

## **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Sustainable Buildings & Climate Initiative (SBCI)**

**This is a briefing to UNEP-SBCI Members on the Sustainable Buildings (SB) Index and establishment of a Steering Committee (SC) and supporting Technical Advisory Committees (TACs).**

### **Background:**

The need for a common language and definition for sustainable buildings is widely recognized within the building sector. While some countries have defined sustainable buildings through national rating systems and legislation, most countries do not yet have such references. Without global consensus, the definition of basic issues, indicators, and metrics and the costs and benefits associated with sustainable buildings, tend to vary. This is causing confusion in the market, inaccurate perceptions of political or financial risks to persist, and undermining efforts to fully implement sustainable building practices.

This issue has been core to SBCI's mission since its inception in 2006. Upon receipt of three key background reports in December 2008, SBCI members and think tank representatives proposed developing an index of common metrics, based on a life-cycle approach that could be used to report on progress made by various countries in addressing key building-related sustainability issues. In 2009 the effort focused on the highest ranking core global issue – Climate Change. UNEP-SBCI then convened two meetings of international organizations to reach consensus on a common carbon metric for the building sector. This was achieved and the Common Carbon Metric was launched at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen on 11 December 2009.

### **The UNEP-SB Index:**

The UNEP-SB Index shall provide a globally consistent framework to understand, measure, report, and verify actual building performance on core sustainability issues, particularly in developing countries. The Index is envisaged as a tool for generating a global annual report on progress made by jurisdictions in improving the sustainability of buildings. The Index is not intended to be a rating system, but rather intended to steer and focus building industry stakeholders on the primary issues agreed upon by the leaders of this sector. The Index shall focus on measureable, reportable, and verifiable indicators, be applicable to existing residential and non-residential buildings and facilitate both top-down and bottom-up aggregation of the performance of building stock<sup>1</sup>. The Index shall include aspects of the buildings' impact and benefits with regards to:

- Energy Efficiency & Greenhouse Gas Emissions (EE/GHG);
- Water;
- Materials (consumption, scarcity, life-cycle and waste generation);
- Biodiversity;
- Social Issues; and
- Economic Considerations.

SBCI Membership has focused on climate change as its priority issue and thus tackled the issue of building energy efficiency and emission of greenhouse gases in 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Common Carbon Metric for description of top-down and bottom-up approaches.

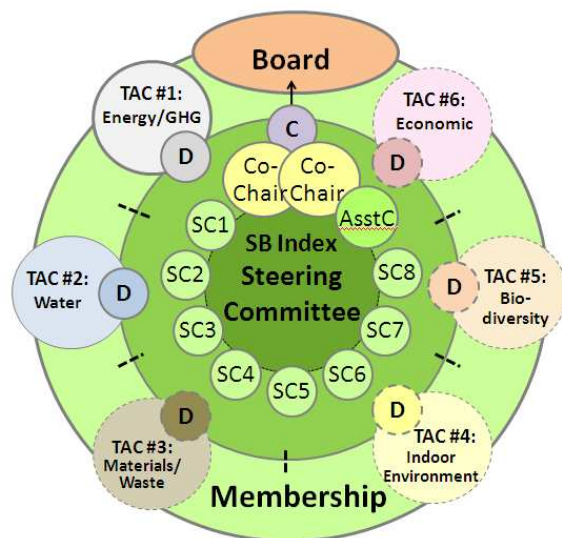
For 2010, SBCI is working to progress the general development of the UNEP-SB Index structure, with strong focus on completing the work on the Common Carbon Metric. SBCI has engaged the World Resources Institute (WRI), developer of the globally recognized Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, to draft measurement protocols and a reporting template for the Membership's review at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May, 2010. Common metrics for other core issues shall be developed as resources become available.

**Establish Steering Committee (SC) & Technical Advisory Committees (TAC)**

It became clear through SBCI's stakeholder meetings in Paris and Singapore, in 2009, that a group of experts with diverse viewpoints is needed to guide and manage the development of the UNEP-SB Index and that policies and procedures of this group must be defined to support the work. This proposed group, the UNEP-SB Index SC, has a long-term mission to deliver the UNEP-SB Index; providing common understanding of the core issues, measuring tools, reporting protocols and verification process for sustainable buildings. UNEP-SBCI is committed to working with other parties working toward similar goals.

The SC shall be supported by the gradual establishment of TACs as resources become available. The mission of each TAC shall be to develop measurement and reporting metrics, protocols and templates for a specific core issue. SC

and TACs shall be formally established at the AGM. If supporting resources are secured in advance of the meeting, the first TAC to be established in 2010 shall be the Energy/GHG TAC. Participation in and leadership of each TAC shall be determined at the AGM by the Membership.



**Governance & Coordination:** Steering Committee members shall be nominated by UNEP-SBCI members and elected at the AGM (*see attached nomination form*). Committee members must be members of UNEP-SBCI or have a formal association with the Initiative. The SC shall be directed and governed by the SBCI Board and coordinated by the SBCI Secretariat.

**Financial Support:** The SC shall be sponsored by one SBCI Member for a period of one year. The Sustainable Buildings Alliance has graciously agreed to Sponsor the Steering Committee for this membership year. The Sponsor shall assume a voting position on the SC and fund the SC Meetings. Each TAC shall be sponsored by one Donor for a period of one membership year. The Donor shall be approved by UNEP. Each Donor shall assume a voting position on their TAC and fund their TAC Meetings. The Sponsor is prohibited from Co-Chairing the SC and Donors are prohibited from Chairing their TAC to keep the integrity of the committee free and clear of financial persuasion or special interests.

***We invite parties to express their interest in participating in this new and exciting work.***

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