# iiSBE Workshop on the performance assessment of neighbourhoods

The purpose of the workshop was to present some recent initiatives in assessment of neighbourhood performance and to share ideas on future directions. The workshop took place at the **UN Environment** Economy Division in Paris on 17 and 18 January 2018. The following persons participated.  The notes below include substantial input from Richard Lorch as an appendix.

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|---|---|---|---|
| LB: | Luis Bragança, iiSBE | SS: | Serge Salat, France |
| AM: | Andrea Moro, iiSBE Italia | FL: | Françoise Labbé, France |
| NL: | Nils Larsson, iiSBE | CE: | Cristina Engel, Brazil |
| FB: | François Baillon, Switzerland | IC: | Ivan Cerda, Chile |
| WB | Wim Bakens, CIB | JC: | Judith Cazas, CESBA (France) |
| RL: | Richard Lorch, Editor of BRI | XM: | Xavier Marti, CESBA (Catalonia) |
| SG: | Sharon Gil, UNEP/Paris | EV: | Etienne Vienot, CESBA (France) |
| MO: | Martina Otto, UNEP/Paris | GT: | Gregoire Thonier, CESBA (France) |
| TL: | Thomas Lûtzkendorf, Weimar | VM: | Victor Martinez, CESBA (Sant Cugat, Catalonia) |
| RB: | Ruben Paul Borg, Malta | JV: | Juan Villalobos CESBA (Catalonia) |

## Presentations and discussions included the following:

1.  A presentation was made by Nils Larsson on *Neighbourhood Performance* that outlined some basic context and research issues.

2.  AM provided an Introduction to and review of the CESBA process.

-  He described the EU LEVEL(s) system of 9 key performance indicators that can provide consistent performance indicators at various levels of analysis, including regional, urban and neighbourhood. WB asked if this would be a mandatory system, but the answer is no.

-  AM emphasized that the target users for CESBA are local government officials, who are faced with interactive issues and who are in the best position to deal with them.

-  A general discussion emphasized the difficulty of differentiating between building clusters, neighbourhoods and districts. SS replied that definition and boundaries remain important and cited London as an example, where boroughs have excellent collections of useful data.

-  RL supported the scope and ambition of the work. He said that we need more data on mixed-use buildings which are increasingly prevalent. NL replied that SBTool recognizes this problem and differentiates up to 3 different uses in buildings. RL also asked if the CESBA system will track changes over time, since neighbourhoods are dynamic systems.  AM replied that the intent is to apply the system at intervals. Also, many cities have retrospective data, but they are not often well organized for our purposes.

-  AM stated that the LEVEL(s) system is designed for buildings, and DGNB is inserting the system into their DGNB system. CESBA KPIs are designed for neighbourhoods, but efforts are being made to ensure compatibility with LEVEL(s).

-  MO and SG pointed out that the work carried out by UN-Habitat called Economic Foundations for Sustainable Urbanization provides useful support for the CESBA and international work. It focuses on 3 major axes: Design, Governance and Finance.  A third book *The Weight of Cities*, will come out soon, dealing with the reduction of resource consumption from higher densities.

3.  NL then presented specific features of the current CESBA Tool.

-  The system uses the general methodology developed for SBTool, which is an Excel-based framework that contains generic benchmarks, weights and other information plus a linked file that allows users to identify characteristics of the specific local area.

- The system offers a choice of large, mid-size and small number of active criteria, with the total weights always totalling 100%, and adjustments possible by local users.

- Weighting is done at the lowest (criterion) level, according to an algorithm.

- Some of those present expressed fears that local government users could "game the system" in order to improve their standing, and that weights and benchmarks should not be changeable, except for local adjustments. A general discussion took place, with the following points raised:

4. AM tabled plans for an international process to follow up on the CESBA work and the SBE Urban Challenge at WSBE2020.

- The idea is that, as soon as the CESBA project is delivered, the results will be in the public domain, and iiSBE can launch an international version for areas outside of Europe. This work may begin as soon as the end of February. AM suggested that we should establish a network of national Urban Framework Committees to work on adapting the generic system to their regions. These groups would seek funding from their national research agencies and will meet together as the International Urban Framework Committee (IUFC), to work towards a common model.

- AM proposed that the first meeting of the IUFC should take place in Barcelona, in conjunction with a meeting of CESBA-MED and the URBENERE group. This was agreed to, with tentative dates suggested as 13-14 June for CESBA-MED, a joint session with URBENERE on the afternoon of 14 June, a public session on the afternoon of 15 June and the iiSBE IUFC meeting on12 or 15 June.

- NL suggested that we should establish an umbrella system, adding a file at a higher level than the current CESBA A file. Thus, we would have a 0 File that would contain all possible parameters, including those from ISO and other sources, with the CESBA A file derived from this. This may be difficult, but we should try.

- WB suggested that we should contact Chrisna Du Plessis to find out more about ISO work in this area.

- It was suggested that process is as important as the tool. This would include consideration of how neighbourhood performance assessment might be implemented in local governments. All agreed that this is an important issue and NL volunteered to prepare some flow chart ideas to illustrate this.

- MO and TL pointed out that there are already 3 international initiatives operating at the urban level, *Sustainable Cities, Resilient Cities and Smart Cities*. They also suggested that we should have a name for the project that is not too "heavy", such as Indicator Set. TL went on to say that German municipalities are not keen on processes that hand out gold medals, since this leads to problems if results are poor, and possibly a lack of positive action. He suggested that we should work on a bottom-up process, asking residents what are their problems. AM replied that this is being done in CESBA. TL also suggested that closed indicator systems cannot be adapted to various regional differences. AM and NL assured him that this approach is at the heart of the proposal.

- MO said that UNEP has distributed a short paper on the subject through the China Council.

- WB said that the system will have to adapt to different uses, e.g. for national data gathering or for local action. We also have to be clear about unspoken assumptions that are inevitable given the different backgrounds of the developers. He suggested that the CESBA system has many embedded assumptions that are based on European communities.

- RL suggested that the current CESBA tool is aimed at professionals, and both the CESBA system and a new international system should also facilitate use by lay people. AM pointed out that the EcoDistrict project has developed a user interface usable by lay people, and this can be adapted for the CESBA and iiSBE systems.

5. Holger Wallbaum provided an outline of plans for the WSBE2020 conference.

- The event is scheduled for June 2020 in Gothenburg, Sweden. They will use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) symbols as an organizing device, with SDG 11 as a centrepiece.

- Regarding the Urban Challenge, it was agreed that it should showcase and to discuss various approached to small urban assessment, including CESBA, the subsequent international iiSBE project, ISO work and possibly Districts 2030.

4. Luis Bragança presented a summary of the URBENERE project for Latin America.

- This is a project to develop small urban assessment methods for use in Spain, Portugal and Latin America.

- The project is managed by LB and CE and is in a start-up phase, but he visualizes a continuing exchange of ideas with the iiSBE IUFC project.

5. Serge Salat presented *Creating and Capturing Value with Sustainable Planning & Design:*

- SS outlined the study he carried out in China of 4 cities and about 50+ neighbourhoods. One important conclusion is that performance of buildings and neighbourhoods is strongly influenced by user behaviour, so this should be an important consideration. CESBA and iiSBE hope to integrate some of the ideas of SS into the urban assessment frameworks.

- SS also has China contacts who may want to come to the WSBE2020 conference.

NL, 27 January 2018

## APPENDIX:  DRAFT Notes by Richard Lorch
## Morning 18 January 2018

The stated objective is to create an implement an action plan

The stated legacy is to measure and (allow others to) follow through

**Thomas Lützkendorf** discussed the fact that there are many other existing urban assessment systems and said it is important that the CESBA system must be clear, differentiated and focus on the neighbourhood.  It should also be usable by (independent) stakeholder groups (not only city administrations) to provide leverage for change and also hold city administrations to account

**Martina Otto** said there are 3 other existing spheres of activities:

> Sustainable cities
> Smart cities
> Resilient cities

Therefore, there is a need for clarity on how the CESBA tool is situated within the plethora of assessment tools and systems - what its goals and indicators are focused on (and not focused on).

Developers like medals and accreditation; however cities don't need medals.

People (stakeholders) like and value participation in the process:

- co-production (process-based approach / motivation)
- flexibility in data
- need to develop the criteria* first, then the indicators

   \* this is based on background information and the core criteria

**Thomas Lützkendorf:** However, there is a risk of double counting due to the design of the indicators (leading to overlap).  Can this be an advantage? Also, raised an important question about the intention of this project.  Is this project developing a framework or a system?

**Andrea Moro** discussed the Eco-district ideas: guidelines for supporting modules for the renovation of neighbourhoods. There can be a "dashboard" for decision making processes that can connect to the multi-criteria.  URL: ecodistr-ict.eu

What topics?
- decision making:
  - ICT (tools for supporting the decision making process
  - Participation
  - KPIs for core global issues (plus other local issues)
  - Assessment methodologies

Fix the scope
- develop a toolkit to help cities in their planning activities
- it is NOT for commercial stakeholders
- it can be customised for local stakeholders to use
- it should elicit priorities from local stakeholders
- it can incorporate neighbourhood priorities and be a neighbourhood process

**Wim Bakens**

- The strength of this is that it is a framework and not a system.
- Its strength is that it is extensive and also concise.
- It is possible to create different interfaces for different users.
- It should NOT be an assessment system
- It must be complete, flexible and comparable.

**Thomas Lützkendorf**

There is a difference between an indicator set or an indicator system

The core set of KPIs is top-down, but there is also a need for a bottom-up approach: the starting points are problematic

There is a need for a communication process for engagement with citizens (at the front end of the process)

The framework can cover most (but not all) local problems

**François Ballon**

"Health" as a citizen concern can be connected to air and water quality.

The approach needs a participatory and co-creation process.

**Serge Salat**

Suggested the use of SDGs to help frame and connect to cities' and citizens' concerns.

**Nils Larsson**

But this needs to be an iterative process

**Judith Cazas**

Clarity is needed on whether we set goals and means.

Do we work with the stakeholders or city administration?

Community planning needs to be addressed - another tool needed at the neighbourhood level.

A series of tools is needed for use by municipalities

The framework needs to include the process of how to use it.

    Goal:

- A series of test case studies of the application of tools in 2020
- Other teams (iiSBE) show how they use the framework and tools
- To define a strategic concept for neighbourhood retrofit
- To convince city administrations to undertake sustainable actions at neighbourhood level
- A tool to help implement policy (which is criteria-based and not about means)

**Thomas Lützkendorf**

What is the relation between CESBA & iiSBE activities and teams?  Not clear at present

**Andrea Moro**

CESBA is an assocation, including iiSBE Italia and iiSBE Malta; it uses iiSBE's GBCtool

**Luis Braganca**

- CESBA tool will be available in February 2018
- Collaborative work with iiSBE and others to develop the framework, methods, process and criteria for assessing neighbourhood performance
- WSBE conference 2020 will host and present the Urban Challenge