Submission

10 pages but there is no limitation on supporting material that can be attached as annexes. All submissions should have the following format:

Name of the project: Ecomaterials for Social Housing in Cuba

Inst. nominated: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de Estructuras y Materiales, CIDEM, Cuba

1. Background

Substantive information about the organization or individual being nominated including their mission, goals, history, size, length of experience in human settlements field.

CIDEM stands for Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de Estructuras y Materiales (Centre for Research & Development of Structures and Materials). It is a Research & Development Institute attached to the Faculty of Construction at the “Universidad Central de Las Villas”, and while it is part of the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education, it has operative freedom. It manages several foreign currency bank accounts, sells its services in the local market (to Ministries and firms) and internationally (consultancies and contracts for planning in Latin America and Africa).

As well, CIDEM is a Project Center of the Faculty for Construction and has specialized in the practical application of ecologically and economically sustainable construction materials and technologies. Its status of being part of the University and being able to count on its staff and installations, but having achieved a high degree of self-financing through marketing their services and know-how within and outside of Cuba to Ministries, Municipalities, Commercial firms and NGO’s, gives them a high degree of operational independence and allows flexibility.

CIDEM addresses different areas of construction with a practically minded approach. The main thrust is in the field of sustainable technologies for the manufacture of ecomaterials. The scope of CIDEM’s work is very wide, and includes fundamental and applied research, technology development and practical implementation, mainly in social projects. The fundamental research is carried out in close connection with Universities in Europe (Germany, Switzerland) and North America (Canada). The applied research is basically done in Cuba and other countries of the region, and includes development of the hardware (machinery) for the manufacture of the newly developed materials. Implementation and follow up is often done in collaboration with other institutions, mainly NGOs or local governments, through donor projects for vulnerable communities, where disaster preparedness and mitigation have a great priority.

The technologies developed are oriented to small-scale production, suitable for rural and suburban areas. This type of small-scale production would stimulate the local economy through creation of new job opportunities. Furthermore, the environment is protected since potential threats in the form of wastes are profitably and/or effectively used. Great success has been reported in the production of Microconcrete Roofing Tiles (MCR), Lime Pozzolana Cement (CP-40), and precast concrete elements of small format (hollow concrete blocks). There are currently 48 ecomaterials workshops in full operation throughout Cuba, and another 15 outside Cuba, mostly in Central America (Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala), South America (Colombia, Ecuador), and Africa (Namibia, Nigeria, Mozambique).

Cuba is moving slowly towards an economy where market shall play an important role. The party congress in 2011 has approved a series of measures that will introduce real changes in the municipal economy. However, this is not being implemented as an economic shock, the measures will be solidly planned and implemented within the framework of the constitution and defined in laws (not in decrees). One of the decisions is that by 2015 the construction activities will be 70% by non state actors and only 30% by the state, already in 2012 they plan to have 40% of the GNP produced by the non state sector (the term used to describe private and cooperative endeavors). CIDEM has been called to provide
advisory service at a very high level at the Cuban government and at Parliament level, to implement a new housing program based on the use of local resources, and a clear emphasis on the non-state productive sector.

CIDEM was founded back in 1992, initially as a R&D unit, and in 2004 was recognized as an independent Center for Research by the Cuban Ministry of Science. The work with communities began in 1995 and the first project implemented in 1996. At present it has been involved in the implementation of 12 international projects, funded by international donors, such as GTZ (Germany), SDC (Switzerland), AEICI (Spain), Swiss Red Cross (Switzerland), DESWOS (Germany), EU-Werkhof Verein e.V. (Germany), DAAD (Germany), Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Germany), and CIDA (Canada).

CIDEM has been widely awarded nationally and internationally. In 2007 it received the UN Habitat-BSHF World Habitat Award. Later in 2008 CIDEM was one of the three finalists for the Eneergy Globe Award. In Cuba in 2005 the National Academy of Sciences awarded CIDEM the National Prize for Science, and in 2008 CIDEM was granted the National Prize for Technological Innovation.

CIDEM is an active member of the EcoSur network (Network for an Ecological and Economical Habitat, www.ecosur.org) which includes different institutions (NGO´s, Parastatal, private companies) from 13 different countries of Latin America and is active member of the BASIN network (Building Advisory Service and Information Network, led by GATE, ITDG, SKAT and CRATerre).

2. Description of the initiative or project

Situation or problem addressed, objectives, target beneficiaries, investment in the project in terms of human, material and financial resources, activities undertaken, duration of the project, achievements and outputs (provide photographs/evidence of outputs), lessons learnt, best practices from the project

From 1959-1988, the system for housing provision in Cuba was based on the centralized production of building materials in large, automated facilities operated by the Ministry of Construction. Prefabricated building materials were produced and supplied by road or rail to areas far from the industrial centers; it was an energy-intensive system based upon the supply of cheap oil from the former USSR.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and East European socialist states had a dramatic effect on the system: energy became scarce, roads deteriorated because of the lack of maintenance, the fleet of trucks became obsolete and the supply of spare parts was threatened. This had a great impact on the construction materials industry, which was no longer able to maintain a steady supply of building materials, particularly to areas distant from the production centers. The lack of availability of building materials led to a decrease in new housing construction and a rapid deterioration of existing housing stock due to lack of maintenance, as the population did not have the means to renovate or maintain their homes in good repair.

The new situation prompted a fundamental shift from centralized production based on long-distance transportation, to the local production of building materials in order to lower energy and transportation costs.

The work of the CIDEM research and development institute since it was established in 1991 has consisted of developing and implementing technologies to support this change at the grassroots level.

The project involves the development of a system for the local manufacture of ‘ecomaterials’ – building materials made with low embodied energy, often through recycling wastes. These include micro-concrete roofing tiles (MCR); lime-pozzolana cement (CP-40); pre-cast hollow concrete blocks, where Portland cement has been partially replaced by CP-40; gravel and sand suitable for use in concrete, produced in portable crushing facilities; low-energy fired clay bricks using bio-wastes as fuel; and the use of bamboo in construction. Suitable for both rural and suburban areas, the technologies developed by
CIDEM are geared towards small-scale production, with a focus on stimulating the local economy through the creation of new job opportunities. The project’s main features include:

- An innovative process of technology development and transfer, which has resulted in a set of appropriate technologies for the manufacture of building materials at municipal level. The whole process has been organized as a south-south endeavor, as machinery and know-how come from Cuba and other countries in Latin America. Ecomaterials workshops are carried out that include personnel training and a post-sale advisory service.

- A large-scale decentralized program for production of building materials at municipal level, which contributes to providing affordable and accessible building materials in a sustainable manner, particularly in areas where hurricanes have caused serious damage and a quick post-disaster response is required. This model has been embraced by the Cuban government as the model for housing development, and since June 2009 it has become the official approach of the Cuban government for housing at municipal scale. Donors like the Swiss Development Cooperation and CIDA Canada are strongly supporting this initiative. The Cuban Government is matching these funds with local funds and various resources.

- Creation and further improvement of a new decentralized management model for housing renovation, which gives local authorities new opportunities to act independently as well as increase their capacity for resolving urban renewal issues. The model includes the new legal framework for small and medium enterprises working on private (non-state) or collective (cooperative) property, and the launch of pilot projects that stimulate this new production sector in the Cuban society.

There are currently 48 ecomaterials workshops in full operation throughout Cuba, and another 16 worldwide, including Latin America (Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti), Africa (Namibia, Nigeria, Mozambique), the Middle East (Yemen) and Asia (Bangladesh).

CIDEM has also been involved with the development of projects for the mitigation and prevention of damage to housing in the event of hurricanes and other disasters. The results of this work can be seen in the fast recovery after hurricanes Michelle (2001), Dennis (2005), Gustav and Ike (2008) which struck Cuba between 2001 and 2008, and in partnership with EcoSur in Haiti (2010) after the earthquake.

3. Main partners

List partners and their roles and levels of participation in the planning, design, implementation and funding of the project.

- **Swiss Development Cooperation**: main sponsor of the project, and main counterpart. They have provided approximately CHF 1,5 million through the official cooperation channels between Cuba and Switzerland.

- **Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA**: they have partially sponsored the project with funds around $C 220,000, through the University of Calgary, Canada

- **CARE International in representation of the private firm Bouygues International**: they have partially sponsored the project by providing EUR 300,000 to set up production facilities in 5 municipalities severely affected by the 2008 hurricanes.

- **Latin American Network for the Sustainable Habitat, ECOSUR**: they have provided in kind assistance through advisory service and experts exchange. They are CIDEM’s main international partner.

- **Werkhof Verein and the European Union**: they funded the very first part of the project (2000-2005) with EUR 180,000, channeled through the NGO “Werkhof verein”

- **Cuban Ministry of Construction**: they have funded all salaries of productive personnel, all production facilities, as well as raw materials and resources to undertake production in all
workshops. These funds exceed CHF 5 million for the period 2008-2011. They have participated through the National Housing Institute in all phases of the project, planning, implementing and monitoring.

- Cuban Ministry of Higher Education: they have funded the salaries and infrastructure of scientific personnel, and most of the expenses carried out in research & development work during the whole period 2000-2011.

4. Impact

Estimated number of beneficiaries, types of beneficiaries (e.g. women, children, poor, war victims), impact on beneficiaries’ living conditions e.g. social, economic, environmental, health, education, employment, security of tenure, crime reduction, community involvement in decisions/ governance, etc. Provide quantitative and qualitative values.

Beneficiaries:

- 5,300 constructive actions directly for the families in all municipalities where the project was implemented; year 2010 (4000 total houses) and 1300 total houses on year 2011.
- 137 small non state enterprises in sustainable operation in the production of various materials (bricks, tiles).
- 325 new jobs created during 2009-2011, 48 jobs occupied by female (15%)
- Three training centers established at the universities (Villa Clara, Holguin, Santiago de Cuba), 292 trainees (45% female)

A contribution to the gradual migration from a centralized production model based on state-owned, subsidized enterprises to a decentralized production model based on non-state, market oriented production figures operating at municipal scale: 48 municipalities equipped with facilities to locally produce approximately 65% of the materials needed for their own housing programs; a national program for the Local Production of Materials launched by the Ministry of Construction, with funds allocated to progressively expand the model to the rest of the municipalities in Cuba (70% of productive infrastructure for housing shall be “non-state” in 2015, according to official statement)

Experiences gathered at pilot scale in the implementation of the framework for the operation of the new production figures at municipal scale: legal regulation for issuing production licenses for the use of commodities like clay, stones, tuffs, firewood in the local manufacture of ecomaterials; technology, know-how and advisory service available for the implementation of local production schemes for at least 12 production lines (aggregates, tiles, blocks, bricks, briquettes, etc.) in all 48 workshops; legal background for new production figures like construction cooperatives, private contractors, masons, electricians, plumbers, etc. approved, with credit lines provided by the bank.

A contribution to the improvement of the housing situation in 48 municipalities in the context of disaster mitigation. 70% of these actions targeted families affected during the 2008 hurricane season. This represents 48% of the constructive actions reported in the municipalities object of this project.

5. Sustainability

Describe how the initiative has created lasting change (by enacting new legislation or policy, by promoting capacity building and community empowerment, by strengthening the institutional framework, by enforcing efficiency, accountability and transparency etc.). Indicate how long the positive impact has been sustained so far. If there is ongoing investment to maintain the positive results, give details of how this is secured, and its commercial and social sustainability

Since June 2009 the Cuban Government has officially recognized the importance and impact of CIDEM’s approach to tackle housing problems, and has created a Task Force, led by the Minister of Construction, to disseminate the productive model in all municipalities in Cuba, under the approach known as “Traje a la Medida” (Tailored Suit), which means that the availability of local resources has to be proved prior to deciding which technology will be implemented.

In 2010 CIDEM was officially appointed as advisor for the Parliament is issues related to housing policies. Later this year, CIDEM started to take place in meetings held at the maximum decision level in the country (Office of the Vice President of the Council of Ministers and the Council of State), to provide
advisory service on matters related with the decentralized model for the production of ecomaterials and the construction of houses.

In the first half of 2011, after a year of trials, a National Program for the decentralized production and sales of building materials was officially launched, with funds allocated by the Cuban government. This program includes the creation of production facilities in all municipalities in Cuba, at a growth rate of 40 municipalities a year, by also the creation of incentives for the new non-state entrepreneurs that will undertake production of materials and house constructions, as well as the legal and economic environment for new economic figures like small credits schemes, provision of construction services, local sales in the municipal market and many others. CIDEM is permanent advisor of the Directorate of this program and takes an active part in its implementation.

6. Transferability and upscaling

Indicate whether this is a replicable best practice and show where it has been replicated and how this was done.

CIDEM is a founding member of the Latin American Network for the Sustainable Habitat, EcoSur, and through its internet portal (www.ecosur.org) provides potential users or beneficiaries with information on the technology.

Once a request is made, the web master begins negotiation with the customer. Depending on her/his interest and the funds available, he directs it to the appropriate network member and an onsite fact finding visit from experts can be organized. If the customer remains interested, EcoSur organizes shipping the machinery, a complicated process that involves international banking, customs, and a heavy office work.

CIDEM/EcoSur has standing agreements with the different machinery producers –Cuban and others,;- places an order for the machinery, and the machines are shipped. Once the machines reach the final destination, an expert from CIDEM or another EcoSur partner moves to the place and sets the machines into operation and trains the local operators and technicians. Depending on the size of the operation and the type of contract, the know how transfer includes management and scientific teaching; the costs of training can be embedded in the costs of machinery.

Enclosed a list of transfers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries/communities</th>
<th>Institutions involved in the transfer</th>
<th>Description of the endeavor</th>
<th>Dates and timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nicaragua, 1997</strong>: project “Vista Hermosa”, houses built with ecomaterials</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias/ SOFONIC (concept, construction), CIDEM (design &amp; technical assistance; machinery supply) Funded by Swiss Government and EU / WHD</td>
<td>An ecomaterials workshop was set up in Diriamba, and 36 houses were built for middle income population. Credit schemes were implemented</td>
<td>Start: 1997 Finish: 1999</td>
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<td><strong>Nicaragua, 1999</strong>: project “Malacatoya”, post disaster houses built for affected population after hurricane “Mitch” affected Central America</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias/ SOFONIC (concept, construction &amp; management); CIDEM (design &amp; tech. assistance; machinery supply) NGO Pan &amp; Arte (funding)</td>
<td>An ecomaterials workshops was set up for production. Population was organized on self-help basis. A whole new village with 136 houses, school and health centre was built in a flood safe area in Malacatoya (near Granada)</td>
<td>Start: 1999 Finish: 2001</td>
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<td><strong>Honduras, 1999</strong>: project “La Betania”, post disaster houses built for affected population after hurricane “Mitch” affected Central America</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias (concept and management assistance), EcoViDe (constr. &amp; management); CIDEM (design, tech. assistance;</td>
<td>Two ecomaterials workshops were set up for production. Population was organized on self-help basis. Two neighborhoods (560 houses) of a new satellite town were built in a flood safe area</td>
<td>Start: 1999 Finish: 2002</td>
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<td>America</td>
<td>machinery supply), Red Cross (Finances)</td>
<td>area in La Betania (near Tegucigalpa)</td>
<td><strong>Namibia, 1998</strong>: project “Clayhouse”, Otjiwarongo. Clay based formal houses in squatter camp in northern Namibia. Houses constructed in adobe (walls), and the roofs are built with MCR tiles. The project has evolved into other areas like sanitation (dry toilets). Start: 1998 Finish: the project is still operating (2010)</td>
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<td><strong>Namibia, 1998</strong>: project to supply ecomaterials to Columbian NGO “Federación Nacional de Vivienda Popular, FENAVIP”</td>
<td>CIDEM; CECAT (technical assistance, machinery supply); FENAVIP (funding &amp; implementing)</td>
<td>A chain of ecomaterials workshops was set in several cities (Bogota, Medellin, Barranquilla, Neiva, Cali). They were able to build up to 20,000 houses with these materials. Start: 1998 Finish: 1999</td>
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<td><strong>Colombia, 1999</strong>: project to manufacture and trade ecomaterials in Latin America, project based in Riobamba</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias/SOFOECU (concept, implementation management), CIDEM (technical assistance, training) EU (funding),</td>
<td>Products like pozzolanic cement, blocks and MCR tiles were produced and sold to the market and to social housing projects. Start: 1999 Finish: 2006</td>
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<td><strong>Colombia, 2001</strong>: A cooperative of women starts production of MCR in seven towns, in response to two fatal earthquakes</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias (concept, management and technical assistance, machinery supply); Several funding agencies over the years</td>
<td>Decentralized application of the concept and philosophy of EcoSur (principally developed by Grupo Sofonias and CIDEM), training of the local counterparts by SOFONIC. Start: 2003 Finish: the project has grown.</td>
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<td><strong>Nigeria, 2003</strong>: project to produce ecomaterials in Gwagwalada, Abuja, to benefit disadvantaged population and create jobs</td>
<td>NGO “GECOTECH” (management), Saint Paul’s missionaries (implementing); CIDEM (technical assistance, machinery, training)</td>
<td>An ecomaterials workshop was set into operation (concrete blocks &amp; pozzolanic cement). CIDEM did a feasibility study, supplied the machinery, trained the operators and left the workshop in continuous production. Start: 2003 Finish: 2004</td>
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<td><strong>Mexico, 2003</strong>: Estado de Michoacán de Ocampo, México requested CIDEM/CECAT to set up an ecomaterials workshop</td>
<td>CIDEM/CECAT (technical assistance, machinery supply); Secretaría de Desarrollo Social Morelias (funding &amp; implementing)</td>
<td>One pilot workshop was set up where MCR tiles, blocks, ferrocement panels and pozzolanic cement were produced. A seminar to lobby the technologies and encourage new producers was held. Start: 2003 Finish: 2005</td>
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<td><strong>Bangladesh, 2003</strong>: a private entrepreneur decided to launch a MCR business as alternative to commercial roof solutions</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias (concept, machinery supply &amp; training); CIDEM (technical on site assistance); NGO “Save the Earth” (funding)</td>
<td>A MCR tile workshop was set up to supply tiles to a local business to cover a large commercial hangar (2,000 m2 roof) in Dacca. The workshop continued to supply the local market afterwards. Start: 2003 Finish: 2004</td>
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<td><strong>Nicaragua, 2006</strong>: the Diriamba housing project. An alternative mortgage scheme for people who do not classify for normal bank loans.</td>
<td>SOFONIC (concept, management, construction); CIDEM (sporadic technical assistance, updating technology) DESWOS/ German Government (funding)</td>
<td>A housing scheme was organized where beneficiaries receive an alternative mortgage scheme. 80 houses were built with ecomaterials supplied by the existing workshop. The beneficiaries provided in-kind contribution. More similar projects have followed. Start: 2006 Finish: the project is further replicated based on the same idea</td>
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<td><strong>Yemen, 2007</strong>: PRACTICAL ENTERPRISES initiates the production and sale of pozzolanic cement at Sana’a,</td>
<td>Ecosur (facilitator); CIDEM (technical assistance &amp; machinery supply); Mr. Ali Mohamed Alsharafi (private</td>
<td>A private enterprise purchased a ball mill for the production of pozzolanic cement. Ecosur established the contact. CIDEM supplied the machinery, the technical Start: 2007 Finish: 2008</td>
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<td>Republic of Yemen</td>
<td>funding</td>
<td>assistance and onsite training</td>
<td>Start: 2008 Finish: the project is further replicated</td>
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<td><strong>Ecuador, 2008:</strong> the Chambo project to assist brick producers in the Chambo community, Chimborazo</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias (concept and backstopping) Fundación EcoSur (implementation &amp; management); CIDEM (technical assistance); EU/WHD (funding)</td>
<td>Brick producers in Chambo were equipped with tools and instruction to improve brick production. CIDEM provided the know how to use PROVID, a fluxing agent that makes brick production more efficient</td>
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<td><strong>Venezuela, 2008:</strong> Project within the ALBA framework for cooperation between Cuba and Venezuela, las Maravillas &amp; Zona Hidrica, state Barinas</td>
<td>CIDEM (technical assistance &amp; machinery supply); FUNDACITE Aragua (funding &amp; credit); local enterprises (implementing)</td>
<td>The technology for efficient production of bricks was introduced; also the MCR tile production and the use of bamboo as construction material. 3 Pilot workshops were organized and training seminars were held</td>
<td>Start: 2008 Finish: 2009</td>
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<td><strong>Cuba, 2008-2011:</strong> multiplication of the ecomaterials workshops in a post-disaster action after hurricanes “Gustav” and “Ike”</td>
<td>CIDEM (management &amp; machinery supply); Swiss Development Cooperation (70% funding); CIDA-Canada (20% funding); Bouygues-CARE (10% funding)</td>
<td>After the massive destruction caused by the hurricanes, 14 new municipalities established their own facilities to locally produce the ecomaterials to re-build the houses damaged. 48 municipalities are now fully equipped in Cuba</td>
<td>Start: 2008 Finish: the project is further replicated throughout the island</td>
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<td><strong>Haiti, 2010:</strong> post earthquake project to alleviate the problems caused by the disaster in Port au Prince, Jacmel and Verretes</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias (concept, management &amp; global coordination); SOFONIC (technical assistance &amp; machinery supply); CIDEM (technical assistance); Funding comes from different charities in Europe, UNDP</td>
<td>Grupo Sofonias and local partners in Haiti organize various workshops where ecomaterials are produced (ferrocement, MCR tiles, blocks). The project moves towards the use of debris to produce aggregates (feasibility studies underway)</td>
<td>Start: March 2010 Finish: the project is still progressing</td>
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7. Innovation

*Describe the main innovations aspects of the initiative.*

- The development of a set of sound appropriate technologies for the manufacture of ecomaterials. This is supported by a continuous and integrated process of innovation, which combines fundamental and applied research, machinery development and manufacture, sales and post-sales service. Further, the development of the legal and economic environment for the introduction of these technologies in the non-state sector as small and medium enterprises is included in the technology transfer package.

- The fact that these technologies and their use in ecomaterials manufacturing workshops have been successful and resulted in the massive production of building materials in a decentralized way, together with the new approach, has demonstrated that there are alternatives that decrease foreign currency costs through the local production of ecomaterials.

- The decentralized management model for housing renovation has yielded great success in its implementation and wide acceptance by the community, and has entered the mainstream as a government program, with a potential for further dissemination throughout the entire country with funds allocated by the Cuban government.

- That Cuba has become a ‘technology exporter’ through this process: approximately 50 inquiries are received each month on the different technologies for manufacturing of ecomaterials, primarily from Latin American countries.
8. Recognition of the initiative

Provide a list of references, articles, publications, media reports about the initiative starting with the most recent ones and where possible, send copies of the actual articles as an annex.

National journals

- 2011-03, Granma: Remedios caseros para la Vivienda
- 2010-12, Granma, Producen más materiales de construcción en centro de Cuba
- 2010-06: Granma, Ecomateriales, ¿alternativa o solución?
- 2009-11: Vanguardia, Ecomateriales, alternativa confiable
- 2009-05: Granma, Finalista Proyecto Cubano en Concurso Energía Global
- 2009-04: Bohemia, Tesoro en el Patio
- 2009-01: Granma, Extienden producción de ecomateriales para viviendas
- 2008-09, Agencia de Información Nacional, AIN, Ecomateriales para edificar viviendas

International Journals

- 2010-05: CNN, Eco Solutions, Cuba's disaster-hit homes get eco-friendly rebuild
- 2009-09: Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal, Australia, Cuba: Rebuilding after the hurricanes, sustainably
- 2009-04: Radio Praga, Hagamos el medio ambient sexy
- 2008-03: International Press Service, CUBA A LA MANO, Vivienda ecológica, resistente y de bajo costo
- 2007-08: Building and Social Housing Foundation Newsletter: World Habitat Award to CIDEM
- 2007-08: SuedOstSchweiz, World Habitat Award
- 2007-08: Swiss Info: World Habitat Award
- 2005-07: International Press Service, DESARROLLO-CUBA: Techos a prueba de huracanes