

Best Practices at OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is often called a “best practices institute” or an “orchestrator of best practices.”

The organisation's 30 member countries from Europe, North America and the Western Pacific Rim have elaborated guidelines, principles, model laws and policy recommendations on subjects like corporate responsibility, taxation, the environment, information technology and urban and regional policy, to mention just a few.

These “best practices” are the fruit of careful analyses of the many good and bad policy experiences from the wide variety of economic and political contexts in our member countries.

One of the major lessons from the OECD's

work is that best practices do not in fact exist. And even if they did, it would not be the world's most developed countries that were the sole source of such best practices.

While lessons from experience can be very useful, one size does not fit all. These lessons of “best practice” must be adapted to each country's own cultural, political and historical context. Each country must ultimately find its own path.

Today, the OECD would prefer to be thought of as a hub for policy dialogue on global issues where our best practices can be a starting point for such dialogue.

It is in this spirit that the OECD is honoured and proud to participate in Shanghai 2010. We hope to not only contribute to public education on the theme of “Better City, Better Life”.



We also expect to learn even more from the countries, other organisations and public participating in this event.

John West
Director of the Forum
OECD

Urban Best Practices : an introduction to the Spanish case

Democratic Spain is now 30 years old and its cities are probably the best mirror of its transformation.

In the '70s, many Spanish cities witnessed the development of social and cultural movements, which were at the same time critical and constructive. While questioning the city planning of the dictatorship - considered to foster segregation, speculation and ugliness - they contributed to lay the foundations for a democratic planning that developed in the following decade. It was in this period that Best Practices found their guiding principles.

The first principle is the right to the city. This concept integrates the citizen's need for housing, equipment, services, public spaces, accessibility, centrality, and identity.

It claims equal quality of life for all inhabitants, an integrated view of urban policies and the recognition of inhabitants as citizens with full rights. The need for quality will also apply to urban design and architecture.

The second principle is democracy. The '70s were characterized by an occupation or construction of public spaces for citizens, both in physical and political dimensions.

The citizenship claim soon translated into a

political claim: participation. Opposition to enforced urban policies, rejection of non-representative municipalities, recognition of the citizens' voting right, the need to participate in the development of plans and projects and in the execution and management of projects or services. Public participation became a fundamental component of local democracy and of urban policies.

The third is modernity. The municipalities, elected since 1979, collected a wealth of innovative ideas and practices mostly shaped by the resistance to the dictatorship during the earlier years.

Planning was viewed as core to urban policies, but projects and programs were emphasized and prioritized, that is the direct and visible intervention on the territory.



Local governments are elected, but, in the large cities, they must decentralize. The rights of citizens and the necessary competencies to apply them to new domains of local policies expand. Communication and the democratization of information technology became particularly important, as well as the right to mobility in the metropolitan areas that make up the modern city.

Even the reclaiming of the urban identity is expressed in modern terms: using the heritage as an element of quality of life, of socio-cultural integration and of attractive positioning in a new, globalized world.

Based on these observations, the three concepts that, in our view, must structure the presentations of the Spanish cities at Expo 2010, are:

- Right to the city: identity and life quality
- Democracy and citizens' participation
- Modernity and universality

Jordi Borja
Director, Management Program of the City
Oberta University of Catalunya, Spain

Important Dates

4 February: Opening of the BIE travelling exhibition «Expo X Expos», Palazzo della Triennale, Milan, Italy

4-5 February: Milan 2015, 2nd International Symposium

6-7 February: 3rd Meeting of the International Participants, Zaragoza 2008

14-17 February: Izmir, Turkey, 2nd International Symposium



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Progression

The BIE Newsletter

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Expo 2012 in Korea

The city of Yeosu will host the International Expo in 2012.

Expo Yeosu 2012 will be held from May 12 to August 12, 2012, under the theme, “The Living Ocean and Coast: Diversity of Resources and Sustainable Activities.” Through this global event, Expo Yeosu 2012 wishes to contribute to the international mobilization against the overexploitation and degradation of the oceans and coasts, whose grave consequences threaten the future of humanity.

Expo Yeosu 2012 aspires to move forward this common project of the international community in the 21st century for human development that is both meaningful and sustainable by comprehensively assessing the roles of oceans and coasts in this endeavor.

Approximately 7.95 million visits are expected during the three-month period of the Expo, to which participation from 80 countries, 10 international organizations, 10 multinational companies, and civil society organizations is expected.

<http://www.expo2012.or.kr>



Ambassador Jean-Pierre Lafon is the new President of the BIE



On November 27th 2007, Ambassador Jean-Pierre Lafon was elected President of the BIE by the 140 member-states gathered for the organization's 142nd General Assembly, in Paris.

M. Lafon is former Ambassador of France to Lebanon and to China, Secretary General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Director of the United Nations and International Organizations.

Jean-Pierre Lafon replaces Ambassador Wu Jianmin, who was appointed Honorary President of the BIE.

Best wishes
for a happy
New Year 2008 !



For a shared quality of life

The city of Geneva is delighted to be associated with the "Urban Best Practices Area," a space, within the Expo Shanghai 2010 *Better City, Better Life*, dedicated to best practices promoting quality of life in the urban environment.

Without pretending to be exemplary, the city of Geneva is making significant efforts in infrastructure (day-care centers, schools, green spaces, athletic facilities, cultural offerings, housing, meeting places for the elderly, etc.) as well as in collective practices for the promotion of participation, social solidarity, and integration.

These efforts rely especially on projects through which we seek to actively engage the population in the life of the city (for instance, by means of neighbourhood contracts, in the near future) and to promote a "positive cohabitation." Some of the initiatives that can be cited include the participatory budget in schools, the associative management of neighbourhood houses, the Neighbourhood Fair, the Musical Festival, the Senior Town, or the active promotion of popular sports. These actions contribute to build social solidarity and therefore to bridge the gaps between the youth and the elderly, locals and migrants, and between people of different socio-economic backgrounds.

Quality of life only makes sense if it is sustainable and shared by everyone!

Sami Kanaan

Deputy Director for Social, Educational and Environmental Affairs
City of Geneva



Best practices in Expos

As we enter a new era in the 21st century where sustainable development is no longer a choice but a necessity, we find ourselves turning more and more towards the concept of best practices.

Why? Because best practices allow us to learn from our past mistakes and make the best out of them for a better future.

We see best practices everywhere: in the corporate business world, in international organizations, and now more and more in the urban planning of major cities around the world, to name a few.

What better place than an Expo – a place where members of the international community gather to share ideas and offer their own insights and unique experiences – to showcase and promote these best practices? A dynamic meeting point for different sectors of society and an important platform for intercultural dialogue and cooperation, Expos are the ideal setting for celebrating existing best practices and inspiring new ones.

This is why the BIE is proud to present to you this issue of *Progression*, which is dedicated to the numerous examples of best practices from around the world, which are amongst the most innovative elements of upcoming World and International Expos.

Vicente González Loscertales
Secretary General of the BIE

The City as a Decisive Place for Sustainable Development

The challenge of reconciling progress, social justice, and the preservation of conditions for future development on the local and global level is enormous.



It requires responding to the local needs of sustainable development by sharing resources at the global level while integrating diversity of cultures and knowledge.

We must imagine new ways of managing and planning our territory, in ways that focus on quality, equity and democracy.

The city is the place of decision-making which is closest to the concerns and the needs of the citizens, and it is also an environment for mobilization and cooperation.

We need to encourage the emergence of a "new art of city, new art of living." The urban transformation must facilitate and encourage a common living, and allow the development of local know-how, of new types of jobs, and of a shared culture which is accessible to all.

Only with these orientations sustainable development has any meaning. The political engagement to develop eco-neighbourhoods, reinforced by the city of Lille, is built on these different demands and experiences.

Danielle Poliautre

Deputy Mayor for the Quality of Life and Sustainable Development
City of Lille

Reclaiming the Ebro and Expo Zaragoza 2008

Historically, the river Ebro has played an ambiguous role in the urban growth of Zaragoza.

Over the centuries, the city has identified itself with its river, despite the fact that it represented an obstacle that pushed urban development towards the south, on the right-bank.

Even though in the 19th century some industries and infrastructures were built on the left-bank, only in the 70's, with the construction of new bridges integrated into the road system of the city, the river ceased to be an almost insurmountable physical barrier.

However, although the city had eliminated the separation with the left bank, the Ebro began to deteriorate and slowly became an almost hidden element, completely severed from urban development.

The goal to integrate the Ebro into the city and "to open the city to the river," was the "leitmotiv" of the actions of the Plan of Rivers and of the Expo Zaragoza 2008 project.

Reclaiming the rivers of Ebro is part of a concept that considers waterways and their urban journey as elements that are both natural and cultural. These concepts belong to a long tradition in European cities. However, in the last few years, their meaning has

changed, to incorporate principles related to "urban best practices," for a sustainable development based on the improvement of the quality of public spaces.

The location of the Expo, near the river, in a meander close to the historical centre, satisfies this objective to integrate and reconvert the Ebro into a new public space, a green space open to the city.

The Expo theme, *Water and Sustainable Development*, goes hand in hand with an urban and environmental strategy starting with the construction of a metropolitan water park and of a multifunctional space which will become a new centre for the city.

In parallel, the actions of the Support Plan will be decisive to connect the citizens with the waterways that run through the city – the Ebro, Gallego, Huerva, and the Imperial Canal of Aragon – and for its transformation into a green belt that will significantly improve the urban and landscape quality of Zaragoza.

Javier Monclús
Architect
Zaragoza 2008

Best practices at Expo Shanghai 2010

As the first of its kind in the history of World Expo, Urban Best Practices Area will be one of the highlights of Expo 2010, to echo the theme of "Better City, Better Life."

The UBPA will provide a great opportunity for urban best practices, conducted by representative cities around the world, to improve the quality of urban life, with focus on *Livable Cities, Sustainable Urbanization, Protection and Utilization of Historic Heritages, and Technological Innovation in the Built Environment* as the mainstays of urban best practices. Participating cases in the UBPA should be widely acknowledged by the international communities for their value in innovation and replication.

The organizer of Expo 2010 kindly invites cities around the world to submit candidate cases of urban best practices. The International Selection Committee will evaluate submissions and select 30-50 participating cases.

The Urban Best Practices Area in Expo 2010 will provide a unique platform for urban governments, civil societies and enterprises to exchange and share ideas and experiences in urban governance, policy, planning and development, resulting in long-lasting influence on visions of sustainable development of cities around the world.

Professeur TANG Zilai
Chief Planner, Urban Best Practices Area
Expo 2010, Shanghai

