

KEY BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE CITIES: PLUS NETWORK

1. Improved excellence and understanding of long-term urban sustainability

Participating cities and communities collectively gain access and contribute to a shared international pool of the best urban planning expertise and tools related to sustainability.

2. Improved investor confidence and risk management

Long-term planning improves decision making and renders municipalities more attractive to investors, multilateral lenders, donors and federal and provincial governments. Long-term integrated planning helps cities to articulate their vision and to put requests in a development context, thus reassuring lenders/donors/investors that the city has considered a wide range of factors over a long period of time.

3. Increased cost-effectiveness of planning processes and methodologies

The cost of the planning process in participating cities and communities is reduced by the economies gained from sharing experiences and tools. Practical sharing allows cities to avoid costly mistakes made by others and the PLUS *Network* encourages the development of better planning frameworks and tools. Modification of existing methods and identification of new ones occurs during professional development workshops or consultations. Efficient reuse or adaptation of tools is promoted so that development costs need not be repeated.

4. Use of events as catalysts

Members gain the opportunity to showcase their city or community and their planning expertise, as well as to report on results of planning and demonstration projects at high profile events such as those associated with Habitat +30: the World Urban Forum 2006. These events can often serve as useful catalysts to mobilise support and resources within cities and countries.

5. Sharing of learning between North and South

Developing country cities face overwhelming problems of poverty, informal settlements, HIV AIDS, security of persons and property, water and sanitation. Northern cities face problems of pollution, sprawl, traffic congestion, drugs, homelessness and an ever-increasing ecological footprint. PLUS *Network* cities recognize these disparities and their different priorities and they move beyond stereotypes or positions to find common ground. Shared problems of decentralization without sufficient financial resources, short term thinking, departmental territoriality, complex legal mandates or structures, and the need for political and private sector support are among many commonalities that allow participants to share their experiences and learn from one another. Integrated planning with a long-term sustainability focus provides a neutral entry point to build a dialogue across the divides of income, culture and geography.

6. Benefits to the private sector

Benefits of the Network will accrue not only to member cities but also to industries and businesses that support the move towards a sustainable future. More liveable cities and communities attract creative and qualified personnel and help prevent the 'brain drain'. Multi-stakeholder processes will ensure that planners address the needs of developers, businesses and future residents, along with their economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. Suppliers of professional services and planning tools used by member cities will gain access to a larger international market.