



**Executive Board of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme
Second Session of 2021**

Online, 15 and 16 November 2021
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Financial, budgetary and administrative matters,
including the implementation of the resource mobilization
strategy in accordance with the strategic plan**

Responsibility and accountability framework of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and its implementation**

Report of the Executive Director

1. During its first resumed meeting held in November 2019, the Executive Board of the United Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in its Decision 2019/1, requested the Executive Director to submit for approval by the Executive Board at its first session of 2020 an accountability framework, along with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for assessing the implementation of the framework. This was based on the request by the United Nations Habitat Assembly in its Resolution 1/1 on the United Nations Human Settlements Programme strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 adopted at its first session in May 2019 that an accountability framework be presented to the Executive Board for approval.
2. At its second session for the year 2020, the Executive Board approved the UN-Habitat accountability framework that was realigned with the requirements of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023, the Programme’s vision and mission statement, and other institutional and governance developments (EB.2020/24).
3. Additionally, as a programme of the United Nations Secretariat, UN-Habitat is governed by the existing accountability system of the United Nations Secretariat. The 2020 UN-Habitat accountability framework complements the accountability system of the United Nations Secretariat. In summary, oversight of the UN-Habitat accountability framework overlaps between the UN Secretariat and the Executive Board.
4. To ensure there is ownership at the managerial level of the accountability framework and in tandem with the organisational restructuring, UN-Habitat introduced a responsibility matrix (RACI) and a focal point system, which has been in use for the last 18 months. It also puts into practice the Executive Director’s vision for a ‘whole of house’ approach in shifting the Programme to being more impact-oriented whilst ensuring greater integration between normative and operational activities.
5. The UN-Habitat accountability framework comprised of Governance, Strategic Programme & Budgeting, Results Performance Management, System of Internal Control, Independent Oversight Bodies, and Ethical Standards & Integrity.
6. The UN-Habitat Governing Bodies provide an advisory and oversight role supporting the Executive Director in meeting the obligations of the mandate as envisioned in the United Nations

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** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Charter, which is delegated to the Executive Director by the Secretary-General. To date, the UN-Habitat Assembly successfully convened its first session in May 2019 whilst the Committee of Permanent Representatives held its first open-ended high-level midterm review meeting from 29 June to 1 July 2021. The Executive Board met twice a year consecutively since 2019 providing oversight with the Ad-hoc working groups meeting when the Board is not in session. The Executive Board endorses the annual work programme and budget.

7. The Executive Board exercises its oversight role on the implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan through the annual work-programme and budgets of 2020,2021,2022,2023. It also has oversight through policies, strategies, advisory services, advocacy work, capacity building, and programmes and projects developed and executed by UN-Habitat and its partners. The work programmes and budgets provide detailed information on activities, outputs, expected accomplishments and the required resources.

8. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) ensures that UN-Habitat, which is a Secretariat Programme, is part of the broader accountability framework at secretariat level. As such, it provides oversight on the use of regular budget resources and UN-Habitat has consistently submitted the review and recommendations report by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) to the Executive Board at its second session each year. To date, all the reports have been submitted in a timely manner.

9. EOSG also exercises oversight on human, financial and physical resources, maintains Umoja, the enterprise resource planning system of the Secretariat, and monitors the delegation of authority system. The performance on these matrices is captured in the Senior Manager's Compact, particularly that of the Executive Director with the Secretary-General. Owing to a lack of resources, gender mainstreaming in recruitment is poor at the senior managerial levels (D-1 & P-5).

10. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) performs audits and investigations, as required, of UN-Habitat. The latest OIOS report on UN-Habitat was received in December 2020. The UN-Habitat focal point also keeps a record of all cases, which are tracked in the Misconduct Tracking System of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. To date, there are two active cases.

11. The Ethics Office oversees ethical standards in the organisation. In 2020, 95% of all staff attended the ethic training course. At the time of writing, the 2021 course material was just distributed and UN-Habitat will be implementing the training in September 2021.

12. In May 2021, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) carried out a management and administration inspection of UN-Habitat (JIU A456) and at the time of writing, the report has yet to be received. UN-Habitat also participated in two other secretariat-wide JIU inspections on Business Continuity during COVID-19 (JIU A458) and Cybersecurity (JIU A451).

13. The Board of Auditors (BOA) completed its review and submitted their report to the Secretary-General. UN-Habitat is grateful to the BOA for their recommendations. Out of the 25 BOA recommendations for the audit of the financial year ended 31 December 2020, 8 recommendations have been fully implemented and UN-Habitat requested their closure, and 17 recommendations are under implementation. Out of the 63 recommendations contained in the audit report of the BOA for prior financial periods, 28 recommendations have been fully implemented and UN-Habitat requested their closure, and 35 recommendations are under implementation.

14. The Executive Director, implementing the recommendations of by the BOA and OIOS, has been ensuring that all financially outstanding grants be closed. The 789 grants dating back to 2015 remained open when the Executive Director started the review process in July 2018. To date, only 40 remains unclosed representing 95% closure rate. It is expected that all these grants will be financially closed by 31 October 2021.

15. Enterprise Risk Management is led by the Deputy Executive Director, who chairs the risk management committee. The Enterprise Risk Management guidelines are being updated and risk registers developed, in one case with other UN agencies. Risk is also captured at project level by the Project Review Committee (PRC), which is also chaired by the Deputy Executive Director.

16. With regards to the implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023, the Executive Director submits annual progress reports based on the results framework to the Executive Board, key donors, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives conducted a midterm review of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan from 29 June to 1 July 2021 completed the mid-term review by July 2021. In the progress reports and the mid-term review report on the implementation of the

2020-2023 Strategic Plan, submitted so far, indicators of the Strategic Plan were used to demonstrate progress and to enable substantive analysis and comparison across countries and regions.

17. The evaluation framework for the Strategic Plan specifies its mid-term and final evaluation. There are routine internal audits per year and periodic external audits that will be consolidated into a report to the General Assembly every two years. An in-depth programmatic/sub-programme evaluation of UN-Habitat by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is scheduled for 2022/2023.

18. Apart from evaluation of the Strategic Plan, different types of evaluations are being conducted (project, programme, strategy, theme, policy, institutional or operational). Evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and to some extent impact will be applied in all evaluations. External evaluators are selected based on merits and qualifications in evaluation and the respective substantive area of a specific evaluation. The quality of evaluation reports will be assessed based on established quality control checklists. The implementation of evaluation recommendations is monitored regularly through the on-line Evaluation Recommendation Tracking System (ERTS).
