Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19

UNDA Rapid Response Project
Project Description

As the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in dire consequences across all spectrums of development, cities have been the main hotspots for the transmission of the virus, while also proving to be particularly challenging settings within which to respond effectively to the pandemic.

The United Nations project “Building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19” focuses on strengthening the capacities of local governments in 16 cities globally to design, implement and monitor sustainable, resilient and inclusive COVID-19 economic and financial responses, recovery and rebuilding plans. The project is supported from the sources of the United Nations Development Account 13th tranche residual funds.
Project Components

The joint project will address the following five dimensions of economic and financial resilience of cities, with an explicit focus on leveraging digital and technology-based solutions and opportunities within the green economy:

- **Assessment and capacity building**, including in-depth learning of the key challenges of the cities in relation to impacts of COVID-19 pandemic

- **Stakeholder engagement** for effective implementation

- **Economic resilience planning**, including support to cities in planning for inclusive economic and financial recovery and resilience at city level and identifying the local economic stakeholders

- **Knowledge sharing** – sharing local experiences and lessons of economic recovery and resilience planning through regional and global policy networks

- **Process monitoring and evaluation** to improve current and future performance, resilience and emergency response of participating cities
Project Activities

1. Development of a global urban economic resilience diagnostic and planning tool for cities.
2. Creation of an online training programme and organization of global, regional and local training workshops.
3. Development of economic recovery and resilience strategies for each city.
4. Advice on possible funding sources and financial support for economic development and infrastructure projects supporting urban economic recovery.
5. Publishing of regional policy briefs on urban economic recovery and resilience in the respective geographic areas of each Regional Commission.
Rationale and Demand

The need for a specific focus on the vulnerability of urban settings is clearly defined in the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.

Focusing on urban areas is important because of (1) their role as engines of economic growth and structural transformation; (2) their impact on income and non-income inequality and hence social stability; and (3) their high vulnerability to infections due to poor planning or the existence of informal settlements.
Expected Project Impact

The immediate impact of the project will be the provision of good practices which will inform the pilot cities in their activities to develop and implement their immediate response and recovery plans to for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ultimately, the project will contribute to planning for more resilience in cities and local governments to better withstand shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and urban systems’ stresses that are likely to reoccur in a predominantly urban world. Implementation will consider linkages with other dimensions of urban resilience that are of specific relevance to the different social, spatial and governance contexts of each region.

Dimensions of Urban Economic Resilience

[Diagram showing interconnections between Business Environment, Labour Market, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Financial Environment, and Economic Governance, along with a description of the capacity of basic infrastructure and connectivity systems to enable and facilitate continued operation of the other four dimensions of urban economy under stressful conditions.]
Pilot Cities

The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of local governments in the following 16 cities globally:

- Tirana (Albania)
- Yaoundé (Cameroon)
- Guayaquil (Ecuador)
- Alexandria (Egypt)
- Suva (Fiji)
- Accra (Ghana)
- Pune (India)
- Kuwait (Kuwait)
- Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)
- Beirut (Lebanon)
- Subang Jaya (Malaysia)
- Lima (Peru)
- Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic)
- Kharkiv (Ukraine)
- Hoi An (Viet Nam)
- Harare (Zimbabwe)
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