Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP Project
Sustainable Cities Impact Programme - Global Platform (GP) GEF 10452
2020 – 2025

Evaluation Office of the
United Nations Environment Programme

Distributed: November 2024

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Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP Project Sustainable Cities Impact Programme Global Platform (SCIP-GP)
GEF 10452
(05/2024)
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Acknowledgements

This Mid Term Evaluation is prepared for UNEP Evaluation Office by Dr. Suman Kumar Karna.

The evaluator would like to express his gratitude to all the persons he met both in-person and on-line while conducting this Mid-Term Evaluation study as planned.

The evaluator would also like to thank the evaluation office and the project team for their contribution, guidance, and collaboration throughout the evaluation process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the members of partner organizations, government officials and other project stakeholders, who spared time and provided their candid opinion, comments and remarks, which has directly contributed to enriching the substance and quality of this report.

The evaluator would also like acknowledge, all the project members who spent time to provide their sincere and insightful comments on the draft report.

The evaluator understands that the discussions, findings, and recommendations presented in this report will contribute towards further facilitating the smooth implementation of the project and its successful completion as envisioned. Besides, the report will also provide necessary insights helpful to the formulation of next cycle of the project.

Brief external consultant biography

Dr. Suman Kumar Karna is a well-trained Urban and Environmental Governance and DRR and Climate Change Specialist having received his PhD degree from the University of Melbourne, Australia in 2005. He has more than 20 years of extensive experience working for multiple organizations (UN Agencies, USAID, FCDO, EU, IFRC, TAF, DCA, VSO and others) in multiple countries and in different capacities and contexts. His core expertise expands over urban planning and governance, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation. He works simultaneously at both normative and operational level and collaborates closely with all tiers of governments including local communities on the ground. Dr. Karna often delivers under multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary work environment, where he manages diverse range of multi-sectoral projects following participatory and consultative model of development. Dr. Karna has long experience and expertise in conducting evaluation studies for various agencies. His writing has been published both in national media and international journals. He is presently working as freelance consultant and engaged with both national and international consultancies in his areas of expertise.

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About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English.

Evaluation Type: Mid-term Evaluation

Brief Description: This report is a Mid Term Evaluation of a UNEP implemented Sustainable Cities Impact Programme- Global Platform (SCIP- GP) project implemented between 2020 and 2025. The SCIP-GP project objective is that cities pursue integrated urban planning and implementation and increase their ambitions, to deliver impactful sustainable development outcomes with global environmental benefits (GEBs).

The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Sustainable Cities, Sustainable, Impact, Climate Change Adaptation, Green House Gases, Biodiversity, Nature Based Solutions, Environment, Capacity Building, Knowledge Management, Advocacy

Primary data collection period: January 2024 – April 2024

Field mission dates:

i) March 25, 2024 – April 06, 2024 (India Field Mission- Delhi, Surat and Pune)
ii) April 14, 2024 – April 22, 2024 (Latin America Regional UrbanShift Forum- Belem, Brazil)

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

CiBiX	City Business Collaboration Accelerator
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EA	Executing Agency
EMT	Executive Management Team
EP	Executing Partner
FY	Financial Year
GEB	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GP	Global Platform
GPSC	Global Platform for Sustainable Cities
HYPR	Half Yearly Progress Report
IA	Implementing Agency
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
ISUDA	Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Assessment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NbS	Nature Based Solutions
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIUA	National Institute of Urban Affairs
OECD- DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee (internal UNEP committee that approves new projects)
ProDoc	Project Document (must be reviewed by PRC before any project can be undertaken, with the approval of the managing division director)
SC-IAP	Sustainable Cities – Integrated Approach Pilot
SCIP	Sustainable Cities Impact Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TAP	Transformative Actions Program
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United National Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNEP-CCM	United Nations Environment Programme – Climate Change Mitigation
USD	United States Dollar
WRI	World Resources Institute
WEF	World Economic Forum
WUF	World Urban Forum

Project identification table

Table 1-1: Project Summary

UNEP PIMS/SMA[1] ID:	43818		
GEF Project ID:	GEF 10452 **(GP or Urbanshift),** Coordinating Project		
Implementing Agency:	UNEP: GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Climate Change Division[2]	**Executing Agencies:**	C40, ICLEI, UNEP Cities Unit, WRI
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	**SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts** **SDG 11: to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;** **SDG 5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7)	4. Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (4,000 Hectares) 6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (indirectly, 4,400,00 metric tons of CO2e) 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (1,308,000 women/girls)		
Sub-programme:	Subprogramme 1 Climate Change Stability: countries increasingly make the transition to low-emission economic development, and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	N/A
UNEP approval date:	16 October 2020	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	Outcome 1B: Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance, and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement. Indicator (i) Number of national, subnational and private sector actors that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support. Indicator (ii) Amounts provided and mobilized in $ per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the $100 billion commitment through to 2025 with UNEP support.
GEF approval date:	07.05.2020	**Project type:**	FSP
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-7	**Focal Area(s):**	Climate Change Mitigation
		GEF Strategic Priority:	GEF-7 Impact Program

[1] Acronym for ID assigned by the Integrated Planning, Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) system.
[2] Former Industry and Economy Division, moved to Climate Change Division created in 1st of February 2024

			Contributing to measurable global environmental benefits by: a) reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG); b) mainstreaming biodiversity conservation to harness ecosystem services and safeguard threatened wildlife species; c) integrating voluntary LDN targets; and d) improved chemicals and waste management.
Expected start date:	01.06.2020	**Actual start date:**	01.11.2020
Planned operational completion date:	01.06.2025	**Actual operational completion date:**	01.06.2025
Planned project budget at approval:	USD 40,534,595	**Actual total expenditures reported as of December 2022:**	USD 16,400,680
GEF grant allocation:	USD 16,213,761	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of December 2022:**	USD 5,093,939
Expected Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	USD 24,320,834	**Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	USD 11,306,741 (47%)
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	USD 300,000	**Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:**	N/A
Date of First disbursement:	18 November 2022	**Planned date of financial closure:**	October 2026
No. of formal project revisions:	1 (Update on IP rights and slight extension)	**Date of last approved project revision:**	10 May 2022
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	2 (virtual)	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	Last: Nov 2023 / Next: S2-2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	2023	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	December 2023 - May 2024
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	2025[3]	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	2027
Coverage - Country(ies):	Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, China, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda and Sierra Leone	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Global
Dates of previous project phases:	GEF-6 Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (SC-IAP)	**Status of future project phases:**	GEF-8 Cities program is led by the WB and the PFD was be approved in June 2024.

[3] The Coordinating Project is due to complete in June 2025. However, as it holds the mandate and funds for the Terminal Evaluation of the Programme, the timing of the TE is determined by the end date of the Programme (estimated to reach a threshold to support a Programme TE in 2027)

Executive Summary

Project Background

1. Fragmented urban planning, gender disparities, inadequate funding, and environmental degradation are some challenges faced by cities that hinder their transition to sustainable practices. Sustainable Cities Impact Programme – Global Platform (**GP**) recognizes the complexities of cities and aims to dismantle barriers of sustainability through targeted interventions and collaborative efforts.

2. Envisioned as a coordinating project under the Sustainable Cities Impact Programme (SCIP, GEF 10391) the Global Platform (GP, GEF 10452) unites a network of Child Projects, spread across 3 regions and 9 countries, to address the pressing need for integrated urban planning and implementation. SCIP GP is implemented by UNEP Climate Change Mitigation (CCM) Unit and executed by WRI, C40, ICLEI, and UNEP Cities. GP aims to steer cities towards achieving sustainability goals that not only benefit the local communities but also the global environment.

3. GP helps to foster policy reform, facilitates investments and innovating financing mechanisms, and promotes knowledge management and advocacy. GP, through strategic partnerships, effective governance, and robust monitoring and evaluation, aims to create an enabling environment for cities to thrive sustainably, harnessing their potential as engines of innovation and prosperity.

4. By bringing together global, national, and local stakeholders, GP creates a ground for ideas to flourish and solutions to be developed. GP aims to promote a culture of learning and inspiration among cities, as well as inculcate a sense of solidarity and shared purpose in the global agenda for a more sustainable future.

This Evaluation

5. This document is a report of Mid Term Evaluation of SCIP GP 10452. The evaluation has been carried out under the management of the UNEP Evaluation Office, following the Global Environment Facility (GEF) guidelines. The evaluation report has been prepared by an independent evaluator hired by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

6. Aligned with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) has been carried around the midpoint of the project implementation. The MTE aims to assess the project's progress, identify encountered issues or challenges, and determine necessary corrective measures.

7. The MTE adheres to high standards of evidence and analysis, ensuring findings are clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. It employs triangulation of information collected from diverse sources, maintaining transparency while acknowledging single sources where verification isn't feasible to preserve anonymity. Beyond merely assessing project performance, the MTE delves into understanding the underlying reasons for such performance, emphasizing the importance of exploring the "why" as well as the "what" to provide a comprehensive evaluation.

8. A mix of primary and secondary sources, including field missions (to India and to the UrbanShift Latin American Forum) and online interviews, was used to gather relevant data, with review of documents forming the backbone of the study.

9. The MTE commenced with primary consultations with UNEP's Evaluation Officer and the GP Project team, followed by collection of documents and desk review. Concurrently,

preparatory work for field missions began, alongside the development of the Methodology, Work Plan, and Inception Report. Next, the process of MTE included stakeholder interviews and a field mission to India, where key partners were engaged through Key Informant Interviews and Group Discussions in Delhi, Surat, and Pune. Another mission to Belem, Brazil, facilitated meetings with several key partners and stakeholders, alongside the UrbanShift Latin America Regional Forum. The desk review however continued throughout the evaluation process. The selection of respondents was carefully done in close consultation with the UNEP evaluation manager and the GP project team to ensure a well-rounded evaluation process.

10. The evaluation process adhered to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) and UNEP Evaluation Criteria, guided by the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The strategic questions, refined from the Terms of Reference (ToR), provided further insights into programmatic approaches and coordination, particularly focusing on Knowledge Management, Coordination, and overall programme effectiveness.

Key Findings

11. **Strategic Relevance:** GP demonstrates strong alignment with various national, regional, and global priorities, including those outlined by UNEP and donor agencies. GP supports UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and Program of Work, focusing on climate change adaptation and mitigation. GP also integrates well with the national priorities across nine countries in the global south. These priorities center around supporting climate goals through multisector coalition that encourage climate change action across cities, states, and the private sector. GP contributes to core indicators under various GEF focal areas relevant to the Sustainable Cities IP, such as improved biodiversity, landscape practices, greenhouse gas mitigation, as well as gender-inclusive benefits.

12. **Effectiveness:** The GP is a multi-focal area project having mitigation impacts (GHG emission reductions) as well as biodiversity impacts (area of landscapes under improved practices). GP has been successful in making a strong mark among the global urban community about the need of an integrated approach to urban development, building urban resilience and securing their sustainability. In this process, GP is also promoting transit development, access to climate finance, use of nature-based solutions, zero emission, green recovery and energy saving, while guiding urban development process in selected countries and cities. The above agendas are also advocated and championed by GP in major international forums like the Conference of the Parties (COP), World Urban Forum (WUF), the World Economic Forum (WEF) and others.

13. The project emphasizes collaboration between partner agencies, facilitated by thematic leads and regional networks, to ensure implementation via well-coordinated and integrated approaches. Key activities are led by various partners such as UNEP for advocacy, WRI for capacity building, C40 for climate finance and climate action workstreams, and ICLEI for multi-level government dialogues. The project has been practical and well-executed so far. However, challenges include the time required to build relationships/trust with the national and local governments of countries and cities. Likewise, there is confusion regarding the orientation about boundary and roles of GP and national child projects in various countries. Given the current mismatch of timelines between GP and child projects, it is suggested to extend GP timeline to better support child projects, providing continuous training and knowledge development. There is a need to refine impact indicators to better reflect learning and outcomes. Additionally, addressing the equitable funding and logistical requirements of GP needs to be considered.

14. GP informs cities about global perspectives and best practices, advancing them towards achievement of sustainable goals. The regional approach of GP enhances efficiency as well as relevance of GP supports. While GP offers are valuable, there is a need for more interactive and tailored activities to reflect the needs of the cities. Stakeholders need to better understand the unique feature of GP in advancing urban sustainability agendas and the unique, impactful offers that GP provides to the cities.

15. The stakeholders exhibit a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, shaped through a thorough design process. The project's Theory of Change, and Intervention logic demonstrate coherence and realism, crucial for strategic planning and intended outcomes. Identified risks and assumptions are reasonable and relevant, though efforts are needed to address emerging issues like scheduling discrepancies between GP and child projects.

16. Despite some delays in project launches, most outputs and milestones align with goals, although outdated assessments necessitate updates before use by the child projects. Stakeholders' engagement has been satisfactory with varied engagements at local and regional levels, facilitated by effective communication protocols and platforms. Progress towards outputs has improved significantly, with enhanced cities' capacity and confidence noted, leading to attempts by cities to replicate and scale-up GP activities independently. The success of the project is demonstrated by the level of networking and engagement achieved by GP events participants, with the help of regional/country coordinators and partnerships. However, issues like political changes affecting access and lack of budget allocation in GP for city participants to participating in GP activities are some areas for improvement in project design and management.

17. The GP's progress varies across regions due to evolving political environment, bureaucratic challenges and multiple restrictions posed by the COVID pandemic. However, flexibility in planning and delivery of events, supported in achieving the outcomes. Overall progress, as per the Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports and Half Year Progress Report (HYPR) 2023, is satisfactory, with GP activities raising awareness on climate finance and nature-based solutions. Nevertheless, further advocacy involving mayors and ministries is necessary to enhance the GP activities on the ground.

18. The implementation of GP activities following innovative approaches has high potential for impact, including prospects of replicability and scalability in the long run. Activities like City Academy spark new ideas and concepts and hence positively impact cities' commitment towards integrated urban development. Learnings from GP are often used in developing city action plans followed by dedicated projects in areas of transport, flood management, green recovery, bio-diversity conservation and others. GP also provides opportunities to raise funds by accessing climate and green finance and by involving private sectors in developing public goods and services. Appropriate funding is crucial for continuing activities and hence pushing for their replicability and scalability in the medium and long run.

19. While the main modules remain fixed, GP offers an appropriate level of flexibilities to tailor and localize their activities before they are implemented. GP invites child project focused city officials and partners to co-design and localize the activities also by engaging technical experts and relevant stakeholders of this field.

20. Despite challenges posed by the COVID pandemic, online events have been found effective. Post pandemic operation costs have become expensive. In-spite of the restricted work environment, there was also found some missed opportunities. There is a need to further leverage the existing government think tanks and resources (knowledge

base and professional networks) from state level institutions that further enhance the participation and make more solid and visible impact. There should also be continuous follow up to ensure that the city officials benefit from various opportunities offered by the GP partners.

21. **Financial Management:** The project adheres to UNEP financial policies, with UNEP CCM Unit actively involved in planning and management meetings. Financial reporting, including co-financing closely meets the GEF requirements. Reporting cycles are structured for timely reporting, with transparent communication between the key players and the partners. Talks about budget revision is ongoing and this will have clear impact on the workplan. At mid-point, the rate of expenditure versus progress seems appropriate.

22. Financial reporting occurs semi-annually. The transition from output to component-level reporting has helped to streamline the processes, with significant improvement in the quality and timelines of the reporting. Technical and financial disconnects have been addressed with effective communication between the project and admin-finance team. Effective communication and coordination between implementing and executing partners are also crucial for managing project finances and aligning activities to the requirements of funding/donor agencies.

23. **Monitoring and Reporting:** Project monitoring and evaluation are done well as integral parts of the project. Robust communication budgets support M&E efforts. Monitoring includes tracking all engagements with cities and partners, and reports being prepared after each event. This also helps to track baseline indicators and benchmarks. Series of feedback received immediately and even months after an event are also recorded. Meetings with government officials help prevent repetition of activities and anticipate risks. Reporting covers events, calls, and meetings, with progress and financial reports produced twice a year. UNEP CCM Unit ensures reporting compliance with GEF requirements.

24. **Partnerships:** At the country level, the success of project largely depends on the ownership of the project by cities, yet there are no concrete strategies for sustainability post-GEF support. While stakeholders' express willingness to continue GP activities, funding constraints pose a major challenge. Cities expectations often exceed GP's scope. GEF could designate a selected institution to host and sustain GP knowledge, ensuring scaling and dissemination beyond GEF-7 cycle.

25. Project partners execute the project effectively, collaborating closely with UNEP CCM Unit. Agencies actively contribute to GP activities and engage in transparent communication. Risks are identified and managed well, with regular discussions. Project progress is noteworthy, whereby 65% of deliverables have been achieved (based on HYPR July-Dec 2023) by the end of 2023. Standardizing communication tools may help improve efficiency among GP partners and stakeholders.

26. **Human Rights and Gender:** The GP CEO Endorsement package (2020) includes a detailed gender action plan with specific indicators and targets, reflecting a strong commitment to gender equity. UNEP consistently emphasizes on gender balance in GP activities. But challenges persist in achieving equal representation in Africa and Asia due to practical limitations. Quantifying the impact of gender efforts is often confusing and it might be better to include qualitative indicators as well.

Conclusions

27. Based on the findings from this evaluation, the project demonstrates performance at **'Satisfactory'** level (a table of ratings against all evaluation criteria is present in the

Conclusions chapter of the report). Several strategic questions posed in the Terms of Reference for this MTE, are addressed in the Conclusions chapter.

28. The project has demonstrated strong performance in the areas of strategic relevance, financial management, project efficiency, quality of project management and supervision, and project monitoring and reporting.

29. The project performs satisfactorily in effectiveness, stakeholders' participation and cooperation, country ownership and drivenness, and communication and public awareness.

30. The main area of concern requiring serious attention is the exit strategy and sustainability of the project. Other areas that would benefit from further attention are quality of project design, effectiveness, responsiveness to human rights and gender equity, and environmental and social safeguards.

Lessons Learned

31. Lesson 1: GP regional/country coordinators emphasized the use of informal channels of communication (like WhatsApp) and having more than one focal person to prevent any major gap in communication due to change in staff.

32. Lesson 2: The success also depends on how long the participants (city officials) remain engaged with GP ideas and concepts, and strive for their integration in their city level plans and programs.

33. Lesson 3: It is important for the finance and admin team of GP to participate in GP activities and hence remain on the same page with the programmatic team.

34. Lesson 4: Financial reporting is simplified and timely if done component wise when many partners are involved.

35. Lesson 5: Sustainability of GP activities demands appropriate institution, trained resource persons and some seed grant to roll-out the activities for first few years.

36. Lesson 6: Regional events like the regional Forums should be conducted in a neutral location that is not influenced by the geopolitical environment.

37. Lesson 7: Relationship building with countries/cities take time and cities respond well to the project when there is a push from the national government.

38. Lesson 8: Cities may not always prioritize GP activities.

39. Lesson 9: Clear reporting lines and regional focus helps to make the project structure simple despite inherent complexity of the work streams.

Recommendations

40. Recommendation 1: Initiate child project related negotiations much before the signing of the global platform program. This will help to complete the homework beforehand and hence launch the child projects soon after the global project is initiated. This situation will also allow both GP and child progress to make progress in parallel.

41. Recommendation 2: As an alternative to Recommendation 1, increase the timeline of GP for the next GEF cycle. The total project period of GP should be more than child projects if they are starting together.

42. Recommendation 3: Consider more flexibility in offers made by GP (selection and delivery of modules) to make them more suitable and contextual to city level local needs and realities.

43. Recommendation 4: GP should plan and implement more city-based activities and encourage matching funds from cities to enhance local engagement, secure local ownership and also address resource constraints.

44. Recommendation 5: Select some IA, EA, private institutions or universities to host the accumulated GP knowledge and sustain it in the long run. GP should provide seed money (with matching funds from institutions) and Training of Trainers (ToT) to develop necessary resource persons if necessary.

45. Recommendation 6: Include more numbers of decision-makers/city-leaders in GP activities in order to intensify the quality and ownership of the intervention.

46. Recommendation 7: Use the monitoring system to check for assessments becoming outdated.

47. Recommendation 8: Involve more cities (other than GEF 6, GEF 7 cities) with priority to secondary cities and more global organizations (like GFDRR, IFC, IDB, EBRD, including academic and research institutions etc) in UrbanShift GP activities. Request for more funding if required.

48. Recommendation 9: Provide GP with funds for city officials to participate in GP activities in order to ensure participation of people with decision making authority.

49. Recommendation 10: Plan GP activities more frequently at city levels with provision of certification against participation.

50. Recommendation 11: Include qualitative indicators to monitor gender equality and responsiveness to human rights.

51. Recommendation 12: Add notes about how the objective level indicators are being tracked in the PIR.

52. Recommendation 13: Strengthen internal knowledge sharing among partners.

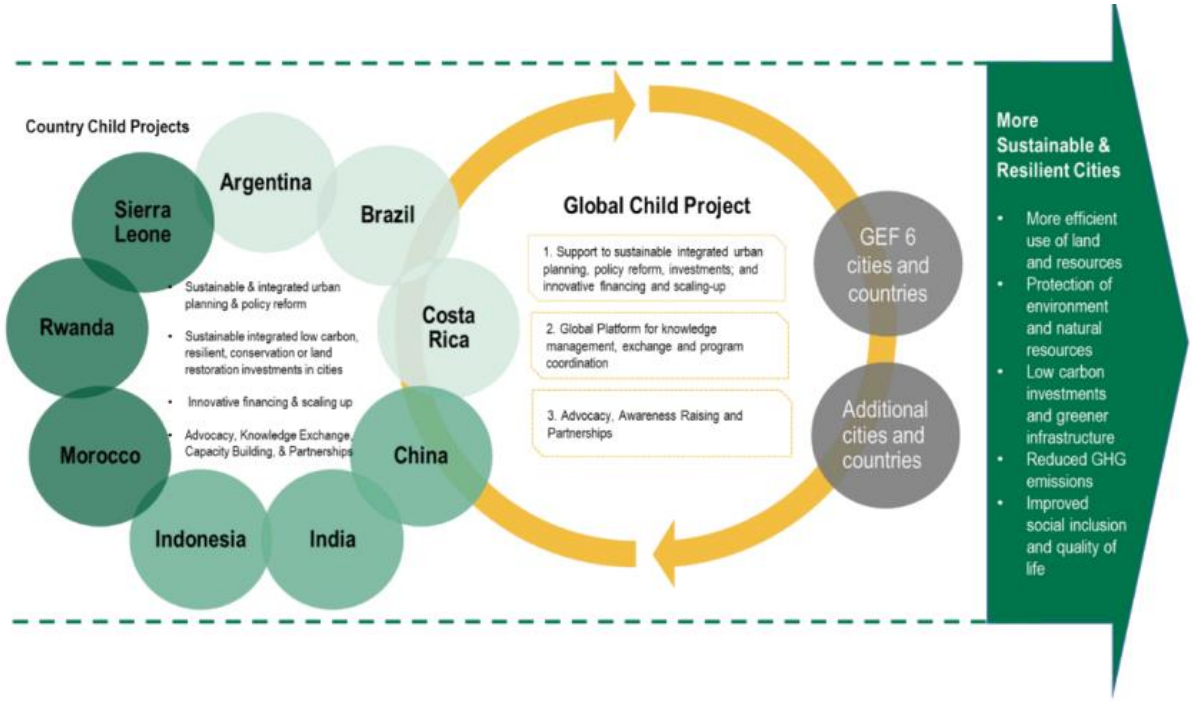
1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

53. This project identified by PIMS/SMA ID 43818 and GEF Project ID GEF 10452, Sustainable Cities Impact Program – Global Platform (hereinafter **GP**), is a Coordinating Project involving a network of Child Projects– GEF 10465, 10466, 10467, 10484, 10486, 10494, 10530, 10768, and 10822, collectively falling under the overarching program SCIP 10391 under 7th GEF replenishment (GEF-7). The programmatic approach of SCIP is represented by Figure 1-1. Brief information about the child projects is present in Annex VIII.

54. The implementing agency spearheading the initiative is UNEP's GEF Climate Change Mitigation Unit, housed within the Climate Change Division. Executing agencies include C40, ICLEI, UNEP Cities Unit, and the Word Resources Institute. The governance structure of the project is present in Figure 1-2. The cooperation of the executing agencies has built a strong institutional base that is necessary for the intended objectives of the project to be implemented and realized. Similarly, a Partnership Engagement Group (PEG) with key urban actors, initiatives, networks, and alliances provides valuable inputs on integrated and environmentally sustainable urban planning agenda.

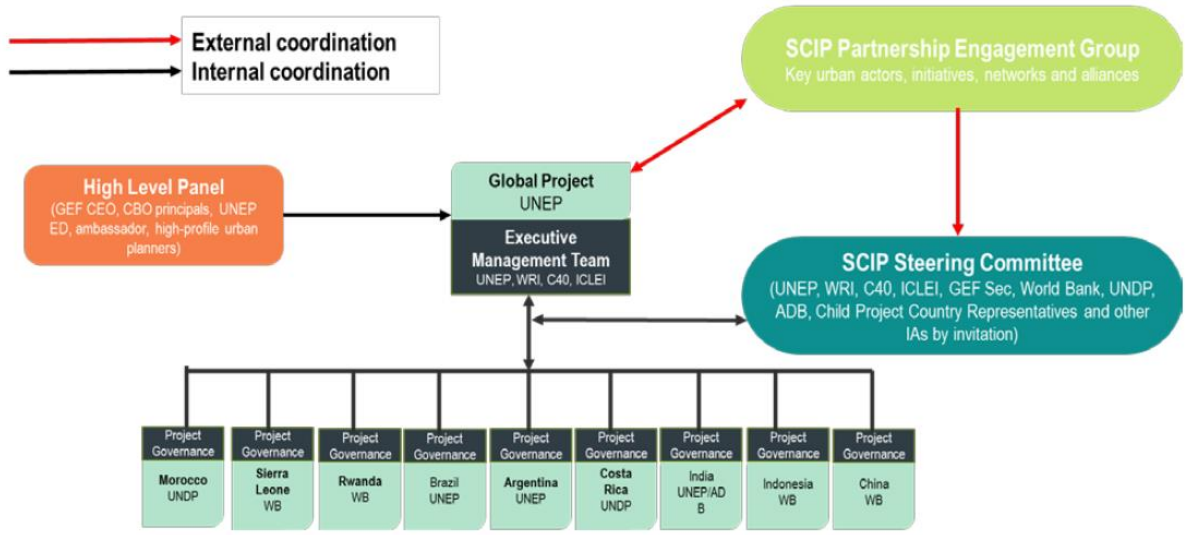
55. SCIP has been branded as UrbanShift. The beneficiaries (cities) recognize the SCIP mostly as UrbanShift, and not as SCIP.

Figure 1-1 Programmatic Approach of SCIP 10391 (SCIP 10391 PIF, 2019)



56. The GP project represents an important endeavour in the pursuit of sustainable urban development. The project objective is *that cities pursue integrated urban planning and implementation and increase their ambitions, to deliver impactful sustainable development outcomes with global environmental benefits (GEBs)*. For this, the project has four major components that focus on various issues related to cities including: support for integrated urban planning, policy reform, investments, innovative financing and scaling up; knowledge management, exchange, and coordination; advocacy, awarenessness raising, and partnerships; and governance, monitoring, and evaluation.

Figure 1-2 SCIP Governance Structure (Endorsement Package, 2020)



57. Cities account for about 70% of the world's carbon emissions, and therefore play a vital role in guiding the planet toward sustainability. Cities have an array of challenges including a lack of integration in urban planning, limited gender considerations, unsustainable local investments, and inadequate funding. These challenges prevent prioritization of innovative solutions to drive cities towards accelerated development. The complicated problems that cities face is a result of unsustainable resource demand, sprawl, energy consumption, air pollution, flooding, droughts, heat islands, and waste. Misaligned legislation, weak national frameworks, and a lack of cooperation amongst multi-level governments are some of the barriers against facing challenges related to cities' development. While many initiatives tackle urban issues, cities find it difficult to disseminate their achievements and creative solutions because of their fragmentation and lack of global learning possibilities. Cities must work together to overcome these challenges in order to successfully negotiate the challenges of urban sustainability.

58. In such a context, the Global Platform project brings together global, national, and local champions for collaborative sustainable development. As a forum for organized knowledge exchange, GP creates momentum and puts integrated solutions into practice. It promotes behaviour modification, allowing cities to share knowledge and inspiration with one another. This cycle encourages creative, reproducible initiatives that serve as role models for others and support international efforts to increase capacity and exchange knowledge.

59. The project's inception workshop occurred on September 21, 2021 (virtually) while the first disbursement occurred on November 18, 2020. Completion date as per the original Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is October 31, 2025, while the expected financial closure date is October 31, 2026. The project has a global reach, primarily encompassing child projects of SCIP in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica), Africa (Morocco, Rwanda, Sierra Leone), and Asia (China, India, Indonesia).

60. The project results framework, derived from ProDoc (Endorsement package, 2020) is presented in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1 Project Results Framework (Endorsement Package, 2020)

Project Objective	Objective Level Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Point Target (if applicable)	End of project Target	Means of Verification	Risks	UNEP MTS reference
Cities pursue integrated urban planning and implementation and increase their ambitions, to deliver impactful sustainable development outcomes with global environmental benefits (GEBs)	Indicator A: GHG emissions reduced from additional commitments from cities (measured in tCO2e)	0	N/A	4,400,000 tCO2e	National resolutions. Local Climate Action Plans [and other low-carbon development plans] implemented during project period. Low-carbon projects approved/implemented during project period. Extrapolate reduction of GHG emissions by city based on types of action. This indicator corresponds to the GEF Core Indicator 6.	Cities and national governments do not make meaningful commitments or take appropriate actions to reduce GHG emissions. Unsustainable urbanization trends, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, outweigh GHG emissions reductions.	UNEP MTS 2018-2021 Climate Change Objective: Countries increasingly transition to low-emission economic development and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change
	Indicator B: Sustainable and integrated urban policies and plans improve management of areas of landscape that benefit biodiversity and sustainable use (measured in Hectares)	0	N/A	4,000 hectares	Document policies and plans that explicitly improve management of areas of landscapes to benefit biodiversity. Work with city-level practitioners to understand the impact of these policies in terms of hectares of land conserved and biodiversity protected. This indicator corresponds to the GEF Core Indicator 4.	Policies and plans that establish improved management to benefit biodiversity in areas of landscapes are not implemented or effectively enforced. Policies and plans do not conserve sufficient land to keep habitat intact or decrease biodiversity loss.	

Project Outcomes	Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Point Target	End of project Target[4]	Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks	UNEP MTS Expected Accomplishment
Component 1: Support to sustainable integrated urban planning, policy reform, investments; and innovative financing and scaling-up ***Outcome 1:*** **Key urban actors demonstrate improved capacity to undertake sustainable integrated planning and investments** **Output 1.1**: Child project teams receive strategic support to design and implement the national projects.	Indicator 1.1: # of cities that have undertaken sustainable integrated planning based on capacity built through their participation in the SCIP GP	0	0	9	Baseline established through city assessments. Plans and policies identified as targets for intervention. Follow through with municipal agencies and provide support via city academies, technical assistance opportunities, and peer exchanges. Identify new plans established during project cycle. Survey to city urban actors.	Plans and policies are not passed or enforced. Difficult to get decision makers to work with SCIP GP or attend trainings.	Expected Accomplishment (b): Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies
Output 1.2: Key urban actors are trained through regional city academies group around identified topics, regions and languages. **Output 1.3**: City officials receive technical assistance on integrated urban solutions **Output 1.4**: Key urban actors participate in peer exchanges, matching cities by interest, with knowledge providers from City-Based Organizations (CBO's) network opportunities and extended partners. **Output 1.5**: Cities receive support to access finance opportunities through existing project preparation facilities, Regional Development Banks (RDB) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) cities initiatives, and SCIP Global Platform sponsored matchmaking opportunities. **Output 1.6**: National governments and cities receive support to take policy and political	Indicator 1.2: # of cities that have accessed finance opportunities through the SCIP Global Platform	0	0	9	Track city pipelines and investment plans through interaction on Technical Assistance, Finance Academies, investment roundtables, project screening through ICLEI Transformative Actions Program and support to access Project Preparation Facilities.	Investment plans or project pipelines may not come to fruition due to lack of financing, technical feasibility or change in administration and priorities.	
	Indicator 1.3: # of cities with gender-sensitive integrated urban solutions, influenced by SCIP GP	0	0	3	List of integrated urban solutions for each city. Plans and policies identified as targets for intervention.	Lack of understanding of the importance and implications of gender mainstreaming in urban environment.	

[4] The End of Project targets when refer to cities, take into account, GEF-7, GEF-6 and additional cities

Project Outcomes	Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Point Target	End of project Target[4]	Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks	UNEP MTS Expected Accomplishment
leadership to unlock action on sustainable and integrated urban planning	Indicator 1.4: # of countries that agree to implement their roadmap for multi-level government collaboration	0		4	National child project progress reports and government websites Indicator 1.4 contributes to PFD Indicator 1.1c	The national dialogues do not trigger commitment by the government.	
Component 2: Global Platform for knowledge management, exchange, and program coordination ***Outcome 2***: **Key urban actors and experts, in addition to those targeted in outcome 1, are using cutting edge knowledge and best practices on sustainable integrated urban planning and investments from a global sustainable cities' platform** **Output 2.1**: Existing knowledge is curated, and a menu of sustainable urban development and integrated planning solutions is available to key urban actors and experts;	Indicator 2.1: # urban practitioners that used the knowledge acquired from the materials from the SCIP website to improve sustainable integrated planning and investment (gender disaggregated)	0	40	100	Track website platform usage include views/download of library of knowledge, private sector and finance publications, and City Academy curriculum from SCIP web platform. Survey to follow up with SCIP city contacts to understand usage and impact of SCIP web platform learning material. Indicator 2.2 corresponds to PFD Indicator 9.	Material is viewed but no action is taking. Language barriers may restrict access to training and knowledge products.	Expected Accomplishment (b): Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies
Output 2.2: New knowledge is generated and made available to key urban actors and experts responding to local demands and identified gaps, including case studies, training materials, reports, training modules; **Output 2.3**: Global convening space with website is created and made available for cities to exchange knowledge; Monitoring and evaluation systems and project coordination are applied by the project teams and governance bodies	Indicator 2.2: # of best practices and lessons learnt that cities have shared through the SCIP GP	0	15	50	Case studies from SCIP cities appear on SCIP web platform, in new knowledge products (e.g. City Academy and Private Sector publications, and peer exchange documentations), featured in webinars and in CBOs respective websites. Indicator 2.2 corresponds to PFD Indicator 11.	Good practices shared may not be verifiable and fail to explain negative externalities.	

Project Outcomes	Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Point Target	End of project Target[4]	Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks	UNEP MTS Expected Accomplishment
Component 3: Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Partnerships ***Outcome 3:*** **Policy makers and key urban actors promote sustainable integrated urban planning and investments** **Output 3.1**: Mayors or equivalent in participating and new cities receive support to set science-based targets and prepare climate action plans. **Output 3.2**: Awareness of policy makers and key urban actors is raised, and action is promoted at a global level on the importance of cities in the achievement of MEA goals. **Output 3.3**: Strategic partnerships are established with key actors including private sector, regional development banks, think-tanks and city initiatives to strengthen the platform. **Output 3.4**: The SCIP Global Platform partnership vision on integrated sustainable urban planning is communicated to policy makers and key urban actors.	Indicator 3.1: # of resolutions and/or commitments made by policy makers, cities and key urban actors influenced by the SCIP GP that lead to Global Environmental Benefits	0	3	15	Baseline established through city assessments to understand opportunities to inform resolutions or increase commitments. Track high level events associated with commitments and resolutions, coordinate with stakeholders to inform resolutions/commitments and build support, and follow passage/adoption at national and city-level. List of additional cities joining the Global Covenant of Mayors, C40 Deadline 2020, C40 Declarations or similar. UNEA, MEA and regional fora decision documents Indicator 3.1 contributes to PFD indicators 8 and 10, so the number of cities taking the commitments need to be tracked as well.	Resolutions or commitments fall short of Paris targets. Commitments are not followed by a plan for implementation.	Expected Accomplishment (b): Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies
Component 4: **Governance, monitoring, and evaluation** ***Outcome 4:*** **Global Platform and Child Projects coordinate and complement each other** **[The MTE has used the phrasing of this Outcome as it appears in the project's TOC diagram: 'The GP is kept on track and coordinated at program and project level in all countries']** **Output 4.1** Monitoring and evaluation systems and project coordination are applied by the project teams and governance bodies	Indicator 4.1: % of recommendations by Steering Committee Meeting addressed	0	100%	100%	Minutes from SC Meetings, tracking system and Project Implementation Reports.	Risk: Low country participation in SC does not allow to capture concerns about the GP offer. Not all recommendations can be implemented.	Expected Accomplishment (b): Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies

61. The components, outcomes, and outputs of the project, as provided in the project document are presented in Table 1-1 and Annex VI. Annex VI highlights the changes that were made in the project parameters (components, outcomes, and outputs) during the conceptual phase of project design and development, which was both rigorous and detailed. During the conceptual phase, outputs were reworded in line with the UNEP Results Glossary definition5, so that it is easier to identify the beneficiary and highlight the immediate gain from the services provided.

62. The project has a total budget of USD 40,534,595 of which USD 16,213,761 is GEF grant allocation and USD 24,320,834 is co-financing from partners (including WRI, ICLEI, C40). The expected spend by component is as shown in Table 1-3. The confirmed sources of co-financing as per the endorsement document, 2020 is shown in Table 1-4.

Table 1-2 Breakdown of Project Finance by Components (Endorsement Package, 2020)

Component	Budget per component at Concept Note State / USD		Budget per component at CEO Endorsement Stage / USD		Remarks
	GEF grant	Indicated Co-Finance	GEF Grant	Confirmed Co-Finance	
Component 1	7,652,346	11,478,519	9,129,466	8,257,261	The major change in **GEF grant allocation** is that Component 1 amount has been increased to align with the current thinking of project activities. This component includes: cost of regional coordinators, the work behind the baseline assessment, the delivery of the finance component and the delivery of all capacity building activities. Therefore, Components 2 and 3 amounts have been reduced. Regarding **Co-finance**, most of the actual contributions, identified during the development phase, are closely related to knowledge development, especially tools and technical expertise to be used in the project; thus Component 2 is the component with the higher co-finance now
Component 2	4,025,422	6,038,133	2,251,751	10,861,331	
Component 3	3,763,909	5,645,864	3,194,369	3,638,703	
Component 4	0	0	866,091	579,822	Added a new standalone component for M&E, moving outputs and resources from Component 2.
Project Management Costs (PMC)	772,084	1,158,126	772,084	983,717	PMC from co-finance has been reduced to be aligned with actual co-finance identified during the development phase.

[5] According to the UNEP Glossary of results definitions, Project Component is a descriptive label related to the way in which work is planned and managed. A project component can define a stream of work. Likewise, an Outcome is the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as a change in institutions or behaviours, attitudes or conditions. An Output is the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities, and awareness of individuals or within institutions. For example, access by the intended user to a report; new knowledge held by a workshop participant at the end of a training event; heightened awareness of a serious risk among targeted decision-makers. (Outputs are viewed from the perspective of the intended beneficiary or user of the output rather than the provider).

Component	Budget per component at Concept Note State / USD		Budget per component at CEO Endorsement Stage / USD		Remarks
	GEF grant	Indicated Co-Finance	GEF Grant	Confirmed Co-Finance	
Total	16,213,761	24,320,642	16,213,761	**24,320,834**	Totals have not changed, but the distribution has changed to better reflect current activities and co-financing sources.

Table 1-3 Breakdown of Co-Financing (Endorsement Package, 2020)

Source of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount / USD
Civil Society Organization (CSO)	WRI	Grant	Investment Mobilized	9,750,000
CSO	ICLEI	Grant	Investment Mobilized	6,465,903
CSO	C40	Grant	Investment Mobilized	6,766,556
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	Recurrent Expenditure	1,338,375
Total Co-financing				**24,320,834**

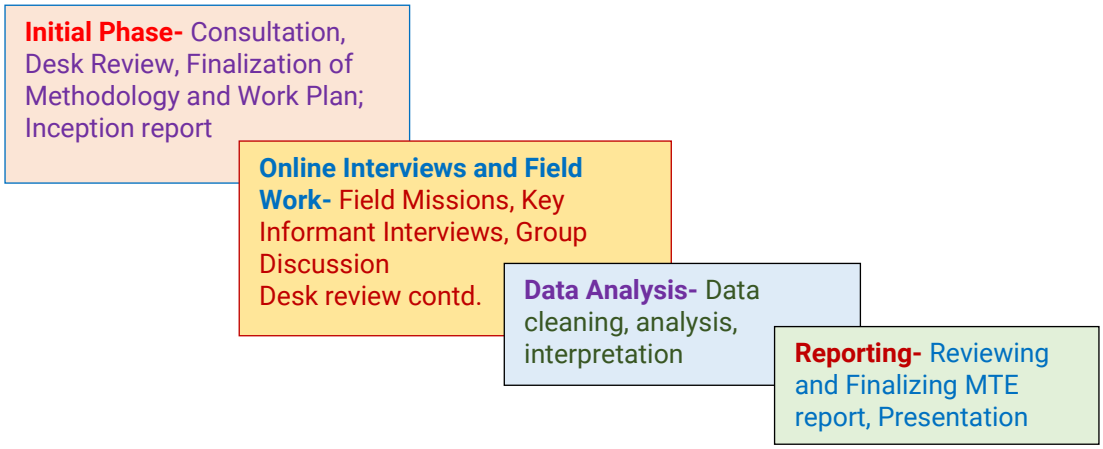
63. According to the ProDoc (endorsement package, 2020), the project was under development during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the project introduced a set of risk management measures (risk section) in case travel were to remain restricted after the project had started implementation. Other challenges to the project were posed by various political happenings like elections and government change (like in Argentina and in India) and a major earthquake in Morocco in 2023. While these had some implications on the progress of GP deliverables, the project was able to progress as planned.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

64. The methodology for this MTE study is simple and orderly and is based on systematic processes. The major guiding documents referred to during the evaluation include GEF Independent Evaluation Office Guidelines for Conducting Program Evaluation (2023), UNEP Strategies: MTS 2018-2021, UNEP MTE Addressing Gender_Guidance Note, MTE Stakeholder Analysis_Guidance_Note, GEF Priorities and Indicators, etc.

65. The objective and scope of the work suggested by the ToR guides the methodology adopted by this study. The evaluation study is broadly divided into four phases (Figure 2-1).

Figure 2-1 Phases and Methods of Evaluation



66. The initial phase of the MTE was largely devoted to primary consultations with UNEP's Evaluation Manager and the GP project team at UNEP CCM Unit, followed by collection of relevant documents and reports supplied by the project team and Evaluation Office. A comprehensive list of documents consulted for this MTE is presented in Annex III. In the same phase, the desk review and preparatory work for a field mission started, while both the methodology and work plan were also developed and finalized. Similarly, an Inception Report was prepared and submitted in this phase.

67. The second phase involved more in-depth interviewing of key stakeholders including regional coordinators and the core team of GP. A field mission to India was conducted to generate insights into the work and benefits of the GP project at the country level or through its support to a child project. While on the field mission, the consultant met with relevant partners and stakeholders and interacted with them using Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussion methods, including informal and side discussions. The consultant engaged with stakeholders in Delhi, Surat, and Pune. Another field mission to Belem, Brazil was conducted in which the consultant met with various GP stakeholders in the UrbanShift Latin America Regional Forum. The desk review continued throughout the evaluation.

68. The data analysis, which involved data cleaning, analysis, interpretation and drawing of inferences was done in the third phase. This helped to ensure the quality and meaningful interpretation of the data, leading to the extraction of useful insights and conclusions. This comprehensive approach helped in making informed decisions and drawing relevant conclusions based on the analysed information. Standard analysis tools and techniques like thematic analysis, content analysis, comparative analysis, and triangulation were employed for analysis of the data. In order to clearly and effectively express

important findings, the data and analysis presentations made smart use of appropriate tools such as tables, flowcharts, schematic diagrams and others. Furthermore, the visualization tools used were based on the type of data and the needs of stakeholders, providing an informative and clear presentation of the project information that were analysed.

69. The last phase focused mainly on writing and preparing the MTE report. A draft report was prepared and shared with the relevant stakeholders (through UNEP Evaluation Office) to take their views, concerns and comments on the report. Upon reviewing and addressing the feedback and comments received on the draft report, the final MTE report was prepared and submitted again to the UNEP Evaluation Office.

70. The MTE was carried out using UNEP Evaluation Criteria, which are consistent with those of the OECD-DAC, and by abiding with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.In addition, some strategic questions suggested in the ToR (later fine-tuned by the consultant) waere used to gain insight into the programmatic approach and programme coordination from the perspective of the child projects, as required by the GEF. The strategic questions particularly focused on the areas of Coordination, Knowledge Management and Programme as a whole.

71. As indicated above, the MTE study used a mix of methods whereby both primary and secondary sources were used to collect relevant data and information essential to this assignment. The knowledge and insights gained through the review of relevant documents and reports served as the backbone of this study, besides first-hand information that were collected through selected field missions. At the same time, online interviews were also conducted with the relevant people using online meeting platforms and other digital tools.

72. A set of evaluation criteria and some suggested mid-point evaluation questions as outlined in the ToR were used as a reference and hence were further strengthened by adding evaluation indicators, and means of verification to the table (refer Annex VII). The questionnaires are framed with reference to different evaluation criteria, which were expected to provide a full spectrum and multiple perspectives of project status and progress in the field. It is important to note that all questionnaires did not apply to all respondents and hence the selection of questions were done based on the position, roles, and contributions of the respondents. The list of potential respondents was developed, revised, and hence finalized in close consultations with the evaluation office and the GP project team (refer Annex II).

73. The evaluation questions distilled from the ToR for this MTE address the following attributes:

- Strategic Relevance
- Quality and Revision of Project Design
- Effectiveness
- Financial Management
- Efficiency
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Exit Strategy and Sustainability
- Factors Affecting Programme Performance

74. A summary of background of child projects spread across 9 countries in 3 regions is present in Annex VIII. GP has been coordinating with these child projects to deliver its activities.

75. A stakeholder analysis was performed to determine the list of individuals and agencies to be interviewed and interacted with for completing the Mid-term Evaluation as envisioned. To involve the key persons and major stakeholders in discussions linked to mid-term evaluation, a variety of communication methods[6] were used.

76. The stakeholders' mapping (Figure 1-3) method followed the UNEP Evaluation Guideline, whereby the extensive list of stakeholders was closely reviewed and analysed[7]. Furthermore, referring to the Johari window format, the stakeholders were put into four distinct categories (Figure 1-3). Stakeholders that are part of the high interest/high power category received particular focus during evaluation.

Figure 2-2 Stakeholders with varying degrees of power and interest identified during MTE

B - Child Projects' Implementing Agencies - Child Projects' Executing Partners - Business Associations, Private Sector, and - Financial Institutions - Multilateral Development Banks	**A** - UNEP CCM (Implementing Agency) - GEF - Core Team of Executing Agencies (C40, ICLEI, WRI) - Regional/Country Coordinators (C40, ICLEI, WRI) - UNEP Cities
D - Non-Local Businesses and Industries in regions and countries - Low-Impact Government Agencies - Other Non-Government Organizations	**C** - Academia and Research Institutes - Organizations Focusing on Gender Issues - Various Organizations working in Child Projects' countries and regions - Partnership Engagement Group (Civil Society Organization, UN agencies, other donors)

A - High power /high interest over the project = Key player
B - High power/ low interest over the project = Meet their needs
C - Low power/ high interest over the project = Show consideration
D - Low power /low interest over the project = Least important

77. The extensive list of stakeholders was mostly developed based on the suggestions received from the Project Team. Stakeholders were then further filtered by grouping them into smaller groups, such as Implementing Agencies and Executing Agencies, as shown in the Table 1-2. This MTE engaged with a core team (from UNEP CCM Unit, WRI, ICLEI, C40) of country/regional coordinators, Implementing Agencies and Executing Agencies from child projects using strategic questions. A comprehensive list of stakeholders interviewed for this MTE is presented in Annex II.

Table 2-1 Stakeholders List

Institutions	Roles
GEF	Funding Agency
UNEP- CCM	Implementing Agency - GP
C40	Executing Agency - GP
ICLEI	Executing Agency - GP
WRI	Executing Agency - GP

[6] A majority of communication was carried out virtually via emails and video calls. Two field missions were carried out- one to India (Child Project) and another to Belem (UrbanShift Latin America Forum) to have an in-person discussion with relevant stakeholders.
[7] The project team provided the detailed list of stakeholders along with their organization, roles, and important notes. This list was discussed in a virtual meeting to understand the stakeholders' level of engagement and also to devise a strategy for approaching them for MTE.

Institutions	Roles
GEF	Funding Agency
UNEP- CCM	Implementing Agency - GP
UNEP - Cities	Executing Agency - GP
Argentina - GoA (MoESD)	Executing Partner – Child Project
Brazil - GoB (MoSTIC)	Executing Partner – Child Project
China - GoC (MGoCCN, CCUDoNDRC)	Executing Partner – Child Project
India - GoI (MoHUA, NIUA, GCC, PSCDL, PMC, SMC)	Executing Partner – Child Project
Indonesia - Government of Indonesia (BAPPENAS)	Executing Partner – Child Project
Morocco - GoM (MoEME-DoE)	Executing Partner – Child Project
Rwanda - GoR (MININFRA, REMA, CAK)	Executing Partner – Child Project
Sierra Leone - GoSL (FCC, FDDiMoFNDMA, WARDC, BCC)	Executing Partner – Child Project
UNDP- Morocco	Implementing Agency – Child Project
UNDP and UNEP Argentina/Brazil	Implementing Agency – Child Project
UNEP CCM - India	Implementing Agency – Child Project
World Bank - China	Implementing Agency – Child Project
World Bank - Indonesia	Implementing Agency – Child Project
World Bank - Rwanda	Implementing Agency – Child Project
World Bank – Sierra Leonne	Implementing Agency – Child Project

GoB- Government of Brazil, MoSTIC – Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communication, GoA- Government of Argentina, MoESD- Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, CSO- Civil Society Organizations, GoI – Government of India MoHUA- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, NIUA- National Institute for Urban Affairs, GCC- Greater Chennai Corporation, PSCDL- Pune Smart City Development Corporation, PMC- Pune Municipal Council, SMC- Surat Municipal Council, GoM- Government of Morocco, MoEME-DoE- Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Environment – Department of Environment), Government of Indonesia, GoR- Government of Rwanda, MININFRA- Ministry of Infrastructure, REMA- Rwanda Environment Management Authority, CAK- City Administration of Kigali, GoSL- Government of Sierra Leone, FCC- Freetown City Council, FDDiMoFNDMA- Fiscal Decentralization Division of Ministry of Finance, National Disaster Management Agency, WARDC- Western Area Rural District Council, BCC- Bo City Council, and GoC- Government of China, MGoCCN- Municipal Governments of Chongqing, Chengdu, and Ningbo, CCUDoNDRC- China Center for Urban Development of National Development and Reform Commission

78. Both the review of secondary information and interviews provided extra attention to cross-cutting issues like gender, environment, social safeguards, human rights, for which sufficient number of questions were included in the questionnaire list. Throughout the evaluation process and in the process of compilation of the MTE Report, extra efforts have been made to discuss and mainstream the needs and views of poor and marginalised groups. The UNEP MTE Gender Methods Note for Consultant was referred to, to see whether the program produced any intended or unintended results relating to gender equality and empowerment of women.

3 THEORY OF CHANGE

79. The theory of change (TOC) has been reviewed in line with the project document and progress reports. The MTE took a close look at the TOC as a primary framework for evaluating the project progress and assessing whether the child projects are in line with the philosophy and principles of the SCIP programme, as reflected in the GP project design. The TOC did not need to be reconstructed[8] in order to evaluate the project's performance to-date in a way that is consistent with UNEP's evaluation guidance.

80. The TOC presented in the project document shows a number of outputs for four project outcomes that ultimately lead to three main impacts. In this process, six drivers of change are considered while three assumptions are outlined. The project's outcomes and outputs are present in Table 1-1, above.The TOC includes intermediate states and impacts that the project is expected to give rise to.

The first level intermediate states include:

- SCIP and additional cities undertake integrated planning approach and sustainable investments promoted by the platform.
- SCIP and additional cities benefit from city networks and finance (public and private) for sustainable investments made accessible by the platform.
- National governments, SCIP and additional cities improve multi-level government coordination and commit to more ambitious actions at global, regional, national, and local level enabled by the platform.

The second level of intermediate states include:

- Cities influenced by the SCIP Global platform increasingly advance sustainable and integrated planning.
- Cities influenced by the SCIP Global platform accelerate adoption and/or implementation of low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies and conservation.

81. These intermediate states are achievable with the help of project deliverables that the project document proposed. For sustainable investments, the project document outlines technical assistance, investment roundtables, and academic learning modules aimed at improvement of financial and investment knowledge and opportunities. At the same time, the GP project also intends to encourage the participating cities to take part in global forums and commitments aimed at climate change adaptation and environmental protection. To promote integrated planning, a series of activities like needs assessment, methodology development, regional training, SCIP labs, and peer exchanges have been proposed.

82. The long-lasting impacts envisioned are:

- Cities reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
- Cities avoid land degradation and biodiversity loss.
- Cities improve their resilience to climate change.

[8] The small alterations to the output statement (see Annex VI) serve to clarify the target beneficiaries and are not substantial enough to significantly affect the diagrammatic representation of the TOC.

83. These impacts are in line with the major international commitments like the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, World urban Forum and others.

84. The project results framework intends to measure these impacts quantitatively. For instance, measuring the tonnes of CO2 emission reduction with the help of additional commitments made by the GP (partner countries) has been established as an objective level indicator. In practice, this is a cumbersome measurement. It cannot be said for sure if GP activities have in fact reduced GHG emissions (i.e. results cannot be attributed to the GP project and any analysis can only reach conclusions on either contributions make by the SCIP programme and/or the credible association between the GP project's work and indications of change).

85. To achieve the impacts envisioned by the project, the following six drivers have been identified:

- Lessons from GEF 6 SC-IAP are embedded in the GEF 7 SCIP GP
- Emphasis on training women and minority groups gives voice to the underserved and strengthens sustainable solutions
- Barriers to vertical integration are overcome enabling sustainable urban development policies and action
- Cities are inspired to prioritize policies and investments that foster green growth to become resource efficient and equitable
- Cities are supported with resources to make sustainable urban development investments more attractive and are connected with private and regional development banks to facilitate financing
- Learning from other cities and sharing lessons learned bolsters innovative and efficient approaches to integrated and sustainable urban development

86. The assumptions made are:

- Cities and national governments replicate and scale innovative and efficient sustainable and integrated policies and projects
- Cities increase green growth and social wellbeing while decoupling resource extraction and use
- Private sector and regional development banks increase investments in catalytic and sustainable urban development solutions

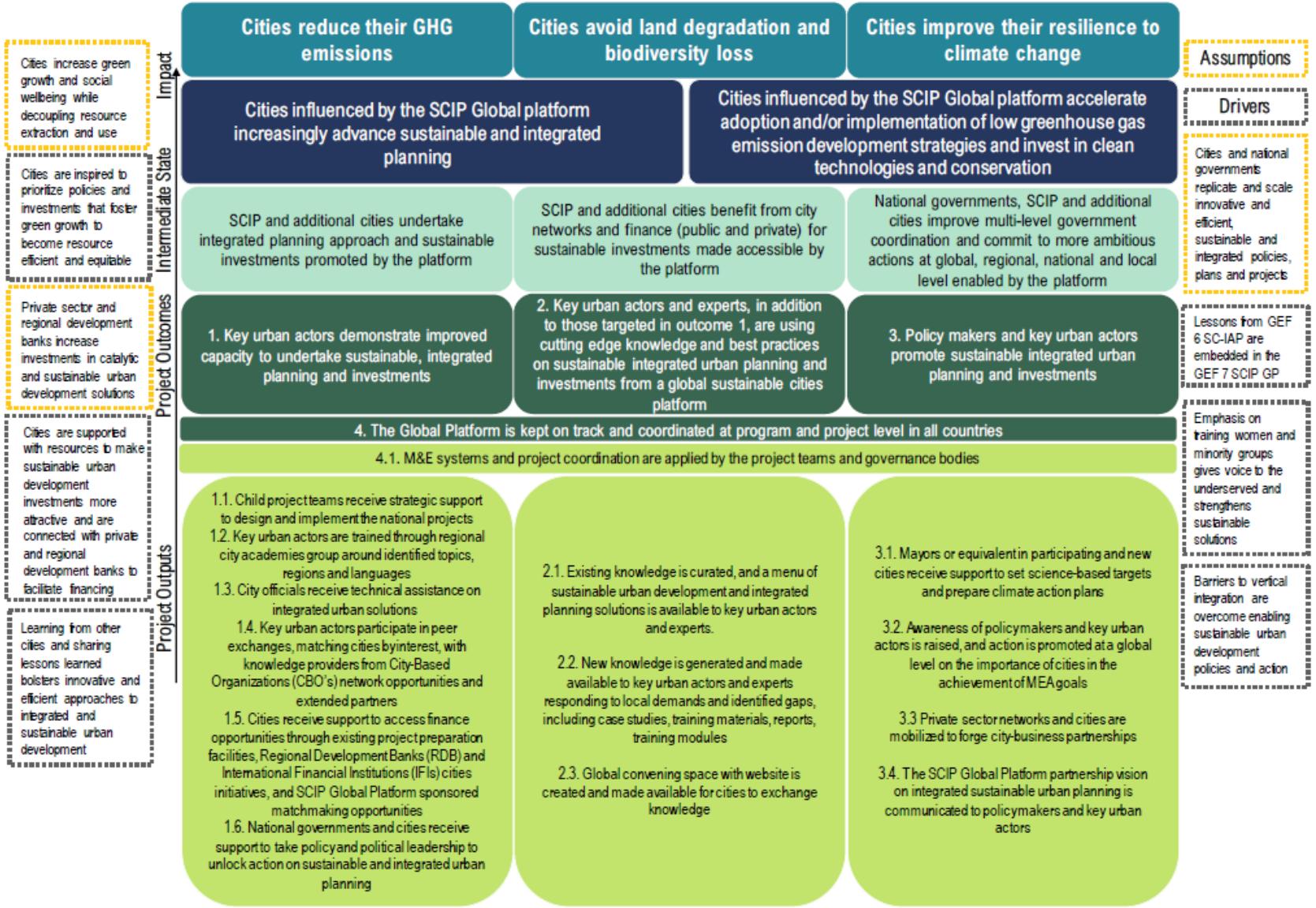
87. According to ProDoc, the GP's unique and innovative strategy, that sets it apart from other existing programs and initiatives, comes from the combination of approaches that work simultaneously, from the bottom up (through investments in transformational, innovative projects at the local level) and top down (through influence in national policies and global discourse). Similarly, the features that sets the GP project apart at the local level are:

- Emphasis on integrated planning approaches
- Wide-ranging suite of capacity building services
- Multi-level government coordination
- Access to city networks
- Advocacy and contribution to global dialogue
- Accelerated climate ambition

- Innovative models and solutions for urban sustainability

88. At project design, the TOC included a driver related to human rights and gender equality to promote human rights and gender equality via the project.

Figure 3-1 Theory of Change Diagram (Endorsement Package, 2020)



4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Strategic Relevance

89. The GP aligns well with various national, regional, and global priorities. Various policies and strategies of the donor agencies and partners are accounted for in the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the project.

4.1.1 Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) Strategic Priorities

90. The project document (CEO Endorsement Package, 2020) is in line with the operating principles and covers most of the priority areas of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy[9] 2018-2021. The PIR for the Financial Year (FY) 2021 indicates that the project's objective was in line with UNEP MTS 2018-21 and Programme of Work 2020-21 under Climate Change Objective: Countries increasingly transition to low-emission economic development and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change, with the Expected Accomplishment (b): Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies. The PIR FY 2022 and 2023 indicate that the project lies in the UNEP Programme of Work 2022-23 under:

    Subprogramme 1 Climate Change Objective: Countries increasingly transition to low-emission economic development and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change.

    Outcome 1B: Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement.

    Indicator (i) Number of national, subnational and private sector actors that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support.

    Indicator (ii) Amounts provided and mobilized in $ per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the $100 billion commitment through to 2025 with UNEP support.

91. The ProDoc mentions that GP project aligns and supports national priorities through city-specific child projects in each country: Argentina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone; as set out under the umbrella of several of the major relevant conventions, agreements, and policy processes, including the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, Nationally Determined Contributions, and others. For instance, GP aligns well with Argentina's focus on supporting climate goals and enhancing integrated urban planning, whereby the country connects with local and national stakeholders to drive climate action by participating with Alliances for Climate Action (ACA). Likewise, in Rwanda, GP helps incorporate climate change into urban strategies, aligning with the

[9] The UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021 has following operating principles: Universal in Application, Results-Based Management, Synergy through Strategic Partnership, Strategic Regional Presence, Greater Integration of Normative Frameworks. The Strategy had following priority areas: Climate Change, Resilience to disasters and conflicts, healthy and productive ecosystems, environmental governance, chemicals, waste, and air quality, resource efficiency, and environment under review.

country's Vision 2050 and national climate adaptation goals. Similarly, in India, GP supports cities in integrating climate action into urban policies, aligning with India's Smart Cities Mission and its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

92. There has been no major shift in regional level priorities during the project implementation. The national level priorities may have changed in a few countries due to a change in leadership or occurrence of natural disasters. For example, there was a coup attempt in Sierra Leone in 2023 and a massive earthquake in Morocco in September 2023. These were sensitive events and during these times, the regional coordinator could not ask for annual progress on the projects of SCIP or GP in these regions. The programs and deliverables under the GP project were slightly affected by the above issues. Nevertheless, all participating countries/cities are still committed to integrated urban development, climate change adaptation, and environment and nature-based conservation - thereby making it easier to adopt the activities proposed by the Global Platform.

93. The project lies under the GEF focal area of Climate Change Mitigation. Out of GEF-7's 11 indicators, the GP project influences core indicators 4, 6, and 11.

    - Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas).
    - Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emission mitigated.
    - Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF.

94. The PIR FY 2023 mentions that it is too early to report the progress on these indicators, but it does mention that the GP project has hosted 46 activities and events which have built the capacity of participating stakeholders about the importance of an integrated approach to urban development to reduce climate risks for urban residents. The events are divided as "deep capacity building", "light capacity building", and "awareness raising". While the PIR FY 2023 mentions that work on impact estimates for these indicators are to be advanced during the next PIR reporting period, it would be better to add notes now about how the indicators are being tracked.

95. The PIRs indicate that the GP is linked to Goal 13 of SDGs 2030 - take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts with SDG Targets 13.3, 13.4, 13.b. Looking into the ProDoc (pg. 119 - Consistency with National Priorities), it can also be seen that the GP project is closely related with the SDG Goals 11, 12, 13 and 17. Likewise, the project's focus on gender equality links it to Goal 5.

Rating for 4.1.1. Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

4.1.2 Complementarity/Coherence with Existing Interventions

96. There are many initiatives operating worldwide in the field of environmental protection, climate change, capacity building, and technology transfer. Even in the regions and countries where the outcomes of the Global Platform project are being delivered, the GP has been coordinating with the relevant stakeholders and organizations to achieve common/complementary goals/objectives. For example: the ProDoc of child project of India shows that ADB and UNEP are co-implementing agencies, whereas NIUA is both an Executing and Knowledge Partner of the India Child Project. The GP team has been coordinating with the child project teams through these partners as well.

97. The Partnership Engagement Group (PEG)[10] members are engaged in various GP activities. This has helped to maintain complementarity with existing interventions in local, regional, and global arena.

98. The priority areas of GP are well reflected within the child projects, whereby they have successfully integrated the concepts like nature-based solutions, climate change adaptation, integrated urban development and others. To cite an example, the portion of the UrbanShift India project implemented by ADB and executed by Greater Chennai Corporation has strong potential to be a replicable model of urban flood management using Nature Based Solutions (NbS) for other cities in India and in the region. Similarly, in Surat, the coastline development project[11], which was adopted by UrbanShift Child Project in India, complements the concepts advocated by GP, including integrated urban development, nature-based solutions, biodiversity conservation, and prevention of environmental degradation.

99. On many occasions, the GP partners have been able to utilize their existing networks and include UrbanShift/GP cities to collaborate and gain from the larger repository of knowledge and expertise. For example, in the case of Africa, the UrbanShift cities were able to collaborate with City Business Climate Alliance (CBCA) of C40 and benefit from their associations. Similarly, in the case of India, partners like ICLEI were successful in utilizing their presence, networks, and their involvement with urban development issues while implementing GP and child project activities in the selected cities.

Rating for 4.1.2. Complementarity/Coherence with Existing Interventions: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

4.2 Quality & Revision of Project Design

100. The project's design emphasizes collaboration among partner agencies[12], ensuring a holistic and integrated approach to implementation. Thematic leads and regional networks play a crucial role in facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange. Various partners lead various key activities. For example, UNEP leads advocacy, WRI leads capacity building, city labs, and data dashboard, C40 leads finance academies, and ICLEI leads multi-level government dialogues.

[10] According to the CEO Endorsement Package, PEG is the external coordination mechanism of the GP project. The PEG is a high-level, strategic group, with participation of key global actors, initiatives, alliances and networks in the urban development space, that provides inputs to the program about key trends, thematic areas and approaches shaping implementation of the program. The PEG establishes a multi-stakeholder coalition of key urban actors, urban initiatives, alliances and networks driving the integrated urban planning agenda related to global environmental benefits.
[11] Development and Improvement of Tourism, Recreational, and Eco-Tourism Activities at Sea Face Area- Dumas by Surat Municipal Corporation.
[12] According to ProDoc, harnessing the power of networks and the experience from the GEF-6 SC-IAP, the SCIP from GEF-7 brings together three leading global organizations working with cities supporting their ambition and actions to fulfil their climate and sustainability targets. The three-organization consortium, also known as the 'City-Based Organizations' will work as co-executing partners of the SCIP. ICLEI is a network that includes more than 1,750 cities, towns, and regions in 100 countries around the world that use its tools and expertise to promote sustainable development. WRI works with around 120 cities on ongoing engagements and another 200 through lighter touches through its international offices to promote innovative work on the ground through demonstration projects and scale up solutions. C40 Cities is a network of 94 of the world's megacities committed to addressing climate change. C40 supports cities to collaborate effectively, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level.

101. The project has been well designed and executed. There has not been any major change in the implementation compared to the design of the project. The project structure is practical. The structure is simple despite the inherent complexity of the work streams. The simplicity can be attributed to the clear reporting lines and regional focus.

102. The progress has been good so far (refer to Tables 4-1 and 4-2). The overall design has allowed child project stakeholders to participate in various regional and global events (including those not organized by the UrbanShift GP).

103. There is a proper set of guidelines for different deliverables which provides a good roadmap for future events. A set of frameworks for UrbanShift Labs, Academies, National-Local Dialogues are present that are tailored according to the need of country/city.

104. Key strengths of the project design include: value addition to the child project activities through knowledge building, partnerships and collaboration; mobilization of many cities within a region or country provides them valuable opportunities for learning, sharing and practicing many new concepts around integrated urban development, which is resilient and sustainable. The project deliverables have been well designed and hence offer a good mix of opportunities by engaging at multiple levels like regional, country and local municipality level.

105. However, the Endorsement Package is found limited in view of considering the time required for building relationship and trust. Also, when leadership changes, building the same relationship demands similar time, energy and efforts (sometime even more).

> Example: A focal person in Sierra Leone changed and there was a change in project level leadership in Marrakech. Similarly, due to a recent election in Argentina, movement of city officials were restricted. The latter situation is found the key reason behind their inability to attend the UrbanShift Forum in Brazil. In India, the situation may be the same after completion of the ongoing election. Based on the recent experience from the field mission to India, finding time with relevant officials during the election period was challenging. These incidents are expected to create a serious break in the smooth progress of the GP activities.

106. Although the initial conception of GP and child projects were envisioned together, the actual detailed conceptualization of projects in cities and their design occurred at different phases. In such a context, GP may not be able to have close coordination and alignment with the development of child projects.

107. At GP level, there are multiple acitivites (advocacy, labs, modules, and others) planned and being executed to support child projects in cities. However, the above activities have been implemented with defined processes and procedures. As a result, GP support sometimes is not found sufficiently flexible to match the priorities and requirements of child project cities. However, it should be remembered that while the global platform primarily serves the child projects, it also serves a broader agenda of promoting integrated approaches to urban development and making urban centres resilient and sustainable. This dual agenda embraces the entire SCIP program and thus requires strategic alignment.

108. The timeline of GP could have been longer. Even cities that have only recently started their child projects need to understand the global narrative and align their efforts accordingly. Therefore, the GP should start early to provide direction to the child projects (which it did) and end only when all child projects are completed. The activities of the GP seems to have

a mismatched timeline with some child projects (refer to Figure 4-1). While GP is more than half-way through, some child projects are only in their early stages of implementation. When GP is to play the role of coordination of child projects, this mismatch in timelines affects the effectiveness of GP as well as the support it provides child projects

109. It is important to place GP a little earlier than the inception of the child projects. This will allow GP to help child projects to better align with the GEF requirements. In addition, the implementation timeline of the GP and child project should be worked out diligently.

110. In addition to national and regional events, there could have been a greater emphasis on continuous training and knowledge development at various levels, rather than only focusing on short-term events.

111. Likewise, some of the project indicators in numbers do not really reflect the actual learning of, and impact on, the participants. There is also a need to assess the level of understanding and knowledge of the participants before delivering contents to them. This should be included in the framework of the project. Impact indicators are to be measured for primary cities but GP also covers secondary cities and GEF6 cities. This can create confusion while tracking indicators and also may not fully reflect the impact of GP. Likewise, the objective level indicators (A and B) (refer to Table 1-1) are difficult to actually track for GP activities (metric tonnes of CO2 and Hectares of Land) in the absence of suitable technology and capacity. It is suggested to rather consider other relevant indicators like “action initiated”, “use of knowledge” (please read this section also with reference to sections 4.3.3. Progress Towards Project Outcomes, and 4.6. Monitoring and Reporting, respectively).

112. Considering the fact that country/regional coordinators are well positioned to represent the country/region they emerge from, it would be a good practice to provide them some say in selecting participants for GP activities. The current practice where the EA of child projects select participants from their cities to participate in GP activities with the funds they control might have created some instances of poor participation as well as logistical challenges in ticketing, visa applications, and accommodation booking.

113. Similarly, GP design seems to have not accounted for varied existing capacities of different countries and cities. As a result of this, the set of global offers are the same and thus may not always match with the ground reality.

114. The design of GP has provisioned several initiatives to facilitate the smooth exit and long term sustainability of their activities. Furthermore, their achievement will largely depend on the successful implementation and quality results of the above initiatives. However, in the changed context whereby the World Bank is now leading the GEF-8 SCIP round, this whole agenda needs to be revisited and aligned accordingly.

Rating for Quality & Revision of Design: **Moderately Satisfactory**

4.3 Effectiveness

Overarching Remarks:

115. SCIP GP activities help the cities to know more about global perspectives and narratives, and understand the various components of projects while exposing the participants to global best practices. SCIP, via GP, has been able to strengthen knowledge exchange and learning by cities on integrated urban sustainability planning and investments.

"GP is the most important aspect of GEF's cities program. This is the component which makes GEF cities program unique and makes it a program- not a project. GP is like a thread that combines cities. It also has an important role in elevating the cities towards a global sustainability agenda." Coordinator of SCIP, GEF Secretariat.

116. GP is playing a synergising role to accomplish the SCIP's result of achieving evidence-based inclusive integrated plans, improving low carbon resilience, improved land restoration, enhanced financing mechanisms and/or business models for scaling sustainable urban solutions, and sharing of knowledge and good practices**.**

117. The regional approach of GP makes the program more efficient economically and logistically. A stand-alone global approach would have been more abstract and less tailored to the local context.

118. The elements of the global offer (City Labs, City Academies, National Dialogues, Finance Academies, National-Local Dialogues, Webinars, Online Library of Knowledge) are valuable to the city beneficiaries. The overall quality of the material is good, as evident by the high scores provided by the participants of the activities and as reported by the post event surveys.

119. GP experts, who have global experience and regional exposure, provide contextual examples that the cities can relate to. In Latin American experience, GP has helped government officials from different departments to learn about improving financing capacity, making bankable projects with concrete indicators, and gaining new insights on how to secure external financing. There are other examples of integration of knowledge gained from GP into city plans and programs. For example, in Teresina, the insights from the GP lab on nature-based solutions were included into the urbanization plan in order to fight growing climate change concerns. In Costa Rica, nature-based solutions were included into consideration for designing a boulevard- leading to the city getting benefit from green infrastructure. Similarly, the positive impression of city officials who attended UrbanShift Asia forum is a testimony of tailoring global knowledge to local context.

120. On the other hand, there is still a need for more interactive and contextualized or tailored activities to meet the specific needs of child projects. A participant of the Asia Forum in 2023 mentioned during an interview with the MTE evaluator that the activities in the forum were sometimes driven more by what the GP partners wanted to deliver rather than what are the need of the cities. The participant further added that though the sessions were interactive, however they were loaded with too much information to be covered in too little time. On the other hand, it is not difficult to understand the challenge of contextualization with a large variety of audiences attending the same session from different countries and cities.

121. While the current GP academies offer valuable concepts, they may not address the diverse range of issues faced by the child project cities. Similarly, GP workshops might not provide sufficient capacity or skills for city officials to effectively implement the solutions in their own context. It would have been better to offer more tailored courses spanning over a little longer duration and providing certification, thereby enhancing participants' skills and expertise. For instance, cities like Surat require assistance in creating an inventory of GHG emissions for infrastructure development. While these cities acknowledge the importance of climate change discussions, they may lack the necessary skills and technical know-how about how to integrate adaptation concept into their city development plans including project proposals. GP could have better addressed this gap by providing deliverables tailored to such specific needs.

122. As indicated in section 4.2, the perception of the global platform versus child projects varies by country. While some countries have a clear distinction, others may perceive them as one entity. Consistent communication and education are essential to address this disparity. While marketing of GP is not necessary, ensuring that stakeholders understand the distinct benefits of the global platform can enhance its impact.

123. Based on the field mission to India, it was noted that there are various instances of confusion of boundaries of GP and national level child projects. Cities are mostly aware about UrbanShift (often times they only see the events as being organized by IAs, EPs) and do not clearly understand the concept and role of a Global Platform. This shows that cities may not be well oriented about the concept of GP and how it is contributing to the child projects.

124. The GP project faces resource limitations, particularly in reaching to a large number of cities and meeting their requests and needs. Limited resources pose challenges for implementing activities at the city level. While there's a recognition of the potential impact of city-based activities, budgetary constraints and logistical challenges do not allow to implement the same in practice. Ideas such as resource sharing concept (matching fund from municipalities side) may be applied to address the situation of resource constraints and thereby promote local engagement. However, the feasibility of such solutions needs to be carefully evaluated within the project's budgetary framework.

125. Influential and key stakeholders like the mayors and ministers have not been sufficiently engaged in GP activities. In such an environment, the effectiveness of GP is found under question. This has also resulted in delay in delivering activities and having to put extra efforts in communicating with IA/EA of child projects and city officials repeatedly for a simple task. A good idea would be to distribute funds for participation in GP activities between the executing partners of child projects and GP partners (C40, ICLEI, UNEP Cities, led by WRI), rather than the executing partners of child project having all the control. In addition to this, major logistical tasks could be outsourced to reliable agencies in order to save valuable time of coordinators and their team.

4.3.1 Theory of Change

126. A useful TOC describing the anticipated intermediate states was included in the project document. The project's change processes are described well in the theory of change, along with the causal relationships between outputs, outcomes, and longer-term impacts. The TOC ensures that project activities and expected outcomes are aligned by successfully mirroring the project's intended change process. Achieving goals and monitoring progress depend on this alignment.

127. The TOC diagram (Figure 3-1, above) shows that the project team is well aware about the needs of cities, as well as drivers and assumptions required to create a global impact. From a cause-and-effect standpoint, the project's TOC and intervention logic exhibit coherence and realism. Maintaining coherence is crucial to making sure actions are planned strategically to provide intended results. Higher-impact results may be achieved if the GP is tailored to the special needs and capabilities of various cities, taking into consideration factors like localization and differing degrees of development.

128. A complete collection of contributing factors, comprising both drivers and assumptions helps in determining the factors that affect project performance and in reducing potential risks and supports an understanding of the causal pathways.

129. Stakeholders had a clear understanding of roles and duties developed by a comprehensive design and conceptualization process, which lasted more than a year. Strong participation in the project is facilitated by prior Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) experiences, which has also increased efficacy through continued collaborations.

130. The project document identifies reasonable and relevant risks and assumptions. In any future phases or Coordinating Child Project designs more efforts should be put by the project design team to: i) address developing issues based on documents developed few years back (and not updated) like the Initial Sustainable Urban Development Assessments (ISUDAs) and ii) to scheduling discrepancies between the implementation timelines of the Coordinating Child Project and country Child Projects. The PIR of 2023 has identified these risks and provided a set of actions to mitigate them. However, even during the time of this evaluation, implementing and executing agencies/partners of India were still feeling the effects of schedule discrepancies.

131. While adjustments to the TOC and intervention logic may not be immediately necessary, streamlining the existing approval process (adopting fast-track method) could improve efficiency in any future revision. Addressing bureaucratic hurdles in the approval process could expedite necessary adjustments and adaptations to project strategies in the future.

Rating for 4.3.1. Theory of Change: Highly Satisfactory

4.3.2 Availability of Outputs

132. Results are stated in terms of the access to outputs by the intended beneficiary, in accordance with UNEP definitions. This alignment makes things clearer and makes it easier to monitor the potential for takeup of the project's outputs appropriately.

133. The defined inputs and strategies are practical and appropriate for achieving the targeted outputs. However, it is important to note that a mechanism for tailoring strategies at the country/city level should be further prioritized in order to make GP support more tangible and accurate for the Child Projects.

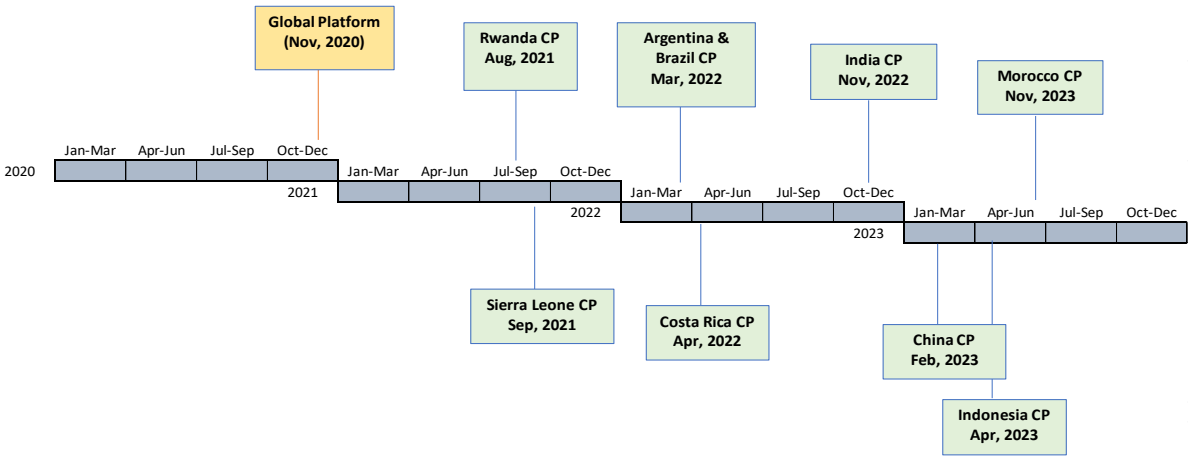


Figure 4-1 Timline showing First Disbursement Date of Child Projects (dates adopted from SCIP Child Project Status, UNEP, 2023)

134. Despite several Child Projects starting later than expected (as shown in Figure 4-1), a majority of outputs and milestones are consistent with the targeted goals. However,

delays in project launch have resulted in outdated assessments (ISUDAs) having informed the GP, necessitating updates before being used by Child Projects.

> Examples: in Indonesia (to some extent, in India as well), the light touch city assessment assessed 5 cities at once and was conducted much earlier than the beginning of the Child Project. There is a need to update the assessment to reflect the present needs and challenges. In order to avoid this situation, the decision to conduct light touch assessment should coincide with the GP timeline and the start of the child projects. Likewise, timeline mismatches have resulted in difficulty while tailoring GP activities to the needs of cities. For example, 3 out of 5 City Labs conducted so far were done to support child projects. The remaining 2 were disconnected with child projects because the labs occurred much earlier than implementation of child projects in cities. The cities and national governments, nevertheless, benefitted from these disconnected city labs. The connected city labs were able to provide necessary knowledge and skills which were also applied and tested in the city level projects. Whereas the disconnected city labs were successful in imparting knowledge, their potential for application in the child project was compromised.

135. Participation in non- GP global and regional activities like COP, ICLEI world congress, WUF, and regional conferences helps GP partners as well as the IAs and EAs of child projects to advance the GP priority agendas to a larger audience in the world arena. This will ultimately pave ways for adoption of these priority agendas by the national and local governments.

136. Stakeholder engagement has been satisfactory. At both the local and regional levels, GP activities are successful in mobilizing a variety of stakeholders at various levels. Steering committee meetings discuss the work of IAs and EAs. In these meetings, they take part and give inputs to the GP activities related to cities. GP activities themselves prioritize engagement between diverse sets of stakeholders in the cities. City representatives take part in GP activities which allows GP activities to connect both at the local and regional levels.

137. The progress towards achievement of outputs derived from the PIR 2023 and HYPR Jul-Dec 2023 is shown in Table 4-1. A lot of improvement can be seen against the baseline. It should be recognized that the cities' capacity has consistently improved, and city officials are now more confident and receptive to new ideas and concepts. Cities are also trying to replicate and scale-up the GP activities at their own level after attending GP activities.

Table 4-1 Progress towards achievement of outputs (derived from PIR 2023 and HYPR Jul-Dec 2023 and verified during the MTE)

Project Outputs	Implementation Status as of 30 June 2022 (%)	Implementation Status as of 30 June 2023 (%)	Implementation Status as of 31 Dec 2023 (%)
Output 1.1: Child project teams receive strategic support to design and implement the national projects	75%	85%	85%
Output 1.2: Key urban actors are trained through regional city academies grouped around identified topics, regions and languages	11% (1 out of 9 City Academies completed)	17% (2 of 9 city academies, no forums completed)	42% (4 of 9 City Academies complete, 1 of 3 Forums complete)
Output 1.3: City officials receive technical assistance on integrated urban solutions	22% (2 of 9 Labs complete)	22% (3 of 9 Labs complete)	55% (5 of 9 Labs complete)

Project Outputs	Implementation Status as of 30 June 2022 (%)	Implementation Status as of 30 June 2023 (%)	Implementation Status as of 31 Dec 2023 (%)
Output 1.4. Key urban actors participate in peer exchanges, matching cities by interest, with knowledge providers from City-Based Organizations (CBO's) network	12% (2/16)	20% (3 of 15 peer exchanges complete)	53% (8 of 15 peer exchanges complete
Output 1.5. Cities receive support to access finance opportunities through existing project preparation facilities, Regional Development Banks (RDB) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) cities initiatives, and SCIP Global Platform sponsored matchmaking opportunities	10%	35%	48%
Output 1.6. National governments and cities receive support to take policy and political leadership to unlock action on sustainable and integrated urban planning	10%	15%	50%
Output 2.1: Existing knowledge is curated, and a menu of sustainable urban development and integrated planning solutions is available to key urban actors and experts.	60%	80%	85%
Output 2.2: New knowledge is generated and made available to key urban actors and experts responding to local demands and identified gaps, including case studies.	30%	50%	100%
Output 2.3: Global convening space with website is created and made available for cities to exchange knowledge	30%	50%	75%
Output 3.1: Mayors or equivalent participating and new cities receive support to set science-based targets and prepare climate action plans	2%	20%	60%
Output 3.2: Awareness of policy makers and key urban actors is raised, and action is promoted at a global level on the importance of cities in the achievement of MEA goals	40%	66%	75%
Output 3.3: Private sector networks and cities are mobilized to forge city-business partnerships	10%	15%	40%
Output 3.4: The SCIP Global Platform partnership vision on integrated sustainable urban planning is communicated to policy makers and key urban actors	40%	50%	75%
Output 4.1: M&E systems and project coordination are applied by the project teams and governance bodies	40%	50%	60%

138. The availability of outputs is discussed in the following paragraphs. The discussion is based on the information provided by HYPR, PIRs as well as interaction and information gained by the evaluator during the field missions to India and Brazil.

139. **Component 1:**

Output 1.1. All 23 selected project cities have had their light touch city assessments done and ISUDAs completed with considerations on gender issues. An effective communication protocol has been agreed upon between various stakeholders of GP and child projects so that the effectiveness of GP as a Coordinating Child Project is enhanced. Interactive maps (available through city dashboard on https://datahub.shiftcities.org) with number of key indicators have been prepared for each 23 cities.

GP has provided various types of support to implementing cities and their stakeholders to roll out GP and support alignment with country project implementation timelines.

Output 1.2. UrbanShift Asia Forum and Latin America Forum have successfully taken place after careful planning. City Academies regional training with 50% women as panellists and

presenters have been planned in each UrbanShift country and 4 out of 9 have been completed. The post event satisfaction survey rating of 4.8/5 reveals an excellent delivery of the academy in Buenos Aires (October 2022). The regional forums and the city academies conducted so far have provided a blueprint for hosting subsequent events in the future.

Output 1.3. Methodologies to run UrbanShift Labs and selection of cities to run the labs have been completed. By the time this report was being prepared, 5 out of 9 labs were completed. These labs have been able to connect well with the practical and urgent issues of child project cities. The lessons learnt from these labs will be compiled and reported in late 2025.

Output 1.4. Peer exchanges in conjunction with city academies are being conducted. 8 out of 15 have been completed so far as reported by HYPR Jul-Dec 2023. Other stand-alone peer exchanges have also been planned and are being conducted with the support of GP partners. These peer exchanges have proven a powerful tool to promote exchange, cooperation, and more importantly detailed and insightful knowledge on selected development issues (best practices) from the field integrated urban development.

Output 1.5. GP has been bringing financial opportunities to cities via knowledge promotion, technical assistance, Finance Academies, business forums and Transformative Action Program (TAP) pipeline. A number of integrated investment projects have been identified and more are in-pipeline through which cities receive support to access financial resources and solve pressing urban issues. For instance, in Kigali, GP is helping to investigate the possibility of using water pumping trucks to limit flooding risks during high rainfall events. Likewise, Finance Academies are being delivered during City Academies where city officials are exposed to global best practices and a pool of experts to navigate climate finance.

Cities were invited to submit requests for light-touch technical assistance. Proposals from Buenos Aires, Freetown, Mendoza and Ushuaia were received. Buenos Aires and Freetown have been selected for support based on their transformation potential and scope. Gap Fund[13] has been approached to support Mendoza project.

High-Level investor roundtables have taken place in the UrbanShift forums in Asia and Latin America. The roundtables focused on investment opportunities available for various types of climate-resilient urban infrastructure in the cities. On the other hand, 12 out of 24 TAP[14] project applications from UrbanShift cities have been screened and taken forward. 7 of 12 selected TAP projects have been presented to Project Preparation Facilities and other partners for further development. 6 have been approved into the TAP pipeline.

Output 1.6. Preparatory plans for National-Local Dialogues in each child project country have been completed. Country factsheets on national urban policy has been prepared for all 9 countries. Roadmaps for multi-level government collaborations are being prepared. Given the slow rolling out of National-Local dialogues and nascent readiness to implement activities of national-local dialogues by the country child projects, progress on commitments to sustainable urban development has been delayed.

140. **Component 2:**

[13] Implemented by the World Bank and European Investment Bank, the City Climate Finance Gap Fund aims to help bridge the urban financing gap to achieve low carbon, climate resilient urbanization pathways.

[14] A partnership initiative led by ICLEI and supported by UrbanShift, the Transformative Actions Program aims to address the pressing challenges faced by subnational governments in implementing climate projects by supporting these governments to access financing for net zero emission and climate resilient infrastructure projects. As TAP is part of the broader UrbanShift finance offer, both GEF-6 and GEF-7 are eligible to receive support from this program (TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS PROGRAM: URBANSHIFT ANNUAL REPORT 2022)

Output 2.1. The UrbanShift Knowledge Library on the GP website has been updated with innovative solutions and resources that can act as a useful knowledge repository. Around 60% of the webinars planned have been completed on topics like “Engaging youth in climate action: Pragmatically moving forward”, “Leveraging Urban Nature to Create Inclusive and Equitable Cities”, and “Plastic Pollution & Cities: Building Momentum Towards A Global Plastics Treaty”.

The resources on the website and the webinars have promoted knowledge exchange and adoption of integrated approach to urban development.

Output 2.2. Methodology, process and quality reviews for UrbanShift courses have been completed. 8 online courses, linked to UrbanShift topics have been developed and were in the process of review, translation, and hosting. There has been some delay due to courses being more ambitious than originally planned, and costs of hosting and publishing exceeding anticipated values. The courses were launched at the Asia Forum in September 2023.

Output 2.3. A functional and well maintained UrbanShift website with regularly updated content is providing a global convening space for cities to exchange knowledge. The delivery of exit strategy is on track as it is planned to start in the second semester of 2024.

141. **Component 3:**

Output 3.1. Climate leader cities have been identified (11 out of 9 expected) to take on climate action commitments, science-based targets and participate at events where they can join to make various commitments like climate action commitments. As of HYPR Jul-Dec 2023, 4 of 9 sets of climate-action targets/science-based targets commitments have been made. For instance, 12 UrbanShift cities committed to the Race to Zero campaign and UrbanShift cities Freetown and Kigali signed the mayoral call to action for increased investment to halt and reverse nature loss during CBD COP15 in Montreal, Canada in December 2022.

Cities are working towards a climate action plan aligned with Paris agreement targets. Climate change action communication and engagement package is being developed. As of December 2023, 5 of 15 new cities are reporting to CDP-ICLEI unified system to track climate acting activities performed by them. Trainings are provided in each region to selected cities to use the CDP-ICLEI reporting system.

Output 3.2. A 5-year advocacy plan has been prepared. Yearly detailed workplans for each GP year with planned events have been presented in Executive Management Team (EMT) meetings. GP has also conducted high level events with 30% presentations made by female urban decision makers.

> Example: The UrbanShift UNEP Cities team engaged with a broad range of key partners including the City of Paris, ICLEI, C40, UN Habitat, World Wildlife Fund, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Cities and Local Governments to organize a first of its kind forum to mobilize cities in the margins of the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution. An advocacy statement was prepared and endorsed by the Mayors prior to the Forum.

In addition to the high level event, all 10 side events, including 30% presentations by female urban decisionmakers, have been completed. For instance, in October 2022, during the C40 World Mayors Summit in Buenos Aires, UrbanShift was represented in the Session "United in Action to Confront the Climate Crisis" by Prudence Rubingisa, Mayor of Kigali, and Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, GEF CEO and Chairperson.

GP has also been able to contribute towards organization of at least 6 regional events including 30% of presentations by female urban decisionmakers.

> Example: Session at the Cities Summit of the Americas (CSOA) - "Building resilience with nature in cities" was co-hosted by the WRI and the UNEP, under the umbrella of UrbanShift and Cities4Forests initiatives. It aimed to increase awareness of the need and opportunity to scale up implementation of urban nature-based solutions (NBS) to strengthen city resilience.

Output 3.3. City Business Hubs have been delivered through City Business Climate Alliance (CBCA) programme at the UrbanShift forums. A publication on private sector and cities collaboration that considers gender issues has been launched in UrbanShift Asia Forum in September 2023. The publication consists of over 30 case studies of city-business collaborations in the Global South cities. Similarly, GP cities are being considered for C40 CBCA programme. By December 2023, 1 city has joined the CBCA. City Business Collaboration Accelerator[15] (CiBiX) workshops, that help to accelerate public-private dialogue on low emission and resilient development through a facilitated approach, have been planned and are in the process of being rolled out.

Output 3.4. Gender sensitive communications and a social media strategy have been updated as needed. Branding packages for trainings, events, and activities have been completed. Many blogs on lessons learnt and best practices on integrated urban planning have been posted. Videos for SCIP forums, quarterly newsletters, and external facing annual reports are being prepared on delivered as planned.

142. **Component 4:**

Output 4.1. Template and guide for collecting annual progress in subsequent years are being followed. This has contributed to timley preparation of GP annual monitoring reports. Meetings have been hosted with each child project implementation team to understand the status of country project M&E plans and compare child project indicators with the GP M&E framework.

The GP website will not have, as was originally envisioned, an interactive display of child project indicators, baselines, targets, and progress. The annual reports of GP are prepared and published and shared during GP events.

No face-to-face SC meetings have been, or will be, conducted. They will be conducted virtually. Steering committee meetings, Executive Management Team meetings, and Partnership Engagement Group meetings are being held as planned and reporting has been done on time. Gender action plan reports are yet to be prepared. There is a good tracking system to track relevant documents to address recommendations from Steering Committee.

143. The success of the project is shown by the level of networking achieved by GP participants. In person activities help to enhance relations between the GP partners and cities. The GP successes so far can be credited to the concept of regional/country coordinators which are instrumental in building good relationships with the child projects.

[15] The City-Business Collaboration Accelerator (CiBiX) is a platform to increase engagement and collaboration between cities and businesses on city-led urban sustainability challenges. Through CiBiX, ICLEI provides a neutral platform that enables local government to take an active role in presenting their challenges to relevant private sector experts. Together they are able to participate in an early-engagement workshop that helps the city to receive new contributions as well as identify potential solutions and partnerships which they can choose to further explore.

The regional knowledge and network brought by the regional coordinators is an added and valuable benefit received by the city officials.

144. Likewise, GP is able to build on opportunities from various GP partners. GP is also providing a much-needed platform for connecting cities around the global south for resilience against Climate Change, which is a big success in itself.

145. Issues like political changes in a country are not in the control of GP. The political environments of national and city governments affect access to people and money required for GP activities. For example- some activities in Africa, planned 2 years ago, have yet not been initiated. The selection of cities for GP activities is another decision affected by national and local politics. In addition, many of the city projects are launched with significant delays. These have directly impacted the overall progress of both the child projects and global platform activities.

Rating for 4.3.2. Availability of Outputs	Satisfactory

4.3.3 Progress Towards Project Outcomes

Overarching Remarks:

146. In Latin America and Africa, planned outcomes are relevant and realistic, with efforts to localize content and align activities with regional priorities, such as managing urban growth. However, in Asia, particularly in India, there is a perception among IAs and EAs that the activities do not reflect ground realities adequately.

147. The progress of GP varies across regions due to factors like bureaucratic challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic. Delays in implementation, for different practical reasons such as internal approval process, stakeholder coordination, regulatory and compliance, highlight the need to anticipate and allocate budgets accordingly. While in some countries the political environment is majorly responsible for delay in achieving project outcomes.

148. Further flexibility in events/activities could provide better results, although pivoting at this midpoint may pose challenges. A locked-in set of programs that are tailored according to the needs of cities may not always yield the best outcomes. This is truer when someone is dealing with a vast range of regions and countries with significant levels of diversity and contextual differences. This situation often possesses huge challenges in devising an offer which fits all. This issue has been often discussed by the country and regional coordinators.

149. The progress towards achievement of outcomes derived from the HYPR Jul-Dec 2023 is shown in Table 4-2. The table shows that the progress against the baseline has been satisfactory. Although GP activities are carried out in primary as well as secondary cities, the impact indicators in Table 4-2 are measured for primary cities only. The objective of having secondary cities in GP is questionable if they are not considered in the reporting of GP outcomes. The idea of supporting secondary cities to expand the outreach of the GP will realise visible effects if they are not integrated into reporting protocols.

150. The implementation of GP activities has promoted the agenda of green development (nature-based solutions, climate finance, and prevention of environmental degradation) which is found being prioritized by many of the cities who are recipient of GP support activities. This situation is helping to leverage other green funds available through different institutions.

151. There are oftentimes discrepancies between what the city wants and what GP, as a technical platform, brings to the table. The country/regional coordinators have reported instances where cities' priorities were not found to be always matching with the agenda of the UrbanShift activities. For instance, in Latin America, when an UrbanShift Lab was being delivered, a city wanted to develop a strategic plan to control their urban growth but the lab could not accommodate their request. Such situations should be avoided with more flexibility to GP activities and their deliverables.

152. There are some instances of conflict that are not in the GP coordinator's hands but could reflect poorly on GP. An example of this was shared by one of the regional coordinators where they reported a case of stakeholders leaving a meeting over controversial mapping (issues of border). Such scenarios are complex and multifaceted, often stemming from discrepancies between the GEF maps and UN approved maps. GEF partners should discuss such issues on an individual basis and come up with a suitable solution for future projects.

Table 4-2 Progress towards achievement of outcomes (derived from HYPR Jul-Dec 2023 and verified during the MTE)

Project Outcomes	Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Point Target	End of project Target	Progress (as per HYPR Jul-Dec 2023)
Outcome 1: Key urban actors demonstrate improved capacity to undertake sustainable integrated planning and investments	Indicator 1.1: # of cities that have undertaken sustainable integrated planning based on capacity built through their participation in the SCIP GP	0	0	9	89% ((8 of 9 cities have undertaken projects or work that is directly correlated with their increased technical knowledge as a result of participating in an UrbanShift capacity building event))
	Indicator 1.2: # of cities that have accessed finance opportunities through the SCIP Global Platform	0	0	9	44% (4 of 9 cities has accessed external finance for its integrated urban planning projects through UrbanShift support)
	Indicator 1.3: # of cities with gender-sensitive integrated urban solutions, influenced by SCIP GP	0	0	3	0 of 3 cities with gender-sensitive integrated urban solutions
	Indicator 1.4: # of countries that agree to implement their roadmap for multi-level government collaboration	0		4	0 (First round of National-Local Dialogues have been hosted in 7 countries. Second round of NLD will help understand how countries are integrating multi-level governance into their integrated urban development projects)

Project Outcomes	Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Point Target	End of project Target	Progress (as per HYPR Jul-Dec 2023)
Outcome 2: Key urban actors and experts, in addition to those targeted in outcome 1, are using cutting edge knowledge and best practices on sustainable integrated urban planning and investments from a global sustainable cities' platform	Indicator 2.1: # urban practitioners that used the knowledge acquired from the materials from the SCIP website to improve sustainable integrated planning and investment (gender disaggregated)	0	40	100	Up to the end of 2023, 2359 people have registered for online courses in the UrbanShift Online City Academy. Number of people completing the course will be reported in next report.
	Indicator 2.2: # of best practices and lessons learnt that cities have shared through the SCIP GP	0	15	50	66% (33/50)
Outcome 3: Policy makers and key urban actors promote sustainable integrated urban planning and investments	Indicator 3.1: # of resolutions and/or commitments made by policy makers, cities and key urban actors influenced by the SCIP GP that lead to Global Environmental Benefits	0	3	15	27% (4/15 resolutions/commitments achieved to date)
Outcome 4: Global Platform and Child Projects coordinate and complement each other	Indicator 4.1: % of recommendations by Steering Committee Meeting addressed	0	100%	100%	100%

153. The progress towards project outcomes is discussed in the following paragraphs. The discussion is based on the information provided by PIRs, HYPRs as well as interaction and information gained by the evaluator during the field missions to India and Brazil.

154. **Outcome 1:**

Progress in sustainable urban planning and investments has been accelerated in four cities—Cartagena, Heredia, Freetown, and Mendoza—with the help of UrbanShift GP project. These cities have started programs integrating Nature-Based Solutions, active mobility, and social inclusion elements into urban infrastructure through capacity-building activities like labs and peer exchanges. Additionally, adaptations such as implementing a taxonomy system for tracking climate initiatives in Mendoza and facilitating city-city learning (with proof of concept) to support Freetown in pursuing a cable transport system illustrate practical effects from UrbanShift interventions. In addition, the platform's significance in promoting knowledge, tools and resources to access and engage with finances and financial institutions (private or public) for urban infrastructure and services is demonstrated by the technical support given to initiatives like the "Mobility Plan for the Future" in Buenos Aires and possible partnerships for Kigali's "Resilient Food Systems".

155. Despite these developments, work is still being done to develop gender-sensitive solutions, which demonstrates UrbanShift's dedication to diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the advancement of collaborative urban development plans is shown by the submission of roadmaps in countries such as Rwanda, Argentina, China, and India, as well as the promotion of multi-level governance through National-Local Dialogues. UrbanShift has been supporting activities with the objective of enhancing sustainability and resilience in urban settings through strategic partnerships and capacity-building.

156. **Outcome 2:**

The UrbanShift global platform is a valuable resource for urban practitioners, enabling the dissemination of cutting-edge information and best practices in sustainable integrated urban planning and investment. Significant engagement metrics have been recorded in 2023. According to 2023 statistics from PIR FY 2023, by June 2023, over 400 people participated in three webinars, over 93,000 website visits were recorded, and 6,139 accesses to the UrbanShift Library of Knowledge were made. Moreover, the platform continued to reach a large audience with 6,701 email subscribers and over 4,500 newsletter opened by June 2023. By December 2023, 2359 people registered to take one or more online courses on UrbanShift Online City Academy.

Furthermore, the platform has allowed sharing of over 33 lessons learned and best practices via its modules. These courses cover a range of places and highlight innovative approaches for green infrastructure, tackling climate change, and preserving urban biodiversity. The Urban Forest Monitoring Strategy of Brasília, the Strategic Plan for Urban Resilience of Campinas, and the biodiversity conservation efforts of Chengdu and Shenzhen are a few examples. UrbanShift enables urban players throughout the world to improve sustainability and resilience in their communities via knowledge exchange and collaboration.

157. **Outcome 3:**

UrbanShift promotes integrated, sustainable urban planning and investment by involving key urban actors and policy makers in innovative and impactful initiatives. UrbanShift highlighted the critical role that cities play in biodiversity protection at the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) by advocating for more direct support for urban nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration initiatives. Furthermore, UrbanShift has supported 12 cities in their commitment to strong climate action targets by providing specialized help and workshops on climate action planning as part of the Race to Zero campaign. In addition, UrbanShift helped to convene the Paris International Forum to End Plastic Pollution in Cities, which brought mayors from all around the world together to share regional approaches towards reducing plastic pollution's negative environmental effects. UrbanShift advances policy agendas that support sustainable urban development and investment practices through advocacy campaigns and strategic partnerships.

158. **Outcome 4:**

Frequent interaction between GP and child project cities leading to appropriate contextualization has helped to implement priority activities aligning to stipulated timeframe. This improved coordination ensures that the GP and child projects work together more effectively, boosting the impact of sustainable urban development efforts.

159. While most deliverables are being made available on time, there is an apparent need for better advocacy involving mayors and ministries including other higher-level authorities. On many occasions, GP is found weak in capturing the attention of city leaders and their officials who hold decision making positions. This has caused slowness in mainstreaming the GP agendas into cities' vision and long-term strategies.

160. The impact of GP activities at city level is still limited since not all GP offers/activities are conducted in all child project cities. There is a great potential to conduct GP activities at the city level in close coordination with partner cities with their matching funds and other support available to facilitate the activities. This has strong potential to expedite GP agendas and their integration into city level plans and programs.

161. GP activities like multi-level government dialogues help in engaging governments both at horizontal and vertical levels. These have helped to amplify the dialogues and discussions on various city level developmental issues by engaging relevant partners and stakeholders. While the overall impact is positive for such events, it is difficult to measure the impact in numbers.

162. In spite of some limitations, the focus of GP activities at national level, in a way, is helpful in convincing the local municipalities, whereby they will be more receptive to the GP agendas and their integration into their plans and programs.

Rating for 4.3.3. Towards Project Outcomes:	Satisfactory

4.3.4 Likelihood of Impact

163. Based on the progress made so far, the GP activities are found to be having noticeable effects on the ground. There is a good element of newness and innovation in the GP concept, which directly enhances the prospects of replicability and scalability of GP activities in a long run.

164. The integrated global and regional concept of GP implementation, with the support of city networks, allows exchange of GP knowledge, concepts, and lessons learnt across and outside the country. Strong partnership with national and local level institutions can help to sustain GP activities in child project countries.

165. The summary of discussions with the key members of the program presented below, further consolidate the issues and prospects of likelihood of impact of GP:

GP in Africa

There was a Nature Based Solutions Academy in Kigali, Rwanda where cities from Sierra Leone participated. When the GP team met with Sierra Leone City officials (people in decision making power - senior level government officials) a few months later, it was realized that the academy learning had really made an impact on their professional and city's development. Some of the participants established NbS related NGOs. The mayors of the cities were sensitized about the NbS related activities. Lobbying for NbS activities like wetland restoration and city afforestation have been taking place.

The Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) training played a crucial role in supporting the Freetown Tree Planting Campaign, which is part of the Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project (RUSLP). The training helped enhance the capacity of local stakeholders, enabling them to apply NBS approaches to urban planning. This directly contributed to Freetown's goal of planting one million trees to combat deforestation, improve biodiversity, and mitigate climate risks like landslides and flooding. By incorporating these NBS strategies, Freetown is better equipped to achieve long-term urban resilience and environmental sustainability.

GP in India

The cities are trying to find the scope of scalability within themselves and let other cities know as well. Likewise, non-GEF cities like Patna, Jammu, and Itanagar also want to get involved in various capacity building and peer exchange programs. There are definite prospects for replicability and scalability. Interests have been shown by many cities. Furthermore, the country coordinator emphasized that it is important to support smaller cities having lower resources with funding and technical assistance. It is expected that NIUA will be integrating GP knowledge repository into their existing platform (NULP) and continue providing similar support to multiple cities of India in future as well.

Through the UrbanShift platform, Surat Metropolitan Corporation has embraced concepts like NbS and sustainability, driving changes in existing projects and fostering confidence among senior authorities to adopt and replicate innovative, environment-friendly solutions. The platform is also enhancing the capacity of city officials.

Latin America

There is a good opportunity for replicability and scalability of the Data Platform. Indicators developed by GP are already integrated in the system of government of Argentina. There is a national level information incorporation. Integration in the system in Brazil is also being discussed. Likewise, in Brazil, talks are going on with the Ministry of Cities to connect the course created by GP with its platform. This will help hundreds of cities in Brazil to connect to GP courses and benefit.

GP emphasizes the value of partnerships over working in isolation, enabling cities to adapt and replicate initiatives on NbS, circular economy, and climate change adaptation. Even after GP concludes, activities will persist through the CSO in Costa Rica, ensuring continuity, with ongoing training and cities eager to maintain this collaborative engagement.

Indonesia

BAPPENAS can integrate the GP activities and knowledge into the national level and can provide access to 100s of cities, advancing the prospects of replication and scalability of the concepts. National capacity is genuinely there to replicate GP activities in the long run. Cities also have local development planning unit that are already doing activities similar to GP.

China

Cities already have similar events and activities as of GP. There are domestic peer-peer exchanges and capacity building events that cities organize. Likewise, GP has set a roadmap to maintain National-Local dialogues. This may help cities to continue such dialogues in the days to come. There is also a good network of partners established via GP which can help in replication of various activities, hinting towards prospects of long-term benefit.

166. The concept of country and regional level engagements of GP is in itself innovative. This is a unique move in this particular GEF project. The modality of working in multiple countries and sharing partner experiences is a good practice in building local capacities. Bringing the best resources from GEF partners for activities like ISUDAs, TAP, and CBCA have added significant value to the work on the ground.

167. As reported by a representative from WRI, "*SCIP GP addresses the issues of GPSC (GEF 6 cycle) and improves upon them. Having regional and country coordinators is an important change between these programs (*GP *vs GPSC). It was hard to connect with the child projects in the previous cycle without country/regional coordinators*."

168. There is an element of innovativeness in activities as well.

    Example: The City Academy in India during the UrbanShift Asia Forum 2023 on Sustainable Development included discussion on Biodiversity Development. Post event, the national government of Indonesia discussed with its 5 cities about sustainable development and about integrating it into the city development plan. This way the GP events provided some new ideas for consideration and added value to the participating cities. In addition to fostering knowledge sharing among Indonesian cities within the country, GP also enhances value by facilitating exchanges with cities in other countries to explore innovation and new ideas.

169. The learnings of the GP activities/discussions/exchanges are being used even months later in cities' action plans, and in discussions with relevant stakeholders for replicability. GP Finance Academy related to climate change adaptation and mitigation provides the cities with alternative finance opportunities leading to filling the gaps of limited resources. These kinds of opportunities are not generally available to cities. The cities, via GP, are equipped with the knowledge, tools, and resources to access finances for urban infrastructure and services as well as supported to grab the opportunity for engagement with private/public financial insitutions available at different levels across the globe.

170. GP has been bringing many private sectors into its various activities. Private enterprises are sensitized about their role in the development of cities and solving their problems following a public-private partnership model of development. Some of the examples discussed were in areas of transportation, public infrastructure, parks, flood management, and others. This intervention helped cities to come closer to the private sector and collaborate on win-win conditions.

171. There is a good level of adoption of project ideas by local governments. Despite initial skepticism, many local officials have begun to prioritize concepts like climate change adaptation, resilient and inclusive development, NbS, Transit Oriented Development as a result of GP interventions. The idea of integrated urban development is gaining momentum across the partner cities of the selected countries.

172. Of course, to continue with the GP activities, funding is required. In the absence of funds, replicability and scalability will be limited. In such a situation, a joint fund contributed by GP (seed grant) and the child projects' national government would be helpful in finding a mechanism and providing continuation to the GP activities, even after the end of the GEF 7 cycle.

Rating for 4.3.4. Likelihood of Impact:	Likely

4.3.5 Adaptive Management

173. Different cities have different contexts and there is definitely a need for adaptation in implementation, which does happen to some extent in GP.

174. While designing the GP activities, IAs and EAs of child projects are invited to co-design in order to make the GP deliverables more localized. Partners (WRI, C40, ICLEI) and technical experts are also involved and engaged to create a more contextualized and practical agenda suitable for the selected cities.

175. Even though the main modules are fixed, there is still some flexibility for localization within those modules. The interests of participants were also incorporated within the Asia Regional Forum (in India) framework. For example, the participants from the city of Amman in Jordan wanted to learn about Urban Growth and also presented their study. There was an exchange of ideas between the participants and presenters.

176. The country/regional coordinator goes through the courses and makes sure that they are relevant to their country/regional context. 8 module courses on urban issues have been made online by UrbanShift. In-person sessions like City Academies, Labs and National Local Dialogues are pre-designed (with relevant examples). These are made in line with the city and government priorities. For example, the city academy in Buenos Aires had examples of other countries in the globe but did not have national and regional examples that the participants could relate to. Learning from this, during the Asia Forum, more contents were tailored to regional and country specific examples. This is a good flexibility in the GP to consider the needs and demands of the country and incorporate lessons learnt. However, aligning GP with child project strategies is challenging. There is a need for regular update for which there may not always be resources available. While the overall quality of the content of GP modules is good, they may not always be in line with the ground realities of cities.

177. CEO endorsement for the UrbanShift programme package was created during the pandemic; however, it seems to have been conceived before the pandemic. COVID hampered the progress of many in-person events and there was limited participation from

the cities because of multiple restrictions and limited skills in technology. During the pandemic, most of the events were organized online. At the start of 2022, most events are arranged to be in-person. It was realized that not all events actually need to be conducted in person. There was a good degree of effectiveness in organizing programmes online as well. This practice of online meetings and discussions are practiced even today.

178. The developmental and working dynamics of the cities changed after the COVID pandemic. GP has been able to adapt well to these changing dynamics and delivering its activities by addressing them effectively. This is reflected by a good level of progress demonstrated by GP in all partner cities (refer to Table 4-1 and 4-2).

179. There were issues with visa acquisition, so the Chinese team could not attend the Asia Regional Forum in-person. While the whole purpose of the Forum is face-face interaction and sharing of ideas, the impact of the Forum is limited when one of the largest economies (which is part of the platform) in the world is not attending it. The discussion is going on to have the Forum at a different neutral location (e.g.: Malaysia, Singapore) to avoid visa related issues that emerge as a result of political conflicts between countries. This is an example of adaptive management that GP demonstrates.

180. The budget allocation for translation of GP materials requires further adaptation. The volume of translation required for non-english speaking countries is more, especially because a majority of city officials in these countries are not proficient in English. Limited funds in translations of GP materials, including the website, have resulted in delays of GP activities in such countries. It takes a longer time to understand and mainstream the concept of GP when its materials are not in the language that the beneficiaries understand.

181. There are cases of missed opportunities as well. Continuous follow-up is required to let the city officials of child projects know about what is happening, like the webinars from various international organizations, and the benefit that they could receive from being a part of such events. There is a confusion as to who is supposed to convey this information to city officials- is it the child project IAs or the global platform? Whether or not child project beneficiaries are utilizing the opportunities and what feedback they have for these events (events that are online and not part of GP but information about them conveyed by GP) are also not tracked.

182. In case of India, as reported by an executing partner, government think tanks could have been further leveraged by GP. GP could also tap into resources from state level urban development institutions like GUDI of Gujarat. NIUA has a network of experts and also has a good knowledge repository that is validated and backed by the government. All cities of India have access to these. NIUA also has capacity building tool kits that are self-paced. GP should be more adaptive towards utilizing these resources and make their products (modules) more grounded and contextual.

183. It was assumed that every city would take up the opportunity provided by GP. However, what GP offers is small compared to Technical Assistance or other projects already in the cities' pipeline. In order to adapt to this situation, GP requires more frequent and intense collaborations with city officials in order to attract their attention and raise their interests towards GP activities. While, on the other hand, after city officials attend the GP events, they are very positive and enthusiastic about introducing the concepts into their municipal development endeavors.

184. There needs to be an MoU with cities to discourage changes of focal point attached to UrbanShift program. There have been many instances of changes in focal points that frequently hindered the progress of GP activities. It is important to devise a code of conduct to maintain effective communication and coordination with the cities. Another solution could be to have alternative focal points in a city so that absence of one would not delay the overall progress of GP deliverables.

185. In order to complete or wrap up the project on time, it may be necessary to adjust, redefine and reduce the scope of the project. There is already a gap in the timeline between the progress of GP and child project in various countries (example China, Brazil). In order to fill the gap, there may be a requirement for 1 year extension of GP. The child projects which are not completing together with GP may struggle to receive GP support in terms of implementation of the priority activities.

Rating for 4.3.5. Adaptive Management:	Satisfactory

Rating for Effectiveness:	**Satisfactory**

4.4 Financial Management

186. It is important to note that the expenditure for GP started slow due to COVID. When travel resumed, the costs of activities increased as a result of global inflation. The cost of staff salary also increased. This has impacted GP management.

4.4.1 Adherence to UNEP's/Donor Financial Policies and Procedures

187. The project's financial reporting and management adhere to the policies and procedures of UNEP. Officials from UNEP CCM Unit and Cites Unit attend planning and discussions of GP activities and management meetings to further keep the management on track with the requirements. There are project finance officers at country/regional levels who take care of financial reports at regional/country levels. The financial reporting systems differ from one partner to another internally. However, the report to the donor GEF adheres to the requirements and framework of GEF.

188. GP prepares two financial reports per year. Earlier, it used to be two 6 months of financial reporting. Now, the reporting cycle is divided into Jan-June and July-Oct. Nov and Dec is added to Jan-June reporting cycle. This is such that UNEP can report by December and August. For the July-Oct cycle, WRI prepares the report by October and then the UNEP report is prepared by December. ICLEI and C40 report to WRI by October.

189. The communication related to administration and finance is transparent. Financial reports are received quarterly from the partners (ICLEI, C40). The project team and admin/finance conduct meetings regularly. There is a meeting with a senior project manager every two months. The weekly meeting and biweekly meetings where all partners come together is also attended by admin/finance.

190. The reporting is done on time as per the requirements. Reporting on co-financing is also done adequately and on time, adhering to the required policies and procedures. So far, no discrepancies were reported by people interviewed at different levels of the program.

191. A budget revision was signed and approved in January 2022 to reflect changes in staff costs and to reallocate travel savings. The timeline in the workplan was updated without major changes in deliverables. Another budget revision was being discussed while this

MTE report was being prepared. The revision was necessitated by the changes in workplan which was also being made while this MTE was being drafted.

192. It is important to note that the expenditure for GP is dependent on the successful implementation of deliverables. Without deliverables, there cannot be expenditure related to GP activities.

193. The rate of expenditure is appropriate for the mid-point. The expenditure so far is shown in Table 4-3.

Rating for 4.4.1. Adherence to UNEP's/Donor Financial Policies and Procedures: Highly Satisfactory

4.4.2 Completeness of Financial Information

194. There is completeness in financial information reported. The reporting process is not straightforward. There are different reporting formats for UNEP, WRI, ICLEI and C40. All partners provide all the information that different organizations require. Financial reporting is done twice a year.

195. Challenges in reporting financial expenditure - there were changes in the past when the reporting was done in outputs level. This was complicated and a lot to handle for the partners and financial/admin team. Now, only component level reporting is being done. This has been easier and simplified. This has been working well so far and reporting is being done on time. This type of reporting was on a trial period and now this is going to be established by formal approval. Summary of the expenditure until 2023 S1 is presented in Table 4-3. As reported by the WRI UrbanShift Project Finance and Admin, the only thing that GP admin is trying to figure out is the mismatch in reporting by partners and preparation of GP audit. The GP partners ICLEI and C40 report to WRI by September whereas the GP audit is planned in June.

196. Technical and financial disconnects were there in the project in the initial phases. These issues have been addressed and mitigated with better communication and meetings. There was lateness in reporting in the previous years but now it is working better. The new reporting cycle and format (output to component) started recently in 2023. The IAs of GP and UNEP are good at listening and working together.

197. GP includes co-financing. Co-financing in GP activities is also well reported by relevant GP partners. The aspect of co-financing was difficult to report in the beginning as there was confusion in the initial period. Now, the co-financing reporting is carried out on time and all partners have built the capacity for reporting co-financing. According to PIR 2023, all main co-executing agencies (WRI, C40, ICLEI and UNEP) have contributed in-kind (co-finance), particularly in the form of co-hosting events and co-drafting training materials, as committed in the CEO Endorsement Package (2020). 47% (USD 11,306,741) co-financing out of total planned (24,320,834) has been reported (refer to Table 4-4).

198. There is a thinking and planning beforehand, with the financial and technical team ,to understand how much any event/activity is going to cost. It is important for the finance and admin team to participate in GP activities so that the team understands and becomes aware of the situations in the events and activities. This also helps to develop personal rapport which ultimately facilitates the timely and appropriate reporting. At the same time, this helps to minimize gaps in understanding about the project and brings everyone on the same page.

199. There are some aspects of financial management that affect project performance. For example, it is sometimes difficult to separate the budget expenditure when both GP and child project activities are implemented jointly on same event. It becomes even more complicated when the budget needs to be formalized with the national government. Good communication, and coordination between the IA and EA/EP is required in child projects, which can have effects on GP activities as well.

200. It is important to note that how the fund allocated in the child projects to participate in GP activities will be settled if the global platform is closed down at its scheduled date of completion (October 2025). Many of the child projects, however, will not be completed within the above date.

Table 4-3 Project Expenditure Reported (adapted from reports provided by WRI and UNEP Cities Unit)

Component	Budget per component at CEO Package (GEF Grant) / USD	Total Project Budget as per FR 2023 S1 / USD	Total Expenditure till 2023 S1 / USD
1	9,129,466	8,783,605	2,905,075
2	2,251,751	2,109,960	983,250
3	3,194,369	2,681,855	1,112,588
4	866,091	716,091	261,586
PMC	772,084	772,083	308,220
TOTAL	**16,213,761**	**15,063,594**	**5,570,719**

Table 4-4 Project Co-Financing Sources and Secured Funding (UNEP CCM Unit, 2024)

Co-financing[16]	Planned Funding / USD	Secured Funding / USD	% of Secured Funding / USD
Co-financing cash contribution (C40; ICLEI; WRI)	22,982,459	10,430,852	45%
Co-financing in-kind contribution (UNEP)	1,338,375	875,889	65%
Total Co-financing contributions (up to 31 May 2023)	**24,320,834**	**11,306,741**	**46%**

Table 4-5 Financial Management Rating Table

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		**HS:HU**	**HS**
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	No
2. Completeness of project financial information			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		**HS:HU**	**HS**
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes [the provided details were adequate]
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	N/A [second round of budget revision is being considered]

[16] Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UNEP accounts, but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP – approved project.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes [reported by UNEP cities unit and WRI via annual expenditure reports]
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	N/A
3.	**Communication between finance and project management staff**	**HS:HU**	**HS**
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	HS
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	HS
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS:HU	HS
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS:HU	HS
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process		HS:HU	HS
Overall rating		**HS**	

Rating for 4.4.2. Completeness of Financial Information: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory

4.5 Efficiency

201. GP has been able to provide good value for the money spent. The project resources are being utilized in the most economical, effective, and equitable way possible. Several activities or deliverables are strategically combined and delivered at one venue to save logistical expenditures and time. For example, many GP deliverables are delivered in the regional forums.

202. Apart from an excellent partnership among the GEF partners, GP is taking good advantage of existing organizations, network of cities, experts, and cities of previous GEF cycles. We can take example from China in this regard. In China, there are 3 GEF-7 cities and 7 GEF-6 cities. In activities organized by GP, GEF 6 cities as well as other cities are invited. This has expanded the footprint of UrbanShift GP's effects in other cities as well. China organized a sub-national summit on 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In this summit, GP cities as well as cities outside of GEF6 and GEF7 participated. This shows that GP is connecting well with the external agencies and leveraging their efforts while advocating for its own concepts of integrated urban development, climate change adaptation, and biodiversity conservation.

203. The presence of GEF is well acknowledged by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. As a result, they want to associate with GP and get involved in various GP activities. They understand the global reach of a GEF project.

204. There is a fairly good engagement of GP with think tanks and non-profits. For instance, in Indonesia, GP has been able to leverage efforts of a resource person from a think tank for planning activities related to sustainable transportation. GP's alignment with city and national goals makes it easier to leverage efforts from partners. GP is also collaborating well with NIUA in India. NIUA is likely to adapt City Academy Modules of GP into their National Urban Learning Platform (NULP), tailor/nationalize it, and disseminate to all Indian cities. This is a good example of GP being able to build on existing institutions.

205. GP activities help bring various co-financing opportunities for cities. For instance, in Africa, GP has been able to tap into the resources, researches and experts of Bloomberg Joint Programme, Global Covenant of Mayors, Transformation Urban Mobility, etc. Non-GP partner, Global Covenant of Mayors, delivered part of the City Academy in Marrakech, focusing on the opportunity for cities to tap into the $150 million Gap Fund. These reflect the capacity of the project to leverage efforts of partners and possible champions towards achievement of GP outcomes, impacts, and sustainability.

206. ICLEI, C40, WRI are doing well in what they're doing. But there are other global organizations in this sphere (GFDRR, IFC, IDB, EBRD, etc). There is a need to connect more with these organizations to have a more pronounced impact.

207. The logistics for GP activities can become cumbersome, especially for country/regional level events like the UrbanShift Forum. Oftentimes, participants do not book the tickets, visa appointments, and accommodations on time. These situations demand time and energy from the coordinators which could otherwise have been invested into the technical aspects of the initiatives.

Rating for Efficiency:	**Highly Satisfactory**

4.6 Monitoring and Reporting

4.6.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

208. The project monitoring and evaluation are parts of the project itself. WRI leads the monitoring of the project. There is a strong budget for communication in GP. This supports the project M&E processes.

209. In the monitoring process, all the meetings and engagements with cities and partners are also monitored.

210. As soon as the GP event is complete, a report is prepared in a predefined format. The basic structure for reporting is already prepared and indicators are also tracked (e.g.: number of cities, number of female participants, number of participants from GEF Cities, etc). Post event discussion is done with partners of GP. The completion of any activity also provides a roadmap for future events. For each activity, there is a form from which the GP team collects the key programme indicators. Another form is used to collect information (including gender disaggregated data) of the participants. Yet another form (follow up) is used for evaluation of the event by participants. Lastly, another evaluation linked impact form is distributed around 90 days after the event to measure the impact of GP activities in cities.

211. The endorsement package provides a list of clear baseline indicators and benchmarks for performance measurement. This has been tracked well by the project management team, except for primary GEF indicators (objective level indicators A and B) which, as discussed before, are difficult to track. Nevertheless, as indicated in the PIRs, a methodology is being revised to have estimates for indiators A and B.

212. A bilateral meeting with local and national level government is conducted from time to time. This helps to gauge their expectations, prevent repetition and also to anticipate risks. The IAs of child projects are interviewed by GP partners to understand their work and progress, including effectiveness of support extended through GP activities. These are done around the end of each year.

213. The GP team has a call every Thursday (weekly meetings) to discuss the progress and issues related to GP implementation. Steering committee meetings17 (that occur every year) review challenges and progress, and help in guiding and resolving pertinent bottlenecks that are delaying implementation of GP activities and their smooth progress.

214. There is no specific monitoring budget at the country/regional level. It is a part of the coordination itself. Most of the interaction for reflection and evaluation takes place online. WRI maintains the workplan of the programme.

Rating for 4.6.1. Monitoring of Project Implementation:	Highly Satisfactory

4.6.2 Project Reporting

215. The GP reporting is going on well. There is a format that covers not just events, but the calls and meetings associated with it. PIR is produced every year. Half yearly progress reports are also prepared and shared with relevant stakeholders. Financial reports are prepared every six months. Risk related discussion and reporting is done quarterly. There are weekly GP calls with project coordinators and directors. This has helped to keep the project on track and mitigate any risks that hinder project progress.

216. UNEP makes sure that the reporting is in line with the requirements of GEF. Monitoring is led by UNEP and WRI. Country/Regional coordinators from GP partners do need to provide, from the project's monitoring perspective, number of participants in an event, disaggregated data about the participants, anecdotal information on ground, evaluation survey reports, etc. UNEP and WRI collect data from the coordinators in a raw format and then put them into the required format for final reporting. This harmonized process that engages project partners in an effective manner helps to keep the project reporting on track and encapsulates progress and concerns from all relevant project partners.

217. The reporting follows international guidelines to maintain participants right to privacy. For every event, there needs to be consent from every participant to use their photos from the event.

[17] According to ProDoc, members of the SC will be representatives of United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, UNEP, ADB, the GEF Secretariat, WRI, C40, and ICLEI, including the global child project regional/country focal points and one city focal point (or the country focal points) for each country, and other participating partners or experts by invitation. The role of the SC members will be to review project implementation progress and progress towards project objectives; review and agree on the annual project work plan and budget; and to discuss ways of improving effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation and support between the global and country child projects. The Committee will also promote coordination between Program projects. The SC will meet every year, or more frequently by request of one of the steering committee members. Meetings will be virtual or face to face and where possible in conjunction with other meetings to manage costs. The GP will draft TORs for the SC and present them during the first meeting.

Rating for 4.6.2. Project Reporting: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Highly Satisfactory

4.7 Exit Strategy & Sustainability

218. Success of a project lies in its ownership. When cities start talking about the project as their own project (funded by GEF), it shows the effectiveness of the project. Several discussions about the exit strategy of the project have been taking place. With the World Bank leading the GEF 8 cycle, a concrete way forward has not yet been laid. GP partners are having multiple discussions with the World Bank and in house to pave ways for a smoother transition- including concepts for fundraising beyond the GEF.

219. GP partners as well as child project IA and EA/EP are willing to take the GP activities forward, but they rely on availability of fundings to do so. When GEF support ends, the continuity of the activities will subside. This is a big challenge which demands serious discussion and exploration of potential sources to give continuity of GP activities beyond GEF funding. Hence, the concern is not about willingness to continue but the availability of funds.

220. Social, political, and administrative factors influence the project results and progress. With every change in leadership (due to election or any other reasons), the project needs to make additional efforts to make them understand the GP concepts and secure their support. In all conditions, continuous follow up is required, as without political buy-in, it is hard to implement and sustain GP activities on the ground. Though GP partners are mostly in technical sectors, they have to skilfully navigate and influence the political environment in their favour and support of the project.

221. Because activities are tailored according to the needs and interests of the cities, there is a fairly good level of ownership. However, it is important to acknowledge that GP activities cover only a certain portion of the cities' expectation. Cities expect large scale projects with larger impacts, especially in cities that are big and have a good resource base, it demands more efforts to attract cities' attention and their constant interest in GP activities. Of course, there are good examples of genuine interest and ownership from some cities. In Sierra Leone, a high level of GP ownership was felt in the last city academy where the city government took proactive interest and seconded several relevant participants to the events. Likewise, the positiveness of city officials towards GP activities in India is an encouraging sign, which will ultimately facilitate durability and sustainability of GP activities in the long run.

222. In the second half of the GEF 7 cycle, priority should be given to successfully implement actictivities provisioned to promote sustainability and exit strategy of the project. In view of change in leadership of GEF 8 cycle (World Bank), many activities envisioned in the present progam to champion the above agenda needs to be revisited and realigned according to the new situation. It is always helpful if GP integrates its modules to any relevant partner institution (like NIUA in India, BAPPENAS in Indonesia, relevant universities and research institutions, private consulting firms) and train them and also prepare few resource persons (by providing TOT to local experts) well before the end of the project. To bring further impetus to the element of sustainability, it is recommended to leave some seed money with the institution to sustain the GP activities till it starts rolling on its own. The GP may also allow the above institution to implement few modules and test their capacity while they are still active in the country and in the region.

Rating for Exit Strategy & Sustainability:	Moderately Satisfactory

4.8 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.8.1 Project Inception

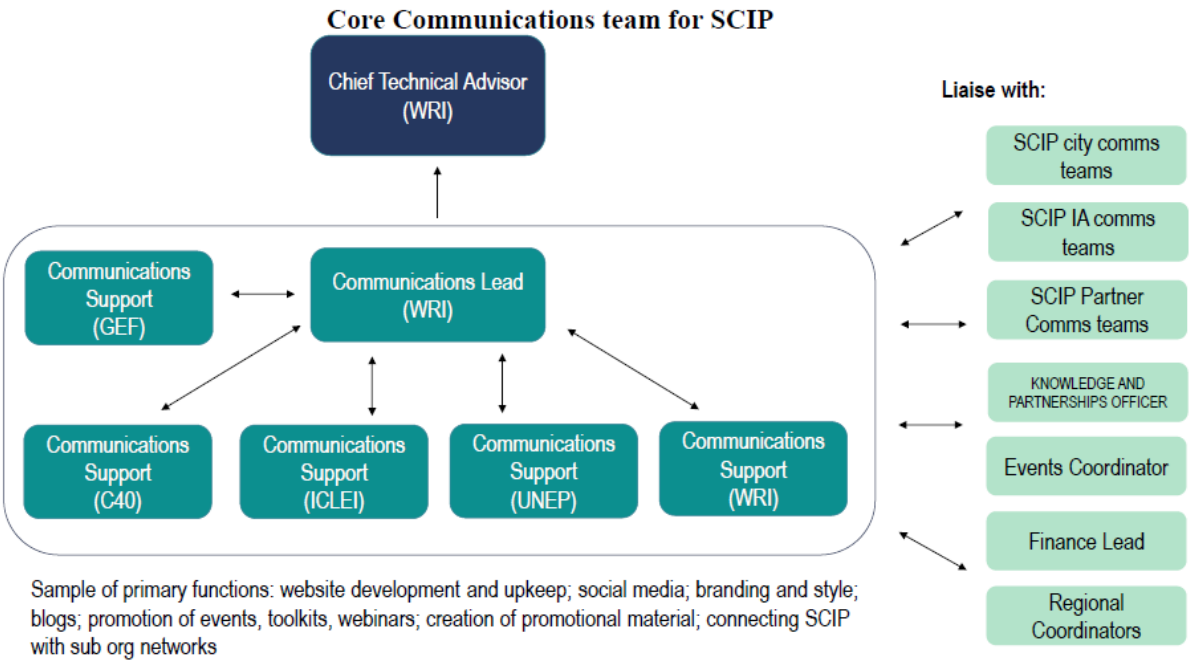
223. The program's inception period was well utilized to confirm all the analysis, partners' capacity and project plans. The overall design and conceptualization of the project (GP) took more than one year.

224. During the initial phase of the program, there were some confusions in roles of partners and working together was a challenge. An UrbanShift retreat in Washington helped to bring everyone on the same page, which later facilitated the smooth implementation of the project.

225. The project partners – WRI, C40, ICLEI, and UNEP Cities are championing different activities based on their experience and expertise. As mentioned earlier in Section 4.2, UNEP leads advocacy, WRI leads capacity building, city labs, and data dashboard, C40 leads the finance academies and investors' round table, and ICLEI leads multi-level government dialogues. There is a well understood set of roles and responsibilities that they are playing out effectively.

226. The communication among the partners and beneficiaries is found effective. There are no any major issues reported on this front by any of the key respondent. The layers of communication led by WRI can be understood from Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2 Communication team for SCIP (Endoresement Package, 2020)



227. The governance structure (Figure 1-2, pg. 12) has been appropriate so far with different partners contributing well to the structure. The Executive Management Team, SCIP Steering Committee, High Level Panel, and SCIP Partnership Engagement Group drive the GP project towards its goals by managing, guiding and coordinating GP works.

Rating for 4.8.1. Project Inception:	Highly Satisfactory

4.8.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

228. UNEP/Implementing Agency: UNEP has been providing a good leadership towards achieving the planned project outcomes as envisioned. UNEP CCM team holds regular discussions and attends regular meetings with the executing bodies. Apart from these, UNEP CCM team also engages with the stakeholders of child projects during various occasions, including regional forums. UNEP CCM Unit, as an implementing agency takes into account the changing needs of various cities and tries to accommodate their changing demands over time. In the past, the focus was little more on quantity rather than quality of deliverables, however in recent time, the focus has shifted more on quality of deliverables, as mentioned by one of the interviewees.

229. Partners/Executing Agencies: The project partners (C40, ICLEI, UNEP Cities Unit, led by WRI) have been executing the project quite well with effective communication and collaboration with UNEP CCM Unit. The executing agencies participate and contribute well in various GP meetings (including weekly, steering committee, etc) and hence collaborate frequently in delivering the GP activities in the field.

230. GP program managers and directors (from IA and EAs) effectively work towards maintaining project relevance within the changing external and strategic contexts. The communication between the agencies is transparent and conducive towards achievement of the project objectives.

231. The project risks were well identified by the CEO Endorsement Package (2020) and new risks have been effectively identified in PIRs and HYPRs. The risks that come up during the project implementation are categorically communicated by the country/regional coordinators of GP partners, which then are considered as priority risks by the project managers. Meetings to discuss risks are done regularly and management strategies are put in place accordingly.

232. The project's adaptation, as discussed in section 4.3.5., is good and overall execution has been quite satisfactory so far, leading to the achievement of around 65% deliverables by HYPR Jul-Dec 2023 (average of progress that is shown in Table 4-1).

233. One of the issues that the project management team could work on is the use of standardized tools for communication. Different partners are using different platforms for communication like teams, slack, google suite, etc. It might be a good idea to standardize this tool of communication.

Rating for 4.8.2. Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Highly Satisfactory

4.8.3 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

234. GP brings together different organizations with different strategic objectives. Sometimes, there may be barriers in delivering the GP activities because different donors of different partners may have differing interests. Nevertheless, GP partner cooperation has been effective and successful in delivering quality events by engaging relevant stakeholders. Existing city networks of GP partners serve as valuable facilitators for engagement and knowledge dissemination. Leveraging these networks enhances the project's visibility and impact at the local level.

235. In the Latin America Regional Forum attended by the evaluator, GP partners' cohesiveness and proactive participation could be clearly seen. The partners could be seen working in a very collaborative and cohesive environment that was well tuned and

synchronized despite delivery of different types of activities by different partners in the forum.

236. The evaluator's participation in the UrbanShift Latin American Forum led to the revelation that GP stakeholders, including the city beneficiaries (cities) are happy and content with the GP deliverables and were advocating for GP activities.

237. According to ProDoc (CEO Endorsement Package, 2020), GP aims to build on existing global initiatives, knowledge, expertise and activities from a diverse range of potential partners to strengthen the work of the GP; to build operational partnerships around common areas of geographical and thematic work; and expand the outreach and capabilities of the SCIP through these partnerships with additional cities and city practitioners. Regional coordinators of GP partners were found to be proactive in responding to the follow up queries even after the completion of the project events, fostering long-term partnerships and engagement. The initial mapping of stakeholders included following central actors are as follows:

    - National Level Governments
    - Business associations, private sectors, and financial initiatives
    - Academia and research institutes
    - Multilateral development banks
    - UN Organizations
    - City networks and initiatives
    - International NGOs
    - Organizations focusing on gender issues

238. The stakeholders have been engaged in various ways. For instance, the national level governments are invited and engaged in major GP events as EA/EP of child projects. Academia and research institutes are consulted and used for preparing and later contextualizing various GP modules.

239. The stakeholders, as envisioned by the CEO Endorsement Package (2020), are informed of GP efforts through newsletters and emails. However, more rigorous engagement would be suitable to connect more stakeholders with one another and provide city level engagements to actually contribute towards the success of child projects.

240. There is a good support from the partners, especially for identifying and getting the (sectoral) experts for various GP activities.

241. There are various interactions with GEF6, GEF7 and other cities outside of GEF cities. A good networking opportunity for cities are provided during events like the regional forums.

242. However, in some cases, the cities are nominating people to participate in GP activities based on the availability of participants. This means that the people participating may not have any idea about what GP is delivering and their participation may not be adding any value to the city's integrated development efforts.

243. The city level representatives, participating in the regional forums18 are often not well aware of the distinction between child projects and GP activities. While, on the other hand,

[18] The regional forums are often planned as residential events extending for 4-5 days. This provides sufficient exposure to a variety of activities performed by global platform targeting to city projects on the ground. City officials were found gaining

this may be the opportunity to get exposure about GP activities and its support to child projects on the ground.

Rating for 4.8.3. Stakeholders Participation and Coopeation:	Satisfactory

4.8.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

244. The GP CEO Endorsement Package (2020) has a comprehensive gender action plan including output level indicators, targets, and means of verification. This level of sensitivity towards gender equity and inclusivity at the project level should be appreciated. UNEP, as an implementing agency, also keeps reminding the partners to reflect on gender balance and inclusivity while delivering GP activities.

245. The GP core team of partners has a fairly good gender balance, including in decision making positions.

246. The GP provides significant consideration for participation of women, indigenous and minorities through its multiple activities. For example: it has organized webinars focused on inclusivity, gender, and youth. Inclusivity is considered even in the panel of experts that are called in for GP activities. At the same time, the annual reports of GP have also featured and highlighted gender-related impacts generated by the project- showcasing zoomed in country/city level examples of success stories in integrating gender related concerns. Similarly, the trainings organized by GP have a dedicated section on gender and inclusivity. In the same manner, resource library of GP continuously add gender-focused reports and knowledge documents.

247. Representation and roles are well balanced in Latin American context. The situation is not the same for Africa and Asia. In Latin America, most of the focal points are women. However, in all regions, most of the mayors, ministers, and city officials are men. When speakers and participants are to be invited, it is difficult to maintain a good gender balance. Although nominating for female participants is requested, adequate women participation is not always achieved, especially in Asian and African context.

248. "In Marrakech city lab, the nomination process started last year. In the nomination form, we mentioned that we needed a 50-50 gender balance. However, we got a call from one of the EAs that this was not possible because there are not enough women in the positions. In those instances, the cities are not able to provide gender-balanced nominations.. We do, however, try." Africa Regional Coordinator for GP.

249. Likewise, gender and equity are difficult to always measure by number. It's not a problem of platform but of the situation. The impact cannot be always be monitored by the numbers. Hence, addition of qualitative indicators may be appropriate when talking about gender related indicators.Some examples of qualitative indicators are : a) Personal accounts from participants on the inclusiveness and accessibility of the activities, particularly for marginalized or vulnerable groups b) Testimonials and follow-up stories from participants on how the knowledge and skills gained from the GP activities have empowered them to address human rights issues in their communities or work c) Qualitative feedback from participants on how well the activities respect and incorporate

substantially from the forums where they also get opportunity to have intimate interactions and exchange of ideas with large range of professionals and practitioners involved with GP activities in the region and beyond. In addition, this event also gives opportunity to city networks to better understand the expectations and aspirations of city partners and other stakeholders of the program.

diverse cultural backgrounds and human rights principles d) Feedback from women participants on the availability and quality of mentorship and networking opportunities during GP activities/deliverables

Rating for 4.8.4. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:	Satisfactory

4.8.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards

250. The Environment, Social, and Economic Review Note (ESERN), Annex P of CEO Endorsement Package (2020) identifies GP as a low-risk project. There is further recommendation in the annex that states: UNEP ESSF guiding principles-- resilience and sustainability; human rights, gender equality and women empowerment, accountability and leave no one behind--are still applicable for low-risk projects.

251. The environmental and social safeguards are mostly linked with the child projects that GP supports. The GP itself does not have any noticeable negative effects on environmental and social risks.

252. The capacity and knowledge building activities implemented by GP are directly contributing in preserving and promoting environmental and social concerns linked to urban development. The deliverables are also creating awareness and making city officials more sensitive and responsible towards environmental and social issues and concerns that emerge while carrying out developmental activities.

253. The safeguards are regularly monitored in the PIRs. PIR 2023 mentions that there has been no complaints or grievances related to social and/or environmental impacts during the reporting period. An interesting environmental and social safeguard development comes from Brasília, Brazil, which shared their Urban Forest and Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy during the Urban Biodiversity course at the Buenos Aires City Academy in November 2022. The strategy helped the city in mapping and understanding the behaviour of Capybara populations in the city lakes to reduce the conflict with local communities and promote relocation and ticks' control in the Capybaras. Complaints from the communities drastically reduced with the strategy.

254. The GP team could further consider environmental (including GHG emissions) and social impacts of participation of people from various corners of the world in GP events. Low emission flights, plastic free events, reduced printing, reduced travel emissions, etc could be further considered.

Rating for 4.8.5. Environmental and Social Safeguards:	Satisfactory

4.8.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

255. The GP directly communicates with the national governments of child project countries and interacts with cities via the child projects' IAs and EAs/EPs. The city counterparts respond well to requests when the national government provides a push.

256. GP activities are aligned well with national plans and priorities which makes it easy to institutionalize the concepts. The national governments take GP activities positively and encourage city governments to participate.

257. GP serves as a platform for cities to exchange ideas and learn from other cities. Based on the evaluator's interaction with city officials of India, Costa Rica, and Brazil, GP is well received by the cities and with the help of GP activities, city officials understand the need

for integrated urban development, reducing GHG emissions, preventing biodiversity degradation, and improving adaptation and resilience against climate change impacts.

258. City officials, EAs, and IAs are included in discussion about GP activities and regular feedback is received, either in verbal communication or via surveys after each GP events. This has improved the delivery of GP activities as well as inculcated a better sense of ownership in the minds of city officials.

259. GP has created various opportunities for city officials and institutions to catalyse change. City officials, upon learning about concepts like NbS, eV mobility, and waste-energy conversion (through peer-peer exchanges as well), have started advocating for such practices in their own cities. This shows the effectiveness of GP activities and ownership of beneficiaries who are committed to translate their learnings into their own contexts of development endeavours.

260. As reported by country/regional coordinators, it was difficult to connect with the strategies from all the countries and tailor the platform accordingly. But GP tries to connect its activities and agenda with the strategy for cities and country. For example, in the UrbanShift Lab in Costa Rica, connection was made with the national decarbonization plan. GP also has a climate action front which provides tailored assistance for reporting related to the climate action plan via CDP-ICLEI platform (a carbon disclosure project).

261. It should however be remembered that the assistance provided by GP is only a trickle in the vast financial assistance cities receive regularly. In such a context, the drivenness for GP activities may not always be at high level and cities may not always be able to prioritize GP activities in their workplan. This prospect would only be secured if sustainability of GP activities is guaranteed.

262. A country's political events such as elections pose risk to implementation timeline of the GP activities. Oftentimes, the team at national/local levels change and GP coordinators have to start all over again. This directly impact the prospect of institutions' ownership and drivenness for implementing GP activities.

Rating for 4.8.6. Country Ownership and Driven-ness:	Satisfactory

4.8.7 Communication and Public Awareness

263. Communication among project partners and with city beneficiaries is going smoothly with the help of communication protocols in place. GP oftentimes faces challenges with communication when certain focal person change in a city or agencies. GP regional/country coordinators emphasize including informal channels of communication (like WhatsApp) and having more than one focal person to prevent major obstacle in communication. The GP coordinators track the political context closely, anticipate changes, and respond to these changes to reduce their impact.

264. The learning and sharing among project partners are quite limited. While the experience sharing and feedback session takes place after each major GP events, there is more to be done. The partners have products of knowledge that are not adequately shared among one another. The focus is on external sharing rather than internal.

265. While the communication among the GP partners is going well so far, a standard communication platform could improve effectiveness in communication. Different partners use different platforms (google, Microsoft, zoom) for various file sharing and meeting activities. Standardizing this can further improve access and security.

266. Public awareness is not directly a part of GP. Nevertheless, several articles, and blogs are made, in addition to GP website, to increase the reach of impacts of GP activities. Digital platforms and social media are also used to raise awareness about GP activities. This has helped to advance the concepts and agendas of GP to a larger audience of this field.

267. Advocacy is an important part of GP. GP advocacy for integrated sustainable development, GHG emissions reduction, biodiversity conservation, and improved resilience and adaptation against climate change impacts has made it to both national and international forums. GP team recognizes that urban issues are well discussed in climate related platforms, yet issues of climate change is not well discussed in urban related platforms. GP aims to break this pattern through pilot projects that advocate for integrated and sustainable urban development.

Rating for 4.8.5. Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

268. The design of GP emphasizes on collaborations between partner agencies. Different thematic activities are led by different partners, looking at their experience and expertise in the field. (see section 4.2)

269. SCIP GP provides cities with global perspectives and examples of best practices. The project's regional approach enhances efficiency and relevance. GP helps cities build capacity to realize their sustainability and resilience building goals. (see section 4.3)

270. GP's Theory of Change and Intervention logics demonstrate coherence and realism. There is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities among partners. Stakeholders are satisfactorily involved with varied levels of engagement opportunities at local and regional levels. (see section 4.3.1, 4.3.2)

271. Despite delays in project implementations, most outputs and milestones are being attained. Cities are developing their capacity and confidence in the realm of integrated and sustainable urban development. (see section 4.3.2, 4.3.3)

272. There is a good level of adaptation in project activities during implementation, allowing for localized contents and incorporation of participants' interests. While GP has been offering valuable activities, there is a need for more interactive and tailored activities to reflect the specific needs of cities. (see section 4.3.3)

273. The project adheres well to UNEP financial policies and has a transparent financial reporting. There is effective communication and coordination among the project teams across different project partners which has ensured trouble-free and timely reporting. (see section 4.4)

274. Project monitoring and evaluation are robust, with a focus on tracking activities' engagements, and baseline indicators. Regular feedback from activities' participants and frequent meetings with concerned stakeholders are helping to keep the project relevant, prevent repetition of activities and to anticipate risks on time. (see section 4.6)

275. Despite good execution, the time required (often long time) to build trust and relationships with the cities are not well envisioned by the project design. There is also some confusion among the city beneficiaries regarding the boundary and role of GP and national child projects. At the same time, cities expectations often exceed the scope of GP. (see section 4.2)

276. The current mismatch between the timelines of GP and child projects will require GP to be extended until the child projects end, so that there is better support and alignment. (see section 4.2, 4.3)

277. GP should be provided with access to the funds for cities to participate in GP activities. (see section 4.2, 4.3.2)

278. Better advocacy among people at decision making positions like the mayors will add further impetus towards the impact of GP. (see section 4.3.3)

279. The exit strategy and sustainability of the project is questionable in the absence of clear direction and continued funding. (see section 4.7)

280. There is a strong commitment to gender equity and responsiveness to human rights. However, challenges persist in achievement of equal representation, particularly in Asia and Africa. (see section 4.8.4)

281. Summary of project performance ratings: Table 5-2 provides a summary of ratings and findings discussed in chapter 4. Overall, the project has been rated as "Satisfactory".

282. Responses to key strategic questions are present in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Responses to key strategic questions

A. SCIP-GP as a Knowledge Management/Capacity Building Project
1. What are the elements of the global offer that are most valuable for the city beneficiaries (City Labs, City Academies, National Dialogues, Finance Academies, National-Local Dialogues, webinars, Online library of knowledge, Advocacy)? And how is the quality of this offer? *All of GP's global offers are valuable to cities. City Academies and Finance Academies, characterized by thematic training and knowledge exchange are highly valued by the participants. Tangible impacts, such as adoption of innovative taxation system in a city inspired by Finance Academies in Africa, demonstrate the project's tangible benefits in addressing urban challenges and promoting innovation. Online events of GP gather a good level of participation. Participants of GP global offer activities have been proving positive reviews, which shows effective engagement, appreciation and satisfaction. GP prioritizes empowering cities. This has been felt in the engagement of GP during the national-local dialogues and capacity building efforts for city officials. GP activities are synchronized with both city requirements and national government agendas. Tailoring initiatives to regional contexts, exemplified by City Academies in Latin America, enhances relevance and engagement. City Labs, particularly favored for their contextualization, offer valuable insights and practical applications. (see section 4.3)*
2. Which global platform activities have been less successful? Evaluate whether these results warrant an adjustment to the global platform scope of activities or a reprioritization therein. *Activities of GP have indeed faced challenges in varying environment. Travel regulations, geopolitical conflicts, local level restrictions and budget constraints have hindered participation of key beneficiaries in regional events (example: Chinese stakeholders could not participate in Asia Regional Forum 2023 due to visa restriction/geopolitical reasons). Additionally, language barriers, exemplified by lack of budget for translations, have resulted in limited accessibility in engagement. Likewise, in the avenue of advocacy, GP faces difficulty in engaging stakeholders with key decision-making powers such as mayors and ministers. Similarly, limited governance role of GP within the benefitting cities hinders GP's effectiveness. (see section 4.3.2, 4.3.3)*
3. To what extent the SCIP-GP is taking advantage of the city networks and other partners (such as PEG, private sector) for implementation? Has the GP synergized with other programs/initiatives led by UrbanShift partners to be able to provide more, stronger and complementary opportunities for beneficiaries? *GP has been robustly utilizing city networks and partnerships to enhance implementation and provide complementary opportunities for beneficiaries. GP invites GEF 6 cities, partner cities of ICLEI, C40, WRI, and other cities in GP activities. Many developmental partners seek or approach UrbanShift platform because of its wider reach as a GEF funded project. GP regularly engages with the stakeholders of child projects as well as PEG, and private sector. Cities are reaching out to GP for technical assistance for various issues. For instance, Mendoza reached out for technical guidance in creating super blocks. Teresina wanted technical design advice with climate action. GP has been able to connect cities beyond UrbanShift. There was a webinar on sponge cities by C40 Urban Flooding Network. Although Kigali is not a C40 city, it was invited, as a part of GP to attend this C40 hosted webinar. There have been many of these push and efforts to improve GP networking. (see sections 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.8.3)*
4. Have the beneficiaries from local governments (main capacity building beneficiaries) been able to apply the acquired knowledge gained from GP activities and events? Why or why not? *With the help of GP, beneficiaries from local governments have become more aware about integrated urban development, sustainable urbanism, and climate change concerns. Local, national, and regional efforts are complemented by GP activities. Cities might not have climate change related knowledge to tackle the issues associated with it. For instance, cities may not know about climate finance and how to do it. GP experts from*

the region, who have global exposure provide contextual examples that the cities can relate to. In Latin American experience, GP has helped government officials from different departments learn to improve financing capacity, make bankable projects with concrete indicators, and gain new insights. There are other examples of incorporation of knowledge gained into city programs. For example, in Teresina, the insights from the GP lab on nature-based solutions were included into the urbanization plan in order to fight climate change. In Costa Rica, nature-based solutions were included into consideration for designing a boulevard-leading to the city getting benefit from green infrastructure. (see section 4.3.4)

5. Have the beneficiaries been able to connect and learn from other local governments implementing similar strategies?

   Yes, cities have been able to connect with other cities and enjoy benefits by exchange of ideas. There was a Nature Based Solutions Academy in Kigali, Rwanda where cities from Sierra Leone participated. When GP team met with Sierra Leone City officials (people in decision making power - senior level government officials) a few months later, it was realized that the academy learning had really made an impact on their professional and city's development. Some of the participants established NbS related NGOs. The mayors of the cities were sensitized about the NbS related activities. Lobbying for NbS activities like wetland restoration and city afforestation have been taking place. In the case of Indonesia, as a GP city, Jakarta is already quite advanced in terms of HR, technology and infrastructure, whereas Bitung lacks most amenities. With the help of City Academy, the experiences and learnings from Jakarta could be transferred to Bitung. Likewise, collaboration and communication between cities is strengthened. Communication channels have been formed and cities are networking with one another. (see section 4.3.4, 4.8.6)

B. SCIP-GP as a Coordinating Child Project

6. Has the GP established good communication channels with Implementing Agencies/Executing Agencies and local government focal points? If so, how well has the GP been able to adapt and respond to local requests?

   GP has established good communication channels with Implementing Agencies/Executing Agencies and local government focal points. Initially, there were some hurdles in fixing a communication channel. However, GP has been able to adapt to communication resources present in different cities/countries and partners. Coordination have been difficult at times but with regular interactions, strong communication channels have been put in place. It is important to embrace informal communication to get more traction. Changes in focal persons, oftentimes, create friction in communications. (see sections 4.8.3, 4.8.7)

7. How well is UNEP, as the GEF Lead Agency, collaborating with other Agencies involved in the Programme?

   UNEP, as an implementing agency, has been collaborating well with other partners of the program. UNEP takes part in major meetings and discussions related to GP activities and provides valuable input. UNEP also takes part in various GP events to witness the activities and maintain their relevance and effectiveness. As the GEF Lead Agency, UNEP also makes sure the project aligns well with GEF reporting requirements and the project responds well to concerns of human rights and gender equity. It is also important to note here that Virtual Steering Committee Meetings are well attended by all agencies, and a regular agencies coffee chat provides an informal channel of exchange. (see sections 4.1, 4.4, 4.8.2, 4.8.4)

8. What are, if any, the additional benefits and costs of the Coordinating Project being part of a programmatic approach? This should include whether benefits accrued from the project being part of a programme rather than a standalone project.

   GP is a coordinating project responsible for knowledge management, capacity building, and advocacy of child project activities in 9 different countries. GP as a standalone project would not make much sense and would probably fail to serve its purpose. With GP, there is knowledge sharing, skill sharing, awareness building, capacity development at a larger level. GP has enabled learning from other countries as well as helped in gaining different perspectives from projects across the globe. (see section 4.2)

C. SCIP Programme as a Whole

9. To what extent does the SCIP-GP Coordinating Project provide the overall direction and support for programme activities?

   SCIP GP coordinating project has allowed child projects' stakeholders to participate in various regional and global events. SCIP GP provides value addition to child project activities by providing continuous support of capacity building, knowledge management, and advocacy. The project also extends opportunities to meet

and exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences among officials of national and local governments, including relevant experts and mentors of this field. SCIP, via GP, has been able to learn new tools and innovative ideas of integrated urban development which is also sustainable and resilient in approach. (see section 4.2, 4.3)

10. How best can the role of the SCIP-GP project vis-à-vis the SCIP programme be described? To what extent is the SCIP-GP playing a 'coordinating' or 'synergising' role that affects the achievement of the programme's results and what implications does this have for the timeframe and budget of the SCIP-GP project?

    SCIP-GP is also a coordinating project that helps to bind the child projects across different countries. With the help of GP activities, child projects are better prepared to implement their activities. GP provides a platform for conducting various assessments to support child projects, as well as provides new and innovative ideas which are now essential components of any city development endeavour. For example, trainings and capacity building to carry out projects related to integrated urban development, climate change adaptation, nature-based solutions, circular economy, transit-oriented development, etc.

    GP helps to coordinate and bring synergy between the partner cities by providing knowledge building and advocacy support through one channel and one event on many occasions. At the same time, GP also facilitates city level synergy by aligning the development projects as well as various tools and concepts in partner cities around the country. GP is also playing a synergising role to achieve the SCIP's result of achieving evidence based inclusive and integrated plans, achieving low carbon emission, improved land restoration, enhanced financing mechanisms and/or business models for scaling sustainable urban solutions, and sharing of knowledge and good practices. It should, however, be noted that there is a discrepancy of timelines between the implementation of child projects and GP. As a result, GP may not be able to address the needs of all child projects effectively via its activities. Any extension of GP project period will have definite cost implication that needs to be considered. (see sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7)

11. What strengths and weaknesses are evident in the Programme design and what lessons can be drawn at this mid-point stage that could improve future programme designs and/or this programme's implementation and achievements?

    The programme design is good and practical so far. Yet, the design does not appropriately account how long it takes to build relationship and trust with cities officials and beneficiaries. Since GP and child projects (delayed during the inception phase) are not progressing in parallel, the timeline of GP could have been longer in order to remain there till the end of the child projects. This is mainly happening as city level political and bureaucratic hassles are more cumbersome and time taking. (see section 4.2)

    GEF works directly with the national government. However, it coordinates child projects at city levels through IAs and EAs (national and city government). In this case, the coordination with the cities often takes longer than expected time which ultimately slows down the overall progress of GP. Example: In Indonesia, talks about a City Academy have been going on for some time (at least 4-5 months) and in spite the city government's readiness to hold the event, the national government approval is still awaited. This situation of rerouted coordination network has often found causing delay and frustration among the project partners and city level stakeholders. The cities are not free to decide on GP supported activities entirely on their own.

    For all impact programs, GEF has offered a 2:1 incentive to participating countries. Specifically, for every USD 2 million allocated by a country from its own STAR allocations, the GEF has provided an additional USD 1 million from the Sustainable Cities Impact Program reserve. This is a good provision, however, it has also some limitations and drawbacks. Since GP has no direct control on city level participants in their events, it is sometimes difficult to manage both programmatic and logistical issues in complementary manner. For example, on many instances, the event date in confirmed while the participants' arrival and their logistics are not simultaneously confirmed by the child projects (regulator of the fund). (see section 4.2)

    a. Explore the efficacy of the regional approach selected (regional Forum, regional/country coordinator), compared to a global approach.

       Regional setup makes courses more flexible and closer to the ground realities. Regional approach is more economical and logistically easier. It is better to have a regional approach for tailoring GP activities in context of recipient cities and their stakeholders. Cities need national/regional partners to access global knowledge. The regional/country coordinators play the role of a catalyst in bridging the national and global level knowledge gap. In this process, they help in making global offers suitable to national and local context of the country which is more acceptable and grounded. The coordination role of regional and country coordinators is an innovation and value addition compared to previous GEF cycle. (see section 4.3)

b. Explore the efficacy of light touch support to many cities, vs deeper support to select cities.

As a capacity building, knowledge management, and awareness raising platform, GP extends to multiple cities and fosters cross city engagements and knowledge sharing. Yes, it would be better to have continuous support to cities with trainings and capacity buildings in different phases. However, whatever GP is doing right now, in terms of regional and national activities, should continue. Of course, the GP support, at present, do not provide enough capacity to cities to implement the solutions on their own. This should improve. (See section 4.2)

c. Are the Programme indicators appropriate and accurate to measure the impact of the work.

The programme indicators are mostly appropriate and accurate to measure the impact of work. The indicators are tracked after each GP events. However, objective level indicators are difficult to track as the cities cannot fully attribute GHG emissions reduction and improved biodiversity management and sustainable use of land to GP. Likewise, qualitative indicators would make more sense in assessing some of the project's impacts than quantitative indicators in numbers. (see section 4.2, 4.6.1, 4.8.4)

12. Has the SCIP-GP Advocacy work and the programme in general contributed to promote the use of integrated approaches to urban development?

GP advocacy has added significant impetus to integrated urban development. Investment related programmes of GP helps to connect financial and banking institutions with city governments and other relevant stakeholders. GP support through various activities like national-local dialogues, multi-level government dialogues, and participation in COP, Economic Forums, etc are contributing to promotion of integrated urban development. GP activities are also successful in bringing multiple level of stakeholders together in implementing a more consultative and inclusive city level development endeavours. In addition, GP has also been able to give voice to people (poor and marginalized communities) who would otherwise never have been brought to spotlight. (see section 4.8.6)

13. To what extent does the Programme TOC outline synergies the programme intends to tap to achieve the intended systemic change, and the trade-offs involved in key choices made in programme design?

The TOC aligns programme activities, outputs, and outcomes with the overarching objectives of cities reducing GHG emissions, cities avoiding land degradation and biodiversity loss, and improving resilience to climate change. The TOC also recognizes the complexity and non-linearity of this process driven by various drivers and supported by assumptions. (see sections 3, 4.3.1)

14. To what extent are the levels of expenditure and rates of technical progress of each of the Child Projects under the Programme appropriate to: a) the mid-point of the Programme and b) the intended timeframes of the Child Projects and the Programme?

The levels of expenditure and rates of technical progress of each project under the programme has not been assessed, as it was outside the scope of this evaluation. Also, GP does not have a say over disbursement of child project budgets. However, if we look at GP itself, the level of expenditure and rates of technical progress seems appropriate. The expenditure has not exceeded 40% of total budget (by June 2023) and progress of achievement of outputs have been around 65% (by December 2023). Assuming that most of the initial hurdles related to projects implementation are managed, this shows that the project will gain further momentum and be able to complete on time and within budget. (see sections 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.4)

15. In what ways, and to what extent, are all the Child Projects contributing to the Programme's objectives?

SCIP's objective is "Multiple global environmental benefits from decarbonization, improving biodiversity conservation and reducing land degradation are achieved by a) promoting innovative business models for integrated solutions and investments at city level, and b) strengthening the global platform for knowledge exchange and learning by cities on integrated urban sustainability planning and investments." Child projects are aimed at providing technical assistance, grants, and investment opportunities to child project countries to carry out projects that aim to achieve the above objective. On the other hand, GP helps in this direction by implementing activities for capacity building, knowledge management, advocacy, and creating a repository of knowledge for cities to carry forward.

a. What explains the significant differences in progress of each child Project.

Following is our observation based on our limited discussion with a number of child project stakeholders:

The time it takes for the proposed project to be adopted and approved for implementation by the executing agencies (national governments as well as cities) vary from one country to another. Several political, bureaucratic reasons come into play during this process of approval. Elections play a major role in meeting implementation and executing timelines. As a result, some child projects are mid-way while some are just beginning.

b. Does the SCIP-GP have the means to influence child projects?

Child projects are the key recipients of the GP activities as planned and envisioned. Besides, child projects receive various suggestions from GP. However, SCIP-GP does not have the governance role to influence the child projects directly. Nevertheless, with the help of ISUDAs, and capacity building, knowledge management, and advocacies, GP are advising and supporting child projects in many ways. Cities are directly benefiting from the knowledge and concepts shared through GP activities which they are considering to integrate into their city level plans and programs, including in their ongoing individual projects. It is expected that new projects planned by the city will incorporate many of the ideas and concepts shared by GP through its multiple events.

16. How well are the Child Projects' M&E designs aligned with that of the Programme? How are the M&E arrangements of the Child Projects contributing to the programme level M&E and results reporting and are the monitoring arrangements generating relevant and high-quality information?

GP is aware about what child projects are offering and aligns its activities accordingly. There are coordination groups in region and countries that help in communication between GP and child projects. Child projects choose at least one of 11 indicators of SCIP and report on it. Monitoring of child projects, however, is not the responsibility of SCIP GP.

Table 5-2: Project Performance Ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance	The project has high level of strategic relevance	**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) Strategic Priorities	The project aligns with the UNEP's medium-term strategy and influences some core indicators of GEF (donor) focal area of Climate Change Mitigation. The project also aligns well with the strategic priorities of countries, regions and the globe.	HS
2. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	There is complementarity with existing intervention with the support of partnership engagement group. The priorities and concepts of GP are also taken well by child projects.	HS
Quality of Project Design	The design of the project emphasizes on collaboration between agencies for achieving project objectives. Key strengths of the project include providing added value to the child projects through advocacy, capacity building and knowledge management at local and regional level. Issues of discrepancy in timelines of child projects and GP, limited awareness about existence of GP entity, and inability of project indicators to properly reflect the impact are present. The design does not sufficiently elaborate on process of exit strategy and achieving sustainability.	**MS**
Effectiveness	The regional concept of GP makes it efficient economically and logistically. The global offers make good use of regional concept and add value to city level authorities and their beneficiaries.	**S**
1. Theory of Change	There is a good alignment between project activities and expected outcomes.	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
2. Availability of outputs	Majority of outputs and milestones are consistent with targeted goals. Few selected GP outputs need updating like ISUDAs.	S
3. Progress towards project outcomes	The progress varies across regions due to various reasons like bureaucratic challenges and covid. Due to the delay in launch of child projects, outcome level information is not yet apparent at this stage of the project. However, the symptoms are positive as cites are already considering GP support and heading towards institutionalizing some of the concepts they are finding appropriate to their local context.	S
4. Likelihood of impact	The impact of GP activities is already making mark, with some countries showing signs of replication and scaling of their activities. GP introduced concepts are considered new, innovative, and timely in view of rapid urbanization and growing climate change concerns. The trend of replication and scale-up of the concept is expected to grow.	L
5. Adaptive management	There is a good level of adaptation while implementing GP activities. For example, the IA and EA of child projects are invited to codesign the events to tailor the activities according to the needs of cities. The program also adapted well with the needs of pandemic to do events online and continues virtual events with good participation. There are some opportunities that are not well tapped by GP in support of implementing its activities.	S
Financial Management		**HS**
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's Policies and Procedures	The project reporting and management aligns well with UNEP's and GEF's policies and procedures with the continued supports from the partners. The meetings for financial discussions are done regularly and there is a good communication system in place.	HS
2. Completeness of Financial Information	The reporting process, although not straightforward, is handled well by the project partners. A change in financial reporting format from output level reporting to component level reporting has eased the reporting process. Any technical and financial disconnects are addressed with proper communication.	HS
Efficiency	The project provides good value for the money spent. GP helps to bring co-financing opportunities from various organizations that help cities. There is, however, a need to connect with more global organizations (including academic and research institutions) for a wider reach.	**HS**
Monitoring and Reporting		**HS**
1. Monitoring of project implementation	Monitoring and evaluation are parts of the project itself. Project indicators are tracked well after each event, and feedbacks are taken from participants in phases. Regular meetings and follow-ups with relevant stakeholders take place to keep the project progress on track.	HS
2. Project reporting	The reporting is in line with GEF's requirements. Project implementation reports, annual reports, financial reports are prepared and published on time.	HS
Exit Strategy and Sustainability	There is no concrete exit strategy in place. While the project partners and cities are willing to continue GP activities, funding can become the limiting factor.	**MS**
Factors Affecting Performance		**S**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
1. Project inception	Project Inception time was adequately utilized to plan the program well. While there were some confusions in the beginning, a retreat in Washington helped to bring every partner on the same page.	HS
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Project management and supervision from UNEP as well as from partners is excellent. The teams have been able to address the needs of changing developmental landscapes and to maintain relevance of the project.	HS
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	GP partners work in synchronized manner. However, GP could engage more with all the stakeholders identified by the ProDoc. Cites have not always been able to send the best candidates to participate in GP activities.	S
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	While the ProDoc did a commendable job of preparing a gender action plan, GP implementation has not been able to live up to the expectations due to various socio-political reasons.	S
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The project was identified as low risk project by environment, social and economic review note. Safeguards are regularly monitored in the PIRs. Further consideration to social and environmental impacts of GP events should be made.	S
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	GP has created many opportunities for the cities and cities are included in discussions of GP activities. With the help of GP, cities are found inclined to integrate concepts of integrated urban development, reducing GHG emissions, preventing biodiversity degradation, and improving resilience against climate change impacts.	S
7. Communication and public awareness	The sharing of knowledge among GP partners is limited. Though public awareness is not directly a part of the project, GP website, blogs, and social media posts have increased GP visibility and impact. GP advocates for integrated and sustainable urban development in many international forums.	S
Overall Project Performance Rating		**S**

5.2 Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	GP regional/country coordinators emphasize considering informal channels of communication (like WhatsApp) and having more than one focal person to prevent major break-down in communication.
Context/comment:	Not all cities and city officials have time to respond to GP coordinators' requests via email or other formal channels. Having informal channels of communication (but later formalizing with a formal mode of communication) helps built rapport faster and easier. At the same time, to avoid disruption of the flow of GP activities due to change in a focal person, it is strongly advised to have more than one focal person in cities.

Lesson Learned #2:	The success also depends on how long the participants (city officials) remain engaged with GP ideas and concepts, and strive for their integration in their city level plans and programs.
Context/comment:	The country/regional coordinators have experienced that when participants of GP activities continue their communication with GP coordinators as well as with fellow participants, they learn more and this also keeps the conversation about global agendas alive. Cities seek

	out help for various issues they face that GP or its partners can provide assistance with, while also sharing their knowledge with other cities.

Lesson Learned #3:	It is important for the finance and admin team to participate in GP activities and hence remain on the same page with programmatic team.
Context/comment:	There are various instances where the financial and admin team may not understand well, the project and the impact it has. It is important for the finance and admin team to participate in GP activities so that the team better understands the project activities including practicalities and under what circumstances they are delivered. This also helps to build good rapport and facilitates appropriate reporting.

Lesson Learned #4:	Financial reporting is simplified and is timely, if done component wise when many partners are involved.
Context/comment:	Output/Outcome wise reporting becomes tedious when many partners are involved across multiple regions and countries. Outcome level reporting had slowed down the financial reporting process, so GP partners switched to component level reporting. The latter option is working well with no delays in reporting.

Lesson Learned #5:	Sustainability of GP activities demands appropriate institution, trained resource persons and some seed grant to roll-out the activities for first few years.
Context/comment:	In the absence of clear policy on exit strategy, it is difficult to ensure sustainability of GP activities beyond the project cycle. It is always helpful if GP integrate its modules to any relevant partner institution and train them and also prepare few resource persons well before the end of the project. To pay further impetus to sustainability, it is recommended to leave some seed money with the institution to sustain the GP activities till it starts rolling on its own.

Lesson Learned #6:	Regional events like the regional Forums should be conducted in a neutral location that is not influenced by geopolitical environment.
Context/comment:	In Asia Forum 2023, China could not participate due to visa issues. It would have been appropriate to conduct such event at a neutral location like Singapore or Malaysia. It is unfortunate, when one of the key partner countries is unable to participate in the major GP event like Asia Forum. At the same time, it should be prioritized to conduct regional scale in-person activities in China. These need not be event based activities. Rather, a well planned city exchange program that could be highlighted as a success story of GP in bringing countries together.

Lesson Learned #7:	Relationship building with countries/cities take time and cities respond well to the project when there is a push from the national government.
Context/comment:	The project design should be able to recognize that building trust and rapport with countries and cities take time. The timeline of the whole project is affected by the time it takes to build these relationships. This is clearly seen in the mismatch of timelines between various child projects and GP. Some child projects are mid-way while some are just starting. Similarly, cities may not always take the requests of platform seriously and prioritize GP activities. A gentle nudge from the national government can be useful in such circumstances. It is therefore, crucial to have a good rapport with the central governments to help project progress.

Lesson Learned #8:	Cities may not always prioritize GP activities.

Context/comment:	The financial support that GEF provides via GP is quite small compared to many support cities receive regularly. This is particularly true for larger cities that already have some good technical and financial capacity. Therefore, one cannot always expect cities to respond to GP requests on time or prioritize GP activities.

Lesson Learned #9:	Clear reporting lines and regional focus helps to make the project structure simple despite inherent complexity of the work streams.
Context/comment:	There are many local, regional, and global stakeholders with varied expertise and interests in GP. Different stakeholders have different strengths and weaknesses, adding to complexity of the GP partnership. Nevertheless, a clear reporting format has helped to make matters simple and transparent. At the same time, conducting activities at regional scales, as opposed to a global scale has improved clarity about the project activities because they could be better tailored to the contexts and needs of the region.

5.3 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	Initiate child project related negotiations much before the signing of the global platform program. This will help to complete the homework beforehand and hence launch the child projects soon after the global project is initiated. This situation will also allow both GP and child progress to make progress in parallel.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Make the next cycle of GEF countries aware of the GEF process and GP activities beforehand so that they can get effective benefit from GP and avoid delays in implementation of child projects. GEF countries/cities should be made aware of the benefits they can get from GP activities. This helps in overall success of the GEF cycle by: • Helping the child projects to be more aligned with GEF project's requirements. • Preventing mismatch of implementation timeline of GP and child projects. If child projects start years later than GP, its knowledge and capacity building products may need to be updated. • Encouraging countries/cities to develop more meaningful interaction with GP activities
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP / World Bank
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

283. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Sections 4.2, 4.3.3

Recommendation #2:	As an alternative to Recommendation 1, increase the timeline of GP for the next GEF cycle. The total project period of GP should be more than child projects if they are starting together.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Based on the experience of GEF7 project cycle, GP should have a longer timeline than of the child projects. This way, it will allow GP to provide continued assistance to child projects even they close late.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project

Responsibility:	UNEP / GEF
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12-24 months

284. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.2, 4.3.5, 4.7

Recommendation #3:	Consider more flexibility in offers made by GP (selection and delivery of modules) to make them more suitable and contextual to city level local needs and realities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Some of the GP modules can be too technical or too general. Non-contextual GP offers do not improve the knowledge level and capacity of the beneficiaries.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP/Partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12-18 months

285. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Sections 4.2, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.5, 4.8.6

Recommendation #4:	GP should plan and implement more city-based activities and encourage matching funds from cities to enhance local engagement, secure local ownership and also address resource constraints.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	There is a limit to number and quality of city level activities offered by GP. Prioritizing more city-based activities and encouraging cities to allocate matching funds from their side. This will help: • To implement a greater number of GP activities in partner cities • To improve contextual relevance of the GP activities • To foster local engagement and improve ownership of the project • To help ensure sustainability and continuity of GP offers • To ensure the actual beneficiaries (cities) are well benefitted from GP activities
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12-18 months

286. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Sections 4.1.2, 4.3.4, 4.8.3, 4.8.6

Recommendation #5:	Select appropriate IA, EA, private institutions or universities to host the GP activities (modules) and sustain it in the long run. Provide seed money (with matching funds from institutions) and Training of Trainers (ToT) to develop necessary resource persons if necessary.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	There is no concrete exit strategy in place for GP. With the help of this recommendation, GP can have a smooth exit. At the same time, there can be better scaling and dissemination of GP activities. GEF could provide seed money to IA, EA or any other relevant institution (with appropriate capacity) to retain and continue offering GP activities in

	cities. The terms for providing seed money could include matching funds by the cities or retaining organizations themselves.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP / GEF
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12-24 months

287. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Sections 4.7, 4.8.6

Recommendation #6:	Include more numbers of decision-makers/city-leaders in GP activities in order to intensify the quality and ownership of the intervention.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	GP activities have been able to include technical city officials quite well. When it comes to engaging political leaders like the mayors and ministers, who are key decision makers, there is a need for improvement. This will help to improve ownership and drivenness of the project, prevent differences during execution of activities, increase likelihood of impact, enhance prospect of institutionalization, and encourage sustainability of the project activities.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

288. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.1.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8.3, 4.8.6

Recommendation #7:	Use the monitoring system to check for assessments becoming outdated.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Some GP assessments like ISUDAs which were done much earlier than beginning of child projects become outdated by the time child projects begin. There is an important need to update these.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project and Partners
Responsibility:	UNEP and GEF partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

289. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Sections 4.2, 4.3.5, 4.5, 4.6

Recommendation #8:	Involve and engage more cities (other than GEF 6, GEF 7 cities) with priority to secondary cities and more global organizations (like GFDRR, IFC, IDB, EBRD, including academic and research institutions etc) in UrbanShift GP activities. Request for more funding if required.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While GP has been involving cities outside of GEF 6 and GEF 7, as well as partnering with various local, regional, and global organizations (through Partnership Engagement Group), there is a need to expand the scope of involvement in order: • To improve effectiveness of the project by scaling-up the impact.

	• To add to knowledge base and sustainability of the project by expanding the network of cities and partners • To diversify perspectives, experiences, funding opportunities, and resources
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project and Partners
Responsibility:	UNEP, GEF and GEF partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

290. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Sections 4.1.2, 4.2, 4.3.5, 4.5, 4.8.4

Recommendation #9:	Provide GP with funds for city officials to participate in GP activities in order to ensure participation of people with decision making authority.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	At present, GP does not have direct access to the funds for city officials to participate in GP activities. It is controlled by the EA of child projects. Providing GP with the funds (at least partially) would save time in logistical activities, allow more meaningful participation, prevent issues like officials not getting visa/documents ready or not booking flight/accommodations on time. GP is better positioned to coordinate these things. EA of child projects are more concerned about the child projects than prioritizing support to GP activities.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP / GEF
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

291. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.2, 4.4, 4.8.2

Recommendation #10:	Plan GP activities more frequently at city levels with provision of certification against participation.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Capacity building activities should be implemented more frequently at city levels to build capacity of local stakeholders to implement projects aimed at attaining reduction of GHG emissions, prevention of land degradation, and improved resilience against climate change impacts and so on. Certificate should be provided to encourage participants and improve authenticity of the courses. GP should motivate partner municipalities to implement such events on cost-sharing basis. In the long run, the cities may plan such activities on their own.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

292. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.1.1, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8.3, 4.8.6, 4.8.7

Recommendation #11:	Include qualitative indicators to monitor gender equality and responsiveness to human rights. Some examples of qualitative indicators are : a) Personal accounts from participants on the inclusiveness and accessibility of the activities, particularly for marginalized or vulnerable groups b) Testimonials and follow-up stories from participants on how the knowledge and skills gained from the GP activities have empowered them to address human rights issues in their communities or work c) Qualitative feedback from participants on how well the activities respect and incorporate diverse cultural backgrounds and human rights principles d) Feedback from women participants on the availability and quality of mentorship and networking opportunities during GP activities/deliverables.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Gender equality and responsiveness to human rights are not well represented by numerical values. While GP collects disaggregated data of participants of each event, the actual effectiveness of GP activities in responding to gender needs is not reflected by this alone. Some other means may also be needed to be devised to increase participation of women in GP activities
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

293. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.6, 4.8.4

Recommendation #12:	Add notes about how the objective level indicators are being tracked in the PIR.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	PIR FY 2023 mentions that work on impact estimates for objective level indicators are to be advanced during the next PIR reporting period. However, it does not mention how they are being tracked.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP/WRI
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

294. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.1, 4.6

Recommendation #13:	Strengthen internal knowledge sharing among partners,
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While GP partners have been effective in delivering their activities and building capacity of beneficiaies, there is a lack of knowledge sharing among the GP partners. There is no effective mechanism for idea sharing and knowledge sharing among ICLEI, C40 and WRI, except partially in regional forums.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

295. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section 4.8.3, 4.8.7

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS ON DRAFT REPORT

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
Page 16 para 47	Can you please clarify what is meant by "Request for more funding if required"? Is the recommendation that the GP would have a larger allocation to start with? The possibility to request more funding from GEFSEC after the project has been approved would not be practically feasible, considering GEF processes and funding allocation.	Yes, the recommendation is to have a good amount of funding to engage more cities and organizations in GP activities. Ideally, the arrangement should also allow for requesting additional funding. This could also be a guidance for next phase of GEF project.
Para 107	"At GP level, there is a limitation of resources". It is unclear if this is an evaluation finding or view of the project team. The evaluator may note that this is one of the largest grant based cities program in the world with a significant allocation for global coordination and knowledge work. So, it would be useful to clarify what is meant by limitation and is the limitation more on the project design and delivery rather than the funding amount. In the same vein, the evaluation could highlight more findings on the GP's coordination function with various child projects. For example- there were some significant challenges faced in coordinating with child projects in China and Indonesia. It would be useful to learn from the evaluation what were the underlying drivers and what lessons are there for the GEF and its partners going forward. Also, it would be useful to know if the GP coordinated with the child projects on program level aggregation and reporting of results and GEBs. Were there barriers in carrying this out and if it was done where was it reported?	Thank you for bringing this to attention. We have revised the particular paragraph and addressed your concerns. There were some coordination issues, which are reflected in our list of recommendations. The idea of regional and country level coordinators should be carried forward in the next cycle as their catalytic roles were found valuable in linking different layers of support and ensuring a more coordinated and synchronized model of delivery.
121	" Similarly, GP workshops might not provide sufficient capacity or skills for city officials to effectively implement the solutions in their own context. It would have been better to offer more tailored courses spanning over a little longer duration and providing certification, thereby enhancing participants' skills and expertise. "	While the evaluation did not particularly delve into the investigation of such adaptive management to address this gap, recommendations 4, 5, 6, and 10 are relevant to this as they provide some reflection on this issue.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
	This is a very important finding. It would be useful to know if the evaluator found any adaptive management by the GP team to address this gap.	
	Co-financing: some useful information is added on how the project was able to leverage financing from other sources e.g. GCOM for Marrakesh academy. Is there any finding on how co-financing from core partners WRI, C40 and ICLEI helped in achieving the project's outcomes?	Table 4-2 (page 47) shows the progress towards achievements of outcomes. The effectiveness of the project is also evaluated in section 4.5. Efficiency (page 56). The evaluation did not look at co-financing from core partners separately.
Para 11.	'GP demonstrates strong alignment with various national, regional, and global priorities, including those outlined by UNEP and donor agencies'. Give at least 2-3 countries and highlight their priorities which are aligned to GP. The same could be done on regional priorities.	Added the following to summary text. More added to para 91. "These priorities center around supporting climate goals through multisector coalition that encourage climate change action across cities, states, and the private sector."
18	'GP also provides opportunities to raise funds by accessing climate and green finance and by involving private sectors in developing public goods and services.' Has any city accessed these funds? If yes, provide this information.	This is the summary text. There are examples throughout the document. For instance: Para 138….in Kigali, GP is helping to investigate the possibility of using water pumping trucks to limit flooding risks during high rainfall events. Para 153……, the platform's significance in promoting knowledge, tools and resources to access and engage with finances and financial institutions (private or public) for urban infrastructure and services is demonstrated by the technical support given to initiatives like the "Mobility Plan for the Future" in

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
		Buenos Aires and possible partnerships for Kigali's "Resilient Food Systems" Para 203….GP activities help bring various co-financing opportunities for cities. For instance, in Africa, GP has been able to tap into the resources, research and experts of Bloomberg Joint Programme, Global Covenant of Mayors, Transformation Urban Mobility, etc. Non-GP partner, Global Covenant of Mayors, delivered part of the City Academy in Marrakech, focusing on the opportunity for cities to tap into the $150 million Gap Fund. These reflect the capacity of the project to leverage efforts of partners and possible champions towards achievement of GP outcomes, impacts, and sustainability.
91	'The ProDoc mentions that GP project aligns and supports national priorities through city-specific child projects in each country: Argentina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone…' Outline the national priorities referred to here, maybe in Table format and show the national blueprints as well.	Added to the paragraph: ……For instance, GP aligns well with Argentina's focus on supporting climate goals and enhancing integrated urban planning, whereby the country connects with local and national stakeholders to drive climate action by participating with Alliances for Climate Action (ACA). Likewise, in Rwanda, GP helps incorporate climate change into urban strategies, aligning with the country's Vision 2050 and national climate adaptation goals. Similarly, in India, GP supports cities in integrating climate action into urban policies, aligning with India's Smart Cities Mission and its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
92	'For example, there was a coup attempt in Sierra Leone in 2023' This was a two-day event and its impact on project progress is close to zero. Hence this can be omitted.	We suggest that this is not removed. Such incidences can have long lasting effects on the operationalization of GP activities on the ground. This is also to alert to take into consideration such events as risk to project implementation.
Sec 4.3	On effectiveness, it would be good to hear the views of mayors and city leaders, one or two direct quotes would suffice.	Thank you for your suggestion. We have avoided providing direct quotes. However, we have added text to para 163 for GP in India and Latin America.
163	Mention the impact of the NBS training on the Freetown Tree Planning Campaign supported by the RUSLP.	Added text re. GP in Africa (information derived from UrbanShift Annual Report 2021-22):
Para. 183	The scope of the China project is not changed. So far, we are not preparing for extension.	Thank you for your input. This is just a recommendation for consideration.
Para 133	"Examples: in Indonesia (to some extent, in India as well), the light touch city assessment assessed 5 cities at once and was conducted much earlier than the beginning of the Child Project. There is a need to update the assessment to reflect the present needs and challenges" Considering the differences in the GP timeline and the start of child projects, it might be essential to outline the optimal timing for performing ISUDAs and their updates. This could include an example of ISUDAs carried out at the right time for successful and targeted GP offers. "Likewise, timeline mismatches have resulted in difficulty while tailoring GP activities to the needs of cities. For example, 3 out of 5 City Labs conducted so far were done to support child projects. The remaining 2 were disconnected with child projects because the labs occurred much earlier than implementation of child projects in cities. The cities and national governments, nevertheless, benefitted from these disconnected city labs."	The paragraph is revised, and the concern has been reflected.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
	To show the importance of aligned implementation timeline between GP and child projects, it may be useful to highlight the major difference/advantages in outcomes of City Labs that are connected to child projects as opposed to those that aren't.	
Para 163 – GP in Indonesia	"BAPPENAS can integrate the GP activities and knowledge into the national level and can provide access to 100s of cities, advancing the prospects of replication and scalability of the concepts. National capacity is genuinely there to replicate GP activities in the long run. Cities also have local development planning unit that are already doing activities similar to GP." It would be useful to mention the specific GP activities and knowledge being replicated here. It would help demonstrate how GP activities complement ongoing efforts rather than duplicating or overlapping them.	Based on our observation, at this stage, we can only discuss the prospect and capacity of replicating GP activities. The actual replication is yet to begin in the partner country.
Para 166	"Example: The City Academy in India during the UrbanShift Asia Forum 2023 on Sustainable Development included discussion on Biodiversity Development. Post event, the national government of Indonesia discussed with its 5 cities about sustainable development and about integrating it into the city development plan. This way the GP events provided some new ideas for consideration and added value to the participating cities." In addition to fostering knowledge sharing among Indonesian cities within the country, GP also enhances value by facilitating exchanges with cities in other countries to explore innovation and new ideas.	Thank you for your input. The text is added to para 166.
Para 220	"It is always helpful if GP integrates its modules to any relevant partner institution (like NIUA in India, BAPPENAS in Indonesia, relevant universities and research institutions, private consulting firms) and train them and also prepare few resource persons (by providing TOT to local experts) well before the end of the project." It's also necessary to ensure that the integration of GP modules is tailored to the specific needs of child projects and demand based.	Thank you for your concern. This is reflected in paragraph 147, 174, and 219.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
Page 63 – 4.8.4 Responsiveness to HR and Gender Equality	CCM-U: The analysis seems very focused on gender parity. However, our gender approach goes beyond representation, and this could be further developed, this could likely lead to an upgrade of the rating. UrbanShift promotes gender and vulnerable groups sensitive urban planning by different means: - It has organized one webinar focused on gender, one on youth, one on inclusivity. - All annual reports have a section highlighting gender. - Most of the trainings do have a section on gender or inclusivity. - Our resource library continuously add Gender focused reports.	Thank you for pointing these facts. We understand these are valuable contributions for gender sensitive and inclusive integrated urban development. These points have been added in paragraph 245. We have reconsidered the ratings and hence revised as appropriate.
Page 65 – 263 & 264	CCM-U: We do have a WRI sharepoint where all documents are filed and accessible to all partners.	Here, sharing does not mean sharing files. It is about learning and sharing among partners.
Page 74 – Lesson learned 6	CCM-U: We considered the neutral place for future regional events and not organizing one in China who could create visa issues for other countries. Some colleagues pointed out that Chinese cities will be negatively affected by not receiving the same in-person, on the ground activities than Indian and Indonesian cities. How would the evaluator react to this important point?	That's an important point! Not having an in-person regional event in China would likely affect the impact on Chinese cities in a negative manner. One solution could be to organize an impactful regional city exchange program that could be highlighted as a success story of GP in bringing countries together.
Page 75 - Recommendation #1:	CCM-U: UNEP is considered responsible of this, but UNEP is only implementing country proejcts in kenya and Sri Lanka. Wouldn't this recommendation apply to the Programme lead agency, thus the WB for GEF-8?	Thank you for pointing this out. Because this evaluation looks at the SCIP GP of GEF 7 cycle, we thought it best to put UNEP on the spot so that it may pass on the message to World Bank or any other agency for the next cycle(s). World Bank has been added as a responsible institution.
Page 76 - Recommendation #3:	CCM-U: Does this apply to the 8 online training modules, or City Academies modules?	Both. Based on the interactions with city beneficiaries in India, there is a need for more contextualization of the delivered modules. It is, of course, understandable that contextualization of online training modules might be difficult in paucity of resources for curating region/country specific examples.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
Page 76 - Recommendation #12:	CCM-U: We make efforts to improve gender parity but also promote gender mainstreaming (as per comment on gender rating above). We will welcome any concrete example of how to apply this recommendation.	Suggestions acknowledged and relevant recommendation revised.

ANNEX II. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

People consulted during the evaluation

Agency	Name	M / F	Role	Location Based	Platform	
Core Team						
C40 (EA)	Emily White	F	C40 City-Business Climate Alliance/UrbanShift Manager	London, UK	In-Person LAF (Latin America Forum)	
	Zoe Fitzgerald	F	C40 City Business Engagement Head		In-Person LAF	
ICLEI (EA)	Emani Kumar	M	Executive Director - ICLEI South Asia	New Delhi, India	In-Person India	
	Karishma Asarpota	F	ICLEI Coordination Support	India	In-person LAF	
UNEP CCM Unit (IA)	Jiya Dhillon	F	Junior Consultant	Paris, France	Online	J M
	Tania Daccarett	F	Project Specialist	France	Online + In-person LAF	
	Sharon Gil	F	Cities project officer - Technical focal point	Paris, France	In-person LAF	
WRI (EA)	Diana Chavez Acosta	F	UrbanShift Finance and Admin	Washington DC, US	In-person LAF	
	John-Rob Pool	M	UrbanShift Project Manager	London, UK	Online - JM	
	Mariana Orloff	F	UrbanShift Senior Project Manager	Washington DC, US		
	Pablo Lazo	M	UrbanShift Project Director	Mexico	In-person LAF	
Regional/Country Coordinators						
C40	Jessy Appavoo	F	UrbanShift Africa Regional Coordinator	South Africa	Online	
ICLEI	Avantika Arjuna	F	UrbanShift India Coordinator	New Delhi, India	Online + In-person India	
	Ji Xu	M	UrbanShift China Coordinator	China	Online	
	Medhi Putra	M	UrbanShift Indonesia Coordinator	Indonesia	Online	
WRI	Bruno Incau	M	UrbanShift Latin America Regional Coordinator	Brazil	Online	
GEF						
GEF Sec	Aloke Barnwal	M	Sr. Climate Change Specialist, Programs Unit; Coordinator - Sustainable Cities Impact Program	Washington DC, US	In person LAF	
Executing Agencies (EA) of Country Child Projects						
EA – Brazil / GOB (MoSTIC)	Cibele Assmamm	F	Urbanist of Municipality of Florianopolis	Brazil	In person LAF	
	Marcela Aboim	F	Project Director at MoSTIC	Brazil	In person LAF	
EA – Costa Rica	Rosario Siles Fernandez	F	Governer of Alajuelita county in San Jose	Costa Rica	In person LAF	
	Maribel Gomez	F	Leader from Vulnerable community in Alajuelita county in San Jose	Costa Rica	In person LAF	
EA - India (NIUA,	Sarika Chakravarty	F	NIUA India - Team Lead, UrbanShift Country Project	India	In-person India GD	

Agency	Name	M / F	Role	Location Based	Platform
PMC, SMC)	Varsha Singh	F	NIUA UrbanShift India Team Members	India	
	Pawan Sharma	M	NIUA UrbanShift India Team Members	India	
	Manas Kulkarni	M	NIUA UrbanShift India City Project Coordinator (Pune)	India	In-person India
	Ashish Arun Sakat	M	NIUA UrbanShift India City Project Coordinator (Surat)	India	In-person India
	Dhvani Trivedi	F	NIUA UrbanShift India Urban Designer (Surat)		GD
	Sahebrao Dandge	M	Superintendent Engineer, Road Dept, PMC	Pune, India	In-person India
	Mangesh Dighe	M	Environment Engineer, PMC	Pune, India	In-person India
	Yogesh Malli	M	Electrical Engineer, PMC	Pune, India	In-person India
	Sanjay Dharav	M	Executive Engineer, Road Dept, PMC	Pune, India	In-person India
	Nikhil Mijar	M	Transport Planner, Road Dept, PMC	Pune, India	In-person India
	Sudhir Prakash Sutar	M	Urban Planner, UrbanShift Country Project in Pune	Pune, India	In-person India
	Ketan Desai	M	Executive Engineer, SMC	Surat, India	In-person India
	Ravi Revar	M	Assistant Engineer, SMC	Surat, India	In-person India
	Priteish Patel	M	Deputy Accountant, SMC	Surat, India	In-person India
	Abhishek Barot	M	Assistant Engineer, SMC	Surat, India	In-person India
Implementing Agencies (IA) of Country Child Projects					
ADB - India	Arunkumar S. Abraham	M	India - ADB Task Manager	Manila, Philippines	Online
	Sourav Majumder	M	ADB India Mission	New Delhi, India	In-person India GD
	Pradeep Tharakan	M	ADB India Mission	New Delhi, India	
UNEP - LAC	Paula Cobas	F	UNEP CCM LAC Argentina	Argentina	In-person LAF GD
UNEP – LAC	Luiza Schmidt	F	UNEP CCM LAC Brazil	Brazil	
UNEP – CCM India	Manoj Kumar Muthumanickam	M	UNEP - CCM Unit India	New Delhi, India	Online + In-person India JM
UNEP – CCM South Asia	Sudhir Sharma	M	Asia - CCM Unit - UNEP Task Manager	Bangkok, Thailand	Online
UNDP-Costa Rica	Juan Aquino	M	UNDP Costa Rica Representative	Costa Rica	In-person LAF
JM- Joint Meeting, GD – Group Discussion					

ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

- SCIP – GP 10452 Endorsement Package
- SCIP – 10391 PFD (Program Framework Document and Child Projects Concept Notes)
- Progress Monitoring
  - 10452 SCIP- Global PIR (Project Implementation Report) 2021
  - 10452 SCIP- Global PIR 2022
  - 10452 SCIP- Global PIR 2023
  - 10452_SCIP_Global_HYPR2020S2
  - 10452_SCIP_Global_HYPR2021S2
  - 10452_SCIP_Global_HYPR2022S2
  - UrbanShift_July-Dec 2023_HYPR
  - UrbanShift – Annual Report 2021-22
  - UrbanShift – Annual Report 2022-23
- SCM – Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
- Child Project Documents (CEO Endorsement and PIRs)
  - 10465 Brazil
  - 10466 Argentina
  - 10467 Costa Rica
  - 10484 India
  - 10486 Morocco
  - 10494 Indonesia
  - 10530 Rwanda
  - 10768 Sierra Leone
  - 10822 China
- 10452 SCIP GP ToR for MTE
- MTE Support Tools
  - 00a_UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions
  - 00c_MTE Documents needed for Mid Term Evaluations
  - 00d MTE Main MTE Report_Template
  - 01_ TOR Mid Term Evaluation_All Funders
  - Annex 1 from the Terms of Reference:
  - 02_MTE Evaluation Criteria Ratings Table
  - 03_MTE Criterion Rating Descriptions_Matrix
  - Annex 2 from the Terms of Reference:
  - 04_MTE Inception Report_Guidance Note
  - (Inception Report is 1st deliverable)
  - 08_MTE Evaluation Methodology_Guidance Note
  - 06_MTE TOC Reformulation Justification_Template
  - 15_MTE Evaluation Framework Questions_SUGGESTIONS
  - 07_MTE Stakeholder Analysis_Guidance_Note
  - 09_MTE Addressing Gender_Guidance Note
  - 10_MTE Safeguards Assessment_Template
  - Annex 3 from the Terms of Reference:
  - 05_MTE Main Evaluation Report_Guidance Note
  - 00d_MTE Main MTE Report_Template FOR USE BY CONSULTANT

  - (Complete Draft Main Report is 2nd deliverable)
  - 11_MTE Use of Theory of Change in Evaluations_Guidance Note
  - 12_MTE_Financial Tables
  - 13_MTE_Recommendations Quality_Guidance Note
  - 13a_MTE Presenting Recs and LL_Template
  - 14_MTE Recommendation Impl Plan_Template
- Financial Documents
  - Audit
  - Cash
  - Co-Finance
  - Expenditure
- Legal Documents
- Project Design Document
- EN-GEF-E-62-Evaluation Guideline
- UNEP Strategies: MTS 2018-2021
- SCIP Child Project Status Table
- 10452 and List of Projects
- GEF Priorities and Indicators
- GEF Independent Evaluation Office Guidelines for Conducting Program Evaluation (2023)
- Bali Strategies
- South-South Corporation
- The CBCA City-Business Partnership Maturity Model

ANNEX IV. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name Suman Kumar Karna

Profession	Urban Governance and DRR Specialist
Nationality	Nepali
Country experience	Europe: Switzerland Africa: Sudan, Egypt Americas: Brazil Asia and Pacific: Nepal, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Fiji, Tonga, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria Oceania: Australia
Education	Ph.D. in Decentralized Urban Development Planning and Management 2000-04, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia Masters in Urban Development Planning & Environmental Management 1996-97, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand Bachelor in Planning 1990-94, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, India

Short biography

Dr. Suman Kr. Karna is a well-trained Urban and Environmental Governance and DRR and Climate Change Specialist having received his PhD degree from the University of Melbourne, Australia in 2005. He has more than 20 years of extensive experience working for multiple organizations (United Nations, USAID, DFID, EU, IFRC, TAF, DCA, VSO and others) in multiple countries and in different capacities and contexts. Besides his core expertise, he is also frequently involved in private sector development activities with focus on enterprise development and livelihood support. He works simultaneously at both normative and operational level and collaborates closely with all three tiers of governments including local communities on the ground. Dr. Karna often delivers under multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary work environment, where he manages diverse range of multi-sectoral projects and initiatives, including review, monitoring and evaluation. His writing has been published both in national media and international journals. He is presently working as freelance consultant and engaged with both national and international consultancies in his areas of expertise.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; Early Recovery, Livelihood Planning and Support; Private Sector Engagement in DRR and CCA; Coordination and Networking; Post-disaster Recovery and Reconstruction; Relocation, Reintegration and Resettlement; Project Design and Management; Project Administration, Budget Planning and Implementation; Decentralization, Urban Governance and Local Service Delivery; Urban Development Planning and Municipal Management; Solid Waste Management; Urban Upgrading, Housing and Land Management; Health and Sanitation; Knowledge Building.

Selected assignments and experiences

Nov. 2018 Onwards, Urban Governance, DRR and Climate Change Consultant- ***UN-ESCAP Bangkok, April 2023 Onwards,*** *Development of Country Paper on Disable Inclusive Disaster and Adaptation of E-learning Course on Disable Inclusive Disaster Risk Management in Nepal;* ***Unicef ROSA, Jan.-June 2023,***

Evaluation of COVID-19 Response by Unicef in Eight South Asian Countries; ***UNDP/NIURS, March-June 2023,*** *Development of Roadmap to Resilience- Duhabi Municipality, Nepal;* ***IOM Nepal, Dec. to Jan 2023,*** *Documentation of lessons Learned and Best Practices of Localization of DRRM Training rolled out in 753 Municipalities in Nepal;* ***USAID-Tayar/NIURS, Dec. 2022 to Feb. 2023,*** *Year-4 Political Economy Analysis of DRRM and CCA in Nepal;* ***UNDP/Genesis Nepal June to Jan 2023-*** *Development of Risk Sensitive Land-Use Plan for Karnali Province in Nepal;* ***OXFAM Nepal, July to August 2022,*** *Development of Post-Crisis Market Based Business Continuity Plan with attention to Market and Value Chain System in Nepal;* ***UN-DRR Cairo Office, August-March 2022 -*** *Disaster Risk Reduction and CCA Consultant- Development of Diagnostic Paper to facilitate Integration of DRR and CCA into UN-Sustainable Development Goal Framework and UN Strategic Framework for five selected Arab Countries from Arab region;* ***USAID-Tayar, Jan-March. 2022,*** *Year3 Political Economy Analysis of DRRM and CCA in Nepal;* ***Merci Corps Nepal, Nov.-Dec. 2021,*** *Development of Policy Brief on Cash and Voucher Transfer based on Experience gained from Resilience Plus Project implemented in Nepal;* ***European Union (EU) Nepal, May to Dec. 2021-*** *Final Evaluation of EU Support to Post-Gorkha Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Programme in Nepal;* ***USAID-Tayar, Genesis Consultancy, March-Dec. 2021,*** *Development of Risk Sensitive Land-use Plan for 4 selected Municipalities in Nepal;*

Asia Foundation/A-DFAT/Vrock Ltd., March 2020- March 2022 - *Expert support to Infrastructure Development and Financial Services, Sub-national Governance;* ***IFRC/DRC, April-June 2021****, Development of SOPs for Emergency Operation Center for three Provinces and 10 Municipalities in Nepal;* ***UNDP, Sept.-May 2021 ––*** *Development of Urban Resilience Roadmap for Waling Municipality, Nepal.****; OXFAM Nepal, Feb-March 2021,*** *Development of Project Proposal in Urban Disaster Preparedness for ECHO-HIP 2021;* ***DCA Nepal, Nov. - Jan. 2020,*** *Conduct Policy Dialogue and Develop Policy-Brief: Is COVID-19-an Urban Crisis and How to Achieve Urban Resilience in the amid of COVID-19;* ***IOM Nepal, Nov.-Dec. 2020,*** *Conducted Final Evaluation of P2P Support for Building Community Resilience through Recovery and Reconstruction Project implemented in Kathmandu Value and outside Municipalities of Nepal;* ***UNDP, June to Sept. 2020 ––*** *Development of Strategic Plan of Action for Gorkha Municipality, Nepal.****; Asia Foundation/A-DFAT/Vrock Ltd., March to Sept. 2020 -*** *Expert support to Infrastructure Development and Financial Services, Sub-national Governance Programme;* ***UNDP, Aug. 2019 to Aug. 2020 ––*** *Development of DRR Policy and Strategic Plan of Action for Province Government and Janakpur Sub-Metropolitan City;* ***MOFAGA/IFRC/NRCS, Sept. 2019 to June 2020 -*** *Development of Municipal Disaster Risk Governance Assessment tool 2020, followed by TOT and Pilot Testing in two municipalities.;* ***IFRC/NRC/BRC, Dec. 2019 to Feb 2020 –*** *Mid-Term Evaluation of Strengthening Urban Resilience and Engagement (SURE) Project in Seven Municipalities of Nepal;* ***VSO, Nepal, June to July 2019, –*** *Development of Institutional Preparedness Plan for Multi-Hazard Emergency Response.;* ***DCA Act-alliance, Nepal, Aug. to Oct. 2019 –*** *Development of Organizational Advocacy Tool for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Nepal, 2019;* ***DCA Nepal, Dec. 2018 to Feb. 2019,*** *Urban Disaster Risk Assessment: Growing Trends and Evolving Prospects, A Joint Efforts of Potential Stakeholders in Urban Municipalities of Nepal.****; IFRC/NRCS, Nov to Dec. 2018 –*** *Development of Case Studies and Best Practices from the IFRC/NRCS and their partners' implemented Humanitarian and Early Recovery projects in different districts of Nepal;* ***VSO, Nepal, Oct. to Nov. 2018, –*** *Development of Operational Modality for DRR/CCA Resource Center at Municipality of Nepal.*

Nov. 2017 Onwards, Project Chief, Post Flood Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project, National Reconstruction Authority, Government of Nepal; **3) May 2015 Onwards, Special Advisor to CEO**, National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), Earthquake Support Programme, NORCAP-IOM Nepal; **4) March - May 2015 Local Governance Advisor,** Programme Recrutement Facility, Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP), UNDP/Ministry of Federal and Local Development, Nepal; **November – 5) March 2015, Disaster/Climate Change Mainstreaming Consultant**, Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Programme (CDRMP), UNDP Nepal; **6) April - August 2014, Disaster Recovery Advisor,** Tropical Cyclone Ian Response and Recovery Plan, UNDP Fiji Office, Naku' Alofa, Tonga.; **7) June 2013 – March 2014, Early Recovery Specialist,** Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Programme (CDRMP), UNDP, Kathmandu, Nepal; **8) Nov. 2010 – Sept. 2012, Decentralization and Local Governance Specialist,** Iraq Programme, UN-HABITAT, Amman, Jordan (www.unhabitat.org).

July - Oct. 2010 - Climate Change and Humanitarian Coordination Specialist, UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), Kathmandu, Nepal; **10) Aug. 2007 to Dec. 2009, Head of Office/Early Recovery Coordination Officer**, Humanitarian, Early Recovery and Reintegration,

UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UNDP, DARFUR, Sudan; **12) Oct. 2005 – July 2007, Urban Development Advisor,** Urban Settlement's Support Programme, UN-HABITAT, Kabul, Afghanistan; **13)May – Sept. 2005, National Project Development Expert,** Public Private Partnership for Urban Environment (PPPUE), UNDP, Kathmandu, Nepal; **14) March – May 2005, Urban and Environmental Planner,** Strengthening Environmental Administration and Management at Local Level (SEAM-N), FINIDA**,** Nepal; **15) Aug. - Dec. 2002, Urban and Environmental Planner,** Public Private Partnership for Urban Environment (PPPUE), UNDP, Nepal; **16) April 02 – Feb. 2003, Urban and Environmental Planner,** Strengthening Environmental Administration and Management at Local Level (SEAM-N), FINIDA**,** Nepal; **17) Oct. 1998 - Sept. 2000, Urban Development Advisor,** Rural Urban Partnership Programme (RUPP), UNDP/UN-HABITAT, Kathmandu, Nepal. **18) Sept. 1997- June 1998, Project Manager**, Americorp Environmental Services Group, Integrated Solid Waste Management Programme, Biratnagar Sub-Metropolitan, Nepal.

22 June 2023, *Building Climate Resilient Infrastructures- Way to Minimize Disasters Induced Damages and Losses, Spotlight Nepal;* ***14 Oct. 2022,*** *An Overview of Early Warning System (EWS) in Nepal- How Inclusive and Resilient to Communities at Risk, Spotlight Nepal;* ***27 June 2022,*** *Mainstreaming DRR and CCA into Development Approaches- Indispensable to Secure SDG Gains, Spotlight Nepal;* ***31 July 2021,*** *Public Open Spaces – Indispensable to Improved Emergency Preparedness and Effective Coordinated Response, Spotlight Nepal,* ***17 June 2021,*** *Pre-Crisis Market Assessment- A Prerequisite for Disaster Preparedness and Timely Response, Spotlight Nepal;* ***13 August 2020,*** *Urban Resilience- A Growing Concern of Urbanizing Nepal, Spotlight Nepal;* ***13 July 2020,*** *Where Are We Falling Short, Spotlight Nepal;* ***11 June 2020,*** *Management of Monsoon Floods Amid COVOD-19 Response, My Republica, Nepal.* ***Feb. 2019,*** *Barriers of Urban Resilience in Nepal, Making Cities Resilient: Agenda for APMCDRR 2020, AIDMI, Ahmadabad, India;* ***26-29 Aug. 2019,*** *Expert Dialogue on Scaling Up regional cooperation in Multi-Hazard EWS in Asia Pacific, UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand.* ***27-28 May 2019,*** *Community Empowerment and Participatory Policy Planning to Reduce Tsunami and Water –related Disaster Risk, ICT and DRR Division, UN-ESCAP, Bangkok;*

Training, Workshops and Conference Participation/Publications

24-26, July 2018, *CityNet Infrastructure Cluster & KLRTC XXXII 2018, Sustainable Urban Transportation for New Urban Agenda,* ***25-27 April 2018,*** *Presented paper - China's South-South Assistance to Disaster Recovery Efforts, UNDP/CAG China, Beijing, China.* ***25-26 Jan. 2018,*** *Expert Group Meeting on Regional Cooperation in Early Warning (EW) for Transboundary River Basin Floods, Flash Floods and Landslides in Asia and the Pacific, UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand.* ***9-11 Dec. 2017,*** *Presented paper - Regional experience in using Retrofitting Techniques in Restoration of Cultural Heritage Sites and Monuments, APDIM/UN-ESCAP, Iran, Tehran;* ***25-28 Nov. 2017,*** *A Key Note Speech- Roles of Regional Cooperation in bridging the Information and Knowledge gaps: Experience from Nepal, IRIDS/Tokhu University/UN-ESCAP/GRF Davos, Sendai, Japan;* ***30-31 Oct. 2017,*** *Presented a Paper, How NRA is committed to Ensure that the Ongoing Recovery and Reconstruction Programme is Resilient; Disaster Risk Specific to South and South-West Asia, UN-ESCAP, NPC, Kathmandu, Nepal.* ***9-11 Oct. 2017,*** *Expert Group Meeting on Regional Cooperation in EW for Transboundary River Basin Floods, Flash Floods and Landslides in Asia and the Pacific, UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand.* ***29-31 March 2017,*** *Presented a Paper- PDNA: Impact of Gorkha Earthquake 2015 on Poverty Reduction in Nepal; Regional Learning Platform: Mainstreaming DRR and Resilience into Sustainable Development with focus on Poverty Eradication, UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand.*

02-05 Nov. 2016, *Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, UN-ISDR, UNDP, NDMA/NIDM, Delhi, India;* ***7-9 Sept. 2016****, Debrief Seminar, NRC/NORCAP/Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Oslo, Norway;* ***5-10 June 2016,*** *Early Recovery Advisor Training, UNDP NY/UNDP Geneva, Bangkok, Thailand;* ***26-29 May 2016,*** *Post Disaster Needs Assessment Training, UNDP NY/UN-ESCAP Bangkok, Colombo, Sri Lanka;* ***23-25 Nov. 2015,*** *Presented a Paper - Lessons on Preparedness from Gorkha Earthquake 2015 in Nepal; Practitioners' Workshop on Risk Reduction and Resilience in Asia, ADPC, EU, FAO, UNDP, Bangkok, Thailand;* ***01-02 Oct. 2015,*** *Presented a Paper on Economics of Build Back Better- A Case Study of Housing and Human Settlements, Gorkha Earthquake in Nepal 2015; Recovery Dialogue, UN-ESCAP, SDMC, GoN-NPC, Kathmandu, Nepal;* ***20-21 May 2015,*** *PDNA: Its application in Nepal Gorkha Earthquake 2015, Kathmandu, Nepal, NPC/UNDP/WB/EC****; Nov. 2014****, Compliance of National Building Code – Necessity for Disaster Resilient Kathmandu Valley, State of DRR at Local level, UN-ISDR.* ***August 2014,*** *Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation: A Pacific Perspective,*

Southasiadisasters.net AIDMI; ***11-15 Nov. 2013,*** *Asia Pacific Workshop: Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, UNDP India, APRC Bangkok and BCPR., Pondichery, India;* ***29 Jan. 2013,*** *TERI-Rockefeller Intl. Workshop on Resilient Cities- Experience from ACCRN in Asia and Beyond, TERI/TRF/ICLEI, Delhi, India.* ***13-14 Sept. 2012,*** *Climate Change - Carbon Market Conclave 2012, FICCIWorld Bank/IETA, Delhi, India*

Independent reviews/evaluations:

- Unicef ROSA, Jan.-June 2023, Evaluation of COVID-19 Response by Unicef in Eight South Asian Countries
- May to Dec. 2021- Final Evaluation of EU Support to Post-Gorkha Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Programme in Nepal
- IOM Nepal, Nov.-Dec. 2020, Conducted Final Evaluation of P2P Support for Building Community Resilience through Recovery and Reconstruction Project implemented in Kathmandu Value and outside Municipalities of Nepal
- IFRC/NRC/BRC, Dec. 2019 to Feb 2020 – Mid-Term Evaluation of Strengthening Urban Resilience and Engagement (SURE) Project in Seven Municipalities of Nepal
- USAID-Tayar/NIURS, Dec. 2022 to Feb. 2023, Year-4 Political Economy Analysis of DRRM and CCA in Nepal

ANNEX V. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP project

"Sustainable Cities Impact Program Global Platform (SCIP-GP)" GEF 10452

which is the Coordinating Project of the

Sustainable Cities Impact Programme (SCIP - GEF 10391)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Table 1. Project Summary

UNEP PIMS/SMA[19] ID:	43818		
GEF Project ID:	GEF 10452 (SCIP-GP), Coordinating Project See Annex 7 for list of all Child Projects (GEF 10465, 10466, 10467, 10484, 10486, 10494, 10530, 10768 and 10822) within this Programme (GEF 10391)		
Implementing Agency:	UNEP: GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Industry and Economy Division	**Executing Agencies:**	C40, ICLEI, UNEP Cities Unit, World Resources Institute,
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	**SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts** **SDG 11: to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;** **SDG 5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7)	4. Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (4,000 Hectares) 6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (indirectly, 4,400,00 metric tons of CO2e) 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (1,308,000 women/girls)		
Sub-programme:	Subprogramme 1 Climate Change Stability: countries increasingly make the transition to low-emission economic development, and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	N/A
UNEP approval date:	16 October 2020	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	Outcome 1B: Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance, and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and

[19] Acronym for ID assigned by the Integrated Planning, Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) system.

			mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement. Indicator (i) Number of national, subnational and private sector actors that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support. Indicator (ii) Amounts provided and mobilized in $ per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the $100 billion commitment through to 2025 with UNEP support??
GEF approval date:	07.05.2020	**Project type:**	FSP
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-7	**Focal Area(s):**	Climate Change Mitigation
		GEF Strategic Priority:	
Expected start date:	01.06.2020	**Actual start date:**	01.11.2020
Planned operational completion date:	01.06.2025	**Actual operational completion date:**	N/A
Planned project budget at approval:	USD 40,534,595	**Actual total expenditures reported as of December 2022:**	16,400,680
GEF grant allocation:	USD 16,213,761	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of December 2022:**	5,093,939
Expected Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	USD 24,320,834	**Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	11,306,741 (47%)
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	USD 300,000	**Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:**	N/A
Date of First disbursement:	18 November 2022	**Planned date of financial closure:**	202831 October 2026
No. of formal project revisions:	1 (Update on IP rights and slight extension)	**Date of last approved project revision:**	10 May 2022
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	1 (virtual)	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	Last: October 2022 / Next: Q4-2023
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	2023	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	July – December 2023

Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	2025[20]	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	2027
Coverage - Country(ies):	Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, China, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda and Sierra Leone	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Global
Dates of previous project phases:	GEF-6 Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (SC-IAP)	**Status of future project phases:**	

Project Rationale

Cities are the main contributors to climate change, accounting for around 70% of global carbon emissions, and can give the world the best chance of reversing its course towards a more sustainable path. More specifically, cities produce 80% of the world's GDP and consume 2/3 of the world's energy (World Bank, n.d). The majority of global wealth is concentrated in cities; meanwhile, many of the 1 billion urban poor who live in informal settlements lack access to reliable core services – water, electricity, transport, and affordable housing. Rapid urbanization will exacerbate these realities if cities do not change their development path, as urban areas are expected to triple in size between 2000 and 2030. Moreover, the challenges of rapid outward expansion are greatest in lower-income cities. (Mahendra & Seto, 2019). Yet, those cities have the least financial resources to address these challenges.

However, dozens of cities across the globe are actively innovating to forge a new urban reality focused on equality and prosperity. Innovative and disruptive solutions including new services such as ZipCar, visionary plans like PlaNYC, and civil society movements like Raahgiri car-free days in India, have all been conceived and initiated in cities. These experiences may offer lessons about a new model of green growth. Yet, mechanisms to scale these innovations to scale effectively at the pace demanded by rapid urbanization are lacking. Cities are still making choices for short-term gain, without taking the time to think beyond business-as usual, consulting different population groups and assessing the impact of new technologies for urban development on these groups. In addition, while a wide range of interventions are addressing various parts of cities challenges, cities themselves find limited opportunities to share successes, lessons learned, and scale innovative approaches on integrated planning.

The GEF-funded project, "Sustainable Cities Impact Program Global Platform (SCIP-GP; GEF 10452)" acts as the Coordinating Child Project of the GEF-funded programme, Sustainable Cities Impact Programme (SCIP; GEF 10391). The SCIP-GP project was intended to influence 9 targeted cities[21] through capacity building, knowledge sharing and advocacy in order to enable cities to improve sustainability through i) policies, regulations and plans, ii) behaviours and utilization of better technologies and iii) investments.

[20] The Coordinating Project is due to complete in June 2025. However, as it holds the mandate and funds for the Terminal Evaluation of the Programme, the timing of the TE is determined by the end date of the Programme (estimated to reach a threshold to support a Programme TE in 2027)

[21] The cities targeted by the SCIP-GP Coordinating Project are additional to the cities supported through the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) managed by the World Bank.

Project Results Framework

The SCIP GP project intended to bring together global, national and local champions that want to work together towards a common vision of sustainable and integrated development. Its objective is that: *'cities pursue integrated urban planning and implementation and increase their ambitions, to deliver impactful sustainable development outcomes with global environmental benefits (GEBs)'* (Endorsement Package, 2020).

As a Coordinating Child project of a GEF impact programme, the project was expected to: a) to facilitate knowledge exchange among other child projects, GEF Agencies, executing agencies, and other stakeholders (GEF 2022[22], p.9) and b) include activities to coordinate program M&E (GEF 2022, p.11).

The project's work is organized into 4 Components, each with a single outcome. See table below.

Results Framework, (Endorsement Package, 2020)

SCIP-GP Project Objective: 'cities pursue integrated urban planning and implementation and increase their ambitions, to deliver impactful sustainable development outcomes with global environmental benefits (GEBs)'	
Component 1: Support to sustainable integrated urban planning, policy reform, investments; and innovative financing and scaling-up	
Outcome 1	Key urban actors[1] demonstrate improved capacity to undertake sustainable integrated planning and investments
Output 1.1:	Child project teams receive strategic support to design and implement the national projects
Output 1.2:	Key urban actors are trained through regional city academies group around identified topics, regions and languages
Output 1.3:	City officials receive technical assistance on integrated urban solutions
Output 1.4:	Key urban actors participate in peer exchanges, matching cities by interest, with knowledge providers from City-Based Organizations (CBO's) network opportunities and extended partners
Output 1.5:	Cities receive support to access finance opportunities through existing project preparation facilities, Regional Development Banks (RDB) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) cities initiatives, and SCIP Global Platform sponsored matchmaking opportunities
Output 1.6:	National governments and cities receive support to take policy and political leadership to unlock action on sustainable and integrated urban planning
Component 2: Global Platform for knowledge management, exchange and program coordination	
Outcome 2	Key urban actors and experts, in addition to those targeted in outcome 1, are using cutting edge knowledge and best practices on sustainable integrated urban planning and investments from a global sustainable cities platform
Output 2.1:	Existing knowledge is curated, and a menu of sustainable urban development and integrated planning solutions is available to key urban actors and experts
Output 2.2:	New knowledge is generated and made available to key urban actors and experts responding to local demands and identified gaps, including case studies, training materials, reports, training modules
Output 2.3:	Global convening space with website is created and made available for cities to exchange knowledge

[22] GEF Guidelines for Conducting Program Evaluation, May 23, 2022 (in draft).

Component 3: Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Partnerships	
Outcome 3	Policy makers and key urban actors promote sustainable integrated urban planning and investments
Output 3.1:	Mayors or equivalent in participating and new cities receive support to set science-based targets and prepare climate action plans
Output 3.2:	Awareness of policy makers and key urban actors is raised, and action is promoted at a global level on the importance of cities in the achievement of MEA goals
Output 3.3:	Private sector networks and cities are mobilized to forge city-business partnerships
Output 3.4:	The SCIP Global Platform partnership vision on integrated sustainable urban planning is communicated to policy makers and key urban actors
Component 4: Governance, monitoring and evaluation (This component will not be assessed under Effectiveness as it is not a results area. Performance will be assessed under the criteria: Monitoring and Reporting and Project Management and Supervision, one of the Factors Affecting Performance).	
Outcome 4	The Global Platform is kept on track and coordinated at program and project level in all countries
Output 4.1:	Monitoring and evaluation systems and project coordination are applied by the project teams and governance bodies

Executing Arrangements

Operationalised within the Industry and Economy Division, UNEP's Implementing Agency role is being played by its GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, which is located within the Energy and Climate Branch. The UNEP Cities Unit, which is not a UNEP-GEF Unit, plays an executing agency role, and is also located within the Energy and Climate Branch of the Industry and Economy Division.

Under the implementation structure, the Endorsement Package (2020) describes the following elements and is depicted in Figure 2, below:

Annual GEF Reporting Network. The members of the network will be the Task Managers, Regional Technical Advisor, and Task Team Leaders of each of the child projects, representatives of WRI, C40, UNEP and ICLEI, and the global child project regional/country focal points. The role of the group will be to discuss the content and prepare the annual program report to the GEF.

SCIP Steering Committee (SC): Members of the SC will be representatives of United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, UNEP, ADB, the GEF Secretariat, WRI, C40, and ICLEI, including the global child project regional/country focal points and one city focal point (or the country focal points) for each country, and other participating partners or experts by invitation. WRI will serve as the Secretariat of the meetings and UNEP will chair the meetings as the SCIP Program Lead Agency. The role of the SC members will be to review project implementation progress and progress towards project objectives; review and agree on the annual project work plan and budget; and to discuss ways of improving effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation and support between the global and country child projects. The Committee will also promote coordination between Program projects. The SC will meet every year, or more frequently by request of one of the steering committee members.

Annual Executive Management Team (EMT): The members of the EMT will be the operational leads from: UNEP, WRI, ICLEI, and C40. WRI will serve as the Secretariat to the EMT and UNEP will chair the meetings. The role of the EMT will be to prepare and revise the annual project work plan and budget according to agreements made by the SC; and process related project revisions. The EMT will also ensure a smooth coordination amongst the 4 executing partners and

consistency in the delivery of project activities. The EMT will meet at least twice per year around the SCIP SC meetings and more frequently at the request of any member.

Partnership Engagement Group (PEG). The PEG is the external coordination mechanism of the SCIP GP. The PEG will be a high-level, strategic group, with participation of key global actors, initiatives, alliances and networks in the urban development space, that will provide inputs to the program about key trends, thematic areas and approaches shaping implementation of the program. The PEG aims to establish a multi-stakeholder coalition of key urban actors, urban initiatives, alliances and networks driving the integrated urban planning agenda related to global environmental benefits. Attendance at the PEG will be by invitation. The CBO leading the organization of the SCIP Forum will serve as the Secretariat of the meetings and UNEP will chair the meetings as the SCIP Lead Agency. The SCIP GP will produce a report for each PEG meeting, develop and implement workplans on identified joint activities and post all these documents on the SCIP website for consultation.

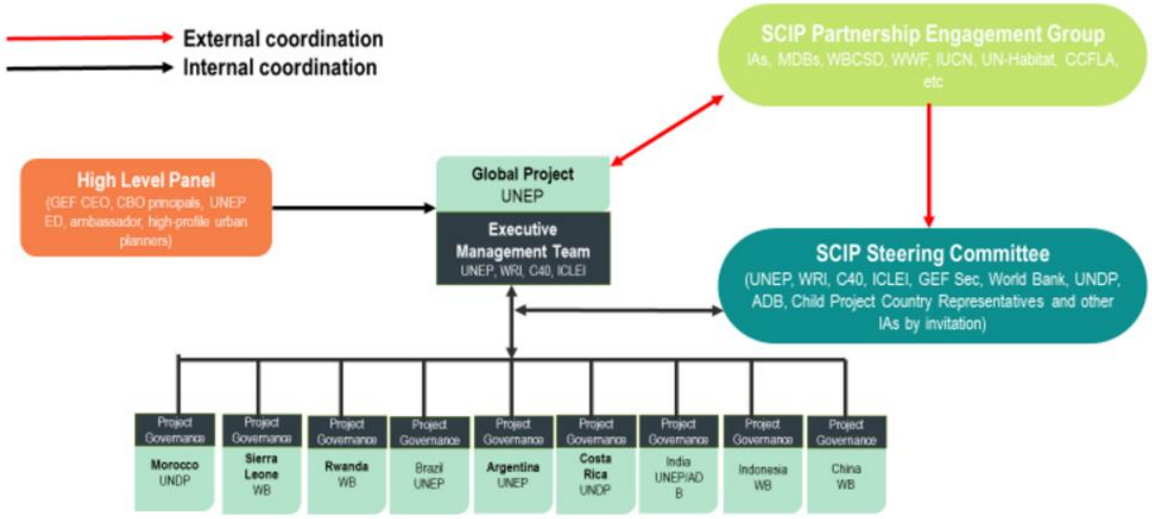
Project Cost and Financing

The project has a total budget of USD 40,534,595 of which USD 16,213,761 is a GEF grant and USD 24,320,834 is co-finance. See expected spend by component, below.

Breakdown of Project Finance by Component (Endorsement Package, 2020)

	Budget per component at Concept Note stage		Budget per component at CEO Endorsement stage		
	GEF grant	Indicated Co-finance	GEF grant	Confirmed Co-finance	
Component 1	7,652,346	11,478,519	9,129,466	8,257,261	The major change in **GEF grant allocation** is that Component 1 amount has been increased to align with the current thinking of project activities. This component includes: cost of regional coordinators, the work behind the baseline assessment, the delivery of the finance component and the delivery of all capacity building activities. Therefore, Components 2 and 3 amounts have been reduced. Regarding **Co-finance,** most of the actual contributions, identified during the development phase, are closely related to knowledge development, especially tools and technical expertise to be used in the project; thus Component 2 is the component with the higher co-finance now.
Component 2	4,025,422	6,038,133	2,251,751	10,861,331	
Component 3	3,763,909	5,645,864	3,194,369	3,638,703	
Component 4	0	0	866,091	579,822	Added a new standalone component for M&E, moving outputs and resources from Component 2.
PMC	772,084	1,158,126	772,084	983,717	PMC from co-finance has been reduced to be aligned with actual co-finance identified during the development phase.
Total	16,213,761	24,320,642	16,213,761	24,320,834	Totals have not changed, but the distribution has changed to better reflect current activities and co-financing sources.

SCIP-GP Implementation Structure (Endorsement Package, 2020)



Implementation Issues

During the 2nd Project Implementation Report (PIR – FY 2023) the project identified additional Moderate risks related to the following:

- Implementation schedule: Given that a number of deliverables, mainly related to policy dialogues and development and private sector engagement are behind schedule (most in Component 3), the risk rating has been set as Moderate. The risk identifies that the project is behind original schedule for some activities, but not that there is a risk to actual implementation of the activities.
- Budget: Global economic uncertainty, inflation, rising salaries, and much higher travel costs all contribute to a slightly increased budget risk for the project. The project team is finding multiple ways to use project resources more effectively, and exploring ways to cut direct costs where this doesn't jeopardize delivery of activities. For example, we are hosting virtual Steering Committee Meetings (which do not require resources for travel), we have established numerous partnerships with like-minded organizations and initiatives to co-brand and co-deliver UrbanShift activities (thereby sharing costs), and we have saved direct costs on some activities which we will use to bolster others on an as needed basis.
- Reporting: directly to Expenditure and Co-finance reporting, which have been complex and labor intensive, requiring more time than originally envisioned. Per agreement with UNEP, as of mid-2023 we are using a modified expenditure reporting template which should simplify and streamline financial reporting.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

Objective of the Evaluation

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[23] and the UNEP Programme Manual[24], the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is undertaken approximately half-way through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required.

Key Evaluation Principles

Mid-Term evaluation findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

A Mid-Term Evaluation is a *formative assessment*, which requires that the consultant(s) go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance is and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance is as it is.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made

[23] https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies
[24] https://wecollaborate.unep.org

by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

Partners and Key Project Stakeholders. A key aim of the Mid-Term Evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff, the implementing partners and key project stakeholders The Evaluation Consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons.

Strategic Questions

The GEF Program Evaluation Guidelines (draft 2023) defines a "program" as "a longer-term and strategic arrangement of individual yet interlinked projects that aim at achieving large-scale impacts on the global environment". The Guidelines note that GEF programmes often consist of a Coordinating Child Project that are expected to provide the overall direction and support for programme activities and several decentralized child projects that are tied together by a shared vision and framework. Over time, and especially in GEF-7 impact programmes, there has been a shift toward the use of integrated approaches in programme design.

The MTE will address the following strategic questions in order to provide informed insights into a) the role being played by the SCIP-GP Coordinating Child Project in supporting the SCIP Programme and b) the current status and emerging performance of the Programme.

A. SCIP-GP as a Knowledge Management/Capacity Building Project
Questions to be addressed under Effectiveness.

1) What are the elements of the global offer that are most valuable for the city beneficiaries (City Labs, City Academies, National Dialogues, Finance Academies, National-Local Dialogues, webinars, Online library of knowledge, Advocacy)? And how is the quality of this offer?
2) Which global platform activities have been less successful? Evaluate whether these results warrant an adjustment to the global platform scope of activities or a reprioritization therein.
3) To what extent the SCIP-GP is taking advantage of the city networks and other partners (such as PEG, private sector) for implementation? Has the GP synergized with other programs/initiatives led by UrbanShift partners to be able to provide more, stronger and complementary opportunities for beneficiaries?
4) Have the beneficiaries from local governments (main capacity building beneficiaries) been able to apply the acquired knowledge gained from GP activities and events? Why or why not?
5) Have the beneficiaries been able to connect and learn from other local governments implementing similar strategies?

B. SCIP-GP as a Coordinating Child Project

6) Has the GP established good communication channels with Implementing Agencies/Executing Agencies and local government focal points? If so, how well has the GP been able to adapt and respond to local requests?
7) How well is UNEP, as the GEF Lead Agency, collaborating with other Agencies involved in the Programme?
8) What are, if any, the additional benefits and costs of the Coordinating Project being part of a programmatic approach? This should include whether benefits accrued from the project being part of a programme rather than a standalone project.

C. SCIP Programme as a Whole

9) To what extent does the SCIP-GP Coordinating Project provide the overall direction and support for programme activities?
10) How best can the role of the SCIP-GP project vis-à-vis the SCIP programme be described? To what extent is the SCIP-GP playing a 'coordinating' or 'synergising' role that affects the achievement of the programme's results and what implications does this have for the timeframe and budget of the SCIP-GP project?
11) What strengths and weaknesses are evident in the Programme design and what lessons can be drawn at this mid-point stage that could improve future programme designs and/or this programme's implementation and achievements?

a. Explore the efficacy of the regional approach selected (regional Forum, regional/country coordinator), compared to a global approach.
b. Explore the efficacy of light touch support to many cities, vs deeper support to select cities.
c. Are the Programme indicators appropriate and accurate to measure the impact of the work.

12) Has the SCIP-GP Advocacy work and the programme in general contributed to promote the use of integrated approaches to urban development?
13) To what extent does the Programme TOC outline synergies the programme intends to tap to achieve the intended systemic change, and the trade-offs involved in key choices made in programme design?
14) To what extent are the levels of expenditure and rates of technical progress of each of the Child Projects under the Programme appropriate to: a) the mid-point of the Programme and b) the intended timeframes of the Child Projects and the Programme?
15) In what ways, and to what extent, are all the Child Projects contributing to the Programme's objectives?

a. What explains the significant differences on progress of each child Project.
b. Does the SCIP-GP have the means to influence the child projects?

16) How well are the Child Projects' M&E designs aligned with that of the Programme? How are the M&E arrangements of the Child Projects contributing to the programme level M&E and results reporting and are the monitoring arrangements generating relevant and high-quality information?

Evaluation Criteria

All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory[25] (HS=6); Satisfactory (S=5); Moderately Satisfactory (MS=4); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU=3); Unsatisfactory (U=2); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU=1). A Criteria Ratings Matrix is available, within the suite of tools, to support a common interpretation of points on the scale for each evaluation criterion. The Overall Performance Rating is calculated as a simple average of the ratings for each criterion (A-H). Any criterion assessed as being in the 'Unsatisfactory' range should trigger corrective action in the Management Response.

A. Strategic Relevance

The Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of UNEP, the donors, implementing regions/countries and target beneficiaries and is operating in a way that is complementary to other ongoing interventions.

The MTE will assess whether there have been any changes in priorities since the project was designed and whether the project has/should adapt to address the changing policy/strategy context.

This criterion comprises two elements:

i. *Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) strategic priorities*

The evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme Of Work (POW) under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[26] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The MTE will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities as well as alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the project is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

ii. *Complementarity/Coherence[27] with Relevant Existing Interventions*

An assessment will be made of how well the project is taking account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups.

The MTE will consider if the project team, in collaboration with all partners, is fulfilling any commitments to collaborate made at project design and is working to ensure their own

[25] *Sustainability* and *Likelihood of Impact* are similarly rated on a six-point scale but labelled from Highly **Likely** (HL) down to Highly **Unlikely** (HU).
[26] http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm
[27] This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

intervention is complementary to other interventions. Examples may include work within Cooperation Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

B. Quality & Revision of Project Design

The MTE should provide a brief overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design and assess whether all elements of the project design have been initiated and/or are still planned for. Based on an evaluation of the project design document, regular reports and meeting minutes, the Evaluation Consultant will confirm whether any amendments[28] have been made to the activities and/or results of the project. This includes changes to the formulation of results statements as well as changes in results indicators and/or project targets and the associated budget. Where revisions have been made the Consultant should confirm that formal documentation for these amendments is available and that UNEP/donor policies for revisions have been followed. In the absence of such formalisation the Evaluation Consultant will make appropriate recommendations.

C. Effectiveness

The Evaluation will assess effectiveness across the following dimensions: Theory of Change; availability of outputs; progress towards project outcomes; likelihood of impact and adaptive management. The Evaluation Consultant will confirm that all results statements conform to UNEP's definitions[29] and make recommendations for adjustments where necessary. At the project's mid-point emphasis is placed on the timeliness, quality and ownership of outputs and whether the project is adopting approaches or delivering activities to support the uptake of outputs (i.e. outcome level results).

i. Theory of Change

The Evaluation will assess whether the Theory of Change/Results Framework represents a coherent and realistic change process from a cause and effect perspective. Considerations will be given to whether the causal pathways are effectively shown/articulated and supported by a full set of contributing conditions ('drivers' are external factors largely under the influence of the project; 'assumptions' are external factors largely outside the influence of the project). The TOC should also reflect[30] UNEP's commitment to increasing equality in line with the UN's commitment to human rights. If adjustments are needed they should be clearly presented and justified during the MTE process and a recommendation made on how any revisions could be formally approved.

ii. Availability of Outputs[31]

The Evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the planned outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document or any formal revisions. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the

[28] The conditions and processes for amendments should abide by the terms of the funding agreement. For example, the GEF has specific requirements for the approval/reporting of 'minor' and 'major' amendments. This includes the provision that any minor and major (approved) amendments should be reflected in the PIR report of the same year.
[29] UNEP, 2019, Glossary of Results Definitions
[30] This can be as a driver or assumption if there is no specific equality results statement.
[31] Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its planned outputs and recommend corrective action as appropriate.

iii. Progress towards Project Outcomes[32]

At the project mid-point the Evaluation Consultant will focus on the links between the provision of outputs and their adoption at the outcome level. The MTE will explore whether the assumptions and drivers that need to be in place to support the uptake of outputs are evident/emerging and consider whether sufficient effort and attention is being directed towards reaching outcome levels.

The Evaluation Consultant will evaluate the project Theory of Change (TOC) and confirm that is properly reflects all levels (outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and long-lasting impact) of results included in the project design. Where necessary, the TOC should be reconstructed, in discussion with the project team, to better guide and strengthen project implementation.

iv. Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality.

The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project is/may play a catalytic role[33] or is promoting scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

v. Adaptive Management

The Evaluation will assess whether any adaptive management[34] is evident, possibly reflected in annual reports or reports from field missions etc. The Evaluation Consultant will consider the project's performance to-date from a risk perspective considering: a) the likelihood of any non/late delivery of the project's workplan; b) likelihood of any negative effects, including reputational risks and safeguard issues and c) factors undermining the endurance of project achievements.

During the MTE, forward plans should be evaluated and adaptive management strategies discussed such that the project's effectiveness and efficiency are maximized. Actions for adaptive management should be reflected in the MTE recommendations, which may include recommendations on governance structures, implementation arrangements, project design elements, monitoring and/or exit strategies etc.

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[32] Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behaviour, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

[33] The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

[34] Adaptive management is an **iterative process** in which practitioners test hypotheses and adjust behavior, decisions, and actions based on experience and actual changes (Stankey et al., 2005).

Global Environment Facility	The Evaluation should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the evaluand is reaching Core Indicator targets (from GEF-6 onwards).
Global Environment Facility	The Evaluation will determine, under Effectiveness, the project's additionality by comparing the benefits of GEF support to a scenario without GEF support. It will identify specific areas where GEF support has contributed additional results and what these additional results were. It will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the findings.

D. Financial Management

Under financial management the Mid-Term Evaluation will assess: a) whether the rate of spend is consistent with the project's length of implementation to-date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of outputs and b) whether financial reporting and/or auditing requirements are being met consistently and to adequate standards by all parties. Any financial management issues that are affecting the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. Expenditure should be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget.

Ratings should be provided for two sub-categories (*adherence to policies and completeness of financial information*), as assessed at the mid-point: i) the Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies; ii) the Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Evaluation may comment on the level of communication between the UNEP Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Global Environment Facility	The Evaluation will determine, under Financial Management, i) time from CEO endorsement (FSP) / CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement; ii) disbursement balance; iii) whether the project has secured co-financing higher than 35% and iv) time between CEO Endorsement and (likely) end of MTE.

E. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion, the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is delivering maximum results from the given resources. The Evaluation will assess the *cost-effectiveness and timeliness* of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities have been/are being delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events are being sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts being made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[35] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The Evaluation will also assess ways in which potential project extensions can be avoided through stronger project management.

[35] Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

F. Monitoring and Reporting

The Evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across two sub-categories: monitoring of project implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring of Project Implementation

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[36] results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management.

The Evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system is operational and facilitates the timely tracking of results and progress towards project milestones and targets throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project is gathering relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider how quality monitoring data are being used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring are being used to support this activity.

ii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised information management system[37] in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant by the UNEP Task Manager. Donors may have specific reporting requirements and copies of reports will be made available by the UNEP Task Manager. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and Donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. This should include confirmation that meeting and field mission reports are being written and centrally stored.

Where the need for any corrective action has been indicated in any project reports (e.g. as an identified risk), the Evaluation Consultant will record whether this action has been taken. This may include responses made during the COVID-19 pandemic or other unpredictable external events of a disruptive or crisis nature. The Evaluation Consultant will also confirm whether formal reports have been appropriately authorised by both the author and the relevant supervisor.

Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Evaluation Consultant should evaluate the quality of regular reports and confirm they have been submitted on a timely basis.

G. Exit Strategy & Sustainability

[36] SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.
[37] Project Information Management System (PIMS) or, from 2022, Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR)

Sustainability[38] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of the project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. It may be considered from the perspectives of socio-political, institutional and/or financial sustainability. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that *are likely* to undermine or contribute to the endurance of benefits at the outcome level. Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. It is assumed that environmental sustainability is central to any UNEP project design but where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

The Evaluation will ascertain that the project has put in place *an appropriate exit strategy* and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. The Evaluation Consultant will consider: a) the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards; b) the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance and c) the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure.

H. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

i. Project Inception

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project. The Evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design, fill information gaps or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular, the Evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity[39] and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. The Evaluation Consultant will confirm whether appropriate inception meetings were held and whether an inception report is available on file.

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

During the MTE the consultant will evaluate the planned implementation structure and the roles and responsibilities assigned to each partner or party. Where roles are not being played as planned, an appropriate recommendation to formalise correction action and/or a change in the implementation structure, should be made.

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to partners and national governments while in others it may refer to the project management performance of an implementing partner and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category is established as a simple average of the two.

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[38] As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

[39] During 2023 UNEP is reviewing its Partnership Policy and Procedures and a future version is expected to include a requirement for risk mitigation against weak performance among partners.

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management to-date with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.

Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Evaluation Consultant should evaluate whether the segregation of responsibilities meets the GEF requirements[40] (the GEF Agency must separate its project implementation and execution duties and establish each of the following: (a) A satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Agency; and (b) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Agency between the project implementation and execution functions.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners; duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs; target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life to-date and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[41].

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular, the Evaluation will consider the extent to which project implementation has taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening, risk assessment and management (avoidance or mitigation) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project

[40] GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards: Separation of Implementation and Execution Functions in GEF Partner Agencies (2019).
[41] The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements[42] were met to: screen proposed projects for any safeguarding issues; conduct sound environmental and social risk assessments; identify and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, mitigate, environmental, social and economic risks; apply appropriate environmental and social measures to minimize any potential risks and harm to intended beneficiaries and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.

The Evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project is minimising UNEP's environmental footprint.

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project to-date. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Evaluation will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. This ownership should adequately represent the needs and interests of all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that are being undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks are being used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gender or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms are being established under a project the Evaluation will comment on the plans to sustain, handover or decommission the communication channel at the end of the project.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Mid-Term Evaluation will use a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the Evaluation Consultant maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings.

The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A **desk review** of:

[42] For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

Relevant background documentation, inter alia: *[add items]*
Project Document and Appendices
Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

(b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
UNEP Task Manager and team members; *[add people as appropriate]*
Representatives of Implementing Agencies and National Governments etc; *[add people as appropriate]*
UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

Evaluation Deliverables and Evaluation Procedures

See Annex 1 of these TOR for a list of tools and guidance available, see Annex 2 for a list of evaluation criteria and sub-categories to be assessed. The Evaluation Consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 3 of these TOR for guidance on structure and content) containing confirmation of the results framework and Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Reports:** (see Annex 4 for guidance on structure and content) containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the Evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

Review of the draft Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Consultant will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with key project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the Evaluation Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

At the end of the evaluation process and based on the findings in the Evaluation Report, the Evaluation Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed by the UNEP Task Manager and updated at regular intervals, and circulate **Lessons Learned**.

The Evaluation Consultant

The Evaluation Consultant, who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Manager, Janet Wildish. Information and liaison support will be provided by the UNEP Task Manager, Tania Daccarett and Fund Management Officer, xxxxxx. It is the consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders (with assistance from the Partners), organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the Evaluation Consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of 6 months [01 Nov 2023 to 31 April 2024] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 7 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of urban energy efficiency is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in Portuguese/Spanish] is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be largely home-based with possible field visits. Being located in, or near Brazil, would be an advantage.

The Evaluation Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, for overall management of the Evaluation and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 9 Evaluation Deliverables, above. The Evaluation Consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

Schedule of the Evaluation

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Tentative Schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Inception Report	
Evaluation Mission	
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	
Draft Report to Evaluation Manager	
Draft Report shared with the wider group of stakeholders	
Final Main Evaluation Report	
Final Main Evaluation Report shared with all respondents	

Contractual Arrangements

The Evaluation Consultant will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. Consultants who carry out a Mid-Term Evaluation may not be contracted for a Terminal Evaluation/Review of the same evaluand. All consultants are required to sigh the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Consultant

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report ***(as per Guidance Note)***	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report ***(as per Guidance Note)***	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report ***(as per Report Template)***	40%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the UNEP Project Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, IPMR, Anubis, SharePoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Evaluation Report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the Evaluation Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Evaluation until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to the Evaluation Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.

ANNEX VI. REVISION OF PROJECT COMPONENTS, OUTCOMES, AND OUTPUTS AT DESIGN PHASE (Endorsement Package, 2020)

Output at Concept Note Stage	Revised Outcomes/Outputs	Remarks
Component 1: **Support to sustainable integrated urban planning, policy reform, investments; and innovative financing and scaling-up**		
Outcome 1: Key urban actors demonstrate improved capacity to undertake sustainable integrated planning and investments		
Output 1.1. Support is provided to child project designs	Output 1.1. Child project teams receive strategic support to design and implement the national projects	The output was reworded to reflect that the SCIP Global Platform support to national child projects will continue during their implementation.
Output 1.2. Regional city academies group training is delivered around identified topics, regions and languages	Output 1.2. Key urban actors are trained through regional city academies group around identified topics, regions, and languages	The output was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Output 1.3. Technical assistance is provided on integrated urban solutions	Output 1.3. City officials receive technical assistance on integrated urban solutions	The output was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Output 1.4. Peer exchanges are organized, matching cities by interest, with knowledge providers from City-Based Organizations (CBO's) network opportunities and extended partners	Output 1.4. Key urban actors participate in peer exchanges, matching cities by interest, with knowledge providers from City-Based Organizations (CBO's) network opportunities and extended partners	The output was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Output 1.5. Cities are supported to access finance opportunities through existing project preparation facilities, Regional Development Banks (RDB) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) cities initiatives, and SCIP Global Platform sponsored matchmaking opportunities	Output 1.5. Cities receive support to access finance opportunities through existing project preparation facilities, Regional Development Banks (RDB) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) cities initiatives, and SCIP Global Platform sponsored matchmaking opportunities	The output was slightly reworded for alignment with new output wordings.
	Output 1.6. National governments and cities receive support to take policy and political leadership to unlock action on sustainable and integrated urban planning	
Component 2: **Global Platform for knowledge management, exchange, and program coordination**		
Outcome 2: Key urban actors are using cutting edge knowledge and best practices on sustainable integrated urban planning and investments from a global sustainable cities' platform	Outcome 2: Key urban actors and experts, in addition to those targeted in outcome 1, are using cutting edge knowledge and best practices on sustainable integrated urban planning and investments from a global sustainable cities' platform	The outcome was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.

Output at Concept Note Stage	Revised Outcomes/Outputs	Remarks
Output 2.1. Existing knowledge is curated, and a menu of sustainable urban development and integrated planning solutions is available	Output 2.1. Existing knowledge is curated, and a menu of sustainable urban development and integrated planning solutions is available to key urban actors and experts	The outcome was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Output 2.2. New knowledge is created responding to local demands and identified gaps, including case studies, training materials, reports, training modules	Output 2.2. New knowledge is generated and made available to key urban actors and experts, responding to local demands and identified gaps, including case studies, training materials, reports, training modules	The outcome was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Output 2.3. Global convening space with interactive website is created for cities to exchange knowledge	Output 2.3. Global convening space with website is created and made available for cities to exchange knowledge	Websites will have limited interactive features, for example, presenting content based on the city/region or topic. The website will not have interactive online courses though.
Output 2.4. Program monitoring framework is completed, and annual reporting and monitoring are undertaken		M&E output was removed from Component 2 and a standalone component (4) was created.
Component 3: **Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Partnerships**		
Outcome 3: Policy makers and key urban actors promote sustainable integrated urban planning and investments		
Output 3.1. Climate action plans and targets agreed by mayors in participating and new cities	Output 3.1. Mayors or equivalent in participating and new cities receive support to set science-based targets and prepare climate action plans	The output was reworded since mayors are not the only local authorities targeted, it depends on the local context.
Output 3.2. Awareness is raised, and action is promoted at a global level on the importance of cities in the achievement of MEA goals	Output 3.2. Awareness of policy makers and key urban actors is raised, and action is promoted at a global level on the importance of cities in the achievement of MEA goals	The output was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Output 3.3 Strategic partnerships are established with key actors including private sector, regional development banks, think-tanks and city initiatives to strengthen the platform	Output 3.3. Private sector networks and cities are mobilized to forge city-business partnerships	The output was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries and better reflect the project activities which are focused on the private sector.
Output 3.4. The SCIP Global Platform partnership vision on integrated sustainable urban planning is communicated to urban practitioners and decision makers	Output 3.4. The SCIP Global Platform partnership vision on integrated sustainable urban planning is communicated to policy makers and key urban actors	The output was reworded to specify the targeted beneficiaries.
Component 4: **Governance, monitoring, and evaluation**		
Outcome 4: The Global Platform is kept on track and coordinated at program and project level in all countries		
	Output 4.1. Monitoring and evaluation systems and project coordination are applied by the project teams and governance bodies	M&E output was removed from Component 2 (2.4) and a standalone component (4) was created.

Annex VII. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Evaluation Report, either as copied or summarised text.** In each case, references should be provided for the paragraphs and pages of the report from which the responses have been copied or summarised.

Table II: GEF portal inputs

Question: Information on progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: Stakeholders engagement has been found satisfactory. At both the local and regional levels, Global Platform (GP) activities are successful in mobilizing a variety of stakeholders at various levels. Steering Committee (SC) meetings discuss the work of IAs and EAs at length. In these meetings, the SC members take active participation and give inputs to the GP activities related to cities. While planning and implementing GP activities, the team themselves prioritize engagement between diverse sets of stakeholders available in the cities. City representatives who take part in GP activities also facilitate to connect the same activities between the local and regional levels. *(Evaluation Report, paragraph 136)* According to ProDoc (CEO Endorsement Package, 2020), GP aims to build on existing global initiatives, knowledge, expertise and activities from a diverse range of potential partners to strengthen the work of the GP; to build operational partnerships around common areas of geographical and thematic work; and expand the outreach and capabilities of the SCIP through these partnerships with additional cities and city practitioners. Regional coordinators of GP partners were found to be proactive in responding to the follow up queries even after the completion of the project events, fostering long-term partnerships and engagement. The initial mapping of stakeholders included following central actors: • National Level Governments • Business associations, private sectors, and financial initiatives • Academia and research institutes • Multilateral development banks • UN Organizations • City networks and initiatives • International NGOs • Organizations focusing on gender issues The stakeholders have been engaged in various ways. For instance, the national level governments are invited and engaged in major GP events as Executing Agency (EA) / Executing Partner (EP) of child projects. Academia and research institutes are consulted and used for preparing and later contextualizing various GP modules. The stakeholders, as envisioned by the CEO Endorsement Package (2020), are informed of GP efforts through newsletters and emails. However, more rigorous engagement would be suitable to connect more stakeholders with one another and provide city level engagements to actually contribute towards the success of child projects. In the Latin America Regional Forum attended by the evaluator, the latter found a very proactive and extensive participation and engagement of GP partners' in every session of the forum. The partners were found working in a very collaborative and cohesive environment that was well tuned and synchronized despite delivery of different types of activities by different partners in the forum.

(Evaluation Report, paragraphs 233-238)

Question: Information on progress on gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender results areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

Response:

The GP CEO Endorsement Package (2020) has a comprehensive gender action plan including output level indicators, targets, and means of verification. This level of sensitivity towards gender equity and inclusivity at the project level should be appreciated. UNEP, as an implementing agency, also keeps reminding the partners to reflect on gender balance and inclusivity while delivering GP activities.

The GP core team of partners has a fairly good gender balance, including in decision making positions.

The GP provides good consideration for participation of women, indigenous and minorities in their regular activities. Women participation is encouraged in all GP activities, including webinars and forums. Inclusivity is considered even in the panel of experts that are called in for GP activities. At the same time, the annual reports of GP have featured and emphasized gender-related impacts generated by the project- showcasing zoomed in country/city level examples of success stories in integrating gender related concerns.

Representation and roles are well balanced in Latin American context. The situation, however, is not the same for Africa and Asia. In Latin America, most of the focal points are women. However, in all regions, most of the mayors, ministers, and city officials are men. When speakers and participants are to be invited, it is difficult to maintain a good gender balance. Although nomination of female participants is always requested however, adequate women participation is not always achieved, especially in Asian and African context.

Likewise, gender and equity are difficult to always measure by number. It's not a problem of platform but of the situation. The impact cannot always be monitored by the numbers. Hence, addition of qualitative indicators may be appropriate when talking about the gender related indicators.

(Evaluation Report, paragraphs 243-248)

Question: Progress on the implementation of the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Response:

<u>Knowledge and Learning Deliverables:</u>

As a forum for organized knowledge exchange, GP creates momentum and puts integrated solutions into practice. It promotes behaviour modification, allowing cities to share knowledge and inspiration with one another. This cycle encourages creative and reproducible initiatives that serve as role models for others and support international efforts to increase capacity and exchange knowledge.

(Evalution Report, paragraph 59)

A lot of improvement can be seen against the baseline. It should be recognized that the cities' capacity has consistently improved, and city officials are now more confident and receptive to new

ideas and concepts. Cities are also trying to replicate and scale-up the GP activities at their own level after attending GP activities.

(Evalution Report, paragraph 137)

The UrbanShift Knowledge Library on the GP website has been updated with innovative solutions and resources that can act as a useful knowledge repository.

Methodology, process and quality reviews for UrbanShift courses have been completed. 8 online courses, linked to UrbanShift topics have been developed and were in the process of review, translation, and hosting. There has been some delay due to courses being more ambitious than originally planned, and costs of hosting and publishing exceeding anticipated values. The courses were launched at the Asia Forum in September 2023.

A functional and well maintained UrbanShift website with regularly updated content is providing a global convening space for cities to exchange knowledge. The delivery of exit strategy is on track as it is planned to start in the second semester of 2024.

(Evalution Report, paragraph 140)

Knowledge Products/Events:

UrbanShift Asia Forum and Latin America Forum are successfully held after careful planning and delivery of multiple thematic sessions. City Academies regional training with 50% women as panellists and presenters have been planned in each UrbanShift country, and four out of nine have been completed. The post event satisfaction survey rating of 4.8/5 reveals an excellent delivery of the academy in Buenos Aires (October 2022). The regional forums and the city academies conducted so far have provided a successful blueprint for hosting subsequent events in the future.

Peer exchanges in conjunction with city academies are being conducted. 8 out of 15 have been completed so far as reported by HYPR of Jul-Dec 2023. Other stand-alone peer exchanges have also been planned and are being conducted with the support of GP partners. These peer exchanges have proven a powerful tool to promote exchange, cooperation, and more importantly detailed and insightful knowledge on selected development issues (best practices) from the field, such as ‘integrated urban development’.

(Evaluation Report, paragraph 139)

The UrbanShift global platform is a valuable resource for urban practitioners, enabling the dissemination of cutting-edge information and best practices in sustainable integrated urban planning and investment. Significant engagement metrics have been recorded in 2023. According to 2023 statistics from PIR FY 2023, by June 2023, over 400 people participated in three webinars, over 93,000 website visits were recorded, while 6,139 people accessed to the UrbanShift Library of Knowledge. Moreover, the platform continued to reach a large audience with 6,701 email subscribers and over 4,500 newsletters opened by June 2023. By December 2023, 2359 people registered to take one or more online courses on UrbanShift Online City Academy.

Furthermore, the platform has allowed sharing of over 33 lessons learned and best practices via its modules. These courses apply to multiple countries and highlight innovative approaches for green infrastructure, tackling climate change, and preserving urban biodiversity. The Urban Forest Monitoring Strategy of Brasília, the Strategic Plan for Urban Resilience of Campinas, and the biodiversity conservation efforts of Chengdu and Shenzhen are a few examples. UrbanShift enables urban players throughout the world to improve sustainability and resilience in their communities via knowledge exchange and collaboration.

(Evaluation Report, paragraph 155)

Communication Strategy:

Communication among project partners and with city beneficiaries is going smoothly with the help of communication protocols in place. GP oftentimes faces challenges with communication when certain focal person changes in a city or agencies. GP regional/country coordinators emphasize including informal channels of communication (like WhatsApp) and having more than one focal person to prevent major obstacle in communication. The GP coordinators track the political context closely, anticipate changes, and respond to these changes to reduce their impact.

(Evaluation Report, paragraph 262)

Lessons Learned and Good Practice:

The success also depends on how long the participants (city officials) remain engaged with GP ideas and concepts, and strive for their integration in their city level plans and programs. Both the country and the regional coordinators have experienced that when participants of GP activities continue their communication with GP coordinators as well as with fellow participants, they learn more and this also keeps the conversation about global agendas alive. Cities seek out help for various issues they face that GP, or its partners can provide assistance with, while also sharing their knowledge with other cities.

(Evaluation Report, Lesson Learnt #2)

It is important for the finance and admin team to participate in GP activities and hence remain on the same page with programmatic team. There are various instances where the financial and admin team may not understand well, the project and the impact it has. It is important for the finance and admin team to participate in GP activities so that the team better understands the project activities including practicalities and under what circumstances they are delivered. This also helps to build good rapport and facilitates appropriate and timely reporting.

(Evaluation Report, Lesson Learnt #3)

Clear reporting lines and regional focus helps to make the project structure simple and modest despite inherent complexity of the multiple work streams. There are many local, regional, and global stakeholders with varied mandate, expertise and interests in GP. Different stakeholders have different strengths and weaknesses, adding to the complexity of GP partnership. Nevertheless, a clear reporting system and formats used have helped to make the matters simple and transparent. At the same time, conducting activities at the regional scale, as opposed to the global scale has improved the purpose and clarity of the project activities, as they are found better tailored to the contexts and needs of the region.

(Evaluation Report, Lesson Learnt #9)

Adaptive Management Actions:

Different cities have different contexts and there is definitely a need for adaptation in implementation, which does happen to some extent in GP.

While designing the GP activities, IAs and EAs of child projects are invited to co-design in order to make the GP deliverables contextual and localized. In this process, partners (WRI, C40, ICLEI) and technical experts are also involved and engaged in integrating local level precise and targeted information for making the selected agenda truly practical and pragmatic, suitable for the partner cities.

Even though the main modules are fixed, they still offer necessary flexibility for localizing the modules as per the local needs and priorities. The interests of participants were also incorporated

within the Regional Forum frameworks. For example, in the case of Regional Forum in India, upon the request of the participants from the city of Amman in Jordan, the agenda of Urban Growth was elaborately discussed and deliberated in the selected session of the forum. Further, the city of Amman also presented their study and shared their views and experiences.

The country/regional coordinator goes through the courses and makes sure that they are relevant to their country/regional context. All eight module courses on urban issues have been made online by the UrbanShift. In-person sessions like City Academies, Labs and National Local Dialogues are pre-designed (with relevant examples from partner countries/cities). These are also made in line with the national and city government priorities. For example, while conducting the city academy in Buenos Aires, there were examples mostly from other countries but did not have national and regional examples that the participants could relate to. Learning from this event, during the Asia Forum, more contents were tailored to regional and country specific examples. This is a good flexibility in the GP to consider the needs and demands of the country and incorporate lessons learnt. However, aligning GP with child project strategies is challenging. There is a need for regular update for which there may not always be resources available. While the overall quality of the content of GP modules is good, they may not always be in line with the ground realities of the cities.

CEO endorsement for the UrbanShift programme package was created during the pandemic; however, it seems to have been conceived before the pandemic. COVID hampered the progress of many in-person events and there was limited participation from the cities because of multiple restrictions, including limited knowledge of relevant digital technology. During the pandemic, most of the events were organized online. At the start of 2022, most events were arranged in-person. It was realized that not all events actually need to be conducted in person. There was a good degree of effectiveness in organizing programmes online as well. This practice of online meetings and discussions are practiced even today.

(Evaluation Report, paragraphs 172-176)

Question: Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's Environmental and Social Safeguards systems and procedures.

Response:

The Environment, Social, and Economic Review Note (ESERN), Annex P of CEO Endorsement Package (2020) identifies GP as a low-risk project. There is further recommendation in the annex that states: UNEP ESSF guiding principles-- resilience and sustainability; human rights, gender equality and women empowerment, accountability and leave no one behind--are still applicable for low-risk projects.

The environmental and social safeguards are mostly linked with the child projects that GP supports. The GP itself does not have any noticeable negative effects on environmental and social risks.

The capacity and knowledge building activities implemented by GP are directly contributing in preserving and promoting environmental and social concerns linked to urban development. The deliverables are also creating awareness and making city officials more sensitive and responsible towards environmental and social issues and concerns that emerge while carrying out developmental activities.

The safeguards are regularly monitored in the PIRs. PIR 2023 mentions that there has been no complaints or grievances related to social and/or environmental impacts during the reporting period. An interesting environmental and social safeguard development comes from Brasília, Brazil, which shared their Urban Forest and Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy during the Urban Biodiversity course at the Buenos Aires City Academy in November 2022. The strategy helped the city in mapping and understanding the behaviour of Capybara populations in the city lakes to reduce the

conflict with local communities and promote relocation and ticks' control in the Capybaras. Complaints from the communities drastically reduced with the strategy.

The GP team could further consider environmental (including GHG emissions) and social impacts of participation of people from various corners of the world in GP events. Low emission flights, plastic free events, reduced printing, reduced travel emissions, etc could be further considered.

(Evaluation Report, paragraphs 249-253)

ANNEX VIII. MID TERM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (ADOPTED FROM UNEP, 2023)

Q.N.	Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
A	**Strategic Relevance**		
A.1.	**Alignment to UNEP's, GEF and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) strategic priorities.**		
1	At project design/approval, what were the linkages between the project and UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and the POW indicators? Do they still hold?	Project aligned to MTS concept, priorities, and components	Project Document
2	Have national or regional level priorities or policies changed during project implementation such that the project is no longer aligned with them?	Revision in national and regional level priorities and policies, and its impact on project delivery	Revised priorities and policies
3	What was the level of alignment to the Bali Strategic Plan and in strengthening South-South Cooperation? Is this alignment still evident?	Project linkage with BSP and SSC, and its present relevance	Project Document
4	Confirm the level of alignment to the GEF's priority areas under which the project was approved. How is the project making a substantive contribution to the core indicators in this regard?	Project linkage with GEF's priority areas and its influence on core indicators	Project Document
5	Confirm the level of contribution to the global agenda (e.g., SDGs, UNCCD etc.)? What is the actual quantitative contribution, if evident, of the project to these agendas? What more could be done to quantify this contribution?	Project responsive to Global Agenda and its contribution in numbers (to measure)	Project Document and Progress Report
A.2.	**Complementarity/Coherence with relevant existing interventions**		
6	Is the project working in conjunction with other initiatives operating in the same implementation countries/regions? (especially if other initiatives were identified in the project design)	Project attuned to other similar initiatives at country and regional level	Project Document
7	Can new opportunities for complementarity and coherence with other relevant existing/emerging projects or initiatives be identified?	Project generated new opportunities in complement and coherence with other relevant projects/initiatives	Progress Reports and KM Events Reports
B	**Quality & Revision of Project Design**		
8	To what extent has the design of the project helped or hindered it in moving towards its own goals? What are its main strengths and are there any distinctive features?	Project design supports achievement of its goals	Project Document and Progress Report
9	What are the main weaknesses of the project's design?	Project design hindering achievement of its goals	Project Document and Progress Report
10	Is there need for the project's design (and results framework/TOC/indicators/targets) to be revised and, if yes, are the adjustments substantive or significant enough to require formal approval.	Gaps and/or Weaknesses in Project Design and need of corrective measures	Interview with IA and EA
C	**Effectiveness**		
C.1.	**Theory of Change**		
11	Does the TOC properly reflect the project's intended change process?	Project induced changes consistent with TOC	TOC and Progress Report
12	Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?	Roles and responsibilities support effective interventions	Progress and Performance Report

Q.N.	Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
13	Is the project Theory of Change (ToC) and intervention logic coherent and realistic from a cause-and-effect perspective?	TOC and intervention logic is coherent and realistic	TOC and Project Progress Report
14	Are the causal pathways fully supported with a complete set of contributing conditions ('drivers' are external factors largely under the influence of the project; 'assumptions' are external factors largely outside the influence of the project).	TOC supported by contributing conditions	TOC
15	Are results statements in keeping with UNEP definitions (e.g., outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)	Result statements in line with UNEP definitions	Project Document
16	How realistic are the risks and assumptions of the project as stated in the project document? Do they need to be expanded at mid-point for the remainder of the project?	Risks and Assumptions, and their role in meeting project targets and delivery	Project Document
17	What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?	Strategies leading to achievement of project objectives	Interview with IA and EA
18	Does the ToC/results statements and intervention logic need to be adjusted? If yes, what is the level of formal approval needed for the level of revisions (donor, UNEP?)	Linkage between TOC and intervention logic, and need of adjustment, if any	Interview with IA
C.2.	**Availability of Outputs**		
19	Are results statements in keeping with UNEP definitions (e.g., outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)	Alignment of Result statements with UNEP definitions	Project Document
20	Are the planned inputs and strategies identified realistic, appropriate, and adequate to achieve the results? Have they been sequenced sufficiently to efficiently deliver the expected results?	Inputs and Strategies lead to achievement of expected results	Project Document and Progress Reports
21	Are the outputs supportive of the ToC and pathways identified? Do outputs link to intended outcomes which link to longer lasting (for GCF 'paradigm shift') objectives of the project?	Outputs' influence on TOC and pathways, leading to intended outcomes and long-lasting objectives	Project Document
22	Has the project been successful to-date in producing its programmed outputs and milestones as per the Project Document and workplan, as well as their quality, usefulness, and timeliness?	Project Implementation contributing to achievement of outputs and milestones as per Prodoc.	Progress Report
23	Were stakeholders appropriately involved in producing programmed outputs?	Stakeholders' involvement in outputs' delivery	Project Document and KII
24	What were the reasons behind any failures/successes of the project in producing its different outputs?	Status of outputs with reasons	Progress Report and KII
C.3.	**Progress towards Project Outcomes**		
25	Are the planned project outcomes relevant and realistic to the situation on the ground?	Project Outcomes relevancy and realness in given situation	KII, GD
26	What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the outcomes of the project (including contributing factors and constraints)?	Scale of achievement of outcomes	Progress Report
27	Are additional activities/different strategies needed for outcomes to be achieved? If yes, which ones?	Implementation of selected additional activities and achievement of outcomes	KII, GD
28	To what extent is the project able to demonstrate changes against the baseline?	Project induced changes in baseline	Progress Report
29	Can any unintended or unexpected positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the project's interventions?	Project's interventions and unexpected/ unintended effects if any	Progress Report, KII

Q.N.	Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
30	In the instance of unintended results, what have been the contributing factors?	Factors causing unintended results	Progress Report, KII
C.4.	**Likelihood of Impact**		
31	Replication and Scalability: Assess the extent to which the activities can be sustained post project implementation and scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries and identification what are the explicit conditions/success factors that enable the replication or scalability.	Prospects and explicit conditions of sustainability and scalability of the project within the country and in the region	KII, GD
31	Innovativeness: What role has the project played in the provision of "thought leadership," "innovation," or "unlocked additional climate finance" for climate change adaptation/mitigation in the project and country context? Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.	Project contribution to innovation, unlock additional climate finance both in the project and country context.	KII, GD
C.5.	**Adaptive Management**		
33	To what extent, and how, has the project applied adaptive management? Is this linked to its monitoring function? Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.	Project practicing adaptive management both to implement and monitor its activities	Project Document, Progress Report
34	(Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?	Project adaption to COVID-19 challenges	Progress Report, KII
35	What has been the project's ability to adapt and evolve based on continuous lessons learned and the changing development landscape?	Project adaptation to new learnings and changing development landscapes	KII, GD
36	What are project lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities to date? What might have been done better or differently?	Lessons and need of adjustment in project delivery approach	Progress Report, KII
37	What factors of the project achievements are contingent on specific local context or enabling environmental factors?	Influence of local context on project achievements	KII, GD
38	Does anything need to be changed to enable the project to complete on time and within budget (i.e., to avoid a no cost extension)?	Changes suggested (if needed) to complete the project on time and within budget	Project Document, KII
D	**Financial Management**		
D.1.	**Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's Policies and Procedures**		
39	How has the project's financial reporting and management adhered to the policies and procedures of UNEP?	Project financial reporting in consistence with UNEP procedures	Project Document, KII
40	Where relevant, have procurement regulations been properly followed?	Procurement regulations followed	Project Document
41	Have any major changes to the workplan been reflected in a budget revision, where appropriate?	Change in workplan reflected in budget revision	Project Document, KII
42	Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point?	Rate of expenditure	KII, GD
D.2.	**Completeness of Financial Information**		
44	What is the level of completeness of financial information? Are there any major omissions?	Completeness of financial information	KII, GD
45	How has co-financing been reported on against what was planned? To what extent has committed co-finance been secured and what are the implications of any shortfalls, if any?	Status of co-finance, their reporting and implication of any shortfalls	Progress Report, KII
46	Are there any aspects of financial management that are affecting project performance?	Linkage between financial management and project performance	Progress Report, KII

Q.N.	Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
E	**Efficiency**		
47	Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point and against the workplan?	Rate of expenditure as per workplan	KII, GD
48	Are project resources being utilized in the most economical, effective, and equitable ways possible (considering value for money; absorption rate; commitments versus disbursements and projected commitments; co-financing; etc.)?	Utilization of project resources followed standard financial management models	Progress Report, KII, GD
49	To what extent is the project building on existing institutions, lessons of other initiatives and ongoing projects?	Influence of existing institutions and lessons of relevant initiatives on project building	KII, GD
50	To what extent is the project leveraging efforts of partners and of possible champions towards achievement of its outcomes, impact, and sustainability	Partners and champions support towards achievement of project outcomes, impact, and sustainability	KII, GD
F	**Monitoring and Reporting**		
F.1.	**Monitoring of Project Implementation**		
51	Is there an effective monitoring mechanism for the project's implementation (this is separate from, and supports, reporting)?	Monitoring mechanism outside separate forms used for reporting	Project Document, KII
52	Are regular field missions, where relevant, being undertaken and a report filed?	Field missions' objectives and corresponding reports	Field Mission Reports, KII
53	Were there clear baselines indicators and/or benchmark for performance measurements? How are these being used in project management?	Baselines and benchmarks used for performance measurements	Project Document, KII
54	To what extent is the project's M&E data and mechanism(s) contributing to achieving project results?	Effectiveness of M&E data and their contribution to project results	Project Document, KII
55	How has monitoring been conducted (is that according to plans) and how have results been used to adapt implementation approach?	Monitoring model in use and internalization of monitoring results	KII, GD, Field Mission Reports
56	Is the monitoring budget being used appropriately?	Monitoring budget and its use	Progress Report, KII, GD
F.2.	**Project Reporting**		
57	To what extent have UNEP and Donor reporting requirements been fulfilled to-date?	Donors reporting requirements and project's response	Relevant Reports, KII
58	Are the project objectives and ToC being used in performance management and progress reporting?	Use of project objectives and ToC in performance management and reporting	Progress Report, KII
59	Where there is staff movement/turnover, are proper handing over processes in place and being used? Is UNEP's institutional memory being built effectively?	Handing over practices of project	KII, GD
G	**Exit Strategy & Sustainability**		
60	What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability, scalability, or replication of project outcomes/outputs/results?	Key factors sensitive to sustainability, scalability, or replication	Progress Report, KII, GD
61	Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end, being incorporated in the project implementation?	Exit Strategy, Sustainability and their integration in project implementation	Project Document, Progress Report, KII
62	Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impact?	Social or political factors influencing project results and sustenance of their impacts	KII, GD
63	Is the level of ownership (and other decision-making bodies and public pressure) by	Government ownership, political will and their commitment for taking results forward	KII, GD

Q.N.	Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
	Government and political will strong enough to take results forward towards impact?		
64	Has communication and collaboration among the institutions responsible and capacitated been strengthened and is this likely to be sustained?	Level of communication and collaboration among responsible institutions	Progress Report, KII, GD
H	**Factors Affecting Project Performance (x-cutting)**		
H.1.	**Project Inception**		
65	Was the inception period properly used to confirm all analyses, partner capacity and project plans etc.? Did this include an inception workshop and was a report filed?	Utilization of the inception period for confirming all analyses, partner capacity, and project plans	Inception Report, KII, GD
66	Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?	Distribution of roles and responsibilities and their effectiveness	KII, GD
67	Is the governance structure appropriate and are all mechanisms functioning efficiently?	Governance structure corresponding to roles and functions	Project Document, Progress Report, KII, GD
H.2.	**Quality of Project Management and Supervision**		
68	Assess the effectiveness of project management to-date with regard to providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution.	Project management and its role in providing effective and productive leadership	KII, GD
H.3.	**Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation**		
69	Is the stakeholder analysis still appropriate and adequate to support the project's ambitions?	Appropriateness and adequacy of stakeholder analysis	KII, GD
70	What has been the degree and effectiveness of partnership collaboration with stakeholders?	Degree and effectiveness of collaboration with project partners	Progress Report, KII, GD
H.4.	**Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity**		
	Following questions are phrased from a gender equality perspective – the same questions should be asked of all marginalized and/or vulnerable groups including those living with disability and Indigenous peoples.		
71	Have plans for inclusivity, equality and/or equity been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?	Implementation of plans for inclusivity, equality, and equity	Progress Report, KII, GD
72	Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end, being incorporated in the project implementation?	Exit Strategy, Sustainability and their integration in project implementation	Project Document, KII
74	Does the project only rely on sex-disaggregated data per population statistics?	Use of sex-disaggregated and other purposive data	Project Document, KII
75	Are financial resources/project activities explicitly allocated to enable women to benefit from project interventions?	Explicit allocation of financial resources for women beneficiaries	Project Document, KII
76	Does the project account in activities and planning for local gender dynamics and how project interventions affect women as beneficiaries?	Local gender dynamics in project planning and interventions.	Project Document, KII

Q.N.	Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
77	Do women as beneficiaries know their rights and/or benefits from project activities/interventions?	Awareness of rights and benefits among women beneficiaries	KII
78	How do the results for women compare to those for men?	Comparison of results for women and men	Progress Report, KII
79	Is the decision-making process transparent and inclusive of both women and men?	Transparency and inclusiveness of the decision-making process	KII
80	To what extent are female stakeholders or beneficiaries satisfied with the project gender equality results?	Level of satisfaction of female stakeholders with gender equality results	KII, GD
81	Did the project sufficiently address cross cutting issues including gender?	Inclusion of cross-cutting issues, including gender, in project design, implementation and monitoring	KII
82	Where gender and minority roles are not evident in the project design - how was it brought into implementation? (i.e., how has project implementation considered differentiated roles in society and how these influence project results?	Integration of gender and minority roles into project implementation	Project Document, KII
83	Have plans for inclusivity, equality and/or equity been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?	Implementation status of plans for inclusivity, equality, and equity	Project Document, KII
H.5.	**Environmental and Social Safeguards**		
84	Are safeguard identification and mitigation plans being monitored and steps taken to minimize negative effects?	Monitoring of safeguard identification and mitigation plans	KII
85	To what extent did the project adhere to the environmental and social safeguards laid out in UNEP policy?	Adherence to environmental and social safeguards laid out in UNEP policy	KII
H.6.	**Country ownership and drivenness/championship**		
86	How well is country ownership reflected in the project governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms or other consultations?	Country ownership in project governance, coordination, and consultation mechanisms	KII, GD
87	To what extent are country level systems for project management or M&E utilized in the project?	Integration of project and country-level systems for project management or M&E	Progress Report, KII
88	To what extent has the project created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions (champions) to catalyse change (without which the project would not have achieved its results)? What level of support was given to these actors?	Creation of opportunities and support for individuals or institutions to catalyse change	Progress Report, KII
89	To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of the national partners?	Alignment of the project with national level plans and polices-development and climate change plans, sub-national policy and priorities	KII, GD
H.7.	**Communication and Public Awareness**		
90	What was the level of learning and sharing among project partners?	Learning and sharing among project partners	Progress Report, Field Mission Reports, KII, GD
91	What public awareness activities took place, and how effective were they in supporting the realization (and further sustaining) of project results?	Public awareness activities in supporting realization of project results	Progress Report, KII, GD

ANNEX IX. BACKGROUND OF CHILD PROJECTS

Background of Child Projects (Sources: CEO Endorsements and Child Project Status, UNEP, 2023)

P.N.	Project Name	Components	Outcomes	Outputs	IA	EP	Project Duration	Expected Implementation Start (as per CEO Endorsement)	Actual First Disbursement
10465	Promoting integrated metropolitan planning and innovative urban technology investments in **Brazil**	4 + Monitoring and Evaluation	4 (1 for each component)	13 (3+4+3+3 for different outcomes)	UNEP	GoB (MoSTIC)	48 months	15 December, 2021	25 March, 2022
10466	Integrated low-carbon and conservation investments in **Argentinian** cities	4 + Monitoring and Evaluation	4 (1 for each component)	12 (3+3+4+2 for different outcomes)	UNEP	GoA (MoESD)	48 months	15 October, 2021	25 March, 2022
10467	Transitioning to an urban green economy and delivering global environmental benefits (**Costa Rica**)	5 (Monitoring and Evaluation as the fifth component)	5 (1 for each component)	20 (8+4+4+3+1 for different components)	UNDP	Organization of Tropical Studies, CSO	84 months	01 February, 2022	06 April, 2022
10484	Liveable Cities in **India**: Demonstrating Sustainable Urban Planning and Development through Integrated Approaches	5 + Monitoring and Evaluation	5 (1 for each component)	13 (3+3+4+3 for different components)	UNEP, ADB	GoI (MoHUA, NIUA, GCC, PSCDL, PMC, SMC)	48 months	01 July, 2022	29 December, 2022
10486	Strengthening Marrakech's sustainable development through innovative planning and financing. (**Morocco**)	4	4 (1 for each component)	13 (2+5+3+3 for different components)	UNDP	GoM (MoEME-DoE)	60 months	01 April, 2022	June, 2023
10494	**Indonesia** Sustainable Cities Impact Program	4	4 (1 for each component)	12 (2+4+3+3 for different components)	World Bank	Government of Indonesia (BAPPENAS)	60 months	July 01, 2022	14 April, 2023

P.N.	Project Name	Components	Outcomes	Outputs	IA	EP	Project Duration	Expected Implementation Start (as per CEO Endorsement)	Actual First Disbursement
10530	**Rwanda** Urban Development Project II	6 (main 4 – divided into technical assistance and investments)	15 (3+3+2+3+2+2 for different components)	20 (2+2+2+6+3+5 for different components)	World Bank	GoR (MININFRA, REMA, CAK)	60 months	November 01, 2020	11 August, 2021
10768	Resilient Urban **Sierra Leone** Project	4 (2+3+0+0 sub-components)	9 (3+4+1+1 for different components)	24 (10+10+1+3 for different components)	World Bank	GoSL (FCC, FDDiMoFNDMA, WARDC, BCC)	60 months	July 01, 2021	21 September, 2021
10822	Green and Carbon Neutral Cities (**China**)	3 (0+2+0 sub-components)	4 (1+2+1 for different components)	17 (4+9+4 for different components)	World Bank	GoC (MGoCCN, CCUDoNDRC)	60 months	June 15, 2022	28 February, 2023

GoB- Government of Brazil, MoSTIC – Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communication, GoA- Government of Argentina, MoESD- Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, CSO- Civil Society Organizations, GoI – Government of India MoHUA- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, NIUA- National Institute for Urban Affairs, GCC- Greater Chennai Corporation, PSCDL- Pune Smart City Development Corporation, PMC- Pune Municipal Council, SMC- Surat Municipal Council, GoM- Government of Morocco, MoEME-DoE- Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Environment – Department of Environment), Government of Indonesia, GoR- Government of Rwanda, MININFRA- Ministry of Infrastructure, REMA- Rwanda Environment Management Authority, CAK- City Administration of Kigali, GoSL- Government of Sierra Leone, FCC- Freetown City Council, FDDiMoFNDMA- Fiscal Decentralization Division of Ministry of Finance, National Disaster Management Agency, WARDC- Western Area Rural District Council, BCC- Bo City Council, and GoC- Government of China, MGoCCN- Municipal Governments of Chongqing, Chengdu, and Ningbo, CCUDoNDRC- China Center for Urban Development of National Development and Reform Commission

ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main evaluation product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the evaluation object • clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope • overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report *:* The Executive summary provides a concise overview of the main findings. Reference is made to the complete performance ratings table and the Strategic Questions in in the Conclusions section	5
Quality of the 'Project Overview' Section Purpose: introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the evaluation itself. To include: • its institutional context within UNEP (where managed from etc) • **implementation structure (with diagram)** • the problem/issue the project aims to address • project parameters for the evaluation (start and end date; geographic reach; total budget etc) • **project results framework - Theory of Change diagram[43] to be included under Evaluation findings below** *(justify any revisions to the formulation of results statements to conform to UNEP definitions and/or international standards)* • any major and agreed changes to the project (e.g. formal revisions, additional funding etc) • description of targeted groups/stakeholders and their relationship with the project **(including, stakeholder analysis diagram)** • any external challenges faced by the project (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval etc • financial tables ((a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	Final report: The report provides a clear and concise overview of the project and all relevant elements are addressed.	5

[43] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports, etc. Revisions to results may be formalized through official communication between the project team and the funding partner (e.g. Steering Committee minutes; email exchange with the donor; GEF Project Implementation Review report; email confirming adoption of revisions after a mid-term review etc.)

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
Quality of the 'Evaluation Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of evaluation methods, demonstrates the credibility of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of evaluation data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) • number and type of respondents *(see table template)* • selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation • methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) • details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, evaluation by stakeholders etc.) • methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) • evaluation limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) • ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. *'Throughout the evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.*	Final report: The report provides the necessary methods information, albeit drawing on some general material. UNEP's standard table of possible/actual respondents is not provided. The complexity of the evaluand (Child Coordinating Project of a GEF Programme) and any challenges that posed, could have been mentioned here.	4
Quality of the Theory of Change Purpose: to set out the TOC at Evaluation in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include: • description of how the *TOC at Evaluation*[44] was designed (who was involved etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process • summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. *The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-*	Final report: A detailed TOC and narrative is provided.	5

[44] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Evaluation report.		
Quality of Key Findings within the Report Presentation of evidence: nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. Consistency within the report: all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. Findings Statements (where applicable): The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual evaluation criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. **A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.** In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report: The report addresses the performance of a complex evaluand clearly and with justification of the findings.	5.5
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section Purpose: to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[45]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report: Covered with helpful detail.	5.5
Quality of the 'Quality and Revision of Project Design' Section Purpose: to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report: A detailed assessment of project design quality is provided.	5.5
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section **(i) Availability of Outputs:**	Final report:	5.5

[45] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	The report provides a detailed assessment of performance at output level, which should assist the project team to optimise the project's performance in the remainder of its implementation period.	
ii) Progress Towards Project Outcomes: Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report: The performance at outcome level is assessed in the context of the project's results indicators and provides detailed insights into the progress to date.	5.5
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: Purpose: to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown • an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents • explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report: The report provides a structured assessment of the likelihood of impact, grounded in a discussion of the progression through the TOC expected change process.	5.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section Purpose: to assess a) whether the rate of spend is consistent with the project's length of implementation to-date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of outputs and b) whether financial reporting and/or auditing requirements are being met consistently and to adequate standards by all parties. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • *highlights* any financial management issues that are affecting the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance	Final report: This section covers all sub-categories of financial management.	5.5
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report *:* This section provides helpful insights. Elements addressed under Efficiency include: cost-effectiveness, financial delivery, human resources, time-frame and co-financing.	5.5
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART results. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • quality of monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • quality of project reporting *(e.g. UNEP and donor reports)*	Final report: All elements of this section are addressed.	5
Quality of Sustainability Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level given the socio-political, financial and institutional context). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • likelihood of enduring benefits from the project • existence of an appropriate exit strategy	Final report *:* The report provides a detailed discussion of likely sustainability.	5.5
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not	Final report *:* All sub-categories are addressed substantively.	5.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the evaluation report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: • quality of project management and supervision[46] • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness		
Quality of the Conclusions Section **(i) Conclusions Narrative:** Purpose: to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance to-date (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to any key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions are being considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report *:* The conclusions provide a well-rounded and readable overview of the performance of the project to-date. Responses to the strategic questions are provided.	5.5
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for use during the remainder of the project (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit evaluation findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations	Final report*:* The lessons are thoughtful and should be of help to the project team and others working in a similar area.	5
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: Purpose: to present proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve	Final report *:* The recommendations are relevant and practical and should be addressed by the project team in its management	5.5

[46] In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Rating
concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the UNEP Unit/Branch can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.	response/recommendations implementation plan.	
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation **(i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report *:* The report is well-structured and all annexes that were requested are provided. Mid Term Evaluations provide for some flexibility in the presentation of the report.	5.5
(ii) Writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report *:* The report is well-written to a high standard.	5.5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.5**

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	**Compliance**	
	Yes	**No**
Independence:		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	**Y**	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	**Y**	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		**N**
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?	**N/A**	
Financial Management:		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?	**Y**	
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?	**Y**	
Timeliness:		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?	**Y**	
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?	**Y**	
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	**Y**	
Project's engagement and support:		
14. Were the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?	**Y**	
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	**Y**	
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	**Y**	
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	**Y**	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?	**Y**	
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?	**Y**	
20. Were the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on the draft evaluation report?	**Y**	
Quality assurance:		

21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed?	**Y**	
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	**Y**	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?	**Y**	
24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports?	**Y**	
Transparency:		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?	**Y**	
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	**Y**	
28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	**Y**	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	**Y**	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	**Y**	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

Process Criterion Number	**Evaluation Office Comments**
	N/A