



## POST LEARNING EVENT REPORTING TEMPLATE

As part of eThekweni Municipality's commitment to strengthen our organisation's culture of learning and sharing, this form presents information on a recent out of town trip, visit, learning exchange undertaken by an official from the municipality. This information will be posted on the MILE website ([www.mile.org.za](http://www.mile.org.za)) in the interest of advancing our **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT** agenda. Thank you for taking the time to complete the form.

### 1. What was the NAME OF THE EVENT?

Ecocity World Summit

### 2. The DATE attended:

25/09/2013 to 27/09/2013

### 3. VENUE

(further details on venue)

Summit held in Nantes, France

### 4. OFFICIALS WHO ATTENDED?

Jo Boulle:

Manager: Policy Implementation Branch, Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department

### 5. What area of expertise did the event cover?

Culture, heritage and sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering and the built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT and Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development and Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	City strategy and planning	x
Energy and the natural environment	x	Good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Other:

### 6. What was the PURPOSE OF THE EVENT, THE BROAD OBJECTIVES, AND THEMES? Why was it of importance?

The Ecocity World Summit is a cross-disciplinary summit designed to facilitate exchanges among governmental decision-makers, researchers and civil society and to bring together different disciplines on sustainable cities. In this tenth Ecocity World Summit, the focus was on the important role of cities in driving the global environmental sustainability agenda, and aimed to mobilise action and foster large-scale and innovative change in the way cities are structured and governed. The five themes of the summit were:

- Reducing the ecological footprint – water, air, soil, waste, biodiversity
- Addressing the energy challenges of the city
- Strengthening solidarity
- Organising the sustainable city – mobility, urban development, decision-making and planning
- Mobilising enabling factors

**7. What in your opinion are some of the KEY LEARNINGS that you came away with? In other words, what stood out for you? Were there any "aha!" learning moments that you can share with colleagues? What were some of the KEY OBSERVATIONS that were important or different?**

A number of key messages emerged during the course of the event, which are important to consider in the work of EPCPD and the Municipality. These included:

### **The role of cities in transformation**

Globally, there is a growing acknowledgement that current patterns of production and consumption are not sustainable, and that radical transformation is needed if development is to remain within the thresholds of natural systems. Cities have an important role to play in this. More than half of the world's population already live in cities and this is expected to reach 75 per cent by 2050 and, while cities occupy only two per cent of the earth's land, they account for 60 to 80 per cent of energy consumption and 75 per cent of carbon emissions. Importantly, cities are also 'at the coalface' when it comes to experiencing the social, economic and environmental challenges that result from certain development pathways and can act more quickly and easily in addressing these. They are centres where populations and resources are concentrated and this means that they are hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity and social development. Cities therefore have a critical role to play in acting as 'change agents'.

If cities are to become agents for change, an important part of this is to begin to facilitate self-organisation through 'transition networks' that are able to build learning networks, and which are able to support and resource core groups. What was also highlighted during the summit, was the importance of both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches in addressing environmental challenges: government policies provide an important framework for action, while grassroots action (e.g. linked to change agents in policy, business and civil society) needs to complement this.

Through all of the discussions around transformation, a clear message was the importance of simply 'getting started' on the transformation journey, regardless of how big or small the effort may seem. Small actions build the confidence that is needed to do even more.

### **New models for the economy**

Linked to the discussions around transformation, was the clear message that current economic models reinforce injustice and inequality, and they are not sustainable. Some of the ideas emerging through the presentations included:

- Promoting a focus on smaller businesses that 'cycle' money more effectively
- The use of development indices other than GDP. In this instance, input was heard around Bhutan's 'Gross National Happiness Index' which has four key focus areas: social equity, environmental conservation, protecting and enhancing culture and good governance. All policies, plans and programmes are assessed against these filters when decisions are made in Bhutan, in order to ensure that these principles are maintained.

- The need to move to incorporation of the value of ecosystems and ecosystem services in planning and decision-making. Currently the value of the natural environment does not feature in financing and budgeting models.

**Shift from ‘participation’ to ‘co-production’ and ‘social learning’**

The central idea in the above is that no-one has the perfect answer to the challenges we face and therefore it is important to engage broadly and to build relevant learning platforms where different perspectives and insights are gained within the decision-making process. Stakeholders also need to be equipped with the right information about the issues that need to be addressed, so as to build their capacity to engage in meaningful ways. Through all of this, it is important to change how people perceive what is possible – we need to open up a view of possibility.

**Citizen mobilisation and collaboration**

A critical part of effecting transformation is the role of the individual – ultimately it is individuals who control the choices that they make and who can be agents for change. Initiatives that promote citizen mobilisation and collaboration play an important role in building capacity and giving individuals and communities a sense of what is possible when people decide to act together. As local government, it is important to understand what role we can play in facilitating these processes in relevant ways. Collaboration with other institutions e.g. universities is also important.

**8. As a result of this event, what is the ONE CHANGE that you may consider making backing back at work, if any? What follow ups are envisaged?**

Build a stronger citizen mobilization component into the work of the Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department.

**9. Please indicate details of useful CONTACTS AND NETWORKS that were established during the event?**

**10. One of the key functions of our MILE website is to serve as a repository of LEARNING DOCUMENTATION, VIDEOS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER RESOURCE MATERIAL. Please can send such material to [mile@durban.gov.za](mailto:mile@durban.gov.za) so that it can be uploaded onto our website.**

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO BUILD A LEARNING ORGANISATION**