Concept note for a project on cities knowledge management of strategic planning and implementation in cities in development

1.   RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION

1.1. General presentation and analysis of the problem

Local governments (LGs), especially those in developing countries, are facing complex challenges related to the necessity to construct fairer and more cohesive societies, to improve sustainable economic development of their territories, and to consider, at the local level, changing and complex scenarios − at the regional, national and international level.

In light of these challenges, the processes of Urban Strategic Planning (USP) have shown themselves to be an effective tool for optimizing the decision making process in favour of consensual, multi-dimensional and territorially balanced urban development. This will be an effective strategy to combat poverty and to respond concretely to the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This tool encourages the mobilization of a group of stakeholders at the local level in response to the necessity to homogenize visions and to create consensus on medium and long-term strategies. Moreover, it goes beyond focussing its attention purely on troubleshooting immediately visible problems, which is one of the characteristics of the local management dynamic, permanently under pressure to find fast and effective responses.

Nevertheless, local experiences of USP are not homogenous. While some cities and regions have developed sophisticated and effective systems, even in contexts of Developing Countries; others- particularly in Less Developed Countries (LDC) - are facing significant difficulties in the designing and implementation of these processes.

Acknowledging this situation and understanding that USP is a valuable tool for development, a group of members of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)- which gathers together cities and national and regional municipal organizations-, has identified the need to tackle this problem and to this end, created the USP Committee in 2007.

This entity came about - from the specificity of the local perspective- to initiate a process of identification of USP experiences at the global level; to present recommendations related to sustainable urban development; to strengthen links between cities worldwide through this issue placing a special emphasis on South-South cooperation; and to initiate a process of articulation of its action with initiatives and networks of existing cities with regard to SUP.

1.2. Specific problems addressed by the action

The principle problems addressed by the action are:

- The obstacles and restrictions local governments (LGs) in developing countries are confronted with- especially Less Developed Countries- in order to tackle the designing and the implementation of the processes of USP, such as institutional weaknesses, rigid legal frameworks and limitations on local authorities (LAs) being able to exercise their responsibilities; the difficulties of articulation between actors in constructing medium and long-term strategies and the scarcity of qualified human resources to design and manage USP processes.
- The insufficient circulation of experiences of USP management, fundamentally of experiences which have made a significant impact improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of the areas in which they were carried out.
- The inadequate critical analysis, systematization and evaluation of USP management experiences.
- The complexity of the transferral of technical assistance between partners, due to the scarcity of the financial and technical resources required to develop them, as well as the diversity of the contexts and specificities in the experiences which are already developed and will provide lessons, and in those which are to be developed. This is valid as much on a city-to-city scale than an on the scale of a local government association (LGA).

1.3 Target Groups

- Locally elected authorities and the planning teams of the 3 cities whom the experiences will be transferred through technical assistance: Lilongwe, Malawi, Ciudad Sur, Chile, and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) or Dakar (Senegal).

- ▪ The technical teams of the LGAs, who will be the recipients of the transferral of experiences through technical assistance: The National Association of Municipalities of Malawi or Senegal; Association of Local Authorities of Namibia and the Local Authorities of Indonesia.
- ▪ The local elected authorities and the planning teams of the 30 cities, which are representative of diverse regions, preferably on a metropolitan scale, are members of the UCLG Committee for Urban Strategic Planning.

Final Beneficiaries: Public and private actors of the assisted municipalities and their citizens in general.

1.4 Relevance of the proposal to the necessities and restrictions of the target groups and the final beneficiaries

The proposal aims to contribute to the overcoming of the obstacles faced by LGs and LGAs in developing countries and to the promotion of processes of USP, by strengthening cooperation through networks, exchanging experiences, promoting processes of technical assistance between partners and enabling the systematization, evaluation and knowledge of good practices in the management of USP.

It is with this aim that three member LGs of the Committee have been selected as the beneficiaries of direct technical assistance (Lilongwe and Dakar or Dar es Salaam) as municipalities in Less Developed Countries on the African continent, along with an association of 10 cities (Ciudad Sur) in Latin America, a confederation of the poorest municipalities with poverty figures correspondent with those of an LDC, in the metropolitan area of Santiago de Chile.

Among the member LGAs selected were those of Malawi and Namibia among the LDC countries, and the LGAs of Nepal, MUAN and/or Indonesia, APEKSI so as to represent local governments in a developing country in Asia.

1.5 Relevance of the proposal in relation to the objectives and priorities presented in the guidelines

The proposal is an initiative which will be carried out in a number of countries on different continents and which is in line with the specific objectives guiding the call for proposals. Urban Strategic Planning has shown itself to be an economic and social development strategy crucial for the construction of socially cohesive societies and for the application at the local level of actions aimed at achieving internationally approved targets such as the MDGs. The initiative responds to the key tasks related to the mandate and the responsibilities of Local Authorities (Strategic Planning).

Another relevant factor to consider is that USP is, by definition, participative, favouring interaction with the population and its organizations and as such aims to construct social capital at the local level, encouraging the empowerment of public and private actors. Finally, this initiative strengthens network collaboration between LAs and their associations (South-South and North-South).

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

2. 1. Project objectives and expected results

The **general objective** of the action is to improve the capacity of LAs, paying particular attention to a group of LGs and LGAs in Less Developed Countries, in USP processes in order to contribute to more sustainable development.

The **specific objectives** of the action are the following:
1. To value the experience of strategic planning of the LGs as a key tool.
   To drive forward local development at the urban and territorial level, through strengthening network collaboration.
2. Improving the management, formulation and development of USP in LDCs through assistance between LAs and LGAs.

2.2. Expected Results
In relation to Objective 1
- A set of documents and tools on USP: a catalogue of experiences of USP, a methodology with a set of indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of USP experiences and an analysis of good practices.
- A consolidated network of 30 cities and LGAs identify and respond to the requests of LAs for capacity building and technical assistance to drive forward USP.

In relation to Objective 2
- Processes of Urban Strategic Planning have been initiated in three cities, aimed at the application of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Three LGAs have assembled teams and drove forward the realization of USP among members.

2.3. Description of the activities envisaged and their effectiveness
In relation to Objective 1
Development of documents and tools supporting USP:
-. **Construction of a catalogue of USP experiences**, based on those carried out by the 30 representative cities of different member regions of the UCLG Committee on Urban Strategic Planning, taking into consideration the work carried out by networks of cities specializing in USP. The catalogue will be an instrument for information and consultation which can be permanently enlarged. It will contain information on different types of USP, the legal and institutional framework, the economic and social context in which USP processes are implemented, the actors involved and the methodologies applied,.
- **Elaboration of a methodology for the monitoring and evaluation of experiences** with a set of indicators. This system should constitute an efficient instrument in the identification of good practices and in the general monitoring of experiences. It will entail the consideration of material obtained from previous activities and the critical revision of work which has already been carried out in other networks of cities.
- **Identification of good practices** based on the results of activities 1 and 2; paying special attention to the contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of the territory (measured in terms of the contribution to the achievement of the MDGs), of the construction of social capital at the local level, the innovative character and sustainability of those practices and, finally, the recognition accorded to these by institutions specialized in the subject.

These three activities will be undertaken by a **working group,** which will count experts from cities representing different regions, with the support of international consultants.
- **Creation of a website** as a dynamic platform to disseminate the tools elaborated and information gathered, and to promote the activities of the project.
- **Consolidating the network collaboration of the 30 cities and LGAs**
- **Carrying out an international seminar** on the USP experiences aimed at: 1) debating on practices and tools developed in previous activities and tools supporting USP; 2) encouraging network collaboration between LGAs and cities in order to present the requests of LGs for technical assistance and identifying possible 'mentors' (cities interested in responding with technical assistance to the request). The event will involve LAs, LGA networks and academic institutions. The action will involve subsidiary activities; preparatory tasks; design of work methodologies and preparation of preliminary conclusive documents.
- **Workshops** in which will be discussed of the advances in the projects made by cities and LGAs active in the UCLG USP Committee. It will be accompanied with actions for visibility to attract new members.
- **Closing seminar** aimed at the discussion of the conclusions of the project, the evaluation of the impact of the activities carried out, reflecting on the difficulties, limitations and achievements of the activities. It will focus on the production of conclusive documents (documentation of lessons) and the dissemination of the results of the action.
- **Final publication** which will contain a set of general recommendations taken from different activities carried out during the project, as well as reflections on the good practices of USP management analyzed over the course of the project.

In relation to Objective 2

-   Supporting the realization of USP in cities
-    Promotion of the cooperation between cities (peer to peer) in order to support USP processes: a tutor city will be identified (European, Latin American, African, or Asian) to apply its experience in another city (recipient).
-    Preparation of tutorials: city experts and specialized consultants of the tutor LGs and technical staff of the recipient LGs will analyze the documents and tools supporting USP, focusing on the cities undergoing tutorials programmes and will undertake methodological capacitating, ensuring coherence with the international organizations dedicated to the subject.
-    Capacitating of the technical staff of recipient cities.
-    Adaptation of the USP instruments in each case, and monitoring of the process.
-    Support the cities with USP management: advise the cities in the identification of possible sources and forms of financing and implementation of USP.

-   Construction of institutional capacities in the LGAs to drive forward USP among their members.
-    Promotion of direct cooperation between LGA: the associations of South Africa (SALGA), the League of Cities of the Philippines, the National Association of Kenyan Municipalities, drawing from the long and solid experience of their USP teams, have already demonstrated their willing to cooperate with other LGAs from LDCs.
-    Hold workshops on capacity building for USP, to analyze experiences and methodologies.
-    Definition with the recipient LGAs, on a process of USP promotion among their members.
-    Provide technical assistance to support the adaptation of USP tools and methodologies to the specific contexts of the LGA members.

-   Involvement of the partners- role and relation with the applicant
Rosario (applicant): Coordinator of the project, through the integration of a team committed to this effect. In the activities for the development of documents and tools supporting USP, it will coordinate the working group and will provide an expert for this group. It will coordinate and hold the Closing Seminar. With its experts, it will support the tutorial activities. It will coordinate the final publication and will collaborate in the activities of dissemination of the products of the project.
Durban (partner city): In the activities for the development of documents and tools supporting USP, it will bring an expert to participate in the working group. It will organize, coordinate and hold the International Seminar jointly with SALGA (South African Local Government Association). With its experts it will support the tutorial activities and will collaborate in the activities of dissemination of the products of the project.
South African Association of Local Governments: Co organizer of the International Seminar. Will support the LGA tutoring activities with its experts.
League of Philippines (partner): Will participate in all the activities, with a representative in the working group. It will coordinate the activities in the Asian region, specifically a workshop which will be specially aimed at LGAs, and it will support assistance activities among LGAs subject to demand.
UCLG (partner): It will bring an expert to the working group in the activities for the development of documents and tools supporting USP. It will be responsible for the creation and updating of the website. It will organize the Workshop and will coordinate the undertaking of tutorials between partners. It will support activities disseminating the products of the project.
The two cities and UCLG hold a vast experience in Urban Strategic Planning and have together carried out work promoting USP in the framework of the programmes initiated with UCLG and Cities Alliance. Rosario and Durban are, respectively, President and Vice President of the UCLG USP Committee. Furthermore, associations and cities in the regions of Europe and Africa, which hold experience in the subject, have offered regular assistance to cities.

3.   SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ACTION

3.2. *Sustainability of the action beyond its completion*
The project will strengthen the network collaboration which has already begun to take effect. It will enable the production of resources which will be help to amplify the collaboration and contribute to its continuity. The elaboration of a catalogue of USP experiences, the elaboration

of a methodology for the monitoring and evaluation of a set of indicators, the identification of good practices, and the process of peer mentoring will strengthen local governments. These will ensure continuity beyond the finalization of the project, above all, in terms of improvement of the Decentralized Cooperation methodology and of the processes initiated. The involvement of other collaborators and partners (Cities Alliance, GTZ, and UN Habitat) in the follow-up of USP initiatives will also contribute to greater sustainability of the processes.

3.1. Initial risks and possible corrective measure

Risks	Corrective measures
Initial	
▪ The institutional context, especially in LDC, makes it difficult for LGs to exercise the urban planning responsibilities which traditionally correspond with their role. ▪ The lack of financing can be discouraging for local governments in their attempts to carry out USP. ▪ Changes in political leadership can also affect the priorities of cities in continuing to work with the Committee. ▪ The channels of communication with members of the Committee are broken due to changes of responsibilities.	▪ Taking as our basis the studies of institutional and legal frameworks, we can promote the legislative reforms which will allow LGs to exercise their responsibilities. ▪ Promote collaboration with other agencies (Cities Alliance) and with national financial institutions so as to facilitate direct financing of municipalities. Orientate decentralized cooperation towards municipalities which use USP. ▪ Verify whether the strategy has taken root in all the political spaces, parties and levels of government; ▪ Search for various interlocutors to maintain the network: Mayors, technical specialists of the region, communicators, and international relations.
▪ The lack of updated local information systems can complicate the elaboration of indicators for the evaluation of the USP. ▪ Best practice models are difficult to replicate. ▪ The expectations and requests for help exceed the capacities for response to the project. ▪ The network primarily connects large cities with financial capacity while the medium and small-sized cities with reduced resources do not actively participate.	▪ Collaborate with other government, academic, and international institutions to facilitate access to the relevant information. ▪ Work according to criteria and indicators which facilitate the transferral of experiences. ▪ Channel the requests of municipalities for USP to other international agencies (Cities Alliance, UN Habitat) and associated networks (CIDEU, Plusnetwork). ▪ Subsidize the participation of medium and small-sized cities of low-income nations in order to diversify the network.
▪ Some of the target LGs or LGAs of the tutoring process can change due to unexpected and critical political situations with decentralized cooperation loosing momentum. ▪ The city does not express its need for assistance as well as the wish to transfer a model. ▪ The risk that the transmission of technical assistance is conducted in a mechanical way.	▪ Prepare for the possibility of changing LG or LGA in similar contextual conditions. ▪ The complexities and specificities of the intended beneficiaries must be consulted beforehand. ▪ Ensure that the tutor city is prepared to take into account the realities and expectations including duration of the project and institutional preparation and revisions.
▪ Cooperation between cities: the mentor city is unable to take into account the complexity of the local reality.	▪ Create technical teams in close cooperation with local leaders,

- The technical staff of the recipient cities does not remain for the duration of the process and cannot ensure an adequate follow-up of the activity.
- Better-skilled technical staff of the mentor cities is unable to participate continuously in the process.
- There are no sources or indicators for comparison to enable studies in this context.
- The LGAs, especially in the LDCs, do not have any promotion strategies for USP.

- Only involve the key technical staff at key moments in the USP processes (2 missions) and provide them with support staff and/or consultants.USP activities can be integrated into LGA strategies.