



MOPAN 2015-16 Assessments

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Executive Summary

Executive summary

This institutional assessment of UN-Habitat covers the period from 2014 to mid-2016. Applying the MOPAN 3.0 methodology, the assessment considers organisational systems, practices and behaviours, as well as the results UN-Habitat achieves. The assessment considers five performance areas: four relate to organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management and performance management) and the fifth relates to development effectiveness (results). It assesses UN-Habitat's performance against a framework of key indicators and associated micro-indicators that comprise the standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. The assessment also provides an overview of its performance trajectory. This is the first MOPAN assessment of UN-Habitat.

Context

UN-HABITAT

- Is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote the development of socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements and the achievement of adequate shelter for all
- Is governed by a 58-member Governing Council and is managed as a non-resident agency of the UN subject to UN, rules and regulations
- Is focused on promoting urban governance and planning, economic opportunities and delivery of basic services, with the aim of ensuring that slum upgrading programmes, and risk reduction and rehabilitation, are integrated with overall city planning and development
- Is seeking more predictable multi-year funding for its normative work, as the volume of voluntary non-earmarked contributions for its core activities is declining
- Has gone through an extensive reform process to improve efficiency, shifting to a decentralised and matrix-based operating model and a new system for financial and performance management

Organisation at a glance

- Established 1978
- Expenditure: USD 167 million (2015)
- Active in 76 countries
- Over 400 core staff
- Secretariat operates through:
 - Nairobi headquarters
 - 4 regional offices
 - 4 liaison offices
 - 55 country offices

Overall performance

The 2016 MOPAN assessment concludes that overall, UN-Habitat largely meets the requirements of an effective multilateral organisation and is fit for purpose, although performance can be strengthened and improved in some areas. It provides strong leadership on sustainable urbanisation, demonstrating a deep understanding of the changing nature of urbanisation and a capability to adapt and respond to these changes. UN-Habitat's organisational architecture is aligned with its mandate, and its programmes and interventions achieve impressive results. The organisation brings innovative and creative approaches to its operations.

UN-Habitat demonstrates relevance, and is responsive to the demands of its partners and the conditions where it works. Its operational models and programmes are relevant and well-designed; they flow from its strategic mandate and the interests of partners. It demonstrates transparency and accountability in its operations, and strong compliance with financial requirements. The inflexibility of UN systems, related to financial and human resources management, pose key constraints to the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness, as does the decline in its core funding. The organisation delivers positive results in a reasonably efficient and cost-effective way across all areas of operation, with impact particularly in relation to sustainable urbanisation. While the organisation has evolved in a positive direction, performance can be further improved in a number of areas.

Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths

- **Made strategic shift to sustainable urbanisation** and how cities will be managed in future
- **Strategic Plan is aligned with global urbanisation challenges** and implemented consistently at all levels
- **Considerable investment made in reform of the organisation:** the new decentralised matrix management approach is working effectively to achieve integrated results across programmes and normative work
- **A strong team approach** facilitates agility, learning and efficiency
- Its technical work adds value and its participatory project design ensures relevance; **its partners value its support and have high levels of confidence in it**
- **Its powerful new partnerships** with city, regional and national governments, as well as traditional and new development partners, have the potential to be transformative
- **Has embraced results-based management at all levels**, improving accountability for results
- **Positive results achieved** across all areas of operation

Areas for improvement

- **Stabilise core funding**, and increase the proportion and volume of flexible core funding, to better focus on strategic priorities and normative work
- **A new partnership strategy**, linked to the inter-agency framework and the current resource mobilisation strategy, is an opportunity to address the funding issue with members and donors
- **Expedite institutional reforms**, specifically the roll out of the Umoja management system, to minimise disruption and more quickly achieve efficiency and transparency benefits
- **Deepen mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues:** strengthen processes for embedding climate change and human rights approaches and knowledge into programme and project design, implementation and oversight
- Engage in **more comprehensive consultation with beneficiaries** to improve analysis and results in cross-cutting issues
- **Strengthen reporting at the outcome level;** apply a more systematic approach to establishing targets and data collection
- **Develop comprehensive results analysis tools**, more **systematic approaches** to knowledge management, and better processes to **track partnerships and accountability** across the organisation
- **Incorporate learning from evaluations** through a stronger feedback mechanism to improve organisational performance
- **Focus more on sustainability** in interventions and on identifying and managing risks throughout the programme delivery process