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## Susta-Info launch



Bali

11 December 2007

## Report

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## Introduction

Susta-Info started February 1, 2006. The mission of the Susta-Info project was to make information on sustainable urban development easily available for local practitioners. Susta-Info is one of the projects that is based on the Memorandum of Understanding between UN-HABITAT and the European Commission concerning international co-operation on urban research. Within the Susta-Info database EU and UN-Habitat research results and a selection from the UN-Habitat Best Practices Database can be accessed in a standardized and user-friendly way.

In March 2007 a mid-term version of the Susta-Info Information System on local sustainability was presented publicly, in order to get feedback from the audience for the further development of this knowledge exchange tool. In combination with this first presentation of the system, an expert meeting on research priorities for local sustainability was organized. The event was organized on the day before the 5th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Seville, Spain. On the last day of this Conference, the Susta-Info partners also presented the first version of the Susta-Info website and database in a specific tools session.

In December 2007 the team presented the completed data base during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali Indonesia. The database had been filled further and the conclusions and suggestions from the audience in Seville were implemented. The objective of the Bali meeting was to officially launch the database and to challenge extra information to complete the exploitation program. The team was successful in reaching it objectives; Susta-Info was launched, we reached the appropriate audience and we found the information we were looking for to finalize the exploitation plan. In this report you will read the results of the meeting in Bali.

The Susta-Info team invites you to come to the Charlemagne Building in Brussels, on January 31, 2008; room S1/37 and celebrate the final launch of Susta-Info with us.

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## Susta -info launch program

### 8:30 - 9:30 Susta-Info Launch Breakfast

- Opening: Pascal van den Noort, Master Plan, Amsterdam The Netherlands
- The relevance of research for sustainable development of cities: Dr. Wolfram Schrimp, EC
- The added value of Susta-info tool for local governments; Ms. Ewa Ciuk, ICLEI, Toronto, Canada
- The Future of Susta-Info. Discussion on the future of Susta-info with Dr. Wolfram Schrimp, EC, Mr. Marco Keiner, UN-HABITAT Ms. Ewa Ciuk, ICLEI. Moderated by Paul van Beek, Goudappel Coffeng, The Hague, The Netherlands

### Coffee break

### 11:30 - 13:00 Added Value of Susta-Info

- Opening: Pascal van den Noort, Master Plan, Amsterdam The Netherlands
- The need for easily accessible knowledge. Video Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
- Susta-Info: validation, abstracts, Susta-Info search; Hands on demonstration of the Susta-Info system by Vanessa Foo, GHK Consulting, London, England



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## Susta-Info Launch Breakfast

Pascal van den Noort, Master Plan BV The Netherlands, gave an overview of the progress of the project in the past two years. He made clear that the 2 months ahead of the project would be used to fulfill demands of the project in terms of exploitation.

Dr. Wolfram Schrimp, DG Research, European Commission discussed:

- The EU policy context
- FP6 and ongoing research;
- FP7 with regards to development.

Details of his presentation can be accessed on the website where his Power Point Presentation is available.

Dr. Marco Keiner, Chief, Urban Environment, UN-HABITAT discussed the following:

- UN-HABITAT is hosting the Best Practices database and wants to make use of the info that is being collected in daily work undertaken with cities, especially with regards to Safer Cities, Sustainable Cities, Local Agenda 21 and the Slum Upgrading program.
- The UN-HABITAT mandate is to provide secure shelter and promote sustainable urban development, but money/staff is limited, despite the desire for it to be the information hub and to disseminate good practice.
- UN-HABITAT wants to talk a 'simple language' for the local level - to allow the city to adopt those kinds of activities that are disseminated

Paul van Beek, Senior Consultat, Goudappel Coffeng, Co-ordinator for Susta-Info highlighted that Susta-Info will be continued for the 2 years following the end of the project, but that at the moment, this is likely to be only a technical continuation (and not a content update). Questions he raised about the future of Susta related mainly to:

- Will Susta be international?

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- Will it be used by professionals?
- Should others be made more aware of it?

There is a desire amongst the consortium for Susta to gain more EC/UN-HABITAT info, for it to be linked to other initiatives, and for it to be used more interactively.

3 operational scenarios for the post-project exploitation of Susta-Info were proposed:

- Maintaining Susta-Info
- Expanding Susta-info
- Developing Susta-Info

Questions for the panel (Wolfram Schrimp; Marco Keiner and Ewa Ciuk) were:

- Will the system be useful for sustainable urban development?
- Should it be improved and linked to other systems?
- Which organisations should be involved?

Dr. Marco Keiner judges that the system will be useful, if the term 'sustainable development' appears. It already has the notion of expanding/developing. The ideal scenario would be a combination of expanding and developing Susta-Info as time goes along. There will be many new Good Practices. If no pro-active dissemination of the good practices is undertaken, they will not be known by the cities/practitioners. Susta is therefore a useful tool for achieving that dissemination.

Dr. Wolfram Schrimp agrees with Marco Keiner. Best Practices in 2007 will not be best practices 5 years from now. 80% of the time, local governments want information on best practices. Important for information to be targeted and important also to get contextual local practices; this is why using Susta is so important.

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Usefulness means that the system is continued, maintained and content is updated. There is a need for interaction between users and developers on how to develop the website.

A question from the audience was to what extent is Susta-Info useful for sustainable rural development?

The Description of Work for Susta does not make mention of this. However, it would be vital for Susta's expansion. Also, even if Susta-Info is not specifically intended for the rural areas, much of its content will be helpful for rural sustainable development.

Marco Keiner feels that Susta is aimed at *local* sustainability – for local authorities. He does not want to make distinctions between urban and rural. Anyone should be able to use the Best Practice examples – it is more about governance.

Question from audience, David Cadman, President, ICLEI:

Will the system be able to track users?

Dr. Wolfram Schrimp comments: All UN-HABITAT database information has contacts, and these contacts have been validated. We can track how many hits we have on the website, and eventually, there are possibilities for having a 'Comment' function on the website which asks what sectors the users come from.

Which organisations would potentially be involved?

Marco Keiner feels one should encourage other institutions dealing with the same topic. Recommending universities (which have lots of projects running at the same time) would be good; there is a need to assess what they have done so far and for this information to be 'brought in' too. UN-HABITAT is launching a new sustainable urban development network. It wants to be a platform in between existing networks – there are currently 56 city networks worldwide

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dealing with Sustainable Urban Development issues. UN-HABITAT wants access of the information to the partners they are working with. It also wants a portal for getting information – and MK can imagine being ‘a part of’ Susta-Info – it is a ‘solution’ they have already been looking for, and he is keen to develop what is already existing – it should therefore ‘have a future’.

Dr. Wolfram Schrimp says that local government associations need to be involved. It is important that an organisation like ICLEI, if not one similar to ICLEI, should be involved. The European Commission would be happy for a result where Susta-Info is used in other projects and for users. Financing should be agreed in the user community.

Comments (and ‘offer’) from Konrad von Ritter, Sustainable Development, World Bank

Konrad von Ritter was interested in whether Susta would have material that could be used for training, development etc i.e. something that could be used for capacity-building for local authorities. The issue is about having a ‘tool’ which could be used straight away, i.e. where the practice could be applied from the example.

He offers a possible collaboration between Susta-Info and the slum upgrading knowledge package which has just been developed by the World Bank – he would be ‘willing to work with the Susta team to bring the system together’.

He also comments that those who provide funding for such projects have good intentions of not duplicating efforts, which explains why larger partnerships work well – they help to avoid such duplication.

It is also good to have a ‘narrow’ scope on certain issues and to avoid falling into a trap of trying to cover all niches – it has a ‘dilution effect’. It is preferable to be selective in niche, as searchers/users of such systems do not want to be ‘swamped with knowledge’ that ultimately might not be useful. He considers Susta-Info’s 9 themes to be ‘huge’ in scope already.

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He is also currently involved in 'METROMATCH' (Latin American and North American cities) – this is in collaboration with cities on a set of sustainable indicators. These cities are willing to work and provide info, helping to develop the indicators themselves. Some cities also volunteer to put some human resources on the sites for a quick response to questions which arise, e.g. when the Head of Water Utilities has a problem with pricing, and he wants answers to questions directly capturing the knowledge base..

#### Conclusion

With these positive results the breakfast was closed. It was decided that the debate on the future exploitation of Susta-Info would be taken further and that a final meeting would take place in Brussels on January 31, 2008.

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## Added Value of Susta-Info

After the coffee break Susta-Info Vanessa Foo, GHK Consulting, London, England & Ewa Ciuk, ICLEI Toronto Canada went more into detail of validation, abstracts, Susta-Info search. The live demonstration was handicapped by the lack of adequate internet facilities.

The Power Point Presentation is available on the website, and some of the details follow here:

### Themes for Sustainable Cities

*Susta-Info addresses 9 themes:*

- Building sustainable cities
- Transport and mobility
- Urban governance
- Water management and sanitation
- Waste management
- Air Quality
- Energy
- Poverty reduction
- Culture

### The content of the Susta-Info knowledge base

The Susta-Info knowledge base contains abstracts, categorization and validation information and the full electronic copies of over 600 documents related to sustainable urban development. The main sources of content are:

- UN-Habitat best practices database;
- UN-Habitat publications related to sustainable urban development;
- EU projects funded through the EU 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, Key Action 4, Cities of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage;

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- EU projects related to sustainable urban development funded through the EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

### **The added value of Susta-Info**

Susta-info has a number of features that make it stand out from existing information services on sustainable urban development. At the same time it is co-operating closely with existing systems and is open to any new co-operations.

The main points of added value are:

- Susta-Info has a global coverage and contains documents from both UN-HABITAT and EU sources
- The content is focussed on sustainable urban development and the actors on local level form the main target group
- All content has gone through a selection, abstraction and categorization procedure to ensure that it is relevant for actors on local level
- The categorization and abstract sheets provide quick information for the individual user to assess whether a document is relevant to a specific local context
- The best-practice case studies within Susta-Info are validated on the different dimensions of sustainability. A graphic tool provides a quick insight on the level of sustainability.
- A specific thesaurus on sustainable urban development and the use of Collexis technology greatly enhance the quality of the searches in the database
- Users not only find documents and project websites but also experts related to a topic.

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### How to search

*Susta-Info offers two methods of searching:*

- Pre-defined search
- Refined Search

The **Pre-defined** search can be accessed through the themes on the home page of the website. All nine themes will generate relevant documents, to give you an idea of what the database offers. For general information purposes this will very often suffice.

Refined search in the knowledge base is possible by entering **your query** in the search box. You can do that in English, French, German and Spanish. You can enter words or sentences in the search box or copy/paste to it **entire documents** that you are already working with.

You are provided with the **most relevant** documents in the database.

Then you will be given the opportunity to **refine** the search result, by giving stronger or lighter 'weight' to certain elements in your search. This will reorganize the order in your query, or alter the documents involved. It is also possible to search within an already done search.

### *Why is Susta-Info different from other search engines?*

- An important difference from normal search engines is that Susta-Info uses a thesaurus – a structured list of terms (or *concepts*) that are relevant for the subject area – to do a search, as well as a standard text search. The specific thesaurus for sustainable urban development is being developed in co-operation with EUKN.
- The term "*Fingerprint*" is used to indicate a relevance-ordered list of concepts from the thesaurus that have been recognised in a text. Fingerprints provide a very efficient way to find out what a document is about.
- By using the thesaurus and the fingerprints, the Susta-Info search is able to provide more comprehensive results to match your queries.

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#### *How do you start a search?*

- Searching starts by typing one or more words in the text field, or by copying and pasting a longer text fragment into it. For example, you can paste in a text from a Word document or a website.
- To start the search, press the "Search" button on the screen or hit the Enter key on your keyboard.
- It is possible to filter by category by clicking the "Set filter(s)" button next to the "Search" button.

#### *How do we interpret the results of a search?*

- After hitting the Enter key or clicking the search button, search results appear in four tabs, called 'Susta-Info', 'Susta-Info experts', 'EUKN' and 'EUKN experts'. Clicking on the titles of found items will open a new window.
- Links from the 'Susta-Info' tab open a window with a detailed description of the item that includes a summary of the document, different classifications to determine the relevance to cities and links to documents and websites.
- For practices, a more elaborate validation has been developed by the Susta-Info team. The results of this validation are displayed in a colored bar, consisting of different shades of brown. Learn more about the validation methodology in the 'Susta-Info Methodology' section of the Susta-Info site.

Susta-Info experts' results link to a window with contact information and to a list of documents produced by the expert.

The information provided for the 'EUKN' and 'EUKN experts' tabs are similar. Susta-Info has established a partnership with EUKN that consists of joint technology development and the possibility to search in each other's databases.

The top 5 concepts: these are the five most relevant concepts from the thesaurus found in the selected document. A more complete overview of relevant concepts from the thesaurus can be seen by clicking on "show fingerprint". The overview of concepts provides you with a quick glance of the relevance of a certain document.

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### *How do you refine your search?*

The Susta-Info site offers different ways to refine your search:

- Add proposed thesaurus concepts to your search
- Search with fingerprints of found documents
- Modify the weights of concepts within a fingerprint
- Select new concepts by searching the thesaurus

### *Adding proposed concepts to your search*

To the left of the search results is a section called "Concepts". This section will show concepts from the thesaurus if any have been recognised in the text entered in the search field. If no concept is recognised, this section will be empty.

Below the Concepts section is the "Proposed concepts" section. It contains a list of concepts found in the combined search results. You can add one or more of the concepts to your search and start a new query.

### *Searching with fingerprints of found documents*

The concepts in a fingerprint of a found document can be used to start a new search. Starting a search with the concepts of just one document can be done by clicking on "use for search". Using multiple document fingerprints to search is done by selecting multiple search results by clicking their check boxes and clicking on the "Search with selected" button, located at the top of the list.

### *Modify the weights of concepts within a fingerprint*

It is also possible to modify the fingerprint used to perform a search. Next to every concept in the "Concepts" section at the left, is a 'slider' indicating the relative importance of the concept when searching with it. Clicking on the scale more towards the left of it will move the brown globe to that position and reduce the concept's importance; clicking more to the right will increase it. Dragging the brown globe across the scale is also possible. Clicking the circle to the left of the scale means the concept will not appear in the search results, and similarly clicking the circle to the right of it makes the concept a required one.

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It is also possible to remove a concept from the search fingerprint by clicking the checkbox to the left of it and on the "Delete selected concepts" button. Adding concepts from the proposed concepts is possible by clicking checkboxes next to these and clicking on "Add Selected". When the search fingerprint is ready, a new search can be started by clicking on "Search with this fingerprint".

#### *Select more concepts by searching the thesaurus*

Concepts not displayed in "Proposed concepts" can be added by switching to the "Search thesaurus" section, available in the brown menu bar at the top of the page. The current search fingerprint will be visible at the left of the page. Entering text in the search box and clicking on "Search for concept" will show concepts from the thesaurus that match the search query. Checking the boxes next to them and clicking on "Add concepts" will add selected concepts to the search fingerprint.

Clicking "Explore" next to a concept will go up one level in the thesaurus hierarchy, so related concepts can be found by browsing. Clicking on a concept next to "Parent" will go up another level in the hierarchy. When a concept is selected here, and "Add concepts recursively" is clicked, all concepts below the selected concept will be added to the search fingerprint as well. Once the search fingerprint is complete, a search can be started by clicking the "Search" button at the upper left.





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## Susta-Info Methodology

### *Susta-Info Validation - How does it work?*

This methodology, developed by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven) in Belgium, with ICLEI as designated 'reference group' of the Susta-Info Consortium, is used for two major purposes:

1. The validation and selection of exemplary and outstanding practices from the UN-HABITAT Best Practices database, relevant for local authorities worldwide and for the EU 6th Framework Programme
2. The selection of relevant UN-HABITAT publications and research documents

The validation is based on 2 different sets of criteria. One set defines the Susta-Info focus and the relevance of the practice or publication, and the other set assesses the level of sustainability of the practice.

### *Selection of Outstanding Practices*

In order to select Outstanding Practices from the large pool of UN-HABITAT Best Practices, Susta-Info has developed the following procedure:

1. **Inclusion of only the UN-HABITAT practices** that are qualified as Promising Practices, Good Practices, Best Practices, or Award Winners .
2. **Composition of a rough list** of pre-selected practices, based on general Susta-Info relevance and experience.
3. **Narrowing down of the list** using 4 basic selection criteria for each practice:
  1. evidence of well-defined role of local authorities
  2. indication of sustainable land use (land/space as a resource) (FP6 EU research topic global change and eco-systems)
  3. cross-sectoral partnerships & community support

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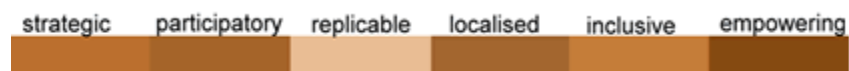


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4. clear presence of capacity building activities

4. **Systematic and thorough assessment** of the practices using 6 major validation criteria:
1. Strategic / Sustainable
  2. Participatory/ Cooperative
  3. Replicable/ Transferable
  4. Contextual/ Localised
  5. Inclusive/ Alleviating urban poverty/ improving accessibility
  6. Capacity Building/ providing training

Each criterion obtains a 'score' or a 'degree of fulfilment', the minimum score being 0 and maximum 5. The score depends on the extent to which each of the 5 sub-criteria is fulfilled ([download full assessment form showing sub-criteria](#) [PDF 1.46 MB]). The differences between the intended and the actual achievements and results (impact) of the project are taken into account. For each practice, this score is translated into a shade of brown, which illustrates to what extent each of the criteria is fulfilled. A darker shade of brown corresponds to a higher score. The practices that are considered to be 'outstanding' are labelled with a 'Susta-Info Outstanding Practice' stamp\*. The brown bar below shows the extent to which each of the criteria is met, providing a comparison of the 'scores' allocated to each Practice.



\* *Outstanding; needs to be interpreted in several ways; as really exceptionally good, as very interesting (considering e.g. methodology, relevance on some selected aspects, etc.), or even as controversial but with interesting lessons to be learned.*

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### *Selection of EU FP5 and FP6 documents*

Not all of the FP5 and FP6 projects were necessarily relevant to Susta-Info. In order to select which of these projects were most relevant for Susta-Info, GHK applied several criteria:

- Projects must have an explicit 'urban' dimension
- Projects must not be too technical, e.g. 'hybrid geophysical technology'
- Projects must not be concerned solely with dissemination/exchange of experience and must not be events such as one-off conferences, or courses
- Projects must not be very theoretical in nature, i.e. should have a practical application of some sort.

Using these criteria, a list of FP5 and FP6 projects considered most relevant to sustainable urban development was generated, which was then reviewed, amended and finalised by POLIS, a Susta-Info partner and designated 'reference group', forming a final list of EU projects to be abstracted and validated for Susta-Info.

### *Selection of UN HABITAT publications*

The selection of publications and research documents is based on the above-mentioned 4 criteria for the **Susta-Info relevance**, as well as their electronic access and availability.

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## The need for easily accessible knowledge.

A video on this theme made by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium is now available on the website.

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## Partners



**Goudappel Coffeng**  
Postbus 161  
7400 AD Deventer  
Snipperlingsdijk 47417 BJ Deventer  
+31 (0)570 666 222  
[www.goudappel.nl](http://www.goudappel.nl)



**GHK**  
526-528 Fulham Road  
London  
SW6 5NR  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)20 7471 8000  
[www.ghkint.com](http://www.ghkint.com)



**Collexis**  
P.O. Box 86  
4190 CB Geldermalsen  
The Netherlands  
+31 (0)345 53 50 25  
[www.collexis.com](http://www.collexis.com)



**ICLEI World Secretariat**  
City Hall, West Tower, 16th Floor  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2 Canada  
+1 416/392 1462  
[www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)



**Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven)**  
Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS)  
Dept. Of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning (ASRO)  
Kasteelpark Arenberg 1  
B- 3001 Heverlee  
Belgium

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[www.susta-info.net](http://www.susta-info.net)

+32 16 32 42 71

[www.kuleuven.ac.be](http://www.kuleuven.ac.be)



**Polis**

Rue du Trône 98

B - 150, Brussels

[www.polis-online.org](http://www.polis-online.org)



**Master Plan BV**

Master Plan BV

Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 20

1017 RR Amsterdam

The Netherlands

+31 (0)20 6270 675

[urbania@xs4al.nl](mailto:urbania@xs4al.nl)

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## EUSEW and Susta-Info

[Susta-Info](#) is an initiative that supports local authorities in attaining sustainable development, by establishing a portal and web based database, making knowledge on local sustainable development accessible to a large group of targeted users.

Susta-Info provides validated access to European Commission funded projects on urban management, sustainable land use, water treatment and management, and urban mobility. Additionally, it provides access to urban research projects supported by UN-HABITAT and case studies from the UN-HABITAT best practices data base.

### On January 31, 2008 Susta-Info will be fully up and running

We invite you to come to the Charlemagne Building on January 31, 2008; room S1/37 and celebrate the final launch of Susta-Info with us.

### Program

14.00 - 15.00	The Future of Susta-Info:	Presentation by the present and future Partners
15.00 - 15.30	Presentation of Susta-Info	What is in Susta-Info for future users?
15.30 - 17.00		Opportunity to get a guided try out of the Susta-Info system; Q&A with the Susta-Info Team

Please accept this invitation and register to be allowed entrance to the building.

You can do that at <http://www.managenergy.net/conference/2008htr.html> you'll find clear directions on how to register.

Please confirm your arrival (for practical reasons only) by sending an e-mail to Pascal van den Noort at: [info@susta-info.net](mailto:info@susta-info.net)

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