

Foundations and Philanthropy Platform

IMPORTANT ROLE OF FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY IN ACHIEVING SDGs

The important role of philanthropy and foundations as catalysts for sustainable urbanization is undeniable at the local, regional, and global level. Foundations have a unique flexibility and access to resources to invest in innovative technology, processes, and financing and are able to take the risks related with developing innovative solutions. Partnering with UN-Habitat provides opportunities to test these innovative solutions on the ground and to scale them to deliver transformational change and impact for urban beneficiaries globally. Foundations contribute over 5% of ODA, of which 97% is channelled through intermediary organisations. UN-Habitat is committed to collaboration with foundations and philanthropy to further leverage knowledge, thought leadership, influence and strategic investments *to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable* for SDG 11 and all other SDGs which will be realized in urban areas where most of the world's population lives.

WHY ENGAGE WITH UN-HABITAT?

Foundations now play an increasing role in sustainable development to bring about innovative and systemic change. UN-Habitat is the only UN organization working specifically with local government leaders in addition to UN Member States so is well positioned to ensure that solutions are sustainable by influencing policy for systemic change at multiple levels from local to regional to national and international.

UN-Habitat can help foundations to achieve their objectives and reduce time barriers to entry for impact investments because it provides foundations with opportunities to engage in international fora like the World Urban Forum with other leading authorities and experts to influence policy and practice to address urban challenges. UN-Habitat offers foundations access to its extensive thematic and peer networks and its coalitions of partners in countries including national and local governments, other UN agencies, communities, professionals and other urban stakeholders to facilitate implementation of programmes. As a leading authority on urban trends, data and statistics, and using its structured methods for profiling and rating investment readiness of cities, UN-Habitat can help match foundations with viable investment opportunities, and provide guidance for impact investments to minimize risk and time to market, and maximize impact and return on investment. UN-Habitat's extensive field experience and presence in over 60 countries provides testing ground for solutions developed with foundations and opportunities to participate in existing multi-donor initiatives to leverage their resources. The partnership between foundations and the United Nations would enhance the credibility, authority and reach of their joint advocacy for more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and prosperous cities.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT FOR UN-HABITAT?

UN-Habitat plays a lead role in supporting achievement of global urban development agenda and would greatly benefit from the involvement of foundations because through their networks, foundations have the potential of raising awareness and securing financial support for urban priorities to their influential constituents. Foundations bring innovative approaches to development challenges and their capacity to invest enables UN-Habitat to present foundations with viable investment opportunities in target countries that are aligned to city and national development plans to achieve inclusive and lasting impact at scale.

WHAT CAN FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT?

Foundations can work with UN-Habitat on its five major flagship programmes on i) building inclusive communities including provision of basic infrastructure and services, ii) people-focused smart cities, iii) resilient pro-poor shelter, iv) urban migration and v) supporting cities to meet SDG targets under its SDG

Cities Programme. The flagship programmes are designed to attract multi-donor funding to realise high impact and systemic change through policy change and to test innovative solutions in selected countries and cities on areas such as urban regeneration, research and innovation, climate action, housing and infrastructure, urban basic services, crisis prevention and response, social inclusion and alleviating urban poverty.

HOW CAN FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION?

Some ways in which foundations can support UN-Habitat to advance sustainable urbanisation are:

- Present innovative approaches and solutions at key urban events including the World Urban Forum
- Make impact investments or co-financing for viable city-led programmes through UN-Habitat's City Investment Facility
- Provide financial support to thematic and country programmes of common interest – including multi-donor funded initiatives under UN-Habitat's five flagship programmes
- Test innovative solutions and approaches on UN-Habitat programmes in countries of common interest
- Share and co-publish new urban approaches and knowledge
- Connect UN-Habitat with influential constituents for joint advocacy, support and higher visibility of urban agenda
- Co-host events on urban solutions

WHY NOW?

The Decade of Action to accelerate achievement of the SDGs starts in 2020, the same year as UN-Habitat launched its strategic plan for 2020-2023. This comes at a time when foundations are playing an increasing role in sustainable development. It also comes at a time of the Covid-19 pandemic which has highlighted the crucial role that cities in addressing global crises and the importance of joint coordinated action involving both state and non-state actors as well as international organizations.

WHY ESTABLISH A PLATFORM?

The purpose of the UN-Habitat's Foundations Platform is to foster collaborative partnership and structure the engagement with foundations and philanthropy to co-create solutions for sustainable urban development. Through the platform foundations and UN-Habitat will discuss thematic areas, locations and programmes for possible collaboration, share updates on joint work and initiatives with other development partners, and explore opportunities to engage in key events to present innovative approaches and solutions to advance sustainable urban development.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership to UN-Habitat's Foundations and Philanthropy platform will be based on interest and an agreed set of criteria including experience, expertise, diversity, and shared goals and values between potential members and UN-Habitat. Membership will be open to foundations, representatives of foundations networks as well as High Net Worth Individuals. Members will serve as a council of advisors and co-creation agents.

UN-Habitat's Foundations and Philanthropy Platform members will meet once a year in person. One of the annual meetings will be held during the World Urban Forum. Members will cover their travel expenses to the meetings. Virtual participations to the meetings will be provided as an option for those who cannot the meetings in person.

The work of the platform will be both collective and through work streams that members prioritize and initiate. Initial consultations have identified some of these areas as an opportunity to co-create, validate urban impact, leverage knowledge, and solidify strategic investments to achieve more prosperous, inclusive and resilient cities.