

PHILIPPINES 2026-2029



COUNTRY PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

"A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world."





UN-Habitat ROAP Country Programme Overview

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)
ACROS Fukuoka Building,
8th Floor 1-1-1 Tenjin, Chuo-ku
Fukuoka, Japan
habitat.fukuoka@un.org
Tel: +81-92-724-7121/23

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Coordination:

Principal author: Christopher Rollo

Contributing authors: Maria Adelaida Antonette Cea

Layout and graphic design: Matheus Cordeiro

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INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, with real GDP growth of by 5.5 percent in 2023 and 5.7 percent in 2024. The current Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 has the overarching goal to deliver durable and measurable improvements in the quality of life for every Filipino through sound economic management, evidence-based policymaking, and strategic public investment. The PDP Midterm Update (2025) aimed to fast-track the government's transformation agenda with urgency and a commitment to concrete outcomes. Philippine cities have demonstrated a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda by localizing the Sustainable development goals (SDG) across multilevel governance structures and systems, ultimately with families owning and acting on their family-level SDGs.

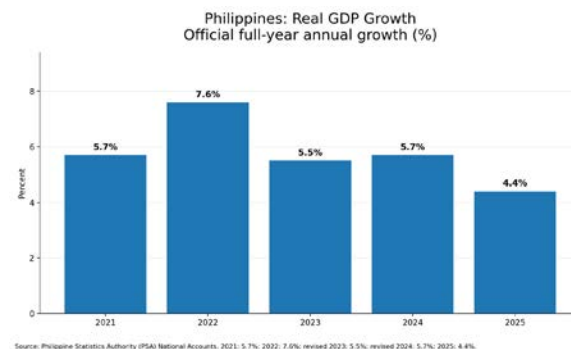
UN-Habitat's partnership with the Philippines started years before it opened the country office in 2003, growing over more than 20 years, grounded in shared priorities under the Sustainable Development Goals, the Philippine New Urban Agenda, and Philippines' national development plans and frameworks.

This Country Programme Overview (CPO) outlines UN-Habitat's strategic engagement in the Philippines for the period 2026–2029. It builds on ongoing collaboration with national agencies, regional governments and councils, local authorities, civil society, academia, and development partners. The CPO highlights key urban challenges, showcases ongoing and planned interventions, and sets out priority areas where UN-Habitat will continue to support the Philippines in advancing sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient housing and urban development. This CPO serves as both a strategic roadmap and a platform for collaboration. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Government of the Philippines and all stakeholders to build a better quality of life for all in an urbanising world.

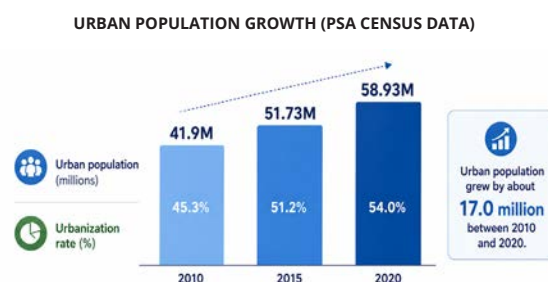


01 COUNTRY ANALYSIS

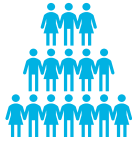
The Philippines remained one of Asia's faster-growing economies, expanding by 5.5% in 2023 and 5.7% in 2024, although growth slowed to 4.4% in 2025. In 2020, an estimated 58.9 million Filipinos or 54% of the country's population lived in urban areas, increasing from 51.2% in 2015. Within the broader context, the Philippines is viewed as a rising urban country.



The World Bank has reported that the Philippines had one of the highest urban population densities in East Asia and the Pacific where Metro Manila (population 14 million), designated as a megacity since 2010, is among the top 20 largest urban agglomerations in Asia.



FACTSHEET



112.7 M
POPULATION



0.80%
POPULATION GROWTH
(2020-2024)



58.9 M
URBAN POPULATION



54 %
URBANIZATION



4,346 USD
GDP PER CAPITA



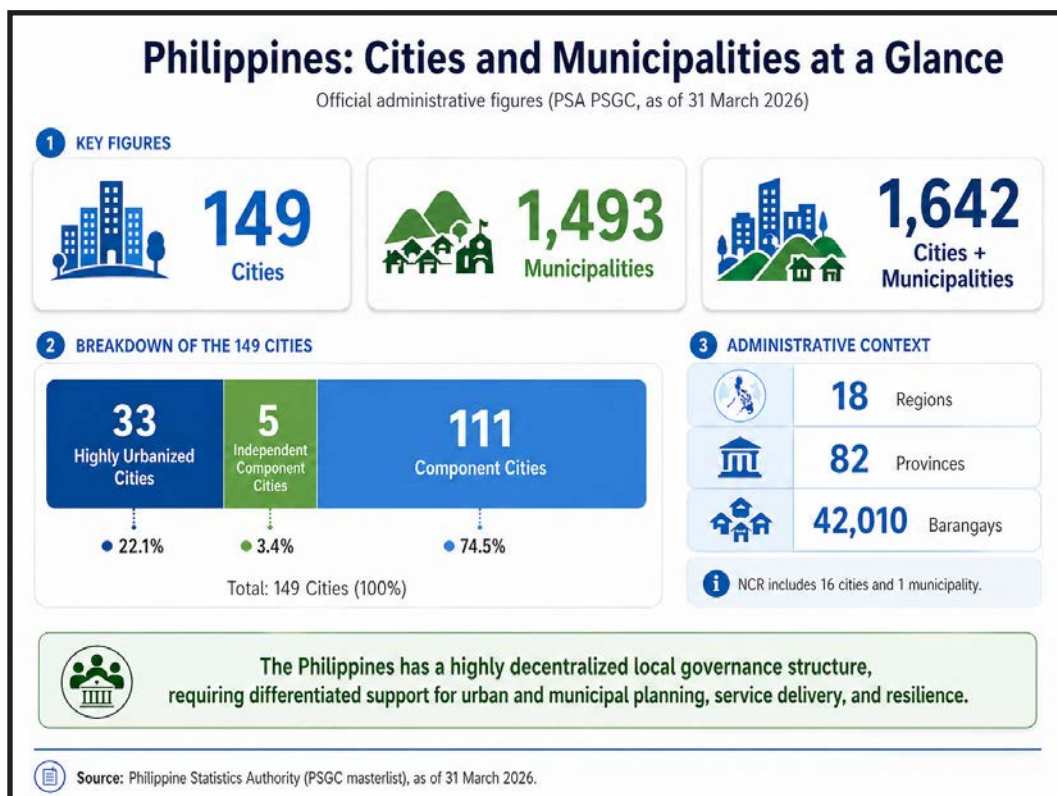
97.5 %
FAMILIES WITH AT LEAST BASIC DRINKING WATER SERVICE



0.720
HDI INDEX (2023)



7.4 %
AGING RATE (2030)



03

URBAN CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

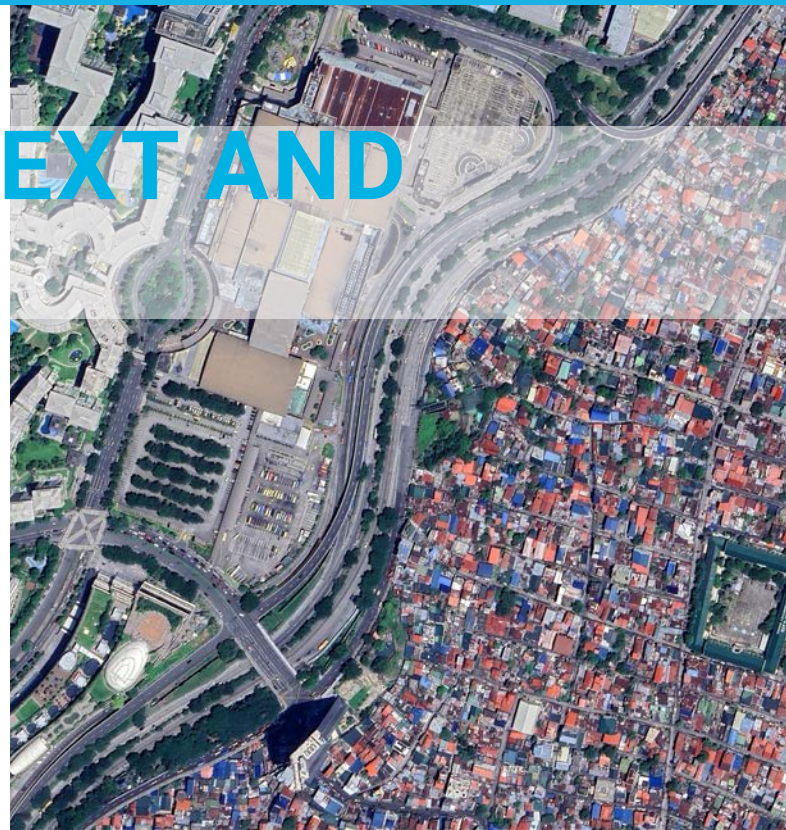
The Philippines faces three interconnected urban challenges: a significant housing backlog and growing housing need, uneven risk-informed land-use planning capacity among local governments, and very high exposure to climate and disaster risk.

CHALLENGE 1

With more than 50% of its population living in urban areas, the country faces a housing backlog of around 2.2 million houses. The confluence of unmanaged urban growth, vulnerability to climate impacts and other hazards which adversely affects informal settlements and vulnerable groups, as well as housing affordability issues are driving factors to the estimated need of 6.9 million houses for 2023-2028. The Expanded 4PH (Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino) Program, launched in 2025, currently covers more housing options but can be improved in areas of policy and programming towards considering housing as a public good and right.

CHALLENGE 2

Local planning capacity and limited fiscal tools constrains urban management. As of January 2026, only 967 of 1,515 Comprehensive Land Use Plans nationwide, or 64 percent, were risk-informed, even as the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) targets full nationwide coverage by 2028.



While the country already has an important base of national urban policy instruments, the next challenge is to translate these more consistently into local implementation and to operationalize a coherent national framework for land-based financing. This would enable local governments to use tools such as special levies, idle land taxes, land value capture, developer exactions, and public land management more systematically to finance infrastructure, housing, and climate-resilient urban development.

CHALLENGE 3

The Philippines ranked first globally in the WorldRiskIndex for the fourth consecutive year in 2025, reflecting very high exposure and vulnerability to disasters and climate-related hazards. Without stronger adaptation and resilience action, climate change-related economic damages could reach up to 7.6% of GDP by 2030. Poor urban communities, often informal settlements, are disproportionately affected due to the lack of or inadequate infrastructure, poor housing quality, and limited access to resources.

04

HOUSING, LAND AND BASIC SERVICES

HOUSING FOR ALL

While access to adequate housing is a fundamental human right recognized by the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, the housing backlog persists in the socialized segment due to affordability issues, and shares of the socialized segment to the total housing supply has been decreasing over the years. Informal settler families (ISFs) that do not have security of tenure were estimated at 3.7 million as of 2021. From 2017 to 2022, the total housing needs of the Philippines was estimated at 6.5 million. For the period of 2023 to 2028, housing needs are estimated to reach 6.9 million households (HHs), 3.4 million of which is the backlog plus future requirements and 3.5 million is reserved for inventory losses.

The 4PH Program was recalibrated as the Expanded 4PH in 2025, broadening the programme's housing modalities and opening opportunities for stronger community-driven, tenure-sensitive and affordability-focused approaches . The Community Mortgage Program (CMP) was also revived nationwide covering an initial 34 on-site CMP projects which will benefit about 5,000 member-beneficiaries. In line with these directions, the government issued the call for a more inclusive participation of partners to address the housing crisis through the Expanded 4PH Program. This opens opportunities for UN-Habitat and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to pursue a more coordinated approach across the housing and tenure continuum - from emergency shelter to temporary/transitory shelter to durable solutions and permanent housing - within resilient communities, sustainable environments, and thriving local economies.

05

CLIMATE AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The Philippine Development Plan's Midterm Update strengthens climate governance by introducing new strategies to improve national and local climate-risk data and information systems, scale up sustainable finance from public and private sources, expand natural capital accounting and ecosystem-service valuation, accelerate sustainable consumption and production, and enhance engagement for effective loss and damage response, signalling a shift toward more integrated, data-driven and finance-enabled climate and resilience planning. In the Philippines National Adaptation Plan 2023- 2050, Land Use and Human Settlements is one of the eight priority sectors. This is particularly crucial in addressing the already experienced climate-driven displacement, flooding, temperature increase, and extreme events that result not only in damage to peoples' assets and property, but also in loss of human lives.

NDC

The Philippines is finalizing its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2026 ahead of submission to the UNFCCC. In implementing the updated NDC, more explicit and targeted action for cities and urban areas could help accelerate progress toward national climate goals. Local governments and the wider range of urban stakeholders should therefore be engaged and supported to translate the NDC into action, particularly through coordinated planning, financing, and implementation at the local level.

PBSAP

The updated Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) 2024–2040 creates important entry points for cities, particularly through targets on expanding urban green space and scaling up effective nature-based solutions. The key gap now is implementation, as many cities still need stronger tools, financing, capacity, and coordination to mainstream biodiversity, nature-based solutions, and urban ecosystem-based adaptation into urban and land use plans, housing, and infrastructure designs, as well as investment decision



06

HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS



The nature of risks and their interrelationships is changing. Progress towards sustainable development and peaceful societies, where no one is left behind, is being undermined by multiple and intersecting threats intensified by persistent risk drivers with cumulative effects. Risk is multidimensional and systemic, characterized by high levels of interdependency, nonlinearity, feedback loops, and uncertainty. In the Philippines, this is evident in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which includes some of the country's most impoverished provinces and is emerging from a long-running conflict under a comprehensive peace agreement. Here, conflict, climate change, and disasters intersect, underscoring the need for an integrated humanitarian-development-peace approach.

RECENT AND ONGOING INTERVENTIONS

1

2022- 2028

Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disaster and Climate Change (SHIELD) Program

The program supports national and subnational government build institutional and community resilience to climate change and other types of hazards through effective collaboration, jointly planning collective outcomes, investing and acting together on resilience actions, and measuring the impact of resilience-building actions.



1.6 M USD



DFAT Australia, UNDP



DILG, DHSUD, DOST, OCD



2

2023- 2029

Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND)

The project pilots a whole-of-government transition towards climate-resilient, low-carbon, and biodiversity-friendly development in three landscapes in the Philippines. UN-Habitat leads the urban ecosystem-based adaptation component, advancing gender-responsive urban EbA through national and subnational policy integration and local action.



4.4 M EUR



International Climate Initiative-Germany, GIZ



DHSUD, Selected Provincial Governments and LGUs in 3 landscapes



3

2025 - 2026

Strengthening resilience and promoting sustainable growth in Filipino cities and communities through nature-based solutions and the circular economy (Huy-anan nan Bajau sa Surigao – Phase 2)

The project supports the long-term resilience, inclusion, and sustainability of Sama Bajau communities in the Caraga Region through culturally grounded nature-based solutions and circular economy approaches. It scales up community-driven, People's Process-based solutions for Sama Bajau families still living in vulnerable sites.



346,535 EUR



AECID, Spanish Government



DHSUD, DENR, Local Government of Surigao City



RECENT AND ONGOING INTERVENTIONS

4

2024- 2025

Huy-nan nan Bajau sa Surigao – Phase 1

The project strengthens government capacity to support disaster-displaced vulnerable communities through nature-based solutions and circular economy approaches. In Surigao City, it demonstrated a community-driven reconstruction approach to help Sama Bajau households displaced by Typhoon Rai rebuild safer homes and more resilient communities.



400,000 EUR



AECID, Spanish Government



DHSUD, DENR, Local Government of Surigao City



5

2019 - 2024

Localize to Realize

The project's main objective is to localize the SDGs by establishing a participatory and community-driven model that can unlock and support vulnerable communities to engage with local and national governments in SDG-based planning and budgeting and access programs and services that are responsive to the differentiated socio-economic needs and priorities of population groups.



300,000 USD



Joint SDG Fund



UN-Women, Surigao City LGU



6

2019 - 2024

Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative

The project's main objective is to enable local governments and communities in the Philippines to reduce marine plastic pollution. This will be achieved through strengthened institutional capacity to implement a new national plan of action on marine litter and the development of improved waste collection and disposal systems within communities of six cities in the Philippines.



3.0 M USD



Government of Japan



DENR, Cities of Manila, Calapan, Ormoc, Legazpi, Cagayan de Oro, Davao



08

HUMAN STORIES

“Promoting family level SDG action in indigenous community”

The Sama Bajau, a traditionally sea-based Indigenous community, are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in the Philippines. In Surigao City, many families have lived for decades in informal stilt settlements over shallow coastal waters, where unsafe housing and limited access to basic services leave them highly exposed to disasters. Typhoon Rai in 2021 further deepened this vulnerability, displacing many families and damaging homes and livelihoods.

For community chieftain Dahila Araman, the challenges are not only physical but also social. Limited access to education, health care, and decent work has long been compounded by discrimination. “People think that we are unsanitary and that we lack intelligence. No one even wants to hire us,” Araman said.



To help address these challenges, Localize to Realize: Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (L2R SDG), a joint programme of UN-Habitat and UN Women supported by the Joint SDG Fund, has worked with the Sama Bajau and other vulnerable informal settler families in Surigao City. The programme strengthens community knowledge of the SDGs, creates space for dialogue with government agencies, and supports participation in planning and decision-making while respecting the Sama Bajau’s cultural identity and aspirations.

A key component is FACES, locally adapted as Family Actions for Children and their Environs in Surigao. Through child-level SDG report cards translated into Bajau and Surigaonon, families can track progress, identify needs, and connect more effectively with local services. A digital version of the tool has further strengthened monitoring and encouraged greater participation, especially among young people.

For mothers like Marilou Catdula, the programme offers a practical pathway to a better future. Her youngest is one of the children whose SDGs are being monitored. She actively engages in activities and contributes her ideas to the programme because she wants a better future for her children. By helping vulnerable communities turn the SDGs into local action, it shows how inclusive, community-driven approaches can support recovery, reduce inequality, and ensure that no one is left behind.

COUNTRY FOCUS



RESILIENT HOUSING & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Key Action Focus:

1. Equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication;
2. Prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction in the context of humanitarian crisis
3. Environment and climate action



INTEGRATED & SMART URBAN GOVERNANCE

Key Action Focus:

1. Co-develop/enhance urban planning and housing policies, guidelines, and tools
2. Promote SDG localization focused on SDG 11 and housing;
4. Integration of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (Territorial planning) into Regional and Local Plans



CLIMATE-RESILIENT URBAN SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Key Action Focus:

1. Develop/enhance Urban Ecosystem-based Adaptation Policies
2. Nature-based solutions and urban ecosystem-based adaptation – demonstration projects / living lab
3. Urban Climate data and action reporting to support NAP, NDC, PBSAP

COUNTRY IN NUMBERS

6.2 M 

FUNDS SECURED FOR PROJECTS IN THE COUNTRY

0.5M 

BENEFICIARIES ASSISTED BY THE PROJECTS

15 

PROVINCES/ LGUS ASSISTED ON RESILIENCE ACTIONS

100% 

IMPROVEMENTS IN DISTRIBUTION OF WELFARE (BAJAUS IN SURIGAO)

PLANNED INTERVENTIONS



BALAI-SMART – Built Analytics for Livable, Adaptive, and Inclusive Smart Housing

Project's Aim: To develop an integrated digital and spatial analytics platform to support evidence-based housing and land-use planning; apply land-use change modelling, housing demand analytics, and climate risk data to guide housing location, typology, and phasing; strengthen national and local government capacity for data-driven decision-making in housing and settlement development; align housing investments with sustainable land use, climate resilience, and inclusive urban development principles.

Relevance to regional implementation plan: Resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive housing and community for all

Additional Priorities: Urban management transformation through integrated planning, participatory governance and advanced technology



TOTAL BUDGET:
20M USD



TIME FRAME:
2026 - 2029



LOCATION:
PHILIPPINES

OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT:

1. Integrated digital platform and planning tools developed to support evidence-based housing and land-use planning, combining housing, land, and climate-risk data and embedding risk-informed, inclusive, and nature-based planning principles.
2. A common housing and settlements database and minimum data standards established with Local Government Units (LGUs) and national partners to strengthen spatial analytics, planning workflows, and stakeholder engagement.
3. Pilot applications implemented in selected SHIELD, TRANSCEND, and ASUS project areas to test and refine the platform, institutional workflows, and coordination among LGUs, housing agencies, financing institutions, academe, and UN partners.
4. Knowledge products and operational guidance co-developed and mainstreamed into national and local housing and shelter planning programmes, supporting stronger prioritization, monitoring, replication, and scale-up.



PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

2

TAHANAN: Transformative Adequate Housing for All through Nature-based and Adaptive Networks

Project's Aim: Strengthen national and local policies to expand financing for housing and community infrastructure, improve the enabling environment for basic services and community infrastructure, and increase the number and percentage of adequate shelter, services, and infrastructure co-developed by the public sector with communities using nature-sensitive, sustainable, equitable, resilient, and regenerative design principles.

Relevance to regional implementation plan: Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive housing.

Additional Priorities: Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive basic services and infrastructures



TOTAL BUDGET:
10M USD



TIME FRAME:
2026 - 2029



LOCATION:
PHILIPPINES

OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT:

1. **Policy, institutional, and operational foundations strengthened for sustainable land management, public open spaces, and resilient communities through combined top-down support on policy, data systems, and governance, and bottom-up demonstration projects with government, private sector, and communities. The approach integrates climate action, disaster risk reduction, nature-based solutions (NbS), urban Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), local economic development, and housing and disaster finance.**
2. **Technical and policy support provided to national agencies to review the flagship housing programme and refine the National Land Use Bill, contributing to a more coherent framework for adequate housing, basic services, and community infrastructure.**
3. **Demonstration sites enable vulnerable households- including women, youth, and Indigenous groups- to adopt climate-resilient housing and diversified livelihoods through co-developed shelter, basic services, and community infrastructure aligned with NbS, urban EbA, design, and local value chains.**



PLANNED INTERVENTIONS



Nature-Positive Strategies for Resilient, Open, Organically Thriving Settlements in the Philippines (URBAN ROOTS PH)

Project's Aim: Mainstream EbA/NbS in community housing by integrating nature-positive site planning and risk-informed housing layouts into CMP guidelines, LGU permitting processes, and DHSUD standards; demonstrating settlement-scale EbA/NbS solutions; strengthening economic resilience through green livelihoods; operationalizing site- and household-level risk and livelihood diagnostics and participatory design tools; and developing investment pipelines to access from public, climate, biodiversity, and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) financing to support replication.

Relevance to regional implementation plan: Harmonized co-existence of cities and nature and preservation of cultural diversity

Additional Priorities: Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive basic services and infrastructures



TOTAL BUDGET:
5M USD



TIME FRAME:
2026 - 2028

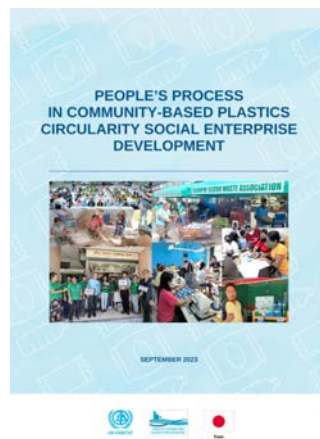
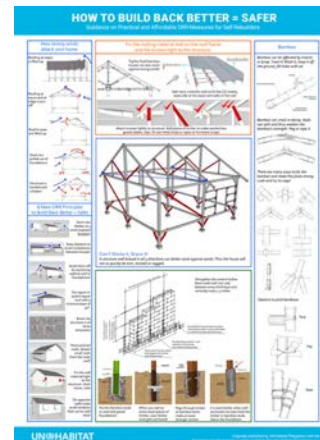
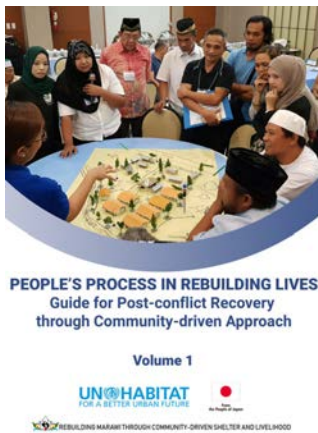
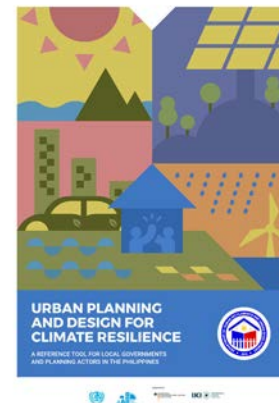
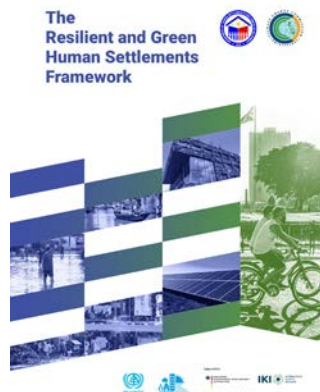
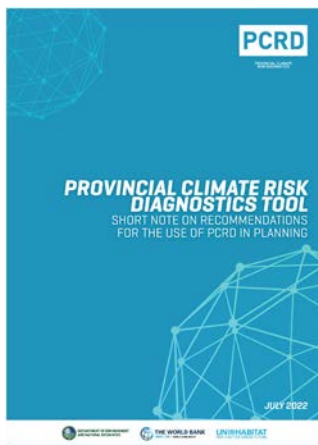


LOCATION:
PHILIPPINES

OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT:

1. **People's Process embedded in project delivery through multilevel governance, with POs/HOAs co-leading design, construction, and O&M, and settlement indicators linked to VLR processes and DHSUD/DILG/CCC reporting.**
2. **National and local policy tools strengthened through DHSUD's Nature-Positive People's Housing Guidelines (CMP annex), updated standards and circulars, and model ordinances on settlement-scale EbA/NbS adopted by six LGUs.**
3. **Six to eight settlement-scale EbA/NbS pilots implemented in informal settlements and CMP sites, benefiting 1,000 households through safer site layouts, climate-resilient housing, improved drainage and green space, and 1,000 new or upgraded CMP units, with baseline-based targets for habitat restoration, flood reduction, and urban heat mitigation.**
4. **Local capacities and delivery systems strengthened through a Risk Toolkit used by at least six LGUs, live dashboards for 6–8 sites, and training for at least 500 practitioners and community leaders, at least 50 percent women of local communities.**
5. **Green livelihoods and finance mechanisms activated through 500 green jobs, 6–8 community stewardship agreements, resilience savings or microinsurance products, at least Php 10 million mobilized, and at least five investment-ready projects.**
6. **LGUs, communities, and housing partners apply nature-positive, risk-informed housing approaches more systematically, linking climate action, housing, basic services, environmental sustainability, and urban economic resilience.**
7. **Community housing becomes more climate-resilient, inclusive, and scalable, enabling replication through DHSUD and DILG systems and stronger access to financing.**

PUBLICITY AND OUTREACH





UN-HABITAT

Contact us

UN-Habitat Philippines

Rockwell Business Center Sheridan
14th Floor, North Tower, Sheridan corner United Streets, Barangay
Highway Hills, Mandaluyong City, Philippines 1550
EMAIL: info@unhabitat.org.ph
Tel: +63 2 7902 2570

UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

ACROS Fukuoka Building,
8th Floor 1-1-1 Tenjin, Chuo-ku
Fukuoka, Japan
habitat.fukuoka@un.org
Tel: +81-92-724-7121/23