

Sharing resources: the Centre for Sustainable Development

After restoration and conversion the historic building of Abd-el-Kader Al Jazairi will house a new Centre for Sustainable Development. The programme will develop its organisation and programme of activities.

The Centre will generate a flow of information, good practice and training about municipal modernisation in Syria, and it will focus on the exchange of ideas between local and central government, and the promotion of co-operation with external partners and with civil society.

One of the important aims of the programme and the Centre is to develop networking between the Syrian and EU municipalities. The Syrian authorities would like to invite EU authorities to exchange learning and development knowledge. They would also like to visit EU authorities to learn from their experience. And the Syrian authorities have asked the project team to find the best ways to involve EU local government in its proposed Centre for Sustainable Development in order to promote cultural exchange, networking and the sharing of innovative ideas and experience, so helping staff to improve their cities' performance and serve their citizens better. It is envisaged that such promotional activities would result in establishing of long-lasting



twinning arrangements and international partnerships for the Syrian municipalities. These relationships would focus on learning through practical exchange of information and would help reduce or eliminate isolation by bringing the Syrian communities into broad ranging social, cultural and economic cooperation in the international arena.

Programmes of effective promotions and communications will keep the municipalities, Governorates and the general public up-to-date with MAM's progress. This 'visibility and communications' strategy will not only publicise the MAM programme itself; it will also help to provide support for municipalities in the promotion of their cities. By employing a people-centred approach, the project would like to improve the images and marketing performance of the

six municipalities, helping to make them more accessible to their citizens and, in this way, foster people's interest in participating in municipal development and services.

The MAM Programme will also attempt to facilitate establishing of the Association of Syrian Municipalities. It is envisaged that linking of this activity with the establishment of the Al Jazairi Centre would strengthen the institutional sustainability of both entities. It is also anticipated that the Al Jazairi Centre and the new Association of Syrian Municipalities would actively pursue and develop the regional contacts with international professional organizations such as the Arab Town Organisation (ATO), United Cities and Local Governments (USLG) as well as other national associations particularly of the MEDA region and the new EU member states.