

## **Description of the project / programme**

### ***Objectives and characteristics of the project***

The overall objective of the project is to create an African digital education Platform on urban development, offering quality MOOCs and online, continuing education training for professionals. It will also act as a forum for the exchange of digital educational resources and the management and governance of African cities to foster sustainable urban development.

Anchored on African soil, initially under the supervision of EPFL, the Platform will gather leading universities in the Anglophone and Francophone regions in order to create a network of institutions in digital education and have impact on the entire continent. African Cities Lab (ACL) is a joint initiative led by EPFL, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana), the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (Maroc), Sèmè City campus (Benin), the University of Carthage (Tunisia), the University of Cape Town (South Africa), and the University of Rwanda to contribute to sustainable urban development on the continent. The initiative, funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), aims to create a digital education platform and its content on urban planning and urban development in Africa. The English-French bilingual ACL platform based on open edX and hosted by the partners in Africa, will offer quality MOOCs and online training for professionals. It will also act as a forum for the exchange of digital educational resources and the management and governance of African cities.

### ***Description of the projet***

The project will be implemented over a two-and-a-half year period. This initial period will set the ground to anchor the activities of the Platform in Africa in a sustainable way, including by strengthening the financial strategy for future developments. The project will be structured along three components that will start concomitantly.

#### ***Component 1 – African Platform on urban development.***

The project will set up the Platform in Africa through the partners, with the resources and infrastructure necessary for the creation, hosting and dissemination of digital content. The existing infrastructure of our partners will facilitate moving forward quickly, while the MOOC production studios at EPFL will be used as a backup to ensure rapid content production.

*Component 2 – Digital educational content on urban development.*

Relevant MOOCs will be produced in English and French. They will be disseminated by the Platform on their own, or packaged in the form of courses or short training courses (see component 3). The MOOCs will be of two types :

- General MOOCs address one theme in a transversal manner. They should provide state-of-the-art and updated training addressing current challenges. Case studies (focus on a city, project, etc) act as complements to the learning content.
- Specific MOOCs allow to further develop a subject in the form of “deep-dive” training focusing on a project implementation and/or financing, or country case studies. They address a specific topic within the theme of interest and allow advanced urban professionals to train a specific skill set.

*Component 3 – Continuing education*

Continuing education is at the heart of this project, whereby the current and next generation of urban planners and developers will be trained.

- Subcomponent 3a – Training programs

As pre-existing resources are pooled and the MOOCs are developed, they will be integrated in the first paid continuing education programs, which will conform to scientific relevance and soundness.

- Subcomponent 3b – Partnerships on continuing education.

This subcomponent will strengthen the operational orientation of the training courses. The subcomponent will put in place hybrid trainings composed of eLearning to gain foundation knowledge (based on the advanced MOOCs developed under component 2), as well as classroom training and field visits to deepen and contextualise knowledge.