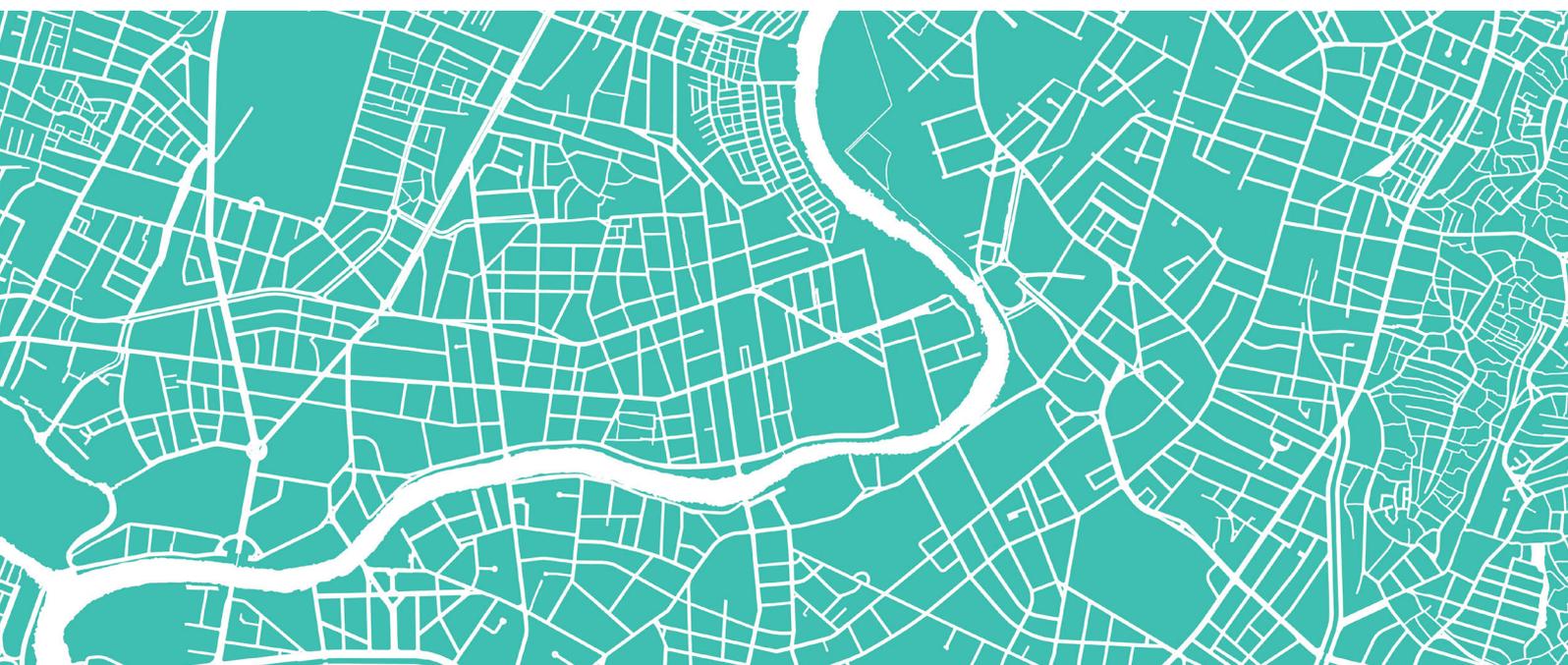




Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office



## **UKBEAG: Strategic Capacity Development**

Report on the Strategic Capacity Development  
Component delivered as part of the Global  
Future Cities Programme

April 2022

**UKBEAG**  
UK Built Environment Advisory Group

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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# Executive summary

**This summary provides an overview of the Strategic Capacity Development Component that has been delivered by the UK Built Environment Advisory Group (UKBEAG) in connection with the Global Future Cities Programme (GFCP) of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).**

### **The UK Built Environment Advisory Group**

Launched at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, in 2016, the UKBEAG is a collaboration between the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Institution of Structural Engineers and the Landscape Institute, the aim of which is to make built-environment expertise more accessible to governments, humanitarian agencies and development partners as they grapple with the combined challenges posed by climate change and rapid urbanisation.

### **Global Future Cities Programme**

The FCDO Global Future Cities Programme is a product of the UK National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, which recognises climate change and rapid urbanisation as being among the significant drivers of instability. The GFCP has supported 30 technical assistance projects in transportation, urban planning and resilience in 19 cities in ten low-to middle-income countries in South America, sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. The programme has been delivered in three phases: the Strategic Phase (preparation and project definition), the Transition Phase (procurement) and the Implementation Phase (delivery).

### **Strategic Capacity Development Component**

Working in close collaboration with UN-Habitat, the UKBEAG was appointed to deliver the Strategic Capacity Development Component of the programme, the aim of which has been to leverage the work being undertaken to help:

- reduce the barriers and strengthen the drivers to implementation
- increase the impact of the interventions and their long-term sustainability
- increase the potential for shared learnings, both within the programme and beyond
- promote the potential for replication and scalability, within the host countries and beyond
- enhance engagement and demonstrate alignment with the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda
- create mutually beneficial economic relationships between UK professions and host cities in areas such as architecture and planning, in which the UK has strong expertise.



Effective integrated planning works at all scales (i.e. national, regional, district and local) and needs to be inclusive (i.e. it should address the needs of all stakeholder groups, including vulnerable and marginalised groups and communities). To achieve this, it will typically include provision for a range of consultative and/or participatory planning activities.

### Preparation and programme design

The Strategic Capacity Development Component was tailored to meet the specific needs of each participating city, while complementing the work being delivered by UN-Habitat in connection with the Global Goals and the project-focused capacity development being undertaken by the delivery partners. The Strategic Capacity Development Component was underpinned by four core principles derived from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidance on capacity development,<sup>1</sup> namely:

- understanding the country and city contexts
- identifying and supporting sources of city-owned change
- delivering support
- learning from experience and sharing lessons.

The UKBEAG also recognised the three levels of capacity development outlined in the OECD guidance: the enabling environment, the organisational level and the individual level.

### Strategic Phase

During the Strategic Phase, the UKBEAG undertook a series of city visits to help:

- understand the context in which the proposed interventions are to be delivered
- understand the key factors which may help to enable and/or obstruct delivery
- build relationships with city stakeholders and help establish their capacity development requirements
- assess the professional capacity, market maturity and preparedness to deliver the proposed interventions within each targeted city.

The work of the UKBEAG was complemented by UN-Habitat, which undertook a spatial assessment, and by colleagues from the International Growth Centre, which conducted an assessment of the financial and legislative context in each city. The results of these studies were consolidated in a series of City Context Reports and Technical Viability Assessments, which helped to inform the scope and the terms of reference for each of the projects.

Towards the end of the Strategic Phase, the UKBEAG hosted a week of Transition Training and Dialogue in London, attended by a group of over 40 senior city stakeholders. This training and dialogue was supported by a diverse group of subject matter experts, who helped to develop the stakeholders' understanding and preparedness and build a cohort through a programme of knowledge-sharing, site visits and social activities.

<sup>1</sup>OECD (2006) *The challenge of capacity development: Working towards good practice*. Available at [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/the-challenge-of-capacity-development\\_oecd\\_papers-v6-art2-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/the-challenge-of-capacity-development_oecd_papers-v6-art2-en#page1) (accessed 25 March 2022).

## Transition Phase

During the Transition Phase, in which the FCDO undertook the procurement process to select and appoint the delivery partners, the UKBEAG set about developing its proposal for the delivery of a programme of strategic capacity development. On the basis of its earlier engagement with the 19 target cities, the UKBEAG initially identified five key thematic areas that appeared to present challenges for each of the cities in the programme to a greater or lesser extent, namely:

1. integrated and inclusive planning
2. governance and collaboration
3. evidence-based design and the effective use of data
4. project finance and procurement
5. implementation and enforcement, monitoring and evaluation.

In order to validate the five key themes, the UKBEAG conducted a comprehensive series of interviews with UN-Habitat local strategic advisers, the FCDO programme managers and the delivery partners. The UKBEAG also developed an online Capacity Needs Assessment to be completed by city stakeholders. On the basis of its findings, the UKBEAG developed an activity programme comprising the following elements:

- an online **Thematic Programme**, the aim of which was to share best practice relating to each of the five key thematic areas
- a programme of online **City-to-City Knowledge Exchanges** to enable knowledge-sharing between cities in the programme
- a programme of in-person **Country-level Events**, which aimed to make the programme more responsive to the specific needs of each country
- two in-person regional **Leadership Forums**, designed to bring stakeholders together towards the end of the programme to consider the next steps.

The UKBEAG was supported during this phase by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, which helped to develop the methodology and pedagogical approach. No sooner had the UKBEAG agreed its proposed programme, than the world was struck by the Covid-19 pandemic. The physical and economic impact of the pandemic necessitated a reduction in the project budget and forced the cancellation of all in-person events. The military coup in Myanmar, in February 2021, ended that country's participation in the Strategic Capacity Development Component.

Belo Horizonte  
Brazil



## Implementation Phase

### Thematic Programme

The Thematic Programme, launched on 21 January 2021 and concluded on 11 March 2021, comprised a series of seven online events, delivered by a range of subject matter experts, each of which focused on one of the initial five key themes. The series opened and closed with contributions from Sir Paul Collier CBE from the International Growth Centre and Mayor Marvin Rees from Bristol City Council. The series concluded with reflections on the importance of communication, collaboration, organisation and behaviour.

One of the outputs from the Thematic Programme was recognition of the importance of 'leadership and change management' as a cross-cutting issue, and this was subsequently adopted as a sixth theme.

### City-to-City Knowledge Exchange

The City-to-City Knowledge Exchange programme comprised a series of four online events between 5 August and 4 November 2021. The aim of the series was to enable cities to share their experiences, to learn from each other, to build relationships with one another and to encourage city ownership of the programme while laying the foundation for the Country-level Events that were to follow. Each event comprised a series of four short presentations from city stakeholders framing the following aspects:

- project background and objectives
- desired outcomes and impacts
- project scope and status
- challenges and opportunities
- lessons learnt and key risks.

Each event was supported by a range of subject matter experts, who brought their knowledge and expertise to bear in the capacity of 'critical friends'. Their role was to provide constructive observations on the presentations, helping to identify issues that might not have been recognised, suggesting solutions for any challenges identified and exploring synergies between projects.



### Country-level Events

The Country-level Events provided an opportunity to bring together stakeholders from the various projects within each city, and/or the various cities within each country, to engage in a more focused discussion on topics of common interest.

The focus of each event was informed by the findings of the online Capacity Needs Assessment and was agreed in discussion with UN-Habitat, FCDO, the delivery partners and city stakeholders. Several events focused on the effective use of data, some on integrated and inclusive planning and others on integrated transport. The underlying theme in many of the events turned out to be governance and collaboration, with many of the cities recognising the potential for delivering more effective outcomes simply by working better together.

Country	Date	Main Topics
Nigeria	13/10/2021	The King's Cross Experience, tackling resettlement and unlocking affordable housing, project finance and procurement
Philippines	25/11/2021	Affordable housing finance and planning
Indonesia	18/11/2021	Managing risk and resilience, integrated planning, and governance and collaboration
Turkey	25/11/2021	Moving from policy to impact and delivering effective outcomes
Vietnam	02/12/2021	Moving from data to action and delivering effective integrated and inclusive planning
Malaysia	14/12/2021 and 16/12/2021	Integrated transport, from policy to practice, and delivering effective outcomes
Thailand	13/01/2022	Delivering transit-oriented development and delivering integrated and inclusive planning
Brazil	20/01/2022	Building an open data environment, delivering effective outcomes, from data to action
South Africa	27/01/2022	Moving from data to action and delivering effective outcomes

**Table 1** Main topics covered during Country-level Events

Where appropriate, these events were also used as an opportunity to connect with national government and other stakeholder groups to promote awareness of the work being undertaken and demonstrate its alignment with national policy. For example, the Malaysia Country-level Event included engagement with the country's Ministry of Finance and demonstrated the relevance of the work being undertaken in relation to the 12th Malaysian Plan, while the event in the Philippines was co-hosted with the Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development (DHSUD) and illustrated how the projects being undertaken in Cebu City and New Clark City might be considered as pilots in the context of the 2040 National Housing Strategy.

The Country-level Events were launched on 13 October 2021 in Nigeria and concluded on 3 February 2022 in South Africa.

Istanbul  
Turkey



### Leadership Forums

Drawing on the lessons learnt from the Thematic Programme, the final events in the UKBEAG's Strategic Capacity Development Component were two regional Leadership Forums. These aimed to encourage, engage and empower city stakeholders to reflect on lessons learnt and consider next steps. With the current programme drawing to a close, and the projects beginning to move from design to implementation, the forums explored the need for effective leadership.

One of the forums focused on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) group of countries while the other focused on non-ASEAN countries. The forums were used to encourage city stakeholders to build on the momentum achieved while leveraging the work already undertaken to engage with some of the broader challenges facing their cities.

### Knowledge management

Where appropriate, all the events forming part of the Strategic Capacity Development Component were delivered with simultaneous translation in each of the programme's five languages: Indonesian, Portuguese, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese. A written summary of each event, incorporating key takeaways, was published on the GFCEP Knowledge Platform. Recordings of the Thematic Programme, the City-to-City Knowledge Exchange events and the Leadership Forums were also published on the platform in each of the five languages, together with copies of all presentations and links to associated resources.<sup>2</sup> Although the Country-level Events were recorded, these were not published to help encourage a frank exchange between participants.

<sup>2</sup> See the following links: for the Thematic Programme <https://www.globalfuturecities.org/thematic-programme/>; for the City-to-City Knowledge Exchange <https://www.globalfuturecities.org/city-to-city/>; for the Country-level Events <https://www.globalfuturecities.org/country-level-events/>; and for the Leadership Forums <https://www.globalfuturecities.org/leadership-forum/> (accessed 25 March 2022).



### Feedback from city stakeholders

The emergence of Covid-19 and the wholesale change to online learning affected the UKBEAG's ability to engage with the cities; for example, the Country-level Events, originally envisaged as two-day workshops, were reduced to three- or four-hour events. Nevertheless, the level of attendance and feedback from city stakeholders suggests that the programme achieved a significant degree of success:

1. **Thematic Programme:** 95% of respondents agreed that the sessions provided a useful introduction to the programme, 96% agreed that the content was relevant and 96% agreed that the speakers were engaging.
2. **City-to-City Knowledge Exchange:** 96% of respondents agreed that the session provided insight into the wider aims of the GFCP, 97% that the series of online events was a useful addition to the programme, 97% that their city shares similar issues to those faced by other cities and 95% that they could see opportunities for applying the learnings in their daily work.
3. **Country-level Events:** All respondents agreed that the event was relevant to the challenges they face, 98% agreed that the event would help with the implementation of their project(s), 98% that the event was a useful addition to the programme and 97% that they could see opportunities for applying the learnings from the event.
4. **Leadership Forums:** 96% of respondents agreed that the event will be helpful in the implementation of their project(s), 96% that the event was a useful addition to the programme, 94% that the event was relevant to them and their work and 98% that they could see opportunities for applying learnings about leadership in their work.

### Overall attendance

The Strategic Capacity Development Programme, which ran from late 2018 to early 2022, attracted over 2,000 separate attendances from over 1,000 participants, amounting to over 4,500 hours of engagement, and was supported by over 40 subject matter experts from a diverse range of backgrounds, such as planning, transportation, finance, procurement, data systems and behavioural science.

### Potential for future engagement

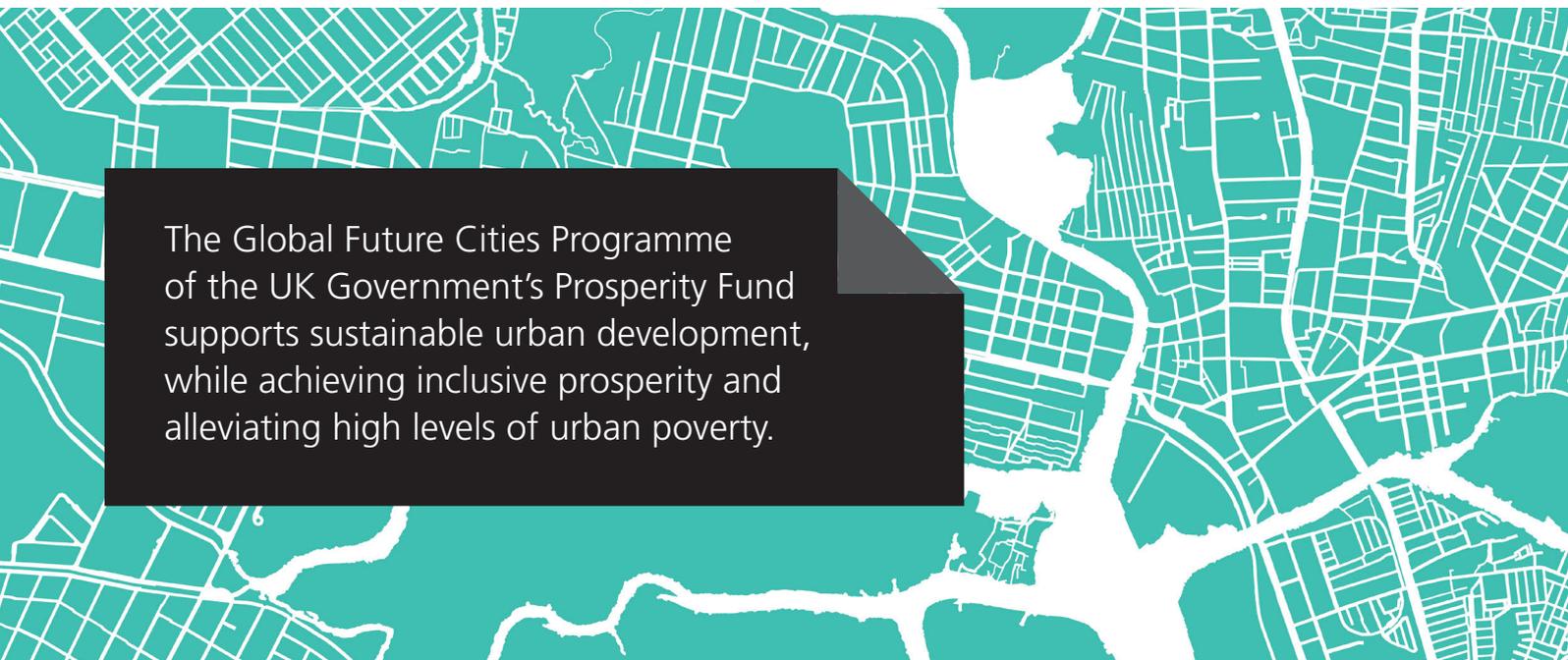
Experience gained by engagement with the GFCP has demonstrated:

- the value of the UKBEAG as a one-stop shop for impartial expert built-environment advice for use by governments and development partners around the world
- the opportunity to contribute to international development through capacity development and the need for such support
- the opportunity to support the delivery of UK foreign policy priorities in tandem with international policy priorities
- the potential for expanding membership of the UKBEAG to better reflect the needs of those grappling with the complex social, economic and environmental challenges associated with city making and the built environment
- the potential for leveraging such programmes to promote UK built environment expertise while strengthening professional networks at home and overseas and capturing the potential for realising secondary benefits.

Moreover, engagement with the FCDO Global Future Cities Programme has provided a rich two-way learning experience, not only for city stakeholders but also for members of the UKBEAG and subject matter experts.



For further information about the programme, please contact  
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The Global Future Cities Programme  
of the UK Government's Prosperity Fund  
supports sustainable urban development,  
while achieving inclusive prosperity and  
alleviating high levels of urban poverty.