# Safety Governance Approach in Urban Environments for Safe, Inclusive and Resilient Cities

A Global Programme implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

| Objective | Safer, more inclusive, better governed, and resilient cities that address the relevant risk factors related to drugs, crime and violence. |
|---|---|
| Outcomes | • Identification of local challenges and priority areas of intervention for each beneficiary city through the use of a dedicated Urban Safety Governance Assessment (Outcome 1); <br> • Strategy and policy development in each beneficiary city with a view to better plan and coordinate efforts to reduce violence, crime, corruption, terrorism, illicit flows, the demand for drugs, and improve well-being and resilience of the community (Outcomes 2 & 3); <br> • Enhanced capacity of officials and institutions at the local and national level (Outcomes 2 & 3) and; <br> • Greater coordination and partnerships, particularly between local and national authorities, and between government agencies and non-state stakeholders at both the local and national level (Outcomes 1-4). |
| Duration | The programme started in July 2019, for 42 months. |
| Geographical focus | Global. Initial interventions to be piloted in Mexico City, Nairobi and possibly cities in Central Asia (2019-2020) |

## Background

Urbanisation is closely linked with increases in economic and social development. Yet, alongside all the growth and advancement taking place, cities across the globe are undermined by chronic insecurity, violence and corruption, including those resulting from crime challenges originating beyond urban or national boundaries. The security challenges of individual cities are increasingly a result of the intersection of individual vulnerabilities, local risks and illicit flows from across national borders.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable recognises that reducing conflict, crime, violence, discrimination, and ensuring the rule of law, inclusion, and good governance are key elements of people's well-being and essential for securing sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda also explicitly highlights the promotion of safe, inclusive and resilient cities (SDG 11).

In 2016, UNODC identified the need for more effective and evidence-based interventions at the urban level to strengthen resilience of communities to crime and violence, as well as to reduce their vulnerabilities to transnational illicit flows (like trafficking of persons, drugs, illicit financial flows, firearms and counterfeit goods). With two-thirds of the world population expected to reside in cities by 2050, these challenges will only continue to become more acute in urban settlements world over.[1]

## UNODC's Response to Urbanisation and Risk

In order to respond to urban challenges, it is essential to develop more holistic, integrated strategies and interventions. UNODC, in close coordination with UN partners and non-state actors, is well placed to assist Member States to diagnose priority areas of concern and then develop sound evidence-based interventions that seek to promote healthy, safe, inclusive and

---

[1] World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, ECOSOC

resilient cities. UNODC understands the value in engaging with local stakeholders, alongside national actors, and empowering them with relevant tools and services as part of this process.

At community level, UNODC, with the complementary expertise of UN agencies, has strong experience in preventing and responding to substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, gender-based violence, violence against children, and promoting education for justice and peace. Over the last five years, UNODC has assisted local governments through Safety Audits in cities in Colombia, Mexico and Kyrgyzstan, collecting and analysing data, conducting participatory crime diagnosis to inform prevention policies and programmes linked to crime and victimisation.



## What is the Urban Safety Governance Approach?

Following recent independent evaluation recommendations, UNODC's intervention aims to build on the past work on Safety Audits, through the Urban Safety Governance Approach. This approach emphasises the need for an in-depth understanding of how a wider set of localised risk factors interact with illicit external flows to give rise to safety challenges. It highlights the need for context-specific responses which seek to reverse risk factors to re-establish legitimate governance, reduce inequality and promote inclusion and individual and community resilience. The approach provides policymakers a framework within which to address an intersection of global threats and local dynamics in order to seek out what builds resilience.

It is expected that the Urban Safety Governance Approach will lead to four main outcomes:

1) ***Identification of local challenges and priority areas of intervention***;
2) ***Integrated strategy and policy development***;
3) ***Enhanced capacity of officials and institutions at the local and national level***;
4) ***Greater coordination and partnerships between all stakeholders***.

The first step of the Urban Safety Governance Approach is the Urban Safety Governance Assessment. This Assessment broadens the scope of the traditional safety audit to examine not only issues related to crime and victimisation but also a wide range of other issues including but not limited to corruption, illicit transnational flows, preventing violent extremism, and health-centred drug prevention, treatment and care. Thematic areas covered by the analysis would vary according to the specific city context and the priorities identified by the local partners. Using an integrated and participatory approach, the Safety Governance Assessments will support local governments, and other relevant authorities, in identifying institutional strengths and weaknesses, priority issues and developing strategies to prevent and address risks to urban safety and good governance.



**Urban Safety Governance Approach**

**Implementation of the Urban Safety Governance Approach**

The Assessment process consists of four key phases: (1) *Planning*; (2) *Data Collection and Analysis*; (3) *Presentation and Validation of Results*; and (4) *Strategies and Policies.*
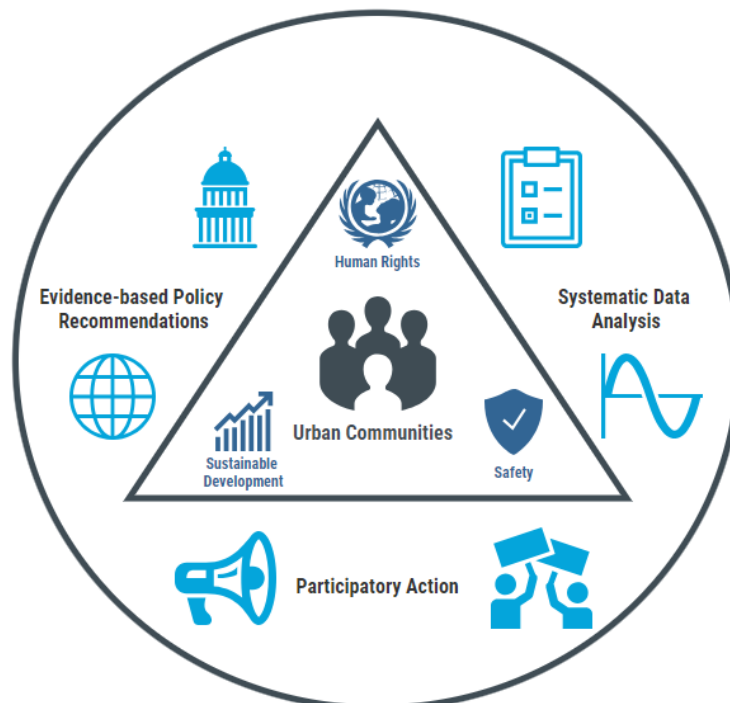
During the Data Collection and Analysis phase, available secondary data is combined with primary data gathered through surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and other participatory methods. The assessment aims to understand the local context, including socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics, crime incidence, drug use and dependence, local governance, policing and judicial mechanisms among others in order to identify priority issues for urban safety and governance. Once priority issues are determined, the research focuses on the views of the local community, civil society, local government and other relevant authorities, in order to understand the specific nature of local challenges, risk factors, actors involved, assess relevant policies and programmes and institutional capacities, and determine community assets to build resilience.

The results from the Urban Safety Governance Assessment should be used to create evidence-based policy recommendations to improve the safety and well-being of urban dwellers. Emphasis will be placed on both working with Member States and their relevant local governments to identify priority areas, as well as on establishing realistic outcomes with measures and milestones against which to gauge progress.

The approach then foresees the design and adoption of public policies at the local level, with corresponding budgetary allocations, to ensure sustainability and local ownership of the process in the short and medium-term. UNODC, in cooperation with key partners, would provide capacity building and technical support for the implementation of key activities identified through the assessment and included in the public policy and action plan. Local counterparts would thus have the means available to measure progress and the capacity to implement preventive and transformative actions to enhance urban safety and good governance.



**Urban Safety Governance Assessment**

**Pilot Implementation**

The Urban Safety Governance Approach will be piloted in Mexico City (Iztapalapa) and Nairobi, within the framework of a project funded by the UN Development Account in 2019-20. Further discussions are ongoing to also work in Bishkek and Tashkent in Central Asia.

Based on the conceptual phase, results and lessons learned from implementation in the pilot cities, the Urban Safety Governance Assessment guidance tool will be refined in 2020 to further improve the implementation of the Urban Safety Governance Approach in other cities across the globe.

For enquiries about the Global Programme, please contact: **UNODCITY@un.org**
For more information on UNODC's Urban Safety and Good Governance initiative, please visit:
**https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/urban-safety/index.html**