activities will be also an important dimension and ensuring equal participations as well as equal addressing of their problems as well as their needs and aspirations for the future of Saudi Cities. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the key expected development changes.

⁶ Found in the project document.

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In addition to these outcomes, the project is designed to provide advisory services in novel areas of interest to the urban planning and management sector. The project, based on available budget, will provide technical assistance to various activities operated within the deputyship of Town Planning including the emerging urban planning issues within the deputyship mandate.

Project budget and expenditure per year 2020-2022 (USD)

	2020	2021	2022	Total
Cost sharing received	2,515,438.12	-	1,232,675.91	3,748,114.03
Expenses	3,588.09	1,092,369.79	378,185/15	
GMS	107.64	32,771.09	11,345.55	
Total with GMS	3,695.73	1,125,140.88	389,530.70	1,518,367.31
Remaining Balance				2,229,746.72

Source: UNDP/Riyadh, Finance department

While the designed (received) total budget is 3,748,114.03, the total, the total expenditures up to date is \$1,518,367.31. The remaining Balance of the received cost sharing is **\$2,229,746.72, almost two third of the allocated (received Budget)**. Yet there are a bulk of designated interventions are not implemented. For example, as of 31 Dec 2021 the expenditures on outcome 3. of the project is \$644.966 USD which represents 56.7 % of the total allocated amount.⁷Quoting from UN_HABIATA comments “on May 2022, the actual expenditures for UN-HABITAT (outcome 3) of the project is \$1,100,517.73” end of Qute. The discrepancies in the amount of expenditures is because the project delivered reports from UN-HABITAT were not delivered on the time I was drafting the report.

CHAPTER 2: key findings

The analysis of the project focused on the planned three main outcomes including the cross-cutting issues Section 2.1 presents the overall performance rating of the project based on the DAC criteria. 2.2 presents narrative on the overall findings out of the progress made by the project implantation from 2020 to 2022. Section 2.3. focus on findings against OECD/DAC criteria for each outcome, it is mainly to enable the determination of the merit, worth or significance of the intervention areas under each outcome. Section 2.4. presents cross cutting issues including gender equality and women’s empowerment, partnerships.

2.1. Overall performance rating of the project

Rational: The necessary workshops for capacity development of the institutional performance linked to the three outcomes were provided by using result base interventions. The project adopted both regular sessions and focused on- job training taking into consideration the national priorities and sector wide strategies. building on the lessons learned from the 1st phase, the project supported the data collection and analysis for reginal and cities strategies as well as localizing. Urban development at the national,

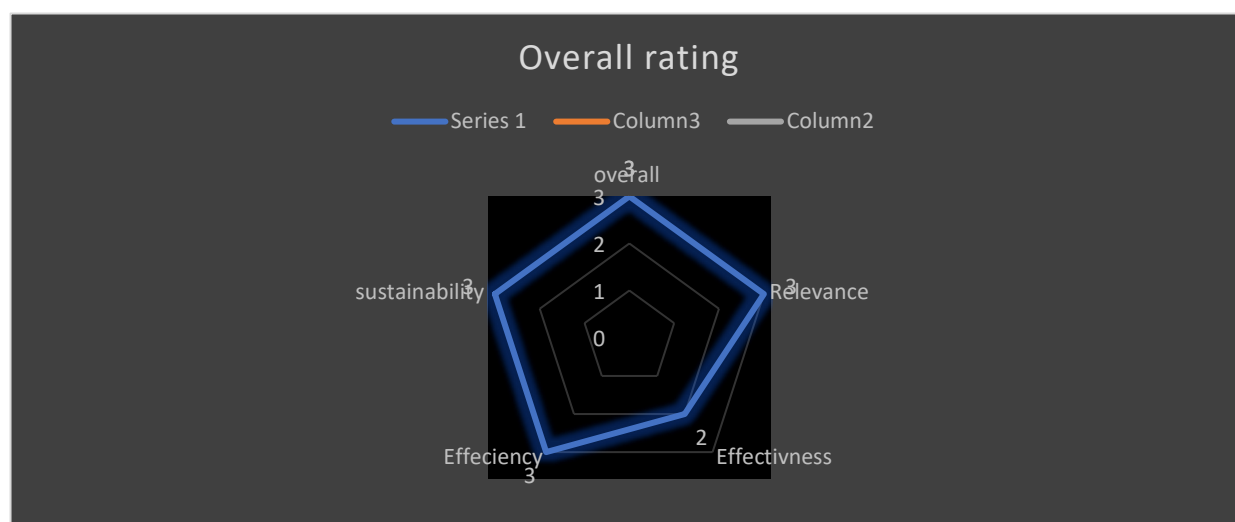
⁷ UNDP, quarterly progress report20201

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regional and city level. The complementarity between the three outcomes were reflected in achieved results.

Highlights: Due to COVID-19 and the emerged changes in responsibilities between the District Development Authority Support Office and the Town Planning Agency, which lead to a change in the target regions and cities that the project were implemented with a few delays.

The following chart and table provide the rating of the performance of the project, using the five internationally agreed evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and a set of parameters for each criterion. A four-point rating scale is used, with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest⁸. This table should be read considering the findings presented in following sections, which provide more detailed justification for the ratings.



Aggregated performance rating of the project

Key criteria and parameters	Score	Justification
1. RELEVANCE	3	
1.A. Adherence to National Development Priorities	3	Overall project components are aligned with National development priorities and sector strategies such as the MOMRAH sector strategy, NSS and the including Saudi Arabia 2030 Vision on enhancing the quality of life for all and meet the needs and requirements of our citizens. Among the Vision goals by 2030 is “to three cities be recognized in the top-ranked 100 cities in the world It is also, has been good in responding to legal, economic and institutional changes in the country.
1.B. Alignment with United Nations/UNDP goals	3	The project linked to the programme outcomes? (i.e., UNDAF Results Group Workplan/CPD, RPD and Strategic Plan. IT is also clearly linked to the program’s theory of change; it has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcome level change and why the project’s strategy will likely lead to this change.

⁸ See: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/library?categoryId=40>

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1.C. Relevance of programme logic	2	At design, the project logic was relevant, showing a balanced approach in terms of thematic sectoral coverage, as well as geographic focus and an appropriate emphasis was placed on engaging vulnerable groups, including women and youth. Women, youth directly targeted by some of the Project Outputs. These groups had been engaged through consultation workshops. found in PD.
2. COHERENCE	3	
2.A. Internal project coherence	3	The design of the project reflected complementarity between the three outcomes: Improved capacity for the Implementation of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS)2030, Improved access to urban data between line ministries in NSS 2030 platform and Improved localizing sustainable urban development at national, regional and local authorities. builds on the lessons learned from the 1st phase with a focus on technical support of planning reforms at the national, regional and city level.
2.B. External Project coherence	2	Some components of project incorporated the advisory support approach. UNDP partnered with relevant United Nations agencies UN-HABITAT, drawing on their expertise in addressing the urban management, the planning reforms, revision of the planning act formulation regional and city strategies revision, economic and municipal finance, as well as direct advisory services in other legal aspects. joint context analysis, and outcome progress reporting are not clearly demonstrated.
3. EFFECIENCY	3	
3.A Timeliness	2	Concerns about the efficiency of project support were related to implementation delays, which were sometimes attributable to the emerged challenges to the duties and responsibilities of the counterpart, such as the deputyship and the NSS implementing department programming environment and COVID-19.
3.B Management efficiency	3	UNDP/UN-HABITAT role in joint implementation received positive commentary, reflected the efficient management including the synergy in monitoring the progress and achievements evaluation procedures. The planned expenditures targets were not met due to internal and external factors described in the evaluation brief above.
4. EFFECTIVENESS	2	
4.A. Achieving stated outputs and outcomes	2	several outputs were achieved under the intended outcomes, particularly for capacity development of the institutional performance, localizing sustainable urban development at national, regional and local authority levels and to a lesser extent access to urban data between line ministries in NSS2030 platform. Emerging changes due to internal and external factors described in the evaluation brief above caused delay in achieving the target outputs. Contribution to municipal finance was slightly limited. Yet, knowing that the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is willing to support gradual move toward decentralization, UNDP/UN-HABITAT to focus their support on local level in the near future.

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4.B. Programme inclusiveness especially those at risk of being left behind	2	The project made significant effort to include all categories of the communities including women and youth. Overall, the results achieved have been beneficial to a moderate extent for involving women in the planning and implementation of the project intended outputs
4.C. Prioritizing gender equality and women’s empowerment	3	The project addressed the equal participation of men and women as well as equal addressing their problems, but gender results remained at the level of in ensuring that the issue is well addressed in the TORs for the strategies for both regions and cities as well as all the process and milestones to realize those strategies.
4.D. Programming processes Adhered to sustainable development principles	2	There are examples of the integration of sustainable development principles across the project, particularly at design stage, but results were moderate due to the emerging challenges the project faced in its implantation life cycle.
5. SUSTAINABILITY	3	
5.A. Sustainable capacity	3	The country programme was developed in collaboration with Government and implemented using NIM modality, jointly at national and local levels, indicating government ownership. However, the institutional, and individual capacity-building needed to sustain interventions required better thought through strategies to establish sustainability and long-term municipal development programs and urban development initiatives.
5.B. Financing for development	2	The project achievements on municipal financing for development and the SDGs is at an early stage. UNDP is also needs to propose a local government and local development financing project

2.2. Overall Findings

Confirm that the project positively impacts the medium- and long-term inclusive, transformed role of the MOMRAH particularly, the deputyship for town planning, and other line ministries and Authorities. Despite the emerging changes in the priorities of the national counterparts (MOMRAH), and the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic, the UNDP/UN-HABITAT has continued to provide technical and substantive assistance, including competent experts to deliver the key functions under the project to ensure a successful outcome.

Interventions within Outcome 2 of the UNDP CP are aiming at enhancing public sector through improved efficiency, effectiveness, equity and accountability. It is closely aligned with the strategic directions of the government and the UN system globally. This project is implemented within the ongoing CPD based on the lessons learnt from the previous phase. A wide set of under the scope of technical assistance is provided in order to assist the Deputyship departments in their reform processes. There is a clear coherence between the objectives and scope of interventions.

UNDP and UN-HABITAT synergic role, especially in the capacity development has been built on the lessons learned from the phase one. The collaboration and full coordination between stakeholders in this area considered crucial by the government and local beneficiaries. The efficient use of resources (human

and financial) has been the main and most sustained source of support. The feedback received from stakeholders and counterparts during the evaluation confirms how complementarily and vital was the institutional performance capacity development approach.

The partnership between UNDP CO and the KSA Government is covering vital sector, and areas which contributes to address the needs of partners (MOMRAH), including enhancement of the deputyship institutional capacity, different departments, and support to policy making and reporting. The partnership between UNDP and UN-HABITAT is an equity based one.

The effective and efficient project immediate respond is highly valued, the feedback received from beneficiaries during the evaluation confirms the visible response of the project, and express how relevant and vital was the project's intended interventions. The immediate respond to the emerging needs considered critical by the national stakeholders.

The flexibility factor in the project implementation procedures and processes highly supported the success factors in meeting the changing environment in both internally and externally. Change in the polices and plans in the country was mitigated by pooling human more resources to support the deputyships in areas that required direct policy advise (Rural classification, population distribution, white land policy and urban boundary change).

Despite the unforeseen delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and emerged changes in the duties and responsibilities of the Deputyship, the project team committed to staying on track with the set work plan. Collaboration and synergies between the National Urban Strategy Office, UNDP and the Un-HABITAT teams have greatly improved the harmonization between the teams and the establishment of communication and reporting systems.

Supporting sustainable municipal services in the rural areas, the project technically provided MOMRAH with insight study on the classification of village services approach which has been designed to support the ministry in achieving its strategic objectives by adopting the prepared general work plan for implementation including the main tasks and time frames. Furthermore, in supporting the growth direction of small cities, the project conducted threshold analysis and provided scenarios and better understanding on the relative importance of the multiple biophysical, social and economic determinants that influence the urban form and patterns of urbanization. Measures on environmental risks had been introduced.

Yes, the previous phase 1 project, had focused on capacity building and this 2nd phases also does. But several challenges remain to ensure the sustainability of those gains in the longer term. These challenges include municipal financing related aspects, local economic development system, and putting cities on the track that fulfill the 2030 vision on having three Saudi cities among the 100 cities in the world.

Yet, the lack of clear exit strategy reduced the sustainability and scale-up of interventions. Supported institutions could not maintain completed initiatives, while beneficiaries consistently requested more time and support to keep their activities going in line with National Vision 2030, Sectorial strategies and Policies.

2.3. Analysis Evaluation of the intervention against OECD/DAC criteria.

Building from data gathered and on the analytical results drawn from the project performance, the following specific findings are in relation to the five evaluation criteria (relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability). The purpose of the finding under each criterion is linked to the purpose of evaluation itself, it is mainly to enable the determination of the merit, worth or significance of the intervention areas under each outcome.

RELEVANCE/ COHERENCE:

Under this Criterion the intention is to find out the extent to which the project's designed and implemented interventions respond to beneficiaries, partners/institution's needs, policies and priorities, and continue to do so when circumstances had been changed.

The project aligned with the national vision 2030, and NSS, including the national development priorities: Objectives of the implemented and ongoing interventions are in line with those of the national partner. Interventions focused mainly on providing institutional capacity development support to MOMRAH, especially, the deputyship for town planning, particularly the NSS implementation office in the areas such as national sectorial policies, regional policies, developed the organization structure of the supported institutions, developed procedural guide on horizontal and vertical of the NSS policy development support. This is perfectly in line with the national priorities as set in the NSS, and with the sectorial strategy for the ministry of Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing, with their alignment with the KSA Vision 2030. The selected activities are at appropriate level, and achieved results are combined by result oriented indicators.

Clearly aligned with the KSA country Programme Document: The main strategic thrust of the country programme is to support Saudi Arabia in its vision of a diversified economy for sustainable development, recognizing the underlying and root causes for the challenges and taking into account the national vision and plans. Under the KSA Country Programme Document CPD, the focus is on three major Pillars, those are: Knowledge-based, equitable sustainable economic and social development, Equitable, accountable, effective and efficient Public Sector, Sustainable natural and cultural resources management. This project is in line with of the second pillar which is Equitable, accountable, effective and efficient Public Sector. It is contributed in achieving part of the pillar intended objectives.

The office of NSS implementation have gained guidance to conduct key functions. Yet, despite that, the office faces few challenges, such as the National Urban Strategy which is waiting to be approved by the Council of Economic and Development Affairs, and Change in responsibilities between the Development Agency Support Office and the Town Planning deputyship. The project provided support in public policies, particularly those of national sectorial policies to ensure the NSS policies are integrated in the sectorial policies and their spatial impact maximized. This is done throughout aligning ministerial policies with the NSS sectorial policies.

There is clear a harmony between involved line ministries and Authorities. The project adopted a clear strategy specifying how the project will use national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluations, etc.,) to the extent possible? for example, the on-job learning support for the preparation of Key

Performance Indicator for urban planning and regional strategies, in addition to the continuing support to the preparation processes and procedures of the Planning act, had established a complementarily collaborative actions among all national and international involved stakeholders.

EFFECTIVENESS:

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. What are the main challenges that delayed or hinder achieving certain outputs?

Providing Deputyship with Sectoral public policy support, the project supported the MOMRAH with technical support to assure that the NSS policies are integrated in the sectoral policies and their spatial impact is maximized. several focus group meetings related to NSS had been organized that relevant to best practices in regional planning and alignment with national urban development plans. In line with the NSS objectives such as initiatives of “improving the Urban Scene” and “Spatial Development Priorities, the project continues the engagement support to MOMRAH deputyships.

The project was not able to achieve its all target indicators related to interventions designed and updated during the lifetime of the program. For example, in providing the deputyship with sectoral public policy support, the project supposed to provide 8 policies in the first year and 14 in the second year, 28 sectoral policies are aligned with the pending current NSS.⁹ The project also supposed to Support the integration of NSS policies into relevant MOMRAH’s and other stakeholders’ initiatives, 6 Initiatives in MOMRA are aligned with NSS. but 2 initiatives are aligned including Urban Code and Urban Design Guidelines, in addition to the Visual Appeal Initiative.

UNDP/UN-HABITAT with long experience in working in this area were able to implement the project as planned and where able to implement activities despite the emerged changes in policies and priorities for the benefit of the MOMRAH and line authorities. within the agreed upon time table. The project was able to support significant activities and provided different items such as, on-job training and regular training sessions. The budget was managed properly. The implementation process used different approaches to utilize the resources in an efficient manner, the national procurement was used.

UNDP/UN-HABITAT, is becoming the think tank advisor for the MOMRAH. The overall intervention in supporting the urban transformation sector wide approach adopted by UNDP/UN-HABITAT, including the support for the provision of the layout of the job descriptions for NSS, capacity development both the selection of thematic areas and the senior trainers, and supporting the pressing need such as regional plans, master plans and local plans are considered crucial to feed in the achievements of the KSA 2030 vision objectives

EFFICIENCY

The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. how well are resources being used? how often the implementing agencies are immediate responding to

⁹ Annual Progress Report 2021 United Nations Development Programme Saudi Arabia Project: SAU10-118640 - Technical Support for Implementation of National Spatial Strategy 2030 Dec 2021

your needs? To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP/ UN-Habitat ensure effective and efficient project management?

UNDP/UN-HABITAT key role is recognized by all stakeholders interviewed, they recognized the valuable contribution of the UNDP/UN-HABITAT in supporting the institutional capacities implementing the NSS as well as providing critical support to policy, strategy formulation. Both has played, still playing and to continue playing a significant role during the life cycle of the project. Most of the involved stakeholders considered UNDP/UN-HABITAT well-presented and still a trusted, well capacitated implementing agency.

Challenges to implementation include constant and continuous revisions and urban planning reforms, such as changing in the request For Proposals RFP of the regional and city strategies, changing of the governance and the expected roles that Development Authorities Support Office (DASO) in some regions such as (Tabuk, Jazan, and Al-Baha). However, as a way of mitigation, the project extended their policy advise functions of the agreement to several polices that are related to the project’s subject and scope, which is very healthy and important for the project side.

The project, introduced new approaches that didn’t exist in phase one, from 2020, the project developed a more systematic initiative for promoting a territorial development approach (regional studios) in two additional clusters, within a larger framework enabled by EU funding. LGRDP II also developed throughout its implementation close synergies and co-operation with line ministries and authorities such as ministry of economy and the Development Authority Support Office

Efficiency has been reflected not only on the project implementation but also on the operation of the Government related department. The NSS implementation office of the deputyship of urban planning, the department is adopting the integrated approach between the best practices in planning and planning in the KSA. The qualitative level of deliverable is more efficient due to the interventions done under the project as well as the professional staff who were part of these interventions. Among elements were considered to be utilized very efficiently, the decision-making process was efficient in taking the right decision at the right time with no delay. Yet, no specific measures for ensuring cost-efficient use of resources was mentioned as part of the project design.

The Project promoted knowledge exchange between the Government of KSA with Countries undergoing similar policy reforms in the NSS implementation. MOMRAH participated in global events such as world Urban Form to share experience and learn lessons with other partners in the area where the project working, and credible evidence supports the engagement of UNDP/UN-HABITAT and partners through the project. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have been considered.

The project’s budget is at the activity level with funding sources, and is specified for the duration of the project period in two-years budget. The budget of the project was \$3,733,333 million two years. The amount of \$1,518,367.32 has been disbursed and it was considered to be realistic in terms of the activities implemented over the period. The project was extended up to Nov, 2022 to allow for the interventions to be implemented. Costs are supported with valid estimates using benchmarks from similar projects or activities. Adequate costs for monitoring, evaluation, communications and security have been incorporated. (Please see Annex 7)

The project had developed M&E Plane included the quality management for project activity results. Selection of outputs and activities were at an appropriate level. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the key expected development changes, each with credible data sources and populated baselines and targets, including gender sensitive, target group focused, sex-disaggregated indicators where appropriate. The project was monitored through, a quarterly bases assessment on the actual progress, based on the information from quarterly progress reports, progress reports are submitted to the project manager. Annual reports were prepared by the project manager and shared with the project board and outcome board. The project included evaluation plan (End project evaluation).¹⁰

IMPACT

what difference does the intervention make? The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? What changes / transformations have taken place as a result of the project?

The impact of the interventions made by the project from 2020 to 2022, had been of evident on the ground. The Project was able to make a big positive change in the institutional performance of the deputyship of the town planning in terms of, (such as but not limited to) Strategic plans for the regions and cities such as of Al-Baha, Jazan, Najran, Northern Borders and Tabuk, significant participation in the preparation of the urban code, Proposing the organizational structure of the National Urban Observatory Center, supporting the agency and secretariats in reviewing local plans in cities, drafting a protocol of design studio activities to support the deputyship projects, Reviewing the preparation of urban development scopes for small gatherings in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah¹¹.

A national team is more capable of performing the tasks assigned to it with high professionalism. Capacity building to support the National Spatial Strategy. As part of the project Intended interventions in supporting the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing, a core component revolved around Training and Capacity Building (T&CB), at the national and local levels. Recently, in May and June, a training and capacity building sessions were conducted focusing on two thematic areas, which are: a. Sustainable and Inclusive Urban and Urban Development - Provided by Habitat. b. Urban Efficiency and Productivity - Provided by UNDP. Building on the on-job training these training courses surely contribute to capacity building of the involved staff, The track developed by UN Habitat is composed by 2 modules – 5 days each - that have been delivered between the 5th and the 23rd of June. 1)Integrated Urban Spatial Planning, 2)Inclusive Interactive Planning Processes, which in this respect retain values in the KSA. Yet, some evidence that key targeted groups have been consulted in the design of the project¹².

¹⁰Project documents: Technical Support to Implementation of National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2030

¹¹ Quarterly progress report 30/12/20221

SUSTAINABILITY

will the benefits last? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue? Will the activities in some way continue after the project? What could have been done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

A quite good number of implemented interventions within the three Outcomes were segments of long-term engagement with the Government, The project benefits and results are long term lasting results on the different levels of interventions related to the planning policies, institutions, to the infrastructure service provision, and to the knowledge and skills upgrade in some areas building on the recommendations from phase one of the project such as support capacity building to strengthen the planning system with the objective to provide more liveable cities according to Saudi needs and priorities. Some others have been relatively new, such as Improved localizing sustainable urban development at national, regional and local authorities. On the level of institutions, the change that was done under the project will have long effect on these organizations. The institutional capacities have been going under major changes in terms of human resources, structures and communication.

Change in the policies and plans in the country was mitigated by pooling more human resources to support the deputyships in areas that required direct policy advice (Rural classification, population distribution, white land policy and urban boundary change). Factors which supported this success have been flexible to meet the changing environment in both internally and externally. UNDP/UN-HABITAT showed flexibility to meet the changes of priorities and the changing environment in both internally and externally.¹³

Supporting the sector wide approach concept, UNDP/UN-HABITAT team is highly involved in other capacity development tasks than those indicated in outcome 1, and heavily engaged in the deputyship mandates, such as but not limited to: aligning the regional and city strategies with the NSS and vision 2030, including new emerging tasks into the urban codes, supporting the organizational setup of the Urban Observatory Centre, Supporting the deputyship and Amanahs in the review of Local Plans in cities. The alignment with the national policies as well as the other MOMRAH national initiatives gave sustainability to the approach because it has been based on efficiency models.

The institutional performance improvement and the capacity of the staff enhanced; those are long term lasting results on the different levels of interventions. These interventions include developed related training materials which are in the hands of the ministry and it owns them, therefore these training course materials can be used by the ministry trainers to deliver training to new employees in different subject matters. The knowledge and skills that were delivered to participants will help the participants to be more efficient, more informative of how to follow up the procedures and how to conduct their tasks in an efficient way with less time. These benefits will last for a long period of time and will affect positively the ministry effectiveness and efficiency in all aspects of its mandate, particularly the deputyship of town planning.

¹³Abstracted from Interview with key informants

Sustainable horizontal and vertical collaboration is enhanced. The collaboration and coordination among the main line actors in NSS, has been built on mutual cooperation. The platform is a significant example on the path of cooperation that was established under the project will continue. The methodological approach of reviewing the strategies of national, regional and city levels will contribute to the sustainability of the review process.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: GENDER MAINSTREAMING, ENVIRONMENT AND RESULT BASE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project paved the road for increase women participation. The project adopted the the gender strategy through the focus of UNDP and UN-Habitat in ensuring that the issue is well addressed in the TORs for the strategies for both regions and cities as well as all the process and milestones to realize those strategies. For example, When the project was giving recommendations to urban planning laws and other laws, has considered giving gender inclusive recommendations. Also, the gender component and analysis has accommodated in the newly prepared guidelines. During the implementation processes the focus was on attracting both females and males in workshops and capacity building activities which ensured to a certain extent gender balance participations and addressing of their challenges as well as their needs. The project adopted the Human Rights Strategy through the engagement of the different stakeholders and a addressing the needs of all beneficiaries that ensured human rights are not violated. social inclusion was heavily addressed when reviewing urban planning laws and other laws.

The project adopted the participatory approach in the identification and implementation processes of the intended interventions. In addition to the women participation in the capacity development workshops and thematic training sessions, the project document provided opportunities to include the women need and gender equity relating aspects in the project’s intended outputs and deliverables. Partnership with UN-HABITAT were also considered as additional support for enhancing UNDP’s contribution to women’s equity and participation aspects.

The climate change, youth and children, and elderly people related issues clearly addressed in the strategies for both regional and cities. The youth and elderly people are engaged in the conducted workshops. Disable people’s need is taken into consideration in the revision of strategies and proposals guidance.

The project has a plan for adaptation and course correction if regular monitoring activities, evaluation, and lesson learned demonstrate there are better approaches to achieve the intended results and/or circumstances change during implementation? The project had a strategy for strengthening specific capacities of related key national institutions and actors that based on a completed capacity assessment. This strategy includes an approach to regularly monitor national capacities using clear indicators and rigorous methods of data collection, and adjust the strategy to strengthen national capacities accordingly. Yet, there was always demand for NPC for better approaches to achieve the intended result.

CONCLUSIONS

confirm that the project positively Impact on the medium- and long-term inclusive, transformed role of the MOMRAH and line ministries and Authorities. Despite the emerging changes in the priorities of the

national counterparts, and COVID-19 Pandemic, the UNDP/UN-HABITAT has continued to provide technical and substantive assistance, including competent experts' nomination to deliver the key functions under the project to ensure a successful outcome in project directives ambitions;

UNDP/UN-HABITAT key role is recognized by all stakeholders interviewed, they recognized the valuable contribution of the UNDP/UN-HABITAT in supporting the institutional capacities in the implementation processes and procedures of the NSS as well as providing critical support to policy, strategy formulation. Both has played, still playing and to continue playing a significant role during the life cycle of the project. Most of the involved stakeholders considered UNDP/UN-HABITAT well-presented and still a trusted, well capacitated implementing agency;

The need (Demand) driven training workshops which had been conducted at the national, regional and local levels are in coherent to the Vision 2030, which is "a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation" to build on an effective, transparent, accountable, enabling and high-performing government¹⁴. The Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Development, and urban efficiency and productivity related capacity development interventions have had effectively executed. The integration of the Urban Code in the regional and city strategies especially those relevant to NSS objectives played a crucial role in the improving urban scene and special development priorities. For example, the direct (daily Basis) on-job involvement of UNDP and UN-habitat in providing quality assurance for the Al Baha Strategic plan is considered by counterparts a significant role in developing the organizational structure and the horizontal and vertical procedural guide for the NSS;

There is demonstrated continued commitment from UNDP/UN-HABITAT to strengthen the gender mainstreaming in the project strategy, planning and implementation, leading to more concerted efforts to address the concerns of women. Initiatives such addressing the gender related interventions through the focus in ensuring the gender mainstreaming in all expected results of the outcome1., the issue is well addressed in the TORs for the strategies for both regions and cities as well as all the process and milestones to realize those strategies. When giving recommendations to urban planning laws and other laws, the project consider giving gender inclusive recommendations. And also, the delay and fragmented implementation of the designed interventions reduced the potential to address involve more women in capacity development workshops. Despite some joint initiatives, there are insufficient efforts towards a holistic sector or issue-based responses. it was not clear how the project focused on attracting both females and males in workshops and capacity building activities as an important dimension and ensuring equal participations as well as equal addressing of their problems as well as their needs and aspirations for the future of Saudi Cities;

The project capacity development approach considered effectively in line with national priorities, by supporting line institutions at the national level, particularly the deputyship of town planning of MOMRAH working on the implementation of NSS. In this context, UN-HABITAT facilitated the organization of the Saudi delegation events at the Word Urban Forum 11, taking place in Katowice, Poland, from the 26th to

¹⁴ The Saudi Arabia 2030 vision is emphasizing on the development of the communities by enhancing all instruments and tools needed for achieving this objective.

the 31st of June 2022. The aim was to support Saudi delegation participation in many high-level events, support the holding of bilateral meetings with delegations from various countries.

The project's outcome one is critically responds to the identified need by the partner. The target groups are clearly specified, prioritizing groups left furthest behind. Women, youth will be directly targeted by some of the Project Outputs. These groups will be engaged through consultation workshops;

Supporting the monitoring and evaluation related inputs, the project interventions in this respect, clearly defined the KPIs for each action/policy through which the achievements and progress of each action/policy can be measured at the sectoral level in line with the objectives of Vision 2030, for example, measuring the policies at the district and city levels for six regions in relation to the objectives of the national urban strategy and indicators Key performance measurement considered critical to best practice strengthening activities;

The project was successful in supporting the establishment of an institutional framework for effective inter-organizations collaboration data collection, analysis, categorization and management of urban development aspects. Support to updated horizontal and vertical access to urban data between the line ministries in NSS 2030, the project contributed to smoothly effective exchange. updated planning related data provided by the establishment of the interactive platform for NSS that serving ministries, agencies, authorities, private sector, and investment entities in this respect at national, and local level considered to be critical inter-organizational collaboration initiative. This platform considered supporting the sustainable horizontal collaboration between the planning and development entities at all levels. The GIS department (Section) in the MOMRAH is a success example of data collection, analysis and verification. The section is for example but not limited is providing the regional, local and private sector with physical planning related data to be used in projection, calculation of the capacity and volumes of roads, water and sewerage networks for planning and development purposed. The project provided technical support related to database design and GIS analysis, to create an interactive urban platform that contains the relevant central strategies, in particular those that have a spatial dimension; In addition to identifying and harmonizing the data required in the strategies of regions and cities;

The efficient and effective planning reform activities performed such as planning act, city and regional strategies, as well as the provision of the advisory services, are critical to the sustainability of the NSS implementation processes and procedures. Yet, the limited Support the Municipal Finance performance for regional and city strategies by the project in general and this outcome in particular is slightly help the municipalities to strengthen their city fiscal space,

the project supported the national, regional and local levels to produce several subject related guidelines and guidance, such as, the draft national guideline for urban design which was prepared by the Urban Design Studio of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing. It is determining the principles and criteria based on the design, which will complement the plans and facilitate their implementation at the local level. In fact, this guide aims to assist stakeholders from the public and private sectors to enhance the livability of Saudi cities by improving the visual appeal of public spaces and spaces within the existing urban fabric and future projects. The key deliverables included, the regional and city strategic plan scope clarification, regional and city strategic plan checklist, (Both were tested in a number

of Amman /local levels such as Baha and Northern Borders), economic return on agricultural lands, methods to calculate green area per capita revision of methods to preserve agricultural lands in Baha Region, estimation of growth constraints for small and medium sized cities in KSA, supporting MOMRAH to prepare the New Urban Agenda Report for 2022;

A flagship intervention performed by the project on planning reforms by reviewing planning code wording, providing additional support by reviewing regional and city strategies as well as providing direct advisory services related to other legal aspects considered among other cornerstones that support gradual decentralization of local urban planning and Development. For example, as related to governance and legal review of laws and strategies for regions and cities, the project provided insight technical notes and advice on the Cities Classification Report, where many pilot cases have been carried out by companies to do the rating including best city reports ranking, and ranking procedures have become a very subjective exercise especially if they are not supported by detailed calculation methods and impartial sources.¹⁵

The On- job quality assurance support to the review and feedback of the master plans intended to improve the quality of the produced plans in several planning, environmental and architectural levels. The project contribution considered by national counter parts critical to the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of the intervention made in the NSS implementation processes. The review on AL Jawan Suburb Master Plan found out that the plan is not up to the required standards. The feedback was provided to MOMRAH and the consultant teams. project review included the review of the environmental study that was recommended by the team. The review and indeed the feedback included different option of the central park, the revised services study as well as the revised housing study. The study was submitted to the Royal Commission of Riyadh City RCRC with various workshops held to discuss the outcomes and to improve the final quality so that it could be accepted by RCRC different departments.¹⁶

the project has moderate focus on supporting the urban financial resilience aspect. Thus, supporting the performance of municipal finance for the strategies of regions and cities characterized by limited interventions that increase the city’s fiscal space which will enhance their capabilities in gradually moving from funding to financing of their planned urban development initiatives;

Yet, the lack of clear exit strategy reduced the sustainability and scale-up of interventions. Supported institutions could not maintain completed initiatives, while beneficiaries consistently requested more time and support to keep their activities going in line with National Vision 2030, Sectorial strategies Policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public administration support should focus on strengthening the capacities of key institutions which are related reform processes. A well-considered approach to strengthening the institutional

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¹⁶ Quarterly Progress Report United Nations Development Programme
Saudi Arabia, Project: SAU10- 118640 - Technical Support for Implementation of National Spatial Strategy 2030, Date: December, 29th 2021

performance capacities of municipalities should be prioritized, it is critical for the gradual trend towards decentralized planning, budgeting and management of local development.

UNDP/UN-HABITAT in addition to the focused support being made for the central level, a priority focuses on local level (municipal level) need to be in place to allow more sector wide approach aiming at strengthening the institutional performance capacities and policy processing.

With strong partnerships with the government at the national and regional levels, UNDP is strongly positioned to play a larger role in streamlining civil service and public administration capacities. UNDP may promote digital solutions for improving governance and social services. UNDP need to be selective in its support to sector wide at the national, regional and/or local level. For example, initiate intervention areas such as Local development financing strategies for consistent engagement in key areas within the sector where UNDP can bring its expertise and solutions.

UNDP to prioritize support to municipal capacities, with particular emphasis on area development models to strengthen local government capacities in service delivery. There should be a prioritization of fewer geographical areas to demonstrate workable solutions in improving municipal capacities. Building on its ongoing support to data and policy analysis, UNDP/UN-HABIATA may identify areas for consistent engagement. This is also an area where coordination within UNCT is critical for maximizing support to SDG data systems.

2. To ensure the sustainability prospects of capacity-development interventions at individual and institutional levels, particularly in the local development finance, UNDP should strengthen strategic linkages with relevant government ministries to ensure adequate communication framework that sustain results at the end of the project implementation. (Exist Strategy)

Developing organizational structure for the support of NSS and procedural guide support to the NSS implementation. This support is to organize the roles and responsibility office and distribute among relevant support departments and sections to enable the NSS strategic national objectives is good, but doing this without focused linkage with the local level, the sustainability after project closure is a major limitation on an exit strategy. UNDP/UN-HABITAT need to ensure a clear and tangible rationale and clarity on the strategic linkages of interventions.

3. Based on concrete data, a well-considered approach strengthening the institutional performance capacities of municipalities, UNDP/UNHABITAT should develop key performance indicators for the foreseen interventions in the planning, budgeting, operation and maintenance areas that aiming at annual measure of the municipal performance. An incentive base approach for municipalities to enhance their capacities in the mentioned areas is required.

The establishment of a Municipal Development programme MDP considered a significant mechanism in fostering the municipal institutional performance. The fund will be using the incentive performance mechanism that encourage municipalities working hard on the development of their capacities in the duty areas, such as planning (Physical and Strategic Investment planning), Budgeting including the identification of proper sources for financing their activities, operations and maintenance plans, procurement, social and environment safeguarding and implementation of the pipeline projects. The MDP

is to provides infrastructure grants to the municipalities, but also it improves performance by building their operational, planning and financial capacity. Its cornerstone is the grant Allocation Mechanism, a formula-based method for distributing funds to municipalities for capital investments – based on need, population and improved performance tools and activities to be in depth explored.

4. For an inclusive support to the gradual decentralization process, new initiatives that promote decentralization process and enhance municipal capacities. Support the gradual moving from funding to financing, by supporting creating relevant frameworks to enable the municipalities to tap into innovative financing mechanisms.

Municipalities in KSA could play a significant role in providing infrastructure and services to the citizens. Despite the foreseen comprehensive roles and functions of municipalities, the current revenue and expenditures constitute only a minor share of the overall public budget. Ensuring applicable financing instruments, and mechanisms will tangibly contribute strengthening the fiscal space of the municipalities. Appropriate funding and financing options without endangering the city’s financial sustainability or making unrealistic assumptions considered as crucial intervention in supporting Local development finance that based on the economic characteristics of the respective activity, for example, its capacity to generate revenue and/or savings.

LESSONS LEARNED

The capacity development initiatives were targeting the institutional performance capacity development and enhancing individual capacities at national, regional and local levels. These kind on interventions need long term investment and time to grow and achieve the best results. Looking at the short term and trying to harvest results as quick gains is not easy task. The foreseen proposed interventions should have clear sustainability strategies which are time-bound and linked to medium-term, long term national and local programs that create opportunities for sustainable local development initiatives.

Cooperation is a prerequisite to have effective and efficient interventions and to generate new concepts and policies. The coordination and complementary roles between different actors, ministries, authorities, municipalities, and committees at all levels is essential for success stories. The municipalities are eager to horizontally cooperate and exchange experience because they witness a positive impact of this cooperation, the same applies for the National level. This is why it is important to initiate the establishment of the Municipal Development Programme.

Concrete data collection and analysis is a tool to create development in different areas that create resilience and stability growth by providing more fact of high quality about the current status of the planning and development conditions. The demand for improved coordination development planning, planning system and sectorial priorities is still needed and it can be strengthened for the collection and analysis of urban data and structural adjustment and reform that are complementary to the on-going changes.

including the consideration of SDG 11 in the project documents gave the opportunity to develop a set of indicators relevant and focused on the needs. This, supported that all regional and city strategies will

include articles that ensure equal access to basic services, ownership of land and other forms of properties, and natural resources and new technology.

The MOMRAH played a major role, especially, the deputyship of town planning, in technical support to implementation of National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2030, it may also play a crucial role in enhancing the municipal institutional capacities through the planning and implementation of the proposed programme aiming at supporting municipal development programme. Aiming at by 2030 three (3) Saudi cities are among the top 100 cities in the world.

Regardless of the size of the city, Duties and responsibilities of cities are the same in KSA. The need towards classifying municipalities based on (its size, capacity to deliver, and income) has become crucial in enabling the cities to best perform their duties and responsibilities. Amending the Urban Planning Framework (governance, bylaws, regulations & policies Classification and reconfiguration of municipalities is also of high importance.

ANNEXEX

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Annex 2 – List of persons consulted

Annex 3 – List of consulted documents and information sources

Annex 4 – Evaluation Matrix

Annex 5 – outcomes and outputs used for performance Criteria

Annex 6- Project Theory of Change

Annex 7- Annual outcome related work Plans.