

# Best Practices Steering Committee

## Report of the 1999 Annual Meeting

*Madrid, Spain 2-4 June 1999*

### Executive Summary

The Best Practices Steering Committee held its third meeting in Madrid, Spain, from 2 to 4 June 1999, hosted by the Government of Spain, with 20 partners participating. Day one began with partners presenting their activity reports for the 1998-1999 period. Issues raised were grouped under four working groups for further discussion: (i) improving the validation and updating process; (ii) modifications to the best practices database; (iii) transferring best practices; and (iv) financial and fundraising issues. Day two featured a discussion on the 2000 Dubai International Award for Best Practices and was followed by meetings of the first two working groups. Working groups three and four met on day three and reported to a final plenary session.

Among the meeting's major conclusions are the following:

1. The "Madrid Principles" were adopted to guide the Best Practices Network in its work to identify, document and disseminate best practices
2. A clear financial reporting format and business plan for the Best Practices Network will be prepared and adopted by partners
3. Sponsorship for the database will actively be sought by UNCHS with revenues to be applied towards (i) providing free access for all; (ii) reducing recurrent maintenance costs currently born by partners
4. Modifications to the database would be evaluated based on their financial implications to the partners
5. Every effort will be made to update 1996 and 1998 submissions, but if no updates are available, submissions will be flagged as an archive on the database
6. A fundraising committee was established to mobilize resources for Best Practices activities and a specific effort will be made to mobilize funds for transfers and to investigate the possibility of establishing a Best Practices Transfer Fund



Ministerio de Fomento  
España



UNCHS (Habitat)

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# BPSC 1999: Minutes

## Day One: 2 June 1999

### Opening Ceremony

1. Following opening remarks by UNCHS, Dubai Municipality and the Government of Spain, the 1999 Steering Committee meeting was officially opened.

### Partners Reports

#### Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme

2. The BLP reported on the outcomes of the recently concluded 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Human Settlements. The BLP will now work under the umbrella of the Urban Secretariat which is devoted to synthesizing the lessons learned from Habitat's operational activities and translating them into norms for urban governance and management. The BLP also presented a list of issues raised in partner reports (see Annex 1).

#### Government of Spain

3. Three activities supported by the Government and National Committee of Spain were described: (a) the Spanish version of the Best Practices database, translated and hosted by the University of Madrid; (b) the Ibero-American and Caribbean Forum on Best Practices; (c) its national competition for the Dubai International Award which identified best practices in three major areas: social inclusion, environment and production and consumption patterns.
4. Spain also reported on a recent seminar and exhibition on Best Practices held in Malaga and indicated that it would explore opportunities to hold more seminars in the future.

#### Dubai Municipality

5. Dubai Municipality reported on the results of the 1998 Dubai International Award for Best Practices (DIABP) and proposed three areas for improvement for the 2000 Award: (a) strengthened regional networks in Africa, Eastern Europe and the Arab States Region; (b) improving the quality of submissions; (c) partner support to submitters, including using Award winning submissions from 1998 as models to be followed.

#### Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

6. AIT described a new, Internet-based capacity-building approach being tested in Asia and developed with the University of Cardiff: the Virtual Policy Studio (VPS). 5 to 6 planners, architects and/or elected officials will be brought together through email and the Internet for a two week programme focusing on a specific area of local government. A moderator will lead several problem-solving exercises and participants will also take advantage of each other's expertise to solve their own problems. The VPS will use Best Practices as resources for participants. While still in the development phase, a first module on Municipal Housing Finance is being prepared.
7. The key innovation is to provide practitioners with on-going peer support to help solve specific problems and policy issues.

#### Centre for Developing Cities (CDC)

8. As a small and relatively new centre, CDC achieved limited success in promoting Best Practices in Australia. Specific funding is being sought to enable CDC to play a more active role as a partner. CDC proposed that a future meeting of the Steering Committee be held in Australia.

9. CDC through its participation in consultancy work in Saudi Arabia has raised with the Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA) the possibility of the ADA and Arriyadh Municipality becoming supporters of the BLP.

#### **CEDARE**

10. Despite increasing the number of submissions for 1998 to 47, concerns remain regarding quantity and quality. In response, CEDARE is actively seeking additional partners.
11. CEDARE's future activities include: a survey of participatory approaches to upgrading informal settlements, a survey on solid-waste management and transferring best practices within the region.
12. CEDARE is launching a major new initiative on "Localizing Sustainable Development" aimed at capacity-building, institutional development and the institutionalization of participatory governance. The initiative will be launched in October or November 1999 in conjunction with a regional meeting of the Urban Environment Forum (UEF).

#### **DeINet/ILO**

13. DeINet only joined the partnership in February 1999, but will soon begin activities involving Best Practices, particularly in Spanish-speaking countries.

#### **Huairou Commission**

14. The Huairou Commission recently launched the call for "Our Best Practices" at a meeting in Bombay in January attended by representatives from 17 countries. The call was repeated in Nairobi during the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Human Settlements held in Nairobi, in May.
15. With support from the UNDP, the Huairou Commission will be identifying grassroots women's best practices. Each qualifying Best Practice will be paid US\$300 to for their effort in documenting their work. A deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> September 1999 has been set so that substantive feedback can be provided for submitters. Those wishing to be forwarded for consideration for the Dubai International Award for Best Practices shall be sent to UNCHS. Five Best Practices will be documented in a casebook.
16. EXPO 2000 in Hannover, Germany, will serve as a major vehicle for disseminating the lessons learned. 20 1-day training sessions will be held, with each initiative presenting their lessons using their own techniques. Day 7 of their event will feature "Partnership Dialogues" to which are invited all BLP Partners.

#### **ENDA Tiers Monde**

17. ENDA recommends that partners identify and address the constraints to submitting, particularly the complexity of the reporting format and by offering support through the documentation process.
18. ENDA is also working to strengthen regional networks in West Africa by bringing on new partners such as the Municipal Development Programme and organisations in Burkina Faso and Niger.
19. There is a need to produce and disseminate hard-copy information related to best practices.
20. ENDA is exploring World Bank funding for regional transfers of Best Practices related to locally-funded infrastructure projects.

#### **Global Eco-village Network (GEN)**

21. GEN is establishing new partnerships in Sri Lanka (where there are 12,000 eco-villages already established) and with UNDP-Brazil to establish eco-villages in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Future activities also include preparing for the 2000 Dubai International Award and for EXPO 2000.
22. GEN is preparing pilot training programmes on such subjects as eco-tourism and e-commerce for its network.

### **Ibero-American Forum on Best Practices**

23. The Forum's plans for 1999-2000 include: identifying best practices, producing a regional newsletter, producing videos for learning and establishing a regional Internet Forum for facilitating dialogues and transfers.
24. The Forum will ask each sub-regional node to produce at least 2 case-studies and to identify national focal points throughout the region (including reviving Habitat II National Committees).
25. Based on its experience in 1998, the Forum proposes that all partners maintain regular (quarterly) contacts with previous submitters to ensure submissions are updated. The Forum also proposed that previous submitters be given a copy of the database as an incentive to stimulate continued interest and transfers.

### **Human Settlement Management Institute (HSMI)**

26. HSMI described its comprehensive national identification and selection process for the Dubai International Award for Best Practices. HSMI noted that many of India's best practices are currently being transferred nationally and internationally. In addition, best practices are incorporated in HSMI's educational and training activities.
27. HSMI raised two concerns: (a) that submissions should be carefully verified by partners to ensure accurate reporting; (b) that other organisations' best practices, such as UNDP, WHO and DFID, be incorporated into Habitat's database.

### **Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS)**

28. IHS offered several recommendations for future activities, including: broadening the partners network in Central and Eastern Europe, increasing the time available for validating new submissions, creating a "dialogue box" on the database for feedback on new submissions and including more visual information on the database.
29. IHS also requested additional information on the existing and planned links between indicators and best practices within the UNCHS.

### **Joslyn Castle Institute (JCI)**

30. JCI raised the issue of a perceived sectoral bias of best practices: the prominence accorded to thematic categories in the reporting format comes at the expense of a more holistic vision of sustainable development. The Best Practices Network needs to be aware of the normative implications of its work.
31. JCI also raised the issue of the need to develop indicators of sustainability for each thematic category of best practice. In this last respect, JCI presented the indicators it has developed for sustainable community design.

### **University of Madrid (UoM)**

32. UoM described how it has used share-ware to design its website and that the site has received over 400,000 hits in 1998. In addition, UoM is regularly distributing a newsletter featuring best practices. The UoM is currently updating its Spanish-language database with the inclusion of 1998 good and best practices.

### **Together Foundation**

33. The Together Foundation's future plans include: hosting a reception in New York to identify potential corporate sponsors for the Best Practices database; retaining a public relations firm to assist in identifying corporate support and hosting a reception in New York in October 1999, to launch the CD-version of the Best Practices database on World Habitat Day
34. The Together Foundation will also investigate the possibility of hosting the next Steering Committee meeting in Aruba, Venezuela.

### **The City of Vienna**

35. The City of Vienna has approved the partnership with Habitat and will involve all 57 municipal departments in best practices activities, especially related to urban environmental technologies and the Central and Eastern European region.
36. The City will focus on: harmonizing CEE and EU standards; traffic and mobility issues; and renewal of old towns. It will also work to develop the "Municipia" urban planners database of good and best practices. Other activities include the development of a roster of expertise, creation of an urban observatory and the dissemination of Viennese best practices information via a mobile exhibit and display.

### **World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC)**

37. Both WACLAC and the Arab Towns Organisation will promote current best practices in their newsletters and will also seek new best practices for the 2000 Dubai Award. Regional consultations for the World Charter on Local Self-Government will also be used to promote the Award.
38. UNCHS presented the reports on behalf of the Brazilian Institute for Municipal Administration and the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives.
39. UNCHS submitted a summarized list of issues raised by partners in their reports. Partners were then invited to submit additional issues for discussion. Issues were then grouped into four working groups as follows:
  - (a) Working Group 1: Validation and Updating Submissions
  - (b) Working Group 2: Modifications to the Best Practices Database
  - (c) Working Group 3: Transfers
  - (d) Working Group 4: Financial and Fundraising Issues
40. It was agreed that up to two working groups should be held concurrently. Partners divided themselves up into working groups.

<b>Day Two: 3 June 1999</b>
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### **Plenary Session: Dubai International Award for Best Practices (DIABP)**

#### **Opening Remarks: Dubai Municipality**

1. Dubai Municipality (DM) thanked the partners for their considerable efforts in promoting the Dubai International Award for Best Practices.
2. DM informed partners that to date significant steps had already been taken to promote the 2000 Award, including: the printing and dissemination, in four languages, of the submission guide and the regulations and procedures; the official launch of the 2000 Award during the Commission on Human Settlements in Nairobi; and the presentation of a copy of the DIABP trophy to UNCHS headquarters in Nairobi.
3. DM hopes that the partners will help generate a large number of high quality submissions for the 2000 Award cycle.

#### **Discussions**

4. IHS noted the difficulty in mobilizing donor support for identifying best practices for the Dubai Award. Donors prefer to create new products that can be attributed to them.
5. Joslyn Castle suggested that "transfers" are an activity that are more attractive to donors. JCI is working with UNCHS to prepare a proposal to a US foundation for a series of community-based transfers.
6. Dubai Municipality proposed that UNCHS make a concerted effort to identify corporate donors for Best Practices activities.

7. IBAM urged UNCHS to create a bridge between the ICLEI's Local Initiative Awards and the Dubai Awards.

### **Working Groups 1 and 2: Reports and Outstanding Issues**

8. Partners then broke into Working Groups 1 and 2, agreeing to meet in plenary once their discussions were complete (please see the attached reports).
9. Reports were presented to the plenary and clarification was sought on recommendations made by each working group.
10. It was agreed that if access to the database was to be made free, effort should be made to identify and monitor the users of the database.
11. Partners requested the Together Foundation provide a complete list of subscribers to the database, dis-aggregated by region.
12. The issue regarding the addition of new categories to the database was resolved by the decision that any changes would be made based on cost estimates to be provided by the Together Foundation. Once available, proposed changes would be submitted to full partners for approval.
13. It was agreed that working groups 3 and 4 would convene the next morning without a prior plenary session.

<b>Day Three: 4 June 1999</b>
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1. The Together Foundation demonstrated to partners how to post new documents on the BLP Intranet.

### **Report of the Working Groups**

2. Working Group reports were presented to Plenary in the afternoon (please see attached).

### **Final Plenary Session: Outstanding Issues**

3. It was agreed that the Standing Committee would develop a financial reporting mechanism to be used by UNCHS and all partners to report on the use of funds and resources. It was also suggested that a business plan be developed for any future revenues and that the plan be adopted by the partners.
4. It was agreed that the revenues from sales of the 1996 Best Practices database were generated prior to the creation of the Best Practices Network and, therefore, decisions on how they are used are the prerogative of UNCHS and the Together Foundation. It was agreed that these revenues would be used to identify potential sponsors for the Best Practices database. Revenues would then be used to provide free access to the database, as a first priority and, as a second priority, to support partners' efforts to identify and validate new best practices.
5. JCI noted that providing free access to the database would undermine its own fundraising strategy, namely providing sponsors of JCI with access to the database. It was agreed that any decision regarding changes in the current pricing policy would await the results of efforts to identify corporate sponsors for the database and be delayed for up to one year to allow JCI to change its product line.
6. It was also noted that providing free access to the database might require rethinking of the proposal to offer copies of the database as an incentive to update original submissions.
7. Partners then reviewed the "Madrid Principles" prepared by Joslyn Castle and the Huairou Commission. Changes were made and once approved will be widely disseminated through the BLP home page, the Best Practices database and other promotional literature relating to the BLP and the DIABP.

8. IBAM and the City of Vienna noted that the adoption of “Gender and Social Inclusion” as a major criteria for Best Practices might undermine their efforts to identify best practices in some regions and thematic areas. The debate centred around the fundamental issue of the normative role of “Best Practices” and the Dubai Award. It was agreed that the issue should be taken up in greater detail at the next Steering Committee meeting. In the interim, it was agreed that the terms of reference of the TAC should explicitly state that the absence of compliance with any of the additional criteria should not disqualify a submission from the Award.
9. A new Standing Committee was selected, consisting of: Martha Vargas, Wadad Al Sulwayeh, Marlene Fernandes, Cecil Steward, Munther Juma and Malick Gaye. It was agreed that the Standing Committee would take on the functions of the Financial Committee proposed by Working Group 4.
10. The following time-table for financial reporting was also adopted:
  - 7 days: UNCHS to distribute a full financial report to the Standing Committee
  - 30 days: Financial report finalized and approved
  - 60 days: Framework for budgeting and reporting finalized and deadline for financial contributions by partners.
  - 1 October: Partners financial reports submitted to Standing Committee

### **Meeting Conclusion**

11. The Government of Spain thanked Dubai Municipality for its support for the Dubai International Award for Best Practices and thanked all participants for their hard work during the past 3 days.
12. UNCHS thanked the Government of Spain for its warm hospitality and support during the meeting. UNCHS also thanked the partners for their continued hard work and the Together Foundation for producing the 1999 Best Practices Database on time for delivery to partners at the Steering Committee meeting.
13. Partners each collected up to 20 copies of the CD-ROM databases before leaving.

## Working Group 1: Validation/Updates

Participants: W. Al Sulwayeh, WACLAC/ATO  
M. East, Global Eco-village Network  
M. Fernandes, IBAM  
M. Gaardboe, Centre for Developing Cities  
M. Gaye, ENDA TM  
M. Juma, Dubai Municipality  
D. Lopez, DeINet/ILO  
O. Salem, CEDARE  
M. Serageldin, Harvard  
K. Singh, HSMI  
C. Steward, Joslyn Castle Institute  
S. Walsh, UNCHS – LAC  
N. You, UNCHS

This working group met on 3 June and made recommendations on the following issues:

### 1. Holistic/Sectoral Approach and Indicators

In view of time constraints, these two issues which were initially tabled by Joslyn Castle were voluntarily deferred. A brief discussion was held and it was generally agreed that the Best Practices emphasis is on the holistic approach, in conformity with the spirit of the Habitat Agenda. It was noted that future versions of the guide and the reporting format should de-emphasize the appearance of a "sectoral bias" by relegating the portion pertaining to the thematic classification of a practice to an annex, as this portion is essentially a means for searching practices. Similarly, the issue of indicators was deferred (see also the final plenary session where this issue was raised again). It was decided that both these items be included in the agenda of the next Steering Committee meeting.

### 2. Feedback process to submitters and role of partners

This issue was dealt with in combination with the item on "respective role of partners". Further to discussions between members of the working group, it was agreed that:

- (a) Submitters be encouraged to submit early to benefit from substantive feedback. The proposed "informal deadline" is 31 December 1999.
- (b) Several partners noted that the "validation sheet" contained useful information for submitters, particularly the narrative section providing written comments. It was decided that the Secretariat should be responsible for compiling these comments and for forwarding them to the submitters.
- (c) Several partners noted that the validation process regarding classification as "best", "good" or "non-compliant" represented a duplication of effort with the TAC review process. One partner also noted that this was the most time-consuming task in the validation process. It was decided that partners should limit their validation efforts to:  
(i) factual validation; (ii) qualifying or non-qualifying; and (iii) written comments designed to provide substantive feedback to submitters.
- (d) It was further agreed that the substantive feedback should focus on improving submissions in the following areas:
  - The five (5) nomination criteria namely: (i) impact; (ii) partnership; (iii) sustainability; (iv) leadership & community empowerment; (v) gender and social inclusion;
  - Lessons learned particularly vis-à-vis transfers or transferability of the practice.
- (e) It was further agreed that all partners are sufficiently familiar with the system and it is therefore no longer necessary to seek validation from two partners. This would

lessen the amount of work and coordination required. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would use its best judgement for distributing submissions for validation based on fair share of work load and the respective "competency" of each partner. It was also agreed that the Secretariat should continue its practice of soliciting validation from institutions and organisations outside the steering committee so as to compliment the competencies of partners.

- (f) That qualifying but non-award-winning practices should be given a certificate or "seal" of recognition which would also stress the importance of "updates" (cf. infra).
- (g) Non-qualifying submissions would be informed by a letter from UNCHS.

### **3. Updates for 1996 and 1998 Submissions**

Initially tabled by the Foro, this issue was further elaborated upon by the Secretariat recommending that a concerted effort be made to seek updates for 1996 and 1998 submissions, as part of the usefulness of the database depends on substantive updates as well as useable information regarding contact persons, addresses and telephone numbers. The Secretariat further suggested that in the absence of updated information, 1996 practices be flagged as having an archival status. It was also noted that the Foro Secretariat is in the process of implementing periodic contact with 1998 submitters and recommended a sort of newsletter to be circulated to submitters. The discussion revealed that "updates" are not applicable to all practices. HSMI provided examples of practices in such areas as "post-disaster relief" and other one-time interventions that will remain valid in terms of lessons learned. Discussion also focused on providing an "incentive" for those submitting updates, notably in the form of free access to the database. Based on these discussions, the following decisions were made by the working group:

- (a) Update efforts should focus on "Best Practices," not "Good Practices"
- (b) Updates would be sought primarily by Regional Centres. However, as regional centres do not cover all regions, the thematic centres would be solicited by the Secretariat to do the same;
- (c) Each partner will contact 10-15 submissions to obtain updates
- (d) The copyright release form will mention the need to provide regular updates. In exchange for this commitment, submitters will be given free access to the database both as an incentive as well as a means for submitters to gain a better understanding of what they are contributing to (see also the final plenary session);
- (e) Past submissions that do not provide updates be "flagged" as such in the database, primarily to inform users of the database that information may be out of date.

### **4. Mandatory Financial Profile**

Initially tabled by several partners, it was noted that having a financial profile was very important for the "comparability" of practices. However, further to discussion, it was noted that such reporting may not be feasible nor logical for a number of smaller NGOs/CBOs as well as some practices resulting from the work of activist groups. It was decided that financial profiles and reporting should be actively sought and required of practices submitted from larger organisations and institutions, namely those involving local authorities, public agencies, the private and larger non-for-profit organisations.

### **5. Good policies, action plans and promising practices**

These three items were discussed in an inter-related manner. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the documentation of good policies and exemplary action plans was being envisaged by UNCHS (Habitat) as part of the preparations leading up to Istanbul +5. It also informed the Committee that there was a demand for information on practices that were eliminated by the TAC. One partner (IBAM) noted that a programme it considered to be a "best practice" was classified as "non-qualifying" by the TAC in 1998. Other partners noted that policies of a legislative nature fell outside the purview of Best

Practices as these would require a different validation process. One partner (Harvard) also stressed the importance of not diluting the essence of the database or of "best practices" by including a "promising practices" category. It was therefore decided that:

- (a) Programmes and plans of action are to be included and that the TOR of the TAC should be amended so that members of the TAC are cognizant of their inclusion;
- (b) National policies and legislation be excluded;
- (c) Promising practices will not become a feature nor a sub-category of the database.

#### **6. Tourism Category**

This item was tabled by the Secretariat which informed the Committee that there were already several submissions in this category but no means for searching this category. The Secretariat also informed the Committee of the increasing importance being accorded to this issue by the international community. Further to discussion, it was decided that:

- (a) A Tourism category could be established pending its financial implications;
- (b) The Secretariat consult with experts in the field to present such a category and its sub-categories for consideration by partners over the Intranet.

#### **7. Submission Languages**

This issue was extensively discussed and several partners noted that the extent of outreach and usefulness of the Awards, the database and the programme as a whole depended to a large extent on its ability to deal with languages. It was noted that certain regional centres bear the greatest burden in this area and that is neither feasible nor desirable to complicate the task of the TAC to deal with submissions in several languages. It was decided, given the present resource constraints, that submissions for 2000 may be made in any language but must be accompanied by an English version to be considered by the TAC (see also infra: Ownership and final plenary session's discussion of Principles).

#### **8. Ownership of Submissions and Principles**

Initially tabled by the Huairou Commission, the discussion of this issue led to a broader debate on "principles". It was felt that a set of principles, including the issue of ownership of information, was necessary to firmly establish the nature of the Programme's working relationship with various groups, notably with civil society, and to serve as a guide for the Programme and its partners. A sub-working group was formed (HC and JCI) to draft a set of principles that would guide the work of the Programme and be widely disseminated, especially through the copyright release form.

## Working Group 2: Modifications to the Best Practices Database

Participants: A. Atif, Dubai Municipality  
J. Cervera, University of Madrid  
E. Frank, IHS  
S. Fricska, UNCHS  
M. Garcia, Government of Spain  
B. Koch, Together Foundation  
H. Lootah, Dubai Municipality  
A. Mehta, Asian Institute of Technology  
A. Muller, City of Vienna  
J-L Nicolas, Government of Spain  
F. Rodriguez, Government of Spain  
E. Stevens, Joslyn Castle Institute  
M. Vargas, Together Foundation

Working Group II met on June 3 and made recommendations on the following issues:

### 1. Changes proposed by UNCHS (Habitat)

Prior to the meeting, UNCHS had circulated to all partners a list of proposed modifications to the Best Practices database. The proposed changes were sent to the Together Foundation for costing, but time constraints prevented the preparation of a comprehensive cost breakdown.

During discussions, partners expressed their concern that the proposed changes would be too costly. At the same time, other partners also proposed additional modifications to the database. Without specific figures, specific decisions could not be made. It was decided, therefore, that the Together Foundation should prepare and circulate to full partners, cost-estimates for each proposed change. It was further agreed that no change should be made until approved by full partners. The University of Madrid and the City of Vienna offered to host some Best Practices outputs on their servers as a cost saving measure.

The list of proposed changes to be priced includes:

- Improvements to the database user interface as per UNCHS recommendations;
- Creating a search option for "Strategies." Of principle use to UNCHS, such a mechanism would allow users to identify those practices that provide evidence of using the "enabling approach" advocated by the Habitat Agenda
- Flagging practices as "Archive" for submissions which have not been updated
- Adding a new search category for Tourism or Transfers (or any other category)
- Adding a new search sub-category for Tourism or Transfers (or any other sub-category)
- Creation of a search category for "Promising Practices," submissions which have not yet been fully implemented, but are worth watching
- Creating an on-line submission form allowing those with Internet access to nominate a best practice via the Internet
- Creating a multi-lingual search engine for translated Best Practices
- Creating Dialogue boxes for subscribers to the database to be able to comment on individual submissions, especially submissions for the 2000 Dubai Award
- Adding a field for the name of the Best Practice organisation (currently this is not available in the reporting format and the name of the Best Practice may not be the name of the Best Practice organisation)
- Technical implications and cost of adding a one minute video clip to both (a) the CD-ROM; and (b) Internet version of the database.

## **2. Best Practices Videos**

The Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) proposed that additional video footage be included in future editions of the Best Practices database. UNCHS explained that the current CD-ROM was nearly full, but that, in principle, more video clips could be added to the Internet version. As in previous years, the submission guide requested submitters to include any available video footage as supporting material.

IHS also requested that UNCHS distribute to partners a list of Best Practices videos received as supporting material. Partners indicated they may wish to make use of these resources.

## **3. Old Submissions**

Partners expressed concern that the quality of the database would decline if the information found there was not current. The working group proposed the following policy regarding submissions:

“All submissions should reside on the database for two years. After this period, if no updated information is obtained, the submission should be archived in a separate field searchable by region and country (but not searchable by the search engine).“

Partners noted that this implies a vigorous validation/updating process by Habitat and all partners.

## **4. Passwords**

Some partners expressed concern regarding the security of their passwords. It was agreed that the Together Foundation would provide partners with the option of changing their password to the database at their own discretion.

## **5. Links to Other Databases**

It was decided that UNCHS would create a page of links from the best practices database home-page (<http://www.bestpractices.org>) to other best practices databases on the web.

## **6. Ownership of Data**

The City of Vienna asked whether partners could make use of existing information on the database or information submitted for the Dubai Award but not included in the database to develop new products. UNCHS explained that the current copyright release form signed by submitters allowed UNCHS and Dubai Municipality to use the information submitted to develop new products. It was agreed that UNCHS would revise the copyright release form to state that submitters allow Habitat, Dubai Municipality and BLP Partners to make use of the information submitted. This would allow partners to modify the data and present it in other forms and applications.

## **7. Mirroring the Database**

The City of Vienna, Dubai Municipality and IHS indicated that they would be interested in hosting mirror sites of the Best Practices database. For Internet users in their region, this would provide faster access.

The Together Foundation said that consistency of data should be an important issue when considering mirror sites. They explained the difference between a true mirror system in which updates to the master database are immediately reflected on all mirrored sites and a system in which updated versions of the master database are regularly distributed to mirror sites where they are uploaded to replace old versions.

They added that the first option – a true mirror system – requires greater harmony of technologies and higher maintenance charges to partners than the second.

It was agreed that the Together Foundation would explore the second option in more detail. The Together Foundation will provide a list of the technical requirements and their cost implications to partners.

## Working Group 3: Transfers

Participants: A. Atif, Dubai Municipality  
J. Cervera, University of Madrid  
E. Frank, IHS  
S. Fricska, UNCHS  
M. Garcia, Government of Spain  
M. Jaeckel, Huairou Commission  
B. Koch, Together Foundation  
H. Lootah, Dubai Municipality  
A. Mehta, Asian Institute of Technology  
J-L Nicolas, Government of Spain  
F. Rodriguez, Government of Spain  
C. Steward, Joslyn Castle Institute  
S. Walsh, UNCHS – LAC

This working group met on 4 June and made recommendations on the following issues:

### 1. Definition of a Transfer

The working group agreed that there is a continuum along which experience is exchanged, starting from inspiration and awareness raising and including the production of case-studies and the holding of workshops. It was agreed, however, that a transfer should be regarded as a distinct means of exchange.

The working group recommended that the definition of transfer as found in the “Guide to the Transfer of Effective Practices” be adopted as a general working definition of transfer:

*“A transfer is a structured process of learning... a transfer implies, at a minimum, the identification and awareness of solutions, the matching of demand for learning with supply of experience and expertise and a series of steps that need to be taken to help bring about the desired change.”*

The working group also proposed the following additional considerations for clarifying the concept of transfer:

- A transfer involves face-to-face learning, not just through the Internet
- A transfer involves peer-to-peer learning
- Best Practices should be empowered to develop the ways of “teaching” and communicating their experiences in their own language and methods
- Best Practices must be adapted to local settings
- A transfer should involve groups of stakeholders, not just individual representatives to ensure that the lessons learned are incorporated fully into the work of the institution/organisation after the transfer
- A transfer can equally involve process skills/lessons (how to build partnerships) as well as products (solid-waste management plan)

### 2. Monitoring Transfers

The working group recommended that each partner monitor or undertake at least one transfer before the next steering committee meeting. An important part of this process would be to maintain regular contact with 1998 submitters. Each transfer should also be documented and the experience disseminated in partner newsletters, as appropriate.

The working group recommends that UNCHS establish a space on the BLP home-page devoted to disseminating information on transfers. Information on transfers should be

disseminated with the Best Practices database and using audio tape and hard-copy formats.

The working group proposed the following questions to be included in any monitoring report:

- Who originated the transfer?
- What aspect of the Best Practice inspired the transfer and how?
- What element of the Best Practice was transferred?
- Who if anyone facilitated the transfer?
- What was the mechanism for the transfer?
- What was the time-frame for the transfer?
- What did each party learn from the experience?
- How were these lessons incorporated into each party's work?
- How was the Best Practice adapted to local conditions?
- Did the transfer help leverage additional resources for the work of each party?
- What changes in working methods occurred as a result of the transfer?
- How was the impact of the transfer measured?
- What obstacles were encountered and how were they overcome?
- How does the transfer connect with policy-makers and decision-makers?

### **3. Fundraising for Transfers**

The working group recommended that UNCHS develop a core fundraising document for transfers that would outline an overall programme of action. Partners could then use this framework to mobilize funds. The need for coordination between partners was emphasized. It was proposed that partners could mobilize resources for specific transfer activities and build in to proposals a percentage of funds to be pooled in a common transfer fund (see below). It was further proposed that the BLP consult with other United Nations agencies to encourage the transfer of best practices experience within this overall framework of activities.

The working group recommends that a core group undertake fundraising efforts specifically for transfers. The group feels that bringing people together is an attractive idea for the private sector. Potential sources of in-kind contributions include: airlines, advertising agencies, hotels, investment banks, video production companies and distributors such as WE-TV. In addition, the fundraising group should also be charged with identifying donors who would contribute cash to be pooled in a transfer fund.

It was proposed that an advertising campaign be considered to generate interest and awareness of a "Best Practices Transfer Fund".

Initial members of the fund-raising group would be: Monika Jaekel, Marta Garcia Nart and Szilard Friczka and that additional members would be sought during the plenary session.

## Working Group 4: Financial and Fund Raising Issues

Participants: W. Al Sulwayeh, WACLAC/ATO  
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K. Singh, HSMI  
N. You, UNCHS

The working group met on 4 June and organised its discussions in two parts. First, it reviewed to what extent the decision of the 1998 Steering Committee were implemented. Second, it discussed the way forward.

### Part A: Review of 1998 Decisions

#### 1. Partner fees and collection of outstanding fees

It was observed that not every partner had signed an MOU and/or paid the partner fees. It was recommended that in the first case potential partners could not be member of the Steering Committee and could not be considered as full partners. In the second case the potential partner would be asked to settle the fee within 60 days after conclusion of the Steering Committee meeting.

#### 2. Intranet conference on fund raising

The BLP had put info on fundraising opportunities on the BLP Intranet shortly after the 1998 Steering Group. It was recommended that a more regular two-way process of information exchange would be needed between partners and secretariat to sustain the effort.

#### 3. Establishment of a regular financial reporting & budgeting format.

It was agreed that there needed to be improved transparency between UNCHS and the partners. A generic financial statement should be developed that would give an overview of all financial resources, fees and other contributions as well as the costs incurred. Also a format is required that would give a comprehensive overview of costs and revenues. [It was noted that the BLP had paid the 3 organisations partners fees.]

#### 4. Acknowledgement of Partner Contributions to Best Practices Products

Due acknowledgement to partner contributions has been given, especially on the 1999 CD-ROM cover.

### Part B: Future Developments

#### 1. Establishment of a Financial Committee

A financial committee is to be established. 5 Steering Committee members are asked to volunteer. The committee is to review the financial statement of the BLP and suggest a format and structure for a future budget.

#### 2. Sponsorship of the Best Practices database

Sponsors for the database would be welcome. The database is, according to independent advice, marketable. The number of sponsors should be limited to five and should be operational in the following sectors: finance, construction, knowledge development, general service and one other. Selection of sponsors should be undertaken carefully and in full consultation with partners. Sponsors would have to pay a fixed sum as well as an amount proportionate to the number of hits or users.

It is recommended that the database could contain a sponsor profile but not an endorsement as a corporate best practice. Also there is to be a clear indication that the profile is only an advertisement.

Partners will be asked to advise before any contract will be signed. Revenues from sponsoring should go to providing free access to database and support to partners in identification, documentation and validation of submissions.

Other Best Practices products, such as transfers and casebooks, could also be sponsored. Product-based sponsorship should be explored.

In attracting new sponsors also the priorities are 1, free access and 2) support to partners in identification, documentation and validation.

It is possible to reduce partner fees through decreases in overhead and maintenance costs, minimizing database modifications and identifying alternative contractors. The Financial Committee is to make suggestions for cost reduction for different components, with due respect for the copy rights on the search engine and expertise that was developed and is provided by the experts in especially programming aspects.

### **3. Budget**

A budget plan needs to be developed that includes the whole program. In development of the budget plan a number of principles can be adhered to:

- Determine the costs that each center makes in the identification/validation process.
- Each center should have a target of at least 5 transfers and 8 case developments.
- The demarcation of number of partners and their contribution in partner fees.
- Priorities in investments, steps to promote the database and improve the marketing effort through a well-defined strategy
- It was noted with dismay in this respect that only 60-80 actual subscribers made use of the database. Others are institutional users and have a free access or enter through partners.
- In strategy development the first priority is to cover the costs of the centers. A differentiation in compensation of costs of partners is to be based on the principle of costs that are occurred over and above the normal operational costs.

### **4. Mobilising Support and Opportunities for Funding:**

- (a) InfoDev/Worldbank. It was agreed that regional partners would send a draft proposal for their region to the BLP before 1<sup>st</sup> of October. The BLP would comment and give further suggestions before submission of proposal.
- (b) Bilateral funding. The BLP will prepare an inventory of funding possibilities with the major donors (5-6 now) and make this information available to partners. Especially possibilities for developing proposals at country level seem to have increased through decentralization of the procedure.
- (c) European Union funding. Also here the BLP should explore the possibilities. EU partners are to take the lead in developing proposals. For Spain the University of Madrid could be the partner.

(d) Other Sources. The BLP is asked to take a pro-active approach towards the identification of possible donors.

**Terms of Reference for Best Practices Casebooks**

The TOR for the casebook development is felt to be appropriate in terms of format but there would be need to increase the possibilities for a more elaborate discussion on the process and results than is presently suggested in terms of maximum number of words.

## Annex 1: List of Issues Raised in Partner Reports

This a summary of issues raised by partners in their progress reports:

**1. Updates of 1996 and 1998 submissions:** Several partners raised the issue of updating old submissions. Updating has obvious direct links to: (i) the quality of the database; (ii) the usefulness of the database with regards to contact names, addresses, etc. The Foro, representing 6 members, suggests that old submitters be given a copy of the CD-ROM as an additional incentive in addition to the incentive of being re-considered for the Award. As suggested by the core programme, Habitat would take the responsibility for initiating contacts to be followed up by partners in their respective regions and thematic areas of expertise.

**2. Password use:** One partner raised the issue of the way the password functions. It is unclear by what is meant here, but the issue is raised and should be discussed.

**3. Integrating Huairou's case-study methodology** (at least a gender component) into their further analysis in terms of policy and capacity-building implications.

**4. Virtual Policy Studios:** How can VPSs make systematic use of BPs and contribute to their analysis and application vis-à-vis policy and capacity-building implications. VPSs could be an highly effective means of reaching out to decision-makers and this may be the subject of a concerted fundraising strategy for mainstreaming the normative dimension of best practices.

**5. Indicators of sustainability:** how can we develop/improve indicators of sustainability based on the lessons learned from best practices (Something that could be discussed at the meeting with recommendations for generic TOR for method and fundraising)

**6. Regional BP Steering Committees:** strengthen regional outreach/mainstreaming and could be an effective mechanism to allow the BLP to expand the number of partners while having full steering committee meetings with a limited number of regional representatives.

**7. Regional and Other Awards:** The number of parallel awards is now growing. This is a development that has been encouraged to help mainstream the concept of best practices. If this trend continues, a conceptual and operational framework will need to be devised so as not to create confusion, particularly with NGOs/CBOs and local authorities.

**8. Parallel databases:** Several partners have or are about to establish databases. How do we create active links and harmonise their presentation to the general public?

**9. Grassroots hard-copy publications:** is this something for which we should write a funding proposal? In May, IPS issued a statement from 133 countries that petitioned the UN not to rely excessively on the Internet.

**10. More time for validation** of submissions/clarification of partner responsibilities; linked to concern regarding quality of information on the database

**11. Networking:** Are database users contacting submitters for more information?

**12. Technical Advisory Committee:** Add one day for the TAC meeting.

**13. Create a dialogue box** for each (or selected) BP submission to get additional information, feedback and discussions.

**13. More intensive use of the Intranet:** The need to use the Intranet more frequently amongst partners to share resources, knowledge and expertise.

## **Annex 2: Madrid Principles**

Following are a number of principles that guide the work of the Best Practices Partners Network and of the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme in identifying, documenting and disseminating Best Practices in support of sustainable community development:

### **1. Building Knowledge**

The documentation of Best Practices is meant to be in itself a process of empowerment for people and their communities whom are developing and implementing the experience. Groups interested in sharing their experience should learn from the process of documenting it. The documentation of the experience, with or without external support, is an opportunity to reflect about how we are doing things, what our visions are and what empowers us, what works for the community and what does not, what are the ways people learn, what sustains community networks, who are our partners, and under what circumstances.

### **2. Participation**

Participation is a value that needs to be enhanced and promoted in all our efforts. Gathering information in an inclusive and participatory manner, looking at our experiences from the point of view of all the people involved, and deciding together how to present the experience is important.

### **3. Diversity and Language**

The Best Practices and Local Leadership Program recognises and respects diversity among all people, which is seen as a source of richness, resources and quality of life. For this reason, the effort of gathering sustainable community practices is happening throughout the globe. In each United Nations region the members of diverse communities and cultures are trying to document approaches and answers to our everyday problems and challenges. Whenever feasible, the documentation of Best Practices should occur in the language native to the initiators of the program, or in one of the official languages of the United Nations. It is recognized, however, and for the time being, the English language will be the predominant language for submitting best practices for consideration by the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment. .

### **4. Sharing**

The idea of documenting and disseminating Best Practices is meant to enhance sharing among communities, to foster mutual capacity building through face-to-face exchanges, peer-to-peer learning, and transfer systems. It is important that grassroots initiators own the information derived from their experiences and that they promote sharing and horizontal and vertical transfers to other communities.

### **5. Ownership**

The experiences documented are the practices of those who carry them out. The credit for, and the inclusion of these experiences in publications, data bases, conferences and other channels of communication and transfer will respect this ownership and create favorable conditions for grassroots participation and ownership in dissemination and implementation processes. The UNCHS and the Best Practices Partners will endeavor to

channel all requests and references for information and engagement to the initiators of the practice.

**6. Respectful Partnerships**

Respectful relationships and partnerships for the documentation and dissemination of Best Practices is a way of bringing together our strength and that of our alliances. This includes careful consideration of the conditions and principles needed for sustainable partnerships.

**7. People and Nature**

- 8.** Sustainable development requires a rediscovery of a balanced relationship between people and natural systems of the planet. The Best Practices recognition program will seek to identify and transfer knowledge of practices which promote an equitable relationship among all people and a sustainable relationship between people and nature.

**Resources**  
Recognizing that human, natural, and financial resources are limited and distributed in uneven quantities, the Best Practices Partners will continuously strive to mobilise the necessary resources for maintenance and improvement of the knowledge base. The Best Practices recognition programme will seek to identify and transfer knowledge of practices which promote an efficient use of resources and which, in particular, promote the conservation of non-renewable natural resources.

# Best Practices Steering Committee Meeting

Palacio de Zurbano, Madrid

2-4 June 1999

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