Independent Evaluation of the Cities Alliance – Briefing Note
Prepared for the Consultative Group by Universalia

Introduction

The Cities Alliance (CA) was established in 1999 as a global coalition of cities and their development partners committed to scaling up successful approaches to poverty reduction. After six years of existence, the Cities Alliance commissioned an independent evaluation. Through a competitive bidding process, Universalia, a Canadian firm, was selected to conduct an independent assessment of the Alliance’s performance, in particular during the three years since its last evaluation (2002). The purposes of this evaluation were to: (1) assess CA performance (both effectiveness and efficiency) in achieving its objectives and desired results, and provide guidance on how to improve this performance; and (2) assess the extent to which the Cities Alliance’s objectives and strategy remain relevant to the urban development agenda and are focussed on the most important strategic challenges that cities will face in the next decades.

Methodology

The study was carried out by a team of specialists in program and organizational assessment and in urban policy and development. The methodology for the evaluation, based on an evaluation framework approved by the CA Secretariat, consisted of a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques that included: document review, individual and group interviews (170 respondents); field visits to Brazil, Egypt, and India; a desk review of a CA initiative in Kenya; and two web-based surveys – one of 55 representatives of Member organizations, and one of 106 clients and beneficiaries. The evaluation team prepared case studies on the CA experience in cities in Brazil, Egypt, India, and Kenya. The evaluation was limited by low survey response rates and short field missions.

Cities Alliance Profile

The Cities Alliance, consisting of 20 Members in 2006,1 promotes the developmental role of local governments and helps cities of all sizes obtain more coherent international support. It provides technical assistance grants in support of: City development strategies (CDS) and Citywide and nationwide slum upgrading (SU). The Cities Alliance Trust Fund, administered by the World Bank, is a pool of Members’ resources that are applied to annual work programs approved by the Consultative Group. Between FY 2000 and 2006, the CA allocated US$80 million in grants.

The CA partnership is governed by a Charter and its governance and organizational structure comprises several bodies, which include: the Consultative Group (CG) composed of all the Members (20 as of 2006); a Steering Committee of six CG members; a Policy Advisory Board (PAB) of experts and individuals of influence from each region; and a Secretariat that carries out the CA mandate and manages its day-to-day operations.

1 Asian Development Bank, Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Metropolis, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, United Cities and Local Governments, United Kingdom, UN-HABITAT, UNEP, USA, World Bank
The CA was co-founded by UN-HABITAT and the World Bank. The Alliance has grown from eight Members in 1999 to 20 Members in 2006 and has recently integrated non-donor countries. CA Member contributions increased from US$10.5 million in FY2000 to more than US$16.4 million in FY2005. In 2006, the CA successfully managed its first leadership transition when William Cobbett succeeded Mark Hildebrand as CA’s program manager.

Evaluation Findings

Program Focus and Priorities

CA has sustained its programming focus in the priority action areas of City Development Strategies and Slum Upgrading. Out of CA total grant allocations of US$54.3 million from FY2003 to FY2006, 53% went to SU, 19% to CDS, and 28% to projects that combine upgrading and development strategies. This is a positive shift in the effort to integrate a poverty focus in CDS projects. CA’s current mix of SU and CDS programming is appropriate and flexible enough to embrace key transversal urban issues in developing country cities. Most respondents believe that CA should maintain this programming focus as many issues remain to be addressed in these complex areas. CA has begun to explore programming in sustainable finance for cities. This is a positive step, but CA’s future role in this area and how it will be integrated in SU and CDS projects is not yet evident. Geographically, CA grant allocations have shifted somewhat towards Sub-Saharan Africa and a greater number of global and multi-regional initiatives. Some stakeholders are concerned that cities with limited resources and capacity do not access CA funding.

Effects on the Ground

In general, CA programming activities contributed to improved coordination and greater coherence of efforts among local and international partners in the cities targeted by the grants. In Salvador, Brazil and Alexandria, Egypt CA initiatives are bringing together partners and providing a framework for further investment and local and state authorities are taking the lead to bring in new parties. In India, where CA initiatives are in earlier stages, CA is contributing to coordination in the design of projects. However, CA project documents indicate that achieving coherence is still a challenge and Members cite missed opportunities for greater coordination among CA Members on the ground.

The US$80 million in grants provided by the CA (through FY2006) have been linked with approximately US$8.2 billion in investment finance, primarily from international sources. However, the leverage for follow-up investment is not evident in all CA projects reviewed and the majority of stakeholders suggest that follow-up investment is an area that needs to be strengthened.

CA-supported activities have contributed to the development of statewide or nationwide scales of action, particularly in the adaptation and replication of CDS activities, but scaling up remains a challenge overall. While CA grants have helped to strengthen the capacities (vision, knowledge, skills) of individuals and organizations at the local level, sustainability beyond the initial CA grant and institutionalization of efforts remains a concern in many CA-funded activities.

CA’s effects on the ground, and the possibilities for change, are significantly affected by at least four key factors: strong local leadership, effective inter-governmental relationships and political alignment, city capacities (both technical and financial), and the opportunities available for economic or cultural heritage development.
Effectiveness in Advocacy and Knowledge Sharing

The CA ability to advocate for urban issues is linked to its ability to generate and disseminate lessons for its Members and clients. CA uses several methods to distill and disseminate knowledge to its Members, but its current emphasis is on the instruments rather than on the process by which knowledge is mobilized and exchanged, and the capacity of CA Members to disseminate this knowledge. It does not yet have a comprehensive approach or strategy for learning and advocacy. CA has contributed to raising the overall profile of urban issues, but it is not clear how successful it has been in increasing the positioning and level of investment for urban development in its Member organizations. Specific CA grants have made contributions in supporting peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, partnership development, and networks among cities (e.g., Philippines CDS Program, South Africa Cities Network (SACN). However, CA does not have a mechanism for retaining and transferring knowledge and has not yet maximized the opportunities for knowledge sharing and advocacy with existing associations of local authorities. The best way to pass on the lessons gleaned from CA experience still seems to be through face-to-face contact between people, both experts and practitioners.

Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the greatest challenges for CA is to implement a monitoring and evaluation system that allows it to further its learning objectives, while at the same time balancing the resources available from the Secretariat and implementing partners to engage in monitoring and evaluation activities. The CA has made some progress in implementing a monitoring and evaluation system to track performance at the project level, but more needs to be done to strengthen this area, particularly in terms of identifying outcomes and outcome indicators and in using project/activity evaluations to inform subsequent project design. CA does not yet have a mechanism for aggregating data at the program/thematic level. A recent CDS impact study reviewed a range of CDS experience across different contexts and served as input for the development of the CDS guidelines, but there is no equivalent study of SU activities. CA also lacks a set of indicators of organizational performance that could be monitored over time. In the next phase of operation, the CA will need the ability to draw on monitoring and evaluation information to comment on the overall organizational effectiveness of the Alliance.

Governance and Management

Consultative Group – The Consultative Group, the main governing body of the CA, meets once a year and decisions are taken on a ‘no objection’ basis. Members support the Consultative Group’s mandate and manner of operation, but suggest that the definition of roles, responsibilities, delegated authorities, and accountabilities for certain functions need to be clarified. Members are generally positive about the addition of recipient countries to the Consultative Group, although this adds complexity to CA governance and raises new issues that need to be addressed, such as the defining the role and number of recipient country members and creating mechanisms to ensure transparency (conflict of interest guidelines). There is strong, broadly based support for the current decision-making process and for the manner in which the Secretariat interprets the Group’s discussion and comments.

Steering Committee – Alliance Members value and support the work of the Steering Committee, but there is a need to clarify the Committee’s mandate particularly with regard to interpreting and/or shaping policy.
**Policy Advisory Board**, currently composed of eight members, meets with the CG once a year but its principal client tends to be the Secretariat. The original vision behind the PAB has not been updated to reflect changes in the Alliance and in the Board itself, and respondents are not clear about its added value.

**The Secretariat**, housed at the World Bank in Washington, manages CA daily operations. The Secretariat has remained a small core group, with significant esprit de corps, which has enabled it to facilitate the work of the Alliance in an efficient fashion. The Secretariat is highly regarded and enjoys the trust of Alliance Members. The current allocation of corporate authorities within the CA has led to under-resourcing of key activities; capacity constraints within the Secretariat prevent it from taking greater responsibility for crucial tasks such as knowledge dissemination. In addition, the Alliance has no formal instrument or established process to ensure the accountability relationship between the Secretariat, the Consultative Group, and the Steering Committee.

**World Bank and UN-HABITAT** – The remarkable partnership between the World Bank and UN-HABITAT in creating and sustaining the Cities Alliance is to be commended, although at times tensions between the two organizations do affect the efforts to strengthen cohesion and coherence of effort within the Alliance.

**Managing CA’s Relationship with the World Bank** – CA members are generally satisfied with the World Bank’s management of the Cities Alliance Trust Fund; some consideration is being given to deepening the involvement of important regional development banks. The CA is creating a “brand”, but is also seen by some stakeholders to lack independence from the World Bank.

**Grant Approval Process** – Most CA Members feel that the grant approval process is transparent and generally efficient. Some clients, however, are frustrated by the length of the processing time. The CA proposal review process is generally effective in identifying quality initiatives for approval by the CG, although the data does illustrate some potential weaknesses in the process (ensuring quality at entry, partnership and implementation arrangements).

**Relevance** – Overall, the feedback (collected through interviews, field visits, survey responses and focus group interviews) indicates that the Cities Alliance is relevant to stakeholders. The vast majority of Consultative Group members consider CA a very relevant forum. Municipal authorities and community beneficiaries consider the CA very relevant, particularly in terms of providing opportunities for capacity building in a range of areas and giving voice to their concerns. By providing a forum for learning that brings together a broad spectrum of individuals with similar interests, CA has developed a unique niche in building social capital with respect to the urban poor in developing countries.

**Conclusions**

Overall, the evaluation found that the CA has continued to be a successful partnership initiative and valuable player in the international assistance scene. It is an extraordinarily relevant organization, both in terms of the substance that it addresses and its collaborative, inter-sectoral approach to urban development. It is valued by its Members as a harmonizing and knowledge-sharing forum that enhances the credibility of their own organizations.

Members and other stakeholders generally support the Alliance’s current directions, and confirmed the value and relevance of the CA program focus on two areas: *Cities without Slums* and *City Development Strategies*. (There is still much work to be done in these areas as is made evident in the recent report on progress in achieving the MDGs (*Millennium Development Goals Report*, 2006), which notes that many countries will not meet the target of improving the lives of slum dwellers.)
These two pillars provide a solid programming mix for embracing key transversal urban issues in developing countries and achieving CA objectives. This evaluation also found that the CA’s work on municipal finance, which has been gaining momentum since 2004, is a necessary complement to the programming mix. Although this is not yet fully integrated with the rest of the CA work program in a way that helps cities to fill gaps in the financing of CDS and SU initiatives, the Alliance has taken steps in the right direction. The future role of CA and the emphasis that this area should have in its work program in the future should be guided by the outcomes of the work of the Municipal Finance Task Force (MFTF).

The Cities Alliance has demonstrated effects on the ground, especially considering the generally modest level of resources that it can allocate to cities. Through technical assistance grants for city upgrading or strategic planning initiatives, it has also contributed to taking project experience to a nationwide or city-wide scale of action, reflected in the replication and adaptation of its initiatives and/or new or revised policy frameworks. In the cities that CA has supported, it has had some success in improving the coherence of efforts in development cooperation for urban development. The CA has been able to leverage follow-up investments in the projects that it has supported, although it will need to continuously strengthen this aspect and also help cities to pay increasing attention to domestic sources of capital where possible. The CA has contributed to the development of capacities of project stakeholders, both individuals and organizations, in areas such as strategic city planning, participatory processes, and integrated approaches to slum upgrading.

The Cities Alliance has been less successful in two areas – advocacy and knowledge sharing – that are equally important for achieving its objectives. The CA needs to strengthen its role in generating policy coherence and increasing synergies among the different actors involved, and in influencing national or global development agendas. In a related vein, the CA has not paid sufficient attention to the process of knowledge exchange and transfer among its stakeholders (Members, clients, and other actors in urban development). The Alliance lacks an overall strategy for ensuring that its influencing and knowledge-sharing role helps it to achieve its objectives. Knowledge sharing and advocacy have been constrained by the limited time and resources that Members and the Secretariat can allocate to these areas.

During the past three years, the CA has taken great strides in improving its monitoring and evaluation to support the “Learning Alliance”, but there are some gaps in the current approach that limit the availability and use of performance information for learning, program design, and corporate accountability.

In recent years the Cities Alliance has grown in strength and numbers. The current internal context of CA, including the entry of recipient countries as Members, provides an opportunity to revisit several aspects of its governance and management structures and practices. In particular, there is a need to modify the roles and responsibilities of the different entities that form the CA structure. The CA “brand” has emerged over the past six years, although it still needs to be strengthened, particularly if the CA is to take on an even greater role in scaling up the issue of the urban poor in the global development agenda. The evaluation found that, on the whole, the CA has been efficient in implementing its work program and keeping low administrative costs, while at the same time ensuring that the collaborative spirit of the coalition also permeates its Secretariat.
Recommendations

The following recommendations identify areas in which the Alliance can tighten its focus and improve performance. The evaluation confirmed that CA’s program focus on CDS and SU initiatives is appropriate and should be maintained. CA should continue to integrate the two areas to the extent possible (i.e., city development strategies should include an approach to upgrading slums and preventing slum development) and also ensure that the transversal issues facing developing country cities, such as the environment, or issues of particular importance for certain countries and regions, such as metropolitan governance, are addressed within this programming framework.

1. The Cities Alliance should now “Scale up the Issue” of upgrading slums and preventing slum formation in the broader development agenda.

Cities and their slums continue to grow and outpace the efforts that Cities Alliance and its Members have made to improve the living conditions for the urban poor. The Cities Without Slums Action Plan recognizes this challenge and sets ambitious targets.

Although CA programming areas and project-level investments are generally on the right track, the CA should now develop a more robust effort to “scale up the issue” – that is, the urban side of the world community’s poverty reduction mission. This recommendation is related to how the Alliance is approaching its role of influencing and challenging donors, governments, the private sector, and slum communities to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

In an era in which there are no net increases in ODA, there is competition for existing financing to address the various priorities embodied in the MDGs. In order to effect the kinds of change that CA would like at high levels in institutional settings (policy decisions and resource allocations that favor poverty-focused urban development), the Cities Alliance will need to develop a higher level approach to advocacy. In doing so, the CA should consider the following types of initiatives:

- The Secretariat should develop a clear and comprehensive strategy for influencing and advocacy, which would be discussed and approved by the CG. The strategy should indicate who the CA is intending to influence, how they are going to do it, who is going to do it, and the resources required. The CG will also need to allocate resources for such a strategy. The strategy should consider some elements that perhaps the CA has not tried before, such as the use of different media and new tools/forums for enhancing visibility of the issue.

- If the CA wants cities to be seen as central to the development agenda, it will need to identify and recruit individuals who have widespread international credibility to champion its advocacy efforts. (Other MDGs have visible champions – e.g., Bill Gates on issues of health and HIV/AIDS, and a High Level Group of Education Ministers on the issues of Education for All.) As the CA moves to a higher level, the CG and Secretariat will need to pay increasing attention to enhancing the CA brand through the use of visible champions and spokespersons such as Jeffrey Sachs.

- The CG should define the roles and specific responsibilities of individual Members, the Secretariat, and the PAB with respect to advocacy, based on a proposal prepared by the Secretariat. It should also recognize the limited capacity of Member organizations to engage in advocacy activities.
• The Secretariat should work with the Consultative Group to develop an expanded program of visits to Members involving workshops that cut across jurisdictional and organizational boundaries to promote coherent policies that address urban poverty.2

• In order to enhance advocacy for cities at the national/regional level, the CA should continue to strengthen its partnerships with associations and networks of local authorities. These networks play crucial roles in raising state or national attention to policy issues for cities. The Secretariat should outline the ways in which it will build on the partnership with UCLG and expand linkages with other regional and, where possible, national associations.

Recommendation #1 – Summary of Actions

• Develop influencing/advocacy strategy for the CA
• Define roles and responsibilities for advocacy of Secretariat, Members, and PAB
• Develop an expanded program of visits to Members
• Map out plan of action for strengthening partnerships with associations/networks of local authorities in countries and regionally

2. The CA should continue its work on municipal finance issues and increase the integration of sustainable financing in CDS and SU initiatives.

This recommendation refers to the issue of sustainable financing in cities that have developed strategies or upgraded frameworks/initiatives with the support of the Cities Alliance. The CA has helped to leverage follow-up investments, primarily from IFI and bilateral sources, but more needs to be done to ensure adequate investments for tackling complex social issues. One of the primary ways in which the results of SU and CDS could be improved is by improving the linkage to follow-up investment from IFI, bilateral, and domestic capital sources.

It is in the area of domestic capital resources and municipal finance that a few specific recommendations can be made.

• Much of the CA work in this area is relatively new, dating from 2004. The CA will need to articulate the role and the relative weight that it will give to finance issues in its future work program, given what other actors are doing in this area. Once the Municipal Financing Task Force (MFTF) has concluded its first mandate, the Secretariat should consider future programming options and present these to the CG.

• In the meantime, the CA should continue to support the development of more effective institutional partnerships among the actors involved in strengthening municipal financing. This is a natural role for CA to play as part of increasing the coherence of development cooperation. Thus, it should continue to support the capacity of the MFTF and UCLG Urban Finance Commission to interact with other key multilateral interveners.

2 Workshops provide an ideal opportunity for the Secretariat to address a cross-section of decision makers and serve as a catalyst for horizontal policy discussions that focus on city development strategies and slum upgrading.
• Additionally, through the MFTF, CA may wish to work more closely with other international partners to fully develop a “menu of financing” solutions as recommended in the April 2004 paper entitled “Linking City Financing Needs with Domestic Capital: A Draft Agenda for the Cities Alliance” and link this matrix to the development of CDS and SU strategies.

• In its approach to new CDS and SU, the Alliance should integrate mechanisms that will ensure that cities’ perspectives on capital financing are brought to the attention of higher levels of government in the nation in question. (These mechanisms should include existing national associations and networks of local government authorities.)

• Future city development and slum upgrading strategies should be required to address the issue of sustainable funding. The issue needs to be raised from the assessment stage of the CDS and even in the application to CA. This would likely require further guidance from CA Secretariat.

3. The Secretariat should strengthen and enhance the CA monitoring and evaluation system.

CA has elements of a monitoring and evaluation system at the project level and has made great improvements in the past few years. However, this is such a crucial area for the Alliance and its Members that more thought needs to be given to the approach to monitoring and evaluation. This recommendation focuses on three areas of monitoring and evaluation that could be strengthened in order to improve CA learning and accountability.

Project Level M&E

• In CA projects, the challenge is to improve project design in a way that facilitates monitoring and assessing results. In large part, this has to do with specifying the outputs, outcomes, and impacts in each project proposal, and developing indicators that will be used for tracking progress. Although some of these elements are already part of the CA proposal application, the outcomes and their indicators are not. The OECD-DAC definitions of these terms should be provided in the application.

• Progress and completion reports should clearly address progress towards Outputs, Outcome, and Impact areas.

• The field evaluations led by mixed teams (PAB, Secretariat, external consultant) should continue, and, if possible, increase in number each year.

Recommendation #2 – Summary of Actions

• Review suite of CA programming efforts in Municipal Finance (Secretariat / MFTF)
• Articulate role and priority for municipal finance in future work program
• Support development of effective institutional partnerships (including MFTF)
• Develop menu of financing solutions presented in 2004 paper (Secretariat)
• Integrate mechanisms into CDS and SU initiatives to ensure cities’ perspectives are heard at higher levels of government
• Set target and develop plan to ensure future CDS and SU activities contemplate funding issues
Thematic Level Evaluation
The CA portfolio is sufficiently developed to begin identifying clusters of activities that merit a programmatic review across country contexts (e.g., a review of a group of SU initiatives that focus on water supply and sanitation services). These evaluations, which may be more costly than project evaluations, should be done periodically. Over time, these evaluations should move towards impact assessment.

Corporate Performance Measurement
Although the previous evaluation of the CA recommended that the Alliance develop a monitoring framework against which its progress could be measured, today, the question remains of how to assess the Alliance’s performance. CA does not have a strategic plan that articulates what it hopes to achieve over the next three years, or how it plans to allocate work and resources in slum upgrading, city development strategies, financing issues, knowledge sharing, and advocacy.

Thus, one of our key recommendations to strengthen accountability is that the CA should develop a medium-term strategic plan and corporate results framework. The plan should reconfirm CA’s key objectives and its strategies for meeting those objectives, identify the full range of Alliance activities (including advocacy, planning, dissemination, and so forth), and indicate projected resource requirements. The plan should also include a results framework that illustrates how CA objectives will translate into results, the performance measures or indicators that will provide signals regarding the performance of the organization, the ways in which performance data will be collected, and the responsibilities for data collection. This performance information will be particularly important as the CA increases its funding of global, multi-regional projects that are not anchored in a particular country context.

Recommendation #3 – Summary of Actions
- Integrate outcomes into the proposal format and provide OECD-DAC definitions of Results-Based Management terms in the guidelines/application.
- Review format of progress reports/completion reports to ensure comments are provided at least on outputs and outcomes (progress towards outcomes)
- Identify “clusters” of activities that could be subject to a cross-country assessment
- Develop medium-term strategic plan and results framework for the CA

4. The CA should review and revise the roles, responsibilities, and delegated authorities of the CG, PAB, Steering Committee, and Secretariat, and should update its policies and procedures.

In order to adjust to the current context and improve its overall performance, the CA needs to clarify and strengthen roles, responsibilities, and delegated authorities. The Secretariat should review responsibility for corporate activities (such as strategic planning, agenda setting and advocacy, and knowledge transfer) and present a proposal to the Consultative Group.

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3 The 2004 World Bank evaluation of Global Programs and Partnerships noted that the majority of the Bank’s global programs, including the Cities Alliance, could benefit from the discipline imposed by performance measures. These could be deployed experimentally at the start, consisting of a mix of qualitative and quantitative targets.
This exercise should consider actions such as:

- Define the responsibilities of Members, in particular their obligations for advancing the Alliance’s learning agenda. Identify useful practices developed by Members for knowledge dissemination and policy coherence.

- Adjust the mandate of the Steering Committee to include the authority to make policy recommendations to the Consultative Group. Reconfirm the CG as the sole decision-making body of the CA, except where it expressly delegates authority. Thus, the CG should have last word on policy interpretation.

- Expand the mandate of the PAB to increase its role in the influencing/advocacy agenda of the Alliance (in addition to the technical/scientific advice). The CA should seek ways to make better use of the Board’s convening capacity and its ability to access and activate various communities of stakeholders. This may require expanding the Board to include a technical group and a policy/advocacy-oriented group. The Secretariat, in concert with the PAB, should develop options for a revised/expanded mandate of the PAB.

- Define the Secretariat’s role, functions, and authority for corporate activities such as corporate strategic planning, knowledge sharing/transfer/dissemination, and influencing/advocacy.

- Develop conflict of interest guidelines. For the Cities Alliance to retain legitimacy, it must manage perceptions, including the perception that Members might influence strategic decisions in order to benefit from subsequent disbursements. Having conflict of interest guidelines would oblige Members to declare the benefits that would accrue to them from various decisions, thus contributing to a more transparent discussion of corporate priorities.

- Adopt a standardized approach to recording the results of CG deliberations. Minutes of CG meetings should link recommendations to decisions taken, whether positive or negative. This would facilitate the development of a corporate memory and would make it easier to build on past initiatives.

**Recommendation #4 – Summary of Actions**

- Define responsibilities of Members in learning and knowledge sharing.
- Identify some of the useful practices developed by Members for knowledge sharing and policy coherence.
- Adjust mandate of the Steering Committee
- Expand mandate of the PAB to emphasize role in advocacy
- Define Secretariat’s role, functions and authorities for corporate activities
- Develop conflict of interest guidelines
- Adopt standardized approach to recording results of CG deliberations
5. The CA should strengthen its role in sharing knowledge that is of use for Members and for cities.

There are four key elements of change to keep in mind for improving the CA role in knowledge sharing. First, the CA will need to be realistic about the capacity of its Members to carry out concrete activities to support knowledge sharing. Second, it will need to pay more attention to the processes that are used for sharing knowledge, which implies a need to privilege face-to-face activities as a primary means of dissemination. Third, the Alliance’s work program should identify knowledge-sharing activities and allocate resources for them. Fourth, in order for the CA to expand its knowledge sharing role, the Secretariat will need to play a larger role in facilitating knowledge distillation and knowledge transfer.

The following aspects of knowledge sharing should be considered:

- Link knowledge-sharing activities to CA’s objectives for influencing and advocacy, and to target audiences.
- Identify a few “clusters of ideas” – areas in which the CA is building a knowledge base and is willing to distill and share knowledge more widely; these clusters could be discipline-based (e.g. housing) or process-based (e.g. participation). The Secretariat could engage with Members in a series of activities and products in the cluster areas, including workshops, conferences, cases, videos, policy briefs, with at least some products available in multiple languages.
- The Secretariat, with Members, should engage national and regional associations of local authorities in the knowledge distillation and sharing effort.
- The Secretariat should prioritize among the multiple ends that the Annual Report currently serves (strategic planning, reviewing, disseminating information, promoting Alliance activities) and make the report shorter and more reader friendly.
- The CA should strengthen its existing mechanisms and create new ones (such as peer networks) for retaining and transferring the tacit knowledge that accrues to city officials, local authorities, and other stakeholders who participate in Alliance projects.
- The CA should experiment with new meeting formats for the Public Policy Forum, particularly with formats that allow small groups to convene and exchange information in workshops. The Forum would thus evolve into a “conference of conferences” in which a diverse range of stakeholders participate. Responsibility for initiating these workshops could be devolved to members of the Consultative Group, to members of the PAB, and to officials and academics from the country or city that is hosting the Forum. A revitalized Public Policy Forum could include the peer networks noted above, providing them with opportunities to meet, exchange views, and share experiences and solutions with Members.

**Recommendation #5 – Summary of Actions**

- Identify the influencing/advocacy objectives that link to knowledge sharing activities
- Identify priority “clusters” of ideas where the Secretariat should distill and disseminate knowledge
- Review and prioritize purposes of Annual Report
- Strengthen peer networks among cities participating in CA initiatives
- Experiment with new formats for Public Policy Forum
6. The CA should strengthen the CA Secretariat so that it can play a greater role in advocacy and knowledge sharing.

If the CA is to take a greater role in knowledge sharing and advocacy, it will require an increased level of effort from the Secretariat. The Secretariat’s capacity could be strengthened through a small increase in number of staff, part of which could be achieved through secondment. The CA does not require a large Secretariat operation, but it may need to slightly increase its staffing.

Once the medium-term strategic plan in Recommendation 4 is put forward (which should include the scaled-up approach to advocacy and knowledge sharing), staffing requirements should be assessed. If the Secretariat capacity is strengthened, the CG will also need to establish more robust and comprehensive accountability mechanisms between the Secretariat and the Consultative Group and Steering Committee. These would be based on the medium-term strategic plan and annual workplans for the Secretariat.

**Recommendation #6 – Summary of Actions**

- Assess staffing requirements in Secretariat for playing greater role in advocacy and knowledge sharing
- Secretariat to present annual workplans to CG and Steering Committee that are linked to the medium-term strategy