What is City-to-City learning?

The objective of City-to-City learning is to build greater institutional and human capacity required to accelerate progress towards disaster resilience. A distinction from other capacity building services, such as technical training, is that cities will learn together. The promise for cities is to become learning organizations by engaging in city learning networks.

There are three levels of learning:
1). The first level entails the discovery of existing knowledge, from searching for lessons learned by other cities (reactive learning).
2). The second level involves learning based on inspiration and joint creation of new knowledge. This will take place during exchange activities (e.g. sharing of information, good practices and ideas amongst peers) and the execution of joint projects (pro-active learning).
3). The third level is about learning from the learning process itself to secure the capacity to learn (meta-learning). An important feature of meta-learning is continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Why engage in City-to-City learning?

Cities nowadays are facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Responding to these challenges, and seizing the opportunities, is placing new and complex demands on decision makers. To keep pace and cope with the rapid changes occurring in cities of today requires accelerated learning through 'learning exchanges' (peer learning). That's why the capacity to learn and engage in city networks will become increasingly important in the support of long-term learning.

City-to-city learning exchanges accelerate the uptake of innovative and transformational practices that enable a city to make deliberate and strategic change. Such enlightenment of new practices can make vast differences and contribute towards the wider effort of a modern day city adapting to the complexities that risk, combined with the influences of climate change and urbanization bring to the equation of ensuring sustainable growth and prosperity in a city. Therefore, in many cases it will be a matter of survival for cities to engage in learning networks and to learn from lessons of other cities.

Six reasons why City-to-City learning is important for your city:

1). It accelerates the transfer of knowledge and experience from one or more cities, to one or numerous others;
2). It fosters the joint creation of new knowledge in cities, in turn empowering local governments: creating a collective voice;
3). It reinforces local networks by stimulating active participation of policy makers, practitioners, the private sector, NGOs and citizens, paving a way for development of beneficial approaches and multi-stakeholder partnerships;
4). It enhances the collective memory of participating cities;
5). It provides opportunities to leverage and aggregate resources for joint activities (e.g. research programs) and;
6). Hence, it increases the capacity of cities to learn overall.