

# THE CITIES ALLIANCE CATALYTIC FUND



## INNOVATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

The Catalytic Fund (CATF) is a Cities Alliance global funding instrument which provides grant support for innovative projects that strengthen and promote the role of cities in poverty reduction and in sustainable urban development. It aims to catalyse urban transformation processes that promote more inclusive cities and to facilitate the sharing of the knowledge and learning distilled from innovative project experiences on global urban challenges.

## HOW THE CATF WORKS

- Call for Proposals focus on a selected theme of international relevance
- Competitive process that is usually open once a year
- Grant sizes between \$50,000 - \$200,000
- Project duration between one and two years
- Sponsorship by one or more Cities Alliance member is required

## INITIAL RESULTS

Since its launch in 2011, the CATF has funded 31 innovative projects around the globe, ranging from tools to promote tenure security, to using an improved knowledge of cities to bridge the engagement, information and accountability gaps between city governments and their citizens, as well as using sports and culture to foster economic and social integration of youths, migrants or the urban poor.

### THE CATF AT A GLANCE

4 calls for proposals on urban development themes (Migration and the Inclusive City, Know Your City, Youth and the City, and slum upgrading)

631 project proposals received

31 innovative projects funded in 48 cities in 32 countries around the world

USD 6.1 million in grant funding disbursed



These projects have catalysed urban transformation processes and created partnerships among urban development actors. Some have leveraged follow-up funding (such as Safetipin and a project creating youth employment centres in Mauritania), and some are being scaled up within a country or integrated into national policies.

While most CATF projects are still ongoing a number of the projects are showing some exciting results, including:

- Safetipin is a mobile phone app that uses crowdsourcing to predict and track safety for women in cities. Cities Alliance supports the extension of Safetipin to collect data at a scale where it is meaningful at a city level and build Safer Communities in New Delhi, Nairobi and Bogotá. Safetipin is partnering with various local government institutions in the respective cities and reaching out to private businesses to use the data to make public spaces safer. So far, the project has collected and mapped its first data on the three cities. It has secured funding from other UN agencies to expand the work to other cities and countries, and generated wide interest from cities, the media and private sector around the world.

Communities felt invisible and they lacked a voice. Through the participatory mapping project [supported by the CATF], we built a platform for community voice.

*Michael Uwemedimo, CMAP (Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform)*

- The Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform (CMAP) shares skills and technologies that allow people in marginalised urban communities to organise more effectively, plan more appropriately and reach the city with their voice and vision. The CATF has supported the youth-led participatory mapping component of CMAP's Human City project - a community-driven media, architecture, urban planning and human rights initiative in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Through mapping, a network of young people from the city's marginalised communities gather and share information about their neighbourhoods, collaborate with urban planners and literally put themselves on the map.

- In Mauritania, the French NGO GRET received CATF funding to set up two youth employment centres in Nouakchott, in cooperation with the Urban Metropolitan Authority of Nouakchott (Communauté urbaine de Nouakchott). These one-stop-shop centres provided a broad range of services to youth to help them access the employment market or set up a micro enterprise. The centres were so successful that the activity was fully integrated into a national vocational training programme for youth carried out by the Ministry of Employment and is being expanded on a national level.
- RedACTES is a project by Transparency International in partnership with its Guatemalan chapter, Acción Ciudadana, to ensure that public funds for bus services and bus safety are effectively spent – so that bus commutes become safer and more efficient for poor and underserved communities, especially women and girls. The CATF funded the pilot of RedACTES, and the project has already launched a Social Accountability Platform and Passenger Rights Charter.
- The Tenure Security Facility Southern Africa initiative, implemented by Urban LandMark, supported work on developing mechanisms to incrementally increase tenure security for households, including market studies and national tenure dialogues. The work has made a significant impact on changing the profile of the need for incremental tenure in the slum upgrading process, and has influenced thinking around how it should be done. Lessons learned informed the development of a practical regional booklet, *Incrementally Securing Tenure: Promising Practices in Informal Settlement Upgrading in Southern Africa*, which includes both legal and administrative mechanisms to incrementally securing tenure.

For a complete list of the projects funded through the Catalytic Fund, please visit [www.citiesalliance.org/catalytic-fund](http://www.citiesalliance.org/catalytic-fund)

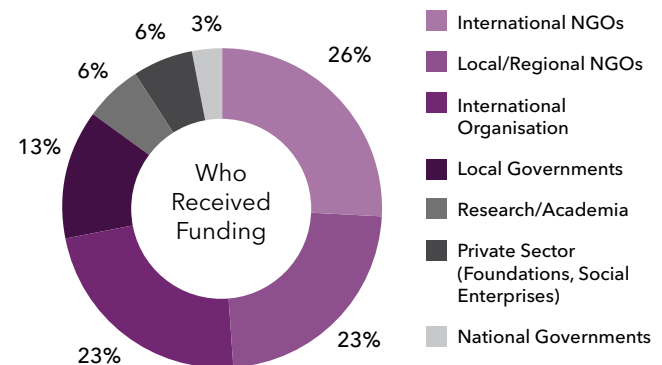
## APPROACH TO INNOVATION

Within the CATF, innovation refers to the development of concepts, products and processes that are either new in absolute terms or a novelty in their application and adaptation to a different context.

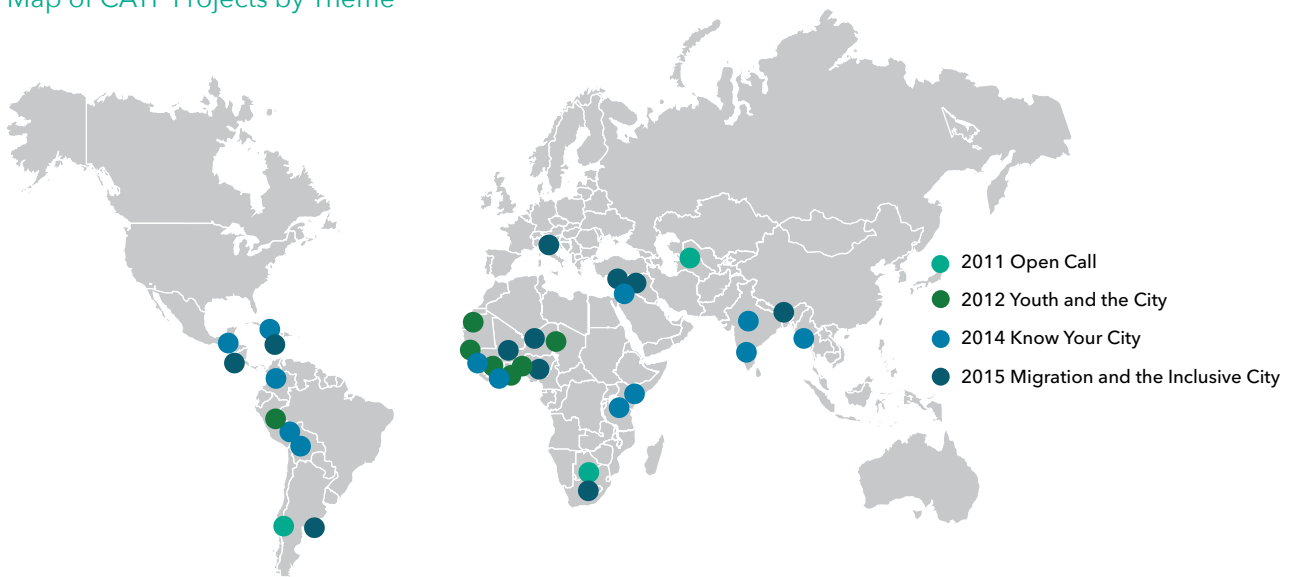
For the CATF, innovation is not an end in itself, but is part of longer term change. In other words, innovation has to be able to create societal value and should trigger longer-term impacts in order to generate a catalytic effect. The ultimate goal is for an innovation to be institutionalised, scaled and replicated.

## WHO RECEIVED FUNDING

The largest share of grant funding has gone to international NGOs, followed by local/regional NGOs and international organisations.



## Map of CATF Projects by Theme





## ABOUT CITIES ALLIANCE

Cities Alliance is the global partnership for poverty reduction and promoting the role of cities in sustainable development. Partnerships are critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We bring together organisations with different perspectives and expertise on city issues around common goals: well run, productive cities that provide opportunities for all residents.

Our members include multilateral development organisations, national governments, local government associations, international NGOs, private sector and foundations, and academia.

The Cities Alliance Secretariat is based in Brussels, and is hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

## CONNECT WITH US

[www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org)

[info@citiesalliance.org](mailto:info@citiesalliance.org)

[www.facebook.com/citiesalliance/](https://www.facebook.com/citiesalliance/)

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Cities Without Slums