



Renewal of FCM technical partnership – Toronto/ Soyapango (El Salvador)

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To:	Executive Committee
From:	Shirley Hoy, City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends the renewal of the technical partnership between the City of Toronto and Soyapango, El Salvador, under the auspices of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for the time period 2007-2010. The City of Toronto will assist the City of Soyapango with developing and implementing improvements to their information technology infrastructure and financial management processes.

The City of Toronto has a long-standing partnership with the City of Soyapango dating back to 1996 when the former City of York established this technical partnership. The partnership was renewed in 1998 between Soyapango and the newly amalgamated City of Toronto. The technical partnership has focused on multiple areas for knowledge transfer and exchange, including solid waste collection and environmental education, economic development, property assessment, user fees and taxation, and information technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. the City of Toronto renew its partnership with Soyapango, El Salvador for a period of three years through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities International Centre for Municipal Development's Municipal Partnership Program, with a view to developing and implementing improvements to Soyapango's information technology infrastructure and financial management processes;

2. the City Manager be authorized to enter into the necessary agreement to give effect to the renewal of the partnership; and
3. the appropriate City officials be authorized to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There are no additional resources required for any divisional budgets for this initiative. The City of Toronto's contribution will be in-kind through staff time for the City's part of the administration for the partnership, to participate in technical exchanges, and to host technical exchanges for the partners in Toronto. All direct costs for travel, accommodation and related expenses incurred by City staff will be provided by FCM's International Centre for Municipal Development.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact Statement

The City of Toronto's participation in technical partnerships such as this assists cities in the developing world with community and organizational capacity building initiatives. The next phase of the partnership with the City of Soyapango will focus on improvements to that city's information technology infrastructure and financial management processes and not on direct services to the community. However, it is expected that the implementation of these improvements will enhance Soyapango's capacity to provide services to its communities.

DECISION HISTORY

In May 2002, Council adopted an International Policy Framework with seven key goals. (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2002/agendas/council/cc020521/pof8rpt/cl009.pdf>) One of these goals is to position the City of Toronto as a caring and compassionate City, which assists cities in the developing world with community capacity building projects. The City of Toronto's involvement in FCM-led partnerships in Soyapango (El Salvador), South-East District (Botswana), Banda Aceh (Indonesia) and Batticaloa (Sri Lanka) are program initiatives which address this goal.

FCM's approach to municipal capacity building involves an active dialogue among Canadian technical experts, their overseas counterparts, political representatives and members of civil society. At the same time, FCM establishes strategic partnerships with national municipal associations, such as COMURES, which is the national municipal association of El Salvador.

The FCM has indicated its interest in the continuation of Toronto's participation in the Municipal Partnership Program in Soyapango for a three year period.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Municipalities in El Salvador, such as Soyapango, face the challenge of formulating and implementing an integrated response to a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems. Local services such as housing, water and sanitation, health and education, roads and transportation, solid waste, economic development and public security, require improvements. Similarly, the local administration supporting the delivery of services could benefit from increased coordination of management processes, adequate sources of revenues and appropriate information technologies.

In Soyapango, some important steps toward the modernization of administrative processes were already undertaken with previous assistance from Toronto. However, there are still a number of challenges which need to be addressed. For example:

- many administrative procedures are carried out manually, some of which could be eliminated;
- there is a lack of coordination and integration among different data management processes;
- there is information duplication in departments; and
- there is a need to improve and streamline information to taxpayers, to better manage resources and transparency, to improve communications in all departments.

An effective financial management system and up-to-date information technology is of vital importance for Soyapango, assuring better control of revenues and expenditures, and therefore more informed decision-making processes.

COMMENTS

The technical partnership between the cities of Toronto and Soyapango is based on broad based consultations in the areas of financial management and information technology. The partnership focuses on municipal capacity building - enabling Soyapango to significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current municipal financial management processes and to enhance service delivery to its residents.

City and FCM staff undertook an exploratory technical mission in January 2007 to Soyapango to finalize the scope for the three-year technical partnership. This mission was successful, as it was able to identify the principle areas of focus towards a re-engineering process for the financial data management and information technology processes. The mission enabled Toronto staff to engage in a broad consultation with key staff members of the City of Soyapango in the areas of Finance and Accounting, IT, Legal, Tax and Land Registry, Urban Development, Vital Statistics and Records, the office of the Mayor and the office of the General Manager. The framework for a complete training program

for City of Soyapango staff on financial management and inventory development of the City's computer infrastructure was set up. A foundation was also established to develop a financial management and information technology business plan for the City of Soyapango. The mission team met with Ambassador Stephanie Allard-Gomez, of the Canadian Embassy in El Salvador, Pierre Marion, Director, Canadian International Development Agency in El Salvador and officials of COMURES. These engagements established important relationships and brought awareness and support of the objectives of the Toronto/Soyapango partnership. The mission concluded with agreement being reached on the scope of a proposed three-year technical partnership between Toronto and Soyapango.

As a result of a joint work program with Toronto, Soyapango expects to achieve the following outcomes over the next three years:

- a re-engineering process of financial data management and information technology processes;
- preparation of a financial management and information technology business plan, together with a budget;
- development of a series of financial management policies, which will facilitate the efficient collection of financial data, data-sharing and the preparation of up-to-date financial performance records; and
- implementation of a training program for City of Soyapango staff focusing on issues of financial management & inventory development of the City's computer infrastructure

In order to achieve these objectives, the City of Toronto team will undertake a total of three technical missions and an evaluation mission to the City of Soyapango. It is anticipated that the three-year technical partnership conclude with a visit of elected officials from Soyapango to Toronto.

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SIGNATURE

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