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QUICK GUIDE FOR URBAN MANAGERS

# **SUPPORTING NATIONAL AND CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING AND PREVENTION**

## **THROUGH NATIONAL URBAN POLICY**

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## Introduction

This quick guide provides urban decision makers with the key messages and actions as to why a National Urban Policy is an important process and outcome to support improvements to the lives of slum dwellers. In particular, the document outlines how a National Urban Policy supports the development of national and city-wide slum upgrading strategies. A National Urban Policy can help promote a positive mind-set towards slum dwellers and thus set a an inclusive and 'pro-poor' tone for subsequent legislation, regulation and planning frameworks.

Both a National Urban Policy and the development of city-wide slum upgrading strategies should be mutually enforcing processes. Both are important institutional developments that help foster the necessary institutional arrangements, platforms and forums to engage all key stakeholders, all of which work to improve the lives of slum dwellers.

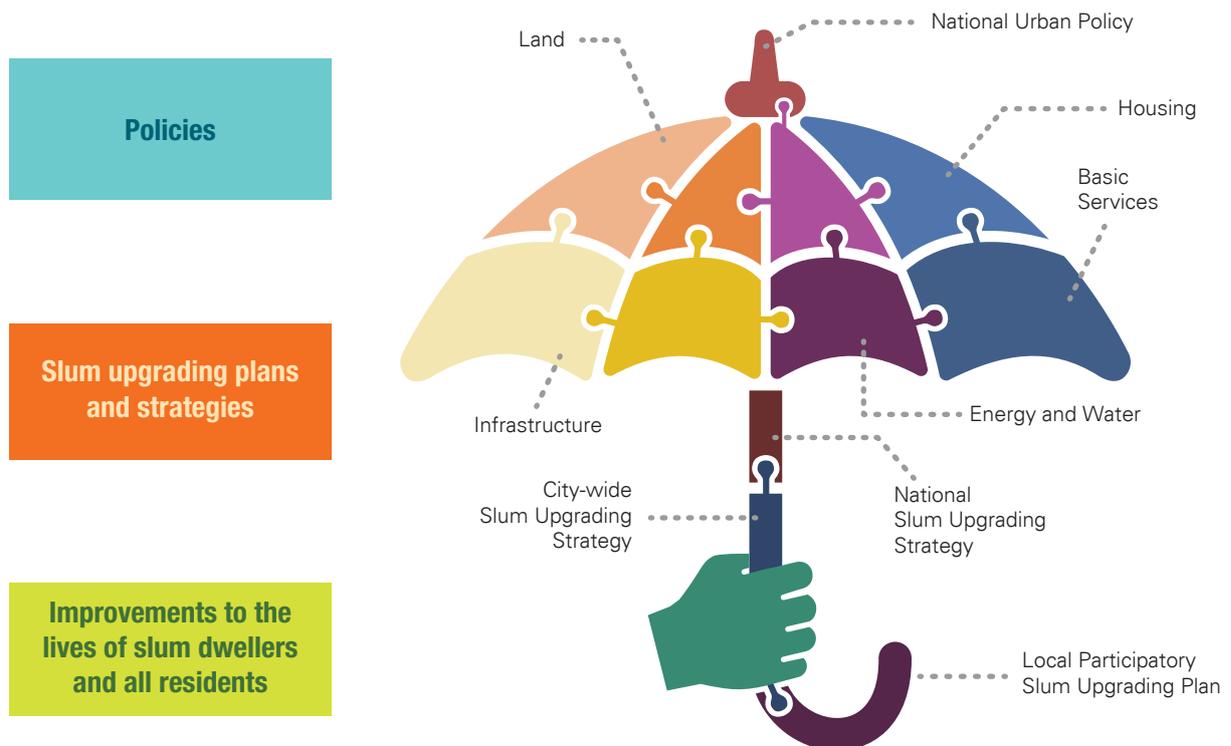
## Key Statements:

One of the most effective results from participatory city-wide slum upgrading programmes are achieved when interventions are closely and clearly aligned with national urban development frameworks<sup>1</sup>.

National Urban Policy provides an overarching 'umbrella framework' which strengthens broad-based support for slum upgrading and slum prevention.

A National Urban Policy offers a coordinating tool to support and strengthen the institutional setup required for a successful national and city-wide slum upgrading strategy. A National Urban Policy creates a strategic entry point for improving the lives of all urban dwellers including slum dwellers as the overall urban environment is more integrated and functional.

**Figure 1:** The role of National Urban Policy as a policy umbrella for strategies, plans and action to improve the lives of slum dwellers across all scales.



<sup>1</sup> UN-Habitat (2009, 2011, 2013), The State of the World's Cities Report; UN-Habitat (2003), Slums of the World. Development Progress (2015). What works in improving the living conditions of slum dwellers. Cities Alliance (2008). Slum Upgrading Up Close: the experience of 6 cities. Fernanda Magalhães and Francesco di Villarosa (eds) (2012). Inter-development Bank. Slum Upgrading Lessons from Brazil. Ivo Imparato Jeff Ruster (2003). Summary of Slum upgrading and participation: Lessons from Latin America.

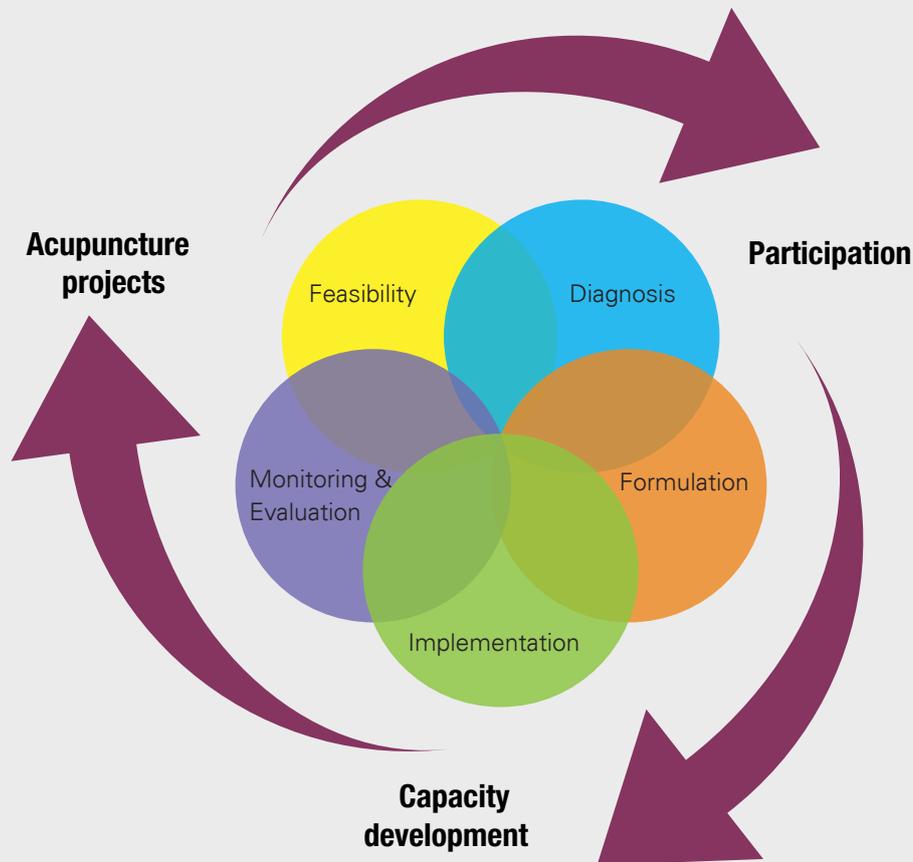
**Box 1** WHAT IS NATIONAL URBAN POLICY?

A National Urban Policy is a tool for government to direct and manage urbanization. With active engagement at regional and local levels and with other stakeholders, a coordinated effort from the national level government through a NUP provides one of the best opportunities for the development of a nation-wide urban development plan.

UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy process has five phases: feasibility, diagnostic, formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation and is based on three pillars and five principles. The three pillars are: participation (engagement of all stakeholders), capacity development (building understanding and consensus around the urbanization priorities), and acupuncture projects (undertaking small scale practical projects to demonstrate the value of a National Urban Policy). The key principles underpinning National Urban Policies are that it be: iterative and forward thinking, implementable, joined up, evidence based and action oriented.

The most effective National Urban Policies are those which seek to understand the key challenges and opportunities of a country and if applicable, develop a pro-poor focus to ensure that the policy can deliver sustainability and equality impacts. Understanding and recognizing the challenges of slums and informal settlements is therefore critical in terms of achieving a pro-poor focus - as is directing National Urban Policy initiatives towards quality of life improvements for all including slum dwellers.

**Figure 2:** UN-Habitat's National Urban Policy process



**Box 2 WHAT IS SLUM UPGRADING AND HOW DOES IT PREVENT THE PROLIFERATION OF SLUMS?**

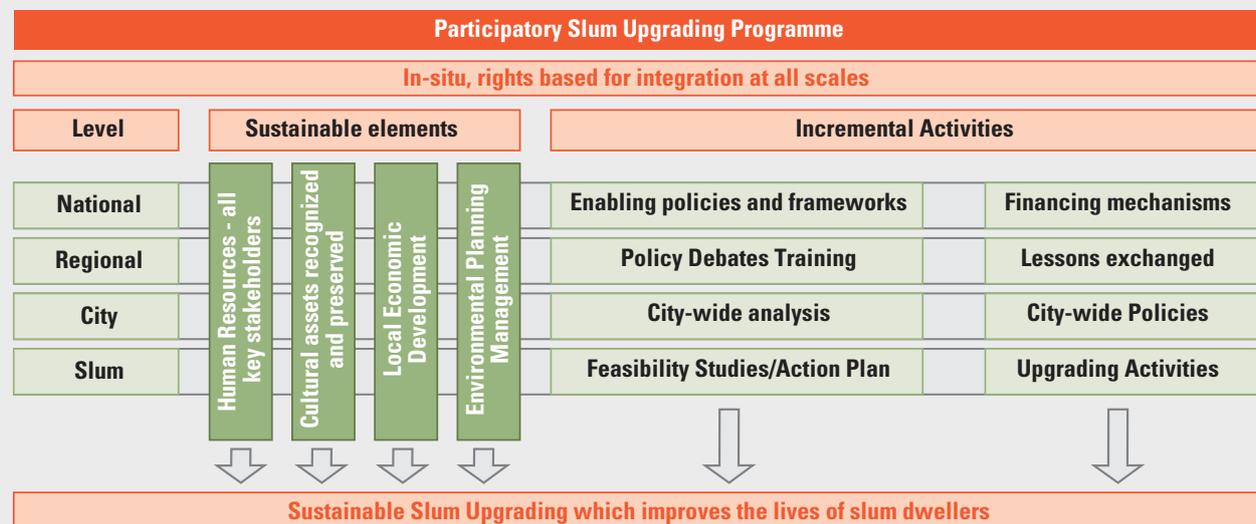
Slum upgrading is a process through which informal areas are gradually improved, formalized and incorporated into the city itself, through extending land and/or providing security of tenure, strengthening basic services and infrastructure – and thus working towards the recognition of slum dwellers with the rest of the urban environment.

Slum upgrading is not simply physical improvements to water or drainage or housing. While physical conditions are important to improve as per the critical deprivations recognized in the slum household definition<sup>2</sup>, slum upgrading must also include actions to strengthen the economic, social, institutional and community activities that are required for sustainable and inclusive local level development and broader city-wide urbanization. These activities should be undertaken cooperatively among all parties involved—residents, community groups, businesses as well as local and national authorities if applicable<sup>3</sup>. Finally, slum upgrading must be recognized as playing a key role in the prevention of slums. The process of planning and implementing slum upgrading strengthens individual and organizational capacity, sensitizes institutions to pro-poor participatory slum upgrading and a mind-set that is more attuned to focusing on the positive dimensions of slum dwellers. Slum upgrading also often develops new institutional responses that are more inclusive and participatory as well as improved cross government coordination. Slum upgrading also provides slum dwellers themselves a voice, the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that become part of the development process. These elements are all essential pre-conditions for prevention.

UN-Habitat promotes the following approaches to slum upgrading as summarized in Figure 3 below:

- Human rights based approach: starts from the premise that people living in slums have a right to adequate housing and basic services, have many skills to offer and must be engaged in all core phases of an upgrading project.
- Involves broad based participation: the inclusion of all stakeholders, including slum dwellers as well as key decision makers and other urban actors for strengthened governance and institutional responses.
- Is city-wide but including peri-urban areas: slum upgrading must adopt an integrated planning approach ensuring that local improvements to the lives of slum dwellers are achieved while at the same time, these local projects are strategically linked to other city level developments and places.
- Strengthens inclusive and sustainable policy and legislative frameworks: the process of slum upgrading is iterative and uses current policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks to achieve a sustainable and inclusive outcome. At the same time, the process provides an opportunity to see how in practice, these frameworks actually support slum upgrading and improvements to the lives of slum dwellers. Lessons learnt can be used to inform revision processes and future policy development.
- Is underpinned by appropriate financing mechanisms for government and other actors as well as options for slum dwellers/communities to be active in the implementation and construction phases.

**Figure 3: Key parameters of Participatory City-wide Slum Upgrading**



2 UN-Habitat’s operational definition for a slum household was agreed through an Expert Group Meeting convened in 2002 by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Statistic Division and the Cities Alliance. It classifies a slum household as one in which the inhabitants suffer one or more of the following ‘household deprivations’: lack of access to improved water source, lack of access to improved sanitation facilities, lack of sufficient living area, lack of housing durability and lack of security of tenure.

3 Discussion draws on UN-Habitat’s approach to slum upgrading and that described by Cities Alliance ([http://www.citiesalliance.org/About-slum-upgrading#Why\\_is\\_slum\\_upgrading\\_important](http://www.citiesalliance.org/About-slum-upgrading#Why_is_slum_upgrading_important))

## How National Urban Policy can support National and City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategies

UN-Habitat promotes the development of national and city-wide national slum upgrading strategies to galvanize support and focus action on improvements to the lives of slum dwellers. A National Urban Policy can also facilitate planning for urbanization that can help prevent future slum development. National Urban Policy supports the development of both National and City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategies through:

### 1. Developing a clear, unified vision for inclusive and sustainable urbanization

The role of a coordinated and inclusive urban policy approach is widely acknowledged to be essential to supporting sustainable urban development<sup>4</sup>. National Urban Policy acts as a national level umbrella document that articulates the goals and vision for urbanization in a specific country-context. This can assist with the development of sustainable improvements to quality of life and, if applicable, for developing a strategy to address informality and to help prevent future slum formation. Furthermore, a National Urban Policy can begin to build consensus around and support for these urbanization goals.

A National Urban Policy helps establish clearly defined urbanization goals which allow for the development of a unified vision for urbanization. These goals should be both defined with slum dwellers, as recognized key stakeholders, and also be for slum dwellers, and therefore cognizant of both the challenges of slums as well as the potential of the people living there.

### 2. Strengthening political will and changing the mind-set towards slums and slum dwellers

The process of development of a National Urban Policy and the messages conveyed in a National Urban Policy are powerful communication tools for promoting sustainable urbanization. A National Urban Policy can also galvanize support for the development of national and city-wide slum upgrading strategies, and ultimately, improve the lives of slum

dwellers. The messages have the ability to shift mind-sets toward the inclusion of slum dwellers and slums in broader planning processes.

### 3. Creating an enabling environment which facilitates national and citywide slum upgrading

Developing policy responses to complex urban problems inevitably requires coordination across and between governments and between all key stakeholders. When considering slum upgrading at a national level, coordination within policy and planning is essential, as is the coherence between national, sub-national governments and other stakeholders. These connections are part of the 'enabling environment' that facilitates action on slums and informality.

A National Urban Policy, both in terms of process and outcome, can help to strengthen this enabling environment through encouraging cross-ministerial consensus on slum upgrading objectives (including all key thematic departments and heads of department) and in defining the appropriate roles and responsibilities for different actors.

### 4. Strengthening an understanding of the institutional setting

Successful responses to slums depend on having a lead ministry/agency which has a) the mandate to implement the programme, b) appropriate implementation funds, and c) effective capacity to engage key stakeholders.

To understand the context within which a National Urban Policy is being developed, a mapping and analysis of government institutions and stakeholders is normally undertaken in the diagnosis phase of the National Urban Policy process. This mapping and analysis allows for an understanding of the needs, interests, and capacity of the stakeholders to respond to the slum challenge. It also helps understand how the institutional setting relates to the goals and objectives of any plans and strategies and what gaps might exist. If consideration for improving the lives of slum dwellers via a National/city level Slum Upgrading Strategy is streamlined through a National Urban Policy, an appropriate lead ministry/agency can be identified during the diagnosis phase of the National Urban Policy process to facilitate effective implementation.

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4 Cities Alliance and UN Habitat (2015). The Evolution of National Urban Policies. Nairobi: UN Habitat; Habitat III, Policy Unit 3, National Urban Policies. Policy Unit Framework; Habitat III, Policy Unit 3, National Urban Policies. Policy Paper. <https://www.habitat3.org/bitcache/e896d8d210d857cbbb94c8b0fa93504d07d6d61e?vid=566123&disposition=inline&op=view> (accessed, 07/03/16).

## 5. Reinforcing the significance of engaging all stakeholders

A National Urban Policy can both start and/or continue a conversation around how the lives of slum dwellers can be improved. More specifically, the conversation can address what a National/City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategy can achieve through its direct engagement with stakeholders on topics regarding urbanization and prosperity. According to UN Habitat, a key pillar of any National Urban Policy development is that the process is participatory – that is, includes those affected and vulnerable in a change process as well as key decision makers and actors.

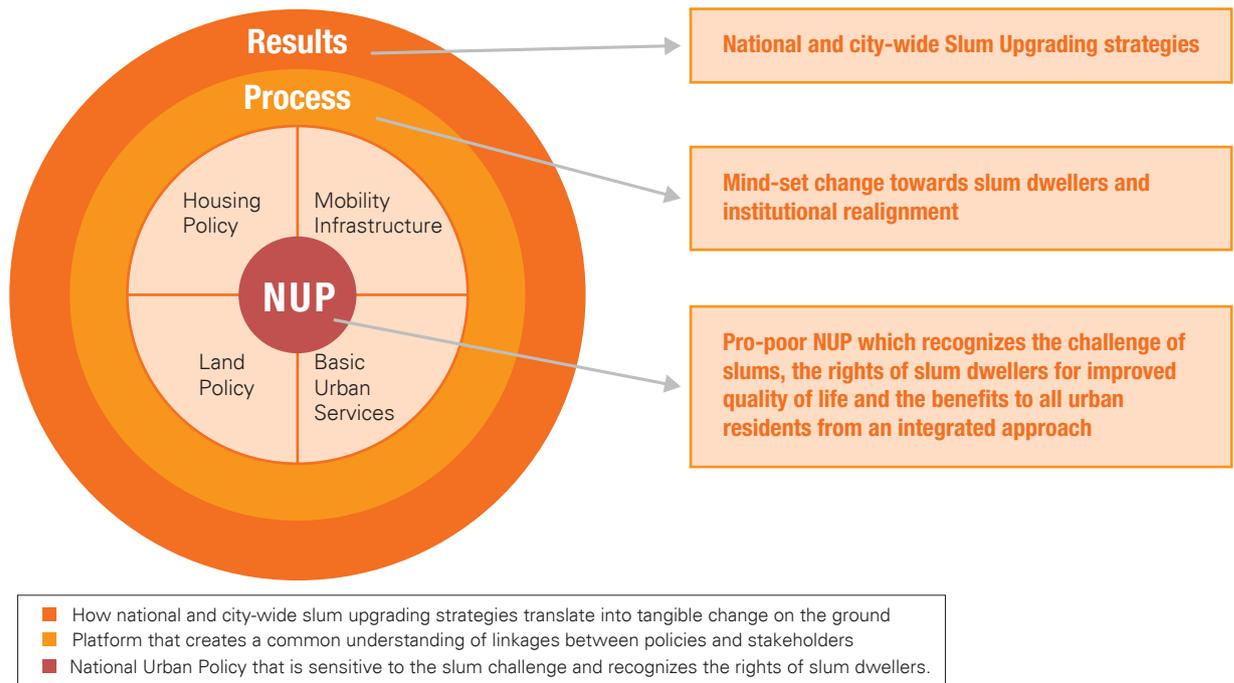
By ensuring a participatory process, the National Urban Policy is more likely to facilitate the inclusion of different perspectives, concerns, solutions, and partnerships into its development and implementation. By making National/City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategy a priority in National Urban Policy, slum communities and other stakeholders can use the

participatory processes within the development of a NUP in order to define national level slum upgrading goals.

## 6. Outlining the key actions and responsibilities to implement national and city-level slum upgrading

A National Urban Policy can aid in the justification of the need for a national (and subsequent development of city-level) slum upgrading and prevention strategy through providing evidence during a feasibility or diagnostic assessment that any ongoing proliferation of slums undermines the capacity to achieve the inclusive urban advantage. Furthermore, a National Urban Policy can work to define and facilitate the assessment of the legislative and financial needs of sub-national governments and the subsequent devolution of these powers. This helps ensure that sub-national governments have the human, financial, and institutional capacity they need to design and implement a slum upgrading programme which links back up to the national policy and associated activities.

**Figure 4:** The Associated Impacts of a National Urban Policy



## The process of promoting slum upgrading in a National Urban Policy

The process of slum upgrading should involve connections between all the policy, strategy, and programme documents that consider slum upgrading and improvements to the lives of slum dwellers.

In some contexts, there will be different policies and strategies in place to support participatory city-wide slum upgrading whilst in others, there will be very limited plans or policy frameworks. In other instances, a National Urban Policy might

need some amendment or review to strengthen its pro-poor element. Finally, in some cases, the absence of a National Urban Policy might mean that a national slum upgrading strategy will be the entry point for both slum upgrading and the development of a National Urban Policy. In other words, the slum upgrading becomes a trigger for the National Urban Policy. The ultimate goal is to create interconnected and related policies and plans and strategies. The diagram below highlights some of the key connections between all these elements.

**Figure 5:** The links and entry points for a National Urban Policy and National/City-wide slum upgrading strategies to improve the lives of slum dwellers.



## Recommendations on how improvements to the lives of slum dwellers are captured in the National Urban Policy development process:

Improvements to the lives of slum dwellers can be secured across the various phases of developing a National Urban Policy.

### Use the **feasibility** phase to:

- Undertake the mapping of the slums context and the people living there to understand key economic and livelihood activities being undertaken and available infrastructure (public and private providers).
- Include the key stakeholders within slum communities as well as those working with slum dwellers, during the National Urban Policy process.
- Map legislative and regulatory frameworks across key thematic areas to understand the institutions that are best placed to lead national and city-wide slum upgrading programmes.

### How to secure the views and assets of slum dwellers?

- Engage the local community in the mapping process in order to build ownership and produce a product that is agreed upon by all.

### Use the **Diagnostic** phase to:

- Consider the development of a National Urban Policy vision which allows for slums to be integrated into the broader urban development framework and the institutionalization of a positive vision of slum dwellers as citizens with rights, assets and responsibilities.
- Assess the capacity of stakeholders, including slum dwellers. Capacity development exercises can be undertaken if necessary in order to ensure that all stakeholders have the capacity to engage meaningfully in the National Urban Policy process.
- Identify 'acupuncture' and 'quick win' projects in slums, which can demonstrate the value of a National Urban Policy and link it directly to tangible changes for slum dwellers in their local communities.

### How to secure the views and assets of slum dwellers?

- Slum dwellers can be mobilized in order to recognize vulnerable persons within their community and assist with ensuring they are mobilized and including in policy dialogues.

### Use the **Formulation** phase to:

- Jointly define and draft the vision, goals, and actions of the National Urban Policy including institutional and financial arrangements.
- Outline of investment required to successfully undertake slum upgrading programmes at a national level.
- Develop indicators of achievement that can inclusively and accurately measure impacts of the National Urban Policy on slums and slum dwellers.

### How to secure the views and assets of slum dwellers?

- Slum dwellers can contribute with defining the vision and goals that have been developed for their communities which can inform the National Urban Policy.

### Use the **Implementation** phase to:

- Begin to implement the National Urban Policy goals that relate to slum upgrading. This can be done:
  - i. Through a national or city-wide Slum Upgrading Strategy reflecting national development agendas and projects,
- Implementation should consider short and long term goals, by establishing quick win projects to test policy areas/ mandates while also planning for long term programmes.

### How to secure the views and assets of slum dwellers?

- Develop national and city-level teams as part of the policy implementation and ensure slum dwellers are part of them.

### Use the **Monitoring and Evaluation** phase to:

- Allow stakeholders to voice their opinions in order to include any unintended outcomes of the National Urban Policy in the overall evaluation.
- Consider evaluating both the process of National Urban Policy development as well as the final outcomes. Lessons learnt can improve both slum upgrading and policy processes in the future.

### How to secure the views and assets of slum dwellers?

- Allow the feedback of slum dwellers to be heard during monitoring and evaluation processes by engaging them with the use of participatory data collection and evaluation techniques.

**Box 3**

**The link between slums and prosperity and how improving the lives of slum dwellers must be a core element of the national urban policy**

“Cities where a large number of people live in slum conditions are less likely to be prosperous. (...) Large concentrations of slums impose enormous burdens on urban authorities that often lack the political will and resources to provide even the most basic services, with implications for the prosperity of cities. Rather than being proactive in their approach to urban development, cities with large concentrations of slums are likely to adopt a reactionary and fragmentary approach to urban development, which tends to be expensive in the long run”<sup>5</sup>.

Thus the proliferation of slums negatively affects all urban residents’ capacity to maximize the urban advantage<sup>6</sup>.

In light of the impact that slums and informality have on all urban dwellers, the National Urban Policy can be a national strategic entry point for taking action on improving the lives of slum dwellers. It is also a means of ensuring that national level urban policy is pro-poor and reflecting current and major urban challenges. There are also benefits to recognizing slum upgrading as a priority of a National Urban Policy. For example, highlighting slums:

- Draws attention to any inequality and equity challenges facing urban contexts.
- Alerts policy and decision makers to the urgency of integrating slums and slum dwellers into broader urban processes and thus demanding a particular approach to urbanization which must articulated in the policy.
- Demands a discussion within the policy process and ultimate outcome, about how slums and the people living there are approached. This then becomes an opportunity to promote inclusive, equality and equity based responses to slums focusing on the value of what is there and the skills of the people, the livelihood and economic development.
- Starts a focus on prevention and what future actions are required to stop the proliferation of slums.
- In other words, the presence of the slum challenge engenders a series of discussions around how to improve the lives of slum dwellers and if the pro-poor approach is secured, then the document can outline the guiding principles for sustainable and inclusive responses.

5 UN-Habitat (2013) State of the World’s Cities 2012/2013 Report.

6 “In a 2013 ranking prepared by the University of Toronto’s Martin Prosperity Institute that evaluated how 61 cities throughout the world performed in the creative economy considering measures on Economic Development and Amenities and Quality of Place, cities that reportedly have slums are all ranked in the bottom half of the list. As these cities belong, in any case, to countries that represent emerging economies in the developing world (Brazil, China, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey), it is likely that cities in less affluent developing countries would perform even worst”. Habitat (2015) Slum Almanac 2015/2016 Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:**

National Urban Policy provides the strategic institutional entry point to support efforts to improve the lives of slum dwellers via city-wide participatory slum upgrading.

**KEY ACTIONS:**

For those with existing National Urban Policies, ensure they recognize slum dwellers and directs efforts to develop national and city-wide participatory slum upgrading strategies for their integration. If a slum upgrading strategy exists, it can be used to inform a revision process for the National Urban Policy.

For those countries without a National Urban Policy, start a process that recognizes slum dwellers and directs effort to developing national and city-wide participatory slum upgrading strategies.

Recommendation	Action for inclusion in the National Urban Policy process
<b>Recognize</b> slum dwellers and areas of informality as part of the urbanization engine	Develop a background document with facts and figures, and map the existing slums in your country.
<b>Recognize</b> the potential of slums to contribute to sustainable prosperity.	
<b>Consider</b> slums while diagnosing the context within which a National Urban Policy will be developed.	Collect the necessary data in order to understand the nature of slums in urban centres and their impact on the state of urbanization within the country.
<b>Recognize</b> slum upgrading as a national priority in a National Urban Policy.	Include the outcomes of the feasibility and diagnosis phases to inform the objectives of the National Urban Policy such that improvements to the lives of slum dwellers are recognized as critical and that slum upgrading, as opposed to evictions, is considered the key tool to achieve this.
<b>Establish</b> a formal process with the participation of the slum dwellers using the National Urban Policy and the development of a National or city-level slum upgrading strategy as a starting point.	Take advantage of the participatory processes within the development of a National Urban Policy, such as a National Urban Forum, and work to ensure that the voices of slum dwellers are heard during these activities.
	Institutionalize the National Urban Policy participatory processes so that current and future (for prevention) slum dwellers and other stakeholders have a permanent forum to have strategic inputs into the urbanization policy and planning across all scales.
	Involve slum dwellers in the implementation of the National Urban Policy, through the diagnostic phases (ensure participatory and current mapping exercises are undertaken) as well as in the development of a National Slum Upgrading Strategy
	Involve slum dwellers in the monitoring and evaluating of the National Urban Policy by ensuring that census collection data is able to reflect the situation of those living in slums and informal settlements.
<b>Consider</b> how other goals of the National Urban Policy can support the National/City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategy and how they are linked to other plans.	Ensure that National Urban Policy goals are mutually reinforced by the actions outlined in sub-national development plans such as an affordable housing policy or pro-poor land policy but definitely including and linking with the National/City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategy.
<b>Develop</b> strategic links with urban development financing plans	Recommend clear financial mechanisms using the National Urban Policy as a justification to support slum upgrading and including the development of National and city-wide Slum Upgrading Strategies.
<b>Ensure</b> key thematic areas key to pro-poor, participatory, city-wide slum upgrading are given specific policy recommendations in the National Urban Policy	Include specific policy recommendations to support: a continuum of security of tenure rights recognizing a range of use and gender rights, support to adequate and affordable housing programmes, provision of basic services and infrastructure to operate alongside slum upgrading and include references to appropriate levels of financing, mandate an inclusive process to engage all stakeholders including slum dwellers themselves in urban development but specifically slum upgrading.

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