



local authorities, business sector,  
universities as agents for change.

## **Recommendations - Project TriNet-Global**

### **Thoughts on the Enhancement of Cooperations between Cities**

Within the framework of the project "TriNet Global", the aim of the Berlin State Office for Development Cooperation (LEZ) is to promote and support participatory engagement in development policies and sustainability issues and especially to

- encourage and strengthen the cooperative involvement of the economic, scientific and administrative sectors in this field of issues;
- support initiatives in the sphere of development cooperation;
- promote the communication and exchange of internationally effective projects and cooperations with other cities dealing with urban infrastructure and public facilities

### **Spheres of Activity and General Framework Conditions**

The focus is on the following fields of action:

- City networks,
- Issue-specific cooperations with municipal administrations (including within the framework of town twinning),
- Sector-specific cooperations (especially on urban infrastructure and public facilities).

The approaches of all activities should, as a matter of principle, always take into consideration the respective cultural environments and associated existing social and societal parameters.

## **Specific Regional and National Framework Conditions**

Principles for the further development and advancement of international cooperations can be gleaned from traditional development efforts. Whenever experiences are exchanged and projects compared, the respective existing social, cultural and societal differences must be kept in mind when reviewing of the transferability of approaches. Cooperative and sectoral approaches should not focus on "best-practice projects" as replicable standard-solution templates. Rather, cooperative initiatives must adapt them to the given regional context and develop a base framework structure that can be evaluated at the regional level and modified as needed. Sustainable development processes in urban environments are influenced significantly by the respective state and administrative structure and corresponding control and competency. As the Asian Development Bank and the Climate Initiative has previously indicated, cities and/or conurbations in some regions are provided with insufficient financial and personal resources for the achievement of sustainable activities. In a study undertaken by the UCLG<sup>1</sup>, a comparative overview of the financial resources of the sub-national bodies in Asia was compiled which, in turn, has also directed attention to the different degrees of decentralization in the regions.

It is of assistance when international cooperations recognize fundamental structural deficits and, in turn, formulate recommendations for action to overcome the said deficits. Thereby it must be taken into account that the checks and balances of the respective countries can differ greatly in structure, as can the manner in which the interpretation and application of laws and regulations are handled and/or monitored (court supervision, monitoring of bodies, dismissal of decision-makers, etc.). Deliberation processes – for example, the decision for or against the development of public transport systems – are largely politically determined, thus sustainability will not always be of prevailing importance, but instead be dependent on a plethora of regional and local factors and capacities. "Green cities" will only prevail when the corresponding positive effects are recognized at a local level; for example, when the environmental advantages of "circular economies" (e.g., recycling) and/or the reduction of environmentally harmful traffic loads are recognized as positive factors and appreciated by the public. The growing influence of the middle class and their participation in urbanization processes, which could lead to the adoption of such processes and/or to the mitigation of social conflicts, should be seen as a positive development.

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<sup>1</sup> United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Local Government Finance: The Challenges of the 21st Century, Second Global Report on Decentralization and Local Democracy, GOLD 2010

## Conclusion and Outlook

International cooperations require not just well-founded expertise and know-how, but also a broad familiarity with the social processes of the respective given city / region / country. The discussion and exchange on sustainability issues between experts is also to be deemed as positive in regard to HCB (human capacity building). The activities of cities should be supported by the respective governments. Thereby, it is assumed that universities, colleges and economic development institutes contribute as service providers and "ambassadors" of cities, and that the German federal states contribute their share in cooperations – and that collaborative activities and intensive, targeted networking opportunities are the result.

Answers and solution approaches can only be developed together – the simple transferal of products and processes is almost impossible. The exchange of experiences collected during transformation processes is useful and helpful. Sustainable developments are dependent upon functioning, transparently structured markets and lasting economic structures capable of gradually implementing social and ecological standards. In the end, it is not just about the development of appropriate or adapted technologies (e.g., the solar reflectors developed by Deepak Ghadia<sup>2</sup>), but also about development of a new way of thinking and the spreading of such solutions by business enterprises.



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<sup>2</sup> [http://solarcooking.wikia.com/wiki/Deepak\\_Gadhia](http://solarcooking.wikia.com/wiki/Deepak_Gadhia)