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| Cities Alliance: Standard Operating Procedures  FIRST DRAFT – For Consultative Group review |

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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

PMS Performance Monitoring System

RFW 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 66 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.

**Charter:** The Cities Alliance Charter, dated 8 November 2011 and as may be amended from time to time.

**Cities Alliance Manager (the CA Manager):** The Manager of the Cities Alliance Secretariat.

**Consultative Group (CG):** 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.

**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 the United Nations Office for Project Services 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):** 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, the EXCO is entirely accountable to the CG. The roles and responsibilities of the EXCO are defined in Paragraph 33 of the Charter.

**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.

**Medium-Term Business Plans:** Plans of three-year 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 Paragraph 15 of the Charter.

**The Policy Advisory Forum (PAF):** The Cities Alliance platform for public discussion, debate and knowledge sharing of activities that improve awareness of relevant policies or activities, changing policies and behaviour, as defined in Paragraphs 35-40 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 41-44 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.

[Others to be determined.]

# INTRODUCTION

1. The Cities Alliance is a partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development. It aims at supporting cities, local governments and their partners[[1]](#footnote-1) 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—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 is 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. 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 Trustee in particular, in their new institutional location. 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 will be reviewed on a regular basis by the EXCO of the Cities Alliance.

# Basic Provisions

1. As defined by Paragraph 6 of the Cities Alliance Charter: “[t]he Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development” (*Charter, Paragraph 6, p. 2)*.
2. In accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Charter, “[m]embership of the Cities Alliance is open to representatives of (i) national governments; (ii) multi-lateral organisations; (iii) global organisations of local authorities; (iv) international networks of organisations engaged in urban development; and (v) other partners as described [in the remainder of the Charter]” (*Charter, Paragraph 14, p. 4)*.
3. **Membership.** As defined by the Paragraph 15 of the Charter, “[t]here are two categories of membership: (a.) Full Members and (b.) Associate Members” (*Charter, Paragraph 15, p. 5)*. Prospective members meeting the criteria outlined under Paragraph 8, above, may become CA members provided that they: “(i) are sponsored by 3 (three) existing Full Members of the Consultative Group (ii) endorse the Cities Alliance Charter and (iii) undertake to meet their financial contributions to the Cities Alliance Trust Fund” (*Charter, Paragraph 20, p. 5)*. [This section will be updated if membership categories are amended in the Charter.]
4. **Membership fees.** Membership fees and exceptions are set out in Paragraph 21 of the Charter: “With the exception of UCLG and Metropolis, all members are required to make a financial contribution to the core funds of the Cities Alliance, according to the Schedule of Annual Membership Fees listed as Annex II**[[2]](#footnote-2)**.The CG, upon recommendation by the EXCO, may decide upon other exceptions to the rule.” (*Charter, Paragraph 21, p. 5)*. 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 22 of the Charter, “[m]embers that fail to make their agreed financial contribution for two consecutive financial years will no longer be Members of the Consultative Group, and they will be notified by the EXCO.” (*Charter, Paragraph 22, p. 5).*
5. **Governance structure.** As defined by the Paragraph 23 of the Charter: “[t]he Cities Alliance is composed of four structures: a) the Consultative Group (CG); b) the Executive Committee (EXCO); c) the Policy Advisory Forum (PAF); and d) the Secretariat” (*Charter, Paragraph 23, p. 5).*
6. 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.

# The Consultative Group

1. **The Consultative Group** (CG) functions as the Board of the Cities Alliance and is its highest and primary decision-making body. The duties and authorities of the Consultative Group are defined under Paragraph 27 of the Charter:

* “a) Adopt, and amend, the Charter;
* b) Approve the long- and medium-term strategic direction of the Cities Alliance;
* c) Ratify the annual work plan and budget of the Cities Alliance, including that of the Secretariat and the Policy Advisory Forum, following approval by the Executive Committee;
* d) Approve the criteria to be used in evaluating and approving Cities Alliance activities;
* e) Review and evaluate the overall performance of the Cities Alliance;
* f) Establish the membership fees for different membership categories;
* g) Help raise additional resources;
* h) Appoint Rotating Members of the Executive Committee;
* i) Appoint the Chairperson of the Policy Advisory Forum;
* j) Approve the applications of new CG members; and
* k) Decide on the physical location of the Secretariat.” (*Charter, Paragraph 27, p. 6.)*

**Consultative Group membership.** As defined in Paragraph 24 of the Charter: “The Consultative Group comprises Full Members and Associate Members of the Cities Alliance.” (*Charter, Paragraph 24, p. 6).*

1. **Decision making authority.** As set out in Paragraph 25 of the Charter: “Two thirds of the membership constitutes a quorum of the Consultative Group. Decisions in the Consultative Group 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 25, p. 6).* Associate Member representatives: “are entitled to participate in the CG session without participation in the decision-making process” (*Charter, Paragraph 17, p. 5.)*. “Others interested in Cities Alliance activities may be invited by the CG Co-Chairs to attend specific CG sessions as Observers” (*Charter, Paragraph 18, p. 5)*.
2. **Consultative Group Chairs.** As set out in Paragraph 26 of the Charter: “[t]he Consultative Group is co-chaired by the founding members of the Cities Alliance: the World Bank and UN-Habitat.” (*Charter, Paragraph 26, p. 6)*. Upon request of the Secretariat and the decision of CG member representatives, the Chairpersons may also be asked to represent the CA in certain fora, and to generally promote the partnership. [This section will be updated if Charter is amended.]
3. **Meetings of the Consultative Group.** The Consultative Group meets at least once a year and as often as necessary to fully discharge its duties. Meetings of the CG are normally convened in November of each year. The meetings are attended by representatives of the CA Members as appointed by their organisations. Recommendations for possible meeting locations for the next year’s CG meeting are formulated by the Secretariat and decided upon by the CG, normally at the end of the current year’s CG meeting. Upon decision of the CG Chairpersons, and in consultation with the EXCO Chair and the CA Manager, CG meetings may be convened through audio or video.
4. Provisional agendas for meetings of the CG are drafted by the CA Manager, in consultation with the CG Chairpersons, and are circulated among CG member representatives at least 30 days prior to the opening date of the meeting. The provisional agenda shall be circulated together with notice of the meeting and the related preparatory documentation. Additions to the agenda and modification by any CA member representatives should be provided no less than 15 days prior to the opening of the meeting. The agenda and the documentation should then be re-transmitted accordingly. The final agenda is adopted at the beginning of the meeting. Whenever a decision must be taken by the CG that does not warrant the calling of a CG meeting, the Secretariat will circulate via email the issue to all members of the CG and the decision may be endorsed by the CG virtually on a no-objection basis. The Secretariat will keep records of the no-objection process and the decisions taken.
5. Records of the CG meetings are kept by the Secretariat, and a report outlining the main deliberations is circulated by the Secretariat to the CG Chairs no later than 15 days after closing day of the meeting. The CG Chairpersons have an additional five days to clear the report, after which it will be circulated to the CG Members. The report is formally approved at the beginning of the following CG meeting.

# The Executive Committee

1. To discharge its duties more effectively, streamline decision-making procedures and provide oversight and guidance of Secretariat operations between Consultative Group meetings, the CG has formed and appointed an **Executive Committee** (EXCO). Per Paragraph 28 of the Charter, “[t]he EXCO is accountable to the Consultative Group in all matters.” (*Charter, Paragraph 28, p. 6).* The roles and responsibilities of the EXCO are defined in Paragraph 33 of the Charter:

* “a) Provide guidance to the Secretariat on matters of policy and strategy;
* b) Approve the Business Plan, annual work plan and budget of the Cities Alliance, including that of the Secretariat and the Policy Advisory Forum, subject to ratification by the CG[[3]](#footnote-3);
* c) Monitor progress and make recommendations to the CG;
* d) Participate in the selection of the Manager of the Secretariat;
* e) Approve any operating manuals produced by the Secretariat;
* f) Select countries for country programmes;
* g) Nominate the Chairperson of the Policy Advisory Forum for CG appointment;
* h) Respond to requests from the CG; and
* Consider applications for membership and makes recommendation to the CG”. (*Charter, Paragraph 33, p. 7).*

1. **Executive Committee membership.** As defined in Paragraph 29 of the Charter the EXCO comprises representatives from: “a) Permanent Members (a. UCLG, UN-Habitat and the World Bank); b) Rotating Members (a. One national government from Developing Countries; b. Two national governments from non-Developing Countries; c. Two other Full Members or Associate Members; c) Ex-Officio Member (a. Manager of the Secretariat)”. *(Charter, Paragraph 29, p. 7)*. “The Chairperson of the EXCO may invite the Chairperson of the PAF to participate in the discussion of the EXCO as an Observer.” (*Charter, Paragraph 30, p. 7)*. [This section will be updated if membership categories are amended in the Charter]
2. **Selection of EXCO Members**. Per Paragraph 32 of the Charter, “Rotating Members are selected by the CG, for three-year terms, appointed on a staggered basis.” (*Charter, Paragraph 32, p. 7).*
3. **Decision making authority.** As set out in Paragraph 31 of the Charter: “Permanent Members and Rotating Members are decision making and the Ex-Officio Member and Observer are non-decision making.” (*Charter, Paragraph 31, p. 7).*
4. **Executive Committee Chair.** “The UCLG representative acts as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. If, for any reason, the UCLG representative is not available, the EXCO Members will elect a Chairperson for that meeting.” (*Charter, Paragraph 32, p. 7)*.
5. **Meetings of the Executive Committee. “**The Executive Committee meets as often as necessary, but no less than twice per year. One of the EXCO meetings precedes the CG meeting.” (*Charter, Paragraph 34, p. 8)*. EXCO meetings are normally convened in May and in November, the latter directly preceding the CG annual meeting. Upon decision of the Chairperson and in consultation with the CA Manager, EXCO meetings may be convened through audio or video. Representatives of EXCO Members are appointed by their respective organisations to attend the meeting. Recommendations for possible meeting locations for the next EXCO meeting are formulated by the Secretariat and decided upon by the EXCO, normally at the end of the current EXCO meeting. Whenever a decision must be taken by the EXCO that does not warrant the calling of an EXCO meeting, the Secretariat will circulate via email the issue to all members of the EXCO, and the decision may be endorsed by the EXCO virtually on a no-objection basis. The Secretariat will keep records of the no-objection process and the decisions taken.
6. Provisional agendas for meetings of the EXCO are drafted by the CA Manager, in consultation with the EXCO Chair, and are circulated among EXCO member representatives at least 30 days prior to the opening date of the meeting. The provisional agenda shall be circulated together with notice of the meeting and the related preparatory documentation. Additions to the agenda and modification by any EXCO member representatives should be provided no less than 15 days prior to the opening of the meeting. The agenda and the documentation should then be re-transmitted accordingly. The final agenda is adopted at the beginning of the meeting.
7. EXCO decisions are taken by consensus of Members[[4]](#footnote-4), and the Chairperson shall ascertain consensus. Records of the EXCO meetings are kept by the Secretariat, and a report outlining the main deliberations is circulated by the Secretariat to the EXCO Chairperson no later than 15 days after the closing day of the meeting. The EXCO Chairperson has an additional five days to clear the report, after which it will be circulated to the EXCO Members and sent to CG Members for information. The report is formally approved at the beginning of the following EXCO meeting.

# The Policy Advisory Forum

1. As defined in Paragraph 35 of the Charter: “The **Policy Advisory Forum** [“PAF”] is the Cities Alliance platform for public discussion, debate and knowledge sharing of activities that improve awareness of relevant policies or activities, changing policies and behaviour.” (*Charter, Paragraph 35, p. 8)*.
2. **Policy Advisory Forum composition.** As defined in Paragraph 38 of the Charter: “The PAF provides a platform for Full Members and Associate Members of the Consultative Group to engage in policy dialogue with other parties, including but not limited to representatives of: a) Country partners of the Cities Alliance, particularly cities and local authorities; b) Universities and training institutions; c) Non-governmental organisations; d) Community-based organisations; e) Foundations; and f) Private sector organisations.” (*Charter, Paragraph 38, p. 8).*
3. **Policy Advisory Forum Chair.** Per Paragraph 37 of the Charter, “[t]he PAF has a Chairperson for a period of three years. In formulating the work programme and activities of the PAF, the Chairperson will work in close consultation with the Chairperson of the EXCO, the Co-Chairs of the Consultative Group and the Manager of the Secretariat.” (*Charter, Paragraph 37, p. 8).*
4. **Meetings of the Policy Advisory Forum. “**The main PAF meeting is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Consultative Group. In between meetings, the PAF can also be convened, in coordination with the Secretariat and the Chairperson of the PAF, at a country or city level.” (*Charter, Paragraph 39, p. 8)*.
5. Provisional agendas for meetings of the PAF are drafted by the CA Manager, with input from the PAF Chair, and are circulated among PAF representatives at least 30 days prior to the opening date of the meeting. The provisional agenda shall be circulated together with notice of the meeting and the related preparatory documentation. Additions to the agenda and modification by any PAF representative should be provided no less than 15 days prior to the opening of the meeting. The agenda and the documentation should then be re-transmitted accordingly. The final agenda is adopted at the beginning of the meeting.
6. Records of the PAF meetings are kept by the Secretariat, and a report outlining the main deliberations is circulated by the Secretariat to the PAF Chair no later than 15 days after the closing day of the meeting. The PAF Chairperson has an additional five days to clear the report, after which it will be circulated to the PAF participants. The report is formally approved at the beginning of the following PAF meeting.

# Secretariat

1. As defined by Paragraph 41 of the Charter, the **Cities Alliance Secretariat** “carries out 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 for appropriate services to CG Members and facilitates their involvement in its activities” (*Charter, Paragraph 41, p. 9)*. The Secretariat is accountable to the CG, and it reports regularly to the CG and EXCO as directed under Section 10.B of the SOP. Roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat are defined by the CA Charter under Paragraph 44:

* “a) Facilitate Member involvement in the activities of the Cities Alliance;
* b) Screen and evaluate project proposals, in accordance with criteria approved by the CG;
* c) Provide Secretariat services to the CG, EXCO and PAF;
* d) Prepare and present medium- and long-term strategies, for consideration by EXCO and the CG;
* e) Support the CG and EXCO in fundraising on behalf of the Cities Alliance;
* f) Maintain a database of projects of the Cities Alliance;
* g) Monitor the implementation of projects and disseminate lessons learned from CA and other activities, including an Annual Progress Report;
* h) Draft the Work Programme and budget for EXCO approval and CG ratification, and facilitate its implementation; and
* Prepare and present status reports on progress and results.” (*Charter, Paragraph 44, p. 9).*

1. **Administration.** Per Paragraph 42 of the Charter [to be amended], the Cities Alliance Secretariat is “administered by and within the [World Bank] [United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)], and [the World Bank] [UNOPS] serves as trustee of Cities Alliance financial resources.” (*Charter, Paragraph 42, p. 9)*. As of transition date, the Cities Alliance Secretariat is headquartered in Brussels from where it manages operations.
2. **Secretariat staff.** The Secretariat is supported by a minimum of staff necessary to implement the activities approved by the EXCO and ratified by the CG in the Annual Work Plans, budgets and medium-term Business Plan for Core, Non-Core and Project funds. The Secretariat is headed by a Manager. Per Paragraph 43 of the Charter [to be amended], “[t]he Cities Alliance Secretariat staff are [World Bank] [UNOPS] staff members recruited and managed according to [World Bank] [UNOPS] policies and procedures.” (*Charter, Paragraph 43, p. 9)*. 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.
3. **The CA Manager.** The CA Manager 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 EXCO will participate in endorsing the position’s terms of reference and will be involved in the selection of the successful candidate. The EXCO will also participate in clarifying the CA Manager’s duties, responsibilities and expectations as well as on-going review of his/her performance.
4. The CA Manager is responsible for the selection of all Secretariat staff in accordance with Section 7 of the SOP. All selections will be made under UNOPS policies and procedures within the budgets approved through the Cities Alliance governance mechanisms.

# Human resources

1. 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.
2. UNOPS will select and appoint a Liaison Officer, a dedicated UNOPS resource to the Secretariat paid from the direct costs as defined in Paragraph 63 of the SOP. The roles and responsibilities of the UNOPS Liaison Officer and the Secretariat are outlined in the attached Matrix of Responsibilities (Annex A).
3. 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 EXCO and ratified by the CG.
4. **Personnel contracts.** Personnel that are recruited for and/or managed by the Cities Alliance 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.

1. In accordance with the approved budgets, the CA Manager 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. It is understood that UNOPS will classify the Secretariat positions upon transfer from the World Bank, in consultation with the CA Manager.

# Results Framework and Performance Monitoring System

1. **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, UNOPS monitors and evaluates its operational activities within an agreed-upon results framework.
2. 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 (RFW) and the Performance Monitoring System (PMS).
3. **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.
4. The Results Framework is approved by the CG 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 E to the SOP, and may be periodically updated by the CG. The Secretariat reports annually to the CG and EXCO on progress towards the agreed results through a corporate scorecard, which is annexed to the annual work plan (see Paragraph 57 of the SOP).
5. **Performance Monitoring System.** The Results Framework forms the basis of a PMS, which operationalises the performance indicators into baselines, milestones and targets, data sources, and tools and frequency for data collection. The PMS operates at the grant/activity level, across grant portfolios and for the programme as a whole. The Performance Monitoring System is not only about monitoring, control and tracking emerging results; it is also about learning for both clients and the organisation that can be applied in the design of new activities. Part of the PMS are project evaluations described under Paragraph 111 of the SOP.
6. **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. I**ndependent Evaluation**s of the Cities Alliance Programme should be determined by CG in line with international best 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 and approved by the CG. The CG will also engage at relevant stages of the evaluation process in consultation with UNOPS.

# Programming of Cities Alliance Funds

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

1. **Contributions[[5]](#footnote-5).** “With the exception of UCLG and Metropolis, all members are required to make a financial contribution to the core funds of the Cities Alliance, according to the Schedule of Annual Membership Fees listed as **Annex II. The CG, upon recommendation by the EXCO, may decide upon other exceptions to the rule”.** These financial contributions (the “Contributions”) constitute the “Core Funds” of the Cities Alliance and are used to fund the Annual Work Plans and Medium-term Business Plans approved by the EXCO and ratified by the CG. Members may contribute more than the minimum amounts set out in Annex II of the Charter.
2. **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, budgets and Business Plans approved by the EXCO, ratified by the CG, and administered under the Charter, Standard Operating Procedures, and the standard provisions governing the multi-donor fund (as contained in the Contribution Agreement).
3. 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, budgets and Business Plans approved by the EXCO and ratified by the CG.
4. **Non-Core Funds.** In addition, while Members should endeavour to allocate all Contributions to the Core Fund, they can offer to make additional Contributions 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. The receipt of Non-Core Funds is subject to agreement in advance in accordance with the criteria specified in Paragraph 54 by the EXCO for amounts less than USD 5 million, and by the CG from amounts greater than or equal to USD 5 million.
5. Acceptance of Non-Core Funds should meet all of the following criteria:

* Support the strategy and Business Plans of the Cities Alliance;
* Contribute towards achievement of the results targeted in the Cities Alliance Results Framework (see Section 8); and
* Cover the costs of the Secretariat and Trustee for administering, managing and reporting on the funds.

1. **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 Consultative Group). 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

1. **Medium-term Business Plans.** The Secretariat will prepare Medium-term Business Plans, which will be reviewed and approved by the EXCO, and ratified by the CG. The Business Plans 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 8). They 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 plans. The Business Plans will be reviewed periodically as determined by the EXCO.
2. **Annual Work Plans.** The Secretariat will prepare Annual Work Plans with respect to the Core, Non-Core and Project funds, with reference to the approved Business Plans for all programmatic and internal and external monitoring and evaluation purposes. All work plans 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. They 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 EXCO and ratification by the CG.
3. **Authority to undertake Core-funded Cities Alliance activities.** Approval by the EXCO of the Annual Work Plans, budgets and Business Plans 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. CG will ratify approved Annual Work Plans, budgets and Business Plans[[6]](#footnote-6).

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

1. **Authority to undertake Non-Core-funded Cities Alliance activities**. Approval by the EXCO of the Annual Work Plans, budgets and Business Plans 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. CG will ratify approved Annual Work Plans, budgets and Business Plans[[7]](#footnote-7).

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

# Administration, Accounting and Reporting on Donor Contributions

A. Administration of Contributions to the Trust Funds

1. 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.
2. **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 52.
3. 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 installment. 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”.
4. **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:

1. Indirect costs are recovered through a UNOPS Management Fee of:

* 4% of all expenditures made through Grant Support Agreements, Memoranda with Governments and UN to UN Agency Contribution Agreements and equivalent instruments; and
* 8% of all other expenditures.

1. Direct costs of UNOPS (USD 300,000 year 1)[[8]](#footnote-8).
2. Direct Allocable Costs of up to 1%[[9]](#footnote-9)

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

1. **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 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

1. **Cities Alliance Fiscal Year.** Starting on 1 January 2014, the CA fiscal year will be on a calendar year basis. Additional accounting and reporting will be provided from the transition date to 31 December 2013.
2. **Reporting.** UNOPS Liaison Officer in coordination with the Secretariat (see Annex A) will provide the Donors—as per the Annex I article 7.2 of the Contribution Agreement—with:

* “Annual result-based narrative reports [the “Annual Report”] by 31 March following the end of each calendar year;
* Semi-annual interim financial statements as of 30 June and 31 December within three months 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”.

1. All reports will be prepared and submitted in accordance with UNOPS standard requirements and formats.
2. 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

1. **Audit procedures.** As per the Annex I article 9.1 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”.

# Procurement

1. **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 Manual (see Annex K, as may be amended from time to time). 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.

# Grant Making Methodology

1. The Cities Alliance is a partnership. Its activities are mainly implemented through Members, or through Partners[[10]](#footnote-10) with the support of Members. In certain circumstances, the Secretariat may initiate and carry out certain activities (see Paragraph 91 below), as approved by the CG and EXCO.
2. **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. 3).*
3. **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 (ASA) 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.
4. **Grant recipients.** Grant recipients may be any city, national association of cities, national government, CA member, civil society organisation, private sector company, foundation or academic institution. The prospective recipient needs to meet eligibility criteria as specified in the Charter[[11]](#footnote-11), Sections 12A and 13, below, and in the Country Programmes Guidelines (Annex B of the SOP), the Catalytic Fund Guidelines (Annex C to the SOP) and the Analytic and Strategic Activities (ASA) Guidelines (Annex D to the SOP) or other such guidelines as EXCO may provide.
5. While the processing of grants to support each of these types of activities—from initiation to implementation and closure—includes many aspects that are similar, there are important differences, as highlighted in the following sections.

A. Initiation, Appraisal and Approval of Funding Proposals

(1) Country Programmes (CPs) [[12]](#footnote-12)

1. **Initiation.** Potential countries are assessed and identified by the Secretariat using a set of criteria endorsed by the EXCO. The list of potential countries is then submitted to the EXCO 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 and CA Members in a series of engagements to develop a common understanding of existing programmes, gaps and priorities.
2. **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. Furtheranalysis 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 partners involved in the design process, as well as all Members of the Cities Alliance Consultative Group through Member coordination.[[13]](#footnote-13)
3. **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 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.
4. Country Programme Framework documents are endorsed by the national government and all Members and partners involved in the Country Programme and approved by the Consultative Group 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 specific individual proposals and submit them to the Secretariat.[[14]](#footnote-14)
5. **Initial Appraisal.**A Cities Alliance Task Manager (CA TM) undertakes threshold screening of all proposals to ensurecompliance 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). As appropriate, the TM may also ask for internal and external peer reviews of the proposal by experts. A Threshold Screening Report is prepared for each proposal. The Threshold Screening Report includes: (i) the 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.
6. **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 the CA Manager, with a copy to all relevant teams, recommending endorsement and clearance to proceed to the next steps. Once the report and the proposal are endorsed and cleared by the CA Manager, they are sent to the CG 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 Manager may approve the proposal directly[[15]](#footnote-15).
7. 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 Manager and/or the CG in accordance with authorisation levels stated in Paragraph 83, 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 Manager highlighting how the issues raised were addressed. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated in Paragraph 83, below.

1. **Approval.** The CA Manager approves[[16]](#footnote-16) all proposals requesting funding of USD 250,000 or less, with the Secretariat informing the CG of these approvals on a regular basis. Proposals requesting funding for amounts greater than USD 250,000 are circulated to the CG for approval on a “no objection” basis.

(2) Catalytic Fund (CATF) [[17]](#footnote-17)

1. **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.
2. 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 CG following suggestions from CG Members or EXCO or a recommendation from the Secretariat. Once the call has been issued, applicants submit Concept Notes thatoutline 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 the CA Manager for clearance, then 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.
3. **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 Manager, 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 CG to ensure that the proposed activities do not conflict with or duplicate CA Members’ activities and for approval in principle for funding on a “no objection” basis. CG may also provide any comments that proponents have to address in the development of the full proposals.
4. 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 CG and the EEP. Comments also include inputs on procurement and FM matters and eventual technical and institutional mitigating measures against identified risks.
5. **Appraisal Completion**.Once a full proposal is received, the CA TM undertakes threshold screening of the proposal to ensurecompliance 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 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. 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 the CA Manager, with a copy to all relevant teams, recommending endorsement and clearance to proceed to final approval. Final approval follows the authorisation levels and modalities stated in Paragraph 89, below.
6. **Approval.** The CA Manager approves[[18]](#footnote-18) all proposals requesting funding of USD 250,000 or less, with the Secretariat informing the CG of these approvals on a regular basis. Proposals requesting funding for amounts greater than USD 250,000 are circulated to the CG for approval on a “no objection” basis.

(3) Analytical and Strategic Activities (ASAs)[[19]](#footnote-19)

1. ASA activities enable the partnership to play an effective role in the development and dissemination of practitioner-oriented knowledge and tools; 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 (Track II).

1. **Initiation of Track I ASAs (Secretariat Executed).** For Track I ASAs, the CA Task Manager, in consultation with the CA Manager, identifies a need/gap in the 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 Manager, the CA TM develops a Concept Note (CN) that the states rationale, objectives, activities, outputs/deliverables, implementation mechanisms and plan as well as resources needed (both financial and human).
2. **Appraisal for Track I ASAs.** The CA TM sends the Concept Note to a group of peer reviewers consisting of internal and, as appropriate, external experts, and facilitates a Concept Review meeting. The CA TM prepares minutes of the Concept Review meeting and revises the Concept Note to reflect feedback/inputs provided during the Review. The minutes from the review meeting and the final Concept Note are then sent to the CA Manager for endorsement and clearance, and then to the CG 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 Manager may approve the proposal directly[[20]](#footnote-20).
3. 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, the CA TM will send the Concept Note to the CA Manager for review and endorsement. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated under Paragraph 94, below.
* If substantial comments and inputs from Member coordination are received, the CA TM consolidates them into a Summary and further revises the Concept Note. The revised Concept Note is then sent to the CA Manager for review and endorsement. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated under Paragraph 94, below.

1. **Approval of Track I ASAs.** The CA Manager approves[[21]](#footnote-21) all Concept Notes requesting funding of USD 250,000 or less, with the Secretariat informing the CG of these approvals on a regular basis. Proposals requesting funding for amounts greater than USD 250,000 are circulated to the CG for approval on a “no objection” basis.
2. **Initiation of Track II ASAs (Members Executed)[[22]](#footnote-22).** Track II ASAs may be initiated by CA Members, who identify a need/gap in the Business Plan 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 the Concept Note, which highlights the rationale, objectives, activities, outputs/deliverables, implementation mechanisms and plan, as well as resources needed for undertaking the activity.
3. The CA TM sends the Concept Note to a group of peer reviewers consisting of internal and external experts and facilitates a Concept Review meeting. The CA TM prepares minutes of the Concept Review meeting and facilitates the Member(s)’ revision of the Concept Note to reflect feedback/inputs provided during the Review. The final Concept Note is then sent to the CA Manager with the relevant documentation for endorsement and clearance. Following the clearance of the Concept Note by the CA Manager, the Concept Note is sent to the CG for Member coordination.
4. 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, the implementing Member(s) work with the CA TM to develop and submit a full proposal.
* If substantial comments and inputs from Member coordination are received, the CA TM consolidates them into a Summary, which is shared with implementing Member(s) asking for further revision of the Concept Note. If the revised proposal is satisfactory, the implementing Member(s) work with the CA TM to develop and submit a full proposal.

1. **Initial Appraisal of Track II ASAs.** Once a full proposal is received, the CA Task Manager undertakes threshold screening of all proposals to ensurecompliance 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 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.
2. **Appraisal Completion of Track II ASA activities.** 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 the CA Manager, with a copy to all relevant teams, recommending endorsement and clearance to proceed to final approval. Final approval will then follow the authorisation levels and modalities stated under Paragraph 100, below.
3. **Approval of Track II ASA activities.** The CA Manager approves[[23]](#footnote-23) all proposals requesting funding of USD 250,000 or less, with the Secretariat informing the CG of these approvals on a regular basis. Proposals requesting funding for amounts greater than USD 250,000 are circulated to the CG for approval on a “no objection” basis.

(4) Other Programme and Administrative Expenditures

1. **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 CG, the EXCO and the PAF; the payment of salaries and benefits of the Secretariat staff; and other general operating costs. Approval by EXCO of the Annual Work Plans, budgets and 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 CG will ratify approved Annual Work Plans, budgets and Business Plans[[24]](#footnote-24).

B. Grant Set-Up and Disbursement of Funds

1. Grants are governed by agreements based on the following modalities: UN to UN Agency Contribution Agreements and Externally Financed Outputs Agreements[[25]](#footnote-25) for inter-agency grants (Annex H); Memoranda of Understanding for grants for Governments (Annex I); Grant Support Agreements for grants to all other external recipients (Annex J). UNOPS expenditures are specified in the CA annual budget.
2. **Creation of records.** Following the approval of a proposal, the CA TM in consultation with relevant staff in the Secretariat and in UNOPS 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.
3. **Disbursement package preparation.** 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 TM then prepares the following: (i) Grant Approval Request together with Project Proposal, Evaluation Report and other supporting documentation; and (ii) Standardised legally approved 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 official for review and signing of the grant agreement, in any of the appropriate modalities, in accordance with UNOPS regulations and procedures.
4. **Grant effectiveness.** Once the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities is signed by UNOPS, 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 in any of the appropriate modalities.

C. Supervision and Monitoring of Project Implementation

1. **Reporting.** As agreed through the grant agreement in any of the appropriate modalities, the recipient submits—if not otherwise specified—narrative progress on a six-month basis, and interim unaudited financial reports on a quarterly basis. The CA TM, in consultation with project 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.
2. **Monitoring.** TheCA 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 Manager, and the CA TM works with the recipient to ensure remedial actions are taken.
3. **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-authorised 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

1. **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 108, above.
2. **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 any of the appropriate modalities. 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.
3. **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 any positive results—the CA TM in consultation with other project team members and following CA Manager endorsement and clearance, makes a recommendation to UNOPS to terminate the grant according to the relevant provisions. The case should be properly documented and an official termination prepared for review and approval by a UNOPS-authorised 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.
4. **Project evaluations**. The Secretariat will carry out annually project evaluations on a sample of projects selected according to criteria established by the Secretariat in consultation with EXCO.

# Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities

A. Financial Management of grants

1. **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.
2. **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 G) 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.
3. **Financial reporting.** As per Paragraph 106**,** 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.
4. **Audit**. UNOPS reserves the right to request the recipient to have its financial statements audited by an independent auditor in accordance with consistently applied auditing standards acceptable to UNOPS. Based on the financial and risk assessment of the project, its duration and size, disbursement arrangements and other considerations, the recipient may be requested to submit annual and/or completion audits in standards acceptable to UNOPS. According to standard practises, most cases will include completion audits for grants above USD 100,000 and annual audits for grant of two years or more of duration.

B. Procurement

1. **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 G) 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.
2. 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 made with contractors with the ability to provide the identified services on time and to acceptable standards.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards

1. **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 G) and a screening tool (the Integrated Safeguard Data Sheet, Annex F) for assessing and identifying potential impacts/risks during the appraisal and approval of all funding applications.
2. 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.
3. **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 F. Following the screening, the CA TM will recommend for endorsement of the CA Manager the classification of the project into one of the following risk categories:

* Category 1: Activities with minimal or no adverse environmental and/or social impacts/risks;
* Category 2: 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 3. 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.

1. For projects assigned Category 1, no additional action will be required. For Category 2 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 implementing the agreed technical and institutional mitigating measures and ensuring that the 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 3, except with no objection of the CG.

D. Disbursement of Grant Funds

1. **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 activity to be funded.
2. **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.
3. **Exchange rate losses.** Any exchange rate losses shall be borne by the recipient.

# Other Operating Priorities and Principles

1. As stated in its Charter, Paragraph 6: “the Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development”. *(Charter, Paragraph 6, p. 2).*Within this broad framework, the Cities Alliance is guided by the following core principles in undertaking any activity under this Standard Operating Procedures:

A. Role of cities and local governments

1. 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

1. As stipulated in its overall impact statement, activities undertaken by the Alliance should contribute to improving the health and socio-economic conditions 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. 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 in general and in the Country Programmes in particular.

C. Gender

1. Through its history, the Cities Alliance has very clearly identified the positive correlation between promoting meaningful and leadership roles for women, and more successful and sustainable development outcomes. In particular, the promotion of a savings-based approach to development programmes for the urban poor ensures a leading role for women. The Cities Alliance will constantly evaluate its activities to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed through the work of the Cities Alliance.

D. Youth

1. In most of the countries in which the Cities Alliance is active, a significant proportion of the urban population is comprised of children and young adults. The Cities Alliance is committed to reflecting these demographic realities into its activities, and ensuring that special attention is paid to policies needed to cater for the special needs of these young populations, and promoting their systematic inclusion into mainstream policies and activities.
2. 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

1. 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.

# Interface with World Bank Legacy Operations [to be drawn from the proposal on CA Legacy Operations]

# Procedures for updating the Standard Operating Procedures

The provisions of these Standard Operating Procedures shall be subject to annual review by the EXCO. Should any revision to the body of the SOP be considered necessary, proposed amendments to sections 1 (Introduction), 2 (Basic Provisions), 3 (The Consultative Group), 4 (The Executive Committee), 5 (The Policy Advisory Forum), 6 (Secretariat), 8 (Results Framework and Performance Monitoring System), 9 (Programming of Cities Alliance Funds), 10 (Administration, Accounting and Reporting on Donor Contributions), 13 (Fiduciary Management of Grant Activities) and 16 (Procedures for updating the Standard Operating Procedures ) shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed upon between UNOPS and the EXCO, with ratification by the CG. Proposed amendments to sections 7 (Human Resources), 11 (Procurement), 12 (Grant Making Methodology), 14 (Other Operating Priorities and Principles) and 15 (Interface with World Bank Legacy Operations) shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed upon between UNOPS and the EXCO. Any amendment to Annexes A, B, C, D, E, F and G shall be recommended by the Secretariat and mutually agreed between UNOPS and the EXCO[[26]](#footnote-26).

Annex A Matrix of Responsibilities between the UNOPS Liaison Officer and the Secretariat

Annex B Country Programmes Guidelines; *under development*

Annex C Catalytic Fund Guidelines; *under development*

Annex D Analytical and Strategic Activities Guidelines; *under development*

Annex E Results Framework

Annex F Template for Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet

Annex G Template for Integrated Assessment Framework

Annex H Form of UN to UN Agency Contribution Agreement and Externally Financed Outputs Agreement (EFO)

Annex I Form of Memorandum of Understanding between UNOPS and a Government

Annex J Form of Grant Support Agreement

Annex K UNOPS Procurement Manual

1. Partners are non-Consultative Group Members and may include cities, national associations of local governments, national governments, civil society organisations, NGOs, university and research institutes, private enterprises, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Charter Annex II: Schedule of Minimum Annual Membership Fees: “These fees constitute the core resources of the Cities Alliance and are used to fund the annual Work Programme for the Cities Alliance. Members are encouraged to contribute more than the minimum.

   Multilateral Organisations: $250,000

   National Governments (non-Developing Countries): $250,000

   National Governments (Developing Countries): $ 50,000

   Global Organisations of Local Authorities, UCLG and Metropolis: N/A

   International Non-Governmental Organisations and Networks: $ 50,000

   Foundations, Private Sector and Universities: $ 250,000

   Other Partners (as defined by the CG): $ TBA [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Although subject to CG ratification, the established practice is that EXCO approval provides sufficient authority to the Trustee to undertake Cities Alliance activities. See Paragraphs 58 and 59 of the SOP. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Consensus means no objection to agreement, but does not preclude the ability to dissent on the record without objecting.” (*Charter, Paragraph 25, p. 6).* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Section 10, below, for details on the financial administration of Contributions. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See footnote 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See footnote 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Reviewed annually by UNOPS and the Secretariat. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 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.). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Partners are non-Consultative Group Members and may include cities, national associations of local governments, national governments, civil society organisations, NGOs, university and research institutes, private enterprises, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Per Paragraph 12 of the Charter, “Cities Alliance country-specific activities are limited to those countries listed in the OECD Development Assistance Committee’s list of Aid Recipients, as amended (Developing Countries). Any city, national association of cities, or national government with their partners can approach the Cities Alliance for support, either through one or more members of the Cities Alliance, or through the Secretariat, which will attempt to identify appropriate member(s) to provide such support.” (*Charter, Paragraph 12, p. 4)*. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Additional details are included in the Country Programmes Guidelines (Annex B to the SOP). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. This approval does not pertain to signature of grants which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Additional details are included in the Catalytic Fund Guidelines (Annex C to the SOP). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Additional details are included in the Analytical and Strategic Activities Guidelines (Annex D to the SOP). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. In certain cases, for ASAs Track II, Partners could also be involved in the execution of the grant if in partnership with a Member. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. This approval does not pertain to signature of grants, which is subject to level of delegation of authority provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See footnote 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. If UNOPS confirms this modality (undergoing legal review). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)