

# **Working Group on Sustainable Urban Management**

**Final Report**

**January 2004**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Working Group (WG) on Sustainable Urban Management has been set-up by the EU Expert Group on the Urban Environment to contribute to the preparation and definition of the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment foreseen by the 6<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme of the European Union.

The targets of the WG can be summarised as follows:

- a) To define major gaps and weaknesses in the management procedures of urban systems, with focus on environmental and health protection;
- b) To propose tools and strategies for an improved sustainable management of European urban areas.

Key to the work is the definition of “urban system” based on the concept of cities operating as complex ‘systems’. These “urban systems” support an ensemble of functions which interact with each other and influence the physical development of the city and its surrounding area.

The WG brings together experts from research projects, city representatives and other stakeholders in order to synthesise on going work and to discuss open questions relevant to the topic of sustainable urban management.

The outcomes from the meetings and from the subsequent interactions among the members of the WG are presented in the Inception Report (available on DG ENV website [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/home\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/home_en.htm)).

The WG defined initially its framework of action by tackling the following:

- a) Definition of the basic terminology and of the policy themes having impact on the sustainable management of urban areas
- b) Identification of administrative and implementation problems to delivering sustainable urban management
- c) Preliminary analysis of policy-making phases and their relevance for sustainable urban management.

The outcomes of the preliminary analysis are presented in the Inception Report (available on DG ENV website [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/home\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/home_en.htm)).

The final report (this document) deals with the following subjects:

- 1) Definition of a vision for Sustainable Urban Management
- 2) Prioritisation of Urban Management and Implementation problems.
- 3) Recommendations for Urban Management

### Definition of a Vision for Sustainable Urban Management

The vision provides the members of the WG with a common position on the urban management framework under discussion, and aims to be used as a reference vision by the users (EC services, decision-makers, general public) of this work.

The terminology and wording adopted in the definition might evolve, as more elements of the Urban Thematic Strategy are discussed and defined.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a process through which the sustainable development of urban areas, their immediate environs and the regions within which they are located may be secured.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will improve ecological conditions in order to provide a healthy urban environment.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will minimize the negative impacts of urban areas on ecological cycles at all levels.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It focuses upon the preservation of the natural environment within its social and economic context, recognising the interrelated nature of the social, the economic and the environmental.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It requires reformed organisational structures and arrangements which enable integrated policy approaches to urban problems to be developed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is founded on an integrated view of the state of the urban environment by using the best possible available information.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It uses the best available technologies and the most suitable approaches and tools which meet the specific needs of the urban areas in question.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is based on an open and inclusionary decision-making process which involves the participation of stakeholders, including citizens and various interest organisations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It builds on former knowledge which should therefore be accumulated and conserved to ensure that new policy approaches learn from past performance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It develops a culture of learning, understanding and respect within organisations and amongst individuals involved in the processes of sustainable development policy making.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It recognises the need for long term vision in policymaking and for the need to secure equitable and just policy outcomes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is based on the precautionary principle and on the integration of environment into the other policies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a continuing cycle of problem analysis, planning and programming, implementation and evaluation (monitoring).</li> </ul>

### **Prioritisation of Urban Management and Implementation Problems**

A list was established of major problems hindering urban management and the implementation of plans and decisions, in order to provide a firm basis for outlining a blueprint for recommendations which will pave the way to sustainable urban management.

The problems are listed below in the order of importance.

1. Limited cooperation beyond administrative borders
2. Limited horizontal cooperation (policies-integration)
3. Lack and/or under use of data, tools and practices
4. Project-based development does not support coherent sustainability policies
5. Participation and involvement of the public is not well enough integrated into the decision-making process
6. Limited vertical cooperation between different governmental and administrative levels
7. Lack of institutional capacity and willingness to learn
8. Separation of planning and implementation/neglect of implementation
9. Problems with public/private partnerships
10. Insufficient resources for planning
11. Lack of commitment to sustainability issues

### **Recommendations**

Urban environmental issues are the concern of all levels of government (local / regional / National / European and in certain instances also global) and these concerns involve a wide range of thematic aspects. Consequently, a first aim has been to set up a framework that includes and coordinates the involvement of all stakeholders in such a way that roles, competences and relevant principles (e.g. proximity, subsidiarity, diversity etc.) are duly and properly respected.

Specific actions have been defined for each recommendation, resulting in a composite picture which has been subsequently rationalised by grouping the actions and distributing responsibilities to most appropriate levels.

The recommendations are centred on the following main core elements:

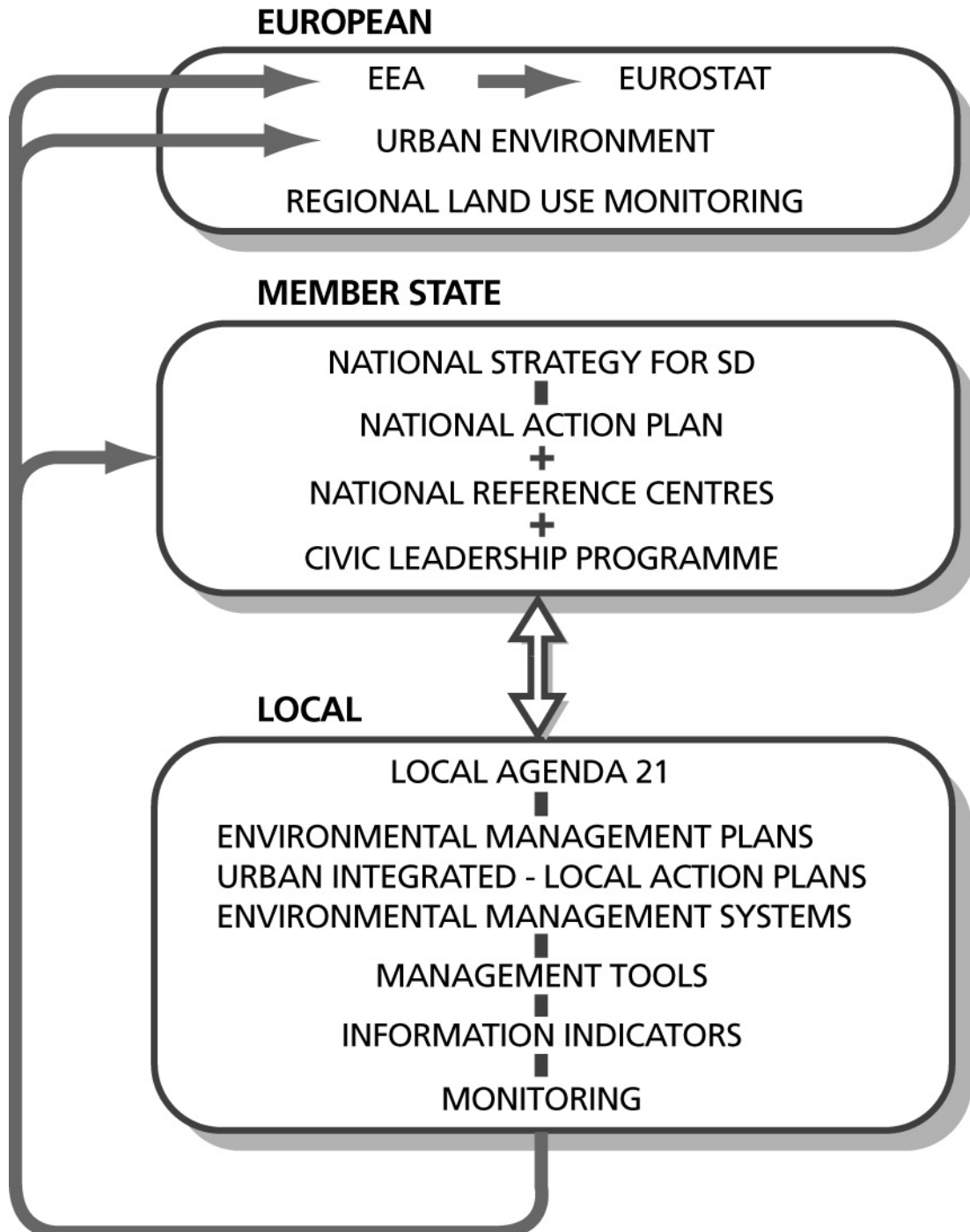
- the key function of the implementation of Local Agenda 21;
- the need to empower and enable local authorities to commitment to sustainable policies;
- the need to prepare overall urban environmental management plans and to adopt an appropriate environmental management system to ensure and monitor its implementation and performance: all of this implies the adoption of urban management tools, including indicators, models etc.;
- the necessity to set up a process of capacity building within local administrations and the exchange of experience and practice at a wider EU scale.

All recommendations need to be promoted and put into practice in close co-operation with the Commission, the Member States and regional/local authorities. In the following, the recommendations have been subdivided into three levels according to the implementation level:

- recommendations for national authorities
- recommendation for local authorities
- recommendation for European institutions

The framework of recommendations is represented in the figure below and then described in more detail in the following.

## URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT - FRAMEWORK OF ROLES AND COMPETENCES





### **Recommended Actions by Member States**

In order to provide a platform in support of sustainable urban management, the following recommendations are made to National governments:

- the development of **National Action Plans** for the urban environment
- the creation of **National Reference Centres** for the urban environment
- the elaboration of **Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programmes**

These recommendations, which are supported by complementary initiatives at local and European level, are described in detail below.

### **National Action Plan for the Urban Environment**

In order to assist in coordinating the diversity of situations and policy priorities at the national level it is recommended that the Member States develop **National Action Plans (NAPs)** for the urban environment, in accordance with their own governmental structure and distribution of competencies<sup>1</sup>.

National Action Plans include national objectives and targets for the development of urban environment, and measures how the objectives will be reached. Based on an analysis of key environmental problems in urban areas the NAPs should provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the main policy instruments implemented by the Member States. The NAPs should then focus on the ways in which Member States' policies and actions, whether at national, regional or local level, can be further strengthened in order to meet environmental objectives for urban areas. Thus, while taking into account the overall national situation and the existing policy frameworks, the NAPs should identify which specific and concrete new initiatives should be implemented in order to address the identified problems and weaknesses. In particular, the NAPs should identify issues that cannot be tackled at the National, regional and local level and that should be pursued by initiatives at the European level.

In NAPs specific attention should be given to:

- linking environmental objectives and targets in existing policy making processes, ensuring that the environment is mainstreamed into all policy areas, including the use of Structural Funds;
- developing an integrated and strategic approach to key issues that cuts across the common objectives in all national urban areas;
- setting clear objectives and a common framework for defining specific targets in each individual urban areas;
- acknowledging the importance of the regional and local dimensions while respecting the different distribution of competencies in different Member States;
- increasing awareness of sustainable development both amongst the general public and amongst policy makers and practitioners;
- providing a National Environmental Awareness Action Plan;

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<sup>1</sup> National Action Plans could be developed by Regional Authorities or equivalent bodies and subsequently brought together at National level.

- explaining how Member States intend to implement Paragraphs 148 and 149 of the Johannesburg Implementation Plan;
- providing regular national reports on the implementation and progression of LA21;
- explaining how the provisions of the Århus Convention are incorporated into environmental policy programmes at all levels of government;

The National Action Plan should include measures and define framework to both mitigate (i.e. reduce GHG emissions) the causes and adapt to (i.e. prevent, moderate and reduce the risks) the impacts of climate changes at local level.

The extent, delineation and composition of individual “urban areas” should be defined according to the priorities and characteristics contained in the NAP, and therefore will inevitably be different amongst Member States and even within each Member State.

The NAP will also describe the administrative arrangements regulating the various local authorities involved in the management of the urban area or “urban region”. The ‘Open method of co-ordination’ presented in the White Paper on Governance as a way of getting better and faster regulation is a way of encouraging co-operation, the exchange of best practice and agreeing common targets and guidelines for Member States.

NAPs need to demonstrate some common basis as regards their structure and contents in order to facilitate the achievement of common EU objectives.

The NAP for the urban environment should be properly embedded in wider national strategies for sustainable development or national environment plans, which are already established or in preparation in several Member States.

### **National Reference Centres for Urban Environment**

One element of linkage amongst the various recommendations is the creation of **National Reference Centres for Urban Environment (NARCs)**. Where consolidated public and/or private initiatives exist already in the Member States, the NARCs should be built in and harmonise with such structures.

The NARCs should:

- participate in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the NAPs
- co-ordinate the collection and harmonisation of urban environmental data;
- interface with the corresponding institutions at the European level e.g. European Environment Agency, to supply information on the status of urban areas;
- introduce or reinforce guidance for all departments and agencies at all levels of governance about the methods, needs and timescales for integration in the plan-making process. Where governments retain powers of approval over plans generated at subsidiary levels of governance, and may withhold approval where joint working and shared ownership have failed, the NARC may assist the drive for consensus.
- Elaborate a **Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme (SUSHIP)** for local government officials and politicians. The Civic Leadership Programme would focus upon the provision of the necessary skills and knowledge to help local policy makers develop effective sustainable urban management in their municipalities.

### **Recommended Actions by Local Authorities**

Local authorities are ultimately responsible for the environmental status of their town and for any adverse impacts on citizens' health. Therefore they must have an active role in both the conception and implementation of policies and measures concerning the management of the urban environment.

It is also essential that local authorities and responsible departments co-ordinate environmental policies and decisions that affect the environment. In order to achieve this, they must prepare an environmental management plan and must ensure that the plan is effectively implemented. This involves the following actions for local authorities:

- definition and implementation of “Integrated Urban – Local Action Plans”, in coordination with and in response to the National Action Plans;
- use of indicators and appropriate tools to monitor the implementation of the Local Actions Plans;
- implementation of an environmental management system;
- ensure that appropriate coordination is established in regions where different neighbouring cities and towns help establish a plan for the urban region as a whole.

### **Integrated Urban– Local Action Plans**

The adoption of **Integrated Urban– Local Action Plans (LAPs)** should be facilitated to foster integration within the “traditional environmental fields” eg water, soil, air, noise, landscape, nature, energy... and in relation to other relevant key sectors eg land use and transport.

The purpose of such local Plans should be to influence local “development strategies” in broad terms, and they should be strongly “action oriented” based on a clear programme of action, with deadlines, responsibilities, targets, monitoring systems, etc.. The establishment of local “targets” by means of the planning process should be basic requirement. The LAPs should be in line with the objectives of the NAPs.

LAPs could be implemented as a new instrument of local planning or by advancement of already existing planning tools (e.g. the *Flächennutzungsplanung* in Germany, which already incorporates landscape planning approaches).

To legitimate their content and enhance their effectiveness, Plans should be developed by means of participatory processes and be based on concerted long-term visions of sustainability, as proposed by Local Agenda 21 approaches and practice.

The development and approval of an Urban Integrated Action plan, through a Local Agenda 21 participatory process cannot be “compulsory” as already the case in some Member States, but should at least form a “pre-requisite” for the securing of funding from both EU and National programmes for local development.

The European Commission should encourage the implementation of LAPs through funding best practice documentations and planning guidance.

### **Adoption of Data, Indicators and Tools**

Local administrations and departments responsible for the urban environment should maximise their use of urban management tools and models including air quality, land use, transport, assessment, participatory approaches, green budgeting, on-line resource management etc.

In general practical urban management tools need to:

- be capable of addressing issues at different levels, to deal with the different complexities faced, to be integrated into decision making processes and to be 'owned' by users;
- integrate various aspects of urban environmental issues
- be available at different stages of a project. Most current evaluation tools only enable the success of a project to be assessed at the end of the project; often too late for modifications to take place that would improve the sustainability of the project;
- deal with problems at all different scales within the built environment from an individual building to the regional level;
- incorporate the analysis of environmental, social and economic factors and possess the ability to assess the interactions between these factors;
- be simple to use, bring useful data together from different sources into a usable format and use established data, so that results are accurate, rapidly delivered, and based on commonly used software.

Co-operation between those who develop new tools, mainly scientists and consultants, and end-users including local authorities, SMEs, NGOs, should be strengthened. The tools should be tested and assessed by a range of end-users so that they meet their needs more effectively. Effort should be focused on making tools simpler to use and more flexible in addressing a wider range of issues. The use of tools should be demonstrated through local training and workshops and the Commission should require all research projects focused on urban management tools to co-operate closely with end-users.

The implementation of Integrated Urban– Local Action Plans should be monitored by collecting appropriate data and information. In coordination with the NARCs the data should then be developed into indicators for reporting at National and European levels. Where feasible and within the boundaries set by the subsidiarity principle, data and indicators should be utilised according to standards and guidelines established by international initiatives such as the ECI project and other initiatives that will emerge during the preparation of the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment. Indicators should be produced routinely to:

- provide a better understanding of complex environmental issues and trends;
- help city managers and decision-makers in defining local policies, and taking environmental concerns into consideration;
- assist city authorities in assessing the achievement of the set environmental objectives
- provide regional/national authorities and international institutions e.g. Eurostat and EEA with detailed information on the urban environment

- evaluate the impact of the city on its immediate surroundings and define opportunities for a better urban-rural balance.

The final report for the European Common Indicators (ECI) project is published on the European Commission web site and is available for download and consultation at:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/policy\\_initiatives.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/policy_initiatives.htm).

A preliminary overview of indicators that may be used to allow comparability between urban areas across the EU and to address the issue of carrying capacity is provided in the annex of this document.

### **Adoption of Environmental Management Systems**

Environmental management systems form a building block for the action-oriented institutional frameworks and integrated urban action plans for sustainable urban management advocated by this report. A management system should be:

- officially recognized;
- designed to incorporate neutral and competent auditing;
- capable of supplying information to the public
- based on the involvement of all stakeholders
- able to deliver comparable results on the basis of a common set of key data.

The development of an Environmental Management System that guides the city towards an environmentally sustainable development path requires the development of new policies, institutions and procedures. It also requires ongoing monitoring, review and improvement of environmental performance in line with predetermined sustainable development goals. It is therefore an essential element of the Urban Integrated Local Action Plan.

Several methods and tools can be adopted, depending on local circumstances, for the purpose of managing and evaluating the urban environment. Amongst these, the Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) developed by the EU has reached an interesting level of acceptance amongst local authorities and is therefore recommended for wider adoption. In particular EMAS implementation in the public sector should be considered as a complementary procedure to LA21/Integrated Plans, a suitable tool to support local integrated planning, and to guarantee the monitoring of results.

### **Recommended Actions at the EU level**

The recommendations for the national and local levels should be developed in collaboration with and supported by appropriate initiatives at the European level. This section summarises the recommendations that require specific actions by the European Commission and by the European Environment Agency. The involvement of other EU Institutions, that is required by the formal procedures for approving and releasing EC decisions is not explicitly examined in this report.

Most of the recommendations for the EC concern funding initiatives, to be accomplished either in framework of existing programmes (e.g. Framework Programme for RTD, LIFE, Structural Funds and Community Initiatives, etc.) or by proposing new specific lines of action. Other recommendations concern the definition of binding legislation (i.e. Decisions, Directives, and Regulations) and of non-binding Legislation (i.e. Communication, Opinions, Recommendations, Resolutions).

Since each recommendation may be implemented in a variety of ways, e.g. additional funding may be a more effective incentive for good urban management than restrictive legislation, and since in many cases implementation is the result of a combination of measures, the recommendations are grouped thematically.

A recommendation for implementation of all measures is provided at the end of the section.

### **Dissemination and Promotion of Good Practice and Methods**

The EC should provide support to the adoption and implementation of the Integrated Urban Local Plans by means of Local Agenda 21 as a “policy tool” approach, enforcing the direction already taken in the past with the establishment of the EU Expert Group on the Urban Environment, the launch of the Sustainable Cities Campaign and the implementation of the “Community Framework for cooperation to promote sustainable urban development”. Further more, the Commission should promote the key role of active national policies as political and financial measures supporting Local Agenda 21 approaches and methods. It should also promote:

- good practice demonstration networks/handbooks to spread information on available tools.
- the dissemination of information on LA21 and EMAS as urban management tools by strengthening the support given to networks of local and regional authorities, facilitating the exchange of information and through awards, eco-labelling and benchmarking. Training actions of both local authorities and representatives of NGOs should be part of this dissemination

### **Building Institutional Capacity**

The EU should support the building of the institutional capacity of local institutions through Structural Funds and other forms of financial support, environmental policies and regulatory activities. The support should in particular focus on trans-national local government networks focusing upon the various dimensions of urban sustainable development, environmental policy and urban management.

A **Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme** for local government officials and politicians should be sponsored. Knowledge centres or universities could operate this programme in conjunction with local government associations according to a common European syllabus. Scholarships could be offered for the programme, with each course lasting around two weeks.

The establishment of a Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Website would provide advice and guidance to local authorities on a range of issues relating to sustainable urban management, environmental policy and practice, and sustainable development.

Senior politicians and heads of industries from across the EU should establish a Sustainable Urban Management ‘think tank’ to explore the integration of visions of sustainable development, to disseminate information about sustainable urban management and to plan educational activities for decision-makers in both sectors to be linked to the Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme

#### **Adoption of Tools and Methodologies**

The adoption of urban environment management systems for towns and cities should be widespread as much as possible. There is no consensus on whether this should be on a mandatory basis or just by means of a recommendation. This should initially be based on tools such as EMAS or simpler versions for smaller towns.

EC funded scientific project should provide support for the implementation of local and regional monitoring systems and the promotion of the concept of regional land use and environmental information systems. This includes theoretical studies, action oriented research as well as best-practice analysis and documentation.

Member States should be persuaded to introduce **Cumulative Impact Assessment** and **Territorial Impact Assessment** as part of the impact assessment practices through the provision of guidance (good practice demonstrations, training, networking) and, if considered necessary, through legislation (at the **European level by amending the Directive on SEA 2001/42/EC.**)

The European Environment Agency should widen the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) to also cover urban data and should regularly provide a report on the environmental status of European urban areas. The setting up of a **European Topic Centre for the Urban Environment** is proposed to coordinate the information collected at National level by the NARCs.

#### **Towards an Urban Environment Framework Directive**

Based on the understanding of existing Directives, in particular the Water Framework Directive and the Noise Directive, the WG propose the formulation of an ‘**Urban Framework Directive**’ where the recommendations could be adequately implemented. The Directive should be based on the types of ‘administrative arrangements’ to be coordinated at the national level (see NAPs) and also should require the formulation of ‘local action plans’ for urban areas of each MS. Measures for networking, reporting including indicators, public consultation and technical guidelines including the adoption of Urban Management Systems for towns, should also be contained in the Directive.

The fundamental issue for the above scenario are the cost implications for local authorities and implementation by Member States – **however it is perhaps the most comprehensive and reflects the ‘integration principle’ announced in the text of the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment.** The Framework Directive should be complemented with more stringent requirements for EU funding e.g. ERDF, Community Initiatives, etc for long term sustainable urban management plans.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 6<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (EAP) guiding the European Union's Environmental Policy and actions until the year 2010 includes several Thematic Strategies the purpose of which is to set concrete targets and implementation strategies for the Programme. The Council and the Parliament have given the remit of preparing the strategies to the Commission. One of the strategies is targeting urban environment. DG Environment has identified four key areas to support the preparation of the strategy: Urban Design, Urban Construction, Urban Transport and Sustainable Urban Management. These areas are dealt with by four Working Groups (WGs).

This report is produced by the Working Group on Sustainable Urban Management which tackles the key area on management systems for urban sustainability. The group consists of experts contributing expertise from various fields of sustainable urban management. The European Commission is represented by DG Environment, DG Research, DG Regional Policy and DG Joint Research Centre (JRC). The European Environment Agency also participates in the group. Further experts have contributed to the work of the WG, by participating to some of the meetings and or by providing inputs on specific issues. The WG is chaired by the Institute for Environment and Sustainability of DG JRC.

Section 6 provides more information on the composition of the Working Group.

The task of the WG is to propose strategies and tools for more sustainable management of urban areas. The targets set out for the WG are the following:

- to identify the problems, their scale and underlying causes related to unsustainable and inefficient management of the urban environment
- to identify relevant approaches, methods and tools to improve urban management
- to propose new integrated approaches for sustainable urban management
- to formulate recommendations for actions at the appropriate administrative/political levels.

The final product of the WG is a set of recommendations for actions. The WG considers all possible instruments - management methodologies, tools, guidelines, legislative initiatives, financial incentives, etc. - to improve the quality of urban management from a sustainability viewpoint.

Sustainability is the main thread guiding the work of group. As sectoral policy compartmentalisation is one of the main obstacles to more sustainable urban management, an integrated, cross-sectoral, comprehensive, area-wide approach is required. High-quality urban management has to take into account the importance of integrating the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic and social issues and hence the work of this WG is based on holistic visions of sustainable urban management. However, as the environment is often the most neglected sphere of sustainability, this WG has taken it as the base level against which the other dimensions of sustainability are considered.

Management is understood in the broad sense of the term as organisation of urban matters.

It covers

- the debate about norms and visions driving policy-making,
- sector-based planning both in strategic and more operative time spans,
- spatial integration of sectoral issues,
- decision-making, budgeting,
- implementation of plans and decisions and
- the monitoring of results and evaluation of impacts.

The purpose of this Final Report is to present findings and results of the Working Group. Recommendations and suggestions are grouped according to the level of government mostly concerned with their implementation, although it must be stress that only a coordinated effort among the various political and administrative levels will produce results of benefit for all the European Union and its citizens.

The content of the report has been approved collectively and consensually by the WG and all members have participated in the process that has resulted in this report.

The report is structured into 6 chapters. After the introduction, the 2nd chapter describes the policy context in relation to the 6<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme.

3<sup>rd</sup> chapter outlines definitions and frameworks, following the definition provided in the Inception Report.

4<sup>th</sup> Chapter presents the list of management and implementation problems.

5<sup>th</sup> Chapter provides the recommendations.

6<sup>th</sup> Chapter lists the experts that have contributed to the preparation of this report.

## 2. POLICY CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

### **The Thematic Strategy**

The Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment is one of the key actions outlined in the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme<sup>2</sup>. The Thematic Strategy is a new way of developing environmental policy for complex priority problems that require a broad approach. The Strategy will consider the environmental problems of urban areas, set objectives building on existing policies that deal with these problems, and identify the proposals necessary to achieve these objectives.

Four priority themes have been identified for the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment. They have been selected as they have a significant effect on the environment in urban areas. They are:

- Sustainable Urban Transport;
- Sustainable Urban Management;
- Sustainable Construction; and
- Sustainable Urban Design.

Overall, the Thematic Strategy seeks to contribute to the improvement of the environmental efficiency of urban areas and to secure a healthy living environment for urban citizens.

### **The Strategy's Approach**

The Strategy will build on existing work. There are many examples of good practice and innovative demonstration projects in each of the 4 priority themes that contribute to a better urban environment. However, whilst these islands of excellence exist, the routine, day-to-day practice often falls far short of these standards. One of the main challenges, then, is to achieve a widespread adoption of these best practices, as this will bring a significant improvement in the quality of the urban environment. The Thematic Strategy should facilitate the shift from talking about best practice to delivering it across the European Union – a shift from “Local Agenda 21” to “Local Action 21”.

In considering the actions and measures to help make best practice routine, the whole range of actions and measures should be considered. The Thematic Strategy should consider all options. These include providing incentives, disseminating information, making recommendations, creating legislation, benchmarking performances, providing political support, preparing guidance, changing the way existing procedures work, and developing new approaches.

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<sup>2</sup>

Decision No 1600/20002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2002 laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme, OJ L 242, 10.9.2002, p.1.

## 2.1 The Urban System

The work to be undertaken by this WG is based on the concept of cities operating as complex ‘systems’. These “urban systems” support an ensemble of functions which interact with each other and influence the physical development of the city and its surrounding area.

Urban functions<sup>3</sup> may include, but are not limited to:

***Residence (housing);***

***Mobility and accessibility;***

***Commerce, industry and related services;***

***Leisure and recreation;***

The physical ‘urban system’ comprises several static elements:

***Buildings***

***Infrastructure***

***Open space (natural)***

***Abandoned and derelict zone;***

***Agriculture (and forestry)***

...

and also dynamic elements:

***Transport***

***Water***

***Energy***

***Waste***

...

Each function is ruled by a specific policy. Consequently, the policies influence and drive the development of the static and dynamic elements of the ‘system’. Individual policies can be formulated at distinct administrative and political levels (e.g. local, regional, national or European).

Where policies are developed sectorally, individual developments deemed to be required to support one function can impact on the effective operation of other functions. The static and dynamic elements serve many masters and can be influenced by many masters. Mutual influences are typically driven by socio-economic and physical criteria.

Sectoral policy decisions/actions do not only influence individual sectors, there are always consequences and knock on effects for other sectors. We need to better understand these relationships and consequences to make effective choices for the urban environment as a whole.

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<sup>3</sup> More could be debated on the definition of ‘function’, in particular on the differences between ‘function’, ‘activity’, and ‘service’. A ‘function’ is considered directly related to the corresponding specific sectoral policy.

While there are various policies at different administrative levels that address these functions and elements, they generally act in isolation from each other, and the environment is all too often the element that receives the least consideration.

In the long-term, the only way to improve consistently the sustainability of our urban environment is, for the municipal authorities, to adopt explicit environmental targets, actions and monitoring. To manage this process they will need to set in place an integrated management system that will allow them to make the necessary connections between a range of policy areas and stakeholders, and to effectively analyse, monitor and foresee the effectiveness of policies and their environmental impacts.

For these reasons, promoting the generalised use of sustainable urban management systems is a key element of the thematic strategy.

Several environmental management tools, such as EMAS (Environmental Management and Audit Scheme), ISO 14001, Environmental Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and indicators, already exist and initiatives such as Local Agenda 21 are promoting good practises for urban sustainability.

However, the use of such management tools by urban authorities is far from being widespread in the EU, and the tools need to be adapted to the specific challenges of urban sustainability.

Therefore, the WG on Sustainable Urban Management will provide **recommendations** for actions at the appropriate administrative/political level on the regulatory or other processes regarding actions expected to both make operational the integrated strategies proposed, and to introduce innovative programs for managing urban environmental issues in an effective and widespread way.

### 3. SUSTAINABLE URBAN MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1 Definitions

The following definitions, discussed and agreed by the Members of the WG, form the basis for the work to be carried out, by outlining targets and fixing boundaries.

**Environment** is understood as the physical space which is composed of an ecological basis and man-made structures. Physical space is the stage on which all social and economic processes take place. There is a two-way interrelation between the physical space and the processes that occur in it. Both of them have an impact on each other.

**Urban Areas** are defined and delimited as one or more urban core(s) and its (their) functional environs which are linked to the core by intense flows of interactions. Rural areas and other smaller urban areas in the functional surrounding regions are also considered as elements of the urban area. For these elements to be considered part of the urban area they must be within a range in which the urban core still significantly influences the surrounding region.

The interdependencies between urban and rural areas require a wider remit for the WG's agenda, one which acknowledges the need to move away from:

- City boundary limits and focus on functional urban regions
- Limited definition of functional urban regions based on economic criteria (and more specifically labour market area) towards a wider definition which incorporates environmental criteria
- Urban-rural dichotomy and focus on urban-rural linkages, particularly environmental interdependencies manifested for example in the management of waste, water, flood protection, air pollution, provision of natural and cultural assets, and so on.

Such recognitions also have implications for governance relations and institutional capacity. Whilst industry, businesses, households operate on the basis of functionally defined areas, and whilst environmental pollutions do not recognise boundaries, governance institutions are often organised and operate on the basis of administratively defined areas such as communes, municipalities, boroughs or Kreise. This mismatch has made it difficult for such institutions to develop their management capacity for sustainable urban environment.

**Management** is understood in the broad sense of the term as the organisation of urban matters. It covers

- the debate about norms and visions driving the policy-making,
- sector-based planning both in the strategic and more operative time spans,
- spatial integration of sectoral issues,
- decision-making, budgeting,
- implementation of plans and decisions and
- the monitoring of results and evaluation of impacts.

**Management System** includes all processes, methods and tools used for organising, operating and supervising the urban environment including the factors influencing it. Management systems cover all phases from the visions behind the preparation of plans and decisions to their implementation and the monitoring of impacts. Planning practices, decision making processes and procedures, implementation and monitoring mechanisms and methods and tools used in the above-mentioned phases are all elements of management systems. In general, urban management is driven by various decisions taken at different levels of administration (local, regional, national).

**Urban Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability is taken as the basis for the sustainability concept in this context. The more sustainable an urban area, the less it impacts on ecological cycles at all levels from local to global and the healthier it is as a living environment for the citizens living in it and its environs. Socio-economic activities are considered to the extent they influence environmental sustainability. In the Table 1 below, the main policy themes for urban sustainability are listed.

**TABLE 1: Policy Themes for Sustainability**

<i>Policy Themes</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
<b>Demand management</b>	Attention to environmental limits and carrying capacities of specific territorial areas, so that development is constrained by supply and environmental capacity, not simply demand led.
<b>Self-sufficiency</b>	Emphasis on self-sufficiency, and responsibility for the management of natural resources for each territorial unit, starting at the household level.
<b>Urban containment and concentration</b>	Prevention of urban sprawl to minimise transformation of rural land, and fragmentation of urban services, often linked to increased densities and reuse of vacant urban land.
<b>Durability and adaptability in the built environment</b>	Increasing the quality of the built environment to minimise energy use, promote neighbourhood identity and historical continuity, opportunities for walking, etc.
<b>Mixed use development</b>	Promoting diversity of land uses within neighbourhoods and properties, making more efficient use of the land resource, and the abandonment of insensitive zoning.
<b>Reducing the need to travel</b>	Linking work, home and other activities within reach of each other, self-contained communities, sustainability supporting infrastructure.
<b>Creation of open space and water networks</b>	Protection and enhancement of important environments, promoting flows through linking green spaces and open water.

### 3.2 What is Sustainable Urban Management

- It is a process through which the sustainable development of urban areas, their immediate environs and the regions within which they are located may be secured.
- It will improve ecological conditions in order to promote a healthy urban environment.
- It will minimize the negative impacts of urban areas on ecological cycles at all levels.
- It focuses upon the preservation of the natural environment within its social and economic context, recognising the interrelated nature of the social, economic and environmental.
- It requires the development of the organisational structures and arrangements which enable integrated policy approaches to urban problems.
- It is founded on an integrated view of the state of the urban environment by using the best possible available information.
- It uses the best available technologies and the most suitable approaches and tools which meet the specific needs of urban areas.
- It is based on an open and inclusionary decision-making process which involves the participation of stakeholders, including citizens and other interest groups.
- It builds on former knowledge which should therefore be specified as a “state of the art” to ensure that new policy approaches learn from past performance.
- It develops a culture of learning, understanding and respect within organisations and amongst individuals involved in the processes of sustainable development policy making.
- It recognises the need for long term vision in policy making and for the need to secure equitable and just policy outcomes
- It is based on the precautionary principle and on the integration of environment into the other policies.
- It is based on a continuing cycle of problem analysis, planning and programming, implementation and evaluation (monitoring).



### **3.3 Minimum Requirements for Sustainable Urban Environment**

The minimum requirements of a good management system capable of delivering sustainable urban environments were identified by the WG. Four areas summarised in Table 2 below were identified.

**Table 2: General Criteria for Assessing the Potential Contribution of Management Systems to Environmental Sustainability**

	<b>Attributes of the System</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Scope and Powers</b>	Cross-sectoral policy coordination	Ensuring that the management system is placed in government so as to be able to contribute to cross-sectoral policy integration as well as the regulation of land use.
<b>Subsidiarity</b>	Assignment of competences	Assigning competences in management to the most appropriate jurisdictions, in respect of the realisation of sustainability
	Institutional framework	Creating appropriate institutions to ensure that tasks can be undertaken at the appropriate level, and involving all relevant actors.
	Capacity building	Ensuring that regional and local institutions have resources and skills to address sustainability, and the promotion of inter-professional working.
<b>Integration and coordination</b>	Strategic perspective	A strategic perspective is needed which takes a long term horizon, shifts the orientation of the system to sustainability goals, and sets targets for environmental quality.
	Horizontal and vertical integration	Establishing horizontal integration amongst sectors and vertical integration of levels of planning to establish commitment to common policies across government.
	Partnerships	Establishing linkages between government, communities and the private sector in the formulation and implementation of planning policy.
<b>Learning Capacity</b>	Participation	Enabling the involvement and empowerment of stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation to generate ownership and meet special needs
	Environmental Information	Improved knowledge about the state of the environmental trends and impacts, promotion of consistency in the application of environmental information, and support for research.
	Monitoring of Environmental Impacts	Ensuring that the performance of planning policy and implementation, and the state of the environment are monitored through the use of indicators.
	Evaluation of Environmental Impacts	Ensuring that the environmental implications of development are considered in decision making through environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal methods.

#### 4. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS

The first meeting of the WG produced a established a list of major problems acting as barriers to urban management and the implementation of plans and decisions. The barriers were grouped under seven main headings, but it was felt that more prioritisation work was needed in order to provide a blueprint for recommendations which will pave the way towards sustainable urban management.

The process of identification and definition of problems and barriers was as follows:

- 1) First, the experts listed the five most important problems according to their view and experience;
- 2) Second, a prioritisation exercise was performed and the results discussed at the Second WG Meeting.

The problems and barriers were first listed and described as proposed individually by the experts. Then, the problems were prioritised and further discussed.

Following the compilation of the initial list of problems and barriers, the Expert Group considered the following problems which need to be solved most urgently in order to smooth the way for the more sustainable future of urban areas. They are presented in the order of importance and subsequently discussed in more detail.

1. Insufficient Co-operation beyond Administrative Boundaries
2. Insufficient Horizontal Co-operation
3. Insufficient Harmonised Data, Tools and Practices
4. Development via Short Term and Isolated Projects
5. Insufficient Public Participation
6. Insufficient Vertical Co-operation
7. Need for Institutional and Personal Capacity
8. Separation of Planning and Implementation
9. Problems with Public/Private Partnerships
10. Insufficient Resources for Planning
11. Lack of Commitment to Sustainability Issues

##### 4.1 Insufficient Co-operation beyond Administrative Boundaries

Administrative borders and/or arrangements often do not facilitate co-operation but, on the contrary, reduce it down or, in the worst cases, encourage competition and the initiation of unsustainable development trends.

Cities are perceived as areas that are tightly defined by their administrative boundaries, rather than being identified as part of a wider city-regions with multidimensional links with their hinterland and, particularly, with the surrounding rural areas. This perception is reflected in the way cities are managed. Often, the responsibilities of urban governance stop at the administrative boundaries of the cities with little co-operation between neighbouring municipalities. This reduces the opportunity for addressing the

management of functional relationships between cities and their hinterlands. Potential reciprocal benefits do not always materialise due to political and administrative obstacles and the fragmentation of competencies.

Typical policy fields affected by this problem are transport, land use zoning, housing, nature protection, use of natural resources as well as phenomena like urban sprawl, sub- and peri-urbanisation.

Most national governments in Europe recognise the national economic interest in strong, internationally connected regions and adapt their regional programmes accordingly. Almost all national governments endorse these new trends in regional economic policy, pointing to the improvement and competitiveness of the strong regions. In this context, European regional policy is still oriented towards giving support to economically disadvantaged regions, but, as previously indicated, current discussions on the future cohesion policy indicate changes in the funding policy.

However, a clearer and more systematic approach is needed for the problem of funding of rural areas, in order to strengthen urban-rural relationships as argued by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). The Nice European Council in December 2000 stressed the importance of such services, stating that “there is need here for clarification of the relationship between methods of funding services of general economic interest and application of the rules on State aid. The compatibility of aid designed to offset the extra costs incurred in performing tasks of general economic interest should be recognised, in compliance with Article 86(2)”. To define public service requirements in relation to some basic amenities – energy, water, telecommunication, transport etc. – it is crucial to allow Member States or local authorities to subsidise the provision of basic services in low density areas where the same services are not commercially viable, thus reducing territorial unbalances and unsustainable regional development trends.

#### **4.2 Insufficient Horizontal Co-operation**

At the moment the fragmentation of responsibilities is a major problem for planning and delivery. This horizontal fragmentation, reluctance to co-operate across sector borders, disputes over competencies and conflicts of interest reduce in a considerable way the capacity for creative problem solving, which is a prerequisite for implementing sustainable development.

The problems caused by lack of horizontal co-operation manifest themselves in all phases of urban management from problem analysis and vision building phases through planning into implementation and monitoring.

#### **4.3 Insufficient Harmonised Data, Tools and Practice**

An important problem is the lack of harmonised data, tools and practices in order to guide urban planning teams, politicians and managers in the desired direction. Urban

planning is managed by experts, usually assigned by politicians, who apply individual practices according to their particular experience and the local circumstances.

### **Problems with Data**

Lack of reliable and sufficiently detailed data is a major problem concerning the problem analysis, planning and monitoring phases. The use of many new tools such as models and various evaluation techniques requires high-quality data on inter-linked urban phenomena and flows of interactions. The lack of comparable data also makes benchmarking and the use of other comparative methods and tools very difficult.

Data gaps emerge in particular at regional and municipal levels (to some extent NUTS II, but particularly NUTS III and below).

### **Methods and Tools**

When it comes to tools and methods the main problems are the following:

- Data analysis methods are not sufficiently harmonised to assure comparability, which would permit benchmarking exercises with more significant results.
- Lack of easy-to-use tools accessible to the various stakeholders and ‘good practice’ guidance in the use of tools.
- Many tools on the market have limited efficiency and compatibility with the state of the art. This leads to the use of more traditional and often lower quality tools.
- Available methods and tools are used only to a limited extent due to lack of awareness and related costs.
- Transfer and implementation of good practice is limited. Many innovations remain local or at best national, but typically do not transfer between MS.
- When tools (e.g. indicators) are used they are not embedded into the policy making process, so that their usefulness is only very limited.
- Many traditional ways of measuring the costs and benefits of projects, which are the most commonly used decision-making support tools, are not suitable for taking into account environmental costs and benefits (see more in the example box)
- Available tools are not always responsive to the user interface and the information they provide. There needs to be better coordination of what the users require in relation to, for example, urban air quality management and there should be continuous dialogue with the scientific community who

generally are responsible for the development of tools. The users also need to more precisely define their current and future requirements.

- Strategic level assessment and evaluation tools are still lacking and, in part because of this, evaluations of land use plans or regional plans are all too rare. The absence of tools suitable for the evaluation of plans poses serious problems in urban management. First, adopted plans may become obsolete due to unrealistic objectives or presumptions about future development. Reactions of planning authorities may come too late when specific conditions of development have changed. Second, the concrete outcomes of planning and implementation are not analysed carefully enough. Questions whether the adopted plan is attaining the defined goals cannot be answered in a transparent way.
- Small projects and businesses do not have sufficiently good access to the information and models necessary to assess environmental impacts in a holistic manner. At the moment small companies and groups have little knowledge of other small-scale developments and there is limited coordination by authorities.
- The importance of a thorough SWOT-analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is often neglected.

## Practice

Many planning-related practices are considered as obstacles in the way of more sustainable urban development:

- Traditional values still rule amongst a large majority of planners and decision-makers. It is difficult to achieve sustainability if most planners and decision-makers think only in relation to growth-oriented objectives and follow narrow sector-based interests.
- Lack of objective or consensual environmental criteria makes it difficult to integrate the visions and objectives of various stakeholders (including the administrative bodies) in the planning process.
- The inflexible structure of plans makes it difficult to update them in a flexible way when need arises.
- There are uncertainties over the costs and risks associated with the innovation that often accompanies sustainability. There is a lack of real demonstration of new innovations and the positive and negative aspects. Demonstration projects are all too often for political purposes rather than to inform decision makers.

#### 4.4 Development via Short Term and Isolated Projects

Management tools such as indicator systems, as well as many projects set up, for instance in the framework of a Local Agenda 21 process, are often introduced in order to raise public awareness or tackle single, specific issues. However, they are not set into an integrated strategy that links such tools and projects to the core tasks of a local authority.

The voluntary character of LA21 and the lack of a “legislative framework” have often induced local community to develop LA21 practice in isolation, without harmonisation. Nevertheless, in some countries LA 21 experience has been an opportunity to actively involve NGOs, to open a public debate on sustainability principles and to define a possible shared vision of the future for the local community. It has however failed to exert a strong influence on environmental and sectoral policies in the medium term. In other Countries, *“Local Agenda 21 has become the main environmental management tool at municipal level”* (Footnote: *Experiences with the LA21 as a Policy Tool – City of Helsinki/2001*), but elsewhere it has failed in implementing effective participatory approaches.

This has two consequences: on the one hand, the lack of a vision built on the principles of sustainable development, which guides the development and implementation of tools and projects, means that they could possibly infringe upon other goals of sustainable development. On the other hand, it also means that after the end of the project period, the outcomes are not mainstreamed into local policy-making and thus have no lasting effect on local strategic planning.

Many Guidelines have been developed trying to harmonise and consolidate Agenda 21 methods (e.g. the ones by ICLEI or others developed at national level by different agencies), and all of them underline the fact that the final output of the participatory process should be a “policy tool”: an Action Plan, based on an integrated approach, with medium to long-term perspectives, defining targets, actions, deadlines, partnerships and responsibilities; a tool, in other words, capable of redirecting sectoral policies towards sustainability.

#### 4.5 Insufficient Public Participation

The weak ownership of plans at all levels is part of the whole ownership debate - delivery is a lot easier if the plan is owned and viewed as a priority by all stakeholders or ‘actors’. Where ownership is weak, there is the potential for non-implementation (private sector ‘bottom-line’), or delay through opponents resorting to legal means, or through popular action by concerned citizens. The concepts of citizen participation, of shared vision and identity, cannot be treated any longer as ‘side issues’, but need to be mainstreamed. Where such action is successful, effective formal and informal ownership of the plan is created, reducing the potential for opposing actions, and so paving the way for shared active urban management. It is also important to closely link this issue with the issue of institutional capacity and the inability of organisations to learn. Without a learned and integrated institutional framework to support public and private ownership of sustainable plans, the question arises of who actually coordinates and collates the process of building ownership.

#### **4.6 Insufficient Vertical Co-operation**

As a result of deeper integration in Europe, strengthening internal market and increasing globalisation single government levels are the less and less able to deal with planning issues on their own. Stronger interdependencies exist among all levels of government.

The lack of co-operation or too weak and occasional co-operation between administrative levels creates barriers to agreement on common aims and objectives, the planning of the steps necessary to achieve them and finally the attainment of binding commitments to implement them.

Problems with vertical co-operation cross all administrative levels. In the European context many EU policies are relevant for urban areas, such as social and economic cohesion, protection of the environment and competition policy. However, the policy aims sometimes contradict each other (see Insufficient Horizontal Co-operation). National policies (e.g. taxation, transport, environment, employment, regional development etc.) set the framework for regional and urban policies.

#### **4.7 Need for Institutional and Personal Capacity**

The capacity of the competent institutions in the various fields of urban management is sometimes very limited. There is an emerging need for the creation of the appropriate central bodies, for example under the association of local authorities, which will provide co-ordination services to its members and which will provide technical support and expertise.

#### **4.8 Separation of Planning and Implementation**

Separation of planning and implementation relates to the issue of 'ownership' of plans and the issue of 'control' over delivery. Separation of the planning and implementation processes renders the plans 'disowned' by the implementers and therefore of reduced status, particularly where the implementers have a strong sense of their own agenda. Where control is relinquished, the plan-maker has no real ability to secure implementation of the 'vision'. There are ways of resolving these problems mainly focussed on voluntary agreements.

Objectives are not always clearly expressed in terms of feasible actions and therefore the plans remain separate from implementation.

Managing cities based on a sustainable path and implementing environmental policies and projects requires resources that are commensurate with the task in hand. It often requires substantial public investment in areas which may not be seen as profitable to private investors. Public finance is often needed to pave the way and attract private sector funding as well as civic engagement. For example, in order to increase the recycling rate for municipal waste, up front investment in infrastructure and facilities is needed before households are encouraged to participate in recycling schemes. However, given the reduced level of local authority budgets, allocation of resources for



environmental schemes typically have to compete with funding for other public policy areas such as education and health. In UK these occupy a higher position in public policy order of priority than environmental schemes such as recycling; the latter often seen as ‘non-voter’.

#### **4.9 Problems with Public/Private Partnerships**

There are serious difficulties in integrating public and private sector responsibilities, capacities, funding etc. in the implementation process. The growing emphasis on public sector resource constraints and the reliance on private capital for delivery is an issue of critical importance. If it is to be effective, private developers must learn to engage and ‘own’ the process of plan-making - that is inherently difficult for them, if plans are based on aims and objectives which place low priority on profit-generation.. Such reliance on private capital leads to piecemeal delivery, as developers ‘cherry-pick’ those parts of the plan that meet their ‘bottom-line’ demands. Therefore, in order to control and achieve totality of plan delivery, complex legal discussions are required that invariably result in lengthy delays.

#### **4.10 Insufficient Resources for Planning**

The politicians and the authorities are not sufficiently aware of the importance of planning for the future of the cities, and therefore do not reserve the necessary economic resources for this. Regional planning, the planning of the city and its functional area, requires highly qualified human resources and sufficient time.

#### **4.11 Lack of Commitment to Sustainability Issues**

There is a lack of commitment by decision makers and the public to sustainability. There needs to be more constructive participation and cooperation agreements for urban sustainability projects to be successful.

The behaviour of the citizens has an important impact on the sustainability of the city. More environmentally friendly practises, such as the use of non-motorised mobility instead of private cars, saving energy etc. are determinants of sustainability. On the other hand, citizens who are aware of these problems will put more pressure on the authorities and will try to force them to improve environmental performance.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In these recommendations the Working Group has focused on the need to take into account all factors influencing urban development and the need to coordinate all policies driving these factors.

Urban environmental issues are the concern of all levels of government (local / regional / National / European and in certain instances also global) and these concerns involve a wide range of thematic aspects. Consequently, a first aim has been to set up a framework that includes and coordinates the involvement of all stakeholders in such a way that roles, competences and relevant principles (e.g. proximity, subsidiarity, diversity etc.) are duly and properly respected.

Specific actions have been defined for each recommendation, resulting in a composite picture which has been subsequently rationalised by grouping the actions and distributing responsibilities to most appropriate levels.

The recommendations are centred on the following main core elements:

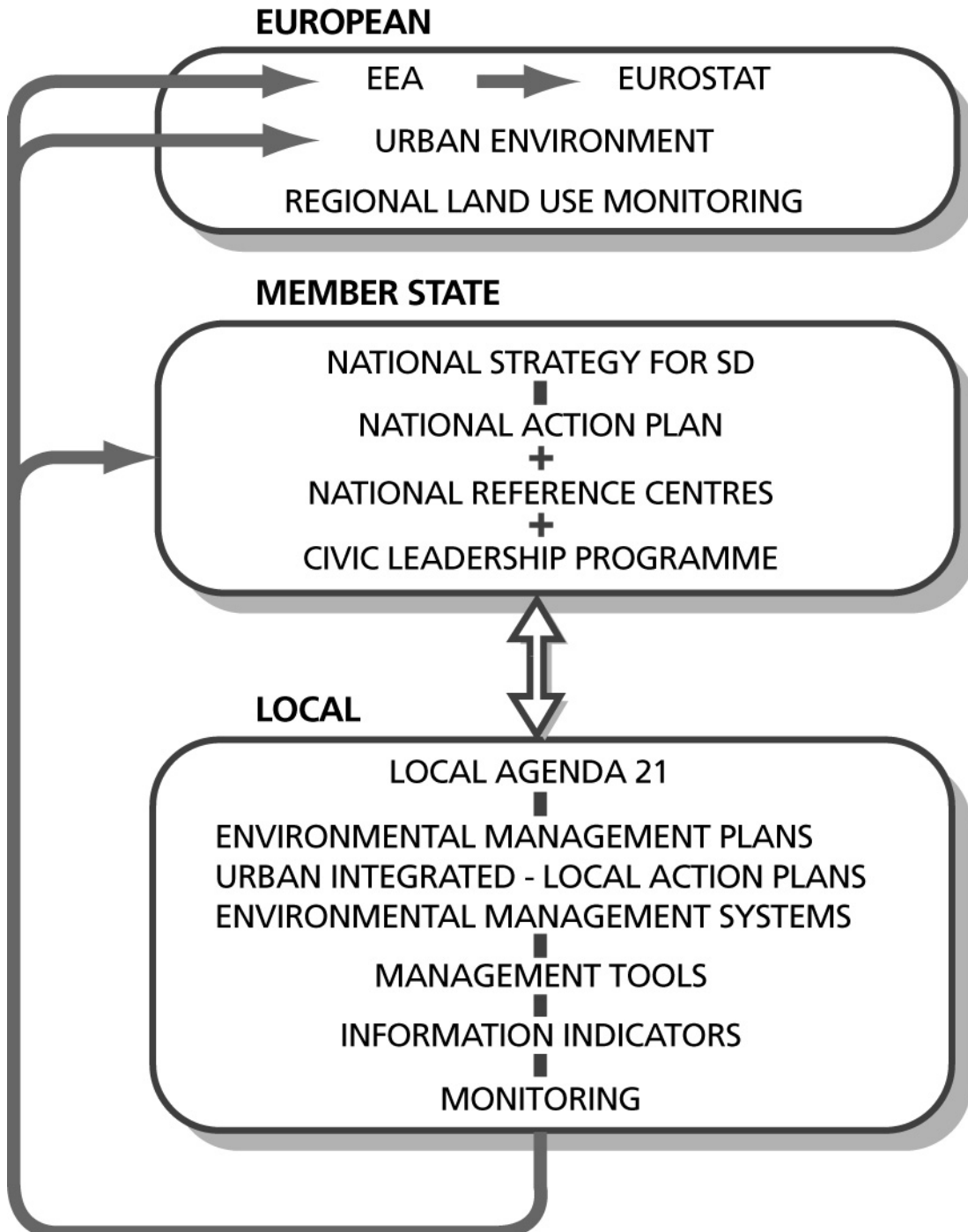
- the need to prepare overall urban environmental management plans and to adopt an appropriate environmental management system to ensure and monitor its implementation and performance: all of this implies the adoption of urban management tools, including indicators, models etc.;
- the key function of the implementation of Local Agenda 21;
- the need to empower and enable local authorities to commitment to sustainable policies;
- the necessity to set up a process of capacity building within local administrations and the exchange of experience and practice at a wider EU scale.

All recommendations need to be promoted and put into practice in close co-operation with the Commission, the Member States and regional/local authorities. In the following, the recommendations have been subdivided into three levels according to the implementation level:

- recommendations for national authorities
- recommendation for local authorities
- recommendation for European institutions

The overall framework of recommendations and the links among the three levels of implementation is shown in the figure below.

## URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT - FRAMEWORK OF ROLES AND COMPETENCES



## 5.1 Recommended Actions by Member States

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg national governments signed the Implementation Plan which recognises the central role that local governments will have to play in implementing the agreements reached at Rio in 1992, and calls upon National Governments to provide the necessary support and guidance to their local governments through funding, long-term policies and organisational assistance.

In addition two European initiatives are directly related to sustainable urban management:

- the European Commission White Paper on Governance outlines the importance of the processes of partnership and co-operation between stakeholders; the need for the effective participation of citizens; and the necessity of developing processes of multilevel governance;
- the Århus Convention provides clear guidance on access to environmental information, the processes of citizen participation and wider questions of environmental justice

In order to provide a platform in support of sustainable urban management which accommodates the above principles, the following recommendations are made to National governments:

- the development of National Action Plans for the urban environment
- the creation of National Reference Centres for the urban environment
- the elaboration of Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programmes

These recommendations, which are supported by complementary initiatives at local and European level, are described in detail below.

### 5.1.1 National Action Plan for the Urban Environment

In order to assist in coordinating the diversity of situations and policy priorities at the national level it is recommended that the Member States develop **National Action Plans (NAPs)** for the urban environment, in accordance with their own governmental structure.

National Action Plans include national objectives and targets for the development of urban environment, and measures how the objectives will be reached. Based on an analysis of key environmental problems in urban areas the NAPs should provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the main policy instruments implemented by the Members States. The NAPs should then focus on the ways in which Member States' policies and actions, whether at national, regional or local level, can be further strengthened in order to meet environmental objectives for urban areas. Thus, while taking into account the overall national situation and the existing policy frameworks, the NAPs should identify which specific and concrete new initiatives should be implemented in order to address the identified problems and weaknesses. In particular,

the NAPs should identify issues that cannot be tackled at the National, regional and local level and that should be pursued by initiatives at the European level.

In NAPs specific attention should be given to:

- linking environmental objectives and targets in existing policy making processes, ensuring that the environment is mainstreamed into all policy areas, including the use of Structural Funds;
- developing an integrated and strategic approach to key issues that cuts across the common objectives;
- setting clear objectives and a common framework for the definition of specific targets for individual urban areas (in accordance and agreement with what set in the Local Action Plans, see section 5.2.1 below);
- acknowledging the importance of the regional and local dimensions while respecting the different distribution of competencies in different Member States;
- increasing awareness of sustainable development both amongst the general public and amongst policy makers and practitioners;
- providing a National Environmental Awareness Action Plan;
- explaining how Member States intend to implement Paragraphs 148 and 149 of the Johannesburg Implementation Plan;
- providing regular national reports on the implementation and progression of LA21;
- explaining how the provisions of the Århus Convention are incorporated into environmental policy programmes at all levels of government;

The National Action Plan should include measures and define framework to both mitigate (i.e. reduce GHG emissions) the causes and adapt to (i.e. prevent, moderate and reduce the risks) the impacts of climate changes at local level.

NAPs need to demonstrate some common basis as regards their structure and contents in order to facilitate the achievement of common EU objectives. It is therefore proposed that Member States should draw up their plans according to the common outline suggested in the box below.

The extent, delineation and composition of individual “urban areas” should be defined according to the priorities and characteristics contained in the NAP, and therefore will inevitably be different amongst Member States and even within each Member State.

The NAP will also describe the administrative arrangements regulating the various local authorities involved in the management of the urban area or “urban region”. Existing examples of cooperation are the *Gemeindeverbund* in Germany (also called *Ämter* or *Samtgemeinden*) or *Mancomunidades* in Spain (administrative and functional cooperation between municipalities). The ‘Open method of co-ordination’ presented in the White Paper on Governance as a way of getting better and faster regulation is a way of encouraging co-operation, the exchange of best practice and agreeing common targets and guidelines for Member States.

The NAP for the urban environment should be properly embedded in wider national strategies for sustainable development or national environment plans, which are already

established or in preparation in several Member States. The key role of national policies has been widely demonstrated by the recent assessment of the main European Agenda 21 experiences e.g. LASALA Project.

Examples of Action Plans and National strategies for sustainable development are provided in Annex 5.

### **Content of National Action Plan**

#### **Actors and Stakeholders**

*Identification of institutions and bodies (public and private) involved in the management of the environment or with functions which may affect the environment in the urban areas.*

#### **Major Trends and Challenges**

*Characteristics of the urban areas, review of the environmental impact of human activity and analysis of urban developments.*

The NAPs should give an overview of the context of their urban areas and should identify the major trends, the immediate and long-term risk factors for the environment and opportunities for improvement in each area.

This section should be supported by relevant indicators covering all major aspects of environmental degradation and improvement, with particular focus being given to monitoring changes over time. The commonly agreed indicators should be used as appropriate but it will be important to supplement these with indicators based on national data.

#### **Strategic Approach, Main Objectives, Principles and Key Targets**

#### **Policy Measures**

#### **Institutional / Administrative Arrangements**

Member States shall identify the individual urban areas lying within their national territory and, for the purposes of this NAP, shall assign them to individual river basin districts. Individual towns may be combined or joined with neighbouring town to form individual urban districts or urban regions where appropriate.

Member States shall ensure the appropriate administrative arrangements, including the identification of the appropriate competent authority, for the application of the rules of this Directive within each urban area district lying within their territory. Member States shall ensure that an urban area covering the territory of more than one Member State is assigned to an international urban area district. At the request of the Member States involved, the Commission shall act to facilitate the assigning to such international urban area.

Each Member State shall ensure the appropriate administrative arrangements, including the identification of the appropriate competent authority, for the application of the rules of this Directive within the portion of any international urban area district lying within its territory.

#### **Good practise**

**Issues which can not be dealt with at Member State level****5.1.2 National Reference Centres for Urban Environment**

One element of linkage amongst the various recommendations is the creation of **National Reference Centres for Urban Environment (NARCs)**.

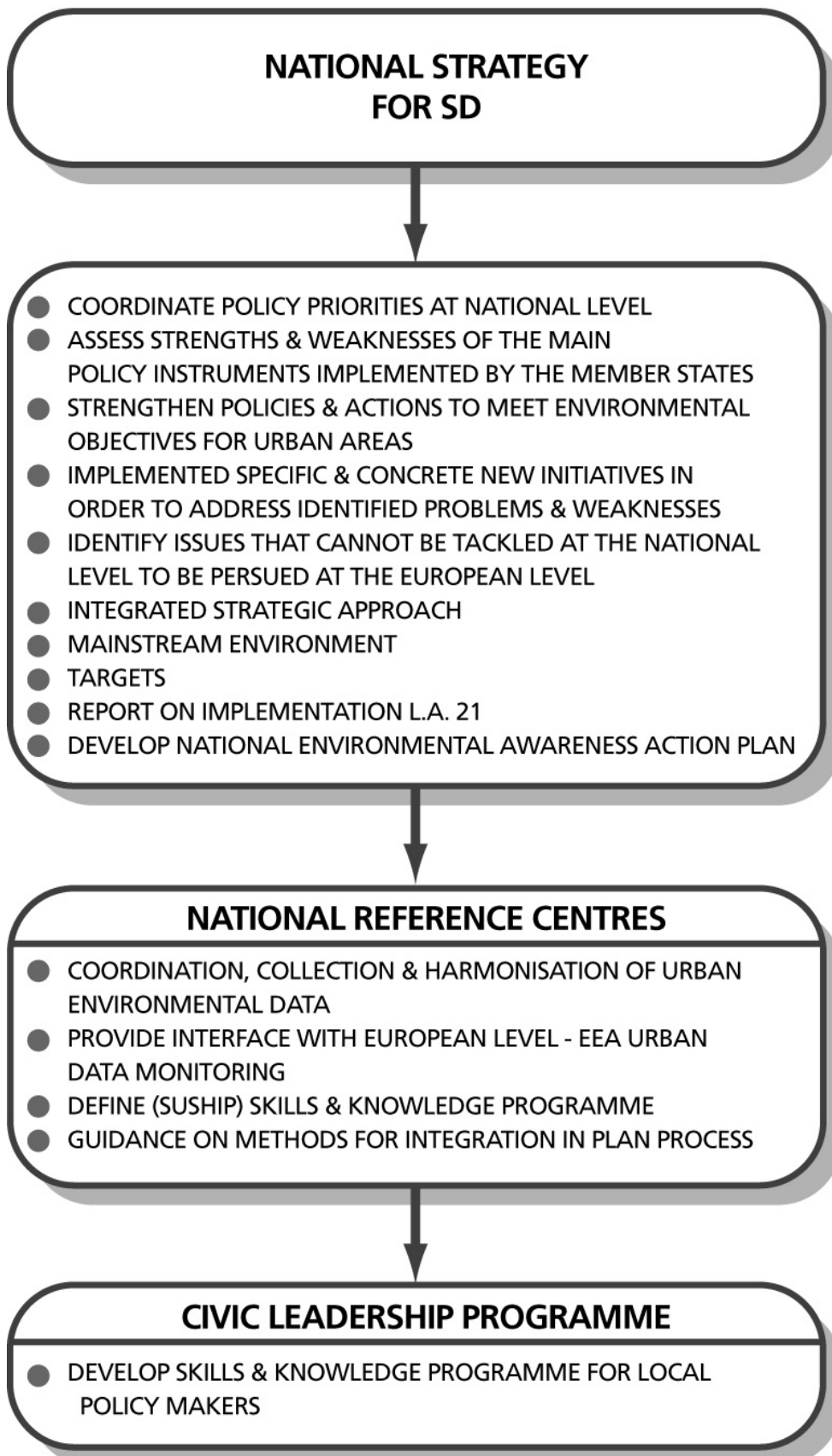
The NARCs should:

- participate in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the NAPs
- co-ordinate the collection and harmonisation of urban environmental data;
- interface with the corresponding institutions at the European level e.g. European Environment Agency, to supply information on the status of urban areas;
- elaborate a **Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme (SUSHIP)** for local government officials and politicians. The Civic Leadership Programme would focus upon the provision of the necessary skills and knowledge to help local policy makers develop effective sustainable urban management in their municipalities;
- introduce or reinforce guidance for all departments and agencies at all levels of governance about the methods, needs and timescales for integrating environmental issues in the planning process. Where governments retain powers of approval over plans generated at subsidiary levels of government, and may withhold approval where joint working and shared ownership have failed, the NARC may assist the drive for consensus.

In Member States with consolidated initiatives (Research Centres, NGOs, public and/or private bodies) in the fields related to the urban environment, the NARCs could be integrated in such existing structures, with the specific aim of strengthening the network amongst them.

The figure below synthesises the recommendations for the national authorities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES





## 5.2 Recommended Actions by Local Authorities

Local authorities are ultimately responsible for the environmental status of their town / city and for any adverse impacts on citizens' health. Therefore they must have an active role both in the conception and the implementation of policies and measures concerning the management of the urban environment.

It is also essential that local authorities and responsible departments co-ordinate environmental policies and decisions that affect the environment. In order to achieve this, they must prepare an environmental management plan and must ensure that the plan is effectively implemented. This involves the following actions for local authorities:

- definition and implementation of “Integrated Urban – Local Action Plans”, in coordination with and in response to the National Action Plans;
- use of indicators and appropriate tools to monitor the implementation of the Local Actions Plans;
- implementation of an environmental management system;
- ensure that appropriate coordination is established in regions where different neighbouring cities and towns help establish a plan for the urban region as a whole.

### 5.2.1 Integrated Urban– Local Action Plans

The adoption of **Integrated Urban– Local Action Plans (LAPs)** should be facilitated to foster integration within the “traditional environmental fields” eg water, soil, air, noise, landscape, nature, energy... and in relation to other relevant key sectors eg land use and transport.

The purpose of such local Plans should be to influence local “development strategies” in broad terms, and they should be strongly “action oriented” based on a clear programme of action, with deadlines, responsibilities, targets, monitoring systems, etc.. The establishment of local “targets” by means of the planning process should be basic requirement. The LAPs should be in line with the objectives of the NAPs.

LAPs could be implemented as a new instrument of local planning or by the advancement of already existing planning tools (e.g. the *Flächennutzungsplanung* in Germany, which already incorporates landscape planning approaches).

To legitimate their content and enhance their effectiveness, plans should be developed by means of participatory processes and be based on concerted long-term visions of sustainability, as proposed by Local Agenda 21 approaches and practice.

The development and approval of an Integrated Urban Action plan through a Local Agenda 21 participatory process should be voluntary but it should be a prerequisite for the securing of funding from both EU and National programmes for local development.

The Local Action Plan should include measures to both mitigate (i.e. reduce GHG emissions) the causes and adapt to (i.e. prevent, moderate and reduce the risks) the impacts of climate changes at local level.

The European Commission should encourage the implementation of LAPs through funding Best Practice Documentations and planning guidance (see chapter 5.3).

### 5.2.2 Adoption of Data, Indicators and Tools

Local administrations and departments responsible for the urban environment should maximise their use of urban management tools and models when dealing with issues related to air quality, land use, transport, assessment, participatory approaches, green budgeting, resource management etc.

In general practical urban management tools need to:

- be capable of addressing issues at different levels, to deal with the different complexities faced, to be integrated into decision making processes and to be 'owned' by users;
- integrate various aspects of urban environmental issues
- be available at different stages of a project. Most current evaluation tools only enable the success of a project to be assessed at the end of the project; often too late for modifications to take place that would improve the sustainability of the project;
- deal with problems at all different scales within the built environment from an individual building to the regional level;
- incorporate the analysis of environmental, social and economic factors and possess the ability to assess the interactions between these factors;
- be simple to use, bring useful data together from different sources into a usable format and use established data, so that results are accurate, rapidly delivered, and based on commonly used software.

Co-operation between those who develop new tools, mainly scientists and consultants, and end-users including local authorities, SMEs, NGOs, should be strengthened. The tools should be tested and assessed by a range of end-users so that they meet their needs more effectively. Effort should be focused on making tools simpler to use and more flexible in addressing a wider range of issues. The use of tools should be demonstrated through local training and workshops and the Commission should require all research projects focused on urban management tools to co-operate closely with end-users.

The implementation of Urban Integrated – Local Action Plans should be monitored by collecting appropriate data and information. In coordination with the NARCs the data should then be developed into indicators for reporting at National and European levels. Where feasible and within the boundaries set by the subsidiarity principle, data and indicators should be utilised according to standards and guidelines established by international initiatives such as the ECI project and other initiatives that will emerge during the preparation of the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment. Indicators should be produced routinely to:

- provide a better understanding of complex environmental issues and trends;
- help city managers and decision-makers in defining local policies, and taking environmental concerns into consideration;

- assist city authorities in assessing the achievement of the set environmental objectives
- provide regional/national authorities and international institutions e.g. Eurostat and EEA with detailed information on the urban environment
- evaluate the impact of the city on its immediate surroundings and define opportunities for a better urban-rural balance.

A preliminary overview of indicators that may be used to allow comparability between urban areas across the EU and to address the issue of carrying capacity is provided in Annex 2. The final report for the European Common Indicators (ECI) project is published on the European Commission web site and is available for download and consultation at:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/policy\\_initiatives.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/policy_initiatives.htm).

### 5.2.3 Adoption of Environmental Management Systems

Environmental management systems form a building block for the action-oriented institutional frameworks and integrated urban action plans for sustainable urban management advocated by this report. A management system should be:

- officially recognized;
- designed to incorporate neutral and competent auditing;
- capable of supplying information to the public
- based on the involvement of all stakeholders
- able to deliver comparable results on the basis of a common set of key data.

The development of an Environmental Management System that guides the city towards an environmentally sustainable development path requires the development of new policies, institutions and procedures. It also requires ongoing monitoring, review and improvement of environmental performance in line with predetermined sustainable development goals. It is therefore an essential element of the Integrated Urban Local Action Plan.

Several tools are available, and many of them are currently adopted by local administration for the management and evaluation of the urban environment. The main systems are:

- Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)
- ISO 14001
- ECO-labeling
- ECO-Budgeting
- ECO-procurement (or green purchasing)
- Green Public Procurement
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Ecological Footprint – Carrying capacity – Sustainable design

Further details on tools and methods for environmental management are given in the Inception Report.

It is recommended that EMAS is adopted as the environmental management system as it is widely used by industry and public organisations (over 500 public organisations, of which 110 are local authorities, have achieved EMAS registration.) and as the European Commission has already devoted a lot of efforts into its development and promotion. EMAS implementation in the public sector should be considered as a complementary procedure to LA21/Integrated Plans, a suitable tool to support local integrated planning, and to guarantee the monitoring of results.

An example of application of EMAS is illustrated in Annex 6.

The figure below summarises the recommendations to be implemented at the local level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES



### 5.3 Recommended Actions at the EU level

The above recommendations for national and local levels should be developed in coordination with, and supported by appropriate initiatives at the European level. This section summarises the recommendations that require specific actions by the European Commission and by the European Environment Agency. The involvement of other EU Institutions that is required by the formal procedures for approving and releasing EC decisions is not explicitly examined in this report.

Most of the recommendations for the EC concern funding initiatives, to be accomplished either in framework of existing programmes (e.g. Framework Programme for RTD, LIFE, Structural Funds and Community Initiatives, etc.) or by proposing new specific lines of action. Other recommendations concern the definition of binding legislation (i.e. Decisions, Directives, and Regulations) and of non-binding Legislation (i.e. Communications, Opinions, Recommendations, Resolutions).

Since each recommendation may be implemented in a variety of ways, e.g. additional funding may be a more effective incentive for good urban management than restrictive legislation, and since in many cases implementation is the result of a combination of measures, the following section regroups recommendations thematically.

A recommendation for implementation of all measures is provided at the end of the section.

#### 5.3.1 Dissemination and Promotion of Good Practice and Methods

The EC should provide support to the adoption and implementation of the Integrated Urban Local Plans by means of Local Agenda 21 as a “policy tool” approach, enforcing the direction already taken in the past with the establishment of the EU Expert Group on the Urban Environment, the launch of the Sustainable Cities Campaign and the implementation of the “Community Framework for cooperation to promote sustainable urban development”. Further more, the Commission should promote the key role of active national policies as political and financial measures supporting Local Agenda 21 approaches and methods. It should also promote:

- good practice demonstration networks/handbooks to spread information on available tools.
- the dissemination of information on LA21 and EMAS as urban management tools by strengthening the support given to networks of local and regional authorities, facilitating the exchange of information and through awards, eco-labelling and benchmarking. Training actions of both local authorities and representatives of NGOs should be part of this dissemination

#### 5.3.2 Building Institutional Capacity

The EU should support the building of the institutional capacity of local institutions through Structural Funds and other forms of financial support, environmental policies and regulatory activities. The support should in particular focus on trans-national local government networks focusing upon the various dimensions of urban sustainable development, environmental policy and urban management.

A **Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme** for local government officials and politicians should be sponsored. Knowledge centres or universities could operate this programme in conjunction with local government associations according to a common European syllabus. Scholarships could be offered for the programme, with each course lasting around two weeks.

The establishment of a Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Website would provide advice and guidance to local authorities on a range of issues relating to sustainable urban management, environmental policy and practice, and sustainable development.

Senior politicians and heads of industries from across the EU should establish a Sustainable Urban Management 'think tank' to explore the integration of visions of sustainable development, to disseminate information about sustainable urban management and to plan educational activities for decision-makers in both sectors to be linked to the Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme

### 5.3.3 Adoption of Tools and Methodologies

The adoption of urban environment management systems for towns and cities should be widespread as much as possible. There is no consensus on whether this should be on a mandatory basis or just by means of a recommendation. This should initially be based on tools such as EMAS or simpler versions for smaller towns.

EC funded scientific project should provide support for the implementation of local and regional monitoring systems and the promotion of the concept of regional land use and environmental information systems. This includes theoretical studies, action oriented research as well as best-practice analysis and documentation.

Member States should be persuaded to introduce **Cumulative Impact Assessment** and **Territorial Impact Assessment** as part of the impact assessment practices through the provision of guidance (good practice demonstrations, training, networking) and, if considered necessary, through legislation (at the **European level by amending the Directive on SEA 2001/42/EC.**)

The European Environment Agency should widen the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) to also cover urban data and should regularly provide a report on the environmental status of European urban areas. The setting up of a **European Topic Centre for the Urban Environment** is proposed to coordinate the information collected at National level by the NARCs.

### 5.3.4 Towards An Urban Environment Framework Directive

Based on the understanding of existing Directives, in particular the Water Framework Directive and the Noise Directive, the WG propose the formulation of an '**Urban Environment Framework Directive**' where the recommendations could be adequately implemented. The Directive should be based on the types of 'administrative arrangements' to be coordinated at the national level (see NAPs) and also should require

the formulation of 'local action plans' for urban areas of each MS. Measures for networking, reporting including indicators, public consultation and technical guidelines including the adoption of Urban Management Systems for towns, should also be contained in the Directive.

The scenario based on the Framework Directive is perhaps the most comprehensive approach and fully reflects the 'integration principle' announced in the text of the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment. However, the WG is well aware of the issues and problems (e.g. the respect of the subsidiarity principle, the cost implications for local authorities) that will rise from such recommendation and therefore a gradual step-wise approach could be adopted to get to the same objectives.

The Framework Directive should be complemented with more stringent requirements for EU funding e.g. ERDF, Community Initiatives, etc for long term sustainable urban management plans.



## RECOMMENDATION FOR EU INSTITUTIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTED AT NATIONAL & LOCAL LEVELS TO BE SUPPORTED BY APPROPRIATE INITIATIVES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL - SPECIFIC ACTIONS BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION & BY THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY

### CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING

- SPONSORSHIP OF THE SUSTAINABLE CITIES CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS & POLITICIANS
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE CITIES CIVIC LEADERSHIP WEBSITE WITH ADVICE & GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES
- SUPPORT FOR TRANS-NATIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORKS FOCUSING UPON URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- EU SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS THROUGH STRUCTURAL FUNDS & OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES & REGULATORY ACTIVITIES
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE URBAN MANAGEMENT 'THINK TANK' INCLUDING SENIOR POLITICAL & BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES FROM ACROSS THE EU TO BE LINKED TO THE SUSTAINABLE CITIES CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

### ADOPTION OF TOOLS AND METHODS

- RESEARCH FUNDING FOR REGIONAL MONITORING SYSTEMS & REGIONAL LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS
- ADOPTION OF URBAN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO BE BASED ON TOOLS SUCH AS EMAS OR SIMPLER VERSIONS FOR SMALLER TOWNS
- ENCOURAGEMENT TO MEMBER STATES TO INTRODUCE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT & TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AS PART OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
- EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY TO WIDEN THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION & OBSERVATION NETWORK (EIONET) TO COVER URBAN DATA & REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS OF EUROPEAN URBAN AREAS
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A EUROPEAN TOPIC CENTRE FOR THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT TO COORDINATE INFORMATION COLLECTED AT NATIONAL LEVEL BY NARCS

### DISSEMINATION & PROMOTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

- DEMONSTRATION NETWORKS/ HANDBOOKS FOR GOOD PRACTICE ON MANAGEMENT TOOLS
- DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON LA21 & EMAS AS URBAN VIA NETWORKS OF LOCAL & REGIONAL AUTHORITIES & SUPPORTED THROUGH AWARDS, ECO-LABELLING & BENCHMARKING
- TRAINING ACTIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES & NGOS
- PROMOTION URBAN INTEGRATED LOCAL PLANS BY MEANS OF LOCAL AGENDA 21 AS A "POLICY TOOL" APPROACH
- COMMISSION TO PROMOTE THE KEY ROLE OF ACTIVE NATIONAL POLICIES AS POLITICAL & FINANCIAL MEASURES SUPPORTING LOCAL AGENDA 21 APPROACHES & METHODS

## 6. INVOLVED EXPERTS

The Working Group on Sustainable Urban Management was set up in October 2002 and was composed by a core group of Members. Additional contributions were received by other experts which had the formal role of “Observers” and participated to some of the meetings held by the WG:

Atger, Catherine	CERTU, France	Member
Berrini, Maria	Ambiente Italia, Italy	Member
Blanes, Nuria	University of Barcelona, Spain, and European Topic Centre on Terrestrial Environment	Observer
Bourkas, Constantin	Consultant, Greece	Member
Buchan, Grahame	Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan Joint Committee, Scotland – on behalf of METREX	Member
Davoudi, Simin	Leeds Metropolitan University, UK	Member
Deelstra, Tjeerd	International Institute for the Urban Environment, The Netherlands	Member
Evans, Bob	Northumbria University, UK	Member
Gomez Orea, Domingo	University of Madrid, Spain	Member
Hagen, Ole	Ministry of Environment, Norway, and Member of the EC Expert Group on the Urban Environment	Member
Hammerl, Marion	Bodensee Stiftung – ECOLUP Project coordinator	Observer
Lindholm, Pirita	Council of European Municipalities and Regions	Observer
Ludlow, David	University of the West of England, Bristol, UK	Member
Ripoll Pinol, Anna	University of Barcelona, Spain, and European Topic Centre on Terrestrial Environment	Member
Rotheval, Jean Pierre	CERTU, France	Member
Siedentop, Stefan	Institute for Ecological and Regional Development, Germany	Member
Steenmans, Chris	European Environment Agency	Member
Tosics, Ivan	Metropolitan Research Institute Budapest	Observer
Van de Ven, Anthony	EUROCITIES	Member
Veivo, Risto	Union of the Baltic Cities, Environment Commission	Member
Vranken, Jan	University of Antwerp, Belgium	Observer

Albas, Michael	EC	DG Regional Policy	Member
Barredo, José	EC	DG Joint Research Centre	Member
Demicheli, Luca	EC	DG Joint Research Centre	Member
Diaz Del Castillo, José	EC	DG Environment	Observer
Favrel, Vincent	EC	DG Research	Member
Gizdulich, Sandra	EC	DG Regional Policy	Observer
Goss, Simon	EC	DG Environment	Member
Hiebl, Ulrike	EC	DG Regional Policy	Member
Kasanko, Marjo	EC	DG Joint Research Centre	Member
Lavalle, Carlo	EC	DG Joint Research Centre	Chair of the WG
McCormick, Niall	EC	DG Joint Research Centre	Member

## 7. ANNEX 1: FORMAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPATIAL PLANNING

Although it is difficult to generalise about countries' constitutional arrangements, it is broadly true to say that most European systems are organised into unitary, regionalised or federal states. The following table shows which of these systems are dominant in different EU member states.

Constitutional arrangements determine, to a large extent, the respective power that different tiers of government have with regard to spatial planning. In unitary states, for example, it is a general principle that the national government makes the law concerning spatial planning and this is then applied throughout the country. However there is variation in the extent of delegation to lower levels. More complex still is the situation in 'regionalised' states where the relative autonomy of regions varies, some being more dependent on national government than others. Again differences arise between and within the federal states, the latter as a result of the autonomy of the 'regional tier'. Nonetheless it is possible to summarise briefly how responsibilities for spatial planning are divided between the national, regional and local levels across the EU, as illustrated in table below.

<b>Responsibility for Spatial Planning</b>	
National level	<p><i>All member states have some responsibility except for Belgium. The Austrian national government has only limited responsibilities.</i></p> <p>In Greece, national government has had sole responsibility and is holds most responsibility for the planning system in the UK, Ireland and Luxembourg.</p>
Regional level	<p>The Austrian Lander and the Belgium regions hold primary responsibility. The German Lander and Italian and Spanish regions have significant autonomy. The regional or provincial structure is important in The Netherlands, France, Denmark and Finland.</p> <p>It is much less important in the UK and Ireland and in the particular circumstances of Luxembourg.</p>
Local level	<p>Local authorities have the primary responsibility for regulating land use control and detailed plan making across most of the EU, but within a framework set and supervised in national or regional government.</p> <p>The role of local authorities is most strong in states that are unitary with a policy of decentralisation, such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden.</p>

Source: CEC, 1997: *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*

More recently, there have been changes in the structure of government in relation to spatial planning, mainly as a response to transnational and strategic developments. This is apparent in the expanding role of regional tiers as they take on responsibilities from national government, but also arising out of the need to provide a context, primarily at the regional level for bidding for European funding. Factors in addition to 'regionalism', which are affecting spatial planning, include the following:

- Changes at central government level to improve co-ordination of different sectoral policies, for instance in the creation of inter-ministerial committees in France, Ireland and Portugal.
- The establishment of city regions as regional public bodies, but often not as a separate tier of government, as with Greece in the operation of metropolitan planning organisations in the two largest cities.
- The reduction in the number of authorities with spatial planning responsibility within a member state, at the regional or local level. In the UK for example, area councils have grouped several small local authorities together.
- The increasing trend towards regionalisation where powers have been devolved down from central government, as with Belgium. Alternatively, as with Finland and Luxembourg where groupings of local authorities are co-operating to prepare regional plans.

It should, however, be noted that in a number of member states government structures and the division of power and responsibilities have remained fairly stable, most notably in Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden.

#### Reference

Commission of the European Communities (1997), *The EU compendium of spatial planning systems and policies: Comparative review of systems and policies*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

## 8. ANNEX 2: OVERVIEW OF INDICATORS FOR THE MONITORING OF 'URBAN AGGLOMERATION'

The scope of this annex is to provide a basic guidance towards the identification of certain indicators which should have two main characteristics:

- 1) allow comparability among urban areas in the EU;
- 2) address carrying capacity

The calculation of indicators with the above characteristics is expected to provide a partial picture of the effects of cities' metabolism in a global context and to allow a benchmarking exercise of EU cities' performances towards sustainability.

Chapters 2.1 and 3.1 of this report have introduced the issue of urban environment definition and of the challenges linked to the adoption of the functional urban area (FUA) concept. Although it is not agreed yet how to calculate the limits of the urban area (or of the FUA), we can however start defining the urban agglomeration as the city proper along with the suburban fringe and any built-up, densely settled areas lying outside of, but adjacent to, the city boundaries. A buffer around the urban agglomeration should also be considered, as it allows to assess the land use/cover surrounding the city (natural land, agricultural land, industrial areas, etc.).

Various organisations have proposed sets of 'urban indicators' to be used for monitoring the sustainability of urban areas at EU level. However, a commonly agreed set of indicators does not yet exist.

Many local administrations have their own set of indicators, which have usually been developed to respond to local problems, closely related to the characteristics of the geographical area in question. Indeed, some of these indicators are common in most of the sets and could, thus, be considered as suiting the monitoring needs of all urban areas, even if definition and method of collection differ from case to case for the same indicator (e. g. 'waste disposal', 'exposure to noise' or 'accessibility to green spaces'). However, these indicators are in general more focused on urban environmental quality than on sustainable development. In practice, they do not address carrying capacity, and do not, thus, respond to the requirement of addressing issues going beyond the administrative borders of the city.

Nevertheless, within the extensive list of environmental indicators adopted for monitoring the situation in urban areas, a subset can be identified which also address sustainable urban management, fitting with the need of considering the overall urban agglomeration and effects of urban metabolism in a wider perspective.

This chapter aims to provide indicative guidance, and does not introduce more theory than is needed for this purpose. Classes and sub-classes of indicators are not proposed, as well as neither distinction between indicators and indexes is made, nor are conceptual frameworks (e.g. the DPSIR one) introduced. Simple examples of indicators that respond to the above characteristics are:

- Loss of natural land

- Loss of agricultural land
- Urban sprawl vs. population growth
- Density of artificial fabric vs. population density
- Land use dynamics
- Soil sealing
- Rate of brownfield regeneration
- Threatened species
- Implementation on nature protection programmes
- Land fragmentation
- Quantity and quality of waste to landfill sites
- Water consumption vs. water availability (lowering of groundwater table)
- Contribution to ground water pollution
- Waste water treatment
- Energy consumption per capita
- Renewable energy consumption per capita
- Waste production
- Waste treatment (type)
- Air emissions
- Material flows (fuels, food, wood, etc.)
- Etc.

The list is certainly not exhaustive, and many other indicators can be proposed that fulfil the above requirements. It is however important to bear in mind that one of the main constraints in indicators' computation consists of data availability. It is, therefore, recommended that the indicators adopted are either already part of existing monitoring programmes, or directly computable from existing data. This topic will be dealt with in-depth by the forthcoming Working Group on Urban Data Management to be set up in 2004.

### **Relevant initiatives**

There are some European level initiatives linked to urban indicators which include indicators also on urban sustainability.

**Urban Audit** is an initiative of the Directorate General for Regional Policy and it is carried out in collaboration with EUROSTAT. The European Commission launched the Urban Audit in June 1997. The overall purpose of the Urban Audit is to enable an assessment of the state of individual EU cities and to provide access to comparative information from other EU cities.

[Fifty eight cities](#) were invited by the European Commission to participate in the Urban Audit during the pilot phase. This includes several cities in each EU member state. The [Indicators](#) of the Urban Audit cover 5 fields: socio-economic aspects, participation in civic life, education and training, environment and culture and leisure. Several indicators (in particular those linked to land-use and transport) are collected on the basis of 'larger urban zones' or 'wide territorial units' in the AUDIT II exercise. It is worth noting that several indicators are linked to the impact of climate change (e.g. rainfall,

temperature, etc.) and have therefore an implicit long-term perspective which goes beyond the administrative borders.

The **European Common Indicators** help towns and cities monitor their environmental sustainability. The Indicators are a voluntary, ready to use, self-contained set of 11 indicators developed by towns and cities and other stakeholders with support from the European Commission. For each of the indicators there is a predefined **methodology** for collecting the data in order to assure comparability. Towns and cities can adapt or add to the 11 indicators to suit local circumstances. The focus of the initiative is on helping towns and cities monitor their own progress rather than on collecting European level data on the state of the urban environment.

The 11 European Common Indicators:

- Citizen satisfaction with the local community
- Local contribution to global climatic change
- Local mobility and passenger transportation
- Availability of local public open areas and services
- Quality of local ambient air
- Journeys by children to and from school
- Sustainable management of the local authority and local business
- Noise pollution
- Sustainable land use
- Products promoting sustainability
- Ecological Footprint

A further reference for the definition of indicators is provided by the report prepared by the World Health Organisation on the **‘Development of Environment and Health Indicators for European Union Countries’** (2003). The work includes indicators for noise, housing, quality of water, transport related accidents and chemicals. Although not directed explicitly toward urban areas, it is evident that the link between environment monitoring and health is a key issue in populated areas.



### **9. ANNEX 3: PROPOSED SCHEME FOR A COMMUNICATION (OR LEGISLATIVE MEASURE) ON MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Every local administration and department exercising functions involving the management of the environment or functions which may affect the environment must prepare an environmental management plan.

The relevant authority (i.e. either at EU level and/or recognized in the National Action Plan for the urban environment) may issue guidelines to assist administrations and departments in the preparation of environmental management plans.

The purpose of environmental management plans is to:

- co-ordinate and harmonise the environmental policies, plans, programmes and decisions of the local administration and of the various departments that exercise functions that may affect the environment or are entrusted with powers and duties aimed at the achievement, promotion and protection of a sustainable environment in order to promote consistency in the exercise of functions that may affect the environment;
- secure the protection of the environment across the urban areas as a whole;
- enable the relevant authority to monitor the achievement and protection of a sustainable environment.

The environmental management plan must contain:

- A description of policies, plans and programmes that may significantly affect the environment;
- A description of the manner in which the relevant department will ensure that the policies, plans and programmes will comply with the principles of protection of the environment;
- A description of the manner in which the relevant department will ensure that its functions are exercised so as to achieve the set targets.

## 10. ANNEX 4: EXAMPLES OF ACTION PLANS AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES

### *City Health Plan and City Health Development Plan*

#### **Definition**

Comprehensive integrated planning at the local level for health and sustainable development has been a core feature of the work of the Urban Health Policies programme and Centre for Urban Health (UHC) of the **World Health Organisation** Regional Office for Europe for over 12 years. UHC works directly with cities (municipal governments) to develop and implement intersectoral strategies and comprehensive plans for health development that are based on Health21, the WHO Strategy for health for all in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Agenda 21.

A **City Health Plan (CHP)** is a key tool for health development. It is also an important aspect of the general development of a city. CHPs link the health for all strategy with a local analysis of health priorities and set out commitments by local authorities and other agencies to improve health at the local level, within the context of overall sustainable urban development.

A **City Health Development Plan (CHDP)** is a Health21-based strategy document that contains a comprehensive picture of a city's concrete and systematic efforts for health development. It contains a city's vision and values, and a strategy to achieve that vision. Its political purpose is to demonstrate that health is a core value for the city administration, and, further, to demonstrate that the vision, values and strategy are translated into action through operational planning. A CHDP draws on the contribution of the many different statutory and non-statutory sectors and agencies, whose policies and activities have an influence on health. It gives expression to a city's partnership for health by emphasising the role that these actors will take in working to improve health and quality of life in the city, but it is not merely a catalogue of activities. It provides a process and a framework for creating partnerships for health and for healthy public policy-making, and its added value is therefore more than the sum of the contribution of individual partners.

Although the CHDP has evolved from the city health plan (CHP), there are certain important differences. These differences relate to both scope and operational implications. CHPs deal mainly with the control of risk factors and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Evidence on the determinants of health is much clearer today than it was five or ten years ago. A CHDP responds to this growth in understanding and puts increased emphasis on the determinants of health. An increasingly wide range of sectors and actors can be expected to be involved. A CHDP is therefore broader in scope than a CHP, reflecting the broader partnership base needed to address successfully all the determinants of health. A CHDP

should also be more centrally positioned in the universe of city decision-making and policies. This depends on both the location of the healthy city project in the city administration, and the extent of its partnership base. The ultimate goal is for the Healthy Cities office to be centrally located within the city organisational structure, and for the Healthy Cities approach to become the mainstream in terms of city policy-making and activity.

Source: <http://www.who.dk/healthy-cities>

### ***Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development***

*(Estrategia Española de Desarrollo Sostenible—EEDS)*

Spain is currently preparing a “Spanish strategy for sustainable development” (EEDS). To this end, an ad hoc interministerial commission (CICEDS) has been created. The construction process of the EEDS is structured in three phases:

- Preparation of a draft document for consultation. To this end five work groups have been created with the participation of eleven ministries (the draft document is available in the web-site of the EEDS).
- Public and institutional participation. The draft document is evaluated by public (Economic and Social Council, expert workshops, open discussion to the citizens and consultation via WWW), and institutional participation (local administrations and Autonomous Communities).
- Approval of the EEDS. Once assessed and integrated the contributions of the second phase, the final EEDS document will be produced and approved by the Council of Ministers.

The EEDS will be launched for the next 25 years. However the strategy will be updated each five years in order to adapt it to changes. Spain has identified several key issues to be included in the EEDS; however the EEDS is based on the three pillars of sustainability: social cohesion, economic growth and environment protection. Furthermore the EEDS included several challenges for sustainability in Spain:

- Strengthen of the social cohesion,
- Decoupling of improvements in quality of life and depletion of natural resources and cultural heritage,
- Balanced spatial (territorial) model, and
- Education, information, cooperation and responsibility for the sustainability.

It is remarkable the relevance of the spatial and urban topics in the EEDS. This is due to the current unsustainable trends showed by the main urban areas in Spain and their direct consequences: urban and social segregation, urban growth and sprawl, increasing needs in mobility, traffic congestion, noise, resources consumption and urban waste. The EEDS addresses these aspects by including the spatial and urban topics between the main elements of the strategy.

The EEDS is founded in the premise that the harmonization of social and economic needs towards a sustainable development, together with the ecological and cultural functions, must be oriented to a large scale sustainable and equilibrated spatial development. In brief, the scope is to reduce the differences between the less developed regions and those with high rates of economic growth by including the concept of spatial (territorial) cohesion, in order to reach the economic and social cohesion.

Source: <http://www.esp-sostenible.net/default.htm>

### ***Strategy for sustainable development in Italy***

The ‘Environmental action strategy for sustainable development in Italy’ was formally approved in August 2002. It was launched to ensure continuation with the Sixth EAP of the EU and with the targets set at the European Council meetings in Lisbon and Gothenburg, as well as with the outcomes of the Barcelona’s European Council, in 2002.

The Strategy is divided into 4 main thematic areas. Urban matters are dealt with in the third heading: ‘Quality of the environment and quality of life in the urban environment’.

The document points out the concentration of settlements along the coasts, where resides over 30% of the whole Italian population. Also, the relocation of dwellers outside of city centres, on which they still depend, worsen issues linked to mobility, such as air quality, noise, traffic congestion and the general quality of life.

It is recognised the inadequacy of current planning systems, still linked to administrative boundaries (over 70% of the 8102 Italian municipalities with administrative jurisdiction has less than 5000 inhabitants).

Finally, much attention is given to the disequilibrium between north and south of the country. 70% of the families leaving in north-west cities affirms to live within a 15 minutes walking distance from green urban areas. The average in the southern cities is 40%, with Palermo and Napoli below 30%. Another example of this disparity is represented by waste management. Out of the national total recycled waste only less than 3% is produced in the southern regions.

Positive aspects are represented by the historical and cultural characteristics of the Italian urban environment, also source of continually increasing tourism, and by an augmenting awareness and knowledge of environmental issues within local administrations.

The strategy’s general objectives refer to the general priorities adopted in the Commission Communication ‘Sustainable urban development in the European Union: a framework for action’ in 1998, COM (98)605, and are:

- Territorial equilibrium: respecting geographical diversity, reducing soil and natural areas consumption and facilitating rural-urban interaction.
- Improved quality of the urban environment: intervention on cause-factors, such as the built environment, health, social inclusion.
- Sustainable use of environmental resources: water, energy, materials, etc.

- Exploitation and fair distribution of local socio-economic resources: promoting sustainable socio-economic development and employment, favouring an integrated programming, enhancing social cohesion, etc.
- Improvement of social qualities and democratic participation: involvement of general public into decision-making processes, improving local environmental management, etc.

In order to better focus, two principles are taken as reference: 1) improving environmental and urban quality; 2) reducing the pressure of urban metabolism on local and global resources.

The objectives are monitored through a series of specific indicators listed on a table where specific objectives match the general ones.

Five specific action lines are also identified:

- 1- Strengthening and fostering the sustainable steering of local Plans (both sectoral and territorial) and their integration into LA21 processes.
- 2- Strengthening and fostering the sustainable steering of local Programmes of intervention designed for urban and environmental regeneration.
- 3- Adoption of fiscal and economic measures to promote local sustainability.
- 4- Fostering administrative and managerial innovation inclined towards sustainability within the local institutions system.
- 5- Improving environmental governance capacity and participation in decision-making processes at local level.

Specific chapters develop, then, the following topics:

- Air quality
- Indoor air quality and radon
- Noise
- Electromagnetic pollution
- GMOs
- Food safety
- Brown-fields remediation
- Environmental crimes (Ecomafia)

### ***“Perspectives for Germany” – The German Strategy for Sustainable Development***

In 2002, the German federal government adopted a Strategy for sustainable development. The first parts of this document contain a general discussion of the concept of sustainable development and the key challenges associated with shaping sustainability. Derived from these challenges 21 key indicators for sustainable development have been identified. The federal government aims to use these indicators for periodical “progress reports” on the way to sustainable development. The first progress report is announced for Summer 2004.

The central part of the Strategy presents concrete approaches of achieving sustainable development grouped in seven key topics:

- efficient energy use,
- environment-friendly mobility,
- production of healthy food,

- accomplishment of the demographic change,
- renewal of the education system,
- economic innovation,
- reduction of urban sprawl and sustainable residential development.

The latter point links to issues of environmental quality in urban areas. Acknowledging the need to reduce the massive amount of land consumption for urban purposes in Germany – during the 90s, on the average 120 hectares of virgin land has been converted to urban uses per day – the strategy outlines the frame of a sustainable urban land use policy. The basic objective is to decouple land consumption from economic growth. To underline this, the federal government sets the target of reducing the daily land consumption down to 30 hectares in 2020. This benchmark should be particularly implemented through urban intensification measures (esp. brownfield and infill development) but without hard restrictions for housing on Greenfield sites. The quantitative “reduction policy” is added by a qualitative approach (“double strategy of quantitative and qualitative management of land use”). The improvement of environmental conditions in existing residential areas is regarded as an important factor of keeping cities competitive to their suburban hinterland. High ecological and architectural quality of new development, the improvement of inner-city open spaces and the strengthening of city centres are elements of this approach.

In the first instance the strategy is addressed to the state and municipality level (*Bundesländer* and *Gemeinden*) due to their exclusive competence for regional resp. local land use planning. To support the overall acceptance of the strategy – esp. the restrictive “30-hectare-target” – the German Council for Sustainable Development is presently conducting a “Dialogue on Land Use” that began in 2003 and will be finished in Spring 2004. By means of four hearings, different aspects of urban land use policy have been discussed by urban experts, politicians and stakeholders.

Source: [http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/n\\_strategie/index.html](http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/n_strategie/index.html)

### ***Urban Policy in UK***

In November 2000 the UK Government published two White Papers: one, specifically on urban matters: "Our towns and cities; the future. Delivering an Urban Renaissance"; and a second on rural-urban interactions: "Our Towns and Cities: the Future and Our Countryside: the Future". The first one set out the Government's commitment to a long-term programme of change and development in England's towns and cities, and was underpinned by 198 specific key measures and policy initiatives. An Urban Summit took thus place in autumn 2002 to take stock of progress with urban policies and programmes.

Messages from the Urban Summit were fed into the development of "[Sustainable Communities: building for the future](#)", an action plan launched by the Deputy Prime Minister in February 2003, which builds on the policies and actions already embarked upon in the two White Papers.

According to the document, the main problems to be tackled are:

- Lack of affordable housing.
- Lack of housing in some parts of the country.
- Collapse of housing market in other parts of the country.
- Spread unnecessary loss of green-fields for new developments.
- Urban sprawl.

Considerable resources will be provided, granted to the action programme's main elements, which are:

#### **Sustainable communities**

- £22bn<sup>4</sup> to improve housing and communities including over £5bn to regenerate deprived areas.
- A new regional approach to housing policy.
- £350m to speed up planning.

#### **Step change in housing supply**

- £5bn for more affordable homes, including:
  - At least £1bn for key worker housing.
  - Support for people who wish to move into home ownership.
  - Action on empty properties.
  - New focus on helping people into home ownership.

#### **New growth areas**

- £446m for Thames Gateway with new development agencies.
- Cabinet Committee chaired by Prime Minister to plan for development of the Gateway.
- £164m for three other growth areas.

#### **Decent homes**

- £2.8bn to bring council homes up to a decent standard.
- £500m to tackle low demand and abandonment.
- £260m to tackle homelessness.
- Action to tackle bad landlords.

#### **Countryside and local environment**

- Guarantee to protect green belt.
- £201m to improve local environment - parks and public spaces.
- Over 5,000 affordable homes in villages.

All figures are totals for 2003-04 to 2005-06.

Legislation is in preparation to allow key partners, especially local authorities, to deliver this action programme effectively.

Objectives and priorities for sustainable development in each region are set through Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs). These are developed by key partners, including Regional Chambers, Government Offices, Regional Development Agencies, business, local authorities, charities and voluntary groups. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy includes a set of the 147 indicators of sustainable development including 15 key 'headline' indicators. Indicators are integral to RSDFs and community strategies, providing regional and local versions of the national indicators and others tailored to local priorities.

<sup>4</sup> 1 GBP (£) correspond to about 1.4 euro (€).

***The Swedish experience – Local investment programmes***

In 1996 the Swedish government set aside 6.2 billion SEK (680 M Euro) in a funding scheme called the Local Investment Programmes (LIP). This was created to fund municipalities' investments and to speed up their progress towards ecological sustainability. In 2002, Climate Investment Programmes (Klimp), more specifically aimed at reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases replaced the Local Investment Programmes.

The government funds municipalities that together with local companies and organisations are investing in measures to reduce negative environmental impacts. For example; initiatives that make more efficient use of energy and other resources, that make greater use of renewable raw materials, that extend the re-use and recycling of waste materials, that strengthen biological diversity, that conserve cultural heritage assets and that improve the cycling of plant nutrients. The programmes are also intended to stimulate employment.

An investment programme is co-ordinated by the municipality and consists of a single or combination of several projects aimed at increasing ecological sustainability mainly through investment. Educational and information projects are only funded if they are combined with an investment for example in a recycle plant. The municipalities' programmes should mirror the largest challenges faced by the municipality in the environmental field and priorities in the municipalities' environmental plans and policies. The municipality is responsible for the programme and its implementation; it prioritises the measures included in the programme and is responsible for awarding a share of the grant to different investors. The municipality also ensures that all the funded organisations have fulfilled their commitments throughout the programme.

The investment programme is administrated by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (before 2001 it was administrated by the Ministry of Environment), and decisions are made by a special body within the Swedish EPA - the Council for Investment Support - with members appointed by the Government. Support is regulated under the Law on Support for Local Investment Programmes Aimed at Enhancing Ecological Sustainability in the Community (1998:23).

Support to local investment programmes differs from traditional government grant programmes in several ways. There is no technical management, which means that the Government/Swedish EPA has not identified specific technological solutions that may receive funding. Instead, focus is placed on the originality of the programmes, and the results, in terms of environmental and employment impact.

According to studies carried out by Katarina Eckerberg at the University of Umeå the key to successful Agenda 21 progress in Swedish municipalities is very much dependent on the strong structure of national support, of which national funding is a crucial part. One challenge in Sweden now is the unevenness in the development



between the municipalities that have received funding and those who have not. 148 out of 288 municipalities have received funding from the Local investment program.

### ***The Danish experience***

Although Denmark was not one of the leading countries after Rio it has now developed to become one of the front runners in the Agenda 21 process. In 2000 the Danish Parliament amended the Planning Act and imposed an obligation on counties and municipalities to report on their Local Agenda 21 strategies at least once every four years.

In chapter 6 of the planning act, entitled Local Agenda 21, it is stated that all municipalities and counties should contribute to sustainable development with information about how they are working with Agenda 21 with a holistic approach, in a cross-Sectoral way and on a long-term basis. And how citizens, businesses, NGOs and associations will be included in the Local Agenda 21 work. The strategy produced by the municipality should include:

1. reduction of negative environmental impacts
2. promotion of sustainable urban development and renewal
3. promotion and protection of biodiversity
4. inclusion of the citizens and the business life in the Agenda 21 work
5. promotion of co-operation on decisions concerning the following issues; environment, traffic, social, health, education, culture and economy.

The report should be published and sent to the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry of Environment will, in turn, gather the information and publish a report on the Agenda 21 work in the counties and the municipalities.

Since the law is so new there has not yet been much evaluation of it. But according to a report "Local Agenda 21 in the Nordic countries – National strategies and local status" edited by University of Oslo. The legislation, together with a starting package for cities that have been slower to implement strategies and a greater commitment from NGOs is crucial to get more active municipalities in Denmark.

The key to success so far in Denmark has been a broad support from the citizens for the sustainability work, Denmark's ability to have already developed environmental policy before the Rio-summit took place, and the consensus on the national level to work with Agenda 21 issues. Interesting initiatives in Denmark have been the Green fund that has supported different locally based environmental projects involving citizens and NGOs. The green fund funded the Green Guides, which are local environmental guidelines whose work is to make the Danes think and act greener. About 100 green guides have been working in different areas throughout the country since 1996 on three-year contracts.

The green fund in contrast to the Local Investment Programmes in Sweden has mainly funded information, education and co-operation projects, while LIP has mainly focused on investments. One of the similarities is that both Sweden and Denmark have incorporated the creation of employment in their funding

instruments, Denmark through the Pool for green jobs and Sweden through LIP.

***City and environment project in The Netherlands.***

The Netherlands has been experimenting with integrated 'area-specific' policy since 1997. In the City and Environment project, urban planners have been working alongside environmental specialists on complex urban redevelopment projects. And in fact they have often come up with creative solutions. Environmental legislation actually provides much more room for manoeuvre than they had previously appreciated. As a result, urban problem areas such as station environs and disused industrial sites have been given a new lease of life, enhancing quality of life and using scarce land more efficiently.

A special feature of the project is that, subject to certain strict conditions, the 25 municipalities which participate in the City and Environment project may depart from the national environmental standards. Attempts to create a compact city may for example run up against stringent noise standards. Standards may only be relaxed, however, if there are offsetting benefits. The scheme is governed by the City and Environment Act, which was introduced temporarily for this purpose. The government will evaluate the City and Environment project in 2004. The key factors are introduced: quality of life, the open planning process and health. An integrated local policy can only really succeed if account is taken of these three factors at an early stage.

Planners are cooperating with environmentalists to set up local projects. By joining forces at an early stage, they come up with creative solutions that comply with environmental standards. The standards allow more leeway than people think. And where necessary, the government will even relax them in specific situations. The final result has to be a better quality of life; the local authorities have to take action to compensate any loss of local environmental quality. The project illustrates how urban areas and their inhabitants can benefit if environmental standards are applied flexibly.

The project adopts an integrated approach to entire areas, with a strong link between land use and the environment. As a first step local authorities try to solve basic environmental problems. Planners and environmentalists work together right from the start. They take environmental interests on board by consulting all parties involved, including residents and businesses. A good example of the so-called source policy is that of the speed limit in the Overschie district of Rotterdam. The maximum speed limit for cars using the motorway that cuts through the district has been reduced from 100 to 80 kms per hour. By reducing it, the government expects a 20% reduction in air pollution and noise nuisance, thus substantially improving the quality of life in Overschie.

The second step is to find creative solutions within the limits of the law. The parties explore all the possibilities. Since representatives of various disciplines do this together, they often come up with creative, innovative solutions for environmental problems in urban areas. Smallerland, in the north of the Netherlands, is using polluted sludge and waste from a refuse dump to build a noise barrier between its industrial zone and a new residential area. By doing so, it is killing two birds with one stone. It has found a use for its polluted soil and a solution to its noise problem. Finally, there is the possibility to make a third step for the 25 towns and cities

taking part in the City and Environment project. If neither source policy nor creative thinking leads to a solution, there is an escape clause. Though the towns and cities must of course abide by European legislation, they may, under very strict conditions, deviate from national environmental regulations. In such a case they need the permission of the minister of the Environment, and they have to compensate for such a deviation on one aspect by improving the local environment in other aspects. They also need the support of local residents. Thus far only two local authorities have made use of the escape clause. Both were allowed to apply more flexible standards for noise.

Is the project successful? The project is producing some very valuable information. For example, current regulations provide enough leeway as long as parties work together on creative solutions. The escape clause has been a good incentive. Local authorities have set to work in areas they previously neglected. And the possibility of the third step has not led to excesses, because the local authorities follow the procedure to the letter. In the end, the quality of life improves, and scarce space is used more efficiently. That is why the City and Environment project is a success. It will end in 2004. Then the government will decide what to do with the findings of the ongoing evaluation.

<http://www.kenniscentrumgrotesteden.nl/kcgs/>

<http://www.rom-rijnmond.nl/english/index.shtml>

Eurocities is currently leading a European project to assess the applicability elsewhere in Europe. Information on this can be found on <http://www.eurocities.org/pegasus/>

A last very interesting initiative that I would like to bring to your attention is the PreSud project which is teaching us a lot about urban management. Info can be found on: <http://www.presud.org/>

## 11. ANNEX 5: EMAS EXPERIENCE

### **Briefing Paper on the Benefits to Lewes District, East Sussex, England of EMAS Accreditation**

**by I. Kedge Head of Environment & Health, Lewes District Council, East Sussex, England**

#### Background

Lewes District Council covers 292 square kilometres in the County of East Sussex on the South Coast of England. It is home to around 92,000 people. It has 14.5 miles of coastline and beautiful countryside much of which is currently designated as areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and which will be incorporated into the forthcoming National Park. The main towns are Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford with many rural villages and settlements.

In 1992, the Council took the decision to establish Environmental Protection as one of its key aims and decided to implement the European Union approved Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). After a great deal of work and targeting of effort Lewes gained EMAS accreditation in 1999 and has received subsequent accreditation in 2002. At the time of the first award we were only one of six local authorities in the country to receive EMAS accreditation and to date only 14 UK local authorities hold this prestigious award. Not content with achieving this high level of recognition for the Council's work in protecting and managing the environments, the Council is now a partner in a European Life funded project entitled ecoBudget. It is working with other European municipalities to establish the environmental management scheme for local authorities utilising a financial accounting methodology.

#### What are the costs of EMAS?

The Council's budget for the financial year 2003/04 estimates that the cost will be £74,080 (€ 103,712). This works out at a cost of 80p (€ 1.12) per head of population. These costs represent the administration input into the scheme by staff working in the Environmental Health Department, which include the Environment Officer's costs, along with the cost of producing the public statement and external verification. Costs also include the costs of officers from other departments who act as Eco Monitors and attend the Council's Environmental Steering Group.

What is not included in the above costs are direct costs relating to the actions carried out under the EMAS system e.g. energy management audits, or the implementation of energy efficiency measures in Council owned housing.

The tangible cost to the Council of the environmental element of all its work has not been calculated. Virtually every aspect of the Council's activities are now considered to be environmentally managed in accordance with the EMAS scheme and these are considered as intangible costs.

### What are the benefits of EMAS?

**As with the benefits EMAS has brought, the Council has not sought to measure these in costs terms or tangible costs, but rather in terms of environmental benefit both for the Council as an organisation and for the wider District's population of residents, businesses and visitors.**

Certain environmental improvement could, if the Council wished, be easily expressed in financial terms.

For example: -

- We have reduced our paper use by almost 40%
- We have reduced our energy consumption for all offices (except Fisher Street in Lewes) from 1,002,000 kWh in 2001/02 to 885,000 kWh
- Decreased our water consumption at Waste and Recycling services from 800 to 584 cubic meters

*We believe that it is the benefits, many of which are intangible, in environmental terms which are the real value in obtaining EMAS accreditation. For example by using peat-free compost in 88% of planting in our parks and gardens we are protecting some of the most sensitive environments in the UK, whose loss would be hard to quantify. By working to improve our timber purchasing policy we are safeguarding forests (and dependant ecosystems) from around the world that could be lost due to unsustainable forest management.*

*Furthermore, many of the benefits to the environment that happen as a result of 'greening our supply chain' and encouraging our contractors to develop an environmental management system equivalent to our own are hard to fully quantify.*

*A complete list of what the Council has achieved and our objectives for Environmental Improvement are set out in the Council's 2002 EMAS Statement Update entitled Lewes District Council and the Environment – How are we doing? A copy of this is attached to this briefing note. Alternatively, it can be found on our website at [www.lewes.gov.uk](http://www.lewes.gov.uk).*

*For the organisation itself there are considerable benefits in terms of public image and recognition by central government. Meeting the stringent requirements of EMAS shows a strong commitment to protecting the environment for residents, businesses and other organisations with which we work. The cross-departmental working that is essential for the smooth running of our system is also recognised as a good example of business management. Involving the whole organisation gives everyone the opportunity to feel that they are working towards a 'bigger picture,' engendering a co-operative culture and a culture of pride in the achievements of the organisation.*

### **Some Examples**

*We are particularly proud of certain actions which we believe demonstrate particularly good progress and reflect the Council's and residents' priorities, bringing real environmental improvements. These include: -*

- The introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme to almost 27,900 homes in the District. In March 2001, we had a recycling rate of 9.37%. By March 2002 this had risen to 10.3%. By March 2003 this had grown to 11.6% and is approximately 15% now, and rising.
- Reductions in the amount of waste generated. Through our actions to promote waste reduction, and reuse we have achieved a waste reduction of 7.6%, between 2000/01 and 2001/02 and a further 11.3% decrease in 2002/03. A reduction from 0.768 tonnes per household to 0.630 tonnes.
- We have been working hard to improve Energy Efficiency in homes throughout the District and have achieved a 15% improvement since 1996.
- Within the public sector (i.e. local authority owned homes) we have been carrying out an extensive programme of installing energy efficiency measures, such as cavity wall insulation. The average SAP rating of Council dwellings has now reached 62.
- Sought to reduce noise pollution in the District through a number of activities, including operating noise patrols to respond to complaints at summer weekends; introducing a neighbour mediation service and providing a noise hotline.
- We have through our Planning Control system ensured that 68% of new housing developments were on previously developed land in 2001/02.

### **Continued Improvement**

One of the principle elements of EMAS is that of continuous improvement. We are constantly reviewing our environmental management plan and year on year seek to improve what we do. We seek not only to accentuate our positive inputs, but to also reduce the negative ones.

We are very keen to:

- Enhance the principle of Sustainability across the District and are producing a Sustainability Work Plan to achieve this.
- Increase our efforts to minimise pollution and air quality problems arising from traffic, including our own transport fleet.
- We are keen to promote environmental management to other businesses and organisations in the District.
- We are keen to promote biodiversity and wildlife in the District.

## Conclusion

Lewes District Council has now held EMAS accreditation for over four years and has been working on environmental management for over a decade. The effort and resource requirement for a small local authority has been high to achieve what we have. Nevertheless we feel there have been great benefits in terms of environmental awareness, protection and improvement.

Environmental management was the first truly cross-cutting issue developed by this Authority. Now all staff are aware of, and contributing to, the Council's environmental programme. All decisions made by the Council take environmental implications into account.

The residents of Lewes District are well aware of the Council's ambitions for, and the priority given to, environmental action. Recent residents' polls indicate a high level of support for the Council's position on this issue.

The actions we are taking are beginning to have real effect for residents, particularly on waste reduction and energy efficiency. We have ambition for many more issues and are demonstrably working towards them.

Achieving EMAS has not been easy and maintaining EMAS still requires a lot of effort. The system needs improvement and in particular needs to be made less bureaucratic. Overall however in terms of benefits, EMAS can only be considered beneficial for the Council, the District, businesses, residents and visitors to our municipality and eventually for the world. All authorities should be urged to take up environmental management systems, such as EMAS. National and European political recognition and endorsement is a must to ensure this happens.