

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC) 2012 GUANGZHOU INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR URBAN INNOVATION

CHINA HOTEL, GUANGZHOU, CHINA, 15-17 OCTOBER 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

The TC met in Guangzhou from 15 to 17 October 2012 to select outstanding and deserving initiatives with a view to enhancing the implementation of sustainable urban development through inspiration and knowledge sharing. It took into consideration the **goal** of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (Guangzhou Award) to reward innovations in improving the social, economic and environmental sustainability in cities and local governments worldwide and more specifically:

- To highlight exemplary models of innovative policies and practices;
- To motivate cities and local authorities to further promote innovation;
- To improve city governance.

The TC took also into consideration the **objectives** of the City of Guangzhou to promote the sharing of lessons learned from outstanding initiatives on urban innovation between cities, regions, countries and thematic areas.

The TC wishes to express its appreciation to the City of Guangzhou, the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and Metropolis for their vision in establishing the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation. It wishes to thank the City of Guangzhou and for its generous hospitality to the TC. The TC commends the secretariat for the Guangzhou Award in the way it handled the call for submissions, the transparency in its guidelines and processes. It further commends the City of Guangzhou for its intention of organising the first International Seminar on Learning from Excellence using the finalists for the Award as living practices. Such a seminar will go a long way to promoting the transfer of knowledge, expertise and experience.

The TC reviewed all 255 initiatives submitted from 153 cities and from 56 countries and regions. The TC concurred with the suggestions of the Secretariat to classify 35 submissions as non-qualifiers for various reasons including non-compliance to the reporting format and irrelevance of the subject matter. The remaining 220 initiatives were deemed as qualifying for further processing.

Of these 220 initiatives, 45 were identified as outstanding initiatives, proportionate to number of qualifying submissions by region. It further selected 15 **submissions of excellence** considered of comparable merit as the shortlist of initiatives to be submitted to the Jury for its consideration and final selection of 5 award-winning initiatives.

II. The Evaluation Process

The TC assessed each submission using the main criteria established by the Guangzhou Award for Urban Innovation namely:

- **Innovativeness:** the extent to which and the use of knowledge of information has been applied in developing new policies, practices and/or business models to address major urban issues and challenges;

- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the initiative has achieved or is well on its way to achieve its stated objective(s) and other socially desirable outcomes;
- **Replicability:** the value of the initiative in inspiring others to adopt new ideas, policies or practices, including replication in other locations of the city, region or country for greater impact and sustainability;
- **Significance:** the importance of the initiative in addressing problems of public concern.

III. Selection Procedure for the Short-listed Initiatives

In its first plenary session, the TC divided into two groups (A and B). Each group reviewed about half of the submissions on a regional basis with a view to determining the most compelling initiatives. The work of the two groups resulted in a consolidated list of 45 deserving initiatives. These deserving initiatives are contained in Annex I.

In its second plenary session, the members of the TC re-organised into two groups (C and D) with the purpose of identifying **15 outstanding initiatives** known as the “shortlist”. Those common to both lists were unanimously admitted to short list. Those that were not common to both lists were discussed in plenary resulting in a final shortlist of 15 initiatives based on consensus.

The final short list of outstanding initiatives is contained in Annex II.

The TC prepared a brief for each short-listed initiative to inform the Jury of the rationale of its selection. These briefs are also contained in Annex II.

IV. Recommendations of the TC to the Secretariat

During the conduct of the appraisal process, members of the TC made the following observations, comments and recommendations to improve the Guangzhou Award process, as follows:

1. The TC noted that there were few submissions showing innovative approaches to economic development and employment at the city level notwithstanding the current economic “crisis” affecting many parts of the world. This may require an attempt to reach out to appropriate networks to help identify such initiatives.
2. The TC noted certain regional gaps and suggests that some of these gaps could be overcome by approaching the appropriate associations or networks;
3. That the format of the submission be comprised of two parts: one part describing the policy, strategy and/or vision of the city, and the second part comprised of initiatives or projects being implemented by the city and/or its partners that best illustrate the innovation.
4. The format of the submission form should be improved by requesting the submitters to fill in a summary sheet of not more than 400 words
5. The TC feels that the submissions constitute a valuable knowledge capital and should be disseminated as widely as possible through a web-based platform which would enable cities to update their initiatives and new ones to register initiatives. This could be done in partnership with universities or other third parties.

6. The TC appreciates the clarity and the simplicity of the criteria and recommends that they be maintained.

V. TC Members

1. Mr. Yu Keping (Chair of the Technical Committee), Director of the Center for Chinese Government Innovations (CCGI), Peking University (China)
2. Ms. Claudia Laub, Director of El Agora Association (Argentina)
3. Mr. Roberto Mizrahi, Chairman of South North Development Initiative, economist and urban regional planner
4. Mr. Thierry Lafont, Professor of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture of Versailles, member of IFHP (COFHUAT)
5. Mr. Jim Powell, Former Deputy Mayor and Assembly Member, City and Borough of Juneau, Research fellow of the University of Alaska
6. Mr. Jeremy Smith, former Secretary General of the CEMR (United Kingdom)
7. Mr. Zhang Xiaojin, Dean of the Department of Political Science, Tsinghua University, Advisor to the China National Commission for UNESCO
8. Mr. Nicholas You, (Co-Chair of the Technical Committee) Chairman, World Urban Campaign Steering Committee (United States)

VI. Members of the Secretariat

1. Mr. Wang Fuchun, Deputy Director General of Guangzhou Award Secretariat
2. Mr. Zheng Jun, Director of Guangzhou Award Secretariat
3. Ms. Wu Xiaoling, staff member
4. Mr. Yang Zeliang, staff member
5. Ms. Chen Ming, staff member

ANNEX I

LIST OF 45 DESERVING INITIATIVES

The following initiatives are listed in alphabetical order.

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Ahmedabad | BRT and Riverfront development |
| 2 | Albay | Building resilient and safe communities through shared responsibility |
| 3 | Aquascalientes | The Green Line comprehensive social development plan |
| 4 | Ashkelon | A strategic city decision support system: improving service performance, accountability and citizen satisfaction |
| 5 | Aviles | Smart City doing away with red tape from within |
| 6 | Belo Horizonte | Partnership approach to digital city, waste management and ACS |
| 7 | Birmingham | Birmingham Public Service Academy |
| 8 | Bremen | Car-sharing as strategic element to reclaim street space in the city |
| 9 | Bristol | Comprehensive approach to becoming a smart city |
| 10 | Buenos Aires | Participatory and comprehensive approach to urban planning and renewal |
| 11 | Cape Town | Electricity savings campaign |
| 12 | Chiang Rai | Urban Biodiversity towards sustainable city and climate change resilience |
| 13 | Cincinnati | Plan Cincinnati: 30 year comprehensive plan |
| 14 | Cornella de Llobregat | Citilab – Cornella the first citizen’s digital library |
| 15 | Curitiba | Linking environmental preservation to urban development: the green areas of Curitiba |
| 16 | Dakar | Paving of Dakar City |
| 17 | Dubai | Dubai 2020 Masterplan |
| 18 | Dusseldorf | Development concept for the south-eastern inner suburbs (EKISO) |
| 19 | Guangzhou | Affordable Housing |
| 20 | Gwangju | Carbon Bank: partnership and citizen involvement |
| 21 | Harbin | Ecological construction and urban innovation |
| 22 | Kadikoy | Yeldegirimeni revitalisation project |
| 23 | Kaoshiung | Comprehensive approach to a user friendly city |
| 24 | Kocaeli | Prepare before its too late: learn to live with earthquake |
| 25 | Lilongwe | Lilongwe-Johannesburg mentorship program |
| 26 | Mashhad | Comprehensive approach to women and transport, investment and culture |
| 27 | Medellin | Medellin Digital |
| 28 | Melbourne | Darling Street storm-water harvesting scheme |
| 29 | Mexico City | Participatory approach to an ecological city |
| 30 | Perm | Transforming the city: the Perm strategic masterplan |

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|----|-------------|--|
| 31 | Sabadell | Efficient, transparent and participatory urban management |
| 32 | Sao Paolo | Cleaning the city |
| 33 | Sakhnin | Linking innovation in building technology with traditional Arabic architecture |
| 34 | Salerno | Sustainable energy NOW |
| 35 | Seoul | Dealing with challenges facing youth and improving transparency in procurement |
| 36 | Singapore | Singapore Bishan Park |
| 37 | Surakarta | Human relocation and empowerment of street vendors |
| 38 | Sylhet | A disaster resilient future mobilising communities and institutions for effective risk reduction |
| 39 | Tallin | Free public transport |
| 40 | Tehran | Green space, solar energy and improving social equity |
| 41 | Vancouver | Visionary Vancouver: creating a welcoming and sustainable place for all |
| 42 | Vienna | Social inclusion, energy optimisation and green procurement |
| 43 | Vinh | Building a sustainable community in Vinh City |
| 44 | Warsaw | Creating a dense, humane and sustainable urban extension |
| 45 | Zouk Mikael | Local government youth strategies |

ANNEX II
SHORT-LISTED INITIATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE JURY
[LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]

1. Aguascalientes

The Green Line comprehensive social development plan

In 2010, the Mexican city of Aguascalientes established its new programme entitled “La Linea Verde - The Green Line. The purpose is at one level to provide public spaces of quality that enhance the quality of community life of over 300,000 of its poorest citizens. Although at its core lies a major physical urban initiative, it has a much wider social aim and impact – no less than to integrate the poorest communities into the social urban fabric, and to improve quality of life. It focuses on citizens who have been, and felt themselves, marginalized. It provides new open spaces along a 12 kilometer ‘line’, and for the first time in Mexico, the national oil company PEMEX has allowed the city to build on their restricted spaces. The initiative uses water – in an area with huge water problems – in an effective way by providing a single water pipeline to provide the same level of water quality and service to each space, and helping economise on use and maintenance.

The social dimension of the initiative is very strong, with each city department making its contribution to what the city calls its ‘social and urban acupuncture’. Thus, the Institute for women holds meetings on domestic violence, the Public Service Agency analyses local needs street by street, and the Citizens Observatory acts as a communication and participation channel. The parks use photovoltaic panels which have reduced local electricity costs.

In summary, the Green Line initiative is a first for Mexico, though borrowing some aspects from other Latin American cities, and provides a powerful combination of physical and social development in a well-integrated way. As a result, poorer communities are already more visible and active in the city’s life, and a range of social benefits are identified including a decline in delinquency. The underlying concept is a good one for replication by other cities.

2. Chiang Ra

Urban ecosystem and biodiversity conservation towards sustainable city and climate change resilience

This initiative, started in 2008, represents a major shift in the way the City of Chiang Rai is meeting the challenges of rapid urbanization and climate change. On the policy front, the initiative is a departure from past policy that focused primarily on making the city an economic gateway for the Mekong. This led to rapid urban growth and environmental deterioration. The new vision of the mayor is for a “liveable city focusing on good environment, in conformity with the Buddhist way, and well-being of the people ...”. Seven development strategies have been formulated to attain this vision. They include a highly original and integrated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation; the linking of biodiversity preservation with local economic development and with disaster preparedness. An equally significant change has been brought about in the role of the city from that of “doer” to “facilitator” involving the active engagement of citizens and local stakeholders to forge a strong sense of ownership and sustainability in implementation.

The initiative has so far resulted in the demarcation of forests, lakes and rivers as conservation zones; in the gaining of new knowledge about local biodiversity; in improved and expanded green spaces and the

overall improvement of quality of life. These actions and improvements have boosted tourism and tourism revenue, spawned new educational programmes for school children and youth, and strengthened community relationships that have significantly reduced conflicts and social tensions. Many cities have already visited Chiang Rai to learn from its experience.

3. Curitiba

Linking environmental preservation with urban development – the green areas of Curitiba

Curitiba is already well known nationally and internationally as an Ecological Capital, a title conferred by the United Nations in recognition of its environmental policies in the 1990s. This new initiative reinforces the city's reputation for conceiving and implementing simple but innovative solutions. While the initiative dates back to the 1970s, it is very much ongoing which is another commendable aspect of continuity across different administrations. The concept is simple: it links the preservation of biodiversity with the creation of green space in the city, especially along the river banks and their natural flood plains in the city. These areas are very important for migratory birds and indigenous flora and fauna. The innovative aspect of the initiative lies in a system of incentives for property owners to play an active role in creating conservation zones in accordance with standards that are stricter than those of national legislation in exchange for tax breaks and/or the possibility to build higher than would normally be allowed by prevailing by-laws.

In a pioneering attitude, a partnership was entered in 2008 with the Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education - SPVS - to quantify the amount of CO₂ sequestered by indigenous plant biomass within urban areas. This is the first instrument of its kind in Brazil.

The initiative demonstrates that preserving bio-diversity, improving and expanding green areas, and planning for rapid urban growth can be carried out simultaneously and in a mutually reinforcing manner while creating value opportunities for property owners and developers and improving quality life for all citizens.

4. Dakar

Title: Paving the City of Dakar by labour-intensive public works

This initiative presents the revival of an approach that was popular some 20 years ago but gradually abandoned owing to the trend for municipalities to favour modern contractors in public works contracts. In this initiative Dakar has taken a very bold step that runs against the tide by adopting an integrated problem solving solution that addresses several local economic and environmental issues. The initiative began in 2011 and uses paving stones and small scale contractors to pave roads, squares and other public spaces. The approach represents a 10 to 30 percent reduction in cost in comparison to conventional paving methods. It also creates two to four times more jobs with the same investment. Employment and training of underprivileged locals as well as supporting local manufacturing of paving stones are combined to improve local economic development and employment opportunities.

This initiative also created improved road and associated surfaces with a semi-pervious material that reduces storm water runoff, facilitates replacement of surface water, and replenishes the aquifer to help prevent salt water intrusion which is critical to maintaining and improving water quality in places like Dakar. This social-ecological innovation resulted in improved roads surfaces, squares and public spaces while reducing sand and insalubrity in streets. It has vastly improved traffic safety, but most importantly

it has created jobs for the poor and new skills that can be used to sustain income generating activities and opportunities.

Many cities around stand to benefit from Dakar's combined approach to local economic development and infrastructure improvement.

5. Kaohsiung

1999 Anytime, anything, anywhere

Kaohsiung City has several ongoing initiatives that clearly demonstrate its commitment to a caring and client-oriented approach to its day-to-day administration. These initiatives are very diversified ranging from a meals-on-wheels type of service for the elderly; using ICT to enhance learning at the primary school level; a bike rental service that uses ICT for real time fleet management and allocation to improve timely access and availability; and a one-window citizen response system that provides seamless response and dispatch services across 52 categories of possible areas of inquiry or assistance. These range from health and transport, to utilities and environmental services, and from fixing a street light to repairing a pothole.

The system, called "1999", initiated in 2007, while inspired by many other one-number call-in services, goes one-step further in ensuring user satisfaction and a high degree of quality of life. Comprehensive daily monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the service and the timeliness of response is undertaken. For example, the benchmark for answering a call or query is 15 seconds, while the benchmark for acting on a complaint about a broken street or traffic light or a pothole is four hours. In addition, Kaohsiung trained and hired people who were physically challenged to for the service. This and other initiatives have already attracted considerable attention and study tours from cities in mainland China and other countries.

6. Kocaeli

Prepare before it's too late!

Kocaeli has in the recent past suffered from a severe earthquake, which destroyed great parts of the city and region, killing some 18,000 people. As a result, the city decided it must plan, research and educate far better for the future. To this end, it established a new programme entitled "Prepare before it's too late" which started in early 2012.

It combines two distinct but complementary strands in a single centre. The first is a comprehensive seismological monitoring facility through which data is collected and risks are analysed. The second is a broad-based citizen education component.

One specific innovation is the way the programme coordinates the emergency management agencies, including NGOs, Universities, research centres, and local government agencies. The education component focuses particularly on children, with the use of theatre in primary schools as an imaginative way of raising the awareness of youngsters. Since January 2012 the initiative has reached more than 20,000 students, including 500 disabled children, and over 3500 people have visited the centre. The innovative approach aims also to be a source of learning and replication by other municipalities and their partners, and has already led to interest from other cities.

7. Lilongwe

The Lilongwe-Johannesburg cities mentorship program

This initiative exemplifies the purpose of the Guangzhou Award, namely how cities can help each other to improve their governance and their sustainability. The initiative represents an innovative three-way partnership between the City of Johannesburg, the Lilongwe City Council (LCC) and the Cities Alliance as well as other donors and national and international organizations. The City of Johannesburg provides assistance to the LCC in developing a City Development Strategy focusing on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Started in 2008, the initiative has led to the substantial improvement in the capacity of Lilongwe City Council to formulate and adopt strategies in economic management, shelter, land and infrastructure. This has resulted in the mobilization of follow-up assistance for implementation of the Strategy in a short period of time. On the management front, the LCC computerized much of its accounting and billing system resulting in improvements in transparency, accountability and efficiency and the setting up of a performance management system. The new accounting and billing led to increased revenues by 2010 which in turn has allowed LCC to improve staff salaries based on the performance management system. Regarding the shelter and land component external grants and government funding have been mobilized to help: (i) create close to 2000 residential and commercial plots which have been allocated to the urban poor; (ii) improve water and sanitation in low income settlements; (iii) strengthen the Community Savings and Loans Association enabling women to start up income generating activities; and improve dilapidated roads and put in place street lighting.

8. Medellin

Medellin Digital

Medellin has been recognized for the broad-based and rapid transformation the city has undergone in the last decade in confronting and overcoming extremely serious security and social inclusion challenges. The Medellin Digital project is based on the current Mayor's vision to transform Medellin into the city with the highest level of education in Colombia. It was initiated in 2007 in partnership created to bring the new tools of communication and information to all the neighborhoods within the city, including those in the outskirts and in low-income settlements.

Medellin Digital is a partnership between the City of Medellin and UNE-EPN Telecom (a local service provider) that aims to make ICT a common tool for development and social change among its citizens. Due to this initiative, close to 50% of Medellin population are regular Internet users which is 15% higher than the national average. Some 1.5 million people have benefitted from Medellin Digital to date through installations in 247 public schools, 8 local business development centres, 5 libraries, 45 government offices and 21 public places. By 2020 the expectation is that over 75% of the city's population will become regular users of the Internet, greatly facilitating networking and the flow of the flow of information and knowledge.

During its first five years (2007 - 2011) Medellin Digital focused on four areas: education, culture, entrepreneurship and governance. Beginning in the second semester of 2012 Medellin Digital incorporated new areas in sustainability, health and social innovation.

The National Ministry for ICT has taken the Medellin Digital strategy as a model to build the technology policy for the rest of the country. Also many other municipalities have come to Medellin in gain first-hand knowledge of the Medellin Digital approach to bridging the digital divide and fostering a knowledge society.

9. Perm

Transforming the City

This initiative involves a strategic masterplan for the City of Perm to help it overcome and reverse many of the negative consequences that affect “shrinking cities”. It includes a long term vision to reinvent itself from its heavy industry legacy into a modern regional cultural and knowledge capital with a high quality of life and a competitive economic base. During its formulation stage (2008-2011), the initiative involved a wide range of public, private and civil society partners from Russia and other countries. Its originality lies in a Masterplan and a series of instruments that define action areas and projects which are to be harmonised with the city budget in four three-year stages. While many aspects of the Plan are common to other plans such as realising a compact transit oriented city, providing alternative mobility, etc., the Plan is comprehensive and seeks to mesh social, economic, environmental, physical and cultural actions with participatory decision making and the means for measuring progress and effectiveness.

On the institutional front, the Plan has resulted in the establishment of City Projects Bureau, a new Urban Planning Department and the Perm Polytechnic to help mobilise and retain the expertise required for going forward. On the physical front, the Plan has resulted in an agreement to stop all future green field development and urban sprawl. On the governance front, the Plan is engaging all stakeholders of the city through dedicated fora, the media and social media, town hall meetings and conferences to forge a better understanding and strong ownership of transformative change and innovation.

10. Sakhnin

TAEQ’s Green Building of Sakhnin: Centre for environmental research and education

The originality of TAEQ, or centre for environmental research and education, is to be found in its two pronged approach to green building design and energy efficiency in buildings. On the one hand, the Centre has been a leader in the area of green building as it initiated its programme some 10 years before the adoption of Israel’s green building rating system in 2010. The centre itself is a “near zero energy facility” using energy saving techniques as well as renewable energy sources. On the other hand, the Centre itself is a blend of traditional Arab architecture with modern architecture using both new energy technologies and age-old passive methods for cooling air and using natural daylight, features and techniques that are missing from modern architecture in the region and worldwide.

The Centre itself serves as a “proof of concept” that shows people, home owners, decision makers and developers how energy can be conserved in any modern or traditional building. All urban planners that work in Sakhnin’s six municipalities come to the Centre for professional development and training. Similarly, all K-12 schools in the six municipalities are implementing energy saving actions and are becoming “green schools”. Some 60,000 people from all walks of life visit the Centre on an annual basis. Last but not least, the Centre has resulted in Jewish and Arab municipalities collaborating, for the first time in Israel’s history, on a regional project.

11. Salerno

Sustainable energy NOW!

The City of Salerno mobilized a multi-disciplinary team including universities and private entities to develop a **City Energy Plan** to reach or surpass the goals fixed by the European Union in terms of reducing CO2 emissions, reducing energy consumption and producing energy from renewable sources. The Plan includes an energy audit together with a very advanced and comprehensive energy monitoring system; a list of specific actions for implementation as well as the formulation of new laws, incentives and regulatory frameworks.

Initiated in 2009, actions have already begun under the overall framework of an urban plan in improving energy efficiency in: street lighting; buildings; water savings, water catchment and management; mobility through smart traffic lights and incentives for car pooling, use of bicycles, park and ride; and improved waste recycling and re-use. Currently Salerno recycles 70 percent of its solid waste which is the highest rate in Italy for a city of its class. Perhaps the most iconic achievement has been the completion of a 24 MW photovoltaic plant “Monti di Eboli”, the third largest plant of its kind in Italy, while a highly original aspect lies with the Solidarity Purchasing Plan which makes it more affordable for home owners to install energy saving measures and PV panels by pooling their orders.

12. Seoul

Dealing with challenges facing youth

Seoul has developed a great capacity for innovation in urban planning and management and has recently implemented a very transparent procurement system. But it is in the social field, aimed particularly at helping young people experiencing severe problems, that two highly original initiatives merit being highlighted and widely disseminated. The first is a Youth Prostitution Prevention Project, and the second tackles the growing problem – of great significance in Korea and many other countries– that of internet addiction.

The issue of teenage prostitution has grown steadily over the last 15 years, and around 200,000 young people run away from home each year. Many young girl runaways are at grave risk of falling into prostitution, even if they do not define themselves as such. When they are found, sending them back to homes that are often dysfunctional and prone to domestic violence or to temporary shelters have proven to be ineffective. Therefore, a new philosophy of social intervention has led to the establishment of the ‘Self-Empowerment School for teen prostitutes’, run by a multi-disciplinary team. The first school opened in 2009 followed swiftly by a second. Their success has led to co-funding by central government. A restaurant/café was opened to provide job training and experience for the girls. A crucial element in the success of the schools is its focus on self-empowerment – the engagement of the girls themselves in building a brighter future. The initiative also uses the web in a proactive way, and finding practical vocational/job training and placement is central. The school initially met with opposition from local residents, and the city has worked hard to change these perceptions and win support.

The second issue – internet addiction – is important given that over 12% of Korean citizens between the ages of 9 and 39 are estimated to have some symptoms of internet addiction. It affects young people in particular. The city government has set up since 2009 “I Will Centres” – and five such centres will have been further established by the end of 2012. The aim is to help young people commit to changing their lives, using a wide range of counseling and therapy techniques and also through preventative work in schools and with parents. The centres have already led to significant international interest.

13. Sylhet

Disaster Resilient Future: Mobilizing Communities and Institutions for Effective Risk Reduction.

Despite having escaped any major disasters in a disaster-prone area and country for over 110 years, Sylhet decided to use a multilevel approach to earthquake risk awareness and preparedness. The strategy which has been put in place and is being implemented since March 2011 is unique in Bangladesh and represents many innovative features. These include: raising general public awareness; improving household preparations through education and providing equipment; coordination of several stakeholders and different levels of government; using volunteers; engaging local schools, the fire service, civil defense, the university, the medical college and the media. The coordination of all these actors has been delegated to a local NGO. Local response capacity is being strengthened by stockpiling and providing first aid supplies and emergency equipment in a decentralized manner. This was an evolutionary approach in that Sylhet learned from other communities in strengthening their respective resilience and local capacity through risk preparedness. The initiative has resulted in a coordinated approach between public, private and community groups through regular meetings, risk assessments and with self-led initiatives and project interventions.

14. Vancouver

Visionary Vancouver: creating a welcoming and sustainable place for all!

The “Greenest City 2020” initiative provides an inspirational vision and ambition with a practical focus, and strong commitment to citizen and business engagement. It builds on the city’s long track record in sustainability, but orienting its policies and practical solutions to serve future generations. It has three framework themes – Zero Carbon, Zero Waste, and Healthy Eco-systems.

The new Village built for the 2010 Winter Olympics integrated a range of state of art green technologies including solar heat, passive energy design, electric vehicle infrastructure etc.. From this experience, the city is developing higher standards in new areas. The Village was the first complete community certified to LEED Platinum standard. It works with the university and other partners. For the city’s own operations, 4 key priorities now are waste reduction and re-use, local food procurement, and achievement of carbon-neutral operations.

The Greenest City 2020 Initiative has ten broad but integrated goals which underpin all municipal policy work within the framework of a clear and coherent vision and backed by a deep commitment and capacity to implement innovative sustainability policies and measures. It compliments other very impressive initiatives on social inclusion and economic development.

15. Vienna

Social inclusion, energy optimization and green procurement

Vienna’s initiatives in the fields of environmental, energy and social issues demonstrate a clear capacity to innovate, on a continuing basis, in many policy directions. On the environmental front, Vienna adheres to a set of very clear and coherent green standards for public procurement (Okokauf) and has become a leader in the production and use of renewable energy for, for example, the operations of Vienna’s wastewater treatment plant.

But given the large scale of migration from other countries to Vienna - an experience shared by so many other cities - the “Start Wien” programme for new migrants stands out in terms of its innovativeness, relevance and potential for replication. The programme offers all new migrants a ‘One Stop Shop’ service, involving different departments and social services, individually tailored orientation meetings, language

services and more advanced information and coaching services. It reaches the target group immediately after arrival, looks at the needs of each individual, provides clear information, and provides a single entry point to access an array of social services.

Many cities could do well to learn from Vienna's approach which helps migrants at the critical stage of establishing a new life and a new home while also overcoming the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness associated with the lack of coordinated and coherent response by different departments and services that make life miserable for those seeking help from public services. .