Key challenges and opportunities for cities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Mr. Omar Siddique
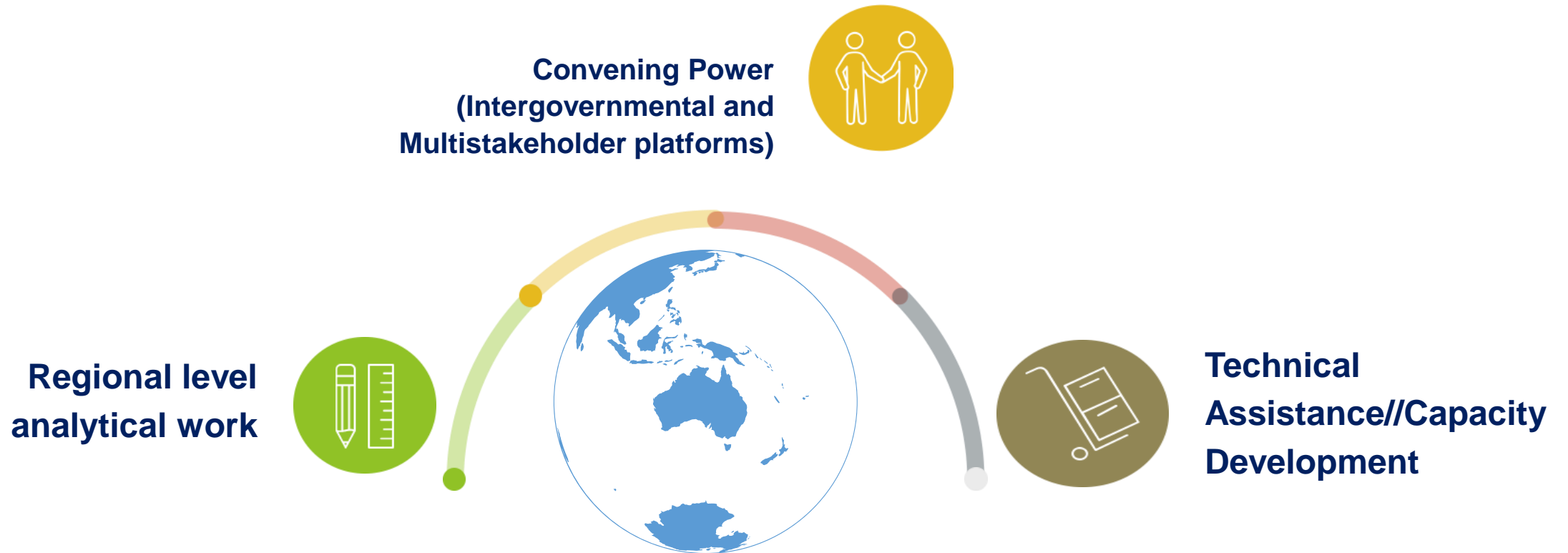
Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Urban Development, UNESCAP
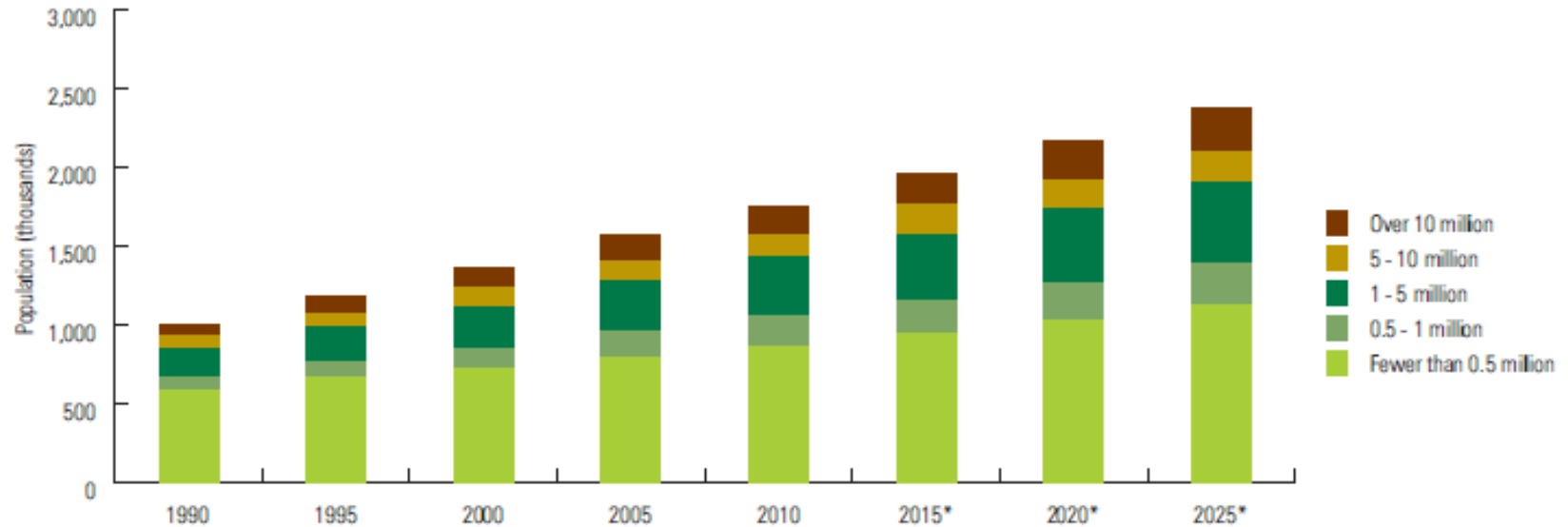
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The work of UNESCAP in a snapshot

Regional development arm of the UN system and the link between national and global level development cooperation within the United Nations

**Convening Power
(Intergovernmental and
Multistakeholder platforms)**

**Regional level
analytical work**

**Technical
Assistance//Capacity
Development**

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Cities are growing

- 2012: **1.9** billion / 46% of region lived in cities

- 2020: **2.2** billion / 52%

- 2050: **3.2** billion+/ 64%

- 2011: 13/23 world's megacities

- 2025: 22/27 world's megacities and 7/10 of the world's largest cities

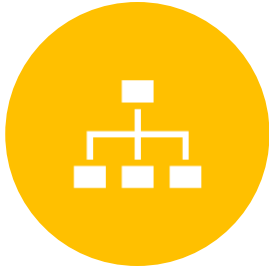- Growth rates are highest in peri-urban areas versus 'core' urban areas

CHART 2.10: THE DISTRIBUTION OF SETTLEMENTS IN ASIA

Legend:
- Over 10 million
- 5 - 10 million
- 1 - 5 million
- 0.5 - 1 million
- Fewer than 0.5 million

*Projections
Source: United Nations (2010)
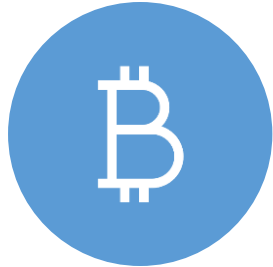
Cities are complex
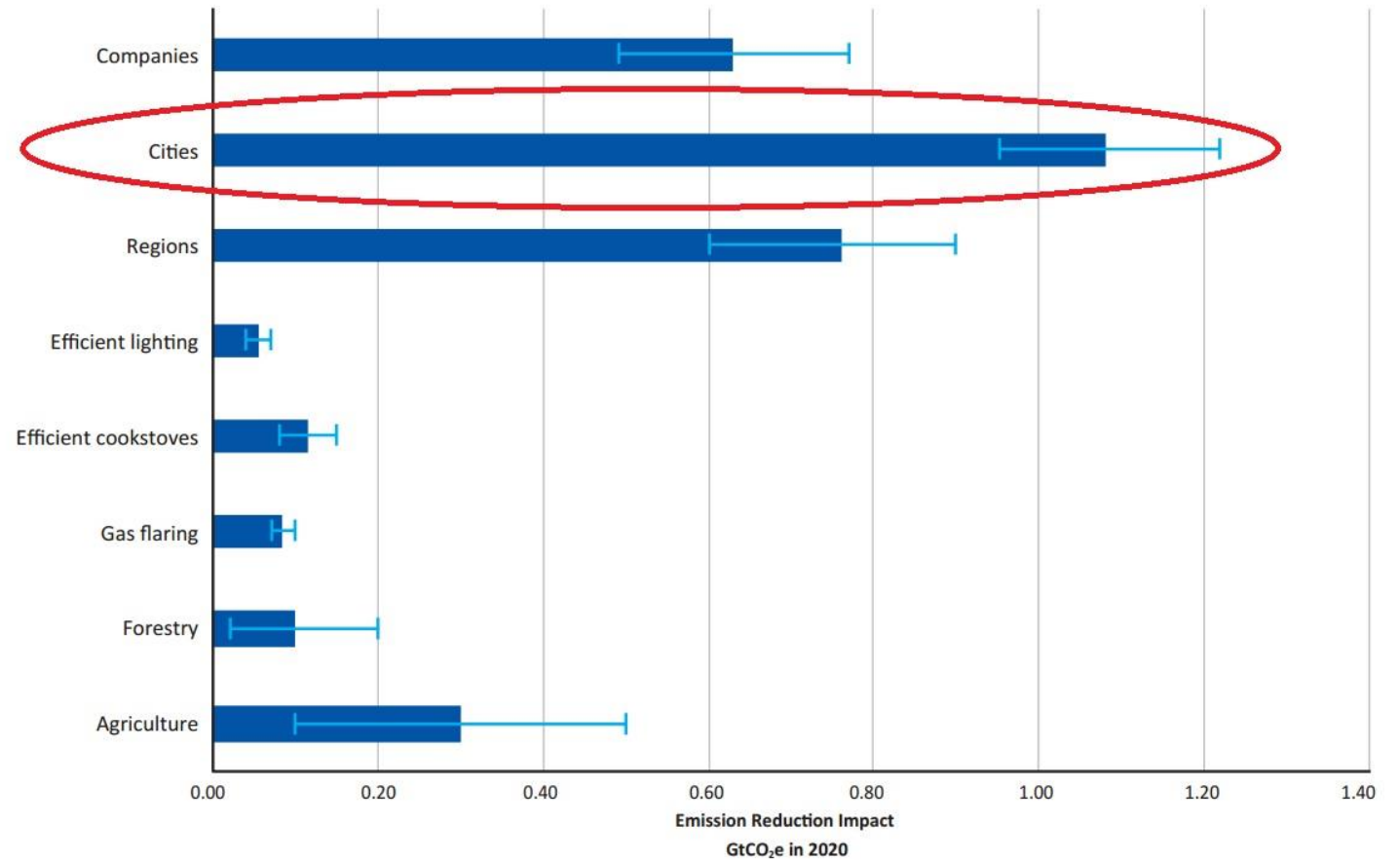

NON-LINEAR PATTERNS

HIERARCHICAL VS NETWORKS

SELF-ORGANIZATION AS RESPONSE TO INADEQUATE PROVISION OF SERVICES

SELF-GOVERNED (AND MANY TIMES GATED) HUBS FOR THE FEW

Cities can help

Emission Reduction Impact
GtCO$_2$e in 2020

Are we on track? SDG Progress in Asia-Pacific

Are we on track?

ASEAN
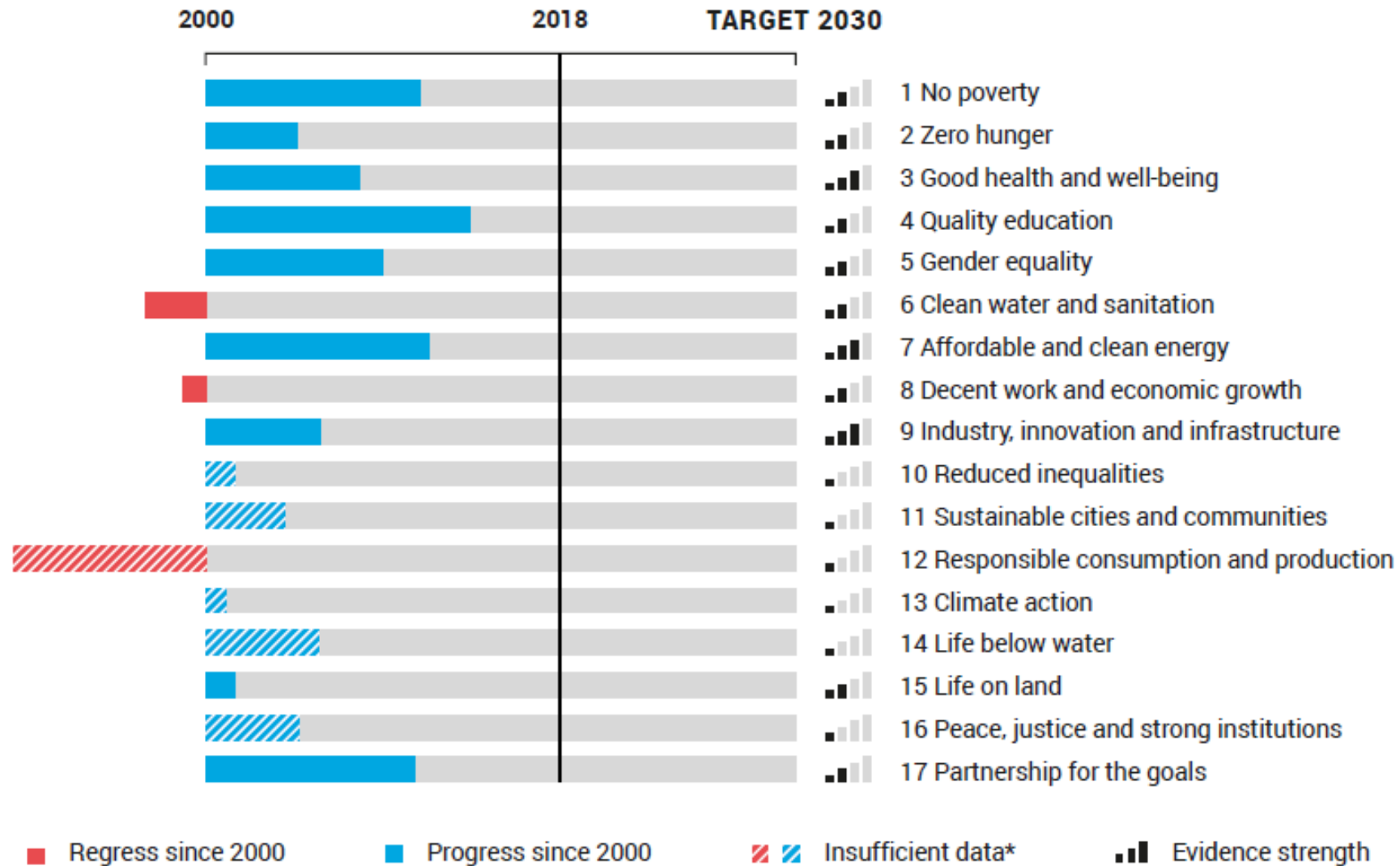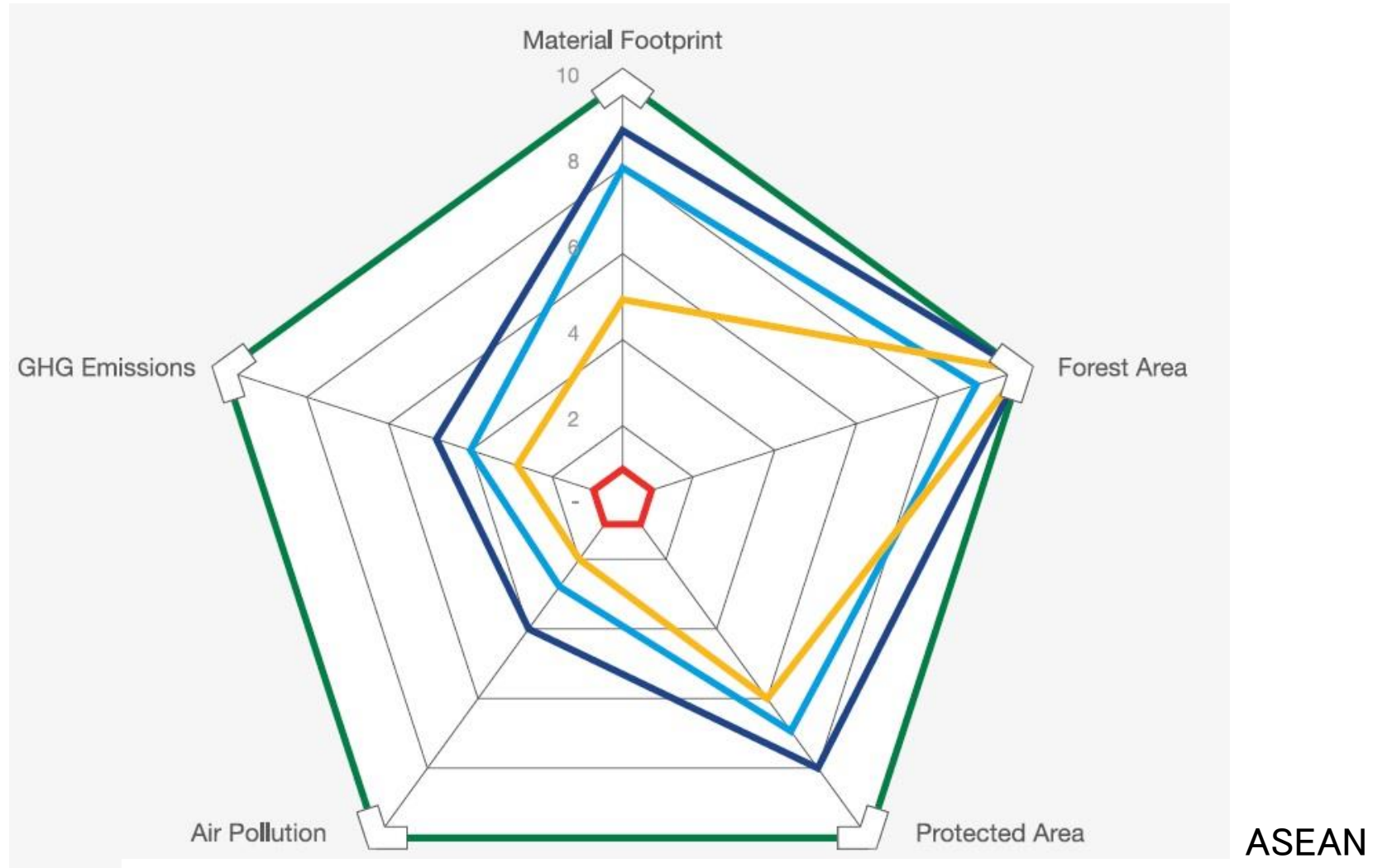
Subregional SDGs Assessment 2019

Asia-Pacific subregions are making progress on different Goals, but some need to reverse trends such as on gender equality, climate action and peace, justice and strong institutions.

SDG data availability by Goal for Asia-Pacific, 2018
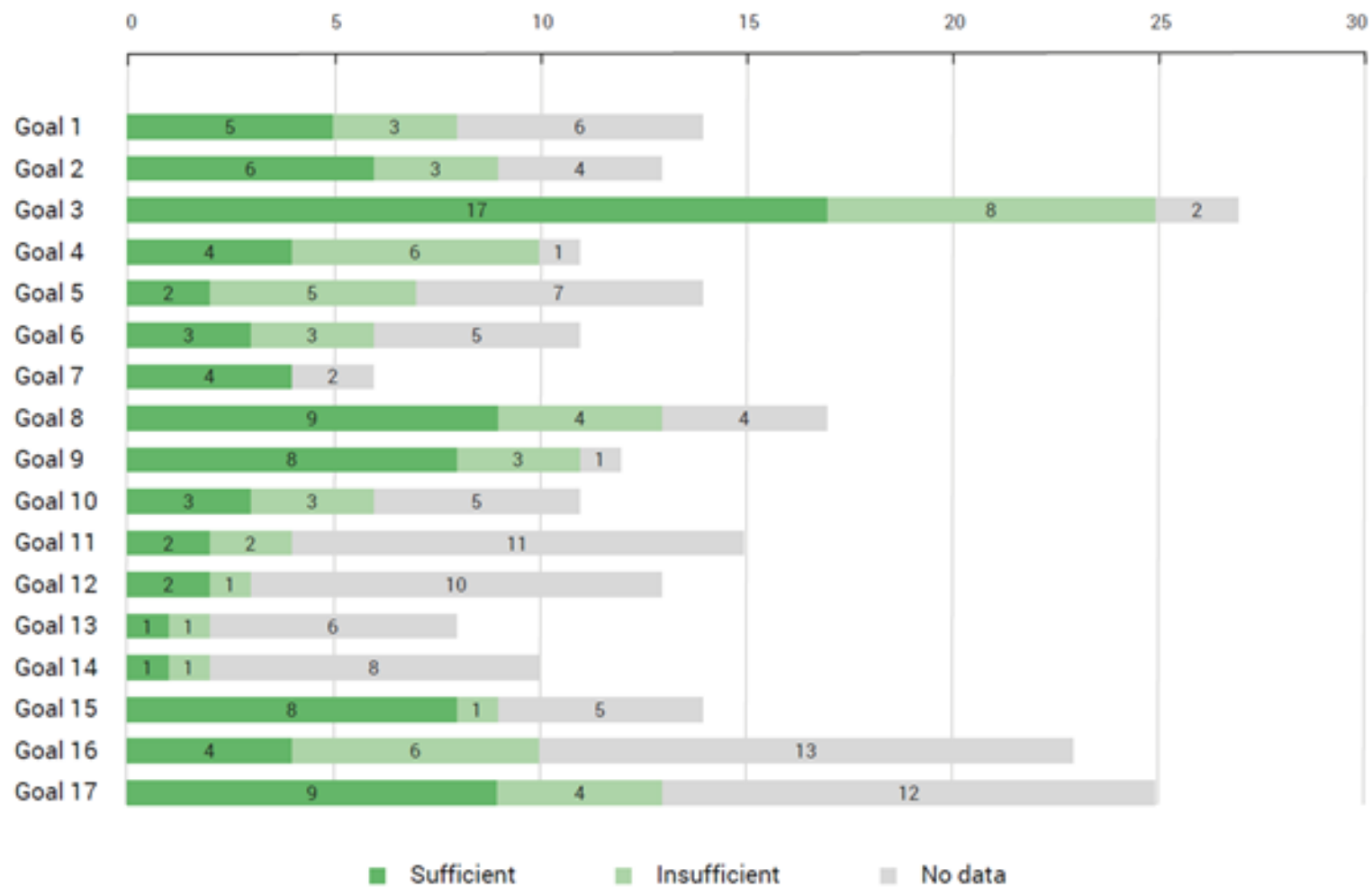

Goal	Sufficient	Insufficient	No data
Goal 1	5	3	6
Goal 2	6	3	4
Goal 3	17	8	2
Goal 4	4	6	1
Goal 5	2	5	7
Goal 6	3	3	5
Goal 7	4	2	
Goal 8	9	4	4
Goal 9	8	3	1
Goal 10	3	3	5
Goal 11	2	2	11
Goal 12	2	1	10
Goal 13	1	1	6
Goal 14	1	1	8
Goal 15	8	1	5
Goal 16	4	6	13
Goal 17	9	4	12

■ Sufficient ■ Insufficient ■ No data

SDG data availability by indicator for Asia-Pacific, 2018

96 (41%)

53 (23%)

83 (36%)

■ Sufficient ■ Insufficient ■ No data
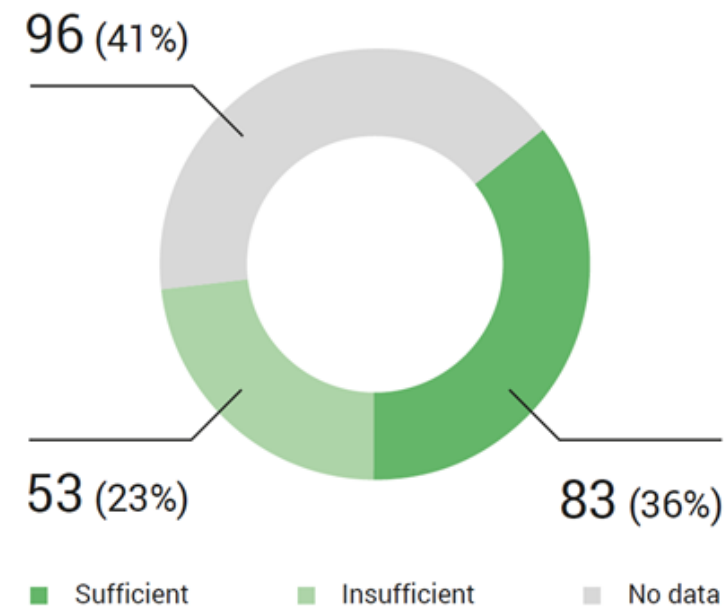
Facilitator of Voluntary National and Local Reviews

Support to > 20 VNRs
- 2019 (Mongolia, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, SIDS)
- 2018 (Kiribati, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Vietnam)

Stakeholder engagement
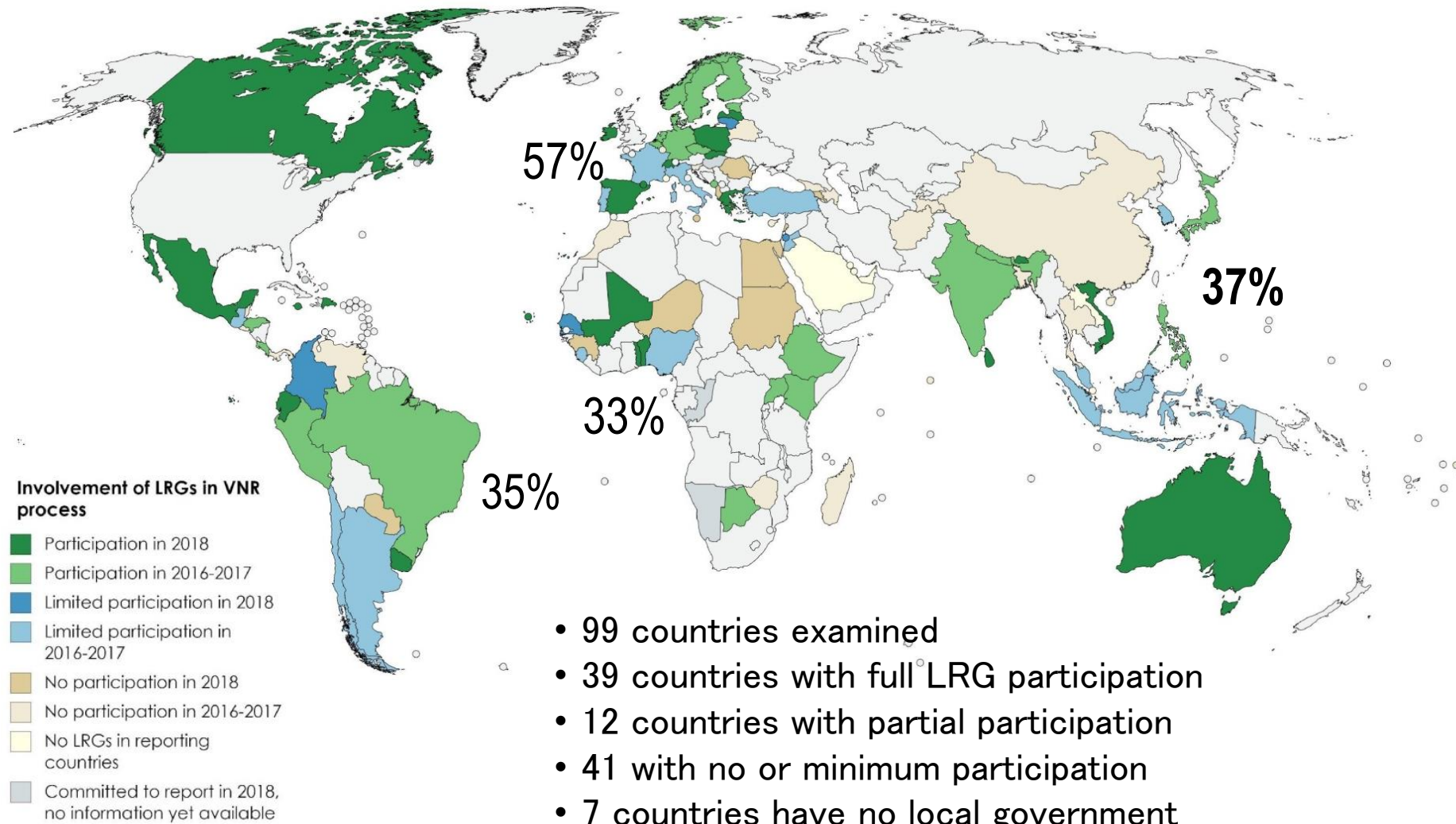- **Capacity building** (data and statistics, integration and interlinkages, stakeholder engagement)
- Space for **peer learning & exchange** (APFSD, Sub-regional preparatory meetings, twinning arrangements)
- **Online support tools** (SDG Help Desk, SDG Gateway)

Vertical Integration
- Capacities in the **National Statistical Offices and Local Data collectors** strengthened
- Local Governments taken steps to **institutionalize stakeholder** engagement
- Member States and local governments **holistically addressing SDGs** in (sub) national planning strategy and implementation.

VNR process and local government ownership, from 2016 to 2018

Involvement of LRGs in VNR process

- Participation in 2018
- Participation in 2016-2017
- Limited participation in 2018
- Limited participation in 2016-2017
- No participation in 2018
- No participation in 2016-2017
- No LRGs in reporting countries
- Committed to report in 2018, no information yet available

57%
37%
33%
35%

- 99 countries examined
- 39 countries with full LRG participation
- 12 countries with partial participation
- 41 with no or minimum participation
- 7 countries have no local government

Localizing:
What is it? Why is it important?

- Means taking **into account sub-national context, challenges & opportunities**

- **Is a process** – calls for co-creating solutions, for meaningful partnership resulting in more inclusive, needs-driven outcomes

- Is a way of **achieving the SDGs through bottom-up action**

- Provides a **framework for local development policy**

- Makes local governments and communities **catalysts of change to achieve global goals**

- Means planning & implementing local action guided by **normative principles** of 2030 Agenda

- Includes **aligning local goals, targets & indicators** to national & global **SDGs frameworks** (identifying baselines & targets) & integrating them into local planning & action

- Determining the **means of implementation** for action *(including finance, capacity development, inclusive & participatory processes, strengthening the evidence base and thinking in more integrated ways)*

Global Vision
Urban Action

New York's Voluntary Local Review Logo & slogan

Pilot Cities and Resource Priorities

Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia)
Population: 1.4 million
Local partner: The Asia Foundation (INGO)
Improving urban eco-systems and livelihoods linked to urban forests.

Nadee (Thailand)
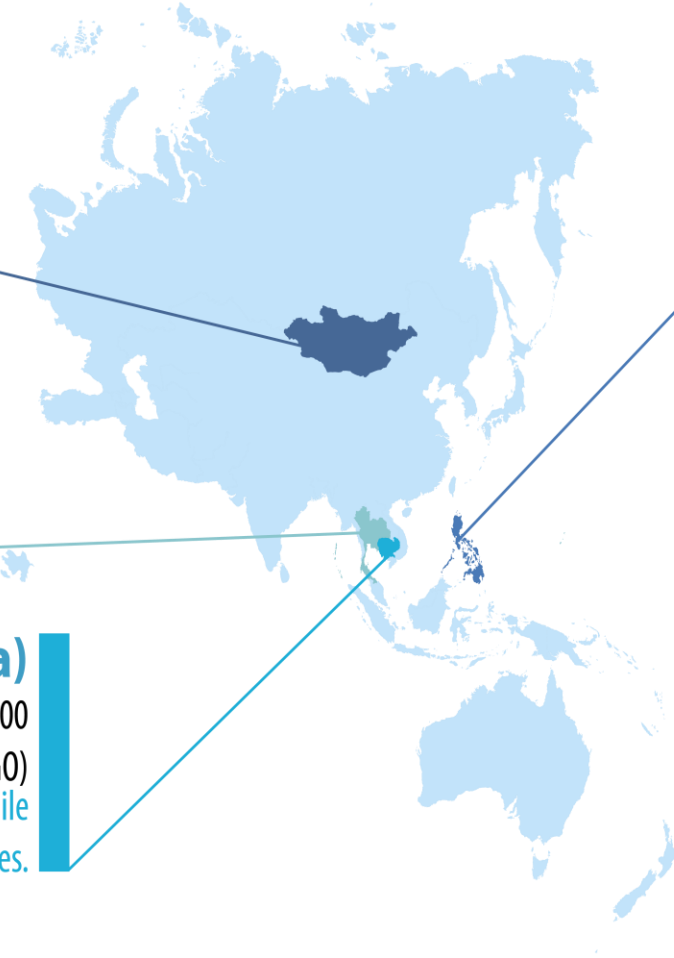Population: 26,000
Local partner: Earth Foundation (NGO)
Tackling industrial and domestic pollution to improve local well-being.

Battambang (Cambodia)
Population: 152,000
Local partner: Habitat for Humanity Cambodia (NGO)
Improving solid waste management while enhancing livelihood opportunities.

Naga (Philippines)
Population: 196,000
Local partner: Naga City People's Council (NGO)
Improving solid waste management while enhancing livelihood opportunities.

Nasinu (Fiji)
Population: 127,000
Local partner: Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) (INGO)
Improving solid waste management while enhancing livelihood opportunities.

Capacity Development Streams

Process

We support cities to develop the capacities of multistakeholder coalitions to

Collaborate
plan, implement, evaluate, and institutionalize stakeholder engagement processes;

Think in Systems
collectively analyze, plan, and implement in an integrated manner, systems-based solution;

Strengthen Evidence
targeted collection and analysis of high-quality data and information to support decision-making.

Collaborate

- Participatory stakeholder engagement through established Multi-Stakeholder Networks and Committees

- Representatives from the local government, local and international NGOs, community-based organizations, academia and the private sector become the catalysts of change

- Co-creation of city-driven sustainable solutions tailored to the needs of the city

Think in Systems

- Breaking silo-thinking to enable a holistic view on the city challenges and identify leverage points steering sustainable shifts

- Stimulating an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral exchange

- Understanding the worst and best-case scenarios

- Setting priorities for policy and urban development improvements
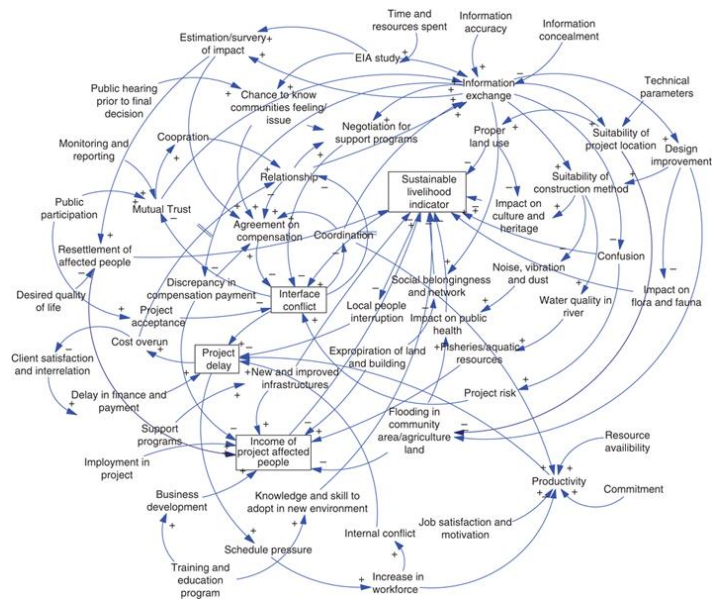
Strengthen Evidence

- Addressing the data and institutional capacity gaps through data collection and analysis

- Strengthening the capacity to form evidence-based decisions improving sustainable policies and urban development

Best Available Research Evidence

The Optimal Decision

Contextual Evidence

Experiential Evidence

Seventh Asia-Pacific Urban Forum 2019 (15-17 October 2019)

Key priorities & follow-up:

- 65 countries (30 ESCAP), with over 5000 participants.
    - Launched the "Future of Asian and Pacific Cities Report 2019".
    - Organised jointly with UN-Habitat, Government of Malaysia
    - Focused on sustainable planning, new technologies, and infrastructure financing.
    - Establishment of the "Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization"

Going forward, enhanced work on sustainable urban development.

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Making future urbanization sustainable

1. **Plan the foundations of a sustainable future.** All cities must strengthen their capacities, adopt inclusive planning processes and develop long-term spatial and investment plans that effectively consider urban growth, quality-of-life goals, resource implications and smart approaches.

2. **Guard against future risks.** To ensure sustainable growth and development, it is critical that cities adopt resilience strategies that break down governance siloes to improve policy efficacy, provide opportunities to scale up nature-based infrastructure solutions, and engage the creativity of the urban poor as solution providers to guard against potential shocks and stresses, including natural disasters.

4. **Mobilize financing to invest in sustainable urban solutions.** Local governments must access or adopt innovative investment tools, such as land value capture instruments, PPPs and environmental user fee models.

3. **Capitalize on frontier technologies to develop people-centred smart cities.** City leaders must develop smart cities road maps across different urban systems that capture the innovation of technological entrepreneurs, bridge the digital divide, support smart mobility

THANK YOU

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