HOW TO FILL THE EVIDENCE, DATA AND KNOWLEDGE GAP FOR CITIES

The role of cloud-based Knowledge Platform Standard and Infrastructure

Fragmented Data, Knowledge and Evidence

In countries and cities, data and knowledge are fragmented, spread across local systems, spreadsheets, printed reports, paper forms, hard disks, data sticks and emails. Accessing data may require days of effort, air fares and scanning or re-keying numbers. Information Design and a Knowledge Platform can transform the availability of data and evidence.

Efficiency Savings from Data, Knowledge and Evidence Gathering

Up to 70% of staff time can be saved from collecting, aggregating and reporting data and evidence using a cloud-based Knowledge Platform. The Knowledge Platform Standard defines functions to automate M&E, Learning, Payment for Results and Performance Management.

Essential to City Service Delivery and Development

The Mayor, city manager & officials need data, evidence & knowledge to:
- Develop the city Integrated Development Plan
- Deliver the Mayor's Manifesto
- Communicate results to voters and citizens
- Engage, plan and deliver with citizens, private sector and universities
- Streamline treasury, audit and compensation reporting
- Benchmark and compare with other cities for learning
- Negotiate a fair share of national budget
- Compete for Urban Development Grants
- Access donor funds based on need and performance
- Access global resources linked to Global Goals
- Attract local and inward private sector investment
- Plan and finance infrastructure.
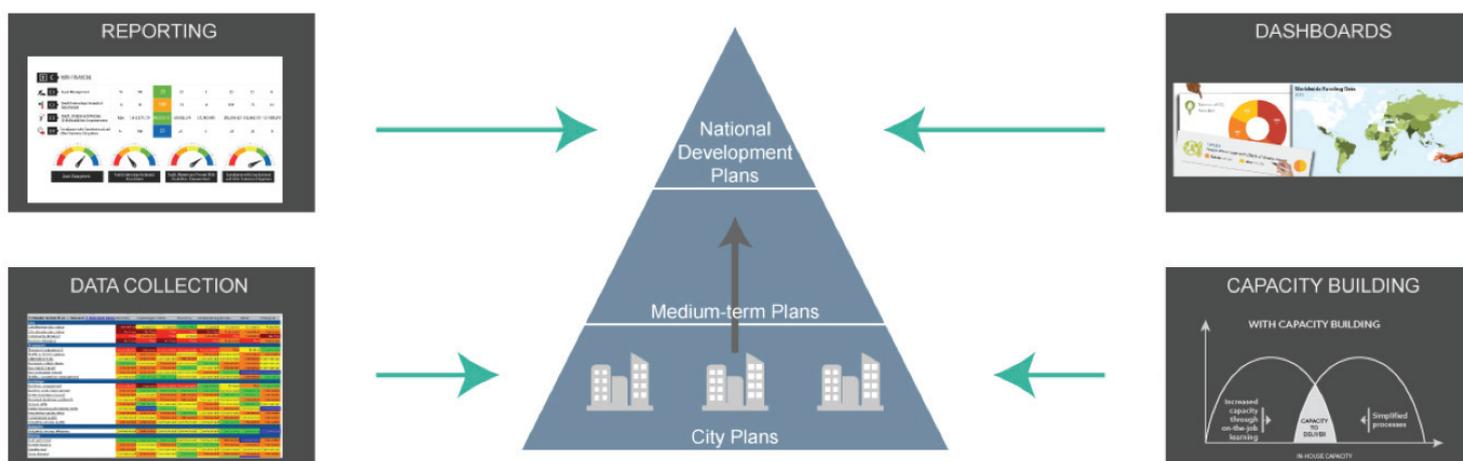
What is Evidence?

Evidence is what city officials need to know what is happening and to make good decisions. Evidence may combine data and knowledge, for example, useful evidence for construction of a road would be a measure of kilometers built vs target, the budget, spend to date, photographs of progress and a signed report from an inspector. With good M&E and Performance Management processes and Knowledge Platform, evidence is captured in real-time and accessed instantly online for decision making.

Key Messages

- Evidence, data and knowledge are required for cities to plan and deliver services and develop.
- In each country, all cities need to work.
- Need to address people, process and technology to cost effectively scale-up.
- People – there is a headcount, qualification, reward and funding gap which limits what cities can achieve.
- Process – without effective, basic processes in place, no city administration can function.
- Simplify and automate evidence and data processes: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL); Payment for Results (PfR); Performance Management Systems (PMS).
- The Knowledge Platform Standard defines minimum online platform functions to fill the gap by streamlining and automating MEL, PfR and PMS.
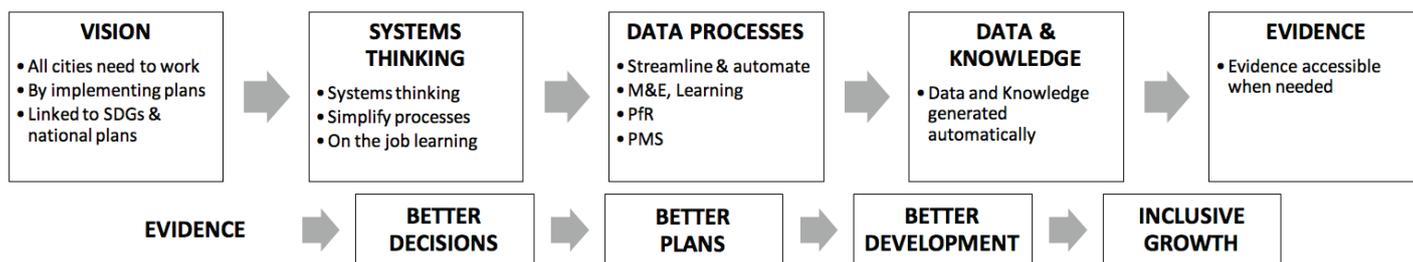
Effective Information Design produces integrated data, knowledge and evidence processes and high quality data and evidence. Without this, access to results-based financing will be limited and infrastructure investment will be less effective.

Effective Information Design leads to simple, easy to use, real time data at a fraction of the cost.

What is Needed to Develop Better Evidence Towards Inclusive Growth?

Evidence depends on available data and knowledge which depends on effective data processes. For data processes to be effective, there needs to be adequate vision, systems thinking and information design. Better evidence contributes to better decisions, better plans, better development and inclusive growth.

VISION	SYSTEMS THINKING	DATA PROCESSES	DATA & KNOWLEDGE	EVIDENCE
• All cities need to work • By implementing plans • Linked to SDGs & national plans	• Systems thinking • Simplify processes • On the job learning	• Streamline & automate • M&E, Learning • PfR • PMS	• Data and Knowledge generated automatically	• Evidence accessible when needed

EVIDENCE	→	BETTER DECISIONS	→	BETTER PLANS	→	BETTER DEVELOPMENT	→	INCLUSIVE GROWTH

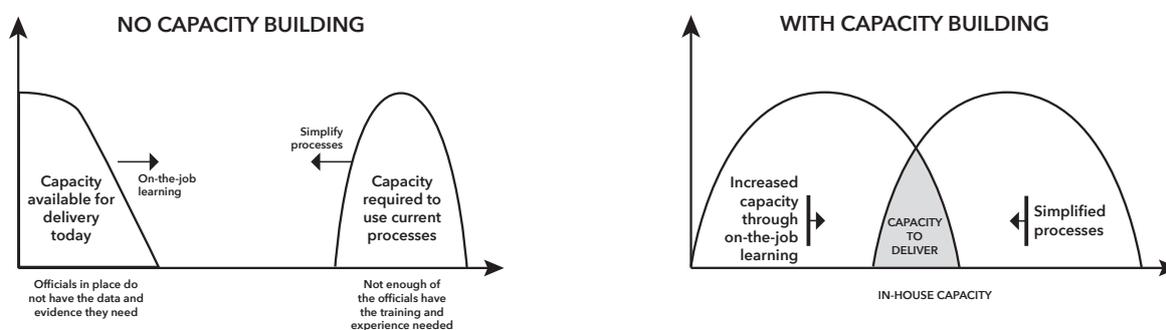## The role of a Cloud-based Online Knowledge Platform and Standard

A "cloud-based" online Knowledge Platform means that knowledge data and evidence from all cities are collected in one database, so the costs of operating and supporting the system are much lower. Side-by-side benchmarking and comparing between cities is built-in and data from all sources is in one place. This is faster, better and cheaper than having many systems and data sources spread across cities.

The Knowledge Platform Standard defines the features and functions of a Knowledge Platform to streamline, automate and integrate data and knowledge processes to provide evidence when needed at city and national levels. Data and knowledge processes include M&E, Learning, Payment for Results and Performance Management. The Knowledge Platform helps to integrate planning and implementation from city to national, regional and global levels.

Improved evidence, is the basis for good decision-making, planning, implementation, service delivery and development. M&E is part of effective Performance Management and Payment for Results processes. Both depend on quality data which can be used as evidence to plan, monitor, manage and improve the city.

Closing the Capacity Gap

Streamlined processes and immediate access to data and evidence saves time for technical staff to do useful work. Streamlining also simplifies work, meaning that less experienced staff can do more of the work required. While the Knowledge Platform and processes cannot replace technical capacity, the platform assists in closing the capacity gap.

NO CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity available for delivery today — On-the-job learning — Simplify processes — Capacity required to use current processes

Officials in place do not have the data and evidence they need

Not enough of the officials have the training and experience needed

WITH CAPACITY BUILDING

Increased capacity through on-the-job learning — CAPACITY TO DELIVER — Simplified processes

IN-HOUSE CAPACITY

Conclusions: A Knowledge Platform is Essential Infrastructure for Development

Missing data, knowledge and evidence is costing cities and nations in service delivery, development, access to funds and in investment. A Knowledge Platform can help to fill the gap by streamlining and automating, leading to efficiency savings (up to 70% in staffing time) freeing essential expert planners and technical officers to do other important work.

- The Knowledge Platform Standard captures the technical functions required to support evidence, data and knowledge processes including M&E, Learning, Payment for Results and Performance Management.
- A cloud-based Knowledge Platform Infrastructure for national and international city networks and local government associations leads to economies of scale – savings on ICT staffing, staffing, support, consulting and service costs.
- A "network effect" improves value for money – The more cities in a network, the more evidence, data, knowledge and learnings are shared with each city contributing to shared learning and impact.
- The Knowledge Platform Infrastructure provides the operating system for city networks to improve evidence, data and knowledge for improved planning, implementation, development and inclusive growth.
- Knowledge Platform Infrastructure supports efficiency, effectiveness, economies of scale and positive network effects.