

URBANIZATION KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

What's the objective?

The world's "go to" hub for urban knowledge exchange. *Creating, sharing, and trading knowledge.* This means moving beyond a static repository, and beyond conferences and workshops, towards an open-source knowledge exchange. A global nexus of urban stakeholders, that evolves over time.

- Focused interactions between Practitioners, Policymakers, Academics, the Private Sector, & Knowledge Brokers.
- Topics are demand-driven, requested by participants.
- Emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, within groups of national & urban governments.

How will the Knowledge Platform work?

As a Contributor, Customizer, Connector, and Convener. The Urbanization KP will:

- **Convene** policymakers, urban think tanks, the private sector and researchers across 'sectors' to assess constraints and priorities for urbanization;
- **Connect** knowledge centers with development practitioners, to translate ideas into action;
- **Create** new evidence to help identify policies and investments that improve urbanization outcomes;
- **Customize** evidence to differentiate urbanization policy priorities across countries and sub-national regions.

What potential areas for knowledge exchange?

Four thematic pillars: Economic, Social, Environmental, Governance.



ECONOMIC: rural-to-urban transition

- Happens once in a country's lifetime
...but how can it best be facilitated for economic growth?



SOCIAL: social inclusion and mobility

- Urbanization embodies structural inequalities
...so how to incorporate the urban poor in a city's economic fabric?



ENVIRONMENTAL: sustainable urban growth

- Low-density cities are hardwiring environmental costs
...so how to manage urbanization to improve sustainability?



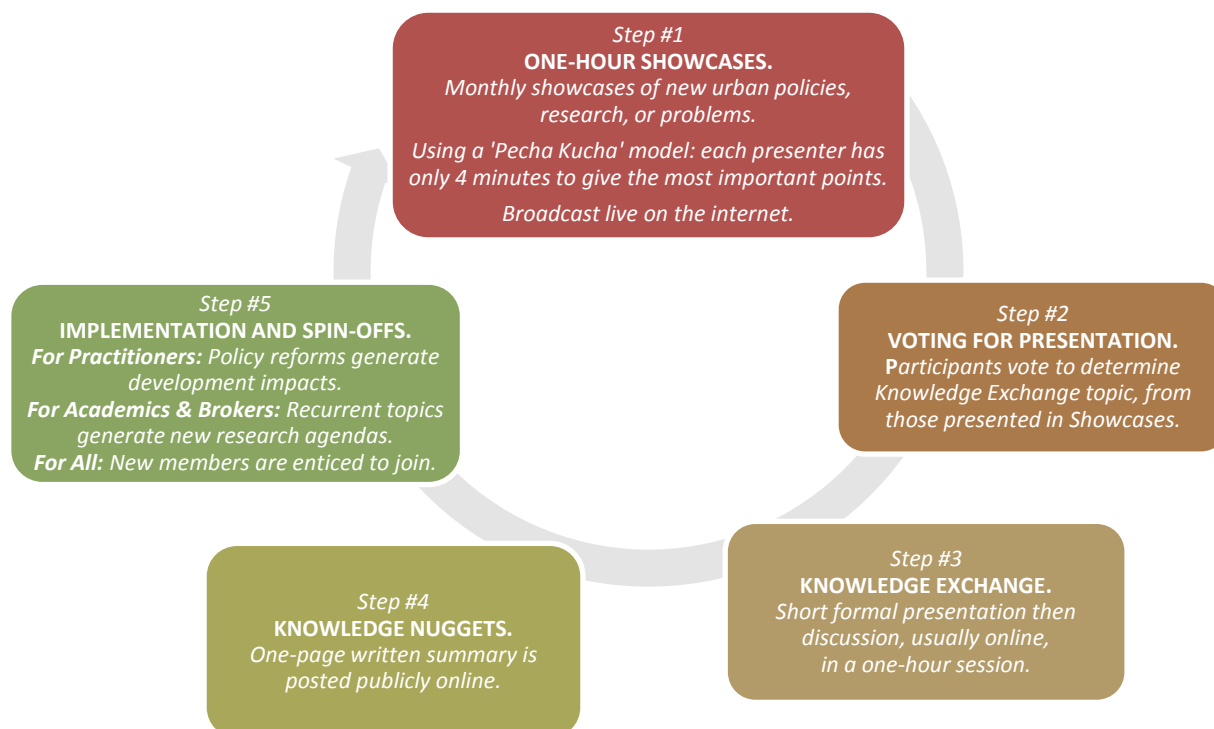
GOVERNANCE: creating accountable cities and towns

- Poorly governed urban centers will not be able to deliver on the economic, social, and environmental promise of urbanization
...so what systems of urban governance are suited for managing urbanization?

What opportunities will it bring?

Four likely components:

1. **Open, online forum**, with global visibility, for knowledge exchanges, consultations, and problem-solving. Anyone can initiate discussions, and anyone can respond. Quality will be self-policed, with popular contributions being promoted up the ladder. Several potential 'rooms' for the forum: e.g.
 - (i) *'What's new in urban?'* [i.e. Contemporary debates]
 - (ii) *Urban pioneers* [i.e. Room for popular contributors to initiate specialized thematic discussions]
 - (iii) *What are the big minds missing?* [i.e. Ideas lab, dissent, rebellion..]
2. **Rolling, dynamic knowledge exchanges in real-time:**



3. **'Thought-leaders'**. Investments of time and research resources from key academics and researchers on urbanization. Progress will be aired in the rapid fire Showcases (step #1 above)—and, where voted for, detailed in longer Knowledge Exchanges (step #3 above).
4. **Yearly reviews**. Core partners and high-level policymakers meet up (potentially 'virtually') once a year, to consolidate progress and review knowledge exchanges.

What's in it for participants?

- **Policymakers and Practitioners** gain from free access to relevant and expert knowledge;
- **Academics** gain from grounding their research in real-world issues, and in giving such research real application;
- **Private Sector** gains from customizing, innovating, and from business development;
- **Knowledge Brokers** create opportunities for fee-based work, as technical consultants or as project financiers.

Who are the partners?

Already signed on:

- :: **World Bank:** corporate commitment, and substantial funding, for 3 years at minimum. Support from Vice-Presidential units including SDN, FPD, AFR, PREM, WBI. Access to technical experts in most countries of the world;
- :: **McKinsey Global Institute:** groundbreaking recent work on China and India plus ongoing work on global city indicators and a global network of McKinsey specialists;
- :: **Cities Alliance:** leveraging its worldwide network of member governments, local authorities, NGOs, multilaterals, and associates;
- :: **Indian Institute for Human Settlements:** highly-regarded, action-oriented research institution;
- :: **MIT Dept of Urban Studies & Planning:** the largest academic department devoted to urbanization issues;
- :: **Eminent researchers,** including Ed Glaeser and Vernon Henderson;
- :: **Brookings Institution:** influential and trusted knowledge broker, plus a worldwide network of experts;
- :: **Several high-profile urban policymakers.**

Participatory discussions now initiated:

- :: Harvard Kennedy School.
- :: Cisco.
- :: African Centre for Cities.
- :: Global Development Network.
- :: Several renowned and emerging think- and do-tanks, in Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, India, Uganda, and elsewhere.
- :: US Housing and Urban Department (HUD).

Launch timetable

February 2011 to May 2011:

- Gradual **creation and roll-out** of each component of the Knowledge Platform;

June 2011:

- Six or more **regional launch events**, in: Africa, South Asia, East Asia & Pacific, Latin America & Caribbean, Europe & Central Asia, and Middle East & North Africa.

July 2011 onwards:

- Platform is fully operational and continues to **grow and evolve over time**.

Why is this important?

Urbanization means...

- 70 percent of global GDP ...
- 95 percent of population growth in the developing world ...
- an increasing share of world poverty ...
- 650 million people with high exposure to natural disasters ...
- the place where an *additional* 2 billion human beings will be by 2030.

Can urbanization be harnessed to end poverty in our lifetime?

So how can the Urbanization Knowledge Platform help you; and how can you help it?