



# Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A GUIDE

**Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide**  
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# **Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide**

## FOREWORD



UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) support the development and implementation of sound urban policies that will improve the lives of citizens and that work towards realizing their dreams. We must work diligently across all spheres of government at country level to ensure that National Urban Policies (NUP), are adequately monitored and evaluated to reach their expected developmental impact and transformative potential. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a powerful public management tool that can be used to improve the way in which all spheres of government achieve results through sound policy making. To be able to set policy milestones and manage challenges, demonstrate accountability and transparency, and to help build trust between governments and their communities, a good Monitoring and Evaluation framework is needed.

National governments are encouraged to co-create, develop and implement national urban policies together with sub-national governments to address a myriad of issues that all levels of government face, including climate change, housing delivery, mobility and transport, slum upgrading, and creating safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces for all. These policies are key to implementing the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the global commitment resulting from the United Nations Habitat III Conference that took place in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016.

The NUA highlights the importance of national, local and regional governments being equally involved in the development and implementation of urban policies.

### **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**

United Nations Under-Secretary General  
and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT



Indeed, all spheres of government should have the opportunity to provide consistent feedback throughout the NUP process. For instance, Local Government Associations (LGAs) play a key role in keeping track of urban policy processes.

As many national governments embark on developing national urban policies, M&E will be increasingly used to shape the future and advance improvements in policy making, management, strengthening dialogue and collaboration between all levels of government and other actors.

We are delighted to present the **'Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide'**. This publication is timely for countries that are seeking to implement their national urban policies and to review existing policies in order to make real and transformative changes. The Guide provides clear steps and tips on how to design, manage, and deploy good monitoring and evaluation for urban policy and to support the implementation of the SDGs and the NUA. This Guide will help urban policy makers and actors in countries to know when, and if, policies are working, and the extent to which they are contributing to global development agendas. The Guide complements many other practical guides prepared by UN-Habitat and partners to support member states, local governments and other actors interested in co-creating impactful and effective urban policies that will ensure that no one and no place is left behind.

### **Ms. Emilia Saiz**

Secretary General, UCLG

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>LRGAs</b>	Local and Regional Government Associations
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NUA</b>	New Urban Agenda
<b>NUP</b>	National Urban Policy
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TOC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UCLG</b>	United Cities and Local Governments
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The success of National Urban Policy (NUP) depends on its effectiveness in helping policymakers ascertain the positive change the policy is making to the life of all. National Urban Policies connect the dots from the neighborhood level up to the global level. A progressive policy should also include projected growth beyond current administrative boundaries by guiding strategic investments.

Through the consultative creation of the NUP, policy makers and stakeholders can demonstrate their awareness of urban issues and its multi-sectoral demands and avoid the drawbacks that often arise from disintegrated and isolated policy approaches. Such approaches can create lead to frustration and social discord.

Good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) establishes clear links between past, present and future initiatives and development results. Monitoring and evaluation can help an organization extract relevant information from past and ongoing activities that can be used as the basis for programmatic fine-tuning, reorientation and future planning: This includes establishing a baseline or database to monitor against objectives, outputs (throughout the policy process) and outcomes. Without effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to assess if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved.

The Guide recommends that national, regional and local governments be empowered to monitor and evaluate urban policies as they are not only aware of the demands, changing tasks and needs of their constituencies, but they are also conscious of the territorial and spatial inequalities that need to be highlighted in national policy making. This fits into the role of local government associations (LGAs), that support national–local dialogues and review policy from the local government perspective.

This Guide outlines the steps and tools for monitoring and evaluation of the NUP. It provides practical steps to take a common approach to monitoring and evaluating a NUP. It must not be viewed as the only resource or document to use when embarking on the policy design and then monitoring and evaluation but complements other relevant and guidance materials.

It is geared towards anyone who has a stake in the NUP process, whether they are existing authorities at the different levels of government and their associations, citizens, academia or policy makers; and those that will be involved in monitoring and evaluation of the NUP. It provides key resources, and good practices for effective monitoring and evaluation.

# INTRODUCTION

Effective implementation of NUP in support of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and other global agendas will require rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to take stock of what works, what does not work, where good practices exist, and where improvements may be needed. A range of tools and frameworks has been used in the past across different international organizations and within national governments with a view to assessing NUP in countries while acknowledging the diversity of urban and institutional conditions within and across countries.

The NUP needs to be measured against clear objectives and expected achievements, if possible, linked to a baseline, with indicators that are accessible and measured continuously.

A National Urban Policy is understood here as “a coherent set of decisions (taken) through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors towards a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term” (UN-Habitat 2014)<sup>1</sup>.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the NUA has provided a strong rationale for countries to embark on developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating inclusive and participatory NUP. Urban policies provide a framework to better harness the opportunities presented by urban development in cities and regions of all sizes, ensuring the provision of basic urban services, affordable housing and other amenities, poverty alleviation, economic empowerment of marginalized groups, effective governance and inclusivity, particularly for women and youth.

Monitoring and evaluation are among the backbones of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA. They are also used to assess national progress towards sustainable development as well as to highlight gaps in national planning implementation and decision-making. The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented by Member States of the United Nations each year at the High Level Political Forum are an example of a monitoring and evaluation tool used to assess the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

1 UN-Habitat and UCLG (2014). *The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview*, Nairobi.

Monitoring and evaluation serve several purposes. All stakeholders involved can learn whether the intended results are being achieved as planned, what corrective action might be needed to ensure the achievement of the intended results, and whether initiatives are making positive contributions towards sustainable development. It relates to pre-identified results in development or policy plans. They are driven by the need to account for the achievement of intended results and they provide a baseline of evidence that can inform corrective decision-making. Monitoring is a continuous assessment that aims to provide stakeholders with adequate information on the progress or delay of ongoing activities<sup>2</sup>. Evaluation on the other hand is a systematic and objective examination concerning the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activities in the light of specified objectives<sup>3</sup>.

Additionally, monitoring, as well as evaluation, provide opportunities at regular predetermined points to validate the logic of a programme, its activities and their implementation and to adjust as needed. Good planning and design alone do not ensure results. Progress towards achieving results needs to be monitored. Equally, no amount of good monitoring alone will correct poor programme design, plans and results. Information from monitoring needs to be used to encourage improvements or reinforce plans. Information from systematic monitoring also provides critical input to evaluation. It is very difficult to evaluate a programme that is not well designed and that does not systematically monitor its progress.

Monitoring and evaluation also provide the opportunity for benchmarking NUP globally for good practices of urban development policies. Monitoring and evaluation are not static but exist through the entire policy process. The substantive content of NUP will vary from country to country. However, the following six issues appear in most national urban policies: **urban governance, spatial sustainability, financial sustainability, economic sustainability, social safeguards, and environmental sustainability**.

2 UNDP (2009). *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*. United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office, New York.

3 UNICEF (1990). *A UNICEF Guide for monitoring and evaluation – Making a difference*, New York.

Many countries are interested in establishing an appropriate foundation for the effective monitoring and evaluation of their NUP. According to the UN-Habitat/OECD report **Global state of National Urban Policy (2018)**, of the 150 countries examined, about half (76) have adopted explicit NUP, and another half (74) have incomplete NUP. In terms of the stages of NUP development, 92 countries (61 per cent) already implement their NUP, whereas 58 countries (39 per cent) are in the process of developing a NUP<sup>4</sup>.

This Guide is broad enough to be adapted to a wide range of contexts, but also specific enough to highlight key issues to be considered when monitoring and evaluating NUP. The principles suggested in this Guide will ensure a coordinated process that fosters and encourages broad-based, national ownership of the policy by all key stakeholders and levels of government.

A clear demand for the establishment of monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure and advise on the design and implementation of NUP are emerging, and with this the opportunity for exchange, benchmarking, but also the opportunity to involve all relevant stakeholders. Using a writeshop format with various experts and practitioners, UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) partnered to develop a Guide for the successful monitoring and evaluation of NUP. The Guide clarifies various pathways and techniques of monitoring and evaluating NUP, the key principles and the key stakeholders to be involved. Given the broad effect that NUP can have on governance, it is imperative that all domains of government are included within the processes of NUP, from adoption to monitoring and evaluation. This is especially relevant for local and regional governments.

## The Advantages of a National Urban Policy

Many countries are seeking appropriate mechanisms to deal with the opportunities and challenges presented by urbanization. The need for a coordinated approach at national and global levels to safeguard sustainable urbanization and the development of human settlements has become very apparent. It is therefore important for governments to commit to the design of an integrated policy mechanism which facilitates the growth and management of cities and creates

the conditions that are required for a productive and prosperous urban development process.

A NUP is a coordinated framework that seeks to harness the opportunities offered and challenges faced by all stakeholders in a country that are involved in urbanisation. The framework defends public interest and unlocks development objectives in territories subject to the forces of competition and strong spatial dynamics.

It empowers all levels of government and non-state actors to engage productively with all the forces of production in urbanization, leading to more environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive cities. This in turn will ultimately enhance overall competitiveness at city, national and global levels.

A NUP should address the territorial implications of a country's development and growth aspirations, and document the progress made towards improving the economic and social wellbeing of the population. It should foster the development of a continuum of human settlements and a network of cities that are more compact, socially inclusive, integrated, connected and climate resilient. It should account for the growth and expansion needs of cities and towns and lay out the linkages between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, or provide guidance and support for regeneration or change of function and form. A New Urban Policy puts urban planning and integrated regional development, supported by appropriate urban legislation and economic policies, at the heart of national development.

## The Benefits of Monitoring and Evaluation

The most effective national urban policy is one that is grounded in enabling infrastructure development and services. However, even the most innovative policies fail if the planning process is exclusive or opaque, or if the policies are not linked to plans, programmes and regulations. An ineffective national urban policy is characterized by inadequate strategic vision and a lack of a shared vision to drive growth. It is also characterized by an absence of monitoring and evaluation systems. A national urban policy that fails to consider and address long-term operations and maintenance issues can result in the inefficient and ineffective management of urban development.

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4 OECD and UN-Habitat (2018). *Global State of National Urban Policy*.  
OECD Paris and United Nations Human Settlements Programme,  
Nairobi.



**Provide feedback** on the scale to which the projects are attaining their goals



**Identify potential problems** at a timely stage and propose possible solutions



**Monitor the accessibility of the project** by all segments of the target population



**Monitor the efficiency** with which the different components of the project are being implemented and suggest improvements



**Evaluate the extent to which the project or policy can achieve its general objectives;**



**Provide guides** for the planning of future projects



**Foster inclusion and ownership** of a NUP by all spheres of government by taking an inclusive approach



**Influence sector assistance strategies.** Relevant analysis from project and policy evaluation can highlight the outcomes of previous interventions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their implementation



**Improve policy design.** Use of project design tools such as the logical framework and results-based framework to structure the indicators for monitoring project and policy performance. The process of selecting indicators for monitoring is a test of the soundness of policy objectives and can lead to improvements in policy design



**Incorporate views of stakeholders.** Ownership brings accountability. Objectives should be set, and indicators selected in consultation with stakeholders, so that objectives and targets are jointly "owned". Monitoring and evaluation can act as tools to ascertain the effectiveness or not of stakeholder engagement



**Show need for mid-course corrections.** A reliable flow of information during implementation enables managers to keep track of progress and adjust operations to take account of experience.

**Box 1. Key Benefits**

## Key Principles of M&E for NUP

The NUP requires an integrated and multidimensional programming approach – in line with the SDGs and the NUA. Monitoring and evaluation of the NUP must therefore be aligned with the following principles:



• **National ownership and accountability** (what is decided, will be done and funded);



• **Affordability** (cost-effective and resourceful);



• **Participation and inclusion** (Leaving no-one and space behind, human rights based);



• **Quality and credibility;**



• **Empowerment of all spheres of government** to fully participate in urban policymaking;



• **Action-oriented;**



• Implementable using **human rights-based approach to development;**



• **Sustainability;**



• **Gender equality, transparency and accountability;**



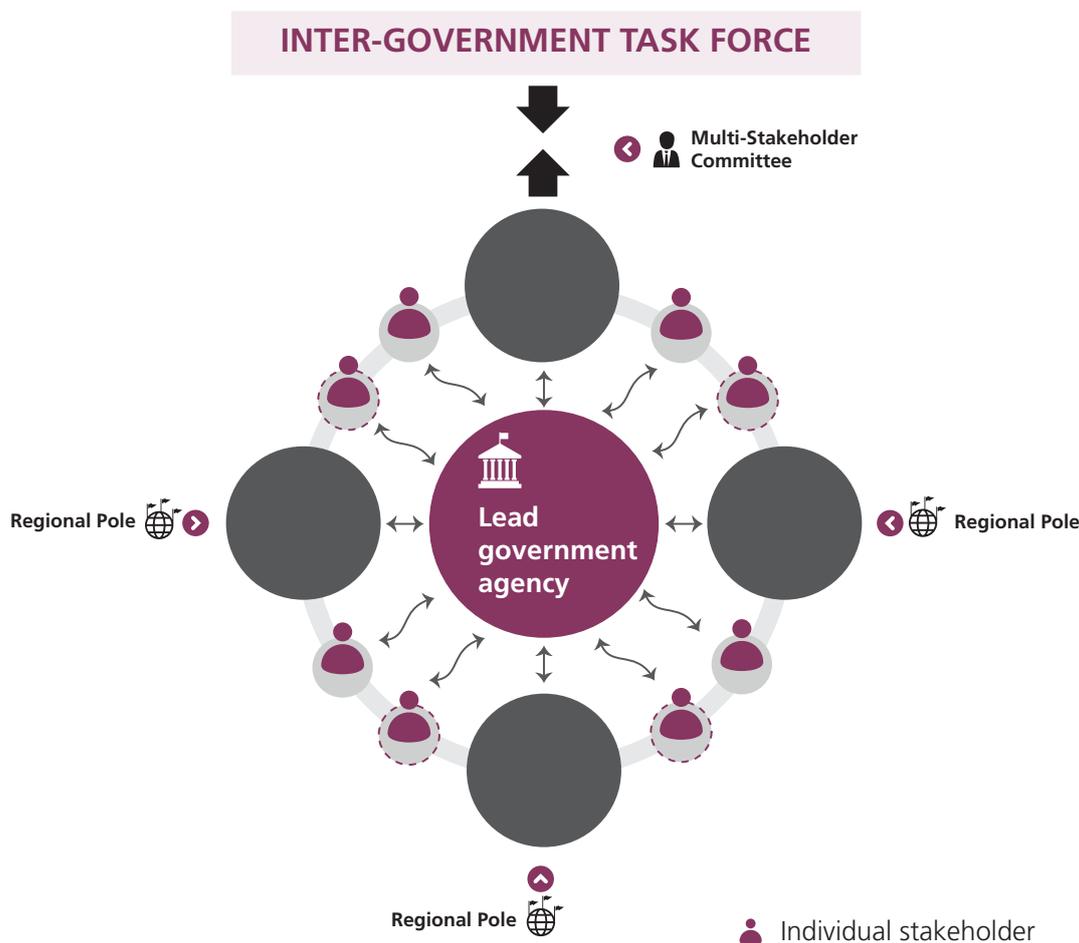
• **Evidence-based.**

Another principle underlined in this chapter is the need for flexibility in devising partnership arrangements. It is important to base decisions on a deep contextual

analysis of each country concerned and make decisions on institutional frameworks, M&E methods and partnership arrangements accordingly.

**The contextual analysis should include analysis of:**

- the economic and development context;
- the socio-political context;
- the environmental and ecological context; and
- the cultural context.



**Figure 1.** Key Actors in Monitoring and Evaluation

**Economic and Development Context**

Case studies have shown that in countries that have embarked on the formulation of broad strategic analyses toward a long-term policy framework for the urban sector, scope and objectives can vary greatly. The implications for the whole process can be diverse including the choice of actors/partners in M&E.

Ø The NUP at the national level (Governments may use different acronyms to define the exercise) originates from fundamental concerns such as: the desire to better assist cities in managing urban development in the context of rapid urbanization and large population flows into urban areas.

Ø However, there is a significant difference: some countries limit the scope of a NUP to search for an improved policy framework solely at the city level, aiming to better manage development processes where flows of people are arriving. Cities, at the same time, can be critical engines of a new economy. On the other hand, other countries may set a broader and more ambitious goal: use the NUP as an opportunity to drastically re-think the entire national development framework, one that sees cities just as elements of a broader territorial system under pressure from ongoing economic and demographic changes and with a view to fostering a more rapid socio-economic development.

- Ø There are obvious implications for partnership arrangements in these two distinct contexts. While NUP exercises may be institutionally generated and led by the Ministry officially responsible for urban development (with the required inter-ministerial collaborative links), NUP could also be overseen and guided by economic and /or development planning ministries to ensure coherence with National Development Plans. Indeed, attempts to run this type of NUP from within 'urban' ministries may render the exercise rather inconsequential.
- Ø Some countries are attempting to accelerate urbanization flows to achieve the level of 'agglomeration' deemed necessary to facilitate industrialization to raise productivity and income levels. At the opposite side of the spectrum, export-driven national economies may instead be under pressure to reduce the level of over-concentration in one primate metropolitan area (viz. a major metropolitan hub) and re-balance territorial development. The range of representatives from economic sectors and private investors, of sub-national government, of environmental agencies and of affected civic groups and communities increase. The implications for M&E can far-reaching.
- Ø The level of established democratic participation and accountability, requiring an uncompromising assessment of transparency versus opacity in decision making processes. Key issues include: the ingrained presence in land markets of large-scale land acquisition practices accompanied by increased social marginalization; the degree of legally guaranteed instruments for recourse to the courts, and a government's response to social pressures around access to basic rights, land, services, and housing, work together with democratic recognition of all social groups. This includes the recognition of the roles of marginalized people in political affairs, particularly women, indigenous people, people with disabilities and youth.

This type of analysis will indicate in which cases the prerequisites for a participatory, transparent NUP governance and monitoring exist. Therefore, the NUP process undertaken in an imperfect democratic environment may still foster a virtuous process of strengthening society in terms of participation and accountability. Alternatively, a NUP may not be viable where conditions do not allow for key UN principles to be observed, for example those regarding monitoring and evaluation (e.g. accountability, learning, independence, partnership etc.)

## Socio-political context

With respect to the socio-political context, several aspects need to be factored-in in the choice of partners for NUP governance as well as for M&E.

- Ø The way in which sub-national governance is organized and the degree of devolution of entitlements functions, and decentralization mechanisms (fiscal, planning, normative etc.).
- Ø The place of the NUP (or other acronyms relevant to the national context) in national political agendas. The main distinction being between countries where a form of NUP is specifically mandated by legal instruments (or even by the Constitution) and countries in political transition, where urban/territorial decision-making takes place through a series of often uncoordinated (or contradictory) sector-specific initiatives.

## Environmental and ecological context

Urbanization relies on the conservation and protection of natural resources and environment for functional and healthy cities. Nature based development patterns require a policy framework that protects and defends ecological values and rights (protection of swamplands, green areas, and biodiversity), which in addition to the human need for nature, also protects natural spaces as ecosystems.

## Cultural context

The expectation of citizens to be able to shape their cities and their 'cultural grid', such as languages and customs, the expression and engagement of citizens, the opportunities and rights on public space and the educational environment need to be taken into account by policymakers.



## Linkages to the SDGs and specific SDG targets

The interlinkages of the SDGs with the NUP is broad and wide-ranging. Most SDG indicators have direct connections to urban policies and a clear impact on cities and human settlements. The goal on poverty is linked to access to land, slums, and inadequate housing; health is often affected by 'place'; and gender equality can benefit from access to public spaces, basic infrastructure, and participation in local governance and decision-making. For instance, urban waste management is strongly associated to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene; energy systems are critical for the development of safe, resilient and sustainable human settlements; and inclusive and productive cities are important for entrepreneurship and job creation. To tackle such complex and interconnected issues, countries are encouraged to develop NUP to set the baseline and the framework to monitor and evaluate various dimensions of sustainable urbanization, and to ascertain the changes, whether gains or losses.

The sustainable development goal on cities offers many opportunities to foster mitigation and adaptation strategies to address climate change, especially through environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development. The proper management of waste generated by cities has direct implications for the pollution of oceans and the degradation of natural habitats and the loss of biodiversity largely depends on the way cities are managed. The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies requires the development of cities free of violence, benefiting from the rule of law. Understanding the urban dimension of the different sustainable development goals is key to unlocking their full potential.

Furthermore, the connection between NUP and the SDGs is best represented in SDG11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities. The character of SDG 11 is cross cutting and its targets are achieved only if all of the other SDGs are also achieved. In this way, NUP are directly related to all SDGs as achieving sustainable urban development is essential in the achievement of the overall objective of achieving sustainable development. In a way, SDG 11 embodies all of the SDGs and the central goal of a NUP.

For example, National Urban Policies need to address the revised SDG target **11.a.1: number of countries that have national urban policies or regional development plans that: (a) respond to population dynamics; (b) ensure balanced territorial development; and (c) increase local fiscal space.** It is only through the establishment of a sound evaluation and monitoring framework that such a goal can be achieved, properly analyzed and evaluated.

### Box 2. Connections to SDGs



# 1 WHY DO WE UNDERTAKE EVALUATION AND MONITORING?

# CHAPTER 1

## WHY DO WE UNDERTAKE EVALUATION AND MONITORING?

In general terms, monitoring and evaluation are distinct but complementary functions. They operate in different contexts and to achieve a few aims and objectives, including the following.

- **Tracking progress** and **measuring** what is happening in relation to what was planned;
  - Providing a basis for **accountability for results** used and results achieved and **supporting evidence-based decision-making**;
  - Promoting **successful mechanisms** for the development and implementation of **current and future policies** and projects;
  - Fostering **multilevel governance mechanisms**;
  - **Generating critical information for evaluation**;
  - Providing recommendations and **lessons to inform future policy processes**;
  - Improving **efficiency and effectiveness**;
  - Improving **reporting to stakeholders**;
  - Improving the **performance** information available in time and for effective decision-making;
  - **Mitigating risks to performance**;
  - Establishing **clear accountabilities assigned to results**; and
  - Managing **performance expectations** jointly set out and **owned by stakeholders**.
- Monitoring and evaluating NUP can be undertaken at different levels, from the global to the national, regional and local. Policies, such as NUP, are monitored and evaluated for a variety of reasons, including to:
1. Promote internal and external transparency and accountability in what governments do;
  2. Contribute to identifying and documenting successful programmes and approaches, including those that have been less successful, allowing for improved knowledge management and tracking of progress towards common indicators across related projects and programmes;
  3. Build a large body of evidence that allows for the continual refinement of indicators measuring different elements that are to be evaluated or monitored. In this regard, there is work being undertaken to establish of standardized international indicators (ISO standards and SDGs) allowing for comparability across sectors, states and different tiers of government;
  4. Assist in strengthening the capacity of local and regional authorities to implement their urban agendas;
  5. Ensure the urban agenda is built in the most inclusive manner possible;
  6. Allow for informed decisions regarding the future of the NUP as national governments capitalize on the development opportunities from urbanization and meet their globally agreed responsibilities, such as the relevant targets of the SDGs and the NUA<sup>5</sup>;
  7. Ensure the new urban agenda receives more central attention in the development agendas of a country;
  8. Contribute to increasing considered evaluation of budgeting priorities and action plans;
  9. Improve the human, technical and financial resources available for NUP implementation;
  10. Encourage policy learning and knowledge sharing within and across countries and regions, possibly through networks of national governments as well as through networks of local government associations and within LGAs;
  11. Improve reporting and collection of information about the status of NUP within and across countries, but also at the global level, to support improved NUP development and achieve global agendas such as the SDGs and the NUA;
  12. Provide lessons and opportunities for relevant international organizations to support the development of more explicit and inclusive NUP.

5 OECD and UN-Habitat (2018). *Global State of National Urban Policy*. OECD Paris and United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Nairobi.

For example, through the National Urban Policy Programme, a global initiative that was launched by UN-Habitat, the OECD and Cities Alliance at the Habitat III Conference. This includes initiatives such as the Training of Trainers programme developed by UCLG/UNDP/UNHABITAT, which has been rolled out in 15 countries across four continents, with the nearly 30 individual events held, fostering a global learning network that can contribute to the process of making the NUP relevant at the local level (the 'localization process')<sup>6</sup>; and

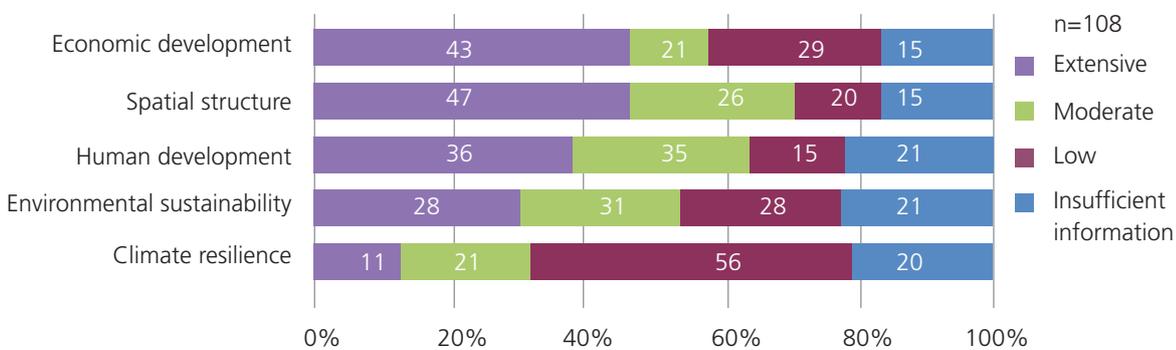
13. Help determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of NUP.

Successful formulation, adoption, implementation and reviews of NUP are dependent on the quality and credibility of the M&E (monitoring and evaluation) systems in place. Whether conducted by governmental institutions, independently, or by the private sector, or geographically separated and sector diversified agencies, or civil society organizations, such monitoring and evaluation processes, play a very important role in both deepening the understanding of NUP as well as ensuring effective and efficient implementation of NUP programmes. It is through the provision of information and analysis that monitoring and evaluation programmes can build ownership in outputs and outcomes identified in the NUP.

### Why Is Monitoring and Evaluation Important in the Context of National Urban Policies?

National Urban Policies have been developed in many different contexts. They have also followed very different processes before getting to the point of being adopted and implemented. NUP assume that a set of common characteristics exist across each of these contexts and competencies that can be used for assessment. Opportunities such as the improvement of social services, new jobs, the creation of better housing options, local economic development

and country-wide economic competitiveness are contrasted with urban challenges, such as unemployment, the growth of slums, the spread of disease and lack of basic services. By contributing to creating these opportunities, a NUP can help to promote productive, prosperous and environmentally sustainable cities<sup>7</sup>.



**Figure 2.** Levels of attention given to selected themes in the NUP in the formulation stage or beyond, global scale

A NUP can only achieve this if it can be measured quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of whether its formulation, design, and execution achieve its intended goals. For example, it has been shown over the last decades that increased attention is being placed on the development of indicators to measure these characteristics of urban development, from

measures of density and economic development to measures of poverty, inequality and social cohesion. The evaluation and monitoring of a NUP therefore becomes a means by which comparisons can more easily be made. The value of a NUP is not only in the product but also the process to develop it and the outcomes it achieves.

<sup>6</sup> UCLG (2018). How UCLG contributes to the SDGs: Fostering the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda from the bottom up. UCLG: Barcelona. Visit [www.localizingthesdgs.org](http://www.localizingthesdgs.org) to find all relevant information on localization.

<sup>7</sup> UN Habitat (2015). National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework. UN-Habitat, Nairobi

Monitoring and Evaluation assist this by promoting good practices, such as stakeholder engagement, capacity development and evaluation of country policy processes at every stage of their adoption<sup>8</sup>.

### Monitoring and Evaluating NUP allows for:

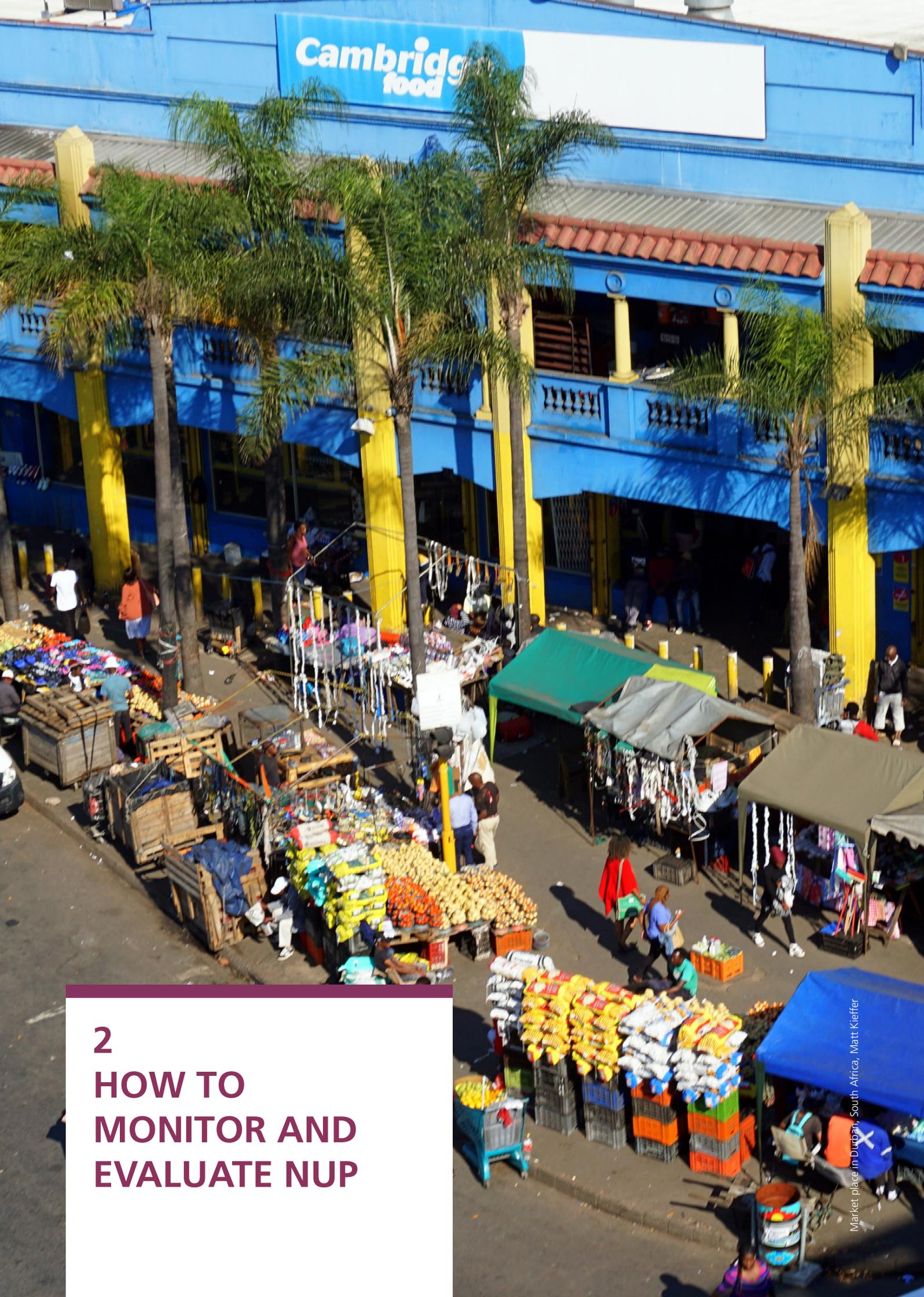
- **Knowledge generation and sharing**, including collecting, tracking and analyzing data to determine what is happening, where, and for whom among different stakeholders and between different spheres of government;
- Improve **performance, management and decision making**;
- Improve the **accountability of national institutions** in terms of the effects their **policies and interventions generate**;
- Measure and report **progress on all SDGs**, particular **SDGs 11 and the New Urban Agenda**;
- Compare performance of **national urban development across countries**;
- Build local and regional government networks by providing information essential to the development of partnerships with other organizations that can effectively ensure the achievement of the SDGs;
- Track possible **futures and pathways**, particularly in **areas of sustainability**, for example **emission pathways**<sup>9</sup>;
- Monitor and evaluate the links between NUP and their related **outputs and outcomes** will improve the effectiveness and sustainability of **urban areas globally and within States**;
- Evaluate the implementation, **quality and impact of each phases of the NUP process**;
- Assess the **performance of stakeholders** during the process;
- Establish the evaluation of cooperation across scales, **policy fields, stakeholder groups and across administrative borders**; and
- Appreciate the evaluation of the **'set of coherent policy decisions'** taken: its quality, effectiveness and efficiency and the relation between input and output/outcomes.

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8 UN Habitat (2015). National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework, Nairobi.

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9 IPCC (2018). Summary for urban policy makers: What the IPCC special report on Global warming of 1.5 degrees centigrade means for cities. December.



## 2 HOW TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE NUP

# CHAPTER 2

## HOW TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE NUP

As in most endeavors, the good design of a NUP is critical to the success of its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The design should articulate a Theory of Change (TOC) that explains how the NUP and its set of interventions, policies and processes are expected to lead to the planned development results. In the NUP context, a thorough TOC should be developed to help explain outcome areas prioritized by NUP, programme strategies and related outputs and how these link with other elements of the NUP, including partnerships and financing, etc., with the core assumptions and risks clearly spelled out. Adjustments to the TOC can be made in light of changing circumstances. To put it simply, **if a policy objective, statement or target cannot be measured, evaluated and monitored, then it should be left out of the policy document.**

### Monitoring National Urban Policies

Ideally, all institutions and entities involved in the design, development and implementation of the strategies, activities, programmes and projects related to the NUP should continuously monitor and report on the progress of implementation, on results achieved, challenges of and opportunities emerging from the NUP process.

Monitoring should be at levels of process, outputs and outcomes - contextualized for each country. Monitoring of the implementation of a NUP should be contextualized in the national development priorities and in achieving the SDGs and the NUA. In this context, reviews and reporting on the NUP at specified timeframes are necessary to make it responsive to changing contexts.

The elements of analysis to be monitored must be adapted to the scale of approach as well as to the different territorial scales, in order to validate the execution of the objectives. Monitoring should focus on the quality of implementation (processes), results achieved, opportunities emerging for achieving the NUP, resources leveraged to finance the NUP, and continuous validation of the theory of change and innovations.

### Five Main Components of Monitoring



1. **System:** The monitoring **system** component clarifying the purpose, context, system parameters, agreed outcomes and indicators to be monitored.



2. **Data:** The **data** collection, processing, and quality assurance components.



3. **Analysis and reporting:** The **analysis and reporting** component, reporting against targets, making comparisons across sub-national and local levels.



4. **Action:** The **action** component regarding decisions on strategies, programmes, service delivery, operations, resources, and evaluations.



5. **Process:** The overall **process** covering all five phases should be monitored.

It is important to ask the right questions from the beginning in order to track the efficiency and effectiveness of the NUP process, products and outcomes. Example questions are given below for each.



#### Efficiency:

- *Is the NUP being designed, developed and implemented correctly, i.e. according to procedures, without wasting time and money, fairly, transparently, and inclusively etc. Are the allocated funds being spent appropriately?*



#### Effectiveness:

- *Are the right programmes/actions related to the NUP being identified? Are they targeting the right beneficiaries?*

## Suggested steps in Monitoring NUP



**STEP 1:** Secure commitment and buy-in from relevant stakeholders on the monitoring system/mechanism (while in most development projects, monitoring is conducted internally, in the case of monitoring NUP, it is important to involve citizens or other stakeholders).

∅ Identify outcomes, indicators, and other performance criteria.

**STEP 2:** Develop a system or mechanism for continuous monitoring (for example, electronic/internet-based).

- Develop data **collection procedures**;
- Develop **multilevel coordination mechanisms** amongst different government departments;
- Identify reporting **frequencies** and **channels** of reporting;
- Determine **analytical and reporting** formats; and
- Assign responsibilities for **maintaining the system**.

**STEP 3.** Administer the monitoring system/mechanism so that whenever feedback is received, it can be followed up accordingly.

∅ **Monitor and modify** as appropriate; and

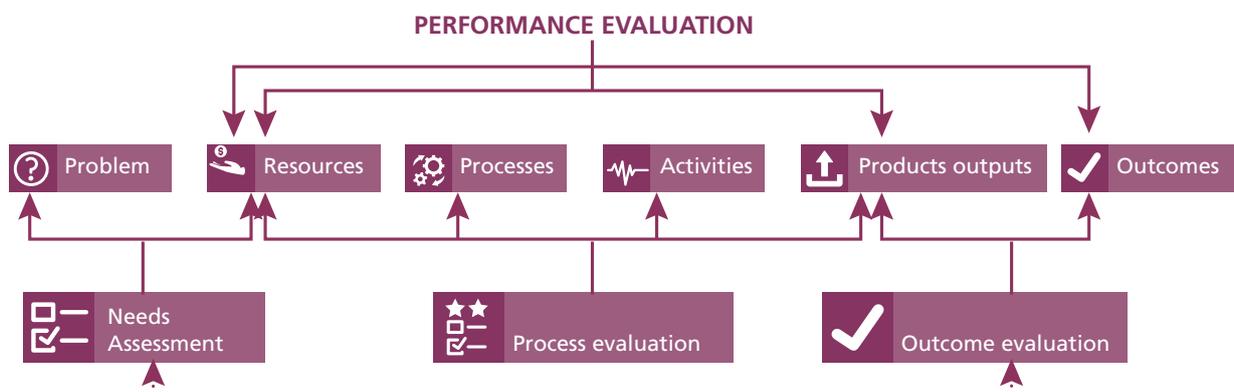
∅ **Present/report the monitored data** in meaningful ways to relevant stakeholders and decision makers.

## Ways for Sharing Monitoring Data

There are different ways of sharing performance information from NUP monitoring, for example:

- **Regular expert and stakeholder meetings**;
- **Official communication channels of government** (e.g. bulletins);
- **Periodic participatory citizen gatherings** (such as the National Urban Forum, where all stakeholders gather and put across their opinions about the state of cities and urban development); and
- **Electronic platforms** (such as E-monitoring through the use of interactive NUP dashboards).

## Evaluating National Urban Policy



**Figure 3.** Evaluating processes, products & outcomes of NUP



Evaluation requires careful preparation to ensure it will be of high quality, credible and useful. Ideally, NUP should be well-formulated and designed to enable robust evaluation. Resources permitting, a feasibility assessment of the NUP should be conducted to determine whether and under what context a NUP can be developed to ensure that its objectives,

outcomes and indicators can be adequately defined and its results verifiable. The evaluability assessment will also help to create the conditions necessary for an evaluation by identifying shortcomings to be addressed. It can take place before the design and implementation of the NUP.



**Evaluating Policy Content (pre-implementation of NUP):** It is important to understand the context, content, and implementation of a NUP. One may seek to understand if the content of the NUP clearly articulates its goals, implementation and the underlying intervention logic that links these to the achievement of the expected change.



**Evaluating Policy Implementation (process evaluation):** The effectiveness of a policy depends mostly on its design and implementation. At this point, it is critical to ask if the design of the NUP can be implemented as planned. Addressing this question will help to obtain important information about the barriers and risks to the implementation of a NUP.



**Evaluating Policy Impact:** Ultimately, the NUP will have to make a difference. The key question is, therefore, whether the NUP is producing the intended and / or unintended outcomes and impact?

## Steps in Evaluating NUP

✔ **Confirming the resources available to conduct an evaluation:** Before an evaluation is initiated, there should be a basic understanding of the availability of sufficient resources to conduct the evaluation, issues to be addressed, the expertise required and timeframe to complete the evaluation. The evaluation budget may include fees for evaluators, travel and subsistence (e.g. during data collection), costs of data collection, costs related to workshops (e.g. dissemination workshops), costs of printing materials, etc.

✔ **Engaging Stakeholders:** A defining characteristic of effective evaluation includes the involvement of all key stakeholders, especially those with an interest in the NUP. Involving key stakeholders from the beginning before the evaluation team is on board has several benefits, including building ownership and increasing the likelihood that evaluation results will be used; improving credibility of the evaluation; revealing political barriers and sensitivities; and avoiding perceived conflicts of interest.

Different stakeholder perspectives enrich the evaluation design and approach, including the identification gender equality and human rights issues, and other implications that may not have been explicit in the design and implementation of the NUP. An evaluation should identify key stakeholders to be involved in the evaluation process by:

- Consulting insiders (e.g. managers of M&E activities, leaders, beneficiaries, donors for NUP interventions) and outsiders;
- Informing key stakeholders about the evaluation initiative and indicate how they are expected to contribute to the evaluation with information and practical support; and
- Establishing a reference group with a few selected stakeholders to support the evaluation process.

✔ **Developing Evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR):** The evaluation TOR is a critically important document in preparing for an evaluation. It offers the first substantive overview and conceptual outlook for the evaluation. It clarifies expectations, roles and responsibilities and guides the evaluation processes until the inception report/work plan takes over as the primary control document. The TOR defines why the evaluation is being undertaken (purpose and objectives); what will be examined (scope); how (design and methods); and when the evaluation will be conducted (time frame); who will use the evaluation (intended uses); and evaluation team composition, skills and experiences. They are normally prepared in close collaboration with key stakeholders. The TOR is also the basis for soliciting an evaluation team. It should outline the skills, experience, qualifications, and other relevant competences that will be needed

to conduct the evaluation effectively- whether the evaluation will be conducted by a consulting firm, by individuals or by a team of consultants.

## Using the Country-based Team/ Evaluation Management Group

Evaluation processes should clearly define an organization and management structure. Evaluation can be done by a team or by a single individual. In many instances, conducting a sound evaluation requires forming a (country-based) team. This is a key step as it helps build credibility, ownership and buy-in for the assessment of the NUP design and implementation while providing strategic direction during the process. The team could be local and multisectoral but also be in line with the objective of bringing about positive change through ownership by the government and local stakeholders in charge of the implementation of the NUP. For instance, the core team would ideally comprise all involved public and private stakeholders. The core management team should oversee the evaluation process and be responsible for: adapting the assessment tools; reviewing evaluation deliverables, including the inception reports and evaluation reports; and facilitating and promoting use of evaluation through advocacy and also policy dialogue to discuss evaluation findings.

## Selection of an Evaluation Team

The recruitment and selection of an evaluation team should be governed by an established contracting process and procedures. The following tips will help to ensure the identification of a strong evaluator or strong evaluators.

- Consider the nature of the **expertise needed**;
- Consult key stakeholders in the **definition of skills required**, and criteria for selection;
- Ensure the TOR clearly specifies requirements for evaluators and indicates the **expected time frame and deliverables**;
- Undertake an **impartial, fair, transparent and competitive** recruitment process;
- Engage **local and regional professionals**, as they provide better understanding of the local context and can be a catalyst to ensure buy-in of the evaluation, on top of being imperative to the implementation process of a NUP;
- Review previous **relevant reports/assignments**;
- **Assess and evaluate** candidates using the information provided in their proposal that describes their experiences and expertise in relation with the evaluation criteria; and
- Undertake **background checks**.

## Conducting the Evaluation

During the inception phase, the preparation of an **evaluation work plan** is a key initial phase of the evaluation process. The selected evaluation team is expected to perform a thorough review of all relevant information sources, to bring a fully informed perspective to the development of the evaluation work plan. This may include refining the methodology in collaboration with experts to ensure that they will help gather the information needed. The work plan helps to forge a common understanding between those managing the evaluation and those conducting the evaluation. The work plan further clarifies the TOR and any areas of uncertainty in relation to the scope of evaluation. Evaluation work plans are expected to address the following elements:

- **Policy overview** (country context, objectives, disbursements, outreach, expected results, stakeholder participation, etc.);
- **Evaluation profile** (reasons for the evaluation, purpose and objectives, key audiences, stakeholder involvement, evaluation questions);
- **Evaluation methodology** (appropriate methods: desk reviews, interviews, surveys, case studies, focus groups, etc.; data collection procedures and sources, data analysis and presentation);
- **Accountability and responsibilities**;
- **Work scheduling** (time frames for the delivery of the main evaluation outputs); and
- **Reporting requirements** (inception report, draft and final report).

### ➡ Data collection phase

Upon approval of the inception report, the evaluation team can begin:

- **Collect data using various methods**, including desk reviews, interviews, surveys, observations, case studies, etc.;

- **Analyze data;**
- **Draw conclusions** that follow logically from data and are consistent with agreed standards; and
- Make **logical and coherent** recommendations.

### ➔ **Report writing phase**

One of the objectives of evaluation reports is to inform on the results of the evaluation. The evaluation report should therefore articulate a comprehensive response to evaluation expectations as set out in the TOR and the evaluation work plan.

### ➔ **Desk review**

To have a good understanding and knowledge of the NUP and its components, the evaluation work may start with the identification and desk review of all relevant documentation. The desk review will shed light on gaps in knowledge about performance, integration and sustainability of the policy, forming the basis for data collection that will be conducted for the evaluation exercise. To scan the whole policy environment, this review will also examine several policy documents and other publications on the urban sector. To have a good understanding and knowledge of the NUP and its components, the evaluation work may start with the identification and desk review of all relevant documentation. The desk review will shed light on gaps in knowledge about performance, integration and sustainability of the policy, forming the basis for data collection that will be conducted for the evaluation exercise.

### ➔ **Select Key Informants and Adapt the Interview Guides**

It is important to select the relevant resource persons from the targeted constituencies related to the implementation of the NUP, determining the adequate number and type of informants to reflect the realities of development and implementation of the NUP in the country. To ensure the information collected is useful, the core team should tailor the questions to fit the NUP and crucial issues that need to be investigated. It is important to consider the policy and country context while conducting a text analysis of the NUP to examine its structure to check whether it is in line with a well-developed policy.

### ➔ **Conduct the Interviews/Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

This is one of the difficult stages of the assessment process as the quality of data collected and its resulting usefulness depends heavily on the way the interviewers and/or FGD facilitators conduct the interviews. First, they should be very experienced in conducting qualitative research methods, to get the best out of the discussions with key informants or FGD participants, some of whom may be high-level policymakers that need to be engaged with carefully and appropriately. It is important for them to explain to the FGD participants and key informants the purpose of the assessment and to obtain their consent beforehand. The ideal interviewer/facilitator may need to have a policy background and/or be familiar with the NUP.

### ➔ **Analyze and Write the Report**

The evaluation team should analyze the qualitative and quantitative data to provide insights into the status of implementation of the NUP, key achievements and major challenges. Qualitative data may be summarized using thematic, content and narrative analyses to provide a robust and deeper picture of actors' perceptions of the programme as well as their thoughts and suggestions to improve the impact of the programme. The evaluation team may also conduct comparisons between relevant data collected. A preliminary report describing evaluation findings, lessons learned and presenting a set of recommendations that can help improve the implementation of the NUP, should be presented to the relevant agencies (e.g. Ministry of Urban Development) and the NUP implementers to collect their opinions and suggestions. Once this feedback is received, the evaluation team should focus on the finalization of the report while considering any comments and suggestions made by the relevant ministries and their partners.

### ➔ **Disseminate and Discuss the Findings**

Organizing forums at all levels to disseminate and discuss the assessment findings is a key step in this process. This can be done in small groups or during a national forum that brings together key stakeholders. As a part of a broader advocacy strategy, the core team for the NUP evaluation has a key role to play in spearheading efforts to identify and set priorities for further action. Special communication skills are required for this activity.

The result of any monitoring or evaluation exercise should not be just recorded (and put on the shelf). It should contribute to the improvement of the NUP being monitored or evaluated. There should be a coherent plan for disseminating, monitoring and evaluating results to key internal NUP stakeholders and external stakeholders.

The dissemination of evaluation results should be tailored to the needs and interests of the audience. It is important to discuss with relevant stakeholders when and how the M&E results should be disseminated. A different range of options including dialogues with stakeholders, meetings, seminars, workshops and any other effective communications strategies.

## Indicators

Well-formulated indicators form the basis for effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Performance indicators are measures that describe the extent to which a policy is achieving its aims and objectives. It is important to select a balanced core set of indicators across the logical framework (i.e. covering inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact) and across major areas with a well-defined baseline and targets. These indicators should address the information needs for monitoring progress and performance towards the main objectives of the NUP. Their selection should be guided by relevance, scientific soundness, usefulness for decision-making, responsiveness to change, and data availability. To ensure appropriate and useful performance indicators, the indicators should be SMART:

- S** a. **Specific** - The performance indicator measures the intended result precisely.
- M** b. **Measurable** - The indicator is reliable and objective. Qualitative measures should be converted into quantitative data where possible.
- A** c. **Attainable** - The indicator is practical and can be obtained in a timely way and at a reasonable cost.
- R** d. **Relevant** - The indicator aligns with the NUP and the results defined in it.
- T** e. **Time-bound** - The indicator is expected to be achieved within a certain time period.

### Box 3. Characteristics of SMART Indicators

After the appropriate indicators are chosen, baselines and targets need to be established that reflect the level of change they would like to see.

Baseline information and targets are crucial because they enable comparison of intended and actual results and set a benchmark for the measurement of the achievements or failures in the implementation of the NUP. It is, therefore, crucial that countries implementing NUP have clear definitions and appropriate tools for measuring the outcome indicators as part of their overall M&E strategy. These include the following:

- Ø **Structure of the system**, including goals, specific objectives, justification and activities;
- Ø **Framing and definition of performance indicators**, both quantitative and qualitative, that are used to measure progress towards achieving results at output, outcome and impact levels; and
- Ø Key successes, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities that have characterized the development and implementation of the policy over time; and **the application of lessons learned** to see how carefully they have been applied.

Each core indicator must have a defined, time bound target, with a baseline measurement that provides the starting point from which achievements are expected. Targets should reflect a level of progress that is realistic, but meaningful considering the resources invested. Target definitions must also take into account the methods used for measurement and the feasibility and frequency with which measurements are taken. Depending on the type of achievement and information available, targets may be formulated as indicated in the box below.

- **Absolute Targets:** a specific numerical target citing a baseline value, e.g. access to public transport for all from 50% to 75% in five years; and
- **Relative Targets:** Relative change that is independent of the initial value of the starting point (e.g. a reduction of road accident fatalities by half) - often used when baselines are uncertain.

### Box 4. Absolute and relative targets



### 3 WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION?

# CHAPTER 3

## WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION?

The partnership framework for M&E in any given NUP will have to be coherent with the governance structure defined for the initiative. Whichever the case, the main principle this chapter would like to stress is that maximum participation of stakeholders be maintained at all levels and at every step. As a fundamental guarantee for limiting conflict, maintaining the basis for democratic resolution of disputes, for equitable treatment of those negatively affected, and for increased participation of those often marginalized. This principle has obvious implications for the monitoring process and the individual mechanisms to be adopted.

Any government, in leading the exercise will have to ensure that the partnership arrangements for monitoring continue until the end of the process, up to and including the evaluation. When required and advisable, an element of independent external evaluation may be added. It is also important that the roles and responsibilities of the different departments of government be clarified.

Most Local Government Associations are mandated to represent the interests of local government which, in case of a NUP, can mean:

- Contributing to NUP development and implementation via **multilevel governance and multi-stakeholder platforms**;
- Carrying out a feasibility check, based on **intergovernmental frameworks**, that clarifies the role of Local and regional governments as implementers of NUP, the competences required and the enabling environment;
- Contributing to the identification of **best practices** with regard to the implementation of NUP;
- Identifying the bottlenecks in implementation – or drawing out lessons from the past- related to **overlapping of competences, fiscal opportunities and challenges**, issues related to **lack of coordination, and** others; and
- Establishing **effective follow up procedures** for NUP and **making clear what works and what does not** at the local and regional levels.

### Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Getting the basic structure and clarification of roles and responsibilities in M&E is essential and can minimize bottlenecks in communication, conflicts of power and interest, duplicated tasks and wasted efforts. Keeping M&E roles and functions connected and close to management is a best practice in M&E. To ensure effectiveness in M&E roles and responsibilities it is important therefore to:

- a. Clarify the M&E responsibilities of **implementing partners** the commitments and responsibilities of each party. Also stipulate the information that should be reported in terms of effects and outcomes, establishing concrete and clear mechanisms to guarantee that this happens;
- b. Clarify the M&E responsibilities of primary **beneficiary/stakeholders**. Although involvement of community members may start with a simple monitoring role, other roles, such as a stakeholder responsibility for managing contractors, can increase efficiency and effectiveness in implementation, and ownership) Consider what **staffing or human resources levels are appropriate** for the set of M&E tasks and functions you need to fulfil. M&E performance can be negatively affected by staffing that is top-heavy or unskilled, too light or distributed in a way that obstructs effective communication and coordination;
- c. **Allocate clear levels of authority** to M&E related staff. The staff need enough recognition to undertake functions that others in the project may perceive as intrusive;
- d. **Use Terms of Reference (TOR)** for those involved in M&E matters;
- e. When using **consultants**, make sure they can strategically contribute to M&E capacity development. When contracting them, be completely clear about what you expect them to add to the existing systems and expertise, specify by when and in what manner they are expected to complete specified tasks. Consider working with the same consultants for monitoring as far as possible to minimize the need to reconcile conflicting advice.

## Introducing Partnership Arrangements

The preceding sections have highlighted contextual scenarios which will undoubtedly affect decisions regarding the national institutional framework for NUP. The results may be one primarily led by the ministry in charge of the urban sector or one, much broader, whereby several ministries will express a direct interest and demand a greater voice in decision making. The definition of the institutional framework is a critical political step. Irrespective of the formula adopted, and with respect to M&E systems, this higher institutional layer will provide overarching political monitoring, checks and balances. This can be often expressed through an **Inter-Ministerial Task Force** to be opened to additional partners from sub-national levels of government and civil society depending on the national socio-political context. However, that upper institutional layer normally limits itself to monitoring and ensuring political coherence among the various modules and activities of the NUP.

Given the very nature of a NUP, its correlation with multiple sectors and its impact on all levels of government as well as local communities, that upper layer should not be considered sufficient; an effort should be made by the sponsors/partners in the project to achieve, as far as possible, a **360° peer-based partnership** in strategic consultations, as well as in monitoring activities. This will also provide a basis for the future evaluation. Inclusion of partners, depending on the agreed scope of the NUP, should be guided by a good understanding of the following factors:

- the structure of **sub-national** government throughout the national territory;
- the needs of **national, regional and local government associations**;
- the **thematic components of the NUP**: legislation, sub-sectoral urban/territorial policies like mobility/transport, housing and basic services, environment, public space, infrastructure, local economic development, cultural/historical heritage, education etc.;
- the **choice of normative/regulatory instruments that it is deemed necessary to improve**: the practices of land management and administration, and the efficiency and responsiveness to the needs of spatial planning practices. The instruments to enhance urban

competitiveness and market attractiveness, the incremental provision of services to urban and rural areas and production and management of information and databases on urban/territorial dynamics etc.;

- the implications on spatial development, **internal migration** and **local economies** of the ongoing lending programmes of multilateral financial institutions; and
- The **degree of integration** of the principles of **gender equality** and of **youth participation** in public policies; the integration of women and youth into monitoring mechanisms should be promoted with a view to verifying the introduction of gender and youth mainstreaming tools in public decisions.

For NUP monitoring, a representation of the various centers of knowledge is important. The reports from academia/research centers across the thematic areas covered by a NUP. Representation, consultation, and participation of sub-national government and their associations and of key multi and bilateral agencies concerned should be attempted.

Monitoring must rely on specialized and diversified competences applied in an inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary manner. NUP governance and monitoring must be based on information gathering and exchange, participation, coordination and communication at all levels.

### **Instruments and resources to this effect should include:**

- urban/territorial databases at the national, regional, local levels;
- mechanisms for citizens' participation involving all concerned groups (local government and councils, civic groups, economic sectors' associations/confederations, women and youth groups etc.);
- monitoring mechanisms of gender and youth mainstreaming; and
- coordination mechanisms of all forms, including virtual platforms and networks.

## Actors and Mechanisms

The range of actors or stakeholders that it would be advisable and strategic to involve in all phases of NUP development is extensive. It is also at the heart of NUP to re-shape the national territory spatially. NUP aim to draw investment into or away from specific regions. NUP make high-impact decisions in terms of land management and land use, affecting local communities and natural resources alike. Therefore, the maximum involvement of actors would help achieve a framework of broad representation and involvement across sectors, regions and local communities.

To this effect, different formulas and mechanisms may be tried, **under the guidance of a higher layer of 'political' oversight**. This high-level monitoring can be extended to key partners according to context – for example, involving the Planning Commission, Economic and Social Council, Urban policy observatory, etc. In the first instance monitoring is the responsibility of the NUP project team established by the sponsors.

This includes keeping track of the delivery of inputs, the production of outputs and reporting on expenditures in accordance with the agreed timetable.

In multilateral or bilateral projects, virtually all monitoring activities are internalized by project teams. This, however, does not exclude monitoring and evaluation to be also led by local and regional governments as they are central actors in the implementation of a NUP.

Considering that NUP have a drastic and massive impact on regions and communities, establishing a system that invites and allows broader stakeholder participation is highly recommended.

Therefore, below the 'upper level' (Inter-Ministerial Task Force and Project Team), an **'advisory' multi-stakeholders committee** could operate as a sounding board for government. The National Urban Forum can be used primarily as a platform to give a voice to concerned groups and communities in decision making. Such initiatives have rarely evolved into permanent mechanisms to enhance participatory decision-making and accountability.

A similar concept (in practice much reduced in size) may be applied, for the duration of the NUP, establishing the following bodies:

- **An Advisory NUP Committee (or Habitat Committee where it exists)** that gathers representatives of the key actors outside central government (regional/state and local government, as well as National Municipal Associations). Key academic and research institutes, private sector consortia/associations, selected NGOs etc. should also be involved. This Committee would function as 'hub' for information gathering and networking of a broader set of partners throughout the country. It would be responsible for drawing insights from established national and sub-national databases (including national and local Urban Observatories). It would also be responsible for guiding and articulating the participation of established national networks in NUP activities, such as National Municipal Associations, non-governmental organization (NGO) consortia, Professional bodies etc.. The Urban Forum could be used to bring together multiple layers of government and a broad range of stakeholders into a dialogue on the performance and gaps in policies and their impacts.
- **Regional NUP poles**, functioning as genuine recipients of all local communities' priorities and concerns, open to participation of Municipalities, LGAs, civic groups, NGOs, women and youth groups, private sector, for the purpose of reviewing and assessing the impact of NUP decisions and activities on their territory. These would be responsible for organizing **Regional NUP meetings**, at regular intervals in coordination with the central NUP team, for the purpose of validating proposed strategies, monitoring modes and timing of implementation. **City consultations** should also be supported by the central NUP team in key cities.
- In the course of NUP development, National **Consultations** should be used as fundamental mechanisms to highlight and validate critical issues.

### Box 5. Bodies required for the NUP

The cost of operations of both the Advisory Committee and the Regional Poles could be covered through a specific budget line of the NUP project. The sponsors of the NUP project could also consider giving the Advisory Committee and Regional Poles (or selected members of either) the responsibility to undertake monitoring tasks for selected indicators or key thematic activities (legal reform processes, spatial planning activities etc. as relevant in the specific context).

### From NUP Formulation, Through Implementation, To Evaluation

The design of a NUP intervention precedes the actual formulation of a NUP. Issues of NUP governance and partnership arrangements should be key elements of discussion and negotiation with all spheres of the government. Doing so will ensure that the framework is agreed upon prior to the starting of the complex NUP formulation phase which should, from step one, draw on the capacities of the broad network of stakeholders described in the preceding sections.

Formulating a NUP is obviously a complex modular exercise. Once completed and duly approved, a NUP provides the government with a reference document to guide all sectoral interventions and local level initiatives under a clear and agreed framework. This will constitute the NUP implementation phase.

The implementation phase involves the roll out of a range of actions in multiple fields, including legal and normative reform, spatial planning exercises at different geographical levels, land tenure and management arrangements, and review of devolution prerogatives. Implementation may therefore take place as the sum of separate modules, with different timelines and under the responsibility of different institutional actors. It would be advisable that the same partnership framework established for NUP formulation be kept alive and active, ideally institutionalizing a mechanism for national dialogue and accountability.

Evaluation can be conducted at different points in time, often every few years in the course of the implementation phase and beyond, to assess whether activities have been conducted as planned or to determine whether programmes or policies that are being implemented can account for the changes in results observed, as measured through outcome and impact indicators. This evaluation clarifies the roles of multi/bilateral partners. It is advisable that an external, independent evaluation be considered to guarantee a transparent assessment of the process. A prior 360° peer-based evaluation, relying on the partnership framework established from the start of the NUP process, could also be considered. It is recommended that a **National Consultation** take place prior to the official Government approval of the NUP.



4

**WHEN SHOULD  
MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION OF  
NUP TAKE PLACE?**

# CHAPTER 4

## WHEN SHOULD MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF NUP TAKE PLACE?

**Monitoring** is a continuous function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide indications of the extent of progress and achievement. As well as the objectives and progress on the use of allocated resources. Therefore, once the M&E framework is in place, monitoring should start immediately, tracking progress against what was planned. The monitoring can be at different levels, tracking inputs (resources), activities carried out, outputs produced and results (outcomes) achieved using indicators of achievement. This should be continuous providing information at specified agreed times.

**Evaluation** is a systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, including its design, implementation and results. As such, it should take place at predetermined times according to a clear timeline established by project or programme managers at the design stage. Key points in time for evaluation are as follows.

- Before implementation of NUP – Assessing the evaluability of the NUP
- Mid-term or during implementation – Formative or process evaluation
- After implementation of the NUP – summative, outcome, and impact evaluation

### Setting up the M&E Framework

Planning for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should be an integral part of the overall planning and formulation of a NUP. The M&E framework should not be rigid, but rather it should be subject to continuous review and adjustment owing to changes in the implementation of the NUP. Below are suggested timing of when the monitoring and evaluation could take place. Evaluation work should start with development of an evaluation framework addressing the following questions:



#### a) Ex-ante evaluation and feasibility:

- To what extent was the NUP focused and in line with agreed standards and relevant to the urban problems identified?
- To what extent are diverse stakeholders involved?
- Is there clear and strong leadership for implementation?
- *Efficiency*. How well did the NUP provide guidance for transforming the available resources into the intended outputs, in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness?
- *Effectiveness*. To what extent did the NUP achieve its intended results?



**b) Process evaluation** – describe and analyze the processes of implemented NUP activities – management strategies, operations, costs, interactions, etc.



**c) Ex-post evaluations of effectiveness or impact** – For example: How well has the NUP been working? Are the observed changes the result of the NUP? Here it is important to examine intermediate measures to enable local policymakers and practitioners to monitor how various offices at local and national levels are performing particular NUP tasks and functions that are critical to producing a desired outcome.

**Box 6.** *Ex-ante, process and ex-post evaluations*

## Readiness Assessment : Ex-ante Evaluation

This is a unique assessment that should be conducted before monitoring and evaluation frameworks are developed. The assessment provides an analytical framework to assess a given country's organizational capacity and political willingness to develop, monitor and evaluate its NUP and to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework.

It should assess critical factors, including institutions roles and responsibilities, capacities, understanding the incentives and demands or lack of that exist to effectively monitor and evaluate the NUP. Basic questions should be used in the readiness assessment such as:

- What potential demand exists for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating NUP – for example: legislative or legal requirements; citizen demand; donor requirements; political or public sector reform?
- Who are the advocates and champions of the NUP process – government, local authorities, parliament, civil society, donors, others?
- What are the incentives and motivations for the champions to support a NUP process, including establishing sound monitoring and evaluation mechanisms?
- What are the roles, responsibilities and existing structures available to support the NUP process?
  - Ø What are the roles of central and line ministries in policy making and in monitoring and evaluation?
  - Ø Do ministries and agencies share information with one another?
  - Ø Who in the country produces data – at the national government level and sub-national or local level?
  - Ø Where and how is government data used? For example: in budget preparation, resource allocation, planning... etc.?
- Where is there capacity to lead the design, monitoring and evaluation of the NUP process? Which actors, which stakeholders?
- How will the NUP link to projects, programmes, sectors and national goals?

- Where will resources for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating NUP come from?
- Are indicators and baselines considered and realistic – are they based on routine management activities or dedicated databases?

The readiness assessment can help governments, donors and other partners to address challenges of organizational capacity, and sequencing of efforts that will be needed to design and construct the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of a NUP.

## Evaluability Assessment of a NUP

Once the NUP has been formulated and the M&E framework developed, an evaluability assessment can be undertaken to determine whether the NUP is designed to enable robust monitoring and evaluation. Ideally the M&E frameworks are prepared as an integral part of the NUP. This involves agreeing on the outcomes to monitor and evaluate, as well as agreeing on key targets and indicators to monitor and evaluate outcomes. This involves the following steps. **Deciding on baseline data** (where are we today), specifying results and targets in accordance with the objectives of NUP; **defining the data sources** and the methods of data collection and analysis required; **reaching agreement** on how the information generated will be used; **specifying reporting** format and periodicity; **establishing the M&E schedules;** **assigning responsibilities** for M&E and **providing an adequate budget** for M&E.

An evaluability assessment can be conducted to determine whether the NUP is in a condition to be evaluated and is likely to produce useful monitoring and evaluation information. Typically, this takes place before or during the implementation of NUP. The evaluability assessment will normally review:

- the design of the NUP;
- Availability of relevant information and data; and
- Conduciveness of the context for monitoring and evaluation.

## What to do with the results of M&E

Reporting should focus on achievements, challenges, opportunities and gaps based on regular M&E. Performance information derived from both M&E will be used as a management tool and provide feedback on the progress of given projects, programmes, and sub-programmes in NUP. Monitoring and evaluation reports should present credible, reliable and balanced information (success as well as failures and mistakes to be corrected). Reports should discuss challenges, risks, opportunities and their effect on the performance of NUP. There should be a systematic plan for disseminating monitoring and evaluation results to key internal NUP stakeholders and external stakeholders. Analyzing and reporting findings is a critical step in M&E because it conveys information, builds awareness, educates, demonstrates results, accountability and informs the decision-making. These steps include:



- Developing M&E **communication and reporting**. This helps plan communication throughout the monitoring and evaluation process and increases the likelihood of that information being used;



- Keeping **report presentation** simple and straightforward;



- **Following an agreed /prescribed order** in the report (an approved format);



- Reporting results in **comparison to earlier results** and to **your baseline and targets**;



- **Presenting only the most important data**. Use appendices or a separate report to convey detailed data;



- Using **visual presentations** (tabular, graphs, charts, pictorial) to present information in a meaningful way;



- Combining **qualitative information** and along with **quantitative data**; and



- Being mindful of **different audiences** (e.g. primary audiences – those that request M&E results and major decision makers; secondary audiences – those involved, but with little influence; tertiary audiences - more distant, but possibly interested in the findings of M&E).

Evaluation reports can play different roles, and the information produced can be put to different uses. The central purpose, however, is to inform the appropriate audiences about the findings and conclusions resulting from the collection, analysis and interpretation of evaluated information. The monitoring and evaluation findings can thus be used as a loop and feedback to improve the design and implementation of the NUP. The M& E team should take care to know its audience and how they want to see information expressed.

Hence, before any evaluation the following steps should be taken:

- **Agree on the priority issues demanding information.** Secure agreement on those issues that most urgently require information to make the most of the resources available for information management. A high degree of consultation is required during the agreement process since stakeholders may have widely differing views on priorities. A draft list of priority issues could be prepared and distributed to stakeholders for comments. Alternatively, a workshop or other discussion forum could be held specifically to reach consensus. Reconciling different viewpoints by negotiating a consensus on priority issues helps build ties between stakeholders and facilitate cooperation;
- **Determine the information needs of decision-making groups.** The key to effective use of information is to focus only on essential information. A thorough assessment of information needs is a critical initial step. One of the most efficient ways of arriving at transferable information (lessons) is through outcome evaluations. The sharing of which can facilitate learning across different countries and geographical locations.

The dissemination of evaluation results should be tailored to the needs and interests of priority audiences. It is important to discuss when and how the M&E results should be disseminated with relevant stakeholders. Results should be reported in relation to earlier data gathered and to the baseline; a comparison over time is critical in order to understand the effects of an intervention.

# CONCLUSION

## Recommendations for effective Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E of a NUP will certainly be based on the initial definition of goals, targets and indicators which can measure the successful conception and implementation of a NUP. The criteria to define a successful NUP will inevitably vary across countries. However, it is suggested that a successful NUP will, at a minimum, respond to nationally defined urban impacts and results (for addressing issues and harness the benefit of urbanization) in the short, medium and long term which have taken into account contexts at both the local and regional levels.

Furthermore, in order to ensure the sustainability of NUP initiatives, having the vision of the NUP mainstreamed into government department programmes and policies could be seen as an indication of success.

When considering NUP monitoring and evaluation, the most pertinent recommendations are as follows.

- **Integrate process and outcome evaluation:** A NUP often sets in motion a multiplicity of policy related processes, and it could be useful to measure both the process, products and as well as specific policy outcomes. Doing so may facilitate the embedding of programmes that mainstream NUP priorities. While outcome evaluation has the ability to consider to what extent the NUP achieved its defined goals, an evaluation of products ensures that the quality and relevance of all products, as well as an evaluation of process can potentially allow insight into what elements of the process undertaken led to successes or failures.
- **Anchoring NUP with reliable data and evidence:** Both the design and implementation of the policy must be based on policy-relevant research and urban-relevant data which reflects realities at both the local and regional levels. Unavailability of reliable baseline data or evidence can prove to be a complicating or even an inhibiting factor for undertaking both the monitoring and evaluation and the evaluation of a NUP. Unreliable urban policy data could form a constraint that affects the assessment of the performance of the urban policy. The establishment of mechanisms, such as a multi-stakeholder platforms, multilevel governance mechanisms, or inter-ministerial committees or urban policy observatories could be recommended in order to stimulate policy-relevant research and produce reliable data on urban issues to support the development of NUP and, more broadly, the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- **Participatory monitoring for engaged stakeholders:** To facilitate an open and participatory policy monitoring and evaluation process, the use of participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques are recommended to ensure that stakeholders remain engaged and committed.
- **Iterative policy design for results:** Regular tracking of the implementation of a NUP is recommended in order to foster an iterative policy design that produces results. While a forward-thinking policy will have defined long-term goals, lessons learned from interim monitoring can be used to reflect on strengths and weaknesses of the policy to date and adjusted accordingly. Incremental and cumulative gains could be identified to stimulate, encourage and motivate actors.
- **Linking NUP monitoring with global monitoring efforts:** For instance, there is an opportunity for outcome monitoring for a NUP to be closely linked to SDG reporting systems, in particular **Voluntary National Reports (VNR)** because many aspects of a NUP are clearly related to SDG targets and the VNR is an opportunity to revise policy and illustrate development progress to global audience.
- **Assessment and capacity building.** Throughout policymaking and delivery, it is necessary to consider the capacity of implementing partners, particularly the capacities of sub-national governments. The M&E framework could assess human, institutional, financial, and technical capacities and the need to build capacity in all spheres of government, and among all NUP implementing partners, in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NUP. Capacity building could also be considered for the private sector.

Successful conception and implementation of a national urban policy could be monitored and evaluated in the context of whether the policy fulfills nationally defined goals in the short, medium and long term, and whether the vision of the national urban policy is grounded by being based on local and regional realities and mainstreamed into departmental programmes and policies. When developing indicators for monitoring and evaluation, measurability through access to adequate data sources that allow comparison with a baseline scenario, as well as the use of participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques, should be considered.

Information may be presented using various analytical techniques. The main point, however, is to make information from evaluations and monitoring user friendly, easily accessible and advantageous to the user. The assessments from evaluation should be documented and distributed to stakeholders for feedback. This will help identify information needs. Once a position on information needs has been agreed, the products and services required to meet them can be designed.

The dissemination of evaluation results is as important as their publication. Only an efficient system of dissemination will ensure that the target recipients receive the evaluation feedback that is relevant to their specific needs. The underlying issue is how to capture lessons from experience that are transferable; that is, those lessons that have a broader application as compared to those that are relevant only to a single programme or project.

This challenge can be addressed through the institutionalization of learning from monitoring and evaluation feedback. Institutionalization of the learning process can be achieved by better incorporating learning into existing tools. It is important to foster learning between the different levels of government and other stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of a NUP.

The major challenge in monitoring is to gather, store and use information that serves different levels of assessment. Monitoring should be multifunctional so that information generated at one level is useful at the next. Monitoring should also go beyond checking whether events are taking place as planned. The monitoring process should be committed to improving the lateral linkages among project and programme staff, including feedback processes, for learning purposes. Analysis of the existing or possible linkages across programmes and projects should be as critical, objective and exhaustive as possible. Evaluation is a process-oriented exercise that requires the establishment of common baseline data for making comparisons. The key challenge is being able to identify correctly, from the outset, every factor that is relevant to project and programme effectiveness and impact, and how all factors affect each other.

## ANNEX

Monitoring	Evaluation
Monitoring is the systematic and routine collection of information about the policies/programmes/project activities	Evaluation is the periodic assessment of the policies/programmes/project activities
It is an ongoing process which is carried out to see if activities are on track or not i.e. it regularly tracks the programme	It is undertaken on a periodic basis to measure success against objectives i.e. it is an in-depth assessment of the programme or policy
Monitoring is to be done starting from the initial stage of the project or policy process	Evaluation is to be done after a certain point of time of the project or policy cycle, usually at the mid of the project, completion of the project or while moving from one stage to another stage of projects or programmes
Monitoring is undertaken usually by the internal members of the team	Evaluation is mainly undertaken by the external members of the team. However, sometimes it may be also done by internal members of the team or by both internal and external members in a combined way
Monitoring provides information about the current status and thus helps to take immediate remedial actions, if necessary	Evaluation provides recommendations, information for long term planning and lessons for organizational growth and success
It focuses on inputs, activities and outputs	It focuses on outcomes, impacts and the overall goal
Monitoring process includes regular meetings, interviews, monthly and quarterly reviews etc. Usually quantitative data.	Evaluation processes include intense data collection, both qualitative and quantitative
It has multiple points of data collection	Data collection is done at intervals only
It gives answers about the present scenario of the project towards achieving planned results considering the human resources, budget, materials, activities and outputs	It assesses the relevance, impact, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of the projects
Monitoring studies the present information and experiences of the project	Evaluation studies the past experience of project performance
Monitoring checks whether the project did what it said it would do	Evaluation checks whether what the project did had the impact that it intended
Helps to improve project design and functioning of current project	Helps to improve project design of future projects
Monitoring looks at detail of activities	Evaluation does not look at detail of activities but rather looks at a bigger picture
It compares the current progress with the planned progress	It looks at the achievement of the programmes along with both positive/negative, intended/unintended effects
Information obtained from monitoring is more useful to the implementation/management team	Information obtained from evaluation is useful to all the stakeholders
Monitoring result is used for informed actions and decisions	Evaluation result is used for planning of new programmes and interventions
Answers the question "Are we doing things, right?"	Answers the question "Are we doing right thing?"
Regular report and updates about the project/programme act a deliverable here	Reports with recommendations and lessons act as a deliverable here
Good or effective monitoring does not rely on evaluation results	Good or effective evaluation relies to some extent on good monitoring
There are few quality checks in monitoring	There are many quality checks in evaluation
It provides information for evaluation	It provides information for proper planning

Source: <https://www.publichealthnotes.com/difference-monitoring-evaluation/>



National Urban Policies (NUP) are critical for framing sustainable urban development. Adequately monitored and evaluated NUP help achieve their expected results. *The Monitoring and Evaluating National Urban Policy: A Guide* is intended to be used as a tool to help countries and their different spheres of government know when, and if, policies are working or not and if they are well-articulated with global policy and development agendas. This Guide further highlights how national, local and regional governments, along with other stakeholders, through M&E, should all be involved in the development and implementation of urban policies. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a powerful public management tool that has been used to improve the way governments and organizations achieve results.

As many countries embark on sustainable urbanization and the achievement of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the M&E tools outlined here should be increasingly used to make improvements in policy making, management, strengthening dialogue and collaboration between all levels of government and other actors. Well-executed urban policy and M&E, with specific targets and indicators, have the power to increase accountability, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency and performance in implementing the NUA.

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