



Cities Alliance: Standard Operating Procedures

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASA	Analytic and Advisory Activity
CA	Cities Alliance
CATF	Catalytic Fund
CG	Cities Alliance Consultative Group
CP	Country Programme
EXCO	Cities Alliance Executive Committee
IAF	Integrated Assessment Framework
JPO	United Nations Junior Professional Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAF	Policy Advisory Forum
PIMS	Performance Indicators Monitoring System
RF	Results Framework
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TM	Task Manager
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

Glossary of Terms

Action Plan: The Cities Without Slums Action Plan.

Annual Report: The results-based narrative reporting and financial reporting provided by the Secretariat under Paragraph 63 of the Standard Operating Procedures.

Annual Work Plans: Plans prepared by the Secretariat that include a financial summary of the prior year's sources and uses of funds, a proposed annual budget and summary of outputs for the coming year, and a staffing table/organogram.

Assembly: (in place since 2015): The Assembly is the sovereign body of the organisation. The Assembly is established by section VII(a) of the Charter. The duties and authorities of the Assembly are defined by Section 3 of this Standard Operating Procedures.

Charter: The Cities Alliance Charter, dated 7 November 2014 and as may be amended from time to time.

Cities Alliance Director (the CA Director): The Director of the Cities Alliance Secretariat.

Consultative Group (CG) (functional only until end of 2014): The Board of the Cities Alliance and its highest and primary decision-making body. The duties and authorities of the Consultative Group are defined by the CA Charter under Paragraphs 24-27 of the Charter (as dated 8 November 2011, now modified).

Contribution: With respect to the Contribution Agreement, the total amount of funds expressed as the respective Donor's Contribution in such Contribution Agreement; and together from all Donors, the "Contributions."

Contribution Agreement: The Contribution Agreement between UNOPS and the Donor for the Cities Alliance Programme.

Donor: Any government, government entity or other organisation that enters into a Contribution Agreement with UNOPS.

Executive Committee (EXCO) (functional only until end of 2014): Formed by the CG to streamline decision-making procedures and provide oversight and guidance of Secretariat operations between Consultative Group meetings. Per Paragraph 28 of the Charter (as dated 8 November 2011, now modified), the EXCO is entirely accountable to the CG. The roles and responsibilities of the EXCO are defined in Paragraph 33 of the Charter (as dated 8 November 2011, now modified).

Funds: The trust funds that are administered by UNOPS on behalf of the Cities Alliance.

Grant Support Agreement (GSA): The agreement signed between UNOPS and the Recipient (Grantee) in support of a particular Cities Alliance activity.

Management Board (in place since 2015): Formed by the outgoing CG in order to replace and reinforce the EXCO decision-making authority and provide oversight and guidance of Secretariat operations between Assembly meetings. The Management Board is established by section VII(b) of the Charter. The roles and responsibilities of the Management Board are defined by Section 4 of this Standard Operating Procedures.

Medium-Term Strategy/Business Plans: Plans of three years or more prepared by the Secretariat that include a review of Cities Alliance goals and objectives; proposed programming of Country Programme, Catalytic Fund and Analytic and Strategic Activities over the medium term; and a review of targets and milestones under the Results Framework. It puts forward a financial plan that allows the CA to undertake the proposed plans, and it may also include recommendations for changes to governance, management and staffing.

Member: Any Member of the Cities Alliance as defined by Section VI of the Charter.

Recipient: Either the Grantee under the Grant Support Agreement or any other recipient of the Contribution.

Secretariat: UNOPS personnel carrying out the Secretariat function of the Cities Alliance, as defined in Paragraphs 42 of the Charter.

Task Manager (CA TM): The Secretariat staff member who is assigned to lead a particular task or activity for which he or she holds responsibility on fiduciary, budgetary, supervision and quality of outputs.

UNOPS: The United Nations Office for Project Services, the trustee and host of the Cities Alliance.

1 Introduction

1. The Cities Alliance is a partnership for poverty reduction and the promotion of cities in sustainable development. It aims at supporting cities, local governments and their partners¹ in the developing world in addressing challenges to capture the gains of urbanisation and taking advantage of opportunities, for the benefit of their citizens. The Cities Alliance was created in 1999 when 10 donor governments joined the World Bank, UN-Habitat and the major international associations of local authorities— currently represented by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis—to form a new partnership aimed at focusing on two key issues: the growth of slums and the management of cities where slum growth was taking place.

2. The first act of the Cities Alliance after its establishment in 1999 was to produce the Cities Without Slums Action Plan, which created a target of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020—the first time such a measurable target had been set in the international development arena. South African President Nelson Mandela agreed to serve as patron of the Action Plan, which was subsequently incorporated into the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 as Target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals.

3. By decision of the members at the launch of the Cities Alliance, the World Bank was requested to act as Trustee of the organisation, and as host of the Secretariat. Under the direction of a Manager, the Secretariat was responsible for managing the daily operations of the organisation. Within the World Bank, the Cities Alliance Secretariat was located within the Sustainable Development Network, under the Director dealing with urban development.

4. In 2007, the Cities Alliance adopted a Medium Term Strategy for the period 2008-2010. The Strategy proposed a longer-term and more programmatic approach to the work of the organisation, and required a number of significant changes to the Cities Alliance's business model and, eventually, the drafting of a wholly new Charter. The new Charter was adopted in 2010.

5. The Consultative Group subsequently decided that the next phase in the organisation's development would be facilitated by moving the Secretariat to Brussels. This was confirmed at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam with the decision to move to Brussels and, subsequently, to identify the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as Trustee and host of the Secretariat.

6. Since moving onto the UNOPS institutional platform, the Cities Alliance has completed significant governance and membership reforms, which have significantly strengthened and diversified its membership. These reforms have led to the creation of different membership constituencies, the evolution of the CG and EXCO into an Assembly and Management Board respectively, the election of the new Management Board and Chair, as well as a President of the Assembly.

7. This compendium of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) has been prepared to guide the operations of the Cities Alliance in general, and the work of the Secretariat and UNOPS as Trustee in particular, as well as their interactions with the CA governing bodies. It builds upon many of the procedures that were used while the Secretariat was based at the World Bank, and also uses the policies of UNOPS as the new host of the Secretariat and Trustee. It is reviewed on a regular basis by the Management Board of the Cities Alliance.

¹ Partners are non-Assembly Members and may include cities, national associations of local governments, national governments, civil society organisations, NGOs, university and research institutes, private enterprises, etc.

2 Basic Provisions

8. As defined in the Introduction to the Cities Alliance Charter: “[t]he Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of cities in sustainable development” (*Charter, Introduction, p. 2*).

9. **Membership.** In accordance with Paragraph 15 of the Charter, “[m]embership of the Cities Alliance is open to representatives from the following constituencies (...): (a) National governments; (b) Inter-governmental and multi-lateral organisations, International or Regional Financial Institutions and Development Banks; (c) Associations of Local Governments; (d) Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations; (e) Private Sector and Foundations; and (f) Universities, Research Centres and Knowledge Networks” (*Charter, Paragraph 15, p. 7*).

10. As defined by the Paragraph 18 of the Charter, “[t]here are two categories of membership: (a) Full Members (...) and (b) Associate Members” (*Charter, Paragraph 18, p. 8*). “Full members (...) participate in [the] decision-making [functions] and are eligible to serve on the Management Board. (...) Associate Members (...) participate in the proceedings of the Cities Alliance” (*Charter, Paragraph 18, p. 8*).

11. Prospective members may become CA members provided that they: “(i) [are] sponsored by 3 (three) existing Full Members of the Assembly; (ii) endorse the Cities Alliance Charter; and (iii) undertake to meet their financial contributions to the Cities Alliance Trust Fund” (*Charter, Paragraph 20, p. 8*).

12. **Membership financial contributions.** As defined by the Paragraph 22 of the Charter, “[a]ll full members make an annual financial contribution to the core funds of the Cities Alliance Trust Fund (*Charter, Paragraph 22, p. 8*). The Management Board determines the minimum amount of financial contributions per constituency and any exceptions to it². All contributions are administered by UNOPS on behalf of the Member in accordance with the terms of the Contribution Agreement between UNOPS and the Member, the UNOPS Standard Provisions Applicable to Contributions to the Cities Alliance Programme and these Standard Operating Procedures. Per Paragraph 23 of the Charter, “[m]embers who do not make their financial contributions for two consecutive years will cease to be members of the Cities Alliance” (*Charter, Paragraph 23, p. 8*).

13. **Governance structure.** As defined by the Paragraph 24 of the Charter: “[t]he Cities Alliance is composed of three structures: a) the Assembly; b) the Management Board (the Board); and c) the Secretariat” (*Charter, Paragraph 24, p. 9*).

14. In the event of any conflict between any provision of the Standard Operating Procedures and any provision of the CA Charter, the provisions of the Charter will prevail, and in the event of any conflict between any provision of the Standard Operating Procedures and any provision of the Contribution Agreement, the provisions of the Contribution Agreement will prevail.

² Current scales for financial contributions are as follows:

Non-Governmental Organisations and Networks:	US\$10,000 – 50,000 +
Universities	US\$10,000 – 50,000 +
Local Government Associations	US\$10,000 – 50,000 +
Multi-lateral Organisations:	US\$50,000 – 250,000 +
National Governments	US\$50,000 – 250,000 +
Private Sector and Foundations	US\$50,000 – 250,000 +

3 The Assembly

15. **"The Assembly** comprises Full Members and Associate Members of the Cities Alliance, and is the sovereign body of the organisation" (*Charter, Paragraph 25, p. 9*). "The Assembly provides leadership and overall direction for the Cities Alliance, and deliberates on sustainable urban development and related issues" (*Charter, Paragraph 25, p. 9*). The Roles and Responsibility are defined in Paragraph 30 of the Charter, as follows:

- "a) Adopt, and amend, the Charter;
- b) Adopt Medium-term Strategy of the Cities Alliance;
- c) Appoint members of the Management Board;
- d) Ratify the applications of new members;
- e) Approve the rules of procedure of the Assembly; and
- f) Review and evaluate the overall performance of the Cities Alliance" (*Charter, Paragraph 30, pp 9-10*)

16. **President of the Assembly.** The Assembly is headed by a President. As defined by Paragraph 31 of the Charter, "[t]he President of the Assembly is selected by the Members, and should be a person of substantial standing in the global community" (*Charter, Paragraph 25, p. 9*). The modalities and procedures for the appointment of the President of the Assembly are defined by the *Assembly Rules of Procedures* (Annex A to this Standard Operating Procedures). The roles and responsibilities of the President are defined by the *Terms of Reference of the President of the Assembly* (Annex B to this Standard Operating Procedures).

17. **Decision Making Authority.** As set out in Paragraph 27 of the Charter: "Decisions in the Assembly are taken by Full Members, by consensus. Consensus means no objection to agreement, but does not preclude the ability to dissent on the record without objecting" (*Charter, Paragraph 27, p. 9*). Associate Member representatives are entitled to participate in the Assembly meetings without participation in the decision-making process.

18. **Management Board Appointment.** As defined by Paragraph 31 of the Charter, "[t]he Assembly appoints the Management Board. The Management Board is accountable to the Assembly" (*Charter, Paragraph 31, p. 10*). As defined by Paragraph 38 of the Charter: "[m]anagement Board Members are appointed to serve terms up to three years, renewable once" (*Charter, Paragraph 38, p. 10*).

19. The rules and procedures to nominate and designate representative(s) to the Management Board by the Assembly are defined by the *Assembly Rules of Procedures* (Annex A to this Standard Operating Procedures).

20. **Senior Policy Advisor(s).** The Assembly may appoint Senior Policy Advisor(s) following proposals from the Management Board. The Advisors are recruited and managed according to UNOPS policies and procedures. Senior Policy Advisor(s) are appointed for a mandate of three years, renewable once. They may be remunerated for their services, according to UNOPS rules and procedures. The roles and responsibilities of the Senior Policy Advisor are defined by the *Terms of Reference of the Cities Alliance Senior Policy Advisor* (Annex C to this Standard Operating Procedures).

21. **Assembly Meetings.** As defined by Paragraph 27 of the Charter, "[t]he Assembly meets at least once a year" (*Charter, Paragraph 27, p. 9*) and as often as necessary to fully discharge its duties. Details on the rules of the meeting, including Attendance, Agenda, Quorum and Records, are defined by the *Assembly Rules of Procedures* (Annex A to this Standard Operating Procedures).

4 The Management Board

22. To discharge its duties more effectively, streamline decision-making procedures and provide oversight and guidance of Secretariat operations, “[t]he Assembly will appoint a Management Board. The Management Board is accountable to the Assembly” (*Charter, Paragraph 31, p. 10*).

23. “The Management Board provides operational oversight [to the Cities Alliance]” (*Charter, Paragraph 39, p. 11*). More specifically, the Board will:

- a) Provide fiduciary and operational oversight of all activities of the Cities Alliance ensuring adherence to its principles, scope and objectives;
- b) Provide guidance to the Secretariat on matters of strategy and policy;
- c) Review and approve the Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan subject to ratification by the Assembly in line with the Cities Alliance's principles, objectives, programmes and policies;
- d) Review and approve the annual work plan and budget of the Cities Alliance in line with the Cities Alliance's principles, objectives, programmes and policies;
- e) Approve all activities of value above \$250,000 and all operational activities which have highest safeguard classification.
- f) Approve the acceptance of Non-Core Funds for operational activities for amounts more than \$1 million;
- g) Review new applications for membership and make recommendations for consideration by the Assembly;
- h) Establish Standing and Special Committees and other subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, and define their terms of reference and rules of procedures;
- i) Propose Senior Policy Advisor(s) candidates to the Assembly to support the structures of the Cities Alliance;
- j) Develop working and coordination arrangements as may be appropriate with the other structures of the Cities Alliance, including responding to requests from the Assembly;
- k) In consultation with the Assembly, select, appoint and enter into legal and administrative arrangements with the Trustee and Provider of the Secretariat;
- l) Participate in the selection of the Director of the Secretariat. Additionally, the Board should also contribute to and participate in the annual performance review of the Director;
- m) Review and approve, in agreement with UNOPS and subject to ratification by the Assembly, the Standard Operating Procedures of the Cities Alliance;
- n) Review and approve, upon recommendation of the Secretariat, other operational modalities, policies and guidelines on matters related to funding structures, access, programme and financial management, grant making and administration;
- o) Review and assess the availability of resources for the Cities Alliance, its sustainability and work closely with the Director to mobilise financial resources;
- p) Periodically review the fiduciary and risks management structures, controls and responses of the Cities Alliance;
- q) Review and approve the framework for the monitoring and evaluation of the results and performance of the Cities Alliance, subject to ratification from the Assembly, as well as the relevant corporate indicators and targets;
- r) Review and approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Cities Alliance;
- s) Ensure that Cities Alliance policies, programmes and financial accountability are controlled, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis and participate in any performance reviews, independent evaluations and external audits; and
- t) Exercise such other functions as may be appropriate to fulfil the objectives of the Partnership.

24. **Membership of the Management Board.** As defined by Paragraph 32 of the Charter, “[t]he Management Board comprises a maximum of fifteen [Assembly] Members” (*Charter, Paragraph 32, p.*

10). As defined by Paragraph 18 of the Charter, "[o]nly Full Members (...) are eligible to serve on the Management Board" (*Charter, Paragraph 18, p. 8*). All six Constituencies of the Assembly must be represented on the Management Board by no less than one Member. A Member of the United Nations system must be represented on the Board (*Charter, Paragraph 32, p. 10*).

25. The rules and procedures to nominate and designate representative(s) to the Management Board by the Assembly are defined by the *Assembly Rules of Procedures* (Annex A to this Standard Operating Procedures).

26. **Management Board Chair:** "The Management Board will appoint a Chairperson for a term of three years" (*Charter, Paragraph 33, p. 10*). The modalities and procedures for the appointment of the Chairperson of the Management Board are defined by the *Management Board Rules of Procedures* (Annex D to this Standard Operating Procedures). The roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson are defined by the *Terms of Reference of the Chairperson of the Management Board* (Annex E to this Standard Operating Procedures).

27. **Decision Making Authority.** Board decisions are taken by consensus, and the Chair of the Board shall ascertain consensus. As with Assembly meetings, consensus means no objection to agreement, but does not preclude the ability to dissent on the record without objecting.

28. **Committees.** As per paragraph 41 of the Cities Alliance Charter, "the Management Board shall establish Standing Committees to deal with Finance and Membership [matters]" (*Charter, Paragraph 41, p. 11*). The Board may also establish other Standing or Special Committees, sub-committees, working groups and/or other subsidiary bodies as may be required to conduct its business. The roles and responsibilities of the Finance Committee are defined by the *Terms of Reference of the Finance Committee* (Annex F to this Standard Operating Procedures). The roles and responsibilities of the Membership Committee are defined by the *Terms of Reference of the Membership Committee* (Annex G to this Standard Operating Procedures).

29. **Meetings of the Management Board.** "The Management Board meets as often as necessary, but no less than three times per year" (*Charter, Paragraph 40, p. 11*). Details on the rules of the meeting, including Attendance, Agenda, Quorum and Records, are defined by the *Management Board Rules of Procedures* (Annex D to this Standard Operating Procedures).

5 Secretariat

30. As defined by Paragraph 42 of the Charter, “[t]he Secretariat shall implement the Cities Alliance Work Programme and manages its day-to-day operations. A primary function of the Secretariat is to actively facilitate the participation of members in the activities of the organisation. It also provides appropriate services to its Members, and generally facilitates the work of the partnership” (*Charter, Paragraph 42, p. 11*). The Cities Alliance Secretariat works under the overall direction of the Director.
31. The Secretariat is accountable, through the CA Director, to the Management Board and reports regularly to both the Assembly and the Management Board. Within this accountability framework and guided by the Charter, the SOP and UNOPS rules and procedures, the Secretariat is empowered to take such actions as necessary to fulfil its mandate.
32. **Administration.** Per Paragraph 44 of the Charter, “The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) acts as the Trustee, provides the Secretariat, and administers the Cities Alliance financial resources” (*Charter, Paragraph 43, p. 11*). As such: “[a]ll Cities Alliance activities shall be consistent with UN and UNOPS principles, policies and procedures” (*Charter, Paragraph 42, p. 11*). The Cities Alliance Secretariat is headquartered in Brussels from where it manages operations.
33. **Secretariat staff.** The Secretariat is supported by a minimum of staff necessary to implement the approved activities in the Annual Work Plans, budgets and medium-term Strategy/Business Plan. In so doing, the Secretariat will make appropriate use of Core, Non-Core and Project funds. Per Paragraph 44 of the Charter “Cities Alliance Secretariat staff are UNOPS staff members recruited and managed according to UNOPS policies and procedures.” (*Charter, Paragraph 44, p. 11*). In order to discharge its duties effectively, UNOPS, in accordance with approved budgets, may engage external consultants, interns or participate in donor-funded staffing programmes such as Secondments, United Nations Volunteer (UNV), and Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programmes.
34. **The CA Director.** The Secretariat staff is headed by a Director. The CA Director is selected and appointed in accordance with UNOPS policies and procedures, while retaining the ability to operate in a functionally independent and effective manner in accordance with UNOPS organisational directives and administrative instructions. The approval of the Director’s terms of reference, and the selection of the Director, will be made in consultation with the Management Board. The Management Board will also participate in clarifying the CA Director’s duties, responsibilities and expectations as well providing inputs to UNOPS in the review of his/her performance.
35. The CA Director is responsible for the selection of all Secretariat staff in accordance with Section 6 of the SOP. All selections will be made under UNOPS policies and procedures within the budgets approved through the Cities Alliance governance mechanisms.

6 Human Resources

36. All human resources services will be provided in accordance with the relevant UNOPS rules and regulations on the process of personnel selection and administration, including the applicable organisational directives, administrative instructions and United Nations staff rules. This will include the selection and recruitment process of personnel as required, the designing of terms of reference for specific positions, writing and publishing of the vacancy in electronic and print media, and selecting and recruiting selected candidates, as well as the on-going management of their contracts with respect to the payment of salaries and corresponding entitlements. Any costs relating to such positions, including any commitments and liabilities that may arise out of or in connection with personnel entitlements notwithstanding the appointment end date, will be charged against the Contributions.

37. UNOPS will provide ongoing support to the Secretariat paid from the direct costs as defined in Paragraph 60 of the SOP. The roles and responsibilities between UNOPS and the Secretariat are outlined in the attached Matrix of Responsibilities (Annex H).

38. Authorisations to incur expenditures and commitments in relation to Cities Alliance shall be made by UNOPS authorised officials in accordance with UNOPS' organisational directives and administrative instructions on delegations of authority, and Work Plans and Budgets as approved by the Management Board.

39. **Personnel contracts.** Personnel that are recruited for and/or managed by the Secretariat shall be subject to the provisions of the contract modality that governs their position. These shall include:

- UNOPS staff contracts, the contract modality that will result in Secretariat personnel holding UNOPS staff member status; or
- Individual contractor agreements, the contract modality used by UNOPS to engage individuals to provide services within specific project-based deliverables.

40. In accordance with the approved budgets, the CA Director may request that UNOPS reclassify certain positions. Upon receiving any such recommendation, UNOPS may then proceed with reclassifying these positions in accordance with its rules and regulations.

7 Results Framework and Performance Indicators Monitoring System

41. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The main objective of the Cities Alliance is to strengthen and promote the role of cities in poverty reduction, and in sustainable development. To assess the extent to which its efforts and those of partners are making progress toward that objective, Cities Alliance monitors and evaluates its activities within an agreed-upon results framework.

42. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provides information to the CA on achievement of developmental results, effectiveness in achieving those results, and efficiency of its operating systems. It also supports learning from experience and promotes accountability for results. The CA's M&E system has two major components: the Results Framework (RF) and the Performance Indicators Monitoring System (PIMS).

43. **Results Framework.** The Charter establishes the developmental objectives of the Cities Alliance, its approach and the type of activities it supports. The Results Framework articulates the different tiers of results (outputs, intermediate outcomes, outcomes and impact) expected by CA interventions that lead to the achievement of the objectives of the Cities Alliance through causal and logical relationships. The Results Framework includes selected Performance Indicators with related critical assumptions to help measure and document progress across the various tiers of results.

44. The Results Framework is approved by the Management Board and ratified by the Assembly as part of its roles and responsibilities for the strategic direction of the Cities Alliance, and for reviewing and evaluating its overall performance. The Cities Alliance Results Framework is presented in Annex I to the SOP, and may be periodically updated by the Secretariat for Management Board approval and Assembly ratification. The Secretariat reports annually to the Management Board and the Assembly on progress towards the agreed results through a corporate scorecard, which is annexed to the annual report (see Paragraph 63).

45. **Performance Indicators Monitoring System.** The Results Framework forms the basis of a PIMS, which operationalises the performance indicators into baselines, milestones and targets, data sources, and tools and frequency for data collection. The PIMS operates at the grant/activity level, across grant portfolios and for the programme as a whole. The PIMS is approved by the Management Board. The PIMS is not only about monitoring, control and tracking emerging results; it is also about learning for both clients and the Cities Alliance that can be applied in the design of new activities. Part of the PIMS are project evaluations described under Paragraph 113 of the SOP.

46. **Independent Evaluations.** UNOPS also relies on periodic Independent Evaluations to help assess the efficiency and relevance of the Programme, verify the achievement of the agreed-upon results, and assess its higher-level impact. Independent Evaluations of the Cities Alliance Programme should be determined by the Assembly in line with international practice—at least every five years—and administered by the Secretariat. The Secretariat should propose the terms of reference for the Evaluation which will be reviewed by the Assembly. The Secretariat will prepare a report with all comments received and distribute it to the Assembly. The revised TOR is then approved by the Assembly. The Assembly will also engage at relevant stages of the evaluation process in consultation with UNOPS. The process of selection will be carried out in accordance with UNOPS organisational directives and administrative instructions

8 Programming of Cities Alliance Funds

A. Programming of Cities Alliance Funds: Core and Non-Core Funds

47. **Contributions**³. All members are required to make a financial contribution to the core funds of the Cities Alliance, according to the Annual Contribution scale.⁴ These financial contributions (the “Contributions”) constitute the “Core Funds” of the Cities Alliance and are used to fund the Annual Work Plans approved by the Management Board and Medium-term Strategy/Business Plans approved by the Board and ratified by the Assembly. Members may contribute more than the minimum amounts.

48. **Core Funds.** Contributions to the Core Funds are pooled in a multi-donor fund administered by UNOPS and used for Cities Alliance administrative and operational activities under the Annual Work Plans and budgets approved by the Management Board, the Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan approved by the Management Board and ratified by the Assembly, and administered under the Charter, Standard Operating Procedures, and the standard provisions governing the multi-donor fund (as contained in the Contribution Agreement).

49. In exceptional circumstances where a potential donor is not able to agree with the provisions of the multi-donor fund, the Trustee may administer the Member Core Fund Contribution in a single donor fund, rather than being pooled with other donor funds, so long as those funds are used for administrative and operational activities under the Annual Work Plans and budgets approved by the Management Board, the Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan approved by the Management Board and ratified by the Assembly.

50. **Non-Core Funds.** In addition, while Members should endeavour to allocate all Contributions to the Core Fund, they can offer to make additional Contributions, above and beyond annual membership fees, to “Non-Core Funds”, particularly if such Contributions will result in the mobilisation of additional funds. Non-Core Funds contain resources that are earmarked for specific purposes to be mutually determined between the Member and the Secretariat. Non-Core Funds are administered under the Charter, Standard Operating Procedures, and the standard provisions governing the Funds (as contained in the Contribution Agreement). Examples of earmarking for Non-Core Funds include directing funding toward a particular geographical focus or in support of specific business lines.

51. Acceptance of Non-Core Funds should meet all of the following criteria:

- Support the strategy and Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan of the Cities Alliance;
- Contribute towards achievement of the results targeted in the Cities Alliance Results Framework (see Section 7); and
- Cover the costs of the Secretariat and Trustee for administering, managing and reporting on the funds.

The acceptance of Non-Core Funds is subject to prior agreement of the Management Board in accordance with the criteria specified in Paragraph 51 for amounts of USD one million and above.

³ See Section 9, below, for details on the financial administration of Contributions.

⁴ Non-Governmental Organisations and Networks:	US\$10,000 – 50,000 +
Universities	US\$10,000 – 50,000 +
Local Government Associations	US\$10,000 – 50,000 +
Multi-lateral Organisations:	US\$50,000 – 250,000 +
National Governments	US\$50,000 – 250,000 +
Private Sector and Foundations	US\$50,000 – 250,000 +

52. **Project Funds.** The Cities Alliance may also administer “Project Funds” with Contributions from non-Members (e.g., donors that wish to financially contribute to CA activities but do not wish to join the Assembly). Project Funds are subject to the same procedures and criteria as Non-Core Funds.

B. Approval for the Financing of Activities from the Core and Non-Core Funds

53. **Four-year Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan.** The Secretariat will prepare a four-year Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan, which will be reviewed and approved by the Management Board, and ratified by the Assembly. The Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan will include a review of Cities Alliance goals and objectives (including any recommended changes), proposed programming of Country Programme, Catalytic Fund and Analytic and Strategic Activities over the medium term, and a review of targets and milestones under the Results Framework (see Section 7). It may also include recommendations for changes to governance, management and staffing, and will put forward a financial plan that will allow the CA to undertake the proposed plan. The Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan will be reviewed periodically as determined by the Management Board or the Assembly.

54. **Annual Work Plan.** The Secretariat will prepare an Annual Work Plan with respect to the Core, Non-Core and Project funds, with reference to the approved Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan for all programmatic and internal and external monitoring and evaluation purposes. The annual work plan will be prepared with reference to the overall objectives of the Cities Alliance as set out in the Charter and as reflected in the Results Framework. It will include a financial summary of the prior year’s sources and uses of funds, a proposed **Annual Budget** and summary of outputs for the coming year, the annual scorecard and a staffing table/organogram. The annual work plan, including the annual budget, is submitted for approval to the Management Board.

55. **Authority to undertake Core-funded Cities Alliance activities.** Approval by the Management Board of the Annual Work Plan budget and Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan provides the authority for UNOPS to proceed with Core-funded Cities Alliance activities, subject to availability of funds and to the approval process for individual grant allocations. The Assembly will ratify the approved Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan. The Management Board approval provides sufficient authority to UNOPS to undertake Cities Alliance activities.

See Section 12.B. for procedures for disbursement grant funds under Core-funded activities.

56. **Authority to undertake Non-Core-funded Cities Alliance activities.** Approval by the Management Board of the Annual Work Plan, budget and Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan provides the authority for UNOPS to proceed with Non-Core-funded Cities Alliance activities, subject to availability of funds and to the approval process for individual grant allocations. The Assembly will ratify the approved Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan. The Management Board approval provides sufficient authority to UNOPS to undertake Cities Alliance activities.

See Section 12.B. for procedures for disbursement grant funds under Non-Core-funded activities.

9 Administration, Accounting and Reporting on Donor Contributions

A. Administration of Contributions to the Trust Funds

57. As the trustee of the Cities Alliance Programme, UNOPS will have full fiduciary responsibility and accountability for the receipt, custody and disbursement of all Contributions provided by the Donors under any Contribution Agreements entered into between UNOPS and any Donor.

58. **Administration of Contributions.** Contributions received by UNOPS under, or pursuant to, any CA Contribution Agreement, shall be administered in accordance with UNOPS' organisational directives, including the UNOPS Financial Regulations and Rules, and administrative instructions. All Core, Non-Core and Project Contributions received by UNOPS shall be recorded in a separate ledger accounts established by UNOPS. All Core Fund Contributions will be pooled along with other Contributions received from Donors for the same purpose, except in the exceptional circumstances described under Paragraph 49.

59. As per the Annex I, Article 2.4 of the Contribution Agreement: "The value of the Contribution if made in a currency other than in USD shall be determined by the actual amounts credited by the bank into the UNOPS bank account on the date of payment of each instalment. Such amounts shall increase or decrease the funds available for disbursements to the Programme. All expenditures made for the Programme in currencies other than USD shall be recorded using the United Nations operational rate of exchange in effect on the date of each transaction and/or payment. UNOPS shall not absorb or otherwise assume responsibility for any net exchange gains and net exchange losses in the value of the Contribution received as well as Programme related transactions".

60. **Management fees.** Per the Standard Provisions Applicable to Contributions to the Cities Alliance Programme, UNOPS will deduct the approved fees to cover its direct and indirect costs expended in support of implementation of the Cities Alliance Programme.

UNOPS costs and fees:

- A. Indirect costs are recovered through a UNOPS Management Fee of:
 - 4% of all expenditures made through Grant Support Agreements, Cooperation Agreements with Governments and UN to UN Agency Contribution Agreements and equivalent instruments; and
 - 8% of all other expenditures.
- B. Direct costs of UNOPS (USD 300,000 year 1)⁵.
- C. Direct Allocable Costs of up to 1%⁶

UNOPS costs and fees will be included in the annual budget and approved through Cities Alliance Programme governance.

61. **Interest income.** Any interest accrued on the cash balances of the Contribution received by UNOPS shall be credited to the Fund that is used to administer the Contribution and used in accordance

⁵ Reviewed annually by UNOPS and the Secretariat.

⁶ Allocable costs are direct costs incurred by UNOPS for which direct benefit is shared among multiple programmes and projects (such as audits, insurance, IT systems etc.).

with UNOPS' Financial Regulations and Rules and financial and administrative practices of UNOPS for the benefit of the Programme, in accordance with the SOP.

B. Accounting and Reporting

62. **Cities Alliance Fiscal Year.** Starting on 1 January 2014, the CA fiscal year will be on a calendar year basis.

63. **Reporting.** The Secretariat will provide the Donors with:

- Annual result-based narrative reports [the "Annual Report"] by 31 March following the end of each calendar year.

UNOPS will provide the Donors with:

- Semi-annual interim financial statements as of 30 June and 31 December within one month of the end of each reporting period;
- Annual certified financial statements as of 31 December by 30 June of the following calendar year;
- Certified final financial statements will be provided no later than 31 July of the calendar year following the year during which activities funded by the Contribution are operationally completed.

64. All reports will be prepared and submitted in accordance with UNOPS standard requirements and formats.

65. The above reports do not include reporting on the legacy portfolio, which will come separately from the World Bank as provided in the past, including on a World Bank fiscal year basis, in accordance with the contribution agreement terms that the World Bank entered with donors.

C. Auditing

66. **Audit procedures.** As per article 8.1 of the Contribution Agreement: "all Contributions to UNOPS [...] are subject exclusively to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the UNOPS Financial Regulations and Rules and further regulated by the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS. Disclosure of audit reports is regulated by the audit disclosure policies applicable to UNOPS". For audit requirements at the project level as they apply to grant recipients, please see Paragraph 117.

10 Procurement

67. **Procurement.** Any procurement activities carried out by UNOPS shall be in accordance with UNOPS internal rules and regulations as defined by the UNOPS Financial Regulations and Rules and UNOPS Procurement Manual⁷. Equipment and materials purchased by UNOPS with Donor Contributions shall be the property of UNOPS unless otherwise agreed, or until such time as UNOPS transfers such property to a Recipient per the Grant Support Agreements, inter-agency agreements, project cooperation agreements or other arrangements.

⁷ (see <http://www.unops.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Procurement%20docs/UNOPS%20procurement%20manual%20EN.pdf>).

11 Anti-Corruption

68. The CA Secretariat as provided by UNOPS adheres to anti-corruption policies of the highest international standards. Pertinent text outlining anti-corruption and fraud measures is included in the Contribution Agreement with Donors. Applicable UNOPS policies are: UNOPS policy to address fraud (OD 10, revision 2); Charter of the Internal Audit and Investigations Group (OD 25, revision 1); Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct or cooperating with duly authorized fact-finding activities (OD 35, new); and UNOPS Legal Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with United Nations Standards of Conduct (OD36). The general conditions attached to grant agreements for Recipients of CA funds includes anticorruption and procurement standards. Within the framework provided by the above policies, the CA Secretariat relies also on its specific fiduciary assessments of Recipients (see Integrated Assessment Framework, IAF – Annex J) and on project control tools (such as procurement plans, social and environmental plans, financial and progress reports, as well as supervision missions).

12 Grant Making Methodology

69. The Cities Alliance is a partnership. Its activities are mainly implemented through Members, or through Partners⁸ with the support of Members. In certain circumstances, the Secretariat may initiate and carry out selected activities (see Paragraph 90 below), as approved by the Management Board and the Assembly.

70. **Cities Alliance objectives.** As stated in Paragraph 7 of the Charter: “the Cities Alliance is governed by three over-arching objectives: (i) to strengthen and promote the role of cities in poverty reduction, and in sustainable development; (ii) to capture and strengthen the synergies between and among Members and partners; and (iii) to improve the quality of urban development cooperation and lending”. (*Cities Alliance Charter, Paragraph 7, p. 4*).

71. **Cities Alliance activities.** To meet these objectives, the partnership supports the following types of activities: (a) Country Programmes (CPs), which offer longer-term programmatic support, at a multiple city / national scale; (b) Catalytic Fund (CATF) projects, which are shorter-term activities designed to catalyse change; (c) Analytic and Strategic Activities (ASAs) designed to: (i) fill knowledge gaps by delivering and disseminating quality products and learning, and (ii) to engage CA Members and partners on strategic global or regional priorities to promote joint advocacy initiatives and policy dialogues; and (d) other programme management and administrative activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat as approved in the Annual Work Plan and budget.

72. **Grant recipients.** Grant recipients⁹ may be any city, national association of cities, national government, CA member, civil society organisation, foundation or academic institution. The prospective recipient needs to meet eligibility criteria as specified in the Charter, Sections 12A and 13, below, and in the Country Programmes Guidelines (Annex K of the SOP), the Catalytic Fund Guidelines (Annex L to the SOP) and the Analytic and Strategic Activities (ASAs) Guidelines (Annex M to the SOP) or other such guidelines as the Management Board may provide.

73. While the processing of grants to support each of these types of activities includes many aspects that are similar—such as appraisal processes, approval threshold, set-up and closure procedures—there are important differences, as highlighted in the following sections.

A. Initiation, Appraisal and Approval of Funding Proposals

(1) Country Programmes (CPs)¹⁰

74. **Initiation.** Potential countries are assessed and identified by CA members and/or the Secretariat using a set of criteria endorsed by the Management Board. The list of potential countries is then submitted to the Management Board for discussion, review and final selection of the country (ies) that should be invited to participate in the programme. Once the country government indicates commitment and accepts the invitation, the Secretariat facilitates a collaborative design process that brings together the national government, local authorities, organisations of the urban poor, CA Members and other partners in a series of engagements to develop a common understanding of existing programmes, gaps and priorities.

⁸ Partners are non-Assembly Members and may include cities, national associations of local governments, national governments, civil society organisations, NGOs, university and research institutes, private enterprises, etc.

⁹ As per UNOPS grant policies, private sector companies cannot be recipients of grant funds however they can be contracted.

¹⁰ Additional details are included in the Country Programmes Guidelines (Annex K to the SOP).

75. **CP Concept Note.** As a result of these engagements, a general Concept Note is developed that broadly defines objectives and activities of the proposed Country Programme. Further analysis is conducted and additional partner forums held to identify appropriate activities and clarify roles, responsibilities and potential partnerships in order to maximise synergies and meet commonly agreed objectives. The Concept Note is finalised by the Secretariat and shared with all members and partners involved in the design process. It is also circulated to all Members of the Assembly for purposes of Member coordination.¹¹

76. **CP Framework document.** The Concept Note is then translated into a more detailed Framework document. Original objectives and activities are verified and refined through the joint forum of partners, facilitated by the Secretariat. The Framework adds an important level of detail to the Concept Note. It further defines roles and responsibilities and allocates resources across activities of the proposed Country Programme. The Secretariat provides an indicative budget for the programme, and the indicative amount of resources available from the CA. CA Members and other partners also indicate their expected contributions to the programme and identify those Members/partners who play a leading role.

77. Country Programme Framework documents are endorsed by the national government and all Members and partners involved in the Country Programme and approved by the Management Board of the Cities Alliance on a no-objection basis. Following the endorsement and approval of the Framework, implementing partners (CA Members, national/local governments, institutes, NGOs etc., identified during the design process) develop proposals for activities within the Framework and submit them to the Secretariat.¹²

78. **Initial Appraisal.** A Cities Alliance Task Manager (CA TM) undertakes threshold screening of all proposals to ensure compliance with funding eligibility and selection criteria as well as safeguards requirements and facilitates the review of other fiduciary aspects by assigned specialists as needed in accordance to the relevant modalities and tools (see Section 13, *Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities*—Section 13.A., Financial Management (FM); Section 13.B., Procurement; and Section 13.C., Environmental and Social Safeguards). A Threshold Screening Report is prepared for each proposal. The Threshold Screening Report includes: (i) the technical and substantive assessment of the proposal against predefined set of relevant criteria, and (ii) a summary of the relevant fiduciary findings emerging from the various assessments and any other relevant comments. For proposals that do not pass the threshold screening in accordance with the CA TM assessment, comments are sent to the applicant with feedback on what revisions may be needed to strengthen the application or address the identified gaps, including recommendations on procurement and FM matters and recommended technical and institutional mitigating measures against identified risks.

79. **Appraisal Completion.** For proposals that pass the threshold screening in accordance with the CA TM assessment, the proposal and the related Threshold Screening Report are sent to an internal peer review committee, with a copy to all relevant teams, recommending endorsement to proceed to the next steps. Once the report and the proposal are endorsed by the internal peer review committee, they are sent to external experts for technical peer reviews and to the Assembly for Member coordination if the request is for an amount greater than USD 75,000. If the request is under USD 75,000 the CA Director may approve the proposal directly¹³.

80. After Member coordination and external peer reviews:

¹¹ Member coordination is undertaken to ensure that the proposed activities do not, inter alia, conflict with other donor activities in the country, and that it will contribute to other programmatic synergies.

¹² In certain circumstances, some initial activities can be funded during the Initiation, Concept Note and Framework stages as part of the preparatory work for the development of a Country Programme.

¹³ This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS.

- If there are no comments, or if the comments do not have a material effect on the proposed activities/budget or other key aspects of the activity, a recommendation for final approval is sent to the CA Director and/or the Assembly in accordance with authorisation levels stated in Paragraph 81, below.
- If substantial comments and inputs from Member coordination and/or external peer reviews are received, the CA TM consolidates them into a Summary, which is shared with applicants asking for further revision of the proposals. If the revised proposal is satisfactory, the CA TM sends recommendation for final endorsement and clearance to the CA Director highlighting how the issues raised were addressed. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated in Paragraph 81, below.

81. **Approval.** The CA Director approves¹⁴ all proposals requesting funding of USD 250,000 or less, with the Secretariat informing the Assembly of these approvals on a regular basis. Proposals requesting funding for amounts greater than USD 250,000 are circulated to the Management Board for approval on a “no objection” basis.

(2) Catalytic Fund (CATF)¹⁵

82. **Initiation.** Activities supported by the Catalytic Fund aim to make a positive impact on urban development challenges by leveraging cooperation and partnership among urban development actors. Such activities should be contextually innovative and foster knowledge as well as learning among cities, practitioners and policymakers. Grants are awarded at least annually through a competitive process and may focus on specific themes or general urban developmental issues.

83. CATF supported activities are initiated by a call for proposals at least once a year. The call may be for a specific theme that has been endorsed by the Management Board following suggestions from Assembly Members or the Management Board or a recommendation from the Secretariat. Once the call has been issued, applicants submit Concept Notes that outline the proposed project, covering its rationale and objectives, activities, outputs/deliverables, timeline and resources. The Secretariat screens the Concept Notes to ensure that they meet a set of agreed minimum criteria for eligibility. Concept Notes that pass the minimum threshold are referred to an independent Expert Evaluation Panel (EEP), which evaluates them on a competitive basis using a predefined set of selection criteria. Following an assessment and validation process, the panel provides a ranked list of all scored concept notes to the CA for further consideration and processing.

84. **Initial Appraisal.** The Secretariat reviews the EEP list taking into consideration additional strategic factors—such as theme, geography, Members’ engagement and knowledge needs aimed at maintaining the strategic balance of the overall grant portfolio and available budget. Following a decision meeting chaired by the CA Director, the Secretariat makes recommendations on which Concept Notes are eligible in principle for funding and qualified to proceed. This list of Concept Notes is shared with the Assembly to ensure that the proposed activities do not conflict with or duplicate CA Members’ activities. Assembly may also provide any comments that proponents have to address in the development of the full proposals.

85. Once the Concept Note evaluation process is completed, the Secretariat notifies successful applicants of the approval in principle of their Concept Notes and invites them to develop and submit full funding proposals. In addition, the Secretariat provides comments on areas that need to be modified and/or strengthened, including recommendations from the Assembly and the EEP. Comments may also

¹⁴ This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS.

¹⁵ Additional details are included in the Catalytic Fund Guidelines (Annex L to the SOP).

include inputs on procurement and FM matters and eventual technical and institutional mitigating measures against identified risks.

86. **Appraisal Completion.** Once a full proposal is received, the CA TM undertakes threshold screening of the proposal to ensure compliance with funding eligibility and selection criteria as well as safeguards requirements and facilitates the review of other fiduciary aspects by assigned specialists as needed in accordance to the relevant modalities and tools (see Section 13, *Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities*—Section 13.A., Financial Management (FM); Section 13.B., Procurement; and Section 13.C., Environmental and Social Safeguards). A Threshold Screening Report is prepared for each proposal. The Threshold Screening Report includes: (i) the technical and substantive assessment of the proposal against predefined set of relevant criteria, and (ii) a summary of the relevant fiduciary findings emerging from the various assessments. For proposals that do not pass the threshold screening in accordance with the CA TM assessment, comments are sent to the applicant with feedback on what revisions may be needed to strengthen the application or address the identified gaps.

87. **Appraisal Completion.** For proposals that pass the threshold screening in accordance with the CA TM assessment, the proposal and the related Threshold Screening Report are sent to an internal peer review committee, with a copy to all relevant teams, recommending endorsement to proceed to the next steps. Once the report and the proposal are endorsed by the internal peer review committee, they are sent to the Assembly for Member coordination if the request is for an amount greater than USD 75,000. If the request is under USD 75,000 the CA Director may approve the proposal directly¹⁶.

88. After Member coordination:

- If there are no comments, or if the comments do not have a material effect on the proposed activities/budget or other key aspects of the activity, a recommendation for final approval is sent to the CA Director and/or the Assembly in accordance with authorisation levels stated in Paragraph 89, below.
- If substantial comments and inputs from Member coordination are received, the CA TM consolidates them into a Summary, which is shared with applicants asking for further revision of the proposals. If the revised proposal is satisfactory, the CA TM sends recommendation for final endorsement and clearance to the CA Director highlighting how the issues raised were addressed. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated in Paragraph 89, below.

89. **Approval.** The CA Director approves¹⁷ all proposals requesting funding within the levels of authority stated in paragraph 81, with the Secretariat informing the Assembly of these approvals on a regular basis.

(3) Analytical and Strategic Activities (ASAs)¹⁸

90. ASA activities enable the partnership to play an effective role in the development and dissemination of practitioner-oriented knowledge and tools and in diagnostic and analytical work; in fostering policy dialogues and exchanges; and facilitating joint advocacy initiatives in order to achieve its stated objectives. ASAs can be executed either by the Secretariat (Track I) or by CA Members through Joint Work Programmes (Track II).

¹⁶ This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS.

¹⁷ This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS.

¹⁸ Additional details are included in the Analytical and Strategic Activities Guidelines (Annex M to the SOP).

91. **Initiation of ASAs Track I Concept Notes.** For Track I ASAs, the CA Task Manager, in consultation with the CA Director, identifies a need/gap in the Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan that can be addressed through a Secretariat-managed initiative using a predefined set of criteria and that is consistent with approved budget. Following the endorsement of the activity by the CA Director, the CA TM develops a Concept Note (CN) that states the rationale, objectives, activities, outputs/deliverables, implementation mechanisms and plan as well as resources needed (both financial and human).

92. **Appraisal for Track I ASAs Concept Notes.** The CA TM sends the Concept Note to an internal peer review committee and, where appropriate, to external experts. The CA TM revises the Concept Note to reflect feedback/inputs provided during the review process. The minutes from the review meeting and the final Concept Note are then sent to the CA Director. Funding for individual ASA Track I activity is expected not to exceed USD 75,000.

93. **Approval of Track I ASAs Concept Notes.** The CA Director approves¹⁹ all ASA Track I Concept Notes within the authority levels stated in paragraph 81.

94. **Initiation of ASAs Track II / Joint Work Programmes (JWP)**²⁰. Track II ASAs may be initiated by CA Members, who identify a need/gap in the Medium Term Strategy/Business Plan or otherwise that needs to be addressed for the overall achievement of the partnership goals. The activity can also be identified by the Secretariat, which in turn determines that implementation by a Member(s) and Partner(s) would maximise the results, effectiveness and impact of such an activity. In both cases, the Secretariat engages with potential implementing Member(s) and Partner(s) and facilitates the preparation of a Concept Note, which highlights the rationale, objectives, activities, outputs/deliverables, implementation mechanisms and plan, as well as resources needed for undertaking the programme. A Joint Work Programme should only be established when at least two CA members are involved in the development and facilitation of the programme.

95. **JWP Concept Note (ASAs Track II).** The CA TM sends the Concept Note of the JWP programme to an internal peer review committee and, where appropriate, to external experts, recommending endorsement to proceed to the next steps. The CA TM facilitates the Member(s)' revision of the Concept Note to reflect feedback/inputs provided during the review. The Concept Note is finalised by the Secretariat and shared with all members and partners involved in the design process. It is also circulated to all Members of the Assembly for the purpose of Member coordination.²¹

96. **JWP Framework Document (ASAs Track II).** The final Concept Note is then translated into a more detailed Programme Framework document. Original objectives and activities are verified and refined through the joint forum of partners, facilitated by the Secretariat. The Framework adds an important level of detail to the Concept Note. It further defines roles and responsibilities and allocates resources across activities of the proposed Joint Work Programme in line with an indicative budget for the programme which also indicates the amount of resources available from the CA. CA Members and other partners also indicate their expected contributions to the programme and identify those Members/partners who play a leading role.

¹⁹ This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS

²⁰ In certain cases, for ASAs Track II, Partners could also be involved in the execution of the grant if in partnership with a Member.

²¹ Member coordination is undertaken to ensure that the proposed activity does not, inter alia, conflict with other donor activities in the country, and that it will contribute to other programmatic synergies.

97. Where appropriate, the framework might undergo additional internal and external review processes for further quality enhancement. The final Framework Document is then sent to the CA Director with the relevant documentation for endorsement. Following the endorsement of the Framework Document by the CA Director, the Framework is sent to the Management Board for Member approval on a no-objection basis. Following the endorsement and approval of the Framework, implementing partners develop project proposals for activities within the Framework and submit them to the Secretariat.

98. **Initial Appraisal of JWP Project Proposals (ASAs Track II).** The CA Task Manager undertakes threshold screening of all project proposals to ensure compliance with funding eligibility and selection criteria as well as safeguards requirements and facilitates the review of other fiduciary aspects by assigned specialists as needed in accordance to the relevant modalities and tools (see Section 13, *Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities*—Section 13.A., Financial Management (FM); Section 13.B., Procurement; and Section 13.C., Environmental and Social Safeguards). A Threshold Screening Report is prepared for each proposal. The Threshold Screening Report includes: (i) the technical and substantive assessment of the proposal against predefined set of relevant criteria, and (ii) a summary of the relevant fiduciary findings emerging from the various assessments. For proposals that do not pass the threshold screening in accordance with the CA TM assessment, comments are sent to the applicant Member(s) with feedback on what revisions may be needed to strengthen the application or address the identified gaps, including recommendations on procurement and FM matters and recommended technical and institutional mitigating measures against identified risks.

99. **Appraisal Completion.** For proposals that pass the threshold screening in accordance with the CA TM assessment, the proposal and the related Threshold Screening Report are sent to an internal peer review committee, with a copy to all relevant teams, recommending endorsement to proceed to the next steps. Once the report and the proposal are endorsed by the internal peer review committee, they are sent to external experts for technical peer reviews and to the Assembly for Member coordination if the request is for an amount greater than USD 75,000. If the request is under USD 75,000 the CA Director may approve the proposal directly²².

100. After Member coordination and external peer reviews:

- If there are no comments, or if the comments do not have a material effect on the proposed activities/budget or other key aspects of the activity, a recommendation for final approval is sent to the CA Director and/or the Assembly in accordance with authorisation levels stated in Paragraph 101, below.
- If substantial comments and inputs from Member coordination and/or external peer reviews are received, the CA TM consolidates them into a Summary, which is shared with applicants asking for further revision of the proposals. If the revised proposal is satisfactory, the CA TM sends recommendation for final endorsement and clearance to the CA Director highlighting how the issues raised were addressed. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated in Paragraph 101, below.

101. **Approval of JWP Project Proposals.** The CA Director approves²³ all proposals requesting funding of USD 250,000 or less, with the Secretariat informing the Assembly of these approvals on a regular basis. Proposals requesting funding for amounts greater than USD 250,000 are circulated to the Management Board for approval on a “no objection” basis.

²² This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS.

²³ This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided by UNOPS.

(4) Other Programme and Administrative Expenditures

102. **Other Programme and Administrative Expenditures.** Funding allocations may also be made to cover other programme and administrative expenditures, such as: the costs of holding meetings of the Assembly and Management Board; the payment of salaries and benefits of the Secretariat staff; and other general operating costs. Approval by the Management Board of the Annual Work Plans, budgets and Medium Term Strategy/Business Plans provides the authority for the Secretariat to proceed with such expenditures, subject to availability of funds and to the approval process for individual grant allocations. The Assembly will ratify approved Medium Term Strategy/Business Plans²⁴.

B. Grant Set-Up and Disbursement of Funds

103. Grants are governed by agreements based on the following modalities: UN to UN Agency Contribution Agreements for inter-agency grants (Annex N); Externally Financed Outputs Agreements for the World Bank (Annex O); Project Cooperation Agreements for grants to Governments (Annex P); Grant Support Agreements for grants to all other external recipients (Annex Q).

104. **Grant package preparation.** Following the approval of the proposal the CA TM works with Finance and Operation Team and relevant UNOPS personnel to draft and process the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities. The CA TM ensures that the project budget, M&E, activities, outputs and deliverables, milestones and timelines as well as other terms of the grant agreement and reporting templates are agreed upon with the Recipient. The CA Finance and Operations team prepares the following: (i) Grant Request for Award; and (ii) Final draft grant agreement, in any of the appropriate modalities, together with its supporting annexes, inclusive of templates for reporting. The package is submitted to the authorising UNOPS official for review and signing of the grant agreement, in any of the appropriate modalities, in accordance with UNOPS regulations and procedures.

105. **Creation of records.** Following the award and signature of the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities, the CA Finance and Operations team in consultation with the CA TM creates the relevant records in ATLAS and in other systems as may be required in order to facilitate timely and effective grant payment and monitoring during implementation. Such records are approved in the systems by the authorised officials in accordance with UNOPS regulations and procedures.

106. **Grant effectiveness.** Once the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities is signed by UNOPS, the Finance and Operations team with the CA TM facilitates its signing by the Recipient and submission of one original countersigned copy. After receipt of the countersigned agreement by UNOPS, the first installment of the grant is paid in accordance with the terms stated therein. Subsequent installments, if any, are paid in accordance with the agreed schedule and satisfactory achievement of the milestones including timely submission of acceptable financial and narrative reports, as may be required under the grant agreement..

C. Supervision and Monitoring of Project Implementation

107. **Reporting.** As agreed through the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities, the recipient submits—if not otherwise specified—narrative progress and interim unaudited financial reports on a on a six-month basis. The CA TM, in consultation with the CA fiduciary team members, reviews the progress and financial reports to determine whether the implementation arrangements—including those covering financial management, procurement and safeguards—remain satisfactory and whether the recipient needs to implement any follow-up actions, including a timeline for their implementation. Project

²⁴ Although subject to Assembly ratification, the established practice is that the Management Board approval provides sufficient authority to the Trustee to undertake Cities Alliance activities. See also Paragraphs 55 and 56 of the SOP.

information is made publicly available through the CA project database in accordance to UNOPS disclosure policies and the principles of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) of which UNOPS is a member.

108. **Monitoring.** The CA TM monitors overall progress of implementation, ensuring that activities are undertaken on a timely basis and that milestones are being achieved in accordance with the agreed implementation plan. If any delays are observed, these are formally reported to the CA Director, and the CA TM works with the recipient to ensure remedial actions are taken.

109. **Amendment.** In rare cases where delays or other circumstances may require amendment to the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities, including extension of closing date, the CA TM in consultation with the Recipient reviews the status of implementation, makes a recommendation and submits a notification letter to a UNOPS-authorized official for approval. Such recommendation should only be considered if (i) the project objectives continue to be achievable; (ii) the performance of the Recipient and other implementing agencies is satisfactory; and (iii) the recipient has prepared a specific action plan acceptable to the Secretariat.

D. Project Closure

110. **Grant closing date.** In addition to monitoring the progress of implementation of the project activities and compliance with other terms and condition of the grant, the CA TM closely monitors the grant closing date of each project and: (i) notifies the Recipient six (6) months before the grant closing date of the upcoming closure, the completion procedures and reporting requirements; and (ii) in consultation with the Recipient and other project teams, determines if an extension may be needed and takes the steps outlined in Paragraph 109, above.

111. **Grant closing notification.** For successfully completed projects, the CA TM ensures that the Recipient has submitted all the reports, outputs and deliverables as agreed upon in the grant agreement. In consultation with project team members, the CA TM verifies that all deliverables, outputs, reports have been received and are consistent with terms of the agreement, and ensures that all outputs and deliverables and completion reports are of acceptable quality and completeness. If all is satisfactory, the TM prepares a summary evaluation and a grant closing notification letter for review and approval by the appropriate authority. Once the notification letter is signed by UNOPS it is sent to the Recipient, the records in the various systems are updated, and any unspent funds are returned to UNOPS.

112. **Grant termination.** For non-performing projects/grants—for example, where the Recipient has not complied with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities, or grant closing date is approaching and any extension would not result in successful completion of activities and achievement of the stated objectives, or efforts to solve problems/issues with the Recipient have not yielded satisfactory results—the CA TM in consultation with other project team members and following CA Director endorsement and clearance, makes a recommendation to UNOPS to terminate the grant according to the relevant provisions. The case is properly documented and an official termination letter prepared for review and approval by a UNOPS-authorized official. The letter should be countersigned by the Recipient. Any unspent grant funds should be paid back to UNOPS by the Recipient. Any undisbursed grant funds are forfeited/cancelled and grant records closed. In case the Recipient did not spend the funds in accordance with the terms and condition of the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities, the Recipient must, subject to the terms and conditions of the grant, repay the funds used for such ineligible expenditures.

113. **Project evaluations.** The Secretariat will carry out project evaluations annually on a sample of projects selected according to criteria established by the Secretariat in consultation with the Management Board.

13 Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities

A. Financial Management of Grants

114. **Acceptable financial management arrangements.** All CA grant recipients are required to maintain or cause to be maintained acceptable financial management arrangements (i.e. budgeting, accounting, internal controls, funds flow, financial reporting, and auditing) and other risk management systems that adequately reflect the operations, resources and expenditures related to grant funded activities. Such arrangements should provide assurance that the proceeds of the grant will be used for the purposes for which it was intended. Where feasible, these financial management arrangements should be integral to the existing recipient's institutional systems and processes.

115. **Assessment of financial management arrangements.** To ascertain such assurance, the Secretariat will conduct, as part of its due diligence during the appraisal stage of funding applications, a financial management assessment (based on the Integrated Assessment Framework - IAF, Annex J) using an agreed set of guiding principles and procedures and taking into account the size and nature of the grant and type of recipient. The assessment is expected to provide evidence of the recipient's existing financial management arrangements, help identify potential gaps/risks, and assist both recipient and UNOPS to agree on measures needed to address them. The agreed mitigating measures will be part of the approval package. In addition, the result of the assessment will inform UNOPS on: (i) whether funding should be provided, and if so, what are the most appropriate disbursements arrangements; and (ii) the type of and extent to which capacity building support may be needed in order to strengthen existing arrangements. The assessment may be carried out through both a review of relevant documentation, and site visits by the Secretariat personnel or consultants appointed by UNOPS to undertake the assessment.

116. **Financial reporting.** As per Paragraph 107, during the implementation of project activities, grant recipients are expected to prepare and furnish—if not otherwise specified—interim unaudited financial reports for all activities funded by the grant in a form and substance satisfactory to UNOPS, and in compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities.

117. **Audit.** Based on the financial and risk assessment of the project, its duration and size, disbursement arrangements and other considerations, UNOPS will request the recipient to have its financial statements audited by an independent auditor in accordance with consistently applied auditing standards acceptable to UNOPS. The recipient will be requested to submit annual and/or completion audits in standards acceptable to UNOPS.

B. Procurement in Grants

118. **Acceptable procurement arrangements.** CA grant recipients are expected to have acceptable procurement arrangements that ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness, quality of goods and services, transparency, and fair competition. As part of the due diligence in the appraisal of funding applications, the Secretariat will initiate a procurement capacity assessment of the recipient based on a set of agreed parameters (as specified within the Integrated Assessment Framework, Annex J) and other relevant documentation. The assessment will evaluate the recipient's capacity to procure goods and services in a manner that ensures that the best total value is achieved, that the process is transparent and fair, and that the recipient's procurement arrangements meet the requirements set out in the grant agreement, in any of the appropriate modalities. The recipient and UNOPS will agree upon actions needed to address any weaknesses identified during the assessment which will be part of the approval package. The assessment may be carried out through both a review of relevant documentation, and site visits by Secretariat personnel or consultants appointed by UNOPS to undertake the assessment.

119. The grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities may also contain necessary provisions that are considered essential in guiding the procurement of goods and services needed for the implementation of project activities. The recipient is expected to: (a) maintain an acceptable written code of conduct that governs the performance of its employees engaged in the awarding and administration of contracts; (b) establish and maintain acceptable written procurement procedures; and (c) ensure that contracts are only issued to contractors with the ability to provide the identified services on time and to acceptable standards.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards

120. **Environmental and social soundness of funded activities.** The Cities Alliance is committed to ensuring that all activities it supports are environmentally and socially sound and that adequate mitigation measures for any potential adverse impacts/risks that may arise from the implementation of project activities are designed and implemented throughout the project life. To achieve this, the Secretariat has put in place a social and environmental checklist (which is included in the Integrated Assessment Framework, Annex J) and a screening tool (the Integrated Safeguard Data Sheet, Annex R) for assessing and identifying potential impacts/risks during the appraisal and approval of all funding applications.

121. The primary objectives of applying the checklist and tool are: (i) to ensure that environmental and social concerns are clearly identified at the time of appraisal of funding applications; and (ii) adequate measures are designed and agreed upon to minimise any social and environmental impacts/risks identified as well as those that may emerge during implementation of project activities.

122. **Environmental and social safeguards screening.** Consequently, all funding applications will be screened by the CA TM for any potential adverse impacts/risks using the standard environmental and social screening tool included in Annex R. Following the screening, the CA TM in consultation with other relevant team members will recommend for endorsement by the CA Director the classification of the project into one of the following risk categories:

- Category C: Activities with minimal or no adverse environmental and/or social impacts/risks;
- Category B: Activities with potential limited adverse environmental and/or social impacts/risks that are few in number, generally site-specific, largely reversible, and can easily be mitigated with cost-effective measures; and
- Category A. Activities with potential adverse environmental or social impacts/risks that may require considerable investment of resources (time and finance) to mitigate or minimise to acceptable levels.

123. For projects assigned Category C, no additional action will be required. For Category B projects, the Secretariat will require the Recipient and other implementing agencies to design and agree upon adequate mitigation measures for the identified risks. Such measures may include targeted consultations with relevant project stakeholders and other groups that might be affected by the implementation of project activities and consultancy expertise and support. The identified mitigating measures will be part of the approval package. During implementation, the Recipient will be responsible for monitoring the identified risks, implementing the agreed mitigating measures and ensuring that progress, and any deviations, are included as part of project reporting. The Secretariat will be responsible for supervising overall compliance. The Secretariat will typically not approve or finance any projects classified as Category A, except after review and having received the no objection of the Management Board.

D. Disbursement of Grant Funds

124. **Grant disbursement arrangements.** Grant disbursement arrangements (including disbursement methods and conditions) will be defined by the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities. This will be done after taking into consideration the results of the assessment of the Recipient's capacity and fiduciary arrangements, any other identified risks, the activity implementation plan, and the cashflow needs of the activities to be funded.

125. **Currency of grant payments.** Grant payments may be made either in USD or in local currency, according to the provisions of the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities.

126. **Exchange rate losses.** Any exchange rate losses shall be borne by the recipient.

14 Other Operating Priorities and Principles

127. As stated in the opening paragraph of its Charter: “the Cities Alliance is a global partnership for poverty reduction and the promotion of cities in sustainable development”. (*Charter, Section I, p. 2*). Within this broad framework, the Cities Alliance is guided by the following core principles in undertaking any activity under these Standard Operating Procedures:

A. Role of Cities and Local Governments

128. As a global partnership, the Cities Alliance is committed to urban poverty reduction and promoting the role of cities in sustainable development. Typically, the Cities Alliance will work closely with the national association of local governments, especially in those countries where Cities Alliance activities involve the provision of support to multiple cities. The Cities Alliance will also provide support to national governments to promote the formulation and adoption of national urban policies that provide clear institutional arrangements and appropriate support to local authorities. In this respect, the Cities Alliance promotes the principle of subsidiarity in its operations so that development decisions can be taken at the lowest effective level of government.

B. Poverty Reduction and the Role of the Urban Poor

129. As stipulated in its overall impact statement, activities undertaken by the Alliance aim at improving the health and socio-economic conditions and inclusion of the urban poor. Central to this objective, the activities of the Cities Alliance should facilitate inclusion of the urban poor into the fabric of the cities in which they reside, promote their urban citizenship, and increase the access to social and economic opportunities as well as their resilience. The Cities Alliance will promote these endeavours in all of its joint operations, such as in slum upgrading initiatives at the national and local levels, in mechanisms to engage citizens and/or in partnerships to increase the governance and management capacity of cities. Appropriate provision should be made to ensure the incorporation of organisations representing slum dwellers and the urban poor into Cities Alliance activities.

C. Gender

130. The Cities Alliance believes that greater gender equality holds the key to addressing many of the problems faced by cities in the developing world. A gender mainstreaming approach provides the means to respond to these problems in ways that will genuinely have meaningful impacts on urban communities, enhancing the overall outcomes and impact of the partnership’s work. Six areas are pre-conditions for strengthened institutional effectiveness for gender mainstreaming: accountability, results-based management, evaluation and oversight, human and financial resources (including gender parity), capacity development and coherence, communication and knowledge/information management. Concretely, this involves making gender perspectives – what women and men do, how they participate and what resources and decision making processes they have access to – more central to all policy, research, advocacy, planning, implementation and monitoring of all projects.

D. Youth

131. In most of the countries in which the Cities Alliance is active, a majority of the urban population is comprised of children and youth. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever before,

totalling nearly three billion or almost half of the total global population. These children and youth live, by and large, in cities and towns and they are society's most essential and dynamic human resource. Should they transition into adulthood in an environment that supports equal opportunities, representation in governance, education, and secure employment opportunities, they can become the engine for the creation of the economic and social capital that is needed to jump-start development in many regions of the world. Cities Alliance is committed to reflecting these demographic realities and supporting youth as positive change agents, ensuring that special attention is paid to projects and policies needed to cater for their special needs, including certain sub-groups, and promoting their systematic and active participation in development of policies and project activities.

132. The Cities Alliance will utilise its Performance Monitoring System to track and report upon its impacts with respect to gender and youth.

E. Engagement with Private Sector Partners

133. The more structured and programmatic engagement of appropriate and relevant private sector partners is an increasing priority for the Cities Alliance. These partnerships can take a number of forms, including engaging with private sector organisations as knowledge partners, to including them in the operations of the Cities Alliance, particularly in the context of Country Programmes. Particular attention should be paid to involving representatives of local and national private sector partners in Country Programmes. These engagements will be guided by the policy framework of the UN Global Compact.

F. Human Rights

134. Human rights standards and principles serve as an overarching framework providing the moral and legal basis for activities of Cities Alliance. Accordingly, the principles of participation, inclusion, equality, non-discrimination, freedom of speech and transparency lie at the core of the work of the Cities Alliance. Cities Alliance is committed to incorporate strategies for the empowerment of the most vulnerable and those who have been left behind in creating an enabling urban environment in which their rights to adequate housing, basic services, land and property can thrive.

135. These standards and principles will inform the Cities Alliance's project cycle. Situation analyses consider power structures and urban inequality; paying attention to disparities, injustices and the basic causes of development challenges. The project design ensures active involvement of partners and the implementation of the projects focuses on empowering the target community. Project monitoring and evaluation includes participation of target communities and follows human rights targets and indicators to ensure a continued and meaningful impact on the lives of urban dwellers, particularly those most marginalised and vulnerable.

F. Environment and Climate Change

136. The Cities Alliance strongly believes that fundamental to achieving the goal of sustainable and equitable cities is the relationship between the built form and the natural environment. The Cities Alliance is committed to respecting and promoting the importance of a healthy natural environment and ensuring that environmental impact assessments are fundamental to the participatory planning processes that we support. As a principle the Cities Alliance is dedicated to supporting as far as possible improvement and restoration of the natural environment, both at a city wide level but also within slum communities in

particular. It does so because we believe that working with and not against the environment both improves the quality of neighbourhood and ensures greater resilience against climatic shocks.

15 Procedures for Updating the Standard Operating Procedures

137. The provisions of these Standard Operating Procedures shall be subject to annual review by the Management Board. Should any revision to the body of the SOP be considered necessary upon request by the Secretariat, a CA Member or UNOPS, proposed amendments to sections 1 (Introduction), 2 (Basic Provisions), 3 (The Assembly), 4 (The Management Board), 5 (The Secretariat), 7 (Results Framework and Performance Monitoring System), 8 (Programming of Cities Alliance Funds), 9 (Administration, Accounting and Reporting on Donor Contributions), 11 (Anti-corruption), 13 (Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities), 14 (Other Operating Priorities and Principles) and 17 (Procedures for updating the Standard Operating Procedures) shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed upon between UNOPS and the Management Board, with ratification by the Assembly. Proposed amendments to sections 6 (Human Resources), 10 (Procurement) and 12 (Grant Making Methodology) shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed upon between UNOPS and the Management Board. Any amendment to Annex A, B, C and I shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed upon between UNOPS and the Management Board, for ratification by the Assembly. Any amendment to Annexes D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, M and R shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed between UNOPS and the Management Board²⁵.

²⁵ This repartition of responsibilities in amendment approval reflects the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Charter where specified, as well as the nature of the tools and provisions covered by the SOP.

16 List of Annexes [in brackets year of last update]

Annex A	Rules of Procedures (ROP) for the CA Assembly [2016]
Annex B	TOR President of the CA Assembly [2016]
Annex C	TOR CA Senior Policy Advisor [2016]
Annex D	Rules of Procedures (ROP) for the CA Board [2016]
Annex E	TOR Chairperson of the CA Management Board [2016]
Annex F	TOR Finance Standing Committee [2015]
Annex G	TOR Membership Standing Committee [2015]
Annex H	Matrix of Responsibilities between the UNOPS Liaison Officer and the Secretariat [2014]
Annex I	Results Framework [2013]
Annex J	Template for Integrated Assessment Framework [2013]
Annex K	Country Programmes Guidelines [under revision]
Annex L	Catalytic Fund Guidelines [2014]
Annex M	Analytical and Strategic Activities Guidelines [under revision]
Annex N	Form of UN to UN Agency Contribution Agreement [2013]
Annex O	Form of Externally Financed Outputs Agreement (EFO) [2013]
Annex P	Form of Memorandum of Cooperation Agreement between UNOPS and a Government [2013]
Annex Q	Form of Grant Support Agreement [2013]
Annex R	Template for Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet [2013]