

Cities Alliance

Extra-ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee

Naples, 4th September 2012

The Executive Committee of the Cities Alliance has decided to take advantage of the presence of many members at the World urban Forum in Naples, and has called an Extra-ordinary meeting. The meeting will take place between 19h00 -21h00, and has been called to discuss one single item – that of the location and hosting of the Cities Alliance Secretariat. Given the importance of the issue, it has also been decided to invite all available and interested CG members to participate as Observers.

Background.

The issues that serve as the background to the meeting should be familiar to Cities Alliance members. Over the past few years, the following matters have been discussed on one or more occasion:

- The increasing difficulty, complexity and slowness of grant-making, particular to non- World Bank implementing partners;
- The need to have more of an advocacy impact and presence in different regions, but particularly in Europe where the bulk of CA donor members are located;
- The challenges presented by the practicalities associated with increased alignment with World Bank operations; and
- The importance of maintaining the Cities Alliance as a multi-stakeholder platform, as envisaged in our recently-revised Charter.

Some of these issues were explicitly addressed in the most recent Independent Evaluation of the Cities Alliance, undertaken by COWI and finalised earlier this year. These findings included reference to the need for improved advocacy in Europe (Section 5.3.4, Page 44), difficulties associated with grant making, including mandatory Country Director Concurrence (Section 6.2, pages 47-49), and the issue of the Secretariat being hosted by the World Bank (Section 7.2, pages 57 & 58).

As COWI noted in concluding the latter point, “The role of the WB, including pros and cons of WB hosting, has been continuously discussed in the CA governing bodies over the years. ***However, no real alternatives have ever been presented***” (emphasis added). (Page 58)

The COWI Report in general, and the location of the Secretariat in particular, was further discussed at the last meeting of EXCO which took place in Kampala, Uganda on the 6 June 2012. Under Agenda Item 3, EXCO `...also noted its on-going responsibility to monitor the efficiency of hosting the partnership at the World Bank, and ***asked the Secretariat to explore viable alternatives***’. (emphasis added).

In response to EXCO’s resolution, the Secretariat has undertaken consultations with a number of members and partners. In addition, the Manager William Cobbett and PAF Chairperson, Clare Short, also undertook an intense visit to Europe, meeting with member representatives in Paris, Rome, Brussels,

Bonn and Oslo, and consulting with Sweden by phone. Subsequently, the Manager has attempted to directly contact every member of the Cities Alliance.

The preliminary conclusion to this exercise is that viable alternatives potentially do exist to the hosting of the Secretariat at the World Bank. Most pertinently, the World Bank's German Executive Director recently had a very positive meeting with the Vice-President of the Sustainable Development Network to convey her Government's willingness to facilitate the transfer of part or all of the Secretariat to Europe, if the CA's members so desired, and so decided.

Naples Meeting.

In preparation for the Naples meeting, and to ensure that the focus is on the future of the Cities Alliance, the Secretariat has prepared a **Terms of Reference for Evaluating the Location and Hosting of the Secretariat**. After consultation with UCLG as Chair of EXCO, we propose that the Naples meeting focus primarily on discussing and adopting this Terms of Reference, thereby giving the Secretariat guidance for undertaking this exercise. This TOR would then be used to evaluate and compare the current arrangements of the Secretariat, any offer(s) that may be tabled by members, as well as other feasible alternatives that may be suggested by members.

This matter would then be brought to the CG meeting in Hanoi on November 1&2, for a more formal discussion and, if possible, decision.