

“Capacity Building and Strengthening Institutional Arrangement”

Workshop: “Sustainable Development”

# Best Practices of Sustainable Development

Mr. Andrea Giuliani, Mr. Gaetano Battistella

APAT

Agency for Environmental Protection and Technical Services

## Best Practices of Sustainable Development

### Sustainable Development

*“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*

(G.H. Bruntland: “Our Common Future”, 1987)



## Sustainable Development – Main steps

- The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Earth Summit - Rio de Janeiro) adopts Agenda 21 and the Rio Principles (1992);
- The UN General Assembly creates the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to ensure effective follow-up to UNCED (1992);

## Sustainable Development – Main steps

- The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa) reinforces the development and implementation of Local Agenda 21, asking Agenda 21 subscribers to move “from Agenda to Action”(2002);
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD – Rio +10) evaluates obstacles to progress and results achieved since the 1992 Earth Summit. WSSD adopts the JPOI (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation), which provides for a more focused approach, with concrete steps and quantifiable and time-bound targets and goals.

## Sustainable Development

Sustainable development requires looking at the totality of social, economic and environmental concerns. It also needs the involvement not only of Governments but also of civil society and the private sector. For these reasons, global conferences, including the 1992 Earth Summit and WSSD, have repeatedly called on Governments to develop and implement integrative and participatory National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS).



## Best Practices

States need to assess and evaluate their policies to ensure that their impacts are as intended. This requires the use of indicators that reflect Countries' concerns and priorities as called for in Agenda 21.

In 1992, at the time of the Earth Summit, indicators for sustainable development (ISD) had not yet been developed or tested.

Chapter 40 of Agenda 21 calls on Countries and the international community to develop indicators of sustainable development.

Such indicators are needed to increase focus on sustainable development and to assist decision-makers at all levels to adopt sound national sustainable development policies.

## Best Practices

Best Practices have to answer sustainable development indicators and the following criteria:

- Contribution to local sustainable development, importance of home based factors for development and welfare
- Integrated approach (ecological, social, economic and cultural goals related with global and international aspects)
- High benefit and transfer potential for new models of wealth
- Participation/networking/social innovations
- Support of regional and local embedded work and labour, structural change to material light society, green technologies, green qualifications
- Reduction of unemployment and social exclusion

## Best Practices

Projects are selected on the basis of admissibility and qualification criteria.

### **General characteristics for a Good Practice are:**

1. To be demonstrable;
2. involvement (is the result of a shared and participated process with local stakeholders);
3. innovation (is the result of new government methodologies and strategies);
4. To be transferable (can be repeated everywhere).

## Best Practices

To define “BP” as activity/project/initiatives some best practice criteria have been defined, as:

**Best Practices are innovative.**

A Best Practice has developed new and creative solutions to common problems of poverty and social exclusion.

**Best Practices make a difference.**

A Best Practice demonstrates a positive and tangible impact on the living conditions, quality of life or environment of the individuals, groups or communities concerned.

## Best Practices

### **Best Practices have a sustainable effect.**

A Best Practice contributes to sustained eradication of poverty or social exclusion, especially by the involvement of participants.

### **Best Practices have the potential for replication.**

A Best Practice serves as a model for generating policies and initiatives elsewhere.

## Best Practices

The original call for “Best Practices” was launched during preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) as a means of identifying what works in improving living conditions on a sustainable basis.

Best Practices are promoted and used by the United Nations and the international community as a means of:

- Improving public policy based on what works;
- Raising awareness of decision-makers at all levels and of the public of potential solutions to common social, economic and environmental problems;
- Sharing and transferring knowledge, expertise and experience through networking.

## Best Practices

Best Practices are outstanding contributions to improving the living environment.

They are defined by the United Nations and the international community at large as successful initiatives which:

1. Have a demonstrable and tangible impact on improving people's quality of life;
2. Are the result of effective partnerships between the public, private and civic sectors of society;
3. Are socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable.

## Best Practices – cases studies

The following tools of sustainable development can be considered as a good practice:

- EMAS (Eco-Management Audit Scheme) is a management tool for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance;
- ECOLABEL (European Ecological label) is a market-based instrument to stimulate both the supply and demand of products with a reduced environmental impact;
- EPD (Environmental Product Declaration) An environmental product declaration, EPD, is a labelling system based on the ISO 14040 series aimed at encouraging the demand of those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, through communication of verifiable and accurate information, on environmental aspects of products and services;

## Best Practices

- LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) is a methodology that can be adopted by industries to analyse the entire cycle of a product and assess the environmental impact;
- GPP (Green Public Procurement) is a strategy that can be adopted by Governments basing all purchasing decisions and allocation of contracts on environmental criteria along with other criteria such as price and quality, in order to orient their procurement of products and services taking into consideration environmental aspects;
- Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment;

## Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development

Agenda 21 is a Global Action Plan and places most of the responsibility for leading the change towards sustainable development on national governments.

Agenda 21 recognizes that broad public participation in decision-making is one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development, and identifies specific roles and responsibilities for nine major groups of civil society: women, children and youth, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities, and farmers.

## Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development

Agenda 21 is a program that provides a framework for implementing sustainable development at the local level. A21 aims to build upon existing local government strategies and resources (such as: urban plans, vegetation management plans, and transport strategies) to better integrate environmental, economic and social goals.

Agenda 21 identifies local Authorities (Chapter 28) as the sphere of governance closest to the people, and calls upon all local authorities to consult with their communities and develop and implement a local plan for sustainability - a *'Local Agenda 21'*.

## Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development

### Chapter 28:

*“Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and subnational environmental policies. As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development...”*

## Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development

### Chapter 28:

*“Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt “a local Agenda 21”. Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues...”*

## Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development

The involvement of stakeholders (institutions, organisations, or groups, local authorities, companies, NGOs, schools, Trade unions, local groups and citizens having some interest in a particular sector or system) in decision making processes may offer the opportunity to develop new methodologies of interdisciplinary involvement and integrated approaches to issues, to find appropriate and shared solutions, which in practice, foster better dialogue, awareness, co-learning, co-responsibility, active commitment in decision-making processes to reach shared targets, several tools in the transition to sustainability.

## Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development

Local Agenda 21, as a process and a governance tool for sustainability, can provide different opportunities for defining participated Action Plans for local sustainable development, and a tool introducing an innovative modernization in local government processes.

The main characters of the Local Agenda 21 processes are: the long term vision, the sustainable management and planning of environmental resources, the prevention of the environmental management, the involvement and participation of local community, the transparency, the sharing responsibility, the social justice and the cultural growing of the community.

That's why a LA21 process can be fully considered as a good practice

## Local Agenda 21 process – basic steps

The basic steps in a Local Agenda 21 process are:

Formal commitment of the organization (municipality) that starts a LA21 process to follow up sustainable policies;

- the systematic identification, by means of extensive public consultation, of environmental/economic and social criticities, their causes and their publication in a Environmental State Report;

- Determine the scope of the planning and define goals and objectives;

- Identification of priorities and issues for stakeholder selection and discussion;

## Local Agenda 21 process – basic steps

- Identify appropriate partners to participate in the Stakeholder Group and its Working Groups on the different issues;
- the stakeholder group draws up the Action Plan;
- programming of the implementation of the plan including the preparation of a timetable and statement of allocation of responsibilities among the partners;
- the organization adopts the Action Plan and put it into effect;
- stakeholders and organization fix evaluation and reporting procedures on the implementation of the Action Plan using sustainable development indicators.

## Best Practices

Local decision-makers are supported by other instruments that help them to realize sustainable development initiatives:

### Best Practices Data Bases

Many of the environmental problems present in some regions or cities can be solved or addressed by existing telematics techniques and practices available in other parts of the Planet. Even though telematics applications are not a panacea for the environment, they are an invaluable and cost effective resource and tool for monitoring and management which should not be lost but profitably transferred to other sites.

## Best Practices data bases

Data bases aim to select and to disseminate information on good practices, helping Local Administrations, NGO, citizens, technicians and other stakeholders to improve their sustainability policies;

The Best Practices databases are designed to help local Authorities to work towards sustainability by disseminating good practices and policies, facilitating the exchange of experiences, and raising awareness about how cities and towns can be managed in more sustainable ways.

## Best Practices data bases

The data base focus is to give priority to local level action enabling actions taken by other levels of government, and namely:

- integrated approaches linking environmental, economic, social and institutional issues;
- multi-purposes measures solving more than one problem at a time;
- sectoral actions located within a strategic framework.

The goal of a database is to present and promote creative, successful and sustainable solutions to social problems arising from poverty and social exclusion in order to build a bridge between empirical solutions, research and policy.

## APAT actions to promote Best Practices

- 2000: Local Agenda 21 Guidelines – The first technical support for Italian Local Authorities starting with a Local Agenda 21 process;
- 2004: “A21L 2003 dall’Agenda all’Azione: linee di indirizzo ed esperienze” (LA21 2003: from Agenda to Action: guidelines and experiences) published after Johannesburg WSSD;
- Supporting public and private organizations for the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS);
- Supporting private organizations for the Ecolabel environmental quality mark;

## APAT actions to promote Best Practices

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Technical Support for land planning elaboration and its environmental evaluations;
- Scientific contribute for Green National Accounting promotion – A system in which economic measurements take into account the effects of production and consumption on the environment;
- Sustainability indicators;
- GELSO: Good Practices data base on local management and environmental sustainability.

## APAT actions to promote SD Best Practices - GELSO



<http://www.gelso.apat.it>

<http://www.apat.it>

# APAT actions to promote SD Best Practices - GELSO



Homepage

## APAT actions to promote SD Best Practices - GELSO

Many environmental management authorities cooperate with GELSO helping to collect good practices: local administrations, protected areas, regional environmental protection agencies, as well NGOs and Italian LA 21 Local Authorities Association.

Projects are selected on the basis of admissibility and qualification criteria (presented on the site). Most of projects won national awards (Sustainable Cities Award, Sustainable Cities for Children Award etc) or funded by national or European level programs (Ministry for Environment and Territory call for LA21, LIFE etc).

## APAT actions to promote SD Best Practices - GELSO

Up to now, 600 projects have been collected. Good practices are divided in 9 sectors: Local Agenda 21, Agriculture, Energy, Industry, Land and Landscape, Tourism, Town Planning, Transport, Waste Management.

A special data base on project in protected natural areas have been organized.

## APAT actions to promote SD Best Practices - GELSO

The Data Base is evolving in a more complex PORTAL on local sustainability practices containing information on:

- Institutional and Legislative references
- Environmental NGOs
- Other data bases at national and international level
- Etc.

## Web & Best Practices

- <http://www.gelso.apat.it>
- <http://www.iclei.org/>
- <http://www.bestpractices.org/>
- <http://www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm>
- <http://www.eltis.org/>
- <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/international/transportation.htm>
- <http://www.cf.ac.uk/archi/programmes/cost8/index.html>
- <http://www.euro.who.int/>
- <http://www.smile-europe.org/>
- <http://www.ecoplan.org/kyoto/challenge/bp-databases.htm>