

UNU PROJECT DOCUMENT¹

A. Project Summary

1. Project Title

Environmental Management at the Local Level in Japan
The City Inspirations Initiative

2. Expected Project Duration

Two years

3. Proposed Starting and Ending Dates

April 2000 – March 2002

4. Project Abstract

The Project aims to document processes and initiatives in environmental management at the local level in Japan. It takes a project, programme, plan, or policy at the local level – at various stages of development from planning to implementation to evaluation – and documents its ingredients of success (or failure) for replication and transfer to developing cities in the Asia Pacific Region.

Each of these documented cases will be termed a 'City inspiration'² These are very basic in their content in order to keep their understanding and adaptability easy. A city or urban area can be a source for several City Inspirations – initiated and partnered with local stakeholders, and implemented at different levels of governance.

Individual wards and cities in Japan, as well as networks, NGOs/NPOs, and citizens groups will be contacted to collate information. Similarly, networks of mayors, city networks and other international organizations and individual city mayors will be contacted to disseminate collections of city inspirations.

The Project will have the following components:

1. Information Collation:

The Project will directly contact city government officials and their environment departments, NGOs/NPOs active in the city (including citizens groups etc.) in order to identify City Inspirations. Besides the above, networks of cities and relevant national ministries in Tokyo will also be contacted.

¹ Version 1.5 dated 20 October 2000

² See Appendix for a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) on City Inspirations.

2. *Capacity building of local government networks in the Asia-Pacific region:*

The Project will disseminate research results directly to city governments. Besides this, networks of city governments in the Asia Pacific region will also be targeted. Ongoing activities of these networks and associations will be used to familiarize city officials of the City Inspirations Initiative.

3. *Information dissemination:*

The success of the City Inspirations Initiative will depend on its usability. City governments in developing countries will be the target users of the collection of inspirations. The format of presentation is deliberately kept simple, a single sheet of paper, in order to ensure that it is easily understood and adapted with minimal local modifications by a wide variety of local stakeholders in developing cities.

A folder will be prepared, containing loose sheets of City Inspirations that can be built upon as the collection grows. Interaction with local institutions and organizations, researchers and academics, experts and consultants, government ministries and agencies, and UN and International organizations, will be explored where relevant.

A comprehensive website [<http://www.unu.edu/env/c-insp/>] — to be made available online in early 2001 — will be prepared to complement the folder of City Inspirations. Seminars and conferences that brings together city governments in Japan and in Asia-Pacific region will also be targeted for wider dissemination, as well training institutes, universities etc. An online mailing list will be constituted for announcing new and updated information on the City Inspirations Initiative.

B. Project Justification and Objectives

5. Background and Justification

Environmental management is a global phenomenon, embracing all stakeholders in all countries, whether or not there already exists an organized response to managing environmental impacts.

Today, there are gross inequalities between the world's high-income and low-income nations in terms of income distribution, consumption patterns, access to resources and environmental impact. Yet both groups are committed, at least in words, to achieving a better managed environment.

Particularly in Japan, public awareness of environmental issues has been rising in recent years and further degradation of the environment has been subject to more stringent regulatory regimes, voluntary agreements and growing consumer and stakeholder pressure on local governments, business and industry and other local stakeholders.

Underlying internal and external changes that Japan is undergoing in the social, economic and ecological fronts has been a key common denominator - the local and global environment. A number of issues have been brought under the umbrella of a sustainable environment, seeking justifications, priorities and solutions that aim at an environmental and ecological balance. This has touched almost every sphere, particularly in bringing the role of local governments to the fore, influencing purchase decisions of ordinary consumers, and in turn affecting product design, manufacturing processes, retail systems etc. Prioritizing the environment in all spheres of life in Japan has been a result of both learning from the mistakes of the past, as well as from looking to the future.

It is with this background that the City Inspirations Initiative is being proposed, to document and disseminate best practices in environmental management at the local level in Japan. This will enable cities and local governments in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region to gain from the experience – not only in finding innovative local solutions, but also in avoiding the repetition of the same mistakes.

The complexity of local environmental management in Japanese cities has clearly raised the need for a better understanding of the different strengths, potentials and roles of local stakeholders. It has also emphasized the importance of local governments in these processes. Concepts such as local autonomy, information disclosure, informed choice, decision-making models etc. have been increasingly used in local planning and development. Using lessons learnt from the Japanese experience, developing cities in the Asia-Pacific region need to place greater emphasis on the role of local governments in environmental management, and simultaneously call for wider and deeper participation and partnerships with all local stakeholders.

6. Objectives

The objectives of this project are:

- **INTERACTION:**
To understand the networking and partnership processes between local governments and other urban stakeholders, and to highlight the critical (direct and facilitative) role of local governments in these processes.
- **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER:**
To document (in an easily understandable and adaptable format) local environmental management initiatives at the local level in Japan in order to transfer them to developing cities.
- **CAPACITY-BUILDING:**
To provide a menu of options in environmental management practices for developing cities of the Asia-Pacific region.

C. Methodology and Expected Outcome

7. Methodology

1. *Information Collation*

Information will be collated via a variety of means – direct contact with local government officials in Japan, and also brochures, pamphlets, reports and other secondary material from a variety of sources. Since much of these information sources will be in Japanese, this will have to be translated to English.

2. *Information Packaging*

The collected information will be studied and analyzed in order to extract 'City Inspirations' that can be summarized and condensed³ A City Inspiration will cover the following aspects: the initiator of the inspiration; essential elements and aims of the inspiration; partners sought and the processes of partnership; processes of implementation; unique features and ingredients of success/failure; lessons learnt; contact persons/institutions for further information.

In order to enhance the replicability and ensure ease of understanding and replication, each inspiration will be presented using only a single sheet of paper, with contact addresses for additional information. Photos and graphical means of presenting information will be used to enhance understanding of the inspiration being presented. The online version will contain additional links to Internet sites for more information.

3. *Information Dissemination*

The collection of inspirations, will be presented in a loose-leaf folder, and will also be made available via a website. While the print version will contain contact addresses for further information, the online version will provide links to relevant additional information.

City governments, and organizations/networks that bring together city governments will be targeted for dissemination.

8. Expected Output/Results

The following are expected to be the outcome of this project.:

1. *The City Inspirations Folder* – will be a loose-leaf folder containing the actual single sheet inspirations, from 100 to 200 inspirations per folder. This folder can grow, after it is first issued.

³ The objective of an 'Inspiration' is simply to inspire. It does not provide detailed technical or policy guidelines, but only a menu of different ways of tackling environmental problems. By outlining the various tools used, stakeholders partnered, and projects implemented, an Inspiration enhances its transferability.

2. *Working Paper Series* – will cover summarized overviews of inspirations, background information and other theoretical issues to complement the inspirations folder. Other formal publications, such as books and manuals, will also be explored.
3. *Online Database* – will contain inspirations that can be accessed via a web browser and will contain links to additional information that can also be searched.
4. *Presentations and displays* – will be done in symposia and workshops throughout the region and in Japan.
5. *Networking* – will be facilitated linking institutions and organizations that have participated in identifying and documenting City Inspirations for further interaction.

D. Project Management and Implementation

9. Project Coordination

UNU Implementing Team:

Dr. Hari Srinivas, Programme Associate

Advisory Team:

Prof. Motoyuki Suzuki, UNU

Dr. Libor Jansky, UNU

Dr. Jerry Velasquez, UNU/GEIC

Ms. Makiko Yashiro, UNU/GEIC

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on City Inspirations.

Contents

- What are City Inspirations?
- Why are City Inspirations important?
- How can we learn from City Inspirations?
- What qualifies as a City Inspirations?
- What are the possible issues to be covered by the City Inspirations?
- How to nominate and submit examples of City Inspirations?
- What will be the output of the City Inspirations Initiative?

WHAT ARE CITY INSPIRATIONS?

City Inspirations are examples of actions that could be recommended for further application, whether in a similar or adapted form. They are actions, initiatives or projects which have resulted in clear improvements in the quality of life and the living environments of people in a sustainable way, as well as broad urban environmental management.

It would therefore include new services, organizational/operational structures, laws, constitutions, procedures, partnerships, ways to relate to and solve problems etc. It would also enable a continuous process of measuring, analyzing and comparing an organization/programme/project's products, services and practices for development and refinement. It includes the successful components of a policy, programme or project which may have been, on the whole, a failure. By taking such a desegregated view of environmental management, it is possible to generate several 'inspirations' per scheme, allowing for a broader mix-and-match in developing programmes and projects.

WHY ARE CITY INSPIRATIONS IMPORTANT?

Through the years, similarities and differences in initiation, development, success/failure etc. of environmental programmes and projects has become increasingly apparent. Lessons have been learnt and recorded in documents and other media, including the internet. Despite these efforts, our knowledge at the global level of actions which offer vital insights is incomplete and out of date.

The project will provide a unique opportunity to set up a neutral, balanced and broadly representative process for identifying City Inspirations in the field of environmental management at the local level. A standardized approach for selecting and describing each case will facilitate comparisons between communities, and provinces within each city, as well as regionally and globally.

City Inspirations will play an important role in building a picture of environmental management and in identifying ways in which common needs and problems can be met through the application of documented successful solutions and approaches. They represent the latest and pragmatic solutions to common problems facing many local programmes and communities. They are a learning process and constitute a knowledge base for effective action now and in the future.

HOW CAN WE LEARN FROM CITY INSPIRATIONS?

Many of the environmental problems facing cities are common to all countries: *poverty and lack of appropriate skills, air/water/noise pollution, insufficient and inappropriate use of resources* etc. Many of the solutions which have proven successful are based on similar strategies: *improving the efficiency of management and decision support systems, forging new partnerships between public, and private sectors as well as the civil societies, broadening the decision-making process to harness and focus resources and*

energies of all key actors and communities, creating increased awareness of problems and opportunities for action.

An effective means of know-how and information exchange is through the sharing of first-hand experience and learning from each other's successes and failures.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS A CITY INSPIRATION?

There are no limits set on the size and nature of a city inspiration, nor are there any limitations on the range of organizations or groups responsible for it. These can be NGOs, user groups, neighbourhood/ward committees, private sector, the media, municipalities, provincial/state governments, regional authorities or central government ministries and departments.

Regardless of the location or scale of activity, what should be important is that the activities contribute - directly or indirectly - to improving the living environments of people in a sustainable manner, and overcoming environmental problems by providing adequate opportunity and resources. Generically, this could include skills, processes, solutions, and resources.

Particular emphasis can be paid to City Inspirations that have been developed without outside help and which can therefore provide important examples of independent and self-reliant initiatives.

Gender-sensitive initiatives also need to be highlighted - those Practices that take into account gender specific roles, responsibilities and access to resources, ensuring that the needs of both men and women are met.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE ISSUES TO BE COVERED BY CITY INSPIRATIONS?

Tentatively, the following aspects are intended to be covered, but will be expanded later:

- Energy conservation
- Sustainable transportation
- Waste management
- Public and community health and safety
- Air/water/noise pollution abatement
- Eco-tourism
- Urban information management
- Environmental decision-making
- Involvement and roles of the community and civil society
- Education and awareness building
- Partnership with the business sector
- Environmental policies, programmes, projects, and plans
- Environmental law, rules and regulations
- Environmental governance
- Urban design and technology

HOW WILL EXAMPLES OF CITY INSPIRATIONS BE IDENTIFIED?

Step 1: Identification of a city inspiration

A city inspiration is an action or initiative that has resulted in a clear impact on one of the proposed issues and involving at least two of the following key actors:

- National governments

- Local governments and their associations
- Community-based groups
- NGOs and PVOs
- Academic and scientific institutions
- Mayors, councilors
- Media groups (press, TV, radio)
- Private sector (for profit and non-profit)

The distinction between an example of City Inspirations and a good practice should be based on the criteria of sustainable impact of the initiative/action on one or more of the following:

- Legislation and regulatory frameworks providing formal recognition of the issues and problems of environmental management which have been addressed
- Policies and/or sectoral strategies at the sub-national level that have a potential for replication elsewhere
- Institutional frameworks and decision-making processes which assign clear roles and responsibilities to different levels and groups of actors, such as, central and local government, private sector, NGOs and CBOs
- Management systems that make more efficient use of human, technical and financial resources

Step 2: Development procedure and format

In order to keep the identification and selection process simple, each City inspiration will be developed in a prescribed form with a 600-1000 words description of the inspiration itself. This will ensure that each inspiration can be presented on a single sheet of paper. Additional material such as charts, graphics, photos etc. are to be included as an annexure or a set of links in the online version, in order to substantiate the inspiration.