



# Urban Innovation made in Africa – Sustainable Planning and Building

Project funded by the Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Fund II

## The challenge

Urban planning and building are one of the most important fields of action for sustainability and climate protection. Currently, **40%** of global energy-related greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the construction and operation of buildings. At the same time, about **800 million people live in slums**, especially in Asia and Africa, and the number will rise to over 1 billion by 2050. Cities must therefore be planned, built and financed more sustainably. **Integrated urban planning** is indispensable to promote polycentric structures, mixed use, and high densities. A paradigm shift in the global building sector towards the use of low-carbon, renewable, recyclable, and regionally produced building materials and construction methods is urgently needed. However, many cities have **little access to illustrative examples** of innovative building solutions. Often, they have neither sufficient mandates nor the necessary financial resources, personnel capacities and instruments fulfilling their tasks. Furthermore, there is a **lack of systematic** consolidation, dissemination and implementation of **sustainable planning and building approaches**, especially in countries with high rates of urbanisation.

## The approach

In **Germany**, the project encourages a **cross-sectoral policy dialogue** with the climate and urban development/building ministries to discuss approaches, strategies and good practices of sustainable planning and building that feed into multi-level discussions and enrich international agendas.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Project Name	Urban Innovation made in Africa
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project duration	10/2022 – 02/2025
Project volume	1.9 million EUR (total)

In **Rwanda**, the project is conducting an **Urban Lab process** with local stakeholders, which serves as a model case for how demand- and gender responsive, climate-friendly, and pro-poor urban planning and financing can be implemented in a country with high urbanisation rates.

In a third field of action, experiences on innovative approaches to just and sustainable urban planning, construction, and financing are exchanged in a **global peer learning**. This follows a two-fold approach: Firstly, a series of online sessions explore practical ways to strengthen national and subnational practitioners and stakeholders in implementing global development and climate agendas in informal settings and equip them with new knowledge to drive a just and inclusive urban transition. Secondly, the project supports the recognition of subnational governments in their role to accelerate the decarbonization and resilience in the buildings and construction sector.

## The objectives

**Innovation:** Address context-specific, climate-friendly, and pro-poor planning and financing

solutions for affordable housing through the Urban Lab in Rwanda.

**Reality Check:** Enrich the inter-ministerial dialogue in Germany and the global transfer of knowledge with learnings from the Urban Lab.

**Peer exchange:** Share learnings from and approaches to sustainable urban planning and buildings in informal settings among experts and practitioners worldwide.

**Acceleration:** Strengthen multi-level and multi-actor partnerships that support a climate-friendly, just urban transformation.

**Impact:** Enhance the effectiveness of Germany's commitment in the implementation of global sustainability and climate agendas in cities through increased inter-ministerial dialogue.

## Expected results

The **inter-ministerial dialogue** on Germany's international commitment to sustainable planning and buildings shall be strengthened through the project by pooling the experience, approaches, and institutional networks of the participating federal ministries. Together, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (**BMZ**), the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (**BMWK**) and the Ministry for Urban Development and Housing (**BMWSB**) can use their political influence and expertise to **jointly** shape relevant German and international strategies, initiatives and processes.

In the Urban Lab in Rwanda, **practical solutions** to increase the supply of affordable housing for

low-income households will have been developed. A guide for policymakers based on the findings of the lab will enhance informed decision making. Impulses from the German interministerial dialogue and findings from the Urban Lab in Rwanda are integrated into a **global exchange of knowledge and practical experiences** to empower local actors to drive socially just and climate-conscious urban transformation, and to enable subnational governments to accelerate the implementation of global, regional, and national climate and sustainability targets.

## Implementation and cooperation partners

The Urban Lab is implemented by the **Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa (CAHF)** and the **University of Rwanda**, in partnership with the **Rwandan Ministry of Infrastructure** and the **City of Kigali**. The global peer learning is organized in cooperation with the **Cities Alliance** and with partners from **ICLEI, UN-Habitat, Slum Dwellers International, CAHF** and the **African Union on Housing Finance**. To increase the acknowledgement of the role of local and subnational governments and stakeholders in decarbonizing the buildings sector, the project supports the **Subnational Action Group** within the **Global Alliance on Buildings and Construction**, hosted by **UNEP**.

**Published by:**  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices  
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32  
53113 Bonn  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15  
E [info@giz.de](mailto:info@giz.de)  
I [www.giz.de/en](http://www.giz.de/en)

Bonn, 09/2024

**Head of Project:**  
Johanna Pohl  
[johanna.pohl@giz.de](mailto:johanna.pohl@giz.de)

**Author / Layout:**  
Efia Faschina, Clara Hertz, Clemens Heukrodt, Johanna Luebbers,  
Andrea Renger,

**Photo credits/sources:**  
Design Indaba / Weiland Gleich, Architecture for Humanity