

**Project Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity in the State of Alagoas:  
An Integrated Initiative**

**EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT 2:  
IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITIES FOR SLUM UPGRADING AND  
PREVENTION, AND IMPROVED SLUM DWELLERS LIVING CONDITIONS**

**Executive Summary**  
Report on the implementation of upgrading projects in slums (grotas)

Maceió  
June 2020



This **Executive Summary** presents a summary of the **Report on the implementation of upgrading projects in slums (grotas)**, produced by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in partnership with the Government of the State of Alagoas under the project **Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity in the State of Alagoas: An Integrated Initiative**, whose objective is to qualify sustainable urban development actions in the State of Alagoas.

This report was produced within the scope of the Expected Accomplishment **Improved knowledge and capacities for slum upgrading and prevention, and improved slum dwellers living conditions** of the above-mentioned project, aiming to:

- (i) Systematize the panorama of housing of social interest in the state of Alagoas;
- (ii) Present strategic recommendations for the implementation of improvement projects in the grotas of Maceió, aiming to enhance the access to adequate housing and support the implementation of a state programme of Technical Assistance for Housing of Social Interest (ATHIS in Portuguese).

The Report is structured in **four sections**: (i) the centrality of housing for the global development agendas; (ii) an overview of housing of social interest in Alagoas; (iii) improved knowledge and capacities for slum upgrading and prevention; and (iv) strategic recommendations for the implementation of improvement projects in the grotas of Maceió.

### Housing at the centre of sustainable urban development

This section has addressed two guiding concepts for the recommendations presented. The first is **adequate housing**, recognised as part of the right to an adequate standard living, which should be interpreted as the right to live with security, peace and dignity, in order to ensure a decent standard of living for all urban population, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable groups (women, migrants, people

with disabilities, the elderly, children and youth and LGBT people).

Adequate housing must consider the conditions of accessibility, cultural adequacy, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, location, and security of tenure.

In the context of the recognition of adequate housing as a right, UN-Habitat's vision of the centrality of the housing issue was built over time from several international declarations and, more recently, from the:

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, in particular, goal 11.1 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which intends to, by 2030, "ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums"; and
- **New Urban Agenda (NUA)**, which recognises the importance of adequate and sustainable housing as a "transformative force" to overcome challenges related to poverty, exclusion, and inequality, and to lead cities towards an integrated, inclusive, and sustainable urbanisation.

The second concept refers to **Technical Assistance for Housing of Social Interest (ATHIS)**. It consists on services of design, monitoring and execution required for building, renovation, expansion, land regularization and/or building of housing of social interest, conducted by architecture, urbanism and engineering professionals.

The right to Technical Assistance for Housing of Social Interest is established by the Federal Law 11.888/2008, which ensures low-income families, with monthly income up to three minimum wages living in urban or rural areas, free public technical assistance for the design and construction of housing of social interest.

Therefore, it is a strategy to provide the necessary services to promote access to



adequate housing by mitigating the housing shortage and inadequacy.

### Overview of the situation of housing of social interest in the state

Alagoas has the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in the country (0.631), about 60% of its population is vulnerable to poverty and 16.6% lives in extreme poverty. In the capital Maceió, home to almost a third of the state's population, 12% of the population lives in subnormal settlements, 100 of which are in *grotas*.

According to the João Pinheiro Foundation (2018), in 2015, Alagoas' **housing shortage** corresponded to 96,669 housing units, equivalent to 5% of the Northeast region and 2% of Brazil. The most critical situations correspond to households with severe rent burden (50%) and cohabiting families (33%).

The **inadequate housing** rate represented 318.395 domiciles, corresponding to 8% of the Northeast region and 3% of the country. The component that contributed the most to this rate was the lack of infrastructure, with 90% of the housing units.

The **state institutional structure dedicated to housing of social interest policies** is composed of:

- **The State Secretariat for Infrastructure** (Seinfra in Portuguese), responsible for the elaboration and execution of housing, sanitation and public works; and
- **Management Council of the State Fund for Housing of Social Interest** (FEHIS in Portuguese), a joint collegiate body with deliberative powers to monitor, control and evaluate housing of social interest policy. However, as of April 2019, the Council members had not yet been sworn in.

The main housing policy instruments in Alagoas are the **State Plan of Housing of Social Interest** (PEHIS-AL in Portuguese), prepared for the period 2010-2020 by the Government of the

State of Alagoas, and the **Local Plan of Housing of Social Interest of Maceió**, (PLHIS in Portuguese) finalized in 2018 by the Municipality of Maceió

The existence of these two Plans indicates that, over the past years and aligned with the main guidelines of the federal policy for housing of social interest, there was an intense process of preparation of local and state housing proposals. Both plans propose the creation of a technical assistance programme with strategic objectives and guidelines for the access to adequate housing.

The current **housing improvement actions** are carried out by Seinfra, as part of the "**Vida Nova nas Grotas**" programme, and are financed by the State Fund for the Combat and Eradication of Poverty (Fecoep in Portuguese).

By June 2020, technical assessments were carried out in 1,502 housing units in 13 *grotas* of Maceió to support two types of services: priority (roof, kitchen, bathroom, façade, wall and floor) and complementary.

Since September 2018, UN-Habitat, the State Secretariat for Infrastructure and the Council of Architecture and Urbanism of Alagoas (CAU/AL in Portuguese) have worked together to develop an **institutional partnership for the implementation of the Technical Assistance for Housing of Social Interest in the grotas of Maceió**, in order to contribute to these housing improvement actions.

Within the scope of this partnership and with resources provided by CAU/AL, the Council hired eight architects to prepare technical studies, budgets, and projects for housing improvements.

As a **result**, by June 2020, the partnership reached 94 housing units of four *grotas* of Maceió, out of thirteen where Seinfra had been working on.

The **impacts achieved** consist of:



- It was the first initiative to implement, at the state level, projects of Technical Assistance for Housing of Social Interest;
- Increased number of qualified professionals working in precarious settlements; and
- Enhanced capacity to execute housing improvements.

- Establish a Cross-sector Coordination Office for the "Vida Nova nas Grotas" Programme to coordinate, organize, and structure its implementation in an integrated and sustainable way.

At the **Planning and Design level**, the main recommendations are:

### Strategic recommendations for the implementation of improvement projects in the grotas of Maceió

The strategic recommendations are set in two levels, based on the identification of critical points:

- **Institutional:** strengthening the state structure for housing in line with the SDGs and the NUA; and
- **Planning and Design:** enhance the potential of impact of the housing improvements of the "Vida Nova nas Grotas" Programme in order to strengthen future interventions, increase access to adequate housing and promote participative, integrated and sustainable urban planning and management.

At the **institutional level**, the main recommendations are:

- Effectively implement the State Plan for Housing of Social Interest, especially its guidelines, the technical assistance programme to families, and its cross-sectoral actions;
- Empower the Management Council of the State Fund for Housing of Social Interest (FEHIS) and define guidelines, plans, goals, actions and a schedule;
- Allocate resources provided by the Annual Budget Law (LOA in Portuguese) to the FEHIS in order to strengthen a funding structure exclusively dedicated to the housing sector;
- Establish a follow-up, evaluation, and monitoring system; and

### Participatory, integrated and sustainable urban planning and management:

- Put housing at the centre of state urban policies;
- Adopt the Rapid Participatory Mapping (MRP in Portuguese) and the Socioeconomic Profile of the Grotas as urban planning and management tools; and
- Support the Municipality of Maceió in the urban regulation of the grotas.

### Improvement projects in the grotas:

- Elaborate diagnoses (social, urban and environmental) and intervention plans for housing improvement actions;
- Create a Public Office for Urban Planning, with a Thematic Chamber for Housing of Social Interest and a multidisciplinary team;
- Reduce the execution cycle of the actions;
- Support cross-cutting actions related to housing improvements, such as social and cultural development, the strengthening of the family economy and social participation; and
- Establish a State Program of Technical Assistance for Housing of Social Interest.