Two-thirds of the world’s urban population today live in cities and towns of Asia and the Pacific, with urbanization continuing at an unprecedented pace, scale, and complexity across the region. Current development patterns and unplanned growth in some cities have often led to significant and unsustainable use of resources, environmental degradation, and unmanageable waste and pollution. These challenges are especially problematic for poor and vulnerable populations with limited access to basic infrastructure, services, and decent livelihoods.

The Project in summary...

| Objective | Strengthen local government and key urban stakeholders’ capacity to contribute to the 2030 Agenda through improved urban resource management processes, including: • Collaborative and adaptive urban governance through multi-stakeholder coalitions; • Integrated analysis and planning through systems approaches; and • Evidence-based decision making using data, information, analysis, and dissemination |
| Implementation Period | 2018 – 2021 |
| Implementing UN Entities | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) |
| Project Cities, Focus Areas, & Implementing Partners | Battambang, Cambodia Sustainable Waste Management Habitat for Humanity Cambodia | Nadee, Thailand Sustainable Waste Management Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand (EARTH) Foundation |
| | Naga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines Sustainable Waste Management Naga City People’s Council |
| | Nasinu, Fiji Sustainable Waste Management Commonwealth Local Government Forum |
| | Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Sustainable Urban Forestry The Asia Foundation |
| Key Stakeholders | • Local government staff and council members • Urban stakeholders from civil society, academia, and the private sector • National-level SDG (and other relevant global agendas) focal points • Line ministries and subnational agencies with urban interests • Local government training institutions |

The Challenge

Two-thirds of the world’s urban population today live in cities and towns of Asia and the Pacific, with urbanization continuing at an unprecedented pace, scale, and complexity across the region. Current development patterns and unplanned growth in some cities have often led to significant and unsustainable use of resources, environmental degradation, and unmanageable waste and pollution. These challenges are especially problematic for poor and vulnerable populations with limited access to basic infrastructure, services, and decent livelihoods.
Why Localize?

When adopting the 2030 Agenda, Governments pledged to "work with local authorities and communities to renew and plan our cities and human settlements to foster community cohesion and personal security and to stimulate innovation and employment." While SDG 11 aspires to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable," it is not the only SDG relevant to cities. In fact, most of the SDGs have direct relevance to cities and around two-thirds of all targets will need to be met by cities. Targets, and the means for their implementation, therefore need to be established at the local level.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the 2021 C40 Cities meeting remarked, "With solidarity and common purpose, we can achieve an inclusive, sustainable recovery, ignite the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, and lay the foundations for the clean, green cities of the future". This Project aims to assist cities and communities with operationalizing the 'what' and 'how' of localizing SDGs and align national priorities of implementing the 2030 Agenda and other international development frameworks at the local level.

Localizing means considering subnational contexts, challenges, and opportunities, from the setting of goals and targets to the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of their achievement. Within the Project framework, ‘localizing’, is seen not merely as a technical or predefined process, but as a process that needs to be sensitive to local opportunities, priorities, and ideas. It goes beyond adjusting global goals to the local level and calls for co-creating solutions through the generation of genuine partnerships, resulting in more inclusive, needs-driven, local-level responses to global challenges and objectives. Ultimately, localizing means enabling local governments and communities to be the catalysts of change to support the achievement of the global goals.

What is Sustainable Urban Resource Management (SURM)?

SURM is an approach that moves from wasteful and harmful ‘take-make-dispose’ linear models to more circular approaches that use resources more equitably. SURM aims to strengthen the capacities of local governments and other key urban stakeholders to adopt policies and take action that minimize the negative and maximize the positive environmental, social, and economic impacts of urban consumption and production systems.

SURM enables cities to operate within planetary boundaries while fulfilling essential human needs and ensuring well-being and prosperity for all.

SURM in our Project

Our Project is based on three mutually reinforcing capacity development streams – (1) collaborative and adaptive urban governance through multi-stakeholder coalitions; (2) integrated analysis and planning through systems approaches; and (3) evidence-based decision making using data, information, analysis, and dissemination. To ensure that the three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic, and environmental) are integrated, the conceptual framework proposes mainstreaming four components throughout the capacity development streams. These components are Linear to Circular, Pro-poor, Gender Responsive, and Resilient and serve as key cross-cutting issues. The ‘components’ and ‘capacity development streams’ are intended to serve as the conceptual bridge to align urban resource management with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
Pilot City Selection and Project Steps

UN ESCAP and UN-Habitat invited secondary cities and towns in Asia and the Pacific to join the Project through a Call for Expression of Interest. The project was launched at the Regional Inception Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand (December 2018), which brought together stakeholders from each pilot city, including from local government, non-government and community-based organizations, academia and the private sector. At the workshop participants gained insight into the conceptual framework and established networks for co-learning and peer-support on Localizing the 2030 Agenda through SURM. The cities selected priority SURM sectors ranging from solid waste management to urban forestry and chose local partner institutions to engage throughout the Project.

To ensure a participatory process, the cities conducted stakeholder mapping and formed Multi-Stakeholder Networks (MSN) consisting of local government and key urban stakeholders as well as smaller Core Teams drawing from the MSN, with the local partner institutions coordinating engagement throughout the Project to strengthen capacity, identify opportunities for collaboration, and plan and implement activities systematically and inclusively.

Cities gathered sector specific data and conducted initial assessments to provide an understanding of the baseline situation, including a snapshot of the existing social, economic, and environmental systems, regulations, and policies in place. At Strategic Planning Workshops in each city, the MSNs with UN ESCAP, UN-Habitat, and other stakeholders identified data gaps for further research, and the cities developed vision statements to guide further action.
Following the Strategic Planning Workshops, cities continued conducting research leading to outcome reports that were presented during **Systems Thinking Visioning Workshops** to help pilot cities make evidence-based decisions on their priority sectors that enhance livelihood opportunities. Participants further examined linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their SURM focus areas. Using SDG Cluster Analysis, Root Cause Analysis, Pilot Project Prioritization Matrices, and SWOT Analysis to assess project feasibility, cities began planning and implementing **SURM pilot projects.**

Building on their pilot projects, the cities have been aligning activities with the 2030 Agenda and local, provincial, and national plans and policies. The Project is supporting cities with developing **Strategy Papers** and **Policy Action Plans** which can lay the foundation for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), continuing progress on SDGs beyond the Project. Based on the cities’ experiences, an **online course on Localizing the SDGs through SURM** is being developed to further disseminate methods and training tools across the Asia-Pacific region. **Closing Workshops** will highlight lessons learned and best practices to monitor and evaluate SURM activities aligned with SDGs.

**Key Project Activities (2018 - 2021)**

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<th>Expression of Interest Call to Cities</th>
<th>Regional Inception Workshop Dec 2018</th>
<th>Strategic Planning Workshops June - Aug 2019</th>
<th>Systems Thinking Visioning Workshops July - Dec 2020</th>
<th>City Strategy Papers &amp; Policy Plans</th>
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<td>2018</td>
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- **Five cities selected**
- **Localizing the 2030 Agenda through SURM e-learning course launch**
- **Monitoring & Evaluation of Pilot Projects and Overall Project**

**SurM Pilot Project Implementation**

- **Systems approaches** – integrated analysis and planning; SDG cluster, root cause, and SWOT analyses; project prioritization; policy coherence
- **Evidence based decision making** – data collection, assessments, sector specific research (2020), dissemination
- **Collaboration** - stakeholder mapping and engagement, Core Team & Multi-Stakeholder Networks, inclusive consultation,

For more information visit: www.unescap.org/projects/da11 or email: escap-edd-suds@un.org.
To learn more about the 2030 Agenda and projects in the region see: http://sdghelpdesk.unescap.org and www.urbansdgplatform.org