Application of Beit Sahour Old Town: A corner of Culture

A. Profile of the Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Region</th>
<th>North Africa and Middle East</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country/Region</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of City/Local Authority</td>
<td>Beit Sahour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Beit Sahour Municipality</td>
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Title, Name and Position of Person(s) Leading the Initiative

1.

Basic City Data

- Population size: 15,000
- Population Growth Rate(%): 3.40
- Surface Area (sq.km): 6.000
- Population Density (people/sq.km): 3200.000
- GDP Per Capita (U.S.$): 1997.300
- GINI Index: 0.355

URL/Webpage of Your City:

URL/Webpage of Your Initiative:

Main source of prosperity (e.g. industry, trade, tourism, creative industry, etc.): Industrial Tourism

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>Beit Sahour Old Town: A corner of Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-title</td>
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Start date of the initiative

Start date of the initiative: 2019-01-01

Tentative End Date of the Initiative (if not yet completed)

Tentative End Date of the Initiative (if not yet completed): 2019-03-31

Thematic Areas

- Social
- Economic
- Governance/Management
- Technology

Abstract/Short description of the innovative initiative being submitted for Award. (150 words max)

Beit Sahour Old City is a vibrant cultural center. From the restaurants and guest houses and traditional market, museums to tourist institutions, and the music and folklore dance classes to local festivals, Beit Sahour Old City thrives in all areas. Yet, it is not just the culture that make up this liveliness. The creative local industries are a significant part of the economy of
the area such as embroidery work, the mother of pearl handwork and the olivewood crafts.

Our project aims to revive the forgotten areas of the historic old town through renovating and reopening shops that would sell traditional handicrafts and homemade products, offer pilgrims a chance to explore the Palestinian heritage and identity, promote local publications and research work, create a cozy little cinema that broadcasts local Palestinian films, become a center for local festivals and events, run a cultural space for artists, photographers and fashion designers, lead exhibitions and tour itineraries, and provide interactive workshops in which tourists could learn a local handicraft or a traditional meal or a Dabkeh “folklore” dance!

We aspire to merge originality with creativity and turn Beit Sahour old town into a vibrant center that combines culture, art, faith and hospitality in one place.

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

Culture has always been embedded in the identity of our country. Beit Sahour Municipality seeks to preserve the Palestinian culture and identity through various methods and activities knowing that Beit Sahour has many institutions that work closely with the tangible activities such as renovating old buildings for the use of community and local institutions that promote alternative and educational tours and ecotourism such as Abraham Path, the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between people, Siraj Center, Peace By Piece Tours and other traditional buildings turned into restaurants and guesthouses allowing the Old City to flourish in addition to intangible cultural heritage and traditions preservation such as traditional festivals and occasions that Beit Sahour Municipality arranges annually like the Shepherds Nights Festival and Beit Sahour Nights Festival as well as Al Faqqous Festival as these festivals and occasions contain traditional music and dances that help empower the identity of the town’s history deep in the hearts of its citizens and generations.

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.
Since there is about 24% of the old city buildings that have been forgotten for a long time, Beit Sahour Municipality believes that there is an urgent need to revive the Old City for three reasons:

1) Our cultural heritage is a reflection of our Palestinian identity
2) The conservation, preservation, enhancement and security of the cultural heritage is our national duty towards our country
3) Many of the buildings in the old core of the city are built between mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century, incorporating the development of Roman-Byzantine techniques and reflecting different phases in the town’s history so we aspire to extend the reputation of the Old City of Beit Sahour as the heart and center of culture which will increase the number of international visitors and support the local economy.

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 main aim is developing a cultural agenda that runs from the heart of the old City of Beit Sahour and includes all events and all institutions in the city, networking in order to make culture a right for all and not restricted on a particular category, recognition of identity and cultural diversity, stressing that culture is an important component of sustainable development, and emphasizing that culture is a significant factor for security and stability through the resolution of conflicts and fight against all forms of war, and to adhere to the principles of good governance and democracy.

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?

Beit Sahour Municipality works in close partnership with:

- The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation
- The Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between people
- Abraham Path
- Arab Orthodox Society
- Bethlehem Fair Trade Artisans
- Alternative Tourism Group
- Peace By Piece Tours
- In addition to the private sector such as guesthouses and restaurants

All of them are benefiting from 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 resources used for this initiative are all local, as the Municipality focuses on developing the local economy. The Municipality participates partially in the project and depends on donors and partners to cover the rest of the expenses. The Municipality provides engineers and workers with a lot of experience to ensure the success of the project.

E. Summary of the Innovative Aspect(s) of the Initiative

Describe the innovation for the initiative using the following lead questions as a guide. (350 words max)

1. Describe whether the initiative should be considered evolutionary or revolutionary. Evolutionary would imply that innovation evolved over time based on lessons learned from experience and that the changes or outcomes are cumulative. Revolutionary would imply something quite new or something that has been borrowed from elsewhere but never been tried before in the sector or context in question and therefore bears a certain degree of risk. If it’s borrowed from elsewhere, describe what the linkage with the other preceding experiences is.

The initiative is considered Evolutionary because Beit Sahour Municipality and Beit Sahour City has always been promoting the local cultural heritage, and this project comes as a big step forward towards providing a better understanding of our culture.

2. Describe where the innovation is being applied, for example, in policy or strategy; planning, design and implementation; business model or financing arrangement; tools and technology; governance and administration; etc.

The innovation is applied in marketing and promoting the old town and the activities of the local institutions in the old town area. All of these activities come directly from the Palestinian culture and the Palestinian Heritage.

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

The obstacles faced in project implementation:
1. Convince landlords of these old historic buildings to accept renovation work and allow the use of their property by local organizations to achieve the goals mentioned previously.
2. Convince residents to move back to the Old City.
3. Narrow roads and buildings close to each other were a challenge in construction process.
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.

Continue to preserve the cultural heritage and legacy of Beit Sahour. Create projects that provide monthly income to the Municipality. Maintain mutual trust and respect of the community. Increase in the number of committees supporting the work of the Municipality. Believe in the principal of participation and partnership between the Municipality and the local community in planning and developing a plan to revive the Old City. Receive more expertise from local experts. Turn old buildings to modern healthy eco-friendly buildings. Increase the quality of services provided. Improve the image of the city, its importance, and promote it internationally.

Show the beauty and originality of architecture in the Old City. Provide public space for artists to be creative, for folklore dance group to hold their trainings and for the community meetings, workshops, activities and cultural events like a bazar of Palestinian traditional handicrafts and an exhibition of olive wood carvings for fair trade artisans. There is also cultural diversity in the Old City through institutions such as the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between people, the Alternative Tourism Group, and other traditional art centres as well as guesthouses where international visitors are immersed in the local culture and Palestinian cuisine.

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.

The Municipality measured success through these factors:
1) Schedule: there is no hard deadline to finish this project.
2) Meeting Objectives: Restoration of the Old City buildings for the use of community.
3) Community Satisfaction: The community was happy with the process of restoration and provided constant feedback.
4) Finance: Municipality always stick to the budget and know where it stands in terms of money spent.

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.
When planning the process of sustainability and strategic development planning, Beit Sahour Municipality has considered all the important elements and used culture in particular in the development process.

The revival of the Old City of Beit Sahour is the center and starting point of this project and we hope to expand this circle. The projects implemented include:

- Strengthen partnership between the local community and local institutions and involve them in the planning process
- The application of the principles of good governance and partnership in the implementation of activities
- Preservation of cultural, social and historical heritage, in addition to the historical routes and traditional annual events
- Support the artisans sector, which local economic development relies on them
- Conservation of the environment and environmental awareness
- Support activities that integrate different sectors of the society and engage them in the implementation process and allow their participation free of charge
- Encourage women's assembly work through the belief in the role of women, their equality and defending all their rights.

4. How does the initiative and its intended changes or outcomes contribute to a new image or reputation for your city or community?

One of the examples of the many projects implemented in the Old City of Beit Sahour is the area of the old market which was damaged and full of waste but through this project, the Municipality turned it into a public space near the Virgin Mary’s Well Church for cultural, social and traditional events as well as modern small shops for the use of exhibitions, souvenir shops and new market. In addition, the Municipality restored another archaeological and historical building and prepared it to be a center for children with special needs run by an Italian organization with a guesthouse for volunteers who come to serve the local community and be immersed in the culture.

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 experience is considered a huge learning potential for all the other cities. It gives a
A great opportunity to learn about the best way to promote your city and your culture. We would be honoured to invite other cities to visit us and participate in the activities personally to increase the learning curves.

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/

| Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages |
| Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all |
| Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls |
| Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all |
| Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable |
| Target 4: Safeguard cultural and natural heritage |
| Target 7: Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular of women, children older persons and persons with disabilities |
| Target 8: Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas |
| Target 10: Support least developed countries in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials |

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. The Guangzhou Award Secretariat
Tel: +86-20-66289390
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Email: info@guangzhouaward.org
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