



## [Mega /catalytic projects](#)

The national department of Human Settlements needs to be very cautious in how it implements its 'mega/ catalytic' housing project programme. Professor Philip Harrison from the University of Witwatersrand concluded, at a human settlement conference in Cape Town on 16-17 August 2017 organised by Isandla Institute, that "internationally and in South Africa, mega housing projects on the urban edge have frequently exacerbated spatial inequalities, reproducing the divide between residence and work, either creating ghettos of poverty or enclaves of wealth." He went on to say that "a key lesson is that settlement should follow economies and not vice versa." See [here](#) for a copy of his presentation.

In discussions during the conference, there still seems to be some uncertainty as to whether government is promoting mega or catalytic projects. Mega projects, by definition, are large scale projects, and depending on where and how they are implemented may not help the country address its housing and development challenges. Catalytic projects are where a targeted intervention is used to encourage and promote much larger responses and achieve a broader transformation objective. The initial intervention could be at a large or a much smaller scale. There also appears to be uncertainty in some instances as to how informal settlement upgrading projects relate to greenfield mega projects.

Afesis-corplan calls on the national department of Human Settlements and [the Housing Development Agency](#) (who is tasked with managing the whole mega/ catalytic project programme) to significantly improve their communications with the public as to which projects form part of the set of mega/ catalytic projects, what the objectives of these projects are, and how the public can get involved in planning and monitoring the implementation of these projects. For example, despite many attempts by Afesis-corplan to find out more about the mega/ catalytic project in the Buffalo City Metro (understood to be in Duncan Village), it is still unclear what this project is all about.