

# 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?



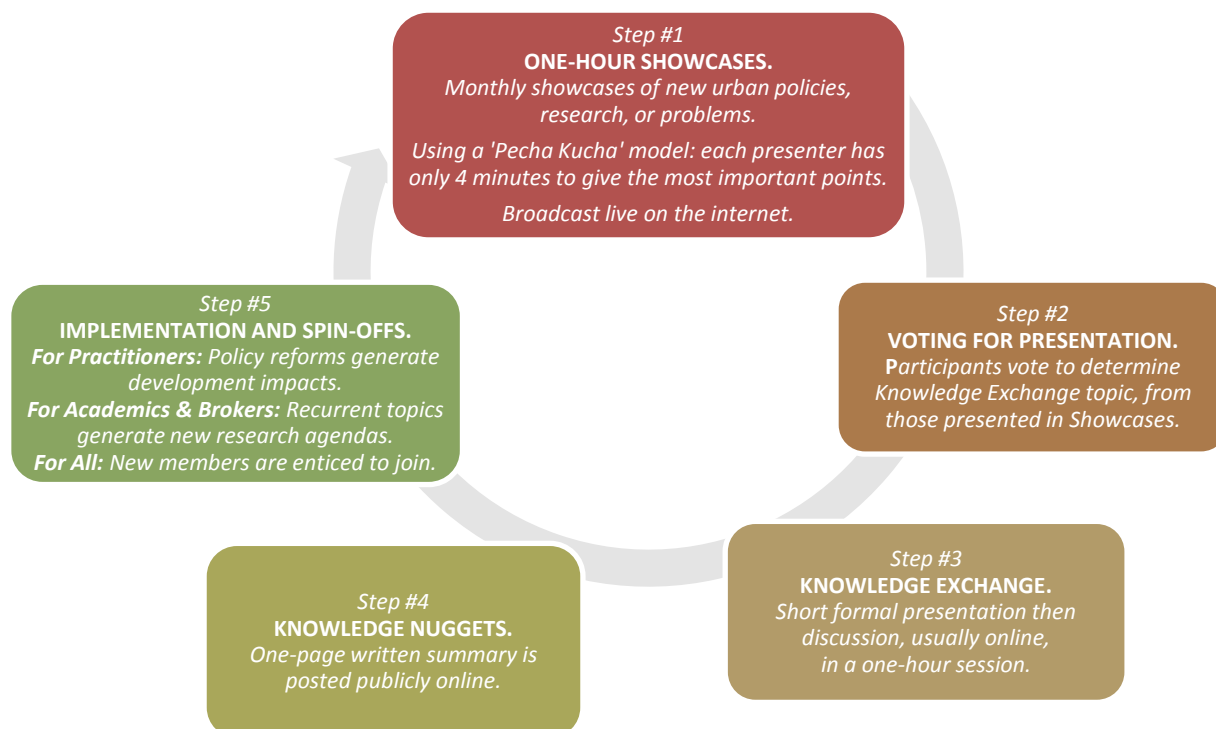
**GOVERNANCE: creating accountable cities and towns**

- 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?