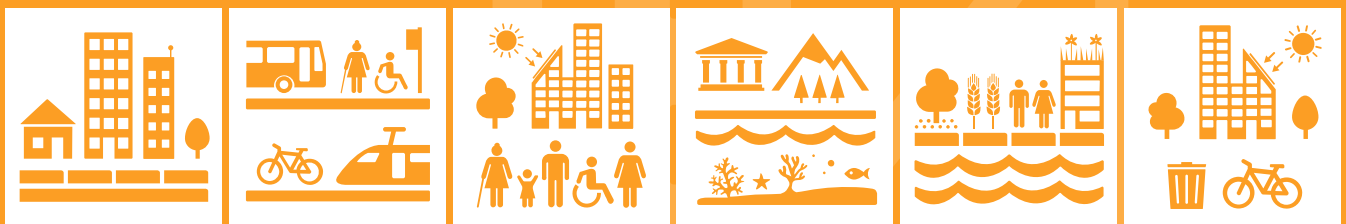


# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Urban Transition Pathways for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

## DEVELOPING A NATIONAL ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11



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## BACKGROUND

Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG11), which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, holds paramount importance in the context of the Asia-Pacific region. This region is witnessing an unprecedented wave of urbanization, with millions of people migrating to cities in search of better opportunities. However, urban growth often leads to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient housing, traffic congestion, and environmental degradation.

Thus, **it is imperative to have a national SDG11 roadmap to facilitate the alignment of national urban policies, urban planning strategies, and resource allocation for urban development with the SDGs, thereby fostering coordinated efforts towards targets of SDG 11 as well as various SDG goals and targets directly pertaining to cities.** In this context, this guideline provides a comprehensive framework to address these issues systematically at the territorial level.

The inclusion of the 11th 'urban' goal in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was heralded by global urban experts, stakeholders, and sub-national government representatives as **a significant step forward in acknowledging the global transition to a majority urban world.** The 11<sup>th</sup> Goal contains 10 targets covering diverse topics – seven numeric 'Outcome' targets, and a further three 'Means of Implementation' targets – whose focus areas range from cultural heritage to housing affordability and slum upgrading to policy integration for generalized urban resilience. Currently, fifteen indicators are designated by the UN's Interagency Expert Group on the SDGs for reporting on these SDG11 targets, with the initial SDG global indicator framework having undergone a comprehensive review in 2020.

The **multifaceted nature of the 'urban' SDG reflects the complexity of the sustainability issues that urban areas face at the local scale.** At the same time, cities, towns, and other human settlements produce, consume, and depend upon materials, goods, services, and ecosystems well beyond their physical boundaries, whilst also housing more than two-thirds of the world's population. To address both the former urban complexity and the latter urban interconnectivity, SDG 'localization' – the uptake, adaptation, implementation, and measurement of the *2030 Agenda* at the subnational scale – extends well beyond SDG11 itself into the other 16 Global Goals.

As shown in Figure 1 below, global assessments by local government networks and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) have identified that **roughly two-thirds of the 169 SDG targets require input and implementation by local governments if they are to be achieved.** These range from managing specific conditions associated with road-related deaths and injuries (Target 3.6 under the good health and well-being Goal, SDG3) to the leadership of cities in areas such as climate action (SDG13) and energy consumption and associated emissions (SDG7).

SDG11, however, **provides a critical 'entry point' into the 2030 Agenda for urban decision-makers, stakeholders, activists, and community groups,** who often engage in a voluntary or ad-hoc manner with both national and international processes, and lack the formal mandates and direct representations of national entities in UN fora, reporting structures, and resolutions stemming from the General Assembly. **By focusing on the urban goal, SDG knowledge exchange and training programmes have demonstrated that sub-national actors can 'scaffold' familiarity with the wider 2030 Agenda and justify further engagement** to city leadership and elected representatives. Engagement in SDG11 implementation also offers a diversity of partnership opportunities with other actors such as private enterprise, academia, and civil society, which can support a range of modes and means of SDG implementation.



Figure 1: Urban-relevant targets and indicators within the 2030 Agenda (source: Trundle et al. 2020)



**Analysis of available SDG11 indicators in Asia and the Pacific shows limited and patchwork progress towards its ten constituent targets**, with additional regression having been observed throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. As of early 2022 only half of the SDG11 targets had sufficient data available for reporting at the regional scale. Of these, four required a substantial acceleration of efforts for the relevant target to be achieved (11.1, 11.2, 11.6, 11.b), whilst the remaining measurable target, 11.5, regressed. Sub-regionally these observations were broadly consistent with East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, whilst SDG11 progress overall was assessed as negative in the three sub-regions of South-East Asia, South and South-West Asia, and the Pacific. Empirical evidence across those remaining indicators lacking adequate regional or sub-regional data also suggested challenges persisted in other target areas, such as the growth of informal settlements in several of the larger Pacific Island Countries.





More recently, **multiple global crises have disrupted SDG progress in tandem with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic**. These shocks and stresses have further destabilized SDG11 progress in Asia and the Pacific. COVID-19 emerged most immediately in cities and towns, with an estimated 90 percent of reported COVID-19 cases in urban areas over the first 6-month period of the pandemic. Despite subsequently dispersing through the wider populous, **the rapid onset of the pandemic's impacts continues to reverberate through urban economies, health systems, workplaces, and the mental and physical health of urban inhabitants**. The inadequacy of public health measures and policies in engaging with urban informal settlements and slums (SDG11.1) was laid bare, with physical infrastructure shortcomings (such as access to clean water and hygiene facilities) compounding disparate governance and a failure to effectively support informal economies and livelihoods (for instance, households dependent on urban mobility for informal street businesses during lockdowns). Other aspects of the first SDG11 target have subsequently been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, with global inflationary pressure further diminishing housing affordability in many cities and towns across the region.

The **diversion of local government resourcing and depletion of municipal income** (due to impacts such as business earnings shortfalls and closures) has also directly affected the ability of cities to invest in meaningful implementation that addresses other SDG11 targets, such as urban greenspace and canopy cover (11.7), investment in waste management (11.6), and the conservation and protection of natural heritage (11.4). Urban and regional policies (11.a) and other planning frameworks in areas such as disaster management and urban resilience (11.b) also need reconsideration due to the deep disruptions to urban systems that have been brought about by these interlinked crises. Even collection of official statistics – critical to measurement of all SDGs, as well as urban decision making and policy development more broadly – has been significantly disrupted by the pandemic. In Asia and Oceania respectively, 40 percent and 25 percent of censuses scheduled for 2020 or 2021 were postponed as a result of the pandemic, impacting a critical source of data across the entire *2030 Agenda*.

**SDG11 is one of the four goals reviewed as part of the 2023 High-Level Political Forum** (the UN's annual process for taking stock of the *2030 Agenda*), which itself will feed directly into the mid-term review of the goals at the SDG Summit later this year. The concurrence with the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-8) in October, and the 12<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum (WUF12) in November 2024 presents **a critical juncture for deep consideration of the 'urban' goal in the region**, including frameworks for amalgamating the rapidly growing body of sub-national urban SDG reporting through localized approaches (such as Voluntary Local Reviews).

As noted in UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2022, Asia and the Pacific has 51 percent of its population living in urban areas and accounts for 54 per cent of the world's urban population. Current rates of urban expansion in Asia are also the second fastest in the world, after Africa. If, as stated by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, "cities are where the climate battle will largely be won or lost" and that, "cities are central to virtually every challenge we face – and essential to building a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future", then **it is in the cities of Asia and the Pacific that the solutions to these concurrent and interconnected global crises must be forged, implemented, and scaled**.

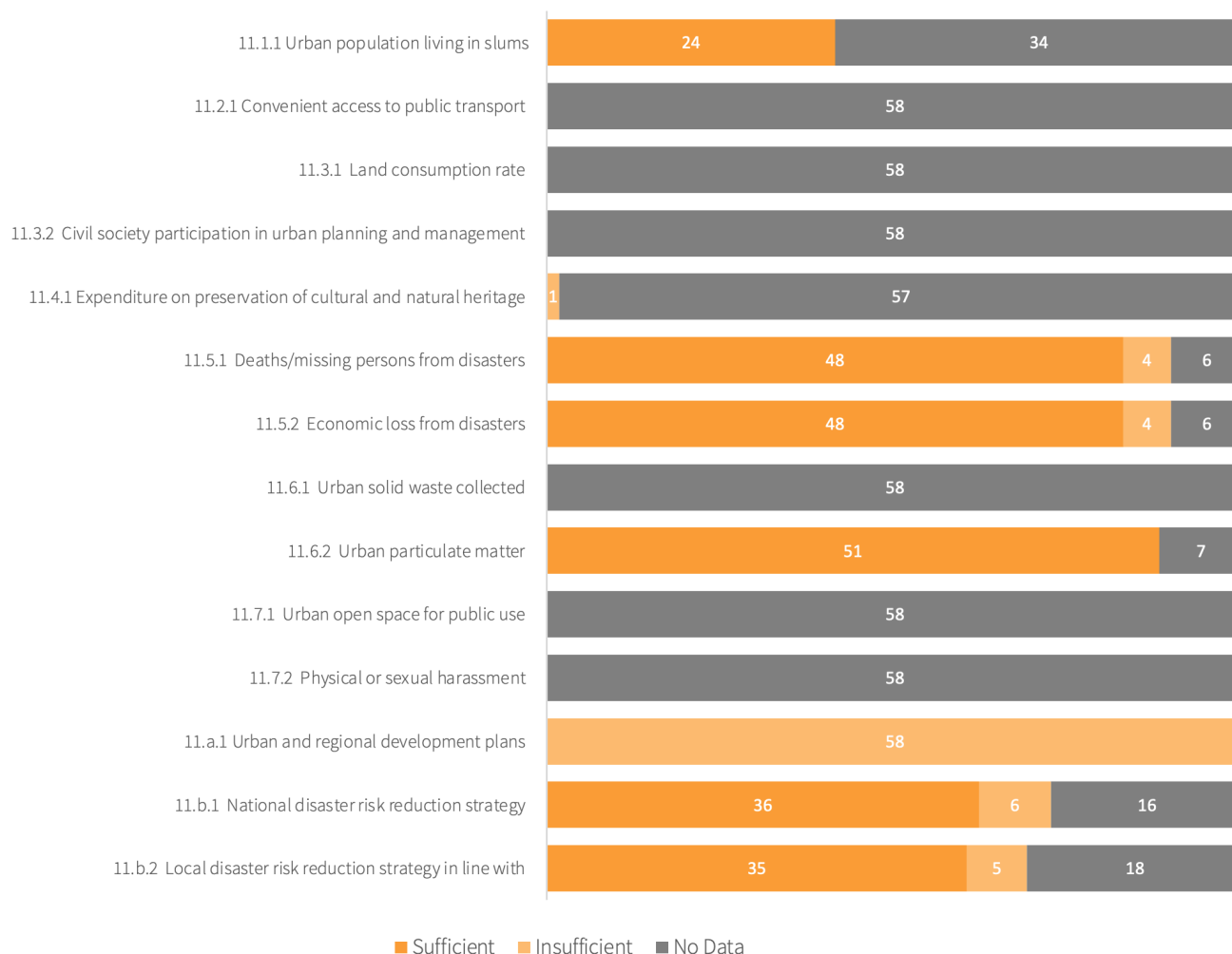
These guidelines put forward an approach for developing a national roadmap for achieving SDG11 as part of both national and sub-national efforts to achieve the Global Goals. It draws upon existing publicly available data, best-practice methodologies, and emerging examples of innovative partnerships and practices. Although specific to SDG11, the approach here is also cognizant of cross-SDG linkages (particularly in relation to the role of urban areas in achieving the *2030 Agenda* as a whole), highlighting key opportunities for synergies at a target level.



## ROADMAP APPROACH & RESOURCING

As SDG 11 is one of the most multi-faceted goals within the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, **the process for developing a national roadmap that addresses all SDG11 targets effectively is necessarily different to the other goals, which mostly have clearer topical alignment of the targets contained within them.** This challenge is further complicated by the limited data available within SDG11's suite of indicators, with half of the 14 SDG11 indicators having no data, a further two being classified as having insufficient data, and with country-level data being even more inadequate within the region (as shown in Figure 2 below).

**Figure 2: SDG11 indicator availability per Asia-Pacific country in 2022 (adapted from ESCAP SDG Gateway)**



Note: graph illustrates the indicator availability for selected SDG11 targets for 58 ESCAP member and associate member States in Asia-Pacific. For further information, please visit the ESCAP SDG Gateway for Asia-Pacific: <https://data.unescap.org/data-analysis/sdg-data-availability>







Additional challenges include **the growing importance of integrating sub-national SDG 'localization' efforts**, with a global movement of cities and subnational governments now striving to develop local Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews into SDG progress independently of national governments. Even at a national scale, it is increasingly commonplace that efforts have been made to adapt SDG targets to better suit individual contexts, including in relation to indicator reporting. All these aspects require consideration and accommodation in the development of a SDG11 Roadmap.

This section of these guidelines runs through **a suggested six-step roadmap development**, so that potential national representatives can gauge, schedule, and suitably resource their development in a timely and realistic manner. These steps include strategies for engaging with data availability limitations and approaches to identify or develop proxy indicators that maximize global, regional, and national comparability, as well as alternative best practice methodologies for sampling urban characteristics in complex country environments. They also highlight processes and guidelines for prioritizing targets and approaches for embedding implementation actions, with the aim of **'shifting the dial'** on SDG11 progress. This includes forward monitoring and evaluation looking towards and beyond 2030, as well as the need to embed any roadmap within partnerships at various scales, and consideration of wider linkages across the *2030 Agenda*.







## GOVERNANCE

Prior to embarking upon development of an SDG11 National Roadmap it is critical that the process is **sufficiently resourced, planned, and technically supported**. This includes having the authority and capacities to draw on relevant cross-departmental expertise, and connections that will allow proposed actions to be rapidly implemented and championed throughout government (in partnership with relevant state and non-state entities). As such, setting up an effective governance structure is critical to supporting the steps set out below.

It is recommended that the SDG11 Roadmap development processes be overseen by **an existing or new advisory group chaired by an executive level representative** of the line ministry (or ministries) that has the most significant **jurisdiction over urban issues**. This might be associated with portfolios ranging from housing to local government, to urban development, depending upon the relevant national setting. In many cases, this responsibility will have been set out as part of the development of a Voluntary National Review, whereby each Global Goal is often allocated a reporting focal point within government. Similar personnel will likely also have expertise in engaging with critical Roadmap components, such as SDG indicators, in a more general sense within other arms of government (for instance, national statistical bureaus) that can be drawn upon for other advisory positions. It is recommended that **the advisory group constitute representatives from each portfolio that holds primary responsibility for the targets set out under SDG11** (see below), **along with generalist SDG experts** (who may be drawn from wider portfolios such as Foreign Affairs and heads-of-government ministries) as well as experts to ensure cross cutting issues relating to gender equality, persons with disabilities and social inclusion are well integrated.



At a minimum a single senior public servant, consultant, or embedded academic or private sector subject matter expert should be tasked with leading the roadmap development process, in such a way that the individual or core project team combine to equate to a minimum of a full-time position with oversight over day-to-day operations, stakeholder engagement, and task management for the duration of the Roadmap's development. This focal point should be able to engage across government agencies to secure the necessary inputs, data and institutional partnerships for the Roadmap's preparation. Additional capabilities which may be necessary for successful completion of the steps below include:

- ◇ Policy analysis & mapping
- ◇ Urban statistical / data analysis
- ◇ Scenario planning
- ◇ Report writing / editing
- ◇ Stakeholder facilitation

Depending upon the capacities that can be deployed through the designated advisory group (for instance, graphic design skills that can be seconded from a representative's own division or department), a wider team of contributing Roadmap authors will likely be required to provide coverage over the capability areas set out above.

**Engagement with stakeholder groups** is crucial in co-developing as well as co-implementing a National SDG11 Roadmap. By involving a diverse range of stakeholders, the Roadmap as well as the process of its development, can benefit from their expertise, perspectives, and input, resulting in more comprehensive and effective urban policies. To foster effective collaboration, a multi-faceted approach should be adopted. Firstly, it is essential to identify and invite diverse stakeholders representing various sectors such as urban poor associations, local communities, women's groups, persons with disabilities, NGOs, private enterprises, and academic institutions. Creating an inclusive environment that encourages open dialogue and active participation is key. Organizing meetings, workshops, and focus groups can provide platforms for stakeholders to share their perspectives, concerns, and ideas. Additionally, leveraging digital platforms and online surveys can ensure broader accessibility and enable wider stakeholder engagement. Regular communication channels and feedback mechanisms should be established to maintain ongoing dialogue throughout the Roadmap process. By fostering meaningful engagement with stakeholder groups, the resulting Roadmap can reflect a collective vision, effectively address urban challenges, and promote sustainable and inclusive development.





## STEP 2

### CONTEXT SETTING

Before focusing on specific SDG11 Target progress, it is important to set out the urban context at the national scale in a manner that is evidence-based, current, and agreed upon by the Advisory Group. This exercise provides a critical 'background' element for the Roadmap, while also ensuring that subject matter experts on the Advisory Board, and members of the Project Team, are familiarized with target interlinkages and the wider national urban environment.

**This context may be able to be drawn from existing documentation**, for instance, recently developed National Urban Policies, National Urban Reports, or other documentation (such as the SDG11 section within an existing Voluntary National Review). It is important to note, however, that the **currency of documentation on national urbanization policies, patterns, and other aspects of urban systems depreciates rapidly**. This is particularly the case for any documents dated prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (and any data contained within more recent documentation that was collated before the pandemic's onset).

There are several global assessments that outline some of the overarching or recurrent urban disruptions stemming from the pandemic. Examples range from reversals of long-term, rural-to-urban migration trends to deep disruptions of work patterns and household configurations to the emergence of new digital economies and a renewed role for urban governance. **Most fundamentally, the pandemic exposed and worsened entrenched vulnerabilities**, both at a city-scale, as well **within cities and urban households where health and policy impacts exacerbated urban inequalities**. Once resources assessing these impacts at a national scale are examined it is recommended that regional and global assessments are considered, including:

- ◇ [Policy Brief: Covid-19 in an Urban World](#) (UN, 2020)
- ◇ [Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future](#) (UN-Habitat, 2021)
- ◇ [Asia-Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2022](#) Urban Food Systems (FAO, 2022)
- ◇ [Rejuvenating Cities and Resilience Capacities for Multi-Challenges](#) (APEC, 2022)
- ◇ [COVID-19 and Livable Cities in Asia and the Pacific](#) (ADB, 2020)
- ◇ [Transformative pathways towards sustainable urban development in the post COVID-19 era](#) (ESCAP, 2021)

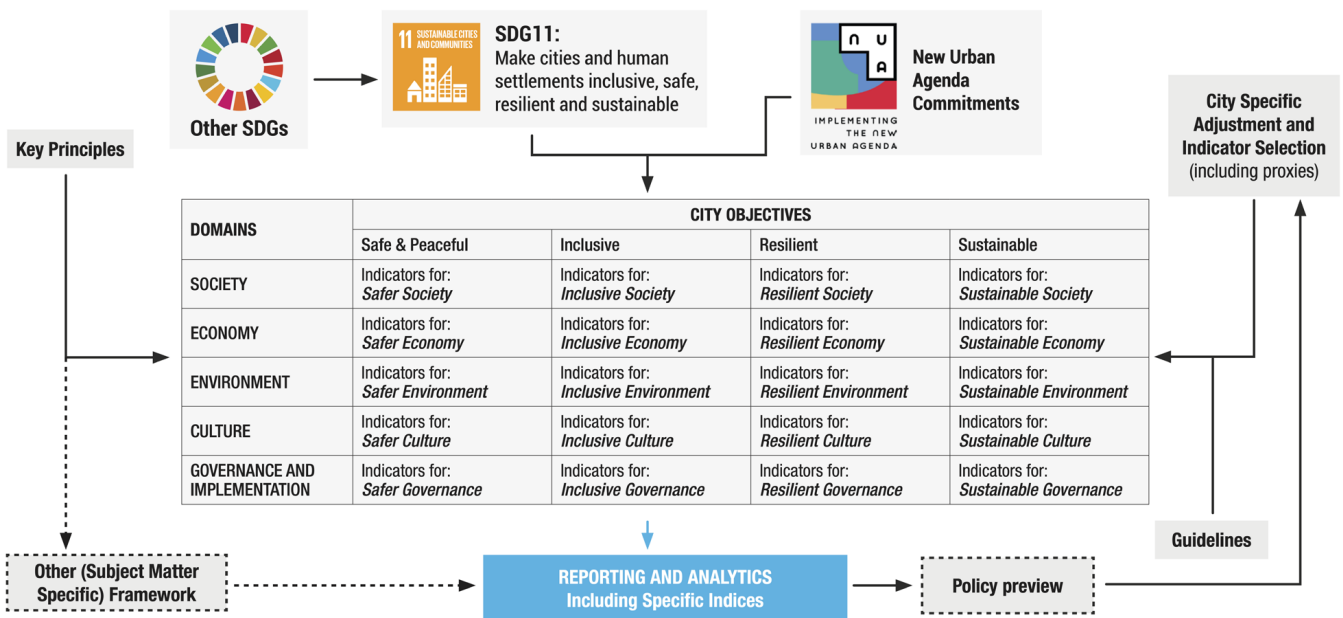




In many national contexts **across Asia and the Pacific the diversity and scale of urban areas will prevent any ability to fully aggregate discrete urban datasets**, an exercise that in some instances will be even challenging at a sub-national scale, particularly in the region’s more populous Member States. UN statistical agencies and UN-Habitat have developed several approaches to address this, with the National Sample of Cities approach providing a current best practice methodology that can form the basis of addressing some of the urban data gaps should they occur in Step 3 below.

If a sampling approach is applied, **it is critical to ensure that the variety of urban typologies and scales are adequately considered within a given national context**. This could, for instance, address differences across the dominant forms of economic production in cities and towns, variations in global or regional connectivity, socio-economic status and disparity, ethnic composition, and environmental and climatic conditions. UN-Habitat’s Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) provides a sophisticated structure for thematically considering urban composition and context in alignment with both the *2030 Agenda* and the *New Urban Agenda*, as set out below in Figure 3. By setting out the national urban context in line with the UMF’s five urban domains – Society, Economy, Environment, Culture, and Governance and Implementation – broader ‘headline’ characterizations can be made that extend beyond SDG11 (but are in many instances compatible and interlinked with SDG11 indicators).

**Figure 3: UN-Habitat’s Global Urban Monitoring Framework Structure (UN-Habitat 2022)**





In the first instance, an urban context should at a minimum set out elements of a Member States urban profile that extend beyond the SDG11 indicators themselves, such as:

- ◇ Overall **levels of and trends associated with urbanization**, the distribution of national population across cities and towns, including their **typological composition** (for instance, average density, centricity, connectivity, and national geographic distribution)
- ◇ **Urban governance** from a national perspective, including legislative responsibilities, sub-national structures, and accountability measures (such as electoral cycles or appointment processes)
- ◇ Critical **resource flows, production capabilities and economic activities** associated with urban areas, for instance, manufacturing and other urban industries, associated areas of food production and ecosystem services, and prominent urban sectoral attributes (such as finance, tertiary education, and health)
- ◇ Key **urban connectivities** with rural areas and regional and global environmental, social, and economic processes, such as international and national trade and markets, and other cross-boundary elements such as remittances and temporary migration patterns for work, education, and other services.

In the current environment it is also likely to be appropriate to note any significant direct health impacts and measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, with relevance to national outbreaks and any policies that may have explicitly affected urban areas (such as localized lockdowns, changes to modes of business and economic production, and other context-specific impacts (e.g., international border closures closing segments of urban tourism and associated industries).

Other elements might include aspects of the current multi-crisis context that are yet to be borne out in data or SDG11 target areas. These might include, inflation-driven housing shortages, changes to working conditions, and specific impacts of recent climate-related hazards. These should be determined through consultations with a range of local urban experts, potentially drawing upon a public submissions process or through a limited period of engagement or workshopping with subject matter experts and key stakeholder representatives.





# STEP 3

## DATA INVENTORY & POLICY MAPPING

Once an overarching national urban context has been established, a more comprehensive review of those elements related to each of the SDG11 targets, as well as associated indicator metrics, is necessary. Each target, as well as its associated indicator(s), is set out in parallel below, highlighting key attributes and associated sub-themes (such as disaster risk management, air quality, and cultural and natural heritage). It is recommended that **a focal point (or focal points) for each target is identified based on subject matter expertise**, jurisdictional responsibility, and/or where interdepartmental data access and interpretation is needed to ensure that each target can be assessed effectively.

**Table 1: SDG 11 Targets and aligned Indicators**

SDG11 Target	IAEG Global Indicator(s)
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to <b>adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services</b> and <b>upgrade slums</b>	11.1.1 Proportion of <b>urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing</b>
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable <b>transport systems</b> for all, <b>improving road safety</b> , notably by <b>expanding public transport</b> , with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient <b>access to public transport</b> , by sex, age and persons with disabilities
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for <b>participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management</b> in all countries	11.3.1 Ratio of <b>land consumption</b> rate to <b>population growth</b> rate  11.3.2 Proportion of <b>cities with a direct participation structure of civil society</b> in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's <b>cultural and natural heritage</b>	11.4.1 Total <b>expenditure per capita</b> spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage, level of government, type of expenditure & type of private funding





<p>11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by <b>disasters, including water-related disasters</b>, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations</p>	<p>11.5.1 Number of <b>deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons</b> attributed to disasters per 100,000 population</p> <p>11.5.2 <b>Direct economic loss</b> in relation to GDP</p> <p>11.5.3 (a) Damage to critical infrastructure and (b) number of disruptions to basic services, attributed to disasters</p>
<p>11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to <b>air quality</b> and municipal and other <b>waste management</b></p>	<p>11.6.1 Proportion of <b>municipal solid waste collected</b> and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities</p> <p>11.6.2 Annual mean <b>levels of fine particulate matter</b> (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (pop. weighted)</p>
<p>11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, <b>green and public spaces</b>, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is <b>open space for public use for all</b>, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p> <p>11.7.2 Proportion of persons <b>victim of physical or sexual harassment</b>, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months</p>
<p>11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by <b>strengthening national and regional development planning</b></p>	<p>11.a.1 Number of countries that have <b>national urban policies or regional development plans</b> that (a) respond to population dynamics; (b) ensure balanced territorial development; and (c) increase local fiscal space</p>
<p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing <b>integrated policies and plans</b> towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, <b>holistic disaster risk management</b> at all levels</p>	<p>11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement <b>national disaster risk reduction strategies</b> in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement <b>local disaster risk reduction strategies</b> in line with national DRR strategies</p>
<p>11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building <b>sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials</b></p>	<p><i>[Removed] 11.c.1 Proportion of financial support to the least developed countries that is allocated to the construction and retrofitting of sustainable, resilient and resource efficient buildings utilizing local materials</i></p>

Initial efforts should focus on assessing and identifying relevant national cross-sectoral stakeholders at a target level across each of the ten targets. These should aim to provide a broad representation of organizations and departments with relevance to the target itself. These sub-groups should in turn be used to identify:

- ◇ **National policies** that substantively contribute to – or could contribute to – the achievement of the target;
- ◇ Any nationally aligned or **associated policy objectives, goals, or significant implementation efforts**; and
- ◇ **Scalable best practice examples** of initiatives addressing the target in local urban contexts, representing and appreciating a diversity of urban typologies and forms.

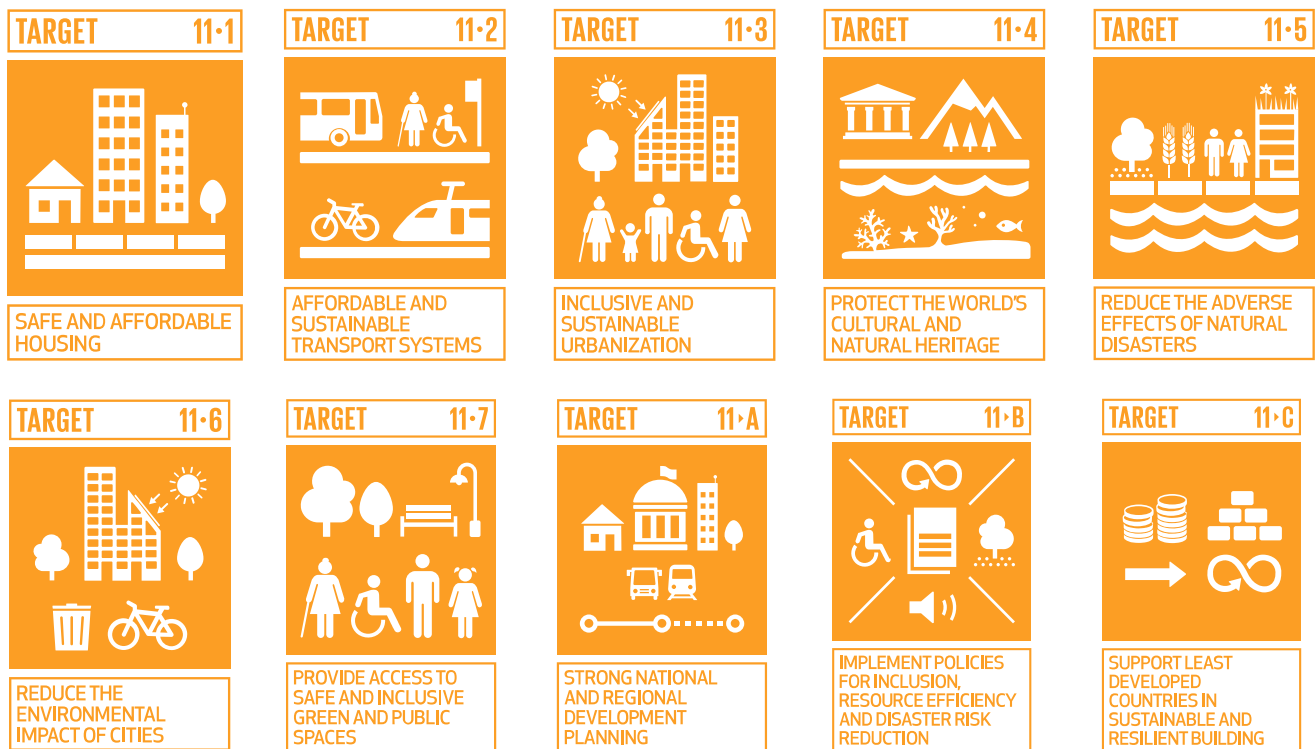






Strategies for inventorying national policies, legislation, and initiatives include reviewing of keyword alignment, and/or a more thematic analysis drawing upon the summary phrases depicted under each target tile (see Figure 4). **Prior to any such review sub-groups should agree on the local applicability of these keywords**, with terms such as ‘slum’ often lacking relevance or suitability either due to language differences (e.g. ‘kampungs’ in Indonesia) or modified to reflect regional preferences or local interpretations (such as ‘shack-dwellers’, ‘squatters’ and ‘informal settlements’). In other cases, these mapping exercises will already have been undertaken, either through the regular categorization of elements of plans, policies, or annual reporting in reference to the SDGs, or through a VNR-associated mapping exercise.

Figure 4: SDG11 Target Tiles with thematic summaries



In creating this strategic inventory, tabulation of each target-aligned plan or policy should extend beyond linking to the document itself, categorizing both the responsible departments for the policy, plan, legislation, or initiative’s implementation, as well as the currency, expiry, or implementation stage of the document itself. The former enables a deeper consideration of cross-governmental responsibilities for target implementation that can be similarly operated at sub-national scales, such as across a local or state government. Relatedly, in certain national contexts it may also be necessary to examine sub-national policy frameworks and strategies, especially in countries where urban planning responsibilities, financial structures and decision-making processes are delegated or decentralized from national bureaucratic or law-making structures.





Once policies have been assessed to a level that sufficiently encompasses the key levers for addressing each target across government in each national context, steps should be taken to assess data availability and, where necessary, address data gaps. Official SDG11 indicators, as shown in Figure 2 and listed in Table 1, remain limited in global reporting by nation states within Asia and the Pacific, and vary significantly in their scope, complexity, and capacity for disaggregation (both spatially and in terms of key vulnerable sociodemographic groups). Measures that are heavily under-reported across the region are similarly diverse in nature. Examples range from definitional issues (e.g. determining “convenient access” to public transport, 11.2.1), to the need to compile sub-national or privately held data (e.g. 11.6.1, which requires analysis of municipal waste throughout), to technical complexities (e.g. the extensive spatial analysis required to assess public open space access in built up areas, 11.7.1). Target 11.c is also notable as the only SDG target without an official indicator, with 11.c.1 having been removed from the suite of agreed SDG Indicators as part of the 2020 Comprehensive Review Process by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators.

SDG11 data gathering can be initiated by interrogating national data sets and SDG reporting portals (where they exist), in particular:

- ◇ **National Statistical Bureaus and Offices**, with census data and national accounts providing key information for indicators or indicator sub-metrics (such as GDP within 11.5.2);
- ◇ **National Budgetary and Departmental Annual Reports**, which can provide nationally agreed measures of more changeable variables such as disaster impacts (e.g. 11.6.2, 11.5.1 & 11.5.3a);
- ◇ **Environmental Reporting Agencies and Protection Authorities** which often collate point-based sample data that can be drawn upon to assess indicators relating to pollutants and compliance (e.g. 11.6.2); and
- ◇ **Credible Independent Research Institutions and Peer-Reviewed Studies** that provide either longitudinal or recurrent data sets that can either supplement or triangulate official government records (e.g. 11.7.2)

**A full list of the metadata for the official UN SDG indicators is available** from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Statistical Division website, including agreed definitions, and is updated regularly. **These metadata can provide a starting point for identifying proxy or partial indicator metrics or sourcing primary data**, for instance, through a structured survey tool for considering waste management controls under 11.6.1.

**Almost half of the official SDG11 indicators do not relate to regularly quantified data or metrics**, instead reflecting the presence of policies or strategies that are being applied to the urban areas or communities. Reporting in relation to these indicators instead requires a basic level of desktop review that will likely have already been completed as part of the policy analysis (e.g., 11.a.1 and 11.b.1), however for those that relate to sub-national governments (e.g., 11.3.2 and 11.b.2), enquiries with sub-national entities may be required. **If a sampling approach has been taken in Step 2, these survey instruments should align and proportionately represent these cities and urban typologies where possible.**





As an optional consideration, if resourcing and timelines allow, the **SDG11 Roadmap Advisory Group may choose to develop a wider survey tool to engage sub-national governments in the roadmap process**. Beyond the policy-specific indicators mentioned above, many sub-national governments directly collate additional data beyond national accounts and statistical repositories, particularly relating to the urban environment. Some countries also require annual subnational reporting on the SDGs, which could also provide a platform for collating up-to-date national data.

Once the above processes are complete, a final step should be included to develop indicator proxies for any remaining data gaps. In this step, the advisory group should prioritize data proxies that are:

- ◇ **Current**, noting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have severely disrupted many long-standing data norms, trends, and trajectories.
- ◇ **Longitudinal**, ideally allowing analysis across more than three data points to show a basic trend over time, noting the disruption to long-term trends noted above.
- ◇ **Horizontally standardized**, aligned with either global standards (using, for instance, globally recognized approaches for measurement of urban green space), or regional frameworks (e.g., consolidated data on disaster impacts held by multilateral entities ).
- ◇ **Sub-nationally comparable**, for instance where municipal governments collate data on housing affordability or homelessness, ensuring the maximum comparability across national urban areas (and, ideally, collation into a sustainable national data source).

In certain settings, SDG targets have been 'localized' to reflect national or sub-national contexts, priorities, or ambitions. If this process has been initiated by a national government under the auspices of official reporting processes (such as a VNR), these localized targets, and any associated variances in indicator metrics, should form the basis of the national roadmap, where possible showing correspondence with the equivalent global target within SDG11 (or elsewhere across the *2030 Agenda*). If localization has been conducted sub-nationally, or by other parties (such as by urban-based or focused private sector institutions), the Roadmap Advisory Committee may wish to include a broader consideration of alternative target interpretations to maximize the potential for both indicator reporting, and implementation-focused partnerships (as set out in Step 5).





## PROGRESS ANALYSIS & PRIORITISATION

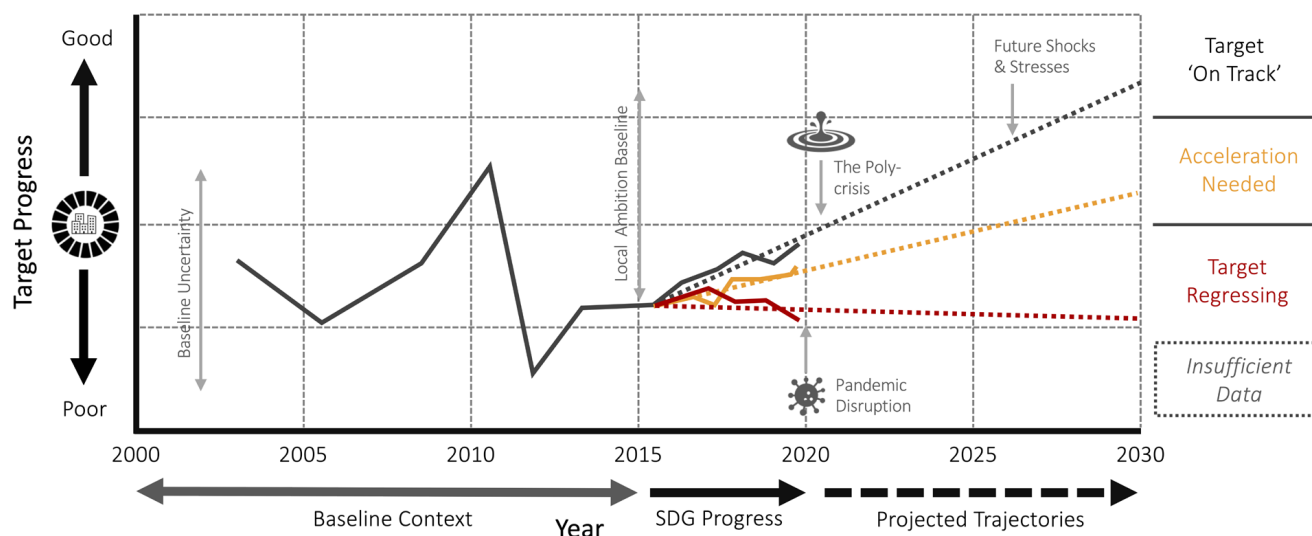
**Transparent, data-based, independently reviewed, and verifiable analysis of target progress provides the most effective basis for accelerating SDG implementation.** In addition to building trust with stakeholders and a key entry point for public and private participation in the SDGs – a core principle of the *2030 Agenda* itself – it can provide the evidence base for strategic investment, policy innovation, and partnership, as well as for knowledge exchange with leaders in particular goal or target areas.

Critical to assessing progress is establishing baseline data in Step 3. As set out above, **this might include more qualitative stakeholder perceptions of progress, and will necessarily integrate both 'point based' quantifiable data, as well as more subjective or binary responses that are not able to be delineated easily as trends over time.** For targets that can be expressed and/or measured quantitatively, it is recommended that **a minimum of three data points are assessed** to consider progress over time, which may require analysis that predates the *2030 Agenda* itself. For binary measures that reflect, for instance, the presence of a policy, **the quality of this policy, or its potential for further improvement or implementation**, might be reflected upon by subject matter experts, as well as any monitoring or evaluation of the policies, strategies, and plans identified in Step 3.

If resourcing allows additional considerations for assessing progress such as spatial and sociocultural disaggregation should also be included as part of progress analysis. This could comprise **disaggregating target-level progress across relevant urban typologies** (if relevant aligned to the National Sample of Cities categorization set out in Step 2), **examination of sub-city forms** (e.g., suburban vs inner-city areas, density delineations, greenfield/brownfield sites, etc.), and/or **analysis of key factors such as gender, ethnicity, age, and minority status**. These approaches ensure a deeper consideration of progress aligned with the principle of Leaving No-one Behind. They also provide a framework for prioritizing and targeting implementation and can assist in identifying key partners for 'shifting the dial' (Step 5).



Figure 5: SDG Progress Assessment Framework



An overarching conceptual framework for assessing SDG target progression is set out in Figure 5, with ESCAP providing a more detailed Progress Assessment Methodology as part of the [Asia Pacific SDG Gateway](#), which forms the basis of the UN’s annual regional updates on SDG Progress. As this figure demonstrates, **longitudinal analysis not only allows a deeper understanding of ‘progress’, but also can be used to examine variability and uncertainty**. Measures of fine particulate matter, for instance, can change significantly on an annual basis, whilst consideration of long-term shifts in urban canopy coverage can be interlinked with significant policy changes at various scales. Critical to this is consideration of major disruptions over recent timescales, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in relation to the poly-crisis for more recent data.

**Agreement on SDG11’s progress over the 15-year timespan of the 2030 Agenda towards the intended 2030 ‘target level’ is critical**, with this end point stipulated in each of the individual SDG11 targets. This allows for a broader qualification of whether target progress is ‘on track’ or in need of more urgent acceleration. In some cases, it may also be evident that target progress is trending backwards, regressing away from the target itself. Although prioritization of targets may relate to wide policy agendas and capabilities, **it is recommended that this assessment of ‘forward’ trajectories forms the basis of the Roadmap’s prioritization of targets** within an action framework (Step 5), along with any associated national resourcing. Where quantitative data is unavailable, the internal advisory group, an independent multi-stakeholder expert group, a Citizen Jury, or a combination of these three modes of representation could also be tasked with making an assessment of progress based on the evidence available. If this approach is chosen, it is recommended that all SDG11 targets are assessed by the same group in a workshop format, to ensure a consistent platform for prioritization.





## STEP 5

### IMPLEMENTATION: 'SHIFTING THE DIAL' & PARTNERSHIPS

Once progress towards SDG11 targets has been assessed at a national scale, the action-oriented components of the SDG11 Roadmap can be developed. Prioritization should form a rationale for focusing additional resources (in terms of finance, but also policy, planning and personnel) and – where relevant – showcasing and sharing areas where substantive progress has been made. However, additional implementation actions are likely to be needed across all SDG11 targets, reflective of the limited regional progress to date, and ongoing need for multi-national support and sharing in sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific.

The *2030 Agenda* contains explicit targets focused on implementation, reflected in the alphabetical (as opposed to numerical) targets, for example, 11.a. SDG17 is also the designated 'Means of Implementation' (MoI) Goal, with a stated aim to "revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development". SDG17 sits across all other sixteen goals and supplements the individual MoI targets contained within each of them. SDG17 also contains 19 targets of its own, uniquely categorized into five discrete areas (the fifth with three sub-categories):

- ◇ **Finance** – 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5
- ◇ **Technology** – 17.6, 17.7, 17.8
- ◇ **Capacity Building** – 17.9
- ◇ **Trade** – 17.10, 17.11, 17.12
- ◇ **Systemic Issues** – *Policy & Institutional Coherence* (17.13-15); *Multi-stakeholder Partnerships* (17.16, 17.17); and *Data, Monitoring & Accountability* (17.18, 17.19)

Despite this, the lack of an effective implementation framework is one of the most regular challenges of the *2030 Agenda*. **In part, this is because individual targets do not necessarily align with either the implementation targets set out in their respective goal, or they lack tangible pathways to the targets set out in SDG17.**




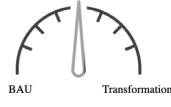

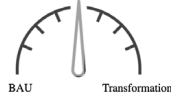


As such, it is proposed that individual targets within SDG11 are assessed for locally applicable Implementation Pathways, **with a focus on activities, mechanisms, and investments that will ‘Shift the Dial’ towards target achievement by 2030**. This is best done in a multi-stakeholder format, drawing upon representatives of both existing and prospective partner organizations from across business, civil society, academia, urban communities, and other stakeholder groups. **A proposed structure for generating these multi-stakeholder implementation pathways could include a SDG11 Roadmap National Forum**, at which participants would be:

- ◇ **Provided with an evidence base of SDG11 progress to date**, reflecting both the national urban profile and individual target data collected as part of the steps set out above.
- ◇ **Allowed to present their own existing initiatives that progress each SDG11 target**, noting that there is a wide range of ‘best practice’ towards sustainable urban development that exists beyond the direct initiatives of national governments (this should include local governments, the private sector, and civil society).
- ◇ **Supported to develop new initiatives that will ‘shift the dial’ on SDG11 progress, with a particular focus on national priority targets**. This should be done collectively, either through breakout groups aligned with individual targets (through interest, policy, or organizational capabilities), and iteratively, allowing a breadth of input from a diverse range of interested parties.
- ◇ **Sanctioned to take ownership over initiatives** where the primary capacities, capabilities, or connectivities lie outside of national government departments or divisions. At some point they also need to be equipped with the means to drive these initiatives (financial, capabilities, knowledge, etc.).

A template for conducting breakout activities is set out in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: SDG ‘Shifting the Dial’ Breakout Activity Template Excerpt**

Chosen SDG Target	Target Partnership Opportunity or Barrier	SDG Partner Action Statement / Pledge	Target Pledge Partners (proposed & prospective)	Partnership Category (designate at least one)	Transformation: Shifting the Dial by 2030
		We will _____ _____ _____	Lead: Supporting: Prospective:	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Governance and management <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity-building <input type="checkbox"/> Education and engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Data and monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Technology and innovation	
		We will _____ _____ _____	Lead: Supporting: Prospective:	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Governance and management <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity-building <input type="checkbox"/> Education and engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Data and monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Technology and innovation	
		We will _____ _____ _____	Lead: Supporting: Prospective:	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Governance and management <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity-building <input type="checkbox"/> Education and engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Data and monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Technology and innovation	







As shown in the Figure above, the development of implementation activities is best conducted through a structured approach that sets out not only the target being addressed, but also ensures that there is a clear consideration of both who is the best to lead and would support as a partner on each identified initiative, along with a tangible commitment to act within a relevant timeframe. Further considerations should include clear definition in relation to the SDG17 MoI categories, and a consideration of the extent to which the initiative itself is capable of ‘Shifting the Dial’ by 2030.

It is important to note that there are several global and regional resources that can be drawn upon to provide inspiration or the basis of locally applicable SDG11 initiatives. ESCAP has put forward a suite of resources in [Transformative Pathways towards Sustainable Urban Development in the Post COVID-19 Era](#) a discussion paper focused exclusively on Asia and the Pacific. UN-Habitat’s [Urban Agenda Platform](#) includes a library of global resources tailored specifically to SDG11, but also houses a live repository of Declared Actions to achieve sustainable urban development by a range of actors that can be filtered by Goal and organization type. Localized efforts to achieve SDG11 are also increasingly being benchmarked in parallel with Voluntary Local Reviews, with the use of global – or at least regionally common – indicators. Global indicators allow [City-Level SDG Benchmarking](#) across individual samples of cities across cohorts such as countries of the OECD.





## STEP 6

### MONITORING & REVIEWING PROGRESS TO 2030

Development of an SDG11 Roadmap should mark the initial phase of a national roll-out, upscaling, and ongoing improvement of actions to address the targets set out within the 11<sup>th</sup> Global Goal. **Critical to this process is the transparent and independently verified monitoring and evaluation of not only target-level progress**, but also the effective contribution of implemented initiatives developed as a result of the Roadmap itself. The latter should build on measures of both initiative-specific impact, but also reflect on the wider national potential for driving targets forward (including up-scaling, and where relevant the proportion of urban areas or comparable city form/space encompassed by the project itself).

As use of the SDGs continues to become more widespread across local governments, civil society organizations and corporations, it is expected that new avenues for supporting both targets and indicators will emerge. These include **more interactive and innovative approaches for 'ground-truthing' and measuring indicators, with citizen science proposed as one such avenue for addressing current indicator data gaps**. Other opportunities for external data supplementation include through collaborations with tertiary institutions and the private sector, derived from sensors, spatial analysis, and other secondary datasets. The development of these technologies and data portals should be re-assessed as part of the monitoring and re-reporting on the Roadmap.

**Roadmap Implementation Reports should be developed biannually**, and serve as a feedback mechanism for aggregating implementation by non-state entities, including in the form of localized SDG action (as reflected in Voluntary Local Reviews and private sector SDG reporting) as well as making updates to implementation strategies as needed. These reports should include any updates to official and proxy indicator that may have emerged over that period of time; for instance, where census data from a previous period has been processed and released subsequent to the Roadmap's initial publication or the relevant intermediary period. Where possible, these should be either integrated or aligned with Voluntary National Review development or other associated national SDG reporting processes to streamline evaluation and provide a single reference point for external stakeholders.





**GOVERNANCE**



**CONTEXT SETTING**



**DATA INVENTORY &  
POLICY MAPPING**



**PROGRESS ANALYSIS &  
PRIORITISATION**



**IMPLEMENTATION:  
'SHIFTING THE DIAL' & PARTNERSHIPS**



**MONITORING & REVIEWING  
PROGRESS TO 2030**



## FURTHER ASSISTANCE & KNOWLEDGE SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

UN ESCAP, alongside United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes and urban development partners located across Asia and the Pacific, stands ready to assist national efforts to develop National SDG11 Roadmaps. In addition, **numerous city and city-stakeholder networks are increasingly well versed in operationalizing the SDGs across the region in urban areas**, including peak bodies such as United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific, regional research entities such as the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, and globally-engaged private-public entities such as Urbanise Malaysia.

Academic institutions across Asia and the Pacific are also heavily involved in SDG localization for cities and towns, as well as SDG monitoring and evaluation. The Melbourne Centre for Cities, for instance, has supported multiple cohorts of cities across the region in localizing the *2030 Agenda* through capacity building and knowledge sharing as part of the SDGs Cities Challenge, whilst the Monash Sustainable Development Institute hosts the Oceania branch of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and provides regular independent assessments of SDG progress for countries across the region.

With SDG11 being one of the focal goals reviewed in 2023 at the **UN High-Level Political Forum** (held at the General Assembly in New York in July), there is a global profile to this 'urban goal'. The second **UN-Habitat Assembly** (UNHA2) held in June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, also reviewed progress towards the New Urban Agenda as well as the UN's overall approach to sustainable urban development. This was followed by the **2023 SDG Summit**, which took stock of SDG progress at the 'halfway point' of the 2030 Agenda, before building into the Secretary General's **2024 Summit of the Future**. The **12<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum**, also scheduled to occur in November 2024 in Cairo, Egypt will provide a further opportunity to convene on global progress towards achieving SDG11. Within Asia and the Pacific, urban issues will also provide a focal point for multilateral processes. The **6<sup>th</sup> Pacific Urban Forum** was hosted in Suva, Fiji in September, prior to the hosting of the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Urban Forum in Suwon in the Republic of Korea in late October.

## CONTACTS

For enquires relating to the development of SDG11 National Roadmaps please contact the ESCAP Sustainable Urban Development Section at [escap-edd-suds@un.org](mailto:escap-edd-suds@un.org)



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The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the most inclusive intergovernmental platform in the Asia-Pacific region. The Commission promotes cooperation among its 53 member States and 9 associate members in pursuit of solutions to sustainable development challenges. ESCAP is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations.

The ESCAP secretariat supports inclusive, resilient and sustainable development in the region by generating action-oriented knowledge, and by providing technical assistance and capacity-building services in support of national and local development objectives, regional agreements and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SCAN ME



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