

UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Regional Pacific Report & Strategy 2030





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UN-Habitat ROAP Regional Pacific Report & Strategy 2030

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Photo: Gizo, Solomon Islands, 2019 (Ben and Ben)

Glossary

CDIA	Cities Development Initiative for Asia	PUP	Pacific Urban Partnership
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum	PUF	Pacific Urban Forum
COP	Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	RISE-UP	UN-Habitat Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor Programme
CRGP	UN-Habitat City Resilience Global Programme	ROAP	UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
CROP	Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific	S.A.M.O.A	Small Islands Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
DOC	UN-Habitat Domains of Change	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
EAROPH	Eastern Regional Organization for Planning & Human Settlements	SURGe	UN-Habitat Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation Programme
ESCAP	United Nations Economic Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific	UN	United Nations
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability	UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
IFI	International Financing Institution	UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
IUR-SIDS	UNDP Integrating Urban Resilience in SIDS and Coastal Cities	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
L&D	Loss and Damage	VLR	Voluntary Local Review
LNOb	Leaving No One Behind	VNR	Voluntary National Review
NAP	National Adaptation Plan		
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization		
NUA	New Urban Agenda		
NUP	National Urban Policy		
PIF	Pacific Island Forum		
PNUA	Pacific New Urban Agenda		
PSUP	UN-Habitat Participatory Urban Slum Upgrading Programme		

01

Executive Summary

Overview

UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) has developed this **Regional Pacific Report & Strategy 2030** to engage with development partners and urban stakeholders in pursuit of sustainable urban development in the Pacific region.

As the United Nations agency responsible for cities and the built environment, UN-Habitat is the custodian of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). Our mission is to promote inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urbanization that enhances the quality of life for all communities.

Through comprehensive knowledge sharing, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action, UN-Habitat aims to support Pacific countries and territories, national, sub-national and local governments, as well as regional organizations, in creating resilient cities and human settlements, leaving no one and no place behind.

UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

Since 1997, UN-Habitat serves the Asia-Pacific Region from its Regional Office in Fukuoka, Japan, which is supported by the Bangkok Programme Office in Thailand to strongly connect to the regional UN system. UN-Habitat ROAP office works closely with Member States, cities and partners in the region. It ensures optimal support for the fifteen UN-Habitat countries offices in the region. In the Pacific, ROAP is strengthening support to the UN Multi-Country Offices Fiji, Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia. **In 2024, ROAP has re-established a UN-Habitat Pacific Regional Office in Suva, Fiji.**

Box 3: UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

While this Strategy provides a high-level framework for inclusive and resilient urban development, it acknowledges the vital contributions of grassroots initiatives by local organizations and agencies. UN-Habitat actively engages with local communities and partner organizations to ensure that policies are informed by practical insights from local experience and knowledge, fostering resilient urban environments that reflect the diverse needs of the Pacific Region.

Moreover, this Strategy builds on the outcomes of regional consultations at the **Pacific Urban Forum (PUF)**, guided by the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA), which have been supported by the strong engagement across the region to ensure full alignment with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Strategic Priorities and Approach

The primary goals of the Strategy are threefold. First, it seeks to **promote people's wellbeing, social equity, housing and informal settlement upgrading**, by improving living conditions, reducing inequalities, and ensuring access to basic services, housing, and infrastructure for vulnerable communities, and emphasizes social inclusion, safety, and the right to adequate shelter for all.

Secondly, it is dedicated to **fostering inclusive prosperity, urban economy, urban governance, localizing SDGs and supporting National Urban Policy** by promoting inclusive economic growth, job creation, and sustainable urban development and encouraging effective governance, participatory decision-making, and policies, ensuring that no one and no place is left behind.

Lastly, the Strategy aims to **enhance urban climate resilience by adopting a climate resilient urban development framework**, bringing together climate change adaptation and mitigation, natural asset protection, enhancement and actions supporting Loss and Damage, and disaster risk reduction.

Key Partnerships

Working with the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP), this Strategy is embedded in a common institutional framework that emphasizes multi-level governance the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multi-level climate action.

UN-Habitat chairs both the Steering Committee of the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP), currently composed of 10 organizations, and Organizing Committee of the **Pacific Urban Forum (PUF)**.

02

Regional Analysis

Regional Urban Context and Challenges

Experiences of urbanization across **Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)** are fragmented and varied, with complex histories of cities and towns intertwined with colonization, commercial alienation of land, and other vested interests. From a global perspective, the Pacific remains the world's least urban region, both in terms of the total share of population and the size of its urban centres.

Of the twenty-one **Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)** enumerated by the UN, twelve have more than half of their citizens living in urban areas, eight of which are two-thirds urbanized. Conversely, Tokelau, for instance is defined as being entirely rurally inhabited. Papua New Guinea's estimated nine million inhabitants, nearly two-thirds of the region's total population, heavily skews regional urbanization statistics downward when they are examined in aggregate.

This variation is one of several factors that complicate regional advocacy on urban issues, reflected in the limited consideration of urbanization or sustainable urban development in the strategies and frameworks by most countries and territories, development partners, regional organizations and policy platforms to date. The need to address urban issues in the Blue Pacific, including through strong regional positioning on and advocacy for sustainable urban development, is, however, increasingly urgent.

Between 2020 and 2050, even the conservative growth estimates project that half of the region's total population growth will occur in urban areas, which will more than double in size. This is before accounting for a recent 'uptick' in urbanization in the larger Melanesian archipelagos.

Between 2009 and 2019 Honiara doubled in size growing twice as fast as officially projected.

The Greater Honiara, Solomon Islands, for instance, doubled in size over the last decade, **reaching a population size of more than 130,000 ten years earlier than expected**. Peri-urban growth outside of Port Vila's boundary, means that the population of Vanuatu's capital is currently underestimated in official records by almost 43%. When combined with the country's second city, Luganville, this adjustment increases Vanuatu's level of urbanization by 10 percent to nearly one-third of the national populace, **a level of urbanization not expected until 2050**.

It is widely acknowledged by both independent experts and national government entities that PNG has not completed an accurate national census since 2000, with the 2011 census **significantly undercounting** the largest Pacific Island Country's urban population. Official re-analysis of building footprints and local headcount data by the PNG National Statistics Office and the National Capital District Commission, however, suggests that **Greater Port Moresby had reached a population of 760,000 by 2019** – 62% higher than official figures – and will reach the one-million-person threshold by mid 2025.

Cities and towns account for more than half of national GDP in most Pacific Island Countries and Territories. They contain major infrastructure, including critical health facilities, which have functions beyond the immediate urban populations. Capital cities dominate salary-based employment and opportunities for study and facilitate international trade and travel. Pacific urban areas also account for a disproportionate share of young people, reflective of a **deeper structural change in the region**. In the longer term, as the climate crisis accelerates, cities and towns will provide critical adaptation pathways for those most severely affected by climate-induced migration, which is **already becoming evident** in some low-lying areas.

The failure to adequately plan for this urban growth across many Pacific SIDS has resulted in **large informal settlement areas** and associated economies, infrastructure shortfalls, and ineffective support and technical expertise within local government and associated institutions. This has had significant secondary effects on local environmental conditions particularly in terms of **waste management and sanitation**) and **health outcomes** with, for instance, in terms of communicable disease, and social stability (as reflected in several recent riots and civil disorder events across the region. Although estimates vary significantly, calculations in Port Moresby and Honiara using building analysis suggest that more than half of each of these city's buildings are now informal and lacking legal land tenure, presenting a major security risk that could destabilize the region.

More than half of the inhabitants of two of the Pacific's biggest cities – Port Moresby and Honiara – are estimated to be living 'informally', impacting security and climate vulnerability.

At the same time the region's cities and towns are starting to offer uniquely Pacific alternatives to Western urban design and 20th century urban planning. This Pacific 'island urbanization' is better able to support community and kinship, embed cultural practice and traditional knowledge, and incorporate ecosystem services and nature-based solutions, but needs stronger support through national and regional architecture if it is to be effectively sustained and supported by development partners.

Addressing specific urban development challenges can and must go hand in hand with regional and national urban strategies and planning frameworks. Recent increases in infrastructure funding – whilst broadly positive and in many cases being overdue – are not enough to make urban areas function in equitable and sustainable ways and require deeper strategic connectivity and forward planning. Investments, including through **donor-led financing facilities**, are lacking guidance in terms of both equity in access and benefit by urban citizens, and the deeper capacity to support urban infrastructure going forward (from both technical and governance standpoints).

The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent can provide the basis for investment, planning, and technical support for a sustainable, resilient, inclusive, and prosperous urban Pacific. The framework for this integration is itself already laid out in both the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA) and the Suva Statement for a Sustainable Urban Pacific, developed at **PUF6**. The pillars of the PNUA are: i) Social Equity and Urbanization; ii) Urban Environment, Resilience, and Infrastructure; iii) Urban Economy; and iv) Urban Governance. The **Suva Declaration** – as well as the outputs from earlier Pacific Urban Forums – draws upon a wide range of multistakeholder inputs from the six Pacific Urban Forums held to date, linking these high-level pillars to contemporary issues being faced within specific Pacific Island Countries and Territories.



Photo: Tuvulu, 2015 (Bernard Barri)

03

Strategic Framework

Results and Action Areas

The results and action areas of the **UN-Habitat Pacific Regional Strategy** have been identified and organized along all Domains of Change (DOCs) of the **UN-Habitat Strategic Framework**, the priorities (Social Equity, Urban Economy, Urban Governance and Climate Resilience) of the **Pacific New Urban Agenda** (PNUA), and all four pillars (Planet, People, Prosperity and Peace) of the **UN Pacific Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)**. The section below provides an overview of the alignment between those frameworks as well as additional details on indicators and key results.

UN-Habitat Strategic Plan

UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 focuses on commitments to advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace and to improve living conditions for all, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) principle of "Leave no one behind (LNOB)", **SDG 11**, and the **New Urban Agenda (NUA)** through four mutually reinforcing and integrated **Domains of Change (DOCs)** as key strategic priorities. UN-Habitat's four DOCs are as follows:

DOC 1: Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum;
DOC 2: Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
DOC 3: Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment; and
DOC 4: Effective urban crisis prevention and response.



These domains are underpinned by the social inclusion dimensions of human rights, gender, children, youth, older persons, and persons with disability and two cross-cutting thematic areas of resilience and safety. The four DOCs have three corresponding outcomes each which are tracked using robust indicators and milestones in the results framework and performance management plan.

Box 1: UN-Habitat Strategic Plan

Results and Action Area 1

People's Wellbeing, Social Equity, Housing and Informal Settlement Upgrading

Improving living conditions, reducing inequalities, and ensuring access to basic services, housing, and infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable communities: This results and action area emphasizes social inclusion, safety, and the right to adequate shelter for all, especially in informal settlements.

This Action and Result Area is aligned with the **UN-Habitat DOC 1** Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, the **PNUA Social Equity Pillar** and the **UNSDCF People Pillar**.

Results and Action Area 2

Inclusive Prosperity, Urban Economy, Urban Governance, Localization of SDGs and National Urban Policy

Promoting inclusive economic growth, job creation, and sustainable urban development: This results and action area encourages effective governance, participatory decision-making, and policies that support equitable urban economies, ensuring that no one is left behind.

This Action and Result Area is aligned with the **UN-Habitat DOC 2** Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions, the **PNUA Urban Economy & Governance Pillar** and the **UNSDCF Prosperity Pillar**.

Results and Action Areas 3 and 4

Urban Climate and Crisis Resilience

Addressing climate change, Loss and Damage and disaster risk reduction: This results and action area focuses on enhancing cities' ability to adapt to climate-related challenges, fostering peace, and ensuring resilience to climate change and other crises in urban settings.

This Action and Result Area is aligned with the **UN-Habitat DOC 3** Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment and **DOC 4** Effective urban crisis prevention and response, the **PNUA Climate Resilience Pillar** and the **UNSDCF Planet & Peace Pillars**.

Policy and Strategic Frameworks Alignment

UN-Habitat’s approach is anchored in a range of global and regional frameworks. At the global level, UN-Habitat is guided by key agreements and frameworks such as the [New Urban Agenda \(NUA\)](#), the [Paris Agreement](#), the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), as well as the [UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#), and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2015-2030\)](#).

At the regional level, several frameworks shape UN-Habitat’s efforts. These include the [UN Pacific Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(2023-2027\)](#), the [Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific \(FRDP\)](#), the [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#), the [Pacific New Urban Agenda \(PNUA\)](#), the [SPC Strategic Plan 2022-2031](#) as well as other national policies of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs).

Together, these frameworks offer a strategic direction for UN-Habitat’s initiatives in the Pacific ensuring that the Strategy is coherent with broader objectives and responsive to regional and local challenges. **Table 1** below summarizes key international and regional policy frameworks integrated into the Pacific Regional Strategy.

Table 1: Strategic Alignment with Global and Regional for Sustainable Urban Climate Resilient Development in the Pacific

Framework	Description	Relevance to the Strategy
UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2025	Focuses on commitments to advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace, to improve living conditions for all, in line with the SDG principle of “leave no one behind”, SDG 11, and the NUA through four mutually reinforcing and integrated DOCs.	Domain of Change (DOC) 1 (Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban–rural continuum); DOC 2 (Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions); DOC 3 (Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment); and DOC 4 (Effective urban crisis prevention and response).
UN Pacific Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027)	Outlines the UN development system’s contributions to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in an integrated manner, with a commitment to Leave No One Behind (LNOB). In the Pacific, the UN system together with the 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) resolved to develop an overarching Cooperation Framework in line with regional strategies, and in particular with the most recent 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.	Four pillars: Planet (Resilience to shocks, climate change and ecosystems restoration), People (access and quality to essential services, social protection systems and nutrition), Prosperity (equal opportunities for decent jobs and livelihoods) and Peace (peace, human rights, gender equality and participation).
2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent	The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent is a regional Strategy to protect and secure the Pacific people, place and prospects. It will develop a long-term vision for the region and outline the steps to achieve it. It is based on the shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean and the connections that the people have with their natural resources, environment, cultures and livelihoods. It represents the ongoing commitment of the region to work together as one.	Thematic Areas on People-centred development; Resources and Economic Development; Technology and Connectivity; Climate Change and Disasters; Ocean and Environment; Political Leadership and Regionalism; Peace and Security.
SPC Strategic Plan 2022-2031	The Strategic Plan 2022–2031 of the Pacific Community (SPC) outlines their ten-year commitment to developing a resilient Blue Pacific: a region of peace, harmony, and prosperity for all.	Focus Area 3 (Food Systems), 4 (Equity, education and social development), 5 (Sustainable economies and livelihoods), 6 (Planetary Health), Focus Area 7 (Transforming Institutional Effectiveness).

New Urban Agenda (NUA)

Mobilizes Member States and key stakeholders to drive sustainable urban development at local level, particularly in line with SDG 11. Adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016.

Sustainable urban development; basic services; climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.

Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA)

The PNUA is an important tool to guide socioeconomic development in cities and presents a strong framework to achieve progress. Ensuring sustainable governance, cooperation and partnerships is important to accelerate knowledge sharing and action in the Pacific

PILLAR 1: Social Equity and Urbanisation; PILLAR 2: Environment, Resilience and Urbanisation; PILLAR 3: Urban Economy; PILLAR 4: Urban Governance.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A collection of 17 interlinked SDGs to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, established in 2015 by the UN General Assembly Resolution

SDG 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger),5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Paris Agreement on climate change

A legally binding international treaty on climate change that entered into force in 2016. With the goal to limit global warming, it works on a five-year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action to be implemented by countries and their plan of actions set out in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Guiding framework for achieving the targets of the Paris Agreement through developing multi-level and integrated climate resilience approaches, urban NDCs, NDC implementation plans, and supporting the participation of Housing and Urban Development Ministers at the [UNFCCC Conference of the Parties \(COP\)](#).

Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (2017-2030)

The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2016 endorsed the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An integrated approach to address climate and disaster risk management for more resilient development in the Pacific (FRDP). The Framework is a global first where the Pacific seeks to reduce their exposure to climate and disaster risk, support low carbon development and improve disaster response and reconstruction.

Goal 1 (Strengthened integration adaptation and risk reduction); Goal 2 (Low carbon development); Goal 3 (Strengthened disaster preparedness, response and recovery).

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction complements key 2030 Agenda agreements, including the Paris Agreement, New Urban Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals. It promotes the substantial reduction of disaster risks and losses in lives, livelihoods, and assets across various sectors, emphasizing that disaster risk management is a shared responsibility between governments and other stakeholders. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) oversees the framework’s implementation, monitoring, and review.

Priority 2 (Strengthening disaster risk governance), Priority 3 (Investing in disaster risk reduction) and Priority 4 (Enhancing disaster preparedness through inclusive, integrated planning and resilience-building initiatives).

Means of Implementation

Knowledge Management & Communications

UN-Habitat will leverage existing and emerging knowledge to support evidence-based decision-making and stakeholder awareness. Communication strategies will be tailored for diverse audiences, utilizing workshops, webinars, and social media to advocate for transformative action.

City & Local Level Action Implementation

Cities and local communities will be central partners. Capacity building and participatory approaches will empower local communities in decision-making processes.

Partnerships

Partnerships are crucial to this Strategy, involving national and local governments, civil society, academia, private sector, and local communities. These partnerships will align with the Pacific UNSDCF and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, focusing on social inclusion, equity, and a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).

National Level Support

UN-Habitat will provide technical support, capacity building, and policy advice to Pacific governments to advance urban resilience and sustainable development.

Regional & Multi-country Actions

UN-Habitat will facilitate regional cooperation and joint multi-country actions, share best practices, and support multi-country projects that address common challenges in the region.



Photo: Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 2013 (Bernhard Barth)

Partnerships

Core to this Regional Strategy is the promotion and support for collaborative partnerships. UN-Habitat aims to further develop robust partnerships with a range of urban actors and stakeholders, including national and local governments, city networks, international organizations, civil society, academia, the private sector, and local communities.

Partnerships, often referred to as the “fifth pillar” of the Pacific UNSDCF, are also reflected as a cross-cutting priority. In this context, regional consultations at the **Pacific Urban Forum (PUF)**, guided by the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA), have been supported by the strong engagement across the region to ensure full alignment with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. Furthermore, these partnerships will be leveraged to reach the groups of people at risk of being left behind, including women and people with disabilities using a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to building climate resilient urban development with a focus on social inclusion and equity.

The Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP) provides the institutional framework for multi-level regional cooperation, policy support and continued engagement with member states in the Pacific Region. The framework emphasizes multi-level governance, the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multi-level climate action.

UN-Habitat chairs the Steering Committee of the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP) (UN-Habitat ROAP, UN Economic Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Oceania), Eastern Regional Organization for Planning & Human Settlements (EAROPH), Home in Place, Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and Local2030 Islands Network, University of Melbourne and Monash University) and the Organizing Committee of the **Pacific Urban Forum (PUF)**.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)** framework for the Strategy is directly aligned and draws on the institutional processes and methodologies applied at the level of UN-Habitat Strategic Plan to ensure consistency and collective delivery of results across the agency.

Our programmes are using a results-based framework aligned with SDG indicators to track progress and include regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms to adapt programs based on lessons learned.

Moreover, progress will be measured against the New Urban Agenda (NUA) reporting system, UN-Habitat’s work programme reporting processes, and the Pacific UNSDCF reporting framework through participation at the pillar working groups and annual report.

04

UN-Habitat in the Pacific

Key Initiatives

Participatory Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme

Completed

Through the Participatory Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme (PSUP), UN-Habitat focuses on the biggest deprivations for slum communities: the lack of adequate and safe housing conditions, clean water supply, sanitation and secure land tenure. We concentrate on waste management, gender equality and human rights, climate resilience and participation of the local communities in the slum upgrading process. The PSUP addresses the living conditions of millions of slum dwellers worldwide. It focuses on the challenges in slums and informal settlements and works in close cooperation with the communities based on partnership.

In the Pacific, UN-Habitat has worked in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu. A Pacific Regional PSUP Strategy is forthcoming.

Fiji

Solomon Islands

PNG

Tuvalu

Vanuatu

Kiribati

COVID-19 Socio-economic Recovery

Ongoing

Completed

Strengthened Capacities of African, Caribbean and Pacific SIDS for Green, Resilient and Pro-poor Pandemic Recovery

In order to confront the triple global challenges of rising inequality, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 health crisis, and its multifaceted repercussions, this project aims to **strengthen the capacity of African, Caribbean and Pacific SIDS for a green, low-carbon, resilient and pro-poor recovery** by providing opportunities for interregional and intraregional learning and exchange, including through the adaptation of existing tools and knowledge products of UN-Habitat, as well as the adaptation and testing of tools on local climate finance to advance innovative financing mechanisms for pro-poor climate action in urban upgrading.

Pacific Islands COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impacts Regional Dashboard

This **dashboard (GIS Atlas with RMIT)** presents nationwide and small area statistics about Pacific Islands countries to inform COVID-19 socioeconomic impact response planning.

Fiji

Solomon Islands

Regional

Climate Resilience

Ongoing

Fiji Resilient Informal Settlements

Launched in 2018, Fiji Resilient Informal Settlements (FRIS) is an Adaptation Fund project focused on informal settlements across four urban areas and towns in Fiji located in the Greater Suva Urban Area. The overall objective of the project is to increase the resilience of 16 informal urban settlements in Fiji that are highly vulnerable to climate change and disaster risks. This project implemented in Fiji by UN-Habitat to address climate resilience of urban poor in partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Local Government and the Climate Change Division.

Fiji

Climate Resilient Honiara

The Climate Resilient Honiara project (2018-2025) supports the implementation of the Honiara Urban Resilience and Climate Action Plan and engages across all scales with resilience actions and capacity building at city, ward, and local community levels. A combination of actions and capacity building across spatial scales ensures that actions are not stand-alone but are integrated into a resilience action plan for the city and hence more likely to be sustainable in the longer term. Important outcomes of this multilevel approach are improved institutional arrangements and working relationships between all stakeholders involved.

Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands participated in the integration of **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** in country-level operations of the Resilient Settlements of the Urban Poor (RISE-UP) programme. Honiara was selected as a site to pilot NbS and urban biodiversity actions in the context of upgrading and building climate resilience in informal settlements.

NDC Support & Ministerial Participation at COP

Aligned with the UN-wide NDC push and in support of the COP28 Pledge for multilevel partnerships (CHAMP), UN-Habitat is supporting the development of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), their implementation plans and greater integration of urban-focused climate actions in NDCs. Additionally, UN-Habitat is facilitating the participation of Pacific Housing and Urban Development Ministers to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP). In recent COPs (COP27, COP28, and COP29), several Pacific Ministers joined the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, co-hosted by UN-Habitat. These activities are supported by the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation initiative (SURGe) aimed at advancing multi-level climate action and equipping cities to accelerate local climate action and help deliver the targets of the Paris Agreements and the SDGs.

Regional

Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) and Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)

UN-Habitat chairs the Steering Committee of the Pacific Urban Partnership and the Organizing Committee of the **Pacific Urban Forum (PUF)**. Held regularly since 2003, most recently in 2019 (PUF5), 2021 (Virtual PUF) and 2023 (PUF6), the event brings together a wide range of urban stakeholders with diverse backgrounds such as national and local governments, policymakers, urban development practitioners and urban planners, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, local and international academia, the private sector, and development partners, among others. **PUF7** is scheduled to be held in mid-2025 and will explore advancing sustainable and climate-resilient urban development from a *Pacific perspective* by focusing on local actions, knowledge, and governance models, all within the framework of a strong regional Pacific context. Lastly, UN-Habitat and the PUP have been working to support Pacific voices and representation at global and regional fora, such as the **World Urban Forum (WUF)** and **Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF)**, by facilitating the participation of Pacific delegates.

Regional

Development of State of Pacific Urbanization Report

UN-Habitat is working with the university members of the PUP and in coordination with the World Bank on the development of a **Regional Policy Paper on the State of Pacific Urbanization**. Building on PUF6 Outcomes and meant to identify best practice approaches and lessons learned from countries in the region on innovative advances to gear post-COVID-19 economic recovery towards climate change adaptation. Approaches will be shared with SIDS countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to support the regional capacity-building hybrid workshop, and possibly, virtual global technical dialogues.

Regional

SDG Localization and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

The joint UN Habitat and ESCAP programme on Accelerating Multi-level Action for SDG Localization in Fiji (2024-2025) delivers a comprehensive approach to accelerate development planning, financing and multi-level governance for the localization of the SDGs in Fiji. The programme directly supports the implementation of Fiji's 2023 Voluntary National Review report's recommendations regarding SDG localisation and the Pacific UNSDCF.

Fiji

ESCAP and UN-Habitat currently support the **Suva VLR co-production processes** with diverse stakeholders as well as with the neighbouring town councils of **Lami, Nausori and Nasinu**. The programme seeks to (1) build on Suva's VLR Report to develop integrated policy solutions to achieve the SDGs through a SDG-Centered 10-Year Development Plan for Suva; (2) **scale up the application of VLR Reports in Fiji to two additional urban centers (Lautoka City and Labasa Town)**; (3) increase the National and Local Government capacity to implement SDGs through multi-level governance, planning and action.

Solomon Islands

UN-Habitat recently held scoping consultations in support of a **Voluntary Local Review for Honiara** resulting in the production of a Framework for a Honiara Local Voluntary Review.

National Urban Policy Support

UN-Habitat with a strong track record of working with the Ministries of Local Government and the Ministry of Housing and providing **National Urban Policy advice including the Housing Policy and the urban dimensions of the NDC and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP)** will provide national government coordination. UN-Habitat further has a strong record of engagement with Nadi and Lautoka and has provided some climate change resilience training for local governments across Fiji. UN-Habitat's Adaptation Fund projects with the Ministry of Local Government and local councils across Fiji support scaling up beyond Suva, UN-Habitat's methodologies on SDG localization and Action-oriented VLRs will be tailored to the contextual needs to Fiji.

Fiji

Building on capacity development Strategy and workshops, recommendations for the **Solomon Islands' Housing Policy** were produced with the intention to guide national government actors as well as local and provincial governments in promoting delivery of affordable and appropriate housing for Solomon Islanders throughout the country. The recommendations support the production and endorsement of a **National Housing Policy Framework, Localised Housing Policy for Greater Honiara and Provincial Housing Policies Guidelines**.

Solomon Islands

UN-Habitat has been requested to support the development of a **National Urban Policy**. Drawing on the potential synergies from this process, we have also offered to support **Vanuatu's 2nd VNR to be completed in 2024**. The first one was completed in 2019. Previous work in the country includes **Greater Port Vila Vulnerability Assessment, Resiliency Profiling** with a set Recommendations of Actions for Resilience and Sustainability, all completed in 2020, as well as a **Participatory Urban Slum Upgrading Programme** completed in 2015.

Vanuatu

Additionally, UN-Habitat has previously implemented projects in **support of National Urban Policy in Samoa and Papua New Guinea**.

Samoa

PNG



Photo: Honiara, Solomon Islands, 2017 (Bernhard Barth)

05

Programme Development

Cutting across our project proposals for the Pacific Region, is a common institutional framework spearheaded by the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP), emphasizes multi-level governance, the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multi-level climate action. As such, the projects presented in the following section can be implemented in an integrated way as part of our Regional Pacific Programme portfolio.

In line with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and contributing to all pillars (Planet, People, Prosperity and Peace) of the UN Pacific Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), our programmes consider a human rights-based approach to development solutions and building urban resilience to reach the groups of people at risk of being left behind, including women and people with disabilities.

Moreover, leveraging UN-Habitat's Global Programmes such as the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) and the Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor (RISE UP) initiatives, our programmes aim to accelerate urban climate change adaptation, mitigation and environmental protection by applying tested tools, emerging knowledge and cutting-edge science and innovation from within the organization, as well as from its academic and research collaborators.

Programme Development Proposals

- 1 SDG Localization for Climate Resilient Urban Development
- 2 Pacific Urbanization Programme
- 3 Pacific Urban and Climate Resilience Hub

Box 4: Pacific UNSDCF and Leaving No One Behind Principle (LNOB) Alignment

The Pacific UNSDCF and Leaving No One Behind Principle (LNOB)

The vision of the Pacific UNSDCF is for all people in the Pacific, by 2030, leaving no one behind, to be equal and free to exercise their fundamental rights, enjoying gender equality and peace, resilient to the existential threats and living in harmony with the Blue Pacific Continent.

Recognizing the residents of informal settlements and upholding human rights principles such as the Right to Adequate Housing, access to clean water and sanitation, participation, gender equality, and protection against unlawful forced evictions, these projects are aimed at supporting the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged urban communities. They are developed based on the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), which is a commitment made by UN Member States to eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities, and end discrimination. LNOB prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals, and it lies at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Programme 1

SDG Localization for Climate Resilient Urban Development

Emerging



Overview

In response to the priority for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the growing need to integrate the SDGs at the heart of multi-level governance, planning and investment strategies, the **Pacific SDG Localization for Climate Resilient Urban Development Programme** delivers a comprehensive approach that leverages technical assistance, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building at multiple levels to foster SDG-aligned local development, and integrates resilience-building strategies into urban governance and planning, at the community, municipal and national levels.

While the experiences of urbanization across PICTs are diverse and complex, reflecting histories shaped by colonization, commercial land alienation, and other vested interests, all suffer from the aggravating effects of climate change on urban development challenges and other crises.

In this context, SDG localization, the process of adapting SDGs to the specific contexts, needs, and priorities of local governments and communities, in coherence with the national frameworks, offers a unique opportunity for advancing climate resilient urban development for PICTs facing increasing vulnerability to climate change, compounded by geographic isolation, and small economies.

In addition, collaboration among all stakeholders and coordination across sectors and spheres of governance is necessary for effective and sustainable SDG localization. Referred to as **"multi-level governance"**, this process enables knowledge and resource sharing across sectors and levels of governance, thereby translating SDGs into actionable strategies at the national, regional, and local levels.

Modeled after the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, which countries use to track their national progress on the SDGs, Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) have been used by cities and municipalities worldwide to monitor, report and accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs. To this day, twelve PICTs have undertaken VNRs to evaluate their national progress on the SDGs. However, only Fiji has initiated VLR at the subnational level for Suva, Lautoka and Labasa.

Building on the experience of UN-Habitat and its partners in supporting VNR and VLR processes worldwide and by aligning local development planning and financing with the SDGs, this programme envisions transformed and climate resilient cities and towns in **Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia**, with improved livability, inclusivity, and sustainability. In addition, the programme directly supports the implementation of the selected PICTs' VNR recommendations SDG localization.

SDG Alignment



Fiji

Solomon Islands

Vanuatu

Kiribati

FSM

PNG

Objective

The programme aims to empower cities and towns in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Micronesia and Kiribati, to create more inclusive, climate resilient, and sustainable communities by effectively integrating SDGs into local development planning, financing and action supported by enhanced capacity of local stakeholders for no one to be left behind.

Key Activities

- 1. **Providing technical support to develop and scale up the application of Voluntary Local Reviews** in selected cities, towns and municipalities. Building on the enabling environment provided by the selected countries' previous VNRs (and Suva's ongoing VLR in the context of Fiji), the outputs will be VLR reports fostering inclusive and climate resilient urban development and planning strategies.
- 2. **Supporting the development comprehensive medium-term Local Development Plans centered around SDGs**, in alignment with existing National Development Plans and Strategies, contributing to VLR replication, and which include Local Climate Action Plans.
- 3. **Preparing inclusive capital investment projects prioritized by the VLRs and the Local Development Plans with a 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) approach** to enhance the socioeconomic impact of SDG actions. The outputs will be capital investment concept notes that meet the needs of marginalized urban communities ready for pre-feasibility financing.
- 4. **Developing comprehensive capacity-building programmes for national and local governments to strengthen multi-level governance and planning for SDG localization.** By bringing together different levels of governance actors and bridging capacity gaps, the programme will enhance SDG awareness, data innovation, planning instruments, and multi-stakeholder engagement tools.

Geographical Scope

The programme aspires to be implemented and to involve multi-level governance actors in the following countries, cities, towns and municipalities:



Expected Outcomes

The programme aims to build evidence for SDG localization by integrating the LNOB principle, supported by effective governance, planning, and financing. It seeks to enhance national and regional environments for SDG localization, strengthen capacities, and promote inter-municipal cooperation on VLRs.

In the long run, policymakers will use SDG performance for planning, institutionalize SDG localization knowledge, and integrate LNOB principles into local actions. This will lead to better SDG integration into municipal plans, improved local SDG financing, and strengthened capacities for livability, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Governance Structure and Partnerships

The Programme will be led by the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), ESCAP and Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Pacific, in collaboration with other members of the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP). Leveraging UN-Habitat and ESCAP's experience and technical support in promoting VNR and VLR integration, and CLGF's established network and expertise in stakeholder engagement and inter-municipal cooperation, this partnership will deliver comprehensive insights and tailored solutions to the specific contexts of PICTs.

Building on ESCAP's application of the Asia-Pacific VLR Guidelines for Suva's VLR and UN-Habitat's methodologies on SDG localization and Action-oriented VLRs, and drawing on its network of qualified local experts, CLGF's involvement in VLR and collaboration with councils and municipalities will enhance the alignment of project outcomes with local priorities and contexts.

In fact, CLGE is uniquely positioned to facilitate effective project management and administration, ensuring that projects are tailored to the specific needs of the country by leveraging local knowledge and skills. The experience gained from similar initiatives, such as the Blue Green Development Project in Tarawa, underscores the importance of consistency and continuity with local experts, ensuring that sustainable and contextually relevant solutions are built by integrating local expertise and strategically deploying international technical experts only when required, ultimately reflecting the unique dynamics of the Pacific Region.

Other Pacific Council of Regional Organisations Agencies (CROP Agencies), Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisation (PIANGO), Local2030 Islands Network as well as other agencies such as UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF will be invited to engage in the joint programme with their experience in SDG localization, support to urban market traders and data support being leveraged. The Resident Coordinator Offices will support visibility and advocacy, including their direct representation of the RCs in all major convenings financed by the joint programme.

Timeline and Budget

The programme is envisioned for 3 years and will require funding of USD \$12 million.

Programme 2

Pacific Urbanization Programme

Extension



Overview

Driven largely by rural-to-urban migration, Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) are facing rapid urbanization trends. The growth of urban populations leads to socio-economic and environmental challenges such as an increase in unemployment, rising inequalities, a growing pressure on urban service delivery and a great demand for affordable housing. Intertwined with these issues are the region's high levels of vulnerability to climate change and disaster risk, which threatens traditional livelihood resources, marine and low-lying island areas and poverty alleviation.

The **Pacific Urbanization Programme** and **Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)** represent an initiative designed to support countries in the region in implementing sustainable urban development strategies that align with the **Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA)**. By leveraging a four-pillar framework focused on Climate Change Resilience & Infrastructure, Social Equity & Urbanization, Urban Economy, and Urban Governance, the programme aims to foster inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban environments across the Pacific Islands.

Through supporting the organization of the Pacific Urban Forum, providing National Urban Policy and Policies Support, and centering Traditional Governance and Knowledge Systems within sustainable urban development and resilience-building approaches, the programme fosters a cohesive approach to urban challenges, promotes knowledge sharing, and mobilizes resources that empower countries to address their unique urbanization needs.

The PUP will facilitate meaningful dialogue, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building among local governments, civil society, and various partners. The success of the PUP will be anchored in its ability to enhance collaboration among diverse stakeholders and integrate urban policies at multiple governance levels. As the programme advances, its outcomes—such as strengthened urban governance frameworks, effective partnerships, harmonization of traditional knowledge systems and formal governance structures, and innovative local solutions—will illustrate how Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) can address pressing urban challenges while prioritizing sustainable development.

Timeline and Budget

The programme is envisioned for 3 years and will require funding of USD \$750,000 annually.

The **Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)** provides the institutional framework for multi-level regional cooperation, policy support and continued engagement with member states in the Pacific Region. Most of the funds raised are managed by the consortium and contribute to further resource mobilization.

SDG Alignment



Regional

Objective

The Pacific Urbanization Programme and **Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)** aim to help enable the implementation of actions arising from the Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) and the **Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA)** by supporting the countries of the region to achieve sustainable urban development. It seeks to rally implementing partners, to mobilize resources for regional and cross-country learning and development across different sectors to achieve better integration and synergies.

Key Activities

1. **Advancing the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA) through the Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) and Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP).** The stream of activities related to the PUF aims to increase the collaboration and strengthen urban resilience in the Pacific through the effective exchange of knowledge, partnerships, and local actions..
2. **Strengthening National Urban Policy and Policies Frameworks to achieve Sustainable and Climate Resilient Urban Development in the Pacific.** In addition to supporting an enabling National Urban Policy (NUP) environment, the Programme expects two additional streams of activities focusing on **National Housing Policies** and enhancing the urban content of **National Climate Policies** such as NDCs and NAPs.
3. **Centering Traditional Governance and Knowledge Systems for Sustainable Urban Development and Resilience-building in the Pacific.** Activities under this stream include capacity building workshops for local government officials and traditional leaders to enhance collaboration, support for developing clear policies that recognize traditional governance roles, and community engagement initiatives to integrate local voices into urban planning.

Expected Outcomes

Through the Pacific Urban Forum, the **Pacific Urbanization Programme** aims to increase collaboration and strengthened urban resilience in the Pacific through the effective exchange of knowledge, partnerships, and local actions, leading to the advancement of the **Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA)**.

Additionally, by providing National Urban Policy and Policies (NUP & NUPs) support, the Programme aims to enhance national and local governance frameworks for housing and urban development that promote safe, secure, and affordable shelter while effectively integrating climate resilience strategies into urban policies and promote a climate resilient approach to urban development.

Lastly, the Programme aims to enhance local governance and community resilience through the integration of traditional knowledge systems and formal governance structures, resulting in improved decision-making, effective service delivery, and sustainable urban development across Pacific Island countries.

Programme 3

Pacific Urban and Climate Resilience Hub

Emerging



Overview

Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face heightened vulnerabilities, particularly as global temperatures approach the 1.5°C threshold. Beyond this point, adaptation becomes increasingly difficult, while climate change-induced disasters and loss and damage intensify. Existing financial, governance, and institutional frameworks fall short in responding to these challenges. National and local governments, along with the private sector, civil society groups, communities, regional organizations, and development partners, each have distinct and crucial roles to play in addressing these challenges, both independently and collaboratively, to build a more resilient future for the Pacific Region.

Drawing on existing frameworks, such as the [Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific \(FRDP\)](#), that view climate resilience in an integrated manner and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as interconnected, the **Pacific Climate and Urban Resilience Hub** is designed to strengthen urban resilience in Pacific SIDS by integrating climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and Loss and Damage into urban planning. Led by [UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific \(ROAP\)](#) and in collaboration with the [Pacific Urban Partnership \(PUP\)](#), it provides policy support, capacity-building, and fosters collaboration among stakeholders to enhance sustainable and climate-resilient urban development across the region.

Timeline and Budget

The roll-out phase (3 years) consisting of partnership building and piloting projects will require funding USD \$2.5 million. Funding for the subsequent full programme implementation phase in five countries is estimated at USD \$50 million.

SDG Alignment



Regional

Loss and Damage Action and Advocacy in the Pacific

A growing number of countries in the region are actively advocating for action on Loss and Damage. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), for instance, has established the Pacific Climate Change and Migration Project in 2019 to address the impacts of climate change on migration and displacement in the region. The government of Fiji has relocated villages further inland due to permanent inundation and the soil being too salty to grow crops and, anticipating future relocations, has published a first set of guidelines outlining 42 villages identified for relocation. **Advocacy on Loss and Damage is also being reflected in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).** Nauru included Loss and Damage as one of eight areas that contribute to sustainable development. Vanuatu's NDC notes that Loss and Damage actions are part of the country's National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy. Tonga all speak to Loss and Damages occurring from increasing disasters, and some countries have detailed cost estimates and systems for tracking this information.

Box 5: Loss and Damage Action and Advocacy in the Pacific

Objective

The **Pacific Climate and Urban Resilience Hub** represents a collaborative effort to localize SDG achievement in the Pacific by catalyzing local and regional engagement on urban climate resilience. By integrating climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and addressing Loss and Damage into urban planning and governance frameworks at local, national, and regional levels, the Hub seeks to serve as a global model for effective stakeholder collaboration and implementation across all SIDS.

Key Activities

1. **Providing policy advisory, capacity-building and advocacy support** for national and local governments, planners, and community organizations to develop and implement **comprehensive strategies for climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and addressing Loss and Damage in urban areas.** This stream of activity includes **support to NDC development**, NDC implementation plans, and integration of urban-focused climate actions in NDCs.
2. **Facilitating risk-information and knowledge exchange among SIDS to foster cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches on resilience building.**
3. **Fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders**, including governments, NGOs, research institutions, and local communities to **develop and implement innovative solutions in climate-resilient urban development.**

Expected Outcomes

At the city level, over the next three years, 10 additional local climate action plans will be finalized. Based on these city/town-wide plans, would include priority projects ready for climate finance / donor discussions. Pilot interventions in these 5 locations to commence.

To achieve these outcomes, the Hub would facilitate activities and outputs, towards two results areas, namely (1) **advancing adaptation actions in cities, building community resilience and promoting an integrated approach to climate resilience and disaster risk reduction**, and (2) **enhancing knowledge and actions to address Loss and Damage.**

Governance Structure and Partnerships

The Hub will be led by the [UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific \(ROAP\)](#), in collaboration with [Pacific Urban Partnership \(PUP\)](#) and located physically with the [Commonwealth Local Government Forum \(CLGF\)](#) Pacific, in Suva, Fiji. In its initial phase, the Hub will focus on developing new and strengthening existing partnerships and learning from climate-resilience initiatives both in the region and globally. Potential partners include [UN-Habitat City Resilience Global Programme \(CRGP\)](#) in collaboration with [UNDP](#) global, country and sub-regional offices, leveraging the UNDP-UN-Habitat Joint Global Programme on [Integrating Urban Resilience in SIDS and Coastal Cities \(IUR-SIDS\)](#). Full programme implementation will be supported by the PUP and roll out in at least five countries as part of a second phase.

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all in an urbanizing world**



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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