

Urban Backup Initiative

An initiative of Cities Alliance (CA) and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for pro-poor urban development

Background

The CA and its members aim to strengthen the focus of the CA on poor countries and secondary cities. However, poor cities are finding it difficult to become part of CA programs, as they often lack the capacities to apply for, plan and implement CA projects.

Objective

The CA and BMZ have initiated the Urban Backup Initiative to increasingly enable poor secondary cities to access Cities Alliance funding. In doing so, the reach and impact of Cities Alliance urban development programs in poor secondary cities will increase, resulting in improved living conditions of the urban poor.

Budget and Timeline

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has provided EUR 1.0 Mio seed money to get the Urban Backup initiative on “Pro-poor urban development” started. Other members of the CA with a strong pro-poor focus are invited to support the initiative financially and/ or conceptually.

Anticipated timeline: pilot phase until March 2012, with an evaluation at the end of 2011.

Concept

- To maximize synergies and complementary impacts, Urban Backup ties in with the content and goals of the respective Cities Alliance project and aligns with projects/ programs of other CA members in the region.
- To increase sustainability and scale of Cities Alliance support, Urban Backup addresses its target group, namely poor secondary cities, through intermediary organizations such as Community Based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, universities, science/ research institutions, think tanks, etc. As these intermediary organizations become qualified partners and deliver competent advisory services to cities nationwide, more and more poor secondary cities will be able to apply for, plan and implement urban development projects.
- To access financing for the thus generated urban development project proposals, Urban Backup will support the secondary cities to apply for funds within Cities Alliance programs and/ or assist in identifying and contacting other financing partners.
- In general Urban Backup is based on the following principles:
 - Participation of key urban and public stakeholder groups, including inhabitants of informal settlements and CBOs, who are engaged in the planning processes, urban renewal and budget planning.
 - Capacity development of relevant local stakeholders in pro-poor urban development.
 - City-to-city-cooperation and the establishment of learning networks.

Next Steps

The Urban Backup initiative will be piloted in Ghana, complementing the “Land, Services and Citizenship for the Urban Poor (LSC) Program”: While the LSC program will focus mainly on the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area, the Urban Backup Initiative will provide support through the Ghanaian Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS) to initially 10 secondary cities. Subsequently ILGS will be equipped to deliver technical assistance to secondary cities nationwide to improve the living conditions of squatter and slum dweller households.