Planning for Better Quality of Life in Datacenter Communities: fostering sustainable communities and smart governance in the context of industrial infrastructure development

Region	**North America**
Themes	**Capacity-Building**
	Planning & Design
Geographic scope	**Global**
Sustainable Development Goals	**Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**
New Urban Agenda Commitments	**Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty**
	Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity and Opportunities for All
	Information Technology and Innovation

Summary

Following 10 years of experience of building cloud infrastructure, Microsoft joined efforts with UN-Habitat to develop and implement inclusive and participatory planning processes in the communities and territories where the company's new data centers (large installations where servers are stored) will be built. Planning for Better Quality of Life in Datacenter Communities is a global initiative that had a first phase of implementation in two municipalities in Sweden. In its second phase, the project pilots participatory urban planning activities for datacenter development in the state of Queretaro, Mexico. The main objective is to develop - together with local actors from various sectors - strategic scenarios and recommendations for more sustainable, socially inclusive and resilient communities.

Background and Objective

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By giving visibility to this project at the Global stakeholder consultation forum, Microsoft aims to share learnings and open a dialogue on inclusive, responsible and sustainable planning of industrial infrastructure. With the information gathered through ongoing discussion , we will be able to contribute to building global practices, based on local learnings and other initiatives.

Outline of activities over the last four years

1. Community Stakeholder back-casting sessions with community stakeholders in Gavle and Sandviken, Sweden (site of new Microsoft datacenters)
2. Community stakeholder backcasting sessions with community stakeholders in Queretaro, Mexico (site of new Microsoft datacenters)
3. Phase 2 community best practices implementation agreements in Gavle and Sandviken, Sweden
4. (future activity, to be completed by June 2022) completion of a global "playbook' by UN-Habitat for operators of hyoerscale datacenters

Outcomes and Impacts

Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

We have achieved significant progress in implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the two communities in Sweden that have entered phase 2 of this project work, and started implementing best practices. However, two communities in Sweden does not constitute success beyond a pilot. Ultimately, this program's success or failure will be dependent upon adoption of the best practices outlined in the playbook at a global scale in driving cooperative urban planning achievements between global hyperscale datacenter providers and rural/urban communities hosting them.

Achievements

1. integrated approach and partnership to sustainable community planning between hyperscale datacenter providers and local municipal governments to maximize better quality of life in communities hosting datacenters
2. alignment of community planning investments
3. Playbook of best practices for global implementation by Microsoft, and eventually other hyperscale datacenter providers

Partners

- Microsoft - USA - Jim Hanna, Director, Datacenter Community Development
- UN-Habitat - Kenya - Thomas Stoll, Project Lead, Architect, Urban Planner and Participatory Specialist
- Microsoft - Europe - Richard Ryan, EMEA Program Manager
- Microsoft Mexico - Juan J. Delgado / Eduardo Castañeda
- Secretary of Sustainable Development (SEDESU) - State of Queretaro, Mexico
- City of Gävle/Municipality of Gävle - Sweden - Elisabeth Hansson, Head of Business Development
- City of Sandviken/Municipality of Sandviken - Sweden - Klara Wirdby, Business Development Strategist
- Rapatac - Moussa N'diaye, Founder and Lisa Backelin, Project Manager
- Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center - Sweden - Karin Nilsson, Board Member