Application of Hebron's Old City Revitalization project

A. Profile of the Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Region</th>
<th>North Africa and Middle East</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country/Region</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of City/Local Authority</td>
<td>Hebron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Hebron Rehabilitation Committee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Title, Name and Position of Person(s) Leading the Initiative

1. 

Basic City Data

Population size: 215,452
Population Growth Rate(%) 2.90
Surface Area (sq.km): 44,000
Population Density (people/sq.km): 4896.000
GDP Per Capita (U.S.$): 57543.000
GINI Index: 0.34
URL/Webpage of Your City:
URL/Webpage of Your Initiative:
Main source of prosperity (e.g. industry, trade, tourism, creative industry, etc.):

B. Title and Abstract

For a large integrated initiative, please consider submitting up to three initiatives under the same title. For example, you may wish to submit under “Low-Carbon Urban Development for My City” an initiative on public transport, an initiative on energy efficiency in buildings, and an initiative on use of renewable energy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title or Tagline of the Initiative</th>
<th>Hebron's Old City Revitalization project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-title</td>
<td>For an integral socio-economic development of the historic centre in Hebron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start date of the initiative</td>
<td>1996-08-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tentative End Date of the Initiative (if not yet completed)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic Areas</td>
<td>Social Economic</td>
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Abstract/Short description of the innovative initiative being submitted for Award.(150 words max)

Hebron, a small city in the South of the West Bank, is one of the most historic cities in the world and thus also listed on the UNESCO World Heritage in danger list. Its historical buildings may be traced back to different conquest periods, such as the Ayoobi, Mamluk and the Ottoman era. However, its physical integrity was threatened since the area and especially the Old City of Hebron were abandoned for a long period without any restoration or maintenance.
The two major factors for the abandonment of the area by Palestinians were general social and economic changes in the Palestinian Hebronite society and Israeli occupation policies. The initiative of revitalizing the Old City of Hebron started with the establishment of The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (hence HRC) in 1996. The HRC aims at reviving the Old City by the restoration and renovation of its historic buildings and the rehabilitation of its infrastructures. Doing so, the HRC has also encouraged Hebron's inhabitants to return to the Old City by providing them affordable housing and public services. Until today, the HRC was able to restore and reuse about 1000 apartments as well as to improve the living conditions of the residents. Furthermore, public services in different areas have been provided, such as in the social, economic, educational, cultural, health and touristic sectors. All this work was guided by a comprehensive Master Plan, which was especially prepared for the social and economic revival and preservation of the Old City of Hebron.

C. Background Information
Describe the legislative or policy framework under which the initiative is taking place, for example, a public policy document at the central or local government level, a policy statement, a covenant, a compact or internationally recognized agreement including, for example, the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the New Urban Agenda.

The policy framework under which the initiative takes place is the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestine National Authority.

D. Summary of the Origins of the Initiative
Describe how the initiative came about and what challenges or issues of sustainable development it is meant to address using the following lead questions as your guide. (350 words max)

1. Describe briefly the reason(s) for undertaking the initiative including social, economic, political or cultural challenge(s) or issues confronting the city/region/community. Include where relevant number of people, enterprises or institutions affected.

The Old City of Hebron is the historic centre of Hebron, which is distinguished by an
unique architectural and cultural heritage. The Old City played a vital role in the development of the social and economic life in Hebron. It was inhabited till 1967, when the Israeli occupation of Palestine by settlers and military started. Hebron is the only Palestinian city (except for Jerusalem) where settlements were established within the city walls, and not in the outskirts of the town. Closures, curfews, and shortages, arising from the Israeli occupation, affected seriously the daily and working life of Palestinian residents and obliged them to leave their houses (only 400 out of 10 000 Palestinians remained). This emigration and the Israeli occupation policies affected both the social and economic life in Hebron. Most of the shops and markets had to close due to military orders or the absence of activity (only 210 out of 1 829 shops are open until today, out of them 512 were closed because of military orders and 1 107 because of the absence of activity). This current situation also threatens the cultural heritage as most of the buildings suffer from deterioration due to the lack of maintenance or restoration. In this regard, the HRC was established to work on the restoration and revitalization of the Old City in order to overcome the mentioned difficulties and to bring life back to the Old City, its houses and markets, focusing on different life sectors. Today, and due to the rehabilitation work done by the HRC, the number of Palestinians increased to 6 000 residents in the Old City, who are living under suitable conditions.

2. Describe the goals of the initiative in terms of desired change or outcome and timeframe for achieving the change or outcome (for example, change in policy, strategy, business model, technology, means of implementation, financing arrangements, human development and empowerment, measuring and evaluating progress and impact, etc.).

The goals of the initiative are the following:

1) Reviving the Old City by renovating its buildings, reusing abandoned buildings, rehabilitating its infrastructure, preserving its cultural heritage and elements of the structural unity of the building in order to preserve the urban fabric and the historical and cultural identity of the buildings.

2) Improving the living conditions of the population by renovating homes and connecting the Old City with the rest of the city, providing various social services that contribute to the development of housing and work conditions as well as improving the surrounding environment to become more attractive to the population.

3) Revitalizing trade and economic activity in the Old City by increasing local and international tourism, and providing vital projects to create job opportunities for the population to combat unemployment and poverty.

3. Describe whether the innovation involves any partnership (public-public, public-private, public-community, etc.) and if yes, who is or was the leading partner(s), the role they each played and whether other parties have benefited or are benefiting from your innovation and how?
The work on the revitalization of the Old City requires the development of all sectors of life and thus the following partnerships:

1) Public – public Partnerships: with the Hebron Municipality and other national governmental institutions in order to make sure that all strategies and policies of development for each sector meet with the strategies adopted by each institution. These institutions play a vital role in the process of the diagnosis of the current situation for each sector which enables the HRC to define the needs for development for each of them. They also participate in all workshops that are held to set the strategies of development for each sector. The public-public partnership parties get a great benefit from this innovation as it will cover and facilitate their work in the area of the Old City of Hebron.

2) Public – community Partnership, with the local community. A local committee was established, composed of representatives of the local community (men and women) who were both residents or shop owners. They played a vital role in identifying the needs of the residents who live or work in the Old City, they also provided the main suggestions and proposal for development from the point view of the local community, those residents and shop owners will be the direct beneficiaries of this innovation.

-(public-private) Partnerships: with private organizations and the private sector, where this kind of partnership is essential for investments in the Old City and aims mainly at improving the economical situation and implementing activities for social development and raising awareness of the local community.

In addition to the mentioned kinds of partnerships the project witnessed an academic partnership with local universities that provide their academic experts and students to implement several studies related to the project.

4. Describe the resources used for implementing the initiative, including funding/financing strategy or arrangements and any significant contributions that are not in cash, for example, in human, technical or managerial resources.

The HRC collaborates and is sponsored by different partners, which are listed below. In addition to these curious funders provide technical support through experts and volunteers in the field of restoration and strategic planning.

1. Sweden Government through UNESCO
2. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
3. Islamic Development Bank
4. Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
5. Ministry of Local Government
6. Palestinians Municipalities Support Program (PMSP)
The innovation is considered to be evolutionary because it evolved over time based on lessons learned from other similar experiences with cumulative outcomes. Those experiences were implemented on the national level in other cities like Jerusalem and Ramallah which had been working in the preservation of cultural heritage several years before the establishment of the HRC. The experience at the beginning of the HRC's work was too limited concerning financial and human resources. Thus it evolved by time and by several trainings for the staff members, who already worked in social, economical and cultural development as well as in planning and restoration of historic buildings. The innovation is a unique one because it gets its particularity from the historic, architectural, social and political situation in the Old City of Hebron. However, it might be inspired from other proceeding experiences in similar fields, especially in the field of restoration it was inspired by other regional and local initiatives such as the experiment of the Jerusalem rehabilitation program.

The innovation is being applied in policy and strategy that were adopted by the HRC to revive the Old City of Hebron and to preserve its cultural heritage. It was also applied in
the planning for the socio-economic development. Finally it was applied on the level of implementation as 60% of the planned projects for development were actually implemented.

3. Describe whether there was or are any obstacles or resistance to the innovation and if so, how were/are they being overcome.

Considering the current political instabilities and tensions in Palestine, the innovation had faced three main obstacles:

1) The Israeli occupation and its measures in the Old City, such as the Israeli settlements, closures, arrest of workers of the HRC and halts of works due to military orders. Several attempts were done in order to continue to work under this situation and to overcome it, such as:
   - All houses in the surroundings of the Israeli settlements were given the priority in restoration and thus by now, all houses were renovated and inhabited by Palestinian residents in order to stop the expansion of the settlements.
   - In closed areas, alternative roads and entrances for houses had been found to allow Palestinian residents to use these houses as well as to allow workers to do the restoration work needed.
   - Using traditional transportation methods for transferring buildings materials in the streets where Palestinians cars are not allowed to drive.
   - HRC found the legal unit to document all Israeli measures and to raise the awareness of Palestinians on how to deal with these measures.

2) Differences in the family structure between past and present generations and the effect of this difference on the design of the houses. Old houses were designed to fit the extended family (a large family, which consists of parents and sons and the families of their sons). According to this, old houses consist of a large number of rooms sharing the same entrance and common spaces (like kitchen and bathrooms), but new houses have special requirements to fit with the modern family structure such as independency in entrance and basic services (kitchen and bathroom).

To overcome this obstacle, the HRC adopted the reuse of the Old City as a residential city and provided it with necessary public services. Thus,

3) The plurality of owners. Due to several social reasons most historical buildings have dozens of related owners with individual rooms often owned by different persons. Considering that most of the buildings in the Old City have been abandoned and as have no tenants, the HRC mediates an agreement with the owners considering the subsequent reuse of each building prior to its restoration. This is done in order to ensure that restored
buildings are put to a proper use immediately after the completion of the restoration work. The owners either agree to inhabit the building with their relatives for the period of five years after the restoration or, in case they fail to do so, they hand over the custody of the building to the HRC for five years. The original owners may either choose to return to the building, renegotiate the rental agreement with the tenants or leave the building under the HRC’s custody.

F. Summary of the Desired Change or Outcome and how it is being Measured

Describe how the initiative, and in particular the innovation, is or will be making a qualitative and/or quantitative change and how that change or outcome is being measured. (350 words max)

1. What change(s) or outcome(s) have you already achieved or hope to achieve? Please describe the nature of the change(s) or outcome(s) in, for example, improved quality of life; new levels of social, economic or environmental sustainability, including new attitudes and behavior; improved efficiency, effectiveness, accountability or transparency, etc. Please describe the scale of the change, for example, primarily local, regional, national or global and where possible, please quantify the change(s) or outcome(s) being achieved.

The revival of Hebron’s Old City aims at achieving its comprehensive revitalization, development and the protection of its cultural heritage. The HRC believes that the comprehensive revitalization will bring life back to the Old City and thus increase the socio-economic development. During the last 19 years of work in this direction, different successes were achieved. The most important one is the great increase in number of new residents who moved to live in the rehabilitated old houses in the Old City, which is considered to be the main indicator and scale for the assessment of any development in the Old City. Today, 7,000 Palestinians live in the Old City, and the HRC was able to restore, renovate and reuse about 1,000 apartments.

Furthermore, the living conditions of the inhabitants of the Old City are improved by renovating old houses and shops, rehabilitating infrastructures and providing any other services. Now they benefit from affordable housing, paving streets, sewage systems, installations for drinking water, electricity and phone networks. The improvement of living conditions also results from the work done by the HRC to rehabilitate and maintain existing public schools and by founding other schools, three public clinics and social centres in the Old City.

The improvement of the living conditions in the Old City is obviously noted in the increase of population and due to the rehabilitation of infrastructure. There was not only an increase in the population but also in the number of visitors, tourist and locals, who come for shopping in the Old City's markets.

Now, and after achieving tangible results in the social development, the economic and tourism development is one of the major goals that the HRC aims to achieve.
2. What indicators or metrics are you using to assess the change? Describe who is doing the measuring, and who is using the measurements and how.

Te HRC has two ways for the evaluation and assessment of the change:
The first is done by a professional team from the HRC including different specializations, such as social, economic, urban, cultural heritage, and management. In this evaluation a comprehensive assessment is done for all the HRC's works from the point view of experts.

The second kind of evaluation comes to assess the project from the point view of residents. Therefore a special questionnaire is designed by the HRC to get information and feedback from the residents and to measure their satisfaction of living conditions and the provided services and to understand their needs and suggestion for any other action or activity that could improve their living conditions. This kind of evaluation is done each five years.

3. Describe any specific tools or methods that were developed or applied to improve the chances to attain the desired outcome or change, for example, new working methods, new data and information, new incentives or disincentives, new means of communication and knowledge, new technology, etc.

Concerning the social development, the innovation puts all efforts on rehabilitating abandoned houses and encouraging people to come back and live in the Old City. In this regard and to be able to rehabilitate any old house, as a first step, all issues related to the ownership must be solved. In the case of the Old City in Hebron, any old house relates to a group of owners (each room in the house relates to one owner), so the rehabilitation of the house turns out to be complicated, dealing with more than one owner. To solve this problem, the HRC developed a new method, which depends on making an agreement with all owners to rent the house to the HRC for five years, which is able to be extended for another five years by a new agreement with the owners. In this time, the HRC does all rehabilitation work for the house and is able to rent it to a new tenant, who might be in some cases one of the owners. This method for dealing with owners is a new one and had not been applied before the HRC started working since 1996. Without this method, the HRC would not be able to rehabilitate historical buildings.

Another method, developed by the HRC, to involve the local community in rehabilitation work, is through the creation of jobs, projects and vocational trainings in order to decrease unemployment and to increase the income of families. These kinds of projects were implemented for workers, engineers and architects in order to create jobs for them and to raise their awareness about their cultural heritage. According to this, periodically meetings are held to discuss several issues with the local community. Furthermore, several training workshops are implemented in order to raise awareness and to involve the local community in preserving cultural heritage and in the development of the Old City.
4. How does the initiative and its intended changes or outcomes contribute to a new image or reputation for your city or community?

The initiative will bring back to the community the image of the Old City as the heart of Hebron, as it was hundreds of years ago. It will support the link between the old and the new parts of Hebron and it will ensure dealing with the old part as a vital part that plays an essential role in the development of the whole city of Hebron, and furthermore, it will take the old city out of the circle of marginalization. The initiative will bring and develop tourism in Hebron. Rehabilitation of Holy Shrines and public places, as well as renovations of old houses turn them into places where tourists can stay, and they contribute to a new image of Hebron, which will no longer be seen as a city of conflict, but as a travel destination with its preserved historic heritage.

G. Describe what you think other cities can learn from our initiative and what your city/community is prepared to do to further that learning.

Choose any of the above headings or a particular aspect of the initiative that you wish to highlight and that you think best describes the reasons why the innovative aspect(s) of the initiative could be of benefit to improving social, economic and environmental sustainability in cities and regions and, in so doing, to advance the prosperity and quality of life of their citizens. (400 words max)

This initiative may be regarded an example case for all cities in Palestine, as they all have the same architecture and urban heritage as well as a similar political and economic situation. Therefore, the same policies and strategies could be applied in any Palestinian city. Furthermore, it could be a sample especially for other Arabic historic-cultural cities as well as for sites all over the world, which aim to preserve their cultural heritage. In order to achieve that, the HRC is going to publish our initiative on a local, national and international level. We are also engaged in implementing exchange and collaboration activities in order to share our own experience with a national and international community. Furthermore, different training programs for Palestinians shall be held in order to involve them more in such initiatives.

H. Relevance of the Initiative to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Commonly Referred to as the “Sustainable Development Goals” and to the New Urban Agenda.

Please tick the most appropriate boxes and provide a brief description of the relevance of your initiative in relation to the relevant goal(s). Please also refer to the complete text of the Sustainable Development Goals at: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1:</th>
<th>End poverty in all of its forms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3:</td>
<td>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4:</td>
<td>Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5:</td>
<td>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 6:</td>
<td>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 8:</td>
<td>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 16:</td>
<td>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Descriptive Materials in Annex to the Document

These are materials destined to allow members of the Technical Committee and the Jury to have a better understanding of the context of your initiative which is a very important consideration. Please do not exceed the specifications below; anything that exceeds these specifications may not be availed to the Technical Committee or the Jury. Please provide, where possible and relevant, the following:

- Up to 5 press clippings or copies of covers and tables of content of reports published on the initiative.
- Up to 5 photos (with titles) that best illustrate the initiative (.jpeg at 300 dpi, 2000 x 2000 px max).
- Up to 5 graphics that best illustrate the initiative (300 dpi). These graphics could illustrate for example, trends, ratios or percentages; tools or technologies; etc.
- 1 map that best illustrates the physical context of the initiative (300 dpi)
- 1 chart that best illustrates the initiative (300 dpi)
- 1 technical drawing (300 dpi)

J. Additional material

Any additional material such as videos should be submitted on a DVD/CD or by email to the Secretariat at info@guangzhouaward.org.

Note: Any additional material should be submitted to the Secretariat via email or mailing.

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