

KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM: URBANIZATION

Urbanization is

- :: 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.

**How can urbanization be harnessed
to end poverty in our lifetime?**



Why a Knowledge Platform on Urbanization?

Urbanization is a defining phenomenon of the 21st century. The developing world is at the center of a demographic and economic transformation—where 400,000 square kilometers will be constructed for urban uses between circa 2000 and 2030, doubling the world's built up urban area. Nearly two billion new urban residents are expected in the next 20 years, and the urban populations of South Asia and Africa will double. Such urbanization takes place only once in a country's lifetime and countries' cannot afford to get it wrong.

Urbanization and economic growth go hand in hand; in fact no country has ever attained middle-incomes without urbanizing, and none has reached high income without vibrant cities that are centers of innovation, entrepreneurship and culture. With cities accounting for some 70 percent of global GDP, recent economic thinking is reshaping how policymakers and development practitioners view urbanization. In other words, the policy debate has evolved from *containing* urbanization to one of *preparing* for it—and of reaping the *benefits* of economic growth associated with urbanization while reducing poverty, congestion, crime, informality, and slums and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. Urbanization is a game changer that is reshaping the development dialogue at a global scale.

But while the global policy debate is moving from the ills of urbanization to harnessing the gains from urban transformation, the jury is still out on the choice, timing, sequence and location of policy instruments and investments that can help in enhancing economic efficiency and environmental sustainability while balancing social, spatial, and environmental equity. Setting policy priorities and highlighting tradeoffs is essential, particularly as the urbanization process and the urban economy are influenced by macro trends, investment decisions across sectors, and local policy efforts. However, multiple layers of actors and cross-sectoral influences make this task particularly challenging—especially since policy discourse, development assistance, and research on urbanization often run in sectoral silos.

Recognizing the transformative nature of urbanization, the Urbanization Knowledge Platform is a cross sectoral and collaborative initiative to:

- **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.

To enhance its development impact, the urbanization knowledge platform is being jointly proposed with national and local policymakers such as Ketso Gordan, advisor to the South African President's office on public service evaluation and Gueye Cheikh, Mayor of Dakar; **think tanks** such as the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings and McKinsey & Company Global Institute, **research centers** like MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning, **eminent researchers** such as Ed Glaeser and Vernon Henderson.

Within the World Bank, the platform has active support of the SDN, PREM, WBI, FPD networks and the AFR, ECA and EAP regions. The multi-sectoral and cross departmental support for this platform dovetails with the Bank's emerging Practice Management Teams, pooling experts across regions and themes (macro policy, investment climate, land regulations, service delivery, connective infrastructure) to provide 'just in time' advice on emerging policy and investment choices facing clients. To keep the platform cross-sectoral, the Knowledge Platform will be institutionalized as a corporate entity, and report jointly to SDN and FPD – the core sponsoring units.

Initial activities under the knowledge platform will be shaped by the following four broad questions:

1. What type of national and regional policies can amplify the **contribution of urbanization to economic growth**?
2. How can national and local governments **integrate the urban poor** in a city's social and economic fabric?
3. Which local policies and investments can improve **urban sustainability**?
4. What systems of **urban governance** are best suited to deliver on the economic, social and environmental promise of urbanization?

KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM: URBANIZATION

Through the collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders, the URBANIZATION KP aims to **combine the best available knowledge with practical wisdom** on how urbanization can generate economic, social, and environmental payoffs, supported by governance structures to deliver them.



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 hardwire 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 best suited for managing urbanization?

Key components of this KP proposal are:

- **Cross-sectoral and collaborative.** Economic, social, and environmental themes are united by a coherent conceptual framework. The proposal is submitted by a coalition of partners—spanning academia, knowledge brokers, the private-sector, and city & national policymakers—and by an internal partnership across the World Bank's Regions and Networks.
- **Changes the nature of development dialogue.** To emphasize two characteristics: first, topics for knowledge exchanges will be driven by the demands of Knowledge Platform participants. Second, with development partners participating in a network that promotes mutual learning, the engagement with the clients will not be one of hierarchical relationships that have often characterized the “aid dialogue” of the past.
- **Generative role.** This Knowledge Platform is designed to harness the experiences and knowledge of participants, including practitioners and policymakers, in such a way as to

generate policies and programs that can have a transformative impact on the urbanization process. And for the World Bank, the Knowledge Platform aims to be transformational by encouraging the formation of operational teams to address challenges across sectoral silos, and thereby maximizing their relevance to the most pressing issues for developing countries.

- **Ground-breaking model for knowledge exchange.** More than nation states, cities and towns have a natural propensity to exchange and share experiences. Importantly, and in contrast to exchanges amongst nation states, this sharing between cities and towns is seen as a dialogue between equals. For instance, New Orleans and Dhaka can engage with each other on the challenges of managing disasters and floods far more easily than the US would engage with Bangladesh in a dialogue on climate change. Essentially urbanization is strengthening this global dialogue between 'local states' rather than 'nation states'; so a core strength of the Urbanization Knowledge Platform is in building on the foundations of this *existing* global exchange.

The proposal is structured as follows: (a) Themes, (b) Format, and (c) Connections.

(1) Rural-to-Urban Transition



As developing countries begin to prosper, they move from being predominantly rural to urban, land changes from agricultural to industrial and commercial, people migrate to cities, and the markets for products and capital become increasingly fluid. Policy to facilitate these changes, while ensuring that the delivery of basic services and amenities is even across the country, *necessitates coordination between national and local levels of government, across multiple sectors*. Witness, for example, the way that China’s national economic growth has been rooted in spatial clusters of cities—notably the Yangtze and Pearl River Deltas—which have in turn had broad impacts on the rest of the country’s economy through migrants’ remittances and increased factor demand; but simultaneously interventions in rural areas have been essential to balance the economic attractions of cities with the provision of basic services in the countryside. Thus while readers of this proposal may be tempted to shorten the title from ‘Urbanization’ to ‘Urban’, this proposal is far deeper and wider than ‘urban’: it concerns the spatial changes which accompany economic development, and the cross-sectoral policies to harness them.

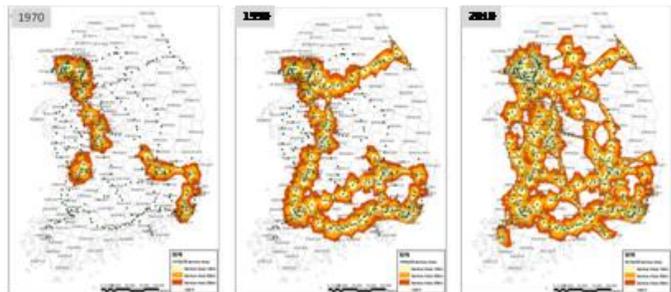
Developing countries are now undergoing this rural-to-urban transition, which raises a number of specific policy and technical challenges. Indeed, by 2030, the world’s population will have been fundamentally reshaped. What do we know about such challenges, and how can such knowledge find traction with policymakers?

- The economic case for urbanization is compellingly demonstrated by evidence—including the World Bank’s ‘World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography’, McKinsey Global Institute’s diagnostic reports on China and India, the Growth Commission¹, the World Bank’s new Urban Strategy ‘Harnessing Urbanization for Economic Development and Poverty Alleviation: A System of Cities Approach’—and the case for prioritizing an urbanization agenda in national policy priorities is gaining momentum through programs like Brookings Institution’s encouragement to connect the ‘metro’ to the ‘macro’. **But these ideas have not been sufficiently customized to address local problems in developing countries, and are often not reflected in national**

¹ Spence, Annez & Buckley (2009), ‘Urbanization and Growth’, *Commission on Growth and Development*.

policies. Indeed, policies to *prevent* migration to urban areas are more widespread today than they were in the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s². These policies are likely to distort a country’s urbanization outcomes, measured through economic growth and poverty reduction. The URBANIZATION KP should become a key channel for transforming national and global debates to recognize the power of urbanization for economic development, particularly through South-South exchanges and learning from rapid developers. Key examples of success include Korea’s development trajectory from the 1960s onwards—where spatial policies have closely accompanied development (see Figure 1)— or South Africa’s bold national program to support the country’s top cities as part of the country’s economic strategy. The aim of such knowledge exchange is to raise the profile of urbanization to national-level policymakers across multiple sectors, including Finance and Investment (for universal services delivery), Transport and Telecommunications (for inter-city connectivity), Housing (for land markets), plus cross-sectoral areas such as Decentralization and Governance (to strengthen the management of cities and municipalities). This approach aligns with the World Bank’s partnership with Singapore in the Center of Infrastructure Excellence—to develop not just any infrastructure, but infrastructure that is coherent, well thought out, productive and effectively managed. As we know, this is a one-shot deal. If countries don’t get it right, millions live with the consequences for generations to come.

Figure 1: Korea built national highways to accompany urbanization—not overinvestment before the fact, nor underinvestment after it
(source: Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, 2010, produced for collaborative work with the World Bank)



- There remain a number of gaps in our understanding of rural-urban transformation, since most research until now has focused on developed countries and emerging economic superpowers like China and Brazil. Do African and South Asian industries benefit from economic concentration, and if not, how can policymakers help them do so? And what can we learn from rapidly urbanizing countries to harness the benefits of urbanization? **In short, there exists a pressing need for knowledge creation on how urbanization is affecting the economies of developing countries, and on how policymakers can best engage with it.** For example, the Bank’s *Urbanization Review* finds in India, as in many countries that have

² This finding comes from a regular survey of 131 governments, UN DESA (2009), *World Population Policies*, http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2009/Publication_index.htm. 72% of national governments in developing countries are attempting to lower the rate of migration to urban agglomerations today, compared with 44%, 56% and 51% in 1976, 1986 and 1996.

gone through the urban trajectory, rapidly growing suburban fringes and high-density areas are emerging outside the traditional city cores. Developing better connections between the core cities and the s new suburban hubs is now an important part of India’s urban challenge. The URBANIZATION KP increases the likelihood that such findings come to light earlier—through sharing of knowledge on the suburbanization of industries in other fast-growing economies like China and, before it, Korea and Taiwan. Such comparator countries show the extent to which suburban land use patterns are a natural consequence of maturing land and real estate markets, which would encourage heavy industries to locate in cheaper locations at the periphery of cities while ensuring market accessibility. Other comparisons from countries like the USA and South Africa show how countries have changed the nature of city management and governance to address the challenge of sub-urban growth.

**Evolution of
Knowledge-Policy Nexus**



(2) Social Inclusion and Mobility



Getting urbanization right can mean the difference between equitable economic development and a concentration of urban poverty. Partly this is a matter of ensuring that migration to cities is driven by growing economic opportunities, as outlined in the first pillar of this proposal. **But it also means finding ways to improve the equity and inclusiveness of increasingly divided urban economies. In practice, this means engaging with a number of complex policy challenges, to help the urban poor move to opportunities:**

- **Structural Urban Poverty.** Where urban slums exist, they should be transitional places for accommodating increased migration from rural to urban economies, rather than pools of structural unemployment and multi-generational poverty traps³. Efforts to improve social and economic inclusion might include instruments like micro-credit programs, community-driven development, or conditional cash transfers⁴. While there already exist specialized knowledge resources on such instruments, the URBANIZATION KP permits wider dissemination and exchange of practitioners' experiences in using them. More importantly, the Urbanization KP can help shift the problem of urban poverty from a ring-fenced approach towards integrating it into the broader framework of urban management.
- **Land Use and Urban Transport.** Access to jobs and amenities depends on location and the availability of transport services. But the urban poor can spend 15-25 percent of their income on transport⁵—almost as much as they spend on housing—and time costs of urban transport can be formidable. In Buenos Aires, for example, 87% of jobs are accessible in 45 minutes of travel by car, but only 23% are accessible in 45 minutes by public transport⁶. How can land use and urban transport be managed to ensure better access to jobs and amenities in larger cities?
- **Slum Integration.** While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include a target to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, this goal falls short in a context where the world's total slum population is projected to increase from 777 million in 2000 to somewhere between 889 and 1,477 million in 2020⁷. Several promising

³ Baker, Judy (2008), 'Urban Poverty: a global view', <http://go.worldbank.org/Y16FA9KLX0>

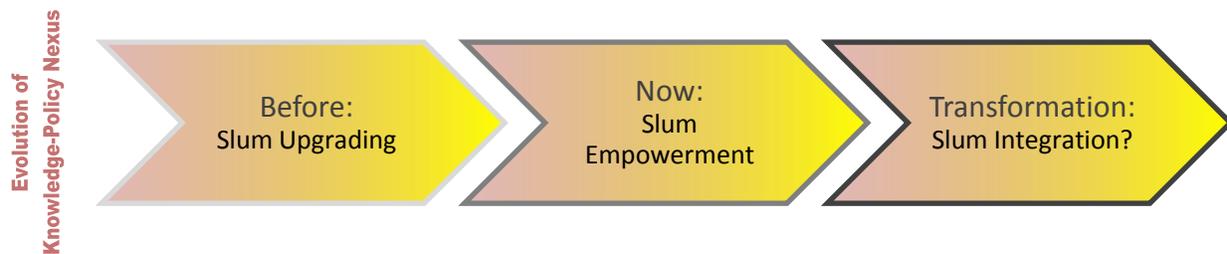
⁴ Pp. 12-15 in Linn, Johannes (2010), 'Urban Poverty in Developing Countries: a scoping study for future research', Brookings Paper.

⁵ Pp. 5 & 22, in World Bank (2002), *Cities on the move: a World Bank urban transport strategy review*, Washington DC: World Bank.

⁶ Table 7 in Prud'homme, Rémy, Hervé Huntzinger, Pierre Kopp (2004), 'Stronger municipalities for stronger cities in Argentina', mimeo.

⁷ Projections are from UN-HABITAT and <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/guo/documents/Table4.pdf>

solutions have been suggested to avoid the development of slums as cities grow⁸— including suggestions that cities demarcate land and reserve rights-of-way for subsequent road and infrastructure construction—*before* squatters and informal subdivisions of land render the construction of those basic services prohibitively expensive when made retroactively. Essentially this means preparing for urbanization with a basic spatial framework to guide it, as has been adopted with some success in Indonesia, and more recently proposed in Ecuador. But despite the elegance and affordability of such solutions, they have not yet gained wide traction with national and local policymakers.



(3) Sustainable Urban Growth



How can urbanization be managed to improve sustainability? Can urbanization become an environmental opportunity? In theory, the concentration of populations in smaller areas means services can be delivered more efficiently, public transport and the transportation of goods and people needs to cover shorter distances⁹. But **the benefits and costs arising from urbanization are path-dependent, and are conditioned by the form that urbanization takes.** We anticipate three core topics in this debate:

- **How to *mitigate* environmental costs during urban growth?** The urban population of developing countries expected to rise from 2.6 billion now to 3.9 billion by 2030¹⁰; but according to current trends of land and transport use, such urbanization will not be

⁸ Buckley & Kalarickal (2005), 'Housing Policy in Developing Countries', *World Bank Research Observer* 20 (2): 233-257.

⁹ Dodman, David (2009), 'Blaming cities for climate change?', *Environment and Urbanization*, 21: 185-201.

¹⁰ UN population projections from <http://esa.un.org/wup2009/unup/p2k0data.asp>

environmentally sustainable. Already the cities account for some 70 percent of GHG emissions. Indeed, a global study of urban growth paths finds that when city populations double, urban land area *triples*, since urban dwellers are demanding more land per person as incomes rise¹¹. At root, this is because urban land and transport are currently not priced to reflect the environmental costs of low-density cities. Households consume land without considering the extent to which those choices push out the urban boundary and therefore lengthen trips taken, thereby contributing to higher energy use and higher emissions. Key success stories of sustainable urbanization might be drawn from Sweden and Germany, where policy changes from 1967 to 2005 led to dramatic decreases in their per capita GHG emissions¹², or from imaginative transport and land use policies in Curitiba, Sao Paulo, and Ahmedabad. How can such solutions be customized to suit the needs of today's rapidly urbanizing countries, to prevent urban sprawl and unsustainable development?

- **How to *adapt* to environmental change during urban growth?** Developing countries will bear fully 75 to 80 percent of the costs of climate change¹³, and within those countries, more than 650 million people are living in cities with high exposure to natural disasters¹⁴. How can plans be made for future climatic uncertainty, including the adaptation of areas that will be vulnerable to flooding, increased disasters, or drought? There exist a number of excellent knowledge resources¹⁵, and the URBANIZATION KP can provide a crucial vehicle for disseminating and customizing them to local challenges.
- **Sharing good practice.** Where cities have been able to shape and influence the form of urbanization, *how* have they done so? How have technical innovations been harnessed by national and local government departments, and how has consensus been achieved amongst urban stakeholders?



¹¹ Angel, Sheppard & Civco (2005), *The Dynamics of Global Urban Expansion*, Washington DC: World Bank.

¹² See also p. 210 in World Bank (2010), *World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change*.

¹³ P.xx in World Bank (2010), *World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change*, Washington DC: World Bank.

¹⁴ P. 52 in Dille, Chen, Deichmann, Lerner-Lam, & Arnold (2005), *Natural Disaster Hotspots: a Global Risk Analysis*, Washington DC: World Bank.

¹⁵ For example, World Bank (2008), *Climate Resilient Cities: a primer on reducing vulnerabilities to disasters*, Washington DC: World Bank.

(4) Urban Governance



Ultimately, the economics, equity and sustainability impacts of urbanization depend critically on the nature of the governance of urban centers. In this fourth pillar of the KP, we anticipate the following themes may emerge in particular:

- **Decentralization of governance.** What are the relative roles of national and local governments in managing cities? In particular, how should responsibilities and fiscal powers be distributed between different tiers of government, as an increasing proportion of a country's population is concentrated in cities? To give some key examples, cities in Latin America and the industrialized West are empowered to act as local governments, and thus the reform focus is on crafting policy, fiscal and regulatory mechanisms that ensure accountability to local citizens. By contrast, countries such as India follow the model of 'centralized cities'—with limited fiscal autonomy and are more accountable to State level political and administrative systems rather than to local citizens. Shifting from an Indian to a Brazilian model of decentralized urban governance requires a major rethink on roles and responsibilities and design of fiscal systems between different tiers of government. That Nigeria is engaged in a direct exchange with Brazil and South Africa on the issue of how best to design the governance of its cities is an example of how much the exchange between countries on city governance is being influenced by the forces of urbanization.
- **Governance for service delivery.** What are the appropriate governance structures for managing metropolitan structures and the inter-jurisdictional issues they bring about? In many industrialized countries this question is being revisited, and cities are being restructured into metropolitan governments—as in Johannesburg, Bogota and Toronto. In the US, the emergence of suburbs and inner-city challenges has led to calls for "cities without suburbs" and the introduction of more flexible mechanisms for incorporating suburbs into city boundaries or formation of metropolitan boundaries. In this context, Brookings has analyzed the changing nature of political representation at the city level in the US, and role of mayors versus in the councils in city governance. How relevant are such reforms for developing countries? In Bangladesh, policy makers are considering an alternative governance structure for the country's megacity, Dhaka: instead of a metropolitan structure, Dhaka may well be divided into smaller municipalities, *but* with efforts to improve inter municipal coordination, as Dakar, Senegal has managed rather successfully. At the other end of the urban spectrum, smaller towns in India are achieving improved service delivery by contracting services

provided state agencies or by jointly managing a common service provider. So the issues of inter-jurisdictional coordination are at the forefront. Civil society organizations such as Janagraha in India have started to link with similar organizations in other countries to ensure that urban citizens have a voice in this evolving dialogue on urban governance. Such civil society bodies will, we hope, play a key part in this debate through the URBANIZATION KP.

- **Cities and Green Growth.** Essentially this is the ‘global goods’ aspect of city management, in a context where *national* economic trajectories are increasingly being determined by the economics of *cities*—and thus sustainable growth (or ‘green growth’) will increasingly hinge on how cities are managed. Proof of this trend is provided by the way cities are now being engaged directly in international talks on climate change, and by the role cities themselves are accepting through new initiatives like the ‘Mexico City Pact’—a covenant on climate change adopted at the World Mayors’ Summit in November 2010. How should such responsibilities and opportunities be realized? Some suggestions focus on creating new fiscal instruments for *decentralized* cities to manage their systems in an environmentally friendly way. At another level, the discussion is about creating or strengthening intermediate levels of governments *above* the city to manage urban spatial and environmental planning. In both cases there is a growing recognition that green growth will require a rethink of the organization, financing, and governance of cities, around which political consensus has yet to emerge. Cities, however, are not waiting passively to see the outcome of international and national discussions around climate change and environment on their governance structures. New form of city sustainability are merging such as the ECO2 cities based on models like Singapore, Curitiba, Malmo and Yokohama. In Africa, Saint Louis has taken the lead to form a coalition of coastal cities—Afrique S’engage—to influence the discussion on the adaptation side of climate change. In India and China, discussions are being held on mitigation issues between national governments *and* cities on how to make cities more energy efficient. Increasingly, global and national policy makers are recognizing that how cities are managed and governed will have a critical impact on the trajectory of “green growth” and that the voice of cities will matter in this dialogue on sustainability. The Urbanization KP can potentially inform this important dialogue around green growth and city governance.



WHY CHANNEL THESE DEBATES THROUGH A KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON URBANIZATION?

The power of the URBANIZATION KP framework is demonstrated by the way it provides a bridging framework for several development problems. With respect to migration, insights on urbanization reveal that basic services must be provided nationally in order that migrants are attracted to cities by jobs rather than by access to schools and hospitals, and infrastructure must be in place so that cities are connected to their hinterlands and thus growth is transmitted to migrants' areas of origin. With respect to prosperity, the URBANIZATION KP's focus on rural-urban transformation helps us understand how jobs come about and are linked together, while our focus on social inclusion focuses attention on bridging the social divide in those job markets. And with respect to industrial development, the URBANIZATION KP focuses on the spatial settings in which such development occurs in such a way to foster an open-sourced knowledge exchange on how such development can best be brought about. **While each of these issues is important on its own, the reality is that developing countries are juggling several balls simultaneously, and do not have the luxury of dropping some to focus on one at a time. Nor should they do so, when each problem is urgent, and requires coordinated action across sectors and multiple levels of government.**

Moreover, in order to leverage the extensive knowledge resources of the core partners now being engaged in the Knowledge Platforms, it is only right that the topic and format are of maximal relevance to as many countries as possible.

The URBANIZATION KP clearly fits this description, to become a global hub for knowledge sharing and exchange—especially on a South-South axis—and to incorporate urgent and transformative issues into a framework to which all countries can relate.

In the rest of this proposal we outline the tangible construction of the URBANIZATION KP: a novel format for knowledge exchange, which stays true to the founding principles of the Knowledge Platform idea (namely open-sourced, collaborative, globally-connected, evidence-based, and results-focused), but does so in a way which should maximize participation and effective outcomes.

STRUCTURING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGES

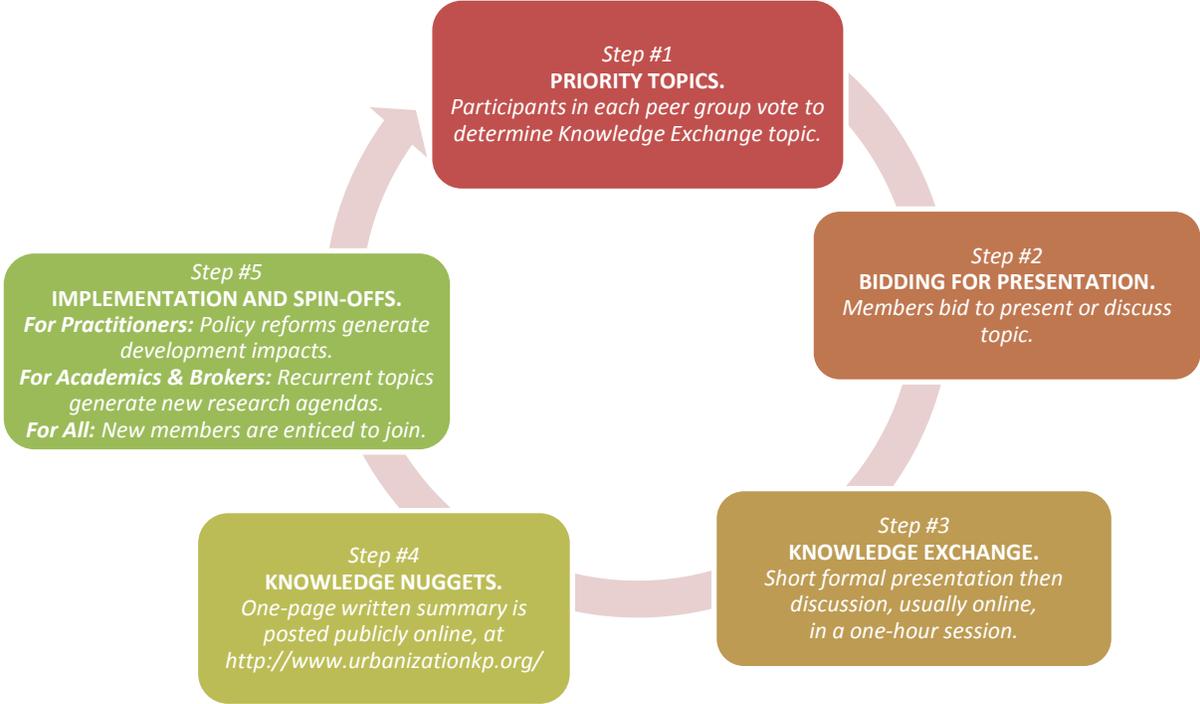
- Focused interactions between Practitioners, Policymakers, Researchers, the Private Sector, and Knowledge Brokers.
- Topics are demand-driven, requested by clients and pertinent to issues they face.
- Emphasis on peer-to-peer and South-South learning, within groups of national & urban governments.
- Pilot customized interventions through partnerships with the aim of scaling up.
- Innovative platforms to work with the private sector to harness innovation and attract financing for urbanization.

The objective of the URBANIZATION KP is to become the world’s “go to” hub for managing the rural-to-urban transformation. But crucially we want to move beyond a static repository of knowledge, and recognize that the most productive modes of learning rely on combining the best available prior and emerging research with a customized engagement directly with real-world problems. What this means in practice is that learning and reform are most likely to occur via peer-to-peer learning, and through channeling the vast knowledge resources available on urban issues towards specific challenges that national governments and cities are facing right now. Frankly, the traditional plethora of written reports and international conferences on urban issues is not being translated into real change at the speed, or the level, demanded by the world’s urban problems. While there is a role for events such as the World Urban Forum, there is a more urgent need for knowledge sharing that is more flexible, more responsive, and is *co-created* through collaborative work and peer-to-peer exchanges.

Hence the *modus operandi* of the URBANIZATION KP will be a demand-driven focus on clients’ policy challenges. Participants will choose their own issues to be engaged with, by voting to select one of several topics. The knowledge exchange itself will take shape as focused discussions between peers (national governments and urban policymakers), structured by contributions of research insights from academics, together with global practical experience from knowledge brokers such as the World Bank and other development organizations. **Peer groups are formed according to the topic of each Knowledge Exchange: in the case of cities and municipalities this means moving beyond a paradigm of grouping according to income levels, and coalescing instead around specific challenges: for example, coastal cities discussing the challenges of environmental adaptation, or post-conflict cities discussing the urbanization of IDPs.** The model of flexible peer-to-peer learning is currently being used very successfully by a number of innovative teams in the Bank, such as the Securities Markets team

in FPD, which holds periodic knowledge exchanges—via gotomeeting.com—between key financial policymakers in 23 countries, to share experience between peers on topics such as developing local bond markets. Or in Africa, where exchanges between urban water providers have been an important mechanism for catalyzing reforms in the water and sanitation sector. This method of peer-to-peer learning has generated solutions better than the sum of their parts.

Figure 2: Urbanization Knowledge Platform – a model for knowledge exchange



The diagram above illustrates the core format of this knowledge exchange, which will take place as a rolling series of debates via an online platform. We have been working with Cisco to explore if their ‘Smart+Connected Communities Institute’ platform can be a transparent tool for bringing about these knowledge exchanges; but we are open to scaling up partnerships with other firms, or to drawing on the resources of WBI in constructing peer-to-peer platforms such as <http://pppnetwork.ning.com/>. The core requirement of such a platform is to create a virtual community—which is global in scale—through which participants can respond and deliberate on each chosen topic. These exchanges will be focused on a single topic at each virtual ‘meeting’, but online debates and contributions can continue afterwards on each thread of discussion, on an open access discussion board. At the end of each year, Knowledge Nuggets will be gathered together and consolidated into a ‘state of the art’ resource on urban policymaking. As the Knowledge Platform scales up over time, the membership of the

URBANIZATION KP will expand into an extensive network of urban stakeholders, engaging in different debates according to their needs and expertise, and defining the future research agenda.

How do URBANIZATION KP topics emerge, and what impacts will they have?

- **Before Step #1: Showcases.** Periodic (probably monthly) showcases will be held on a ‘Pecha Kucha’ model—where any member of the URBANIZATION KP can request a 5-minute slot in a one-hour showcase of novel urbanization policy (by policymakers), innovative urbanization research (by academics), or pressing urbanization problems (by anyone). These showcases will be broadcast publicly via live streaming over the internet. Such showcases serve to identify common ground or common challenges between different URBANIZATION KP members, and demonstrate the breadth of topics available to be proposed as URBANIZATION KP debates.
- **After Step #5: Spin-offs.** The ultimate outputs of the URBANIZATION KP are envisaged to go beyond Knowledge Nuggets: ideally, as trends the topics of knowledge exchanges become clear—or the most knotty problems are identified—whole new research agendas or policy interventions will become apparent, which can be taken up by the academics and think tanks and policy makers who form part of this Knowledge Platform. These ‘thought-leaders’ would subsequently be able to report back during a Showcase, with a view to being selected for a follow-up knowledge exchange to move the debate on that topic forward. It is important to note that this approach would include policy interventions which were inspired by a particular debate, and are piloted in a new setting.

At inception, this process will require some supply-driven kick-starting, by inviting participants (policymakers, academics, and other knowledge brokers) with whom the Bank already has strong ties. But as word spreads, we anticipate that the inherent attractiveness of the topics, plus the quality of exchanges, and the ongoing benefits of global collaboration, will unleash a considerable momentum and attract a broad spectrum of new members.

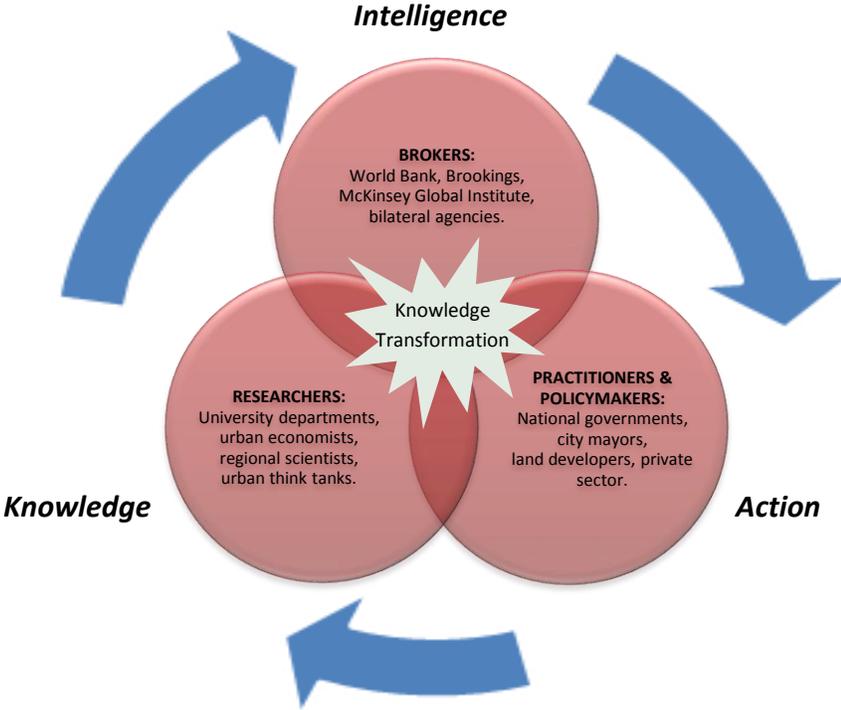
CONNECTING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND PARTICIPANTS

The content of knowledge exchanges in the URBANIZATION KP will combine the best available research knowledge with practical wisdom on *how* real outcomes can be achieved. Essentially this means linking the currently disparate pools of expertise in the Bank, with private-sector actors, academic departments and institutes, and renowned individuals and thinkers. **We envisage these core partnerships as four coalitions of participants in the**

URBANIZATION KP: Policymakers, Researchers, the Private Sector, and Knowledge Brokers.

The membership of each coalition is anticipated to expand owing to two key incentives: first, the attraction of mutual learning, and second, the opportunities that the Knowledge Platform opens up for its participants. 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; the Private Sector gains from customizing, innovating, and from business development; and Brokers may create opportunity for fee-based work, as technical consultants or as project financiers. We portray these coalitions as overlapping groups in the diagram below, to reflect the reality that all actors often fill several roles—as practitioner, researcher, and brokers—simultaneously.

Figure 3: Urbanization Knowledge Platform – building a knowledge coalition



We have already approached, and gained the enthusiastic support of, a number of high-visibility partners—including the Brookings Institution, McKinsey & Company Global Institute, and MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning—with all of whom we submit this proposal jointly. We have also secured the support of thought-leaders in the urban economics world including Professor Vernon Henderson and Professor Ed Glaeser. We are in the midst of further discussions and are firming up partnerships with the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, the African Centre for Cities, the Global Development Network (GDN—through

Gerardo della Paolera, its President), the Harvard Kennedy School, and the US Housing and Urban Department (HUD). Before the KP is launched, we aim to attract as members a number of renowned and emerging think- and do-tanks, such as IPEA and Instituto Pólís in Brazil, Fedesarrollo in Colombia, ISSER in Ghana, NIPFP in India, and the Economic Policy Research Center in Uganda, plus individuals such as Alain Bertaud, Giles Duranton, Enrico Moretti, Henry Overman, Bimal Patel, Enrique Peñalosa, John Quigley, Esteban Rossi-Hansberg, David Satterthwaite, Matt Turner, and Tony Venables. We are going beyond the 'usual suspects' by bringing private-sector thinkers onboard, most realistically including engineering and technology firms like Arup, Cisco, Siemens, Veolia, IBM and Bechtel, and land developers such as Keppel Land or Shui On Group. The aim is not only to incorporate key stakeholders from all sides of developing countries' urban evolutions, but also to benefit from the tacit thinking and knowledge often residing in the 'reflective practitioners' in such organizations. How to manage such a wide group of participants? **The vital aspect of the URBANIZATION KP framework outlined here is that it establishes a basic DNA for collaboration which can be scaled to topics and locations demanded by clients, and participants in each debate will self-select according to their interest in that topic.**

Finally, what do each of the initial core partners proposing the Urbanization KP bring to the table?

- Brookings Institution brings a highly influential and trusted knowledge broker, plus a worldwide network of experts;
- McKinsey Global Institute brings their groundbreaking and highly visible recent work on China and India plus ongoing work on global city indicators and a global network of McKinsey specialists;
- MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning brings the weight of the largest academic department devoted to urbanization issues;
- The World Bank brings solid experience in urbanization issues, access to multiple levels of government in almost all countries of the world, and grounding of the urbanization debate in economic realities. Among the multilateral development banks, the World Bank was the first to put urban development on its agenda, back in 1975, and it has kept engaged ever since, through substantial urban lending, through its expertise in urban governance and financing, and through hosting the secretariat of the Cities Alliance.

As the URBANIZATION KP goes forward, these partnerships will be deepened through ongoing collaboration, and widened far beyond the initial group identified above.