

## PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

**Name of the Partnership/Initiative**

The Sister City Network for Sustainable Development

**Expected date of initiation: 1 September 2002**

**Expected date of completion: 1 September 2005—upon program review, project may be extended indefinitely**

**Partners Involved:**

Governments: Sister city, county and state affiliations

Intergovernmental organizations: UN Habitat

Major groups: International City/County Municipal Association (ICMA); International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI); United States Council on International Business (USCIB)

Other:

*Leading Partner:* Sister Cities International

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**Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative**

Please provide a brief description:

Sister Cities International (SCI) is creating a network of sister city partnerships committed to implementing the concept of sustainable development through innovative, cross-cultural projects. These tangible projects will demonstrate that locally based actions: (a) can be a catalyst for advancing sustainable development concepts throughout the world; (b) improve the quality of life for citizens within their communities; (c) demonstrate that sister city partnerships are a vehicle for long-term sustainable relationships; (d) mutually reinforce and integrate the goals of good governance, environmental protection, sustainable development and social development; and (e) effectively undertake partnerships with the public and private sectors to achieve concrete results.

The Network is being developed to complement local activities already pursued under Local Agenda 21 initiatives here in the United States and abroad. SCI determined that our significant membership network would provide the perfect catalyst to initiate locally driven sustainable development activities that seek to improve the quality of life for our member communities.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

The Network will: (1) pursue an integrated approach to sustainable development as outlined in Agenda 21; (2) perform its work at the local level with a focus upon challenges with global implications; (3) promote the involvement of local citizens in identifying project areas, suggesting and designing solutions, overseeing implementation, and evaluating results; (4) build and sustain local institutional capacity to undertake sustainable community development and use national organizations such as municipal associations to provide the broadest dissemination of the results; and (5) establish formal partnerships with donors and other associations/organizations committed to the goals of the Network.

The Sister City Network for Sustainable Development seeks to address the three pillars of sustainable development by working on a variety of projects at the local level. Specific examples of projects that address economic issues, which are not mutually exclusive, include clean and renewable energy; energy efficiency; energy efficient consumer products; technology and sustainable economic development; eco-tourism; micro-financing; downtown redevelopment; alternative transportation; trade; and urban architecture and its role in sustainable development.

In addition, the Network will facilitate a variety of environmental projects aimed at improving the local environmental conditions in which communities are situated and ensuring the balance between human and ecological needs is maintained in a sustainable manner. Specific projects that seek to address these issues, which are not mutually exclusive, include the protection of open spaces; park development; land preservation; air quality; indoor and industrial air pollution; transportation; solid waste management; clean and safe drinking water; waste water treatment and management; water quality improvement; and water conservation.

Finally, the Network will also work on a number of projects that fall within the realm of social development. SCI recognizes that a community's strength begins with its citizens, and its ability to adapt to changing environmental, economic, and political conditions requires strong, flexible institutions, well-developed human and social capital and significant investment in and maintenance of essential goods and services. Specific projects that will be undertaken that address these concepts, which are not mutually exclusive, include transparency and openness; citizen involvement in local governance; public-private partnerships; emergency preparedness; affordable housing; basic education; art and culture; accessibility for all; addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic; child survival; infectious diseases; nutrition and maternal health; and population issues.

**Expected results:**

Please provide a brief description:

Although the Network is still in the development phase, SCI expects to achieve the following specific results over a three-year period. (1) A functional and dynamic *Sister City Network for Sustainable Development* will be created and sustained by SCI. (2) At least 100 sister city partnerships will be active within the Network and will have achieved substantive results in promoting the concepts of sustainable development at the community level. (3) Twenty-five corporations and foundations will be asked to contribute at least \$50,000 over the three-year

period, totaling \$1,250,000. Seventy-five percent of these funds will go to 100 cities as “seed grants” to initiate local projects. (4) Each sister city partnership will leverage an additional \$50,000 over the three-year period, bringing an additional investment of \$5,000,000 to the program. (5) A location on the SCI Web site ([www.sister-cities.org](http://www.sister-cities.org)) will be devoted to the Sustainable Development Network and will feature project outcomes, on-going work, and international information on sustainable development. The SCI Web site currently offers instantaneous translation in eight languages for e-mail and text, and has a state-of-the-art relational database, which will be used to store and retrieve project results.

**Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:**

The first phase of this initiative will be achieved by 2006, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sister Cities International.

**Coordination and Implementation mechanism**

Please provide a brief description of expected coordination/implementation mechanism of the Partnership/Initiative.

The Network will demonstrate that citizens and their local governments can effectively address critical sustainability issues at the community level working within a cross cultural framework and an international perspective. It will build upon the outcomes of the WSSD, as well as the work being performed by UN Habitat, the urban development arm of the United Nations, and the many groups who have contributed to the knowledge base of sustainable development.

- The SCI Network administrator will be charged with implementing the Network design; contacting and advising the local sister city communities on undertaking sustainability projects with their international partners; and generally ensuring success of the project.
- All current members of SCI will be notified of the establishment of the Sustainability Network and will be supplied, at their request, with information about sustainable development.
- Communities with partners in developing and transitional countries will be given special encouragement to participate, as these cities have the greatest challenges in terms of sustainable development.
- Communities will be given considerable latitude in choosing the kinds of issues they wish to address, and SCI will link those issues with the interests of the corporate partners.
- The Network administrator will actively encourage local sister city organizations to become involved in the Network.
  - A workshop on the Network will be held at SCI’s annual international conferences.
  - Information will be disseminated through the SCI newsletter and its Web site.
  - A special location on the SCI website will be established to connect all the communities, and to disseminate information to the public at large. The Network will be linked through an e-newsletter, e-bulletins, and an interactive discussion board.
  - The Network administrator will compile key information about sustainable development and will make this available to all participating communities. This information will also be made available on the SCI website
- Once local communities have contacted their partners and indicated an interest in participating in the network they will be asked to submit a brief proposal for a seed grant to undertake the project and sign a sub-agreement with SCI.

- Local communities will work with their international partners in ways that will most benefit each community, but they may consider
  - exchange visits of citizens, government officials, and private sector professionals centered on a specific issue.
  - joint analysis of the chosen issue in both communities through dialogue and written reports;
  - facilitated meetings of community stakeholders in both communities where all aspects of the issue can be examined and the group can arrive at solutions; or
  - information sessions for participants that will bring together professionals in the field, citizens who are affected by government and private sector decisions, and other stakeholders.
- The Network administrator will present the findings from the first 50 projects at an international conference.

**Arrangements for funding**

Please describe available and/or expected sources of funding for the implementation of the Partnership/Initiative (e.g. donor government(s); international organization(s)/financial institution(s); foundation(s); private sector; other major groups, etc.)

Initial funding will be secured through corporations and foundations, government grants, and partnership resources through ICMA and other organizations.

Corporate/Foundation Sources: Twenty-five corporations and foundations will be asked to contribute at least \$50,000 over the three-year period, totaling \$1,250,000. Seventy-five percent of these funds will go to 100 cities as “seed grants” to initiate local projects (\$937,500); Twenty-five percent will be retained at SCI for the support and management of the network (\$312,500). Each sister city partnership will leverage as much as an additional \$50,000 over the three-year period, bringing an additional investment of \$5,000,000 to the program. The total financial goal for the network is 6,250,000 over the three-year period.

Additional Sources: SCI is currently pursuing a grant with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in cooperation with ICMA. Funding through the Resource Cities Program has the potential to bring in an additional \$1-\$5 million in support of program initiatives.

**Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer**

Please include information if the Partnership/Initiative provides for training, informational support, institutional strengthening and/or other capacity building measures:

The Network will be available to only those communities that have an active, established sister city partnership and therefore can demonstrate through their “seed grant” proposals they have the capacity to design and implement sustainable development projects. The Network Administrator will be charged with contacting and advising the local sister city communities on undertaking projects with their international partners will handle the necessary support activities to ensure project success. Training, technical and logistical support will be secured either through the local sister city partnerships or through the funding mechanism, as donors will be encouraged to provide in-kind as well as monetary assistance. SCI National Office staff will so continue to support the sister city relationships that will make the Network a success in their day-to-day activities.

Please also provide here a brief description of expected arrangements for technology transfer (if applicable).

As mentioned above, should programs have a technical component, SCI will seek the appropriate donors to supply the necessary support through in-kind donation or monetary assistance.

**Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)**

Please provide a brief description:

N/A

**Monitoring Arrangements**

Please describe expected arrangements for monitoring of progress in the implementation of Partnerships/Initiative after it will be launched at the WSSD:

(e.g. frequency/modalities of preparation of progress reports; electronic updates, news-letters, etc)

The specific results of the Network will be reported on the SCI website, through the newly created on-line relational database. SCI is in the process of establishing a set of evaluation criteria, against which all projects undertaken through the network will be monitored and evaluated.

In addition, the work of the Network will be featured in SCI monthly publications, and will receive special attention during SCI's annual conferences.

**Other relevant information:**

Background On Sister Cities International

SCI is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between U.S. and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation at the community level. It is a recognized leader in the movement for local community development and volunteer action, achieved by motivating and empowering private citizens, municipal officials and community leaders to conduct long-term programs of mutual benefit.

Sister city, county and state affiliations between the United States and other nations began shortly after World War II, and developed into a national initiative when President Dwight D.

Eisenhower proposed the People-to-People program at a White House conference in 1956.

Originally a part of the National League of Cities, SCI became a separate, nonprofit corporation in 1967 due to the tremendous growth and popularity of the U.S. program.

SCI's goals are to:

- Develop municipal partnerships between U.S. cities, counties, states and similar jurisdictions in other nations;
- Provide opportunities for local leaders and their citizens to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships;
- Create an atmosphere in which economic and community development can be implemented and strengthened;
- Stimulate environments through which communities will creatively learn, work and solve problems together through reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal, business,

- professional and technical exchanges and projects; and
- Collaborate with organizations in the United States and other countries that share similar goals.

SCI serves as the national membership association that recognizes, registers and coordinates U.S. sister city, county, and state linkages with communities worldwide. Currently, SCI represents over 700 U.S. communities and their 1,454 partners in 121 countries. SCI is committed to making international exchanges rewarding to U.S. communities across the country. It assists local sister city committees in serving as models of citizen activism, mobilizing municipal officials and volunteers to address community needs, and working with the private and public sectors to secure resources to meet those needs.

Sister cities have a unique role to play in building bridges to communities in transitional countries. They

- Build long-term sustainable community partnerships that last for decades;
- Undertake cost effective projects and activities that are primarily achieved through community fundraising and community volunteerism;
- Produce tangible and meaningful results that impact people's lives at the community level and significantly contribute to a community's overall quality of life;
- Build bridges of cross-cultural understanding that penetrate deeply into the life and fabric of an entire community; and
- Mobilize the resources and commitment from all sectors of a community, thereby focusing attention and resources upon community priorities.

#### SCI's Previous Work

SCI's strength is in the ability of people to help people at the community level. It has received many grants from a variety of foundation and government sources in the last 50 years that have allowed it to sue its extensive international network. SCI administers projects from the national office through sub-agreements with community organizations. Local organizations are drawn into the program through workshops at SCI's annual conference, through the SCI newsletter and Web site, and through direct contact. Recent SCI projects include:

- A grant from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (U.S. Department of State) to address violence against women and children. Twelve sister city partnerships participated in the program and helped more than 30 NGOs in former Soviet Union countries to strengthen their ability to deal with this issue through technical assistance and training. (Project completed in March 2002)
- SCI recently completed a 20-city Municipal Community Problem Solving Program (MCPSP) funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (U.S. Department of State) that brought together sister city partners in the NIS to focus upon specific challenges facing local governments. (Project completed in 2001)
- SCI is partnered with Wheelchairs for Peace to send containers of wheelchairs (240) to those in need in our international cities. (Ongoing project)
- SCI received a grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (U.S. Department of State) that gives it an opportunity to select four U.S. member cities with partners in predominantly Islamic countries to exchange emergency preparedness officials to share information about preparing for unexpected community-wide occurrences. This project is just

getting underway.

Projects undertaken by the SCI national office on behalf of the local communities cover a broad range of topics and interests, many of which address substantive issues of concern to both cities. The local communities on their own undertake a full schedule of exchanges and joint projects. Some recent environmental programs are:

- Portland, Oregon and Khabarovsk, Russia participated in the MCPSP project by analysing the issue of solid waste management and recycling in Khabarovsk. The Portland team, composed of sister city leaders and environmental experts, visited Khabarovsk and, together with civic leaders there, developed a comprehensive solid waste management program for the city of Khabarovsk, emphasizing recycling programs and improvement of solid waste and disposal methods. More information on this project is available at [www.pksc.org/programs/economicdevelopment](http://www.pksc.org/programs/economicdevelopment).
- The city of Tula in Russia called on its sister city, Albany, New York, for help with its inadequate and contaminated water supply. The project began with exchanges of water engineers and other professionals, followed by a set of solutions arrived at jointly by the two cities. Tula still faces financial and political problems with implementing the recommendations, but with the help of their sister city, they have seen their concerns addressed and a clear water crisis averted.
- The Tempe, Arizona, Sister Cities Corporation implemented an environmental project with its sister city, Timbuktu, Mali. Severe drought in Mali prompted the Tempe organization to establish a 'Garden of Peace' project, a reforestation effort in Mali with trees donated by Tempe citizens. The Tempe group also assisted in the construction of five wells in and around Timbuktu, assuring the people there of a sustainable water supply.
- Denver, Colorado and Axum, Ethiopia are working together on a project to update the water system in the Ethiopian city. While the project is in its early stages—the Denver sister city program is currently raising funds—the project is designed to give Axum a sustainable water supply.

Web-site (if available): <http://www.sister-cities.org>

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