

HabPost

Updates from
UN-Habitat

UN HABITAT

www.unhabitat.org

unhabitat-info@un.org

ISSUE 41 | 04 NOVEMBER 2021

The **RBM**
philosophy or
why we should
mean (new)
business



Editor's note

Dear Reader,

How do we measure success? While often a complex question to answer, knowing whether we are successful as an organization in delivering on our mandate is crucial to stay relevant in the international fora. And a few tools exist to help us do just that – chief amongst them, results-based-management (RBM) principles. Today in HabPost, our feature story highlights the reasons why RBM has grown in popularity over the years and why we at UN-Habitat are committed to pursuing this management approach – and the steps we're taking towards it. Spoiler alert: the keyword here is "outcomes".

And if you want to become a New Urban Agenda nerd, don't miss out on the second part of the online crash course, now looking at the means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda. More on this in the Did you know section.

Happy Reading!

Rachad Nassar
Editor



On the menu

News roundup

Feature story

Success story

Staff news

Urban Agenda Platform Insider

Innovation corner

Vacancies

Upcoming events and corporate calendar

Learning

Did you know?

News roundup



UN-Habitat, UNDP, FAO to launch adaptation fund project to address climate change
(ReliefWeb)



UN-Habitat launches new regional project on climate change to increase the resilience of displaced persons and host communities in Jordan and Lebanon
(ReliefWeb)



Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and UN-Habitat sign USD 13.2 million deal to help reduce dust storms
(Kuwait Times)



UN-Habitat Africa Regional Director Speaks to Voa News about Africa's Urbanization challenges
(Voa News)



UN-Habitat build community hall using renewable material in Kalobeyei
(KBC)



Luxor to celebrate World Cities Day on 30-31 October
(Daily News Egypt)



UNICEF Spain and UN-Habitat seek to protect children from climate change
(Diaro Responsable)

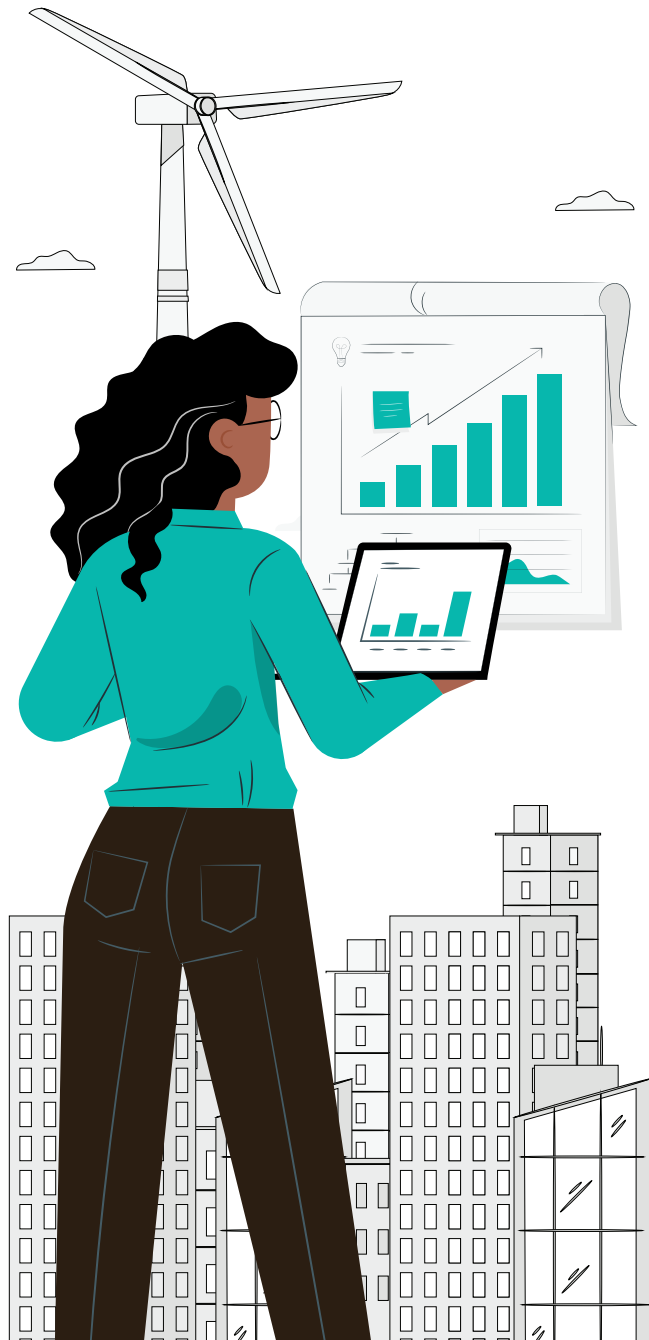


Cameroun/ONU-Habitat : la question de la planification préoccupe
(EcoMatin)



The RBM philosophy or why we should mean (new) business

In 2020, UN-Habitat committed to being a better player in the game of accountability, efficiency, transparency, and quality – we’ll call it the Y game – as our Executive Board approved the [Results-Based Management \(RBM\) policy](#). This paved the way towards a results-oriented organization culture and a focus on outcomes and impact in the delivery of our strategic plan, effectively shifting the way we do business. Here’s Y.



Results-based management (RBM) implies a new way of doing things. In 2006, UNHRC defined RBM as a philosophy that emphasizes the achievement of results as the essential task of management. It is a fundamentally different approach to traditional management where focus is on achieving outcomes as opposed to simply considering inputs, activities, and outputs.

And the reason for this shift in thinking is quite simple: we need to know

whether we’re making progress towards solving the problem we’ve set out to resolve – something that isn’t easily captured by traditional monitoring.

RBM systems were established by donor countries and multilateral agencies as a response to a general public sense that development aid to developing countries wasn’t working very well. Development agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), or the Norwegian Agency for Development

Cooperation (NORAD) had their systems and policies in place as far back as the 1990s. By the year 2000, when the Millennium Development Goals – the first global goals to adopt the RBM system – were developed, nearly all multilateral agencies and bilateral donors either had results-oriented policies in place or had adopted RBM in practice. Why is that?

One of the major challenges among development agencies had been to measure and qualify development interventions in terms of human

development. Despite the billions of development dollars spent by donor agencies over the years in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, the economic and social growth expected in recipient countries has remained largely

unrealized and elusive. Many developing countries have remained developing, while others have slid deeper into poverty, questioning the effectiveness of development programmes and projects. As a results, providers of development assistance programmes have been

asking for a better use of aid resources and requesting to see evidence of the difference these resources make in the lives of targeted beneficiaries. An RBM system helps to do just that.

By judging our projects or programmes on the basis of the change they create as opposed to the outputs they produce, our donors can understand what follows:

 <p>What is being achieved (in terms of human development) in relation to what is being spent</p>	 <p>The effects of our projects, policies, programmes, and interventions</p>	 <p>What has changed or transformed because we spent money on an intervention</p>
 <p>How a project, programme or policy solve an identified problem</p>	 <p>What is the intended return on investment for each project</p>	 <p>What is the value for money for each project</p>
 <p>What the communities and institutions they invested in are doing differently</p>	 <p>Whether investments result in significant social, economic, and environmental improvements</p>	 <p>Evidence that our work is transforming an undesirable situation</p>

Put bluntly, in an RBM system, change did not happen if it can't be observed, measured, and verified. RBM requires data-backed evidence to support claims of change attributable to any given intervention.

The application of RBM principles in our work should help us polish our image and better position ourselves in a competitive funding ecosystem so that we may show donors we make the difference in sustainable urbanization – and perhaps less so the World Bank or other big players.

This particular system has led to an increase in the number of evaluators being asked to assess the effectiveness

“Measuring progress on outcomes is often like watching grass grow. While it is difficult to detect movement on a daily basis, it is simple to see growth over time. Change takes time to emerge, and you need focused attention.”

Rosa Muraguri-Mwololo
Programme Management
Officer, UN-Habitat



and impact of programmes in various settings including in non-profit and for-profit organizations, local and government agencies, universities, and foundations. Evaluations seek to verify claims made in annual reports but also use tools such as the Theory of Change and Logframes to track whether promises made by projects and programmes have been realized. Similarly, the court of public opinion – Member States, donors, and stakeholders – require quantitative or qualitative evidence to support the claim that normative and operational work is making a difference in the way cities are planned, managed, and governed. All this in support of the Y game – for greater accountability, efficiency, transparency, and quality.

Take capacity building, for instance. When measuring the effectiveness of the training of water operators in improving citizens' access to clean and safe water, RBM considers whether operators are able to use new technology, skills, or knowledge, whether clean and safe water is produced as a result of the intervention, whether water is accessible to targeted citizens – and to what extent – and whether households are better off: are women spending less time dealing with water, has poverty been reduced? And all these changes should be measurable, observable, and verifiable. They constitute the steps that must happen for the project to deliver on its objectives.

Of course, by the time some of these changes take effect, the project might have closed. This is where strong feedback loops are needed to gather evidence on if and how things are working, and why.

At UN-Habitat, our normative work aims at strengthening institutions through policy advice, through developing norms and guidelines, and by investing in advocacy and dialogue. This work is central to our efforts helping countries achieve urban development gains.

And we must be able to show the results of this work to maintain our brand.

Inevitably, this leads us to asking ourselves the question: are we happy with our brand as it is? It turns out we haven't been stellar at showing results, and this has affected our relationships with those who fund us and the level or resources at our disposal, on top of being an overall blow to our brand.

The roll-out of the RBM policy and the ongoing RBM trainings aim to support and strengthen our capacity in project planning and execution to embed a results focus in our practices. On top of integrating RBM into the project and programme review mechanism of the Programme Review Committee (PRC), the RBM Handbook 2.0 – a step-by-step guidance on RBM at UN-Habitat – is being finalized and will further ensure that quarterly and annual reporting is more results-oriented and evidence-based.

These efforts along with the application of RBM principles in our work should help us polish our image and better position ourselves in a competitive funding ecosystem so that we may show donors we make the difference in sustainable urbanization – and perhaps less so the World Bank or other big players.

Note: while we only recently adopted the RBM policy, UN-Habitat has been implementing the system incrementally since 2008 and the development of the Medium Term Strategic Institutional Plan (MTSIP) 2008-2013.

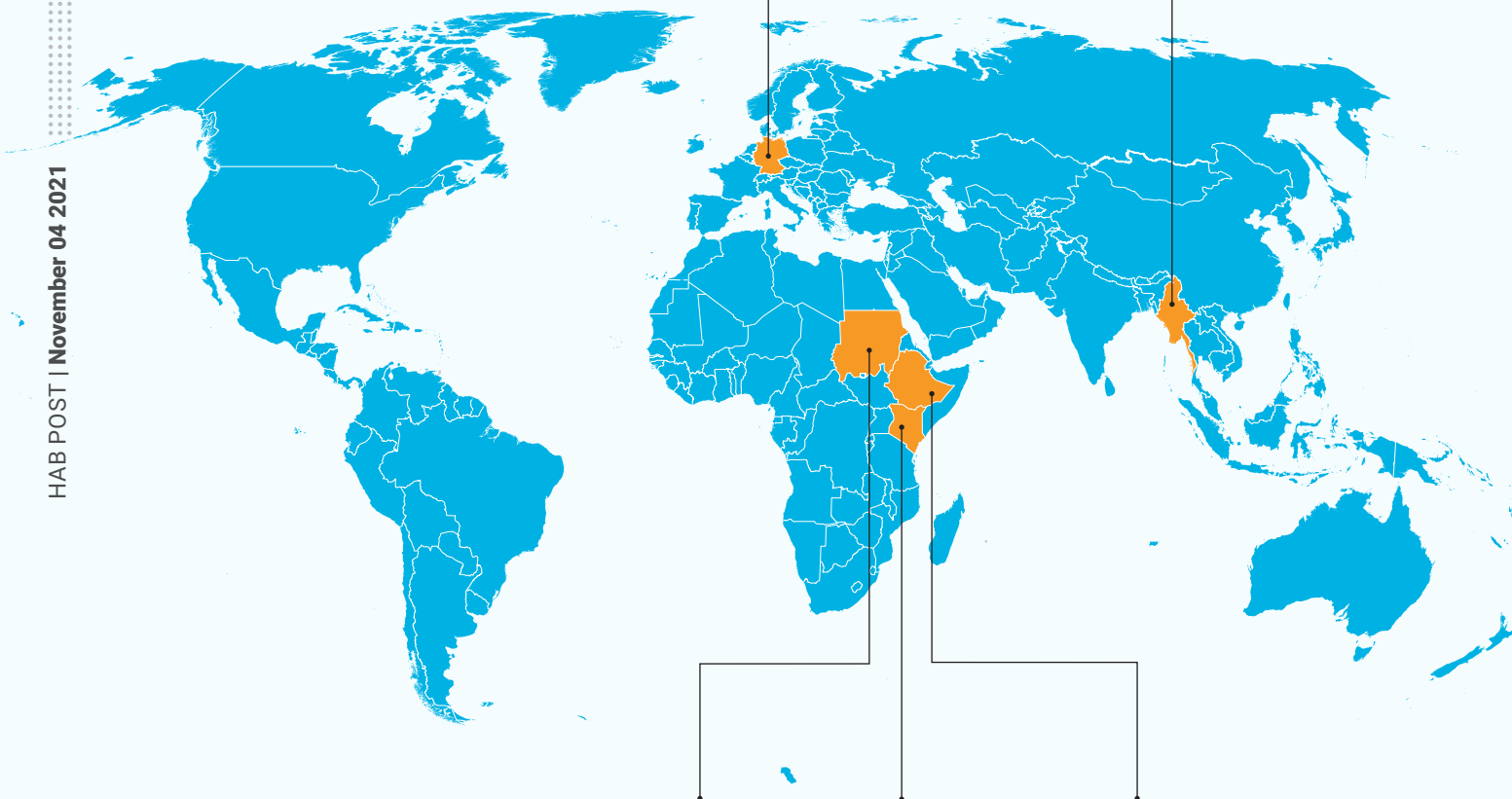
For more information on results in our work and the RBM policy, contact Rosa Muraguri-Mwololo.

VACANCIES

HAB POST | November 04 2021

Role
Senior
Programme
Management
Officer, P5
Duty Station
Bonn, Germany
11 December
2021
[Apply here](#)

Role
Programme
Management
Officer, NOC
Duty Station
Yangon,
Myanmar
12 November
2021
[Apply here](#)



Role
Associate
Programme
Management
Officer, Human
Settlements, P2
(Temporary Job
Opening)
Duty Station
Khartoum, Sudan
8 November
2021
[Apply here](#)

Role
Programme
Management
Assistant, G6
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
23 November
2021
[Apply here](#)

Role
Programme
Management
Officer (Project
Post), NOD
Duty Station
Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia
11 November
2021
[Apply here](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CORPORATE CALENDAR



Public Transport Lab: Integrating urban design and infrastructure to accommodate public transport

How can urban design foster the integration between active travel and public transport, promoting inter-modality as a convenient alternative to private car use? Public transport and active travel are key allies to achieve more liveable urban areas, where citizens can use both modes in a combined way to reach their destinations in an easy, safe, and convenient way. This POLIS webinar will explore the creation of synergies between bike-sharing and train networks at the regional level, the role of public transport in achieving more liveable urban areas, and the integration of cycling infrastructure and public transport stops.



57th ISOCARP World Planning Congress

The theme of the 57th ISOCARP World Planning Congress is *Planning Unlocked: New Times, Better Places, Stronger Communities*. Cities and nations worldwide have been grappling with appalling socio-economic inequalities, failing infrastructure, and the prospect of climate catastrophe for a long while. Against a future of more pandemics, ecosystem meltdown, and social unrest, ISOCARP believes that there is only one remedy – planning better, safer, fairer cities. But is spatial planning up to the task? The traditional concepts, methods, tools, and agents of urban and territorial planning seem woefully inadequate. The main idea associated with the 57th ISOCARP World Planning Congress theme is to unlock our minds and provide planning advocates and practitioners a fresh, new start. The Congress provides a platform for establishing professional as well as personal contacts with city and regional planners from all around the world.



Smart Cities New York Urban Tech Summit 2021

As New York emerges from COVID-19, cities around the world are making a new commitment to building a more inclusive, sustainable future through urban tech. Smart Cities New York (SCNY) is North America's leading global conference exploring the emerging influence of cities in shaping the future. The conference brings together top thought leaders and senior members of the private and public sector to discuss investments in physical and digital infrastructure, health, education, sustainability, security, mobility, workforce development, and more, to ensure cities are central to advancing and improving urban life.



Smart City Expo World Congress 2021

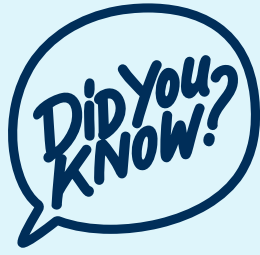
Held in Barcelona since 2011, Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC) aims to empower cities and collectivize urban innovation across the globe. Through promoting social innovation, establishing partnerships, and identifying business opportunities, the event is dedicated to creating a better future for cities and their citizens. In 2021, SCEWC focuses on eight main tracks: enabling technologies, energy and environment, tomorrow, mobility world congress, governance, living and inclusion, economy, infrastructure and buildings, and safety and security.

Key dates



15-16 November

Second session of the Executive Board 2021



The sequel to the New Urban Agenda crash course is up and running

The second part of the course explains the means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda (while the first part looked at its core dimensions). The platform hosting the online course has been visited over 13,000 times for a total of 120,000 page views as of today.



The New Urban Agenda [illustrated handbook](#), which serves as the basis for the New Urban Agenda online crash course, has been viewed over 22,000 times and downloaded over 15,000 times. The Arabic and Spanish versions of the handbook are being finalized, and translation into the remaining official UN languages is on the table.



[Access the online course](#)



Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at unhabitat-habpost@un.org.

Editorial Team

Advisors: Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director

Leads: Neil Khor, Amy Wood

Coordinator & Editor: Rachad Nassar

Design & Layout: Denis Kimathi

Contributors: Rosa Muraguri-Mwololo, Vasko Vidar

