

Partnerships for Sustainable Cities

2nd Strategic Monitoring & Evaluation report 2024



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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GERF	Global European Results Framework
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
INTPA	DG for International. Partnerships
Las	Local Authorities
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSPD	Multi-Stakeholder and Policy Dialogue
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPSYS	Operational System
PLWD	Persons Living With Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
TALD	Territorial Approach to Local Development
TD	Territorial Development



Executive Summary

“

The Report presented below provides a panoramic view of the many positive dynamics generated by the specific instrument of decentralised cooperation to promote urban development.



In the framework of its expanding relations with local authorities (LAs), the EU (DG INTPA) decided in 2018 to support an innovative initiative of decentralised cooperation. The overall objective of the resulting “Partnerships for Sustainable Cities” programme is to promote integrated urban development by fostering peer-to-peer exchanges among Local Authorities of EU Member States and countries in the Global South around shared challenges. This resulted in 57 partnerships between cities from the Global South and Europe (including a substantial number of triangular cooperation schemes involving more than two cities¹).

The Partnership for Sustainable Cities program is **coming to an end**, with most projects completing their implementation cycle or planning to do so in 2025. Hence, it is time for a collective stock taking of results achieved and lessons learnt. To this end, the coordination support team, the technical assistance facility linked to the program, elaborated a **second global performance review**² in close collaboration with participating cities -with 42 out of the 57 responding to a survey on their activities, outcomes and experiences.

Though data collection encountered some methodological limitations (including in terms of depth of analysis provided by the

cities in the survey or means of verification), the Report presented below provides a **panoramic view** of the many positive dynamics generated by the specific instrument of decentralised cooperation to promote urban development through local authorities (LAs). There is a substantial diversity in the 57 projects -reflecting different stages of maturity, ambitions, scope and related ability to achieve change and ensure sustainability. Yet the surveys received testify of the **enthusiasm, activism and creativity displayed by each of the city-to city partnerships** to tackle pressing urban challenges to the benefit of their citizens. They also confirm the **huge added value of peer-to-peer exchanges** between the local actors involved.³

For this second strategic monitoring of results achieved at the overall programme level, a **new set of indicators** were used. The idea was to examine project contributions in relation to the different dimensions of urban development -taken on board by the different projects. **Eight such contribution areas** were retained, with surveys providing quantitative and qualitative data on positive dynamics and effects achieved in each domain.

1 Approximately 50% of the partnerships surveyed have used this modality (with 3 or more cities). The added value of this approach is generally very valued.

2 The first performance review is included as annex 1 and is available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16tgU3LTYtMiLvM4Lk7Jb-SumuA4iOCM0/view?usp=sharing>

3 This is key feature and asset of the decentralised cooperation approach -and something other aid modalities cannot provide for.

The overall outcome harvesting coming out of the surveys is quite impressive, both in terms of diversity of processes supported and achievements (particularly in quantitative terms) as can be seen in the table below:

Positive dynamics and effects	Type of processes supported	Concrete evidence
1. Elaborating innovative urban policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Drafting new or reviewing existing urban policies · Support to pilot initiatives · Improving data management · Fostering the uptake of local innovations at national level · Collaboration between metropolitan areas to influence global frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 853 urban processes · 157 new urban policies · 195 existing policies reviewed · 335 pilot initiatives · Influencing national policies and regulations · Changes in the national and regulatory system
2). Fostering participatory governance and local democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Use of participatory tools · Leveraging local knowledge and expertise as well as resources · Continuous communication · Collaborative decision-making · Multi-actor dialogues on how to develop the territory · Fostering transparency and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1212 public hearings and policy dialogues · Multiple policies reviewed with civil society inputs · Public-Private Partnerships forged · Almost 50% of projects leveraged resources, mainly from civil society⁴
3. Empowering municipalities and local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Institutional development of municipalities · Awareness raising activities and trainings of municipal staff and local stakeholders · Peer-to-peer exchanges · Gender and youth mainstreaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Training of over 2600 municipal staff · Over 4000 individuals trained on climate change and 2385 on territorial planning · 650 awareness raising activities · 250 study visits
4. Planning and investing in infrastructure ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Identifying infrastructure needs · Planning infrastructure investments · Funding investments (with EU grants or co-financing), mainly for cultural facilities and waste management · Implementation of development investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 18 projects used EU grants for infrastructure · 17 projects mobilized co-financing · 4 projects leveraged financing through public-private partnerships · Inclusion women and youth

⁴ The projects were less successful in leveraging private sector resources (only 5 examples).

⁵ Many projects in these areas benefitted from a substantial involvement of women and also youth.



5. Promoting resilience and greening cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Enhancing the quality of life · Promoting urban green growth · Improving resource efficiency · Climate adaptation and mitigations policies and plans · Transport policies and sustainable tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 86% of the projects contribute to resilience and greening of cities · 22 projects focused on climate change, adaptation and mitigation · 30 projects worked on environmental policies and sustainable modes of production
6. Job creation, innovation and prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Training and grants for social enterprises and local firms · Integration of circular economy principles · Fostering public-private partnerships · Promoting sustainable local economies and digitalization for climate goals/resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 71% of projects surveyed contributed to prosperity and innovation · 55% of projects supported job creation, particularly for youth and women · 12 projects supported (often a small number of) micro, small and medium enterprises, most female led · 10 projects supported start-ups
7. Improving social inclusion, particularly of women and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creating opportunities for all citizens to participate · Equipping youth with skills and resources · Integration of vulnerable groups · Gender-responsive urban planning · Promoting social cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 37 partnerships focused on social inclusion · Women, youth and people with disability as key beneficiaries · 17 projects enhanced social protection systems
8. Addressing fragility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fostering resilience of local communities · Restoring trust and improving city management in crises · Providing essential services · Advocating for vulnerable populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Half of the partnerships strengthened resilience · 18 projects primarily focused on fragility · 9 projects fostered local level dialogues for collective action

Though comprehensive solid data are not necessarily available⁶, interesting insights emerged on how the cross-cutting issue of integrating women and youth in urban development was taken on board. Efforts were stronger or more visible in terms of mainstreaming a gender perspective in a wide range of areas.⁷ Both **women and young people** featured more prominently in activities that had a specific focus on ensuring equal opportunities (e.g. in addressing youth employment). Activities linked to urban governance showed lower rates of inclusion of women and young people -hinting at an existing **gap of representation and active participation**.

⁶ As the overall program itself did not recommend a set of indicators to track, not all partnerships monitored gender and youth in a comprehensive manner.

⁷ Including gender and sustainable transportation, urban safety, female entrepreneurship and innovation to support urban health, climate resilience and social inclusion.



Outcomes achieved are not only of a developmental nature, but in many cases also touch upon the capacity of cities to formulate and implement local public policies.

⁸ The issue of sustainability of both project outcomes and C2C partnerships was addressed in the surveys but further examined through a Policy Note on the topic which dissects the various dimensions of sustainability and brings together relevant data and experiences from the 57 projects.

⁹ The survey shows there are very limited connections so far between cities and the Global Gateway process.

Several **key lessons** were learnt in the implementation process of the 57 projects. First, the decentralised cooperation modality has a number of unique features (i.e. peer-to-peer exchanges, focus on concrete challenges, proximity to citizens) which tend to foster strong local ownership and inclusive urban development. Second, the outcomes achieved are not only of a developmental nature, but in many cases also touch upon the capacity of cities to formulate and implement local public policies (i.e. institutional outcomes) in an open, transparent and accountable manner with citizens (i.e. governance / democracy outcomes). Third, C2C partnerships help to deliver on core EU geopolitical external action priorities (such as the green and digital transitions, democracy, peace

and security). Fourth, the benefits of decentralised cooperation processes often go 'beyond the local level' fostering innovations at national level or influencing global norm-setting. Fifth, for city partnerships to flourish and achieve sustainable results,⁸ a conducive ecosystem is required, based on development-friendly decentralisation policies (often absent in many contexts) as well as strategic support by the international community/ EU. This includes political support for the decentralised cooperation approach, access to smart funding and meaningful participation in major investment schemes such as the EU Global Gateway -all areas in which much progress can still be achieved⁹.



Introduction



The EU-funded 'Partnerships for Sustainable Cities' program aims to promote integrated urban development by forging partnerships among local authorities.

In 2018, the European Union (EU), through DG INTPA, initiated an innovative initiative in decentralised cooperation to strengthen ties with and between local authorities (LAs). The resulting 'Partnerships for Sustainable Cities' programme aims to foster integrated urban development by promoting peer-to-peer exchanges among local authorities from EU member states and partner countries across Africa, Latin America, Asia, and neighbouring regions. This initiative launched three calls for proposals between 2019 and 2021, resulting in the implementation of a total of 57 partnerships.

The EU-funded 'Partnerships for Sustainable Cities' program aims to promote integrated urban development by forging partnerships among local authorities from EU member states and partner countries. This initiative aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the EU's policy priorities, notably the 'New Green Deal.' These partnerships are designed to empower local authorities in partner countries to address sustainable urban development through capacity building and service delivery. At the heart of this approach lies peer-to-peer exchanges among local authorities.

As part of this program, a coordination support team has been established to develop and promote a strategic monitoring process for capturing experiences, lessons learned, and overall outcomes.

A first strategic monitoring report was developed in 2023, based on a monitoring framework consisting of 35 outcome-level indicators, structured around the programme's five objectives and three additional priorities. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16tgU3LTYtMiLvM4Lk7Jb-5umuA4IOCM0/view?usp=sharing>

This framework allowed to bring structure to the diverse logframes and monitoring and evaluation systems of the projects, drawing on the Global Europe Results Framework (GERF) and OPSYS indicators. It is designed to aggregate key results from the 57 individual projects to measure progress at the program level, facilitate reporting, and ensure better upward accountability¹⁰.



¹⁰ The note A proposal for a Programme Results based Framework, in annex, provides information on the process of setting up of the strategic monitoring tool, besides listing the indicators and specifying the links to GERF and OPSYS indicators. <https://shorturl.at/Z1n7r>

In this second edition of the performance review, the selected indicators were reorganised around several core dimensions (and some cross-cutting issues such as inclusion of gender and youth) with the aim to offer a meaningful representation of the different components of the city-to-city projects' experiences and results, namely:

1. Influencing policies
2. Citizen participation and local democracy
3. Capacity development
4. Infrastructure investments (link with Global Gateway)
5. Social inclusion, greening and resilience
6. Job creation and private sector (including public-private partnerships)
7. Smart solutions/smart cities
8. Fragility and resilience

The survey, which comprised 74 questions focusing on 8 dimensions and was launched in May 2024, elicited responses from 42 partnerships, with the remaining projects failing to answer due to either their closure at the time of the

survey's launch, complications in the course of implementation or impossibility to comply with the request within the timeframe¹¹. The findings from this survey reveal a diversity of realities, needs, and approaches. As explained in the previous report, the programme's application process, based on the right of initiative of cities – which encouraged the development of individualised intervention logics for each project- resulted in non-harmonized indicators and data for monitoring and evaluation. We tried to factor in this variety of approaches and interpretations as much as possible in the development of the questionnaire and especially at the time of analysing and interpreting the data. Not surprisingly, important variations were also observed in the quality of the responses to the surveys -with the more solid projects showing a greater capacity to reflect on results achieved and underlying factors contributing to success. This also explains why in the report below the same projects are often referred to as the most telling examples (across all dimensions).

One major challenge not yet optimally addressed relates to more qualitative analyses of the performance of the various projects. The format of the survey -which was kept relatively simple and not too demanding for cities- privileged

quantitative responses. In order to enrich our review, additional interviews and five targeted case studies or interviews were carried out in the month of August to complete the analysis, which have been integrated in this report. It should also be noted that 44 projects are still ongoing (see overview in Annex 3). Furthermore, the authors of this report recognise that there are undoubtedly many more interesting stories that could be told about the C2C projects that have not been captured in this report.



¹¹ The Strategic Monitoring Questionnaire, in the four languages of the programme (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese) is included in annex 3. <https://shorturl.at/fXOPc>



Section 1: Influencing Policies

1.1 Analysis of the urban processes & policies influenced by the projects supported by the Programme

One of the expected benefits of city-to-city partnerships resides in their ability to influence or shape local as well as national policies across social, economic and environmental sectors. Evidence collected suggests that several of the projects financed by the program have served as catalysts for broader innovations and transformations in public policies at local and national level. By addressing critical areas such as environmental sustainability, social policies, innovation, and digitalization, projects financed have created a ripple effect that extends beyond their immediate geographic boundaries. Many of them have provided scalable and replicable models that national governments can adopt. This strategic influence underscores the importance of projects financed not just as isolated initiatives, but as integral components of a larger framework aimed at sustainable and inclusive development.

Overview of the types of processes

Between 2019 and 2024, a total of 835 urban policy initiatives have been supported, created and/or launched in the framework of the 42 projects funded by the cities which answered the survey. This high number reflects the cities' commitment in collaborating through peer-to-peer cooperation in order to review and upgrade their urban policy frameworks as well as plans and strategies and engage in innovative initiatives to drive sustainable urban development and ultimately improve the quality of life for their residents.

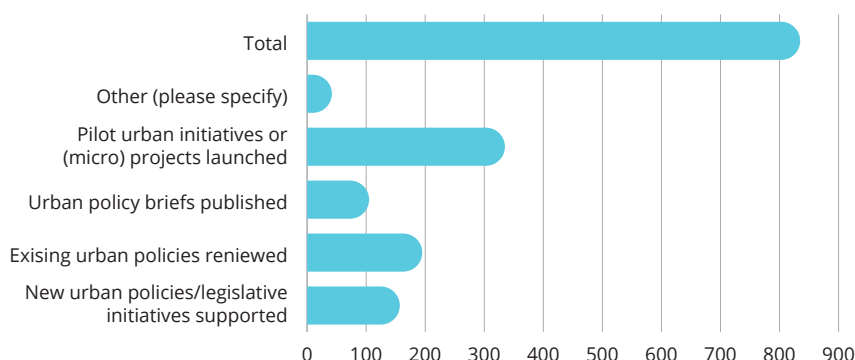
The types of processes supported, created and/or launched at local level are as follows:

- 157 New urban governance policies/legislative initiatives supported;

- 195 Existing urban governance policies reviewed;
- 105 Urban policy briefs published by the projects;
- 335 Pilot urban governance initiatives /(micro)projects launched.

42% of the processes launched consists of **drafting new or reviewing existing urban governance policies**, to update urban policy frameworks considering its paramount importance in shaping the future of cities as their roadmaps for urban development. 53% of the initiatives supported by cities to influence urban policies have consisted of the **support to pilot initiatives** (40%) or the publication of **policy briefs** (13%).

Urban processes & policies influenced by the projects



Overview of the sectors of intervention

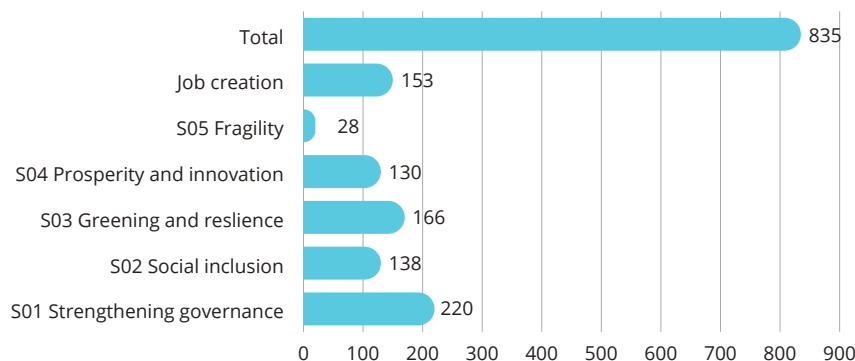
34% of the processes launched have prioritised **the promotion of prosperity and innovation**, with a particular focus on **generating jobs** and fostering economic development in a sustainable manner. **26%** of the processes supported are related to **strengthening urban governance**. Additionally, emphasis is placed on enhancing **greening and resilience (20% of the projects)**, ensuring citizens and their communities can effectively cope with and recover from various challenges and disasters. **16%** of the projects are focused on **social inclusion (S02)**. **4%** of the processes supported are related to **fragile contexts**.

“

Evidence collected suggests that several of the projects financed by the program have served as catalysts for broader innovations and transformations in public policies.



Urban processes & policies influenced by the projects supported by CITIES



EXAMPLES



Examples of urban processes & policies influenced by the projects level supported by the Programme

The “**Strengthening Governance in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador**” project has:

- Prepared a draft of the Law on Development and Territorial Planning for the Metropolitan Area and surrounding municipalities
- Updated the Metropolitan Policy on Environmentally Sustainable Territorial Management and Social Inclusion
- Implemented the metropolitan policy on Public Space

The project “**UNESCO Heritage for Sustainable Cities (USC) - Douala 1st District Municipality**”, seeking to enhance participation in the decision-making process and implement actions to promote tangible and intangible cultural heritage, has supported the following local public policies:

- The Sustainable City Municipal Strategy “Local Agenda 21” has been developed through 104 discussion forums in 22 villages and 4 emblematic neighbourhoods of the Douala 1st District Municipality

- An “Inclusive Governance Policy” that states the systemic involvement of traditional authorities (22 village chiefs across 3 kingdoms/cantons)

The project “**Community gardens as a GenerACTOR for good governance, active citizenship and participation**”, active in Barranquilla, Colombia has supported the following policy processes:

- Implementation of a new city-level regulation for urban agriculture
- Creation of policy briefs, including the Manifesto of Urban and Peri-Urban Governance
- Publication of a mapping of Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture (UPA) in Barranquilla, Colombia and Lazio Region, Italy
- Implementation of Urban Local Group methodology for participatory governance
- Strengthening of the existing urban policies, such as the school garden and balcony-garden initiatives



The **“AcessoCidades - More Accessible and Connected Cities”** project, which focused on mobility policies in Brazilian cities as a tool for sustainable urban development and the reduction of social, racial, and gender inequalities, has worked on:

- The development of new urban policies/ legislative initiatives, such as the Constitutional Amendment 132/2023 proposing a new national tax system with changes for urban mobility
- The revision of existing urban national policies, such as PL 4392/2021: National Program to Assist Elderly Mobility, PL 4489/2021: Social Transportation Voucher Program, PL 1472/2021: Fuel Price Stabilization Fund, Constitutional Amendment 123/2022: Emergency aid for public transportation systems
- Issuing urban policy briefs, such as two urban mobility guides for municipal-level decision-making, five technical-political support reports on various urban mobility topics

The project **“ECOGOBTUR - Empowering Rural Communities and Governments through Sustainable Tourism in El Carchi”** in Ecuador has:

- Updated Sustainable Tourism Plan of Mira, Ecuador
- Financed Provincial Diagnosis of Tourism Capacities of El Carchi, Ecuador

The **“AVANTIA”** project, set out to improve Bogota’s transportation system, has:

- strengthened “Air Plan 2030” policy adopted by decree at the district level by supporting the Bogotá Air Quality Measurement Network and its project to implement a collaborative network of microensors,
- contributed to the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Bicycle Policy 2021-2039 through the evaluation of cycling infrastructure
- contributed to compliance with the Public Policy on Women and Gender Equality by identifying gender barriers in the transport

The project **“Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development in Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area”** in Uganda has:

- influenced policy reforms in the area of municipal finance in Uganda to enable municipalities and Local Governments to access long-term finance for infrastructure and services
- employed three strategies i.e. i) Policy Dialogues, ii) Creditworthiness Assessment iii) Online tools for Climate Smart Capital Investment Planning and iv) Simplified regulations for sub-national PPP projects.

The project **“Desenvolvimento inclusivo e sustentável da Fronteira da Paz (Inclusive and Sustainable Development of the Peace Border)”** has developed pioneering work in cross-border urban agendas in Latin America, by:

- creating an integrated planning process for the two border cities, Sant’Ana do Livramento, Brazil and Rivera, Uruguay, through the development of the Peace Border Urban Agenda and its Action Plan. This is composed of 50 actions and divided into 05 axes: Urban Policies, Environment, Social Inclusion, Administrative Efficiency and Economic Development
- establishing a Solid Waste Management Plan in Sant’Ana do Livramento leveraging selective waste collection in the city, through the promotion of the incipient association of collectors that already existed in the municipality
- generating multi-level governance dynamics in the territory, facilitating consultation with stakeholders in different municipal policies, citizens and the most vulnerable groups, which took on an active role in the process of building their city.

The project **“MOVE IT like Lublin”**, aiming at enhancing the attractiveness and accessibility of the Chisinau, Moldova population to safe, inclusive and comfortable public transport, has succeeded in:



- developing one policy brief along with the legislative initiative on functional classification of public roads. Advocacy activity started to promote this initiative
- preparing three pilot projects to be launched soon, i.e. Traffic Monitoring Center, e-ticketing and new territorial approach for public transport development
- setting in process the development of 3 policy briefs (currently at development or finalisation stage)
- developing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, to be launched in the next months
- initiating new legislative initiatives which will be drafted based on the policy briefs' recommendations related to public transport at local and national level

The Project “**Strengthening Administrative and Financial Competencies of North Kivu Province**” has published and adopted two provincial decrees on tax reform and procedures whose finality is to rectify practices of Congolese financial authorities prior to 2020.

1.2 Key success factors to influence urban public policies

The surveyed partnerships have also provided information about success factors underpinning the influence of funded projects on urban public policies and processes, particularly their integration in multiple platforms for exchanges at regional or national level.

In other cases, the national association of municipalities has played a critical role in the dissemination of experiences at national level. Some projects have reached the interest of national authorities because of the topic itself and/or the importance of the area where the project was implemented (the capital of the country or a major metropolitan area).

Below some testimonies collected on how this policy influencing was achieved: Th the testimonies collected consider to be the most relevant:

1. Adaptation of international regulations to local conditions and dissemination at national level

The “GenerACTOR” project has influenced changes in the national legal and regulatory framework through the adaptation of Rome’s Regulation into a city regulation for Urban and Peri-urban agriculture in Barranquilla, Colombia. Additionally, a public policy document titled “Manifesto on UPA Governance” was created to guide regional and national actions.

2. Integration of the project into multi-actors and multilevel platforms

The project “FLEURIR” in Mauritania has integrated mechanisms for consultation, negotiation and multi-stakeholder collaboration through an alliance of cities and associations of local authorities, a coordination framework with the OMVS (Organisation for the Development of the



Some projects have reached the interest of national authorities because of the topic itself and/or the importance of the area where the project was implemented.

Senegal River), and a multi-level and cross-border consultation framework. These mechanisms have promoted ecologically sustainable development and strengthening institutional relations between the stakeholders involved.

3. Key role played by the national association of municipalities

The project “ECOGOBTUR” in Ecuador participates in the working tables of the Asociación de Municipios del Ecuador (AME) and the Consorcio de Gobiernos Provinciales del Ecuador (CONGOPE), where it exposes its objectives and results, promoting dissemination and exchange between local authorities.

In Brazil, the project “AcessoCidades - cidades mais acessíveis e conectadas” is implemented by the “Frente Nacional de Prefeitos”. The project team was part of the Urban Mobility Consultative Forum with the Ministry of Regional Development (MDR). Through the forum, the team actively collaborated in the construction of the new regulatory legal framework for public collective transportation, which replaces Bill 3,278/2021 and complements the National Urban Mobility Policy (Law No. 12,587/2012), in addition to having supported the construction of policies such as the National Program for Assistance to the Mobility of the Elderly in Urban Areas - PNAMI.

The project “Projeto InovaJuntos” implemented by the Confederação Nacional de Municípios (CNM) in Brazil have encouraged Brazilian municipalities to sign the Brazilian Charter for Smart Cities, through dissemination, explanatory chats about each strategic objective mentioned therein and support for municipal integration strategies.

4. Interests among national authorities

The metropolitan governance system implemented by the project “Projet appui à la croissance économique urbaine et à la gouvernance métropolitaine du Grand Ouaga (PAGO)” in Burkina Faso was requested by the central government to refine and complement the public decentralisation architecture.

The project coordination team of the project “El Centro Histórico de La Habana hacia un modelo de ciudad inteligente con énfasis en el fomento de la economía creativa, en el marco del 500 Aniversario de la Fundación de la Ciudad” in Cuba has maintained a constant exchange and follow-up with government authorities at the national level.

5. Projects in metropolitan areas that influenced urban governance policies and regulatory frameworks at national level

The project “Metro Resilience Guadalajara” in Mexico has established 18 Metropolitan or Coordinating Boards, where the public servants of the new metropolitan municipalities meet to discuss, share and build agreements, projects or government programs on specific themes of metropolitan interest such as the environment, housing, sustainable equality, land management and metropolitan ordinance, integral management of water, civil protection and firefighters, among others. In addition to it the project has participated in several spaces of international collaboration that have generated significant synergies

with other projects working on metropolitan governance, such as the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador.

As mentioned in the introduction, the facility felt the need to expand the data collection process beyond the surveys received by carrying out a number of case studies. One of these seek to examine more closely how mature C2C partnerships, forged over time, can really show the wide scope and added value of decentralised cooperation processes. To this end, we focused on the 50-year long partnership between the municipalities of Reggio Emilia (Italy) and Pemba (Mozambique) as reflected in the box below



THE POTENTIAL OF MATURE CITY-TO-CITY PARTNERSHIPS



One of the 57 projects funded by the EU program called 'MaisPemba' came to consolidate a longstanding partnership between Reggio Emilia (Italy) and Pemba (Mozambique) formally initiated in 1964. The project, which aims at tackling the rapid urbanization linked to the discovery of important natural resources in the Province of Cabo Delgado which in turns accelerated rural migration, builds on existing priorities within the City Council of Pemba to improve the good governance of the territory and deal with the negative effects of this rapid, uncontrolled urbanization.

In the framework of this performance review it was considered useful to go beyond the analysis of the results of the EU-funded project, but to rather zoom in on what were the overall achievements and challenges encountered over the 50 years of existence of the collaboration between the two municipalities. Valuable lessons can be learnt on what it means to construct over time a mature and reciprocal partnership, producing tangible outcomes in terms of development, institutional strengthening, local governance/democracy, and fundraising to support an expanding set of activities. The C2C is now increasingly venturing into the field of diplomacy. This experience also showcases the power of decentralised cooperation as an instrument.

Among the overall lessons learnt by the C2C over time, the following seen particularly relevant:

- **Importance of a clear vision and mission (beyond development aid).** A key indicator of a mature partnership is clarity on the purpose and final aim of the collaboration -showing the level of ambitions nurtured. In the case Reggio Emilia and Pemba, the commonly agreed vision is to promote "decentralization processes and integrated sustainable development at national level, based on experiences at local level". This is translated into a mission: "to contribute to the development of Mozambican institutions through decentralisation cooperation processes and projects, promoting the design and implementation of local public policies by mobilizing the best local and international skills."¹² This shows that the cooperation has not only a strong development focus, but also a clear political and institutional set of ambitions. The added value of decentralised cooperation is seen to lie in peer-to-peer exchanges, in local public policy making and in scaling up of successful experiences.
- **Dual track approach in implementation.** In all project related activities over time, the whole process was oriented towards ensuring that the intervention would: (i) strengthen the municipality and (ii) benefit the community. This requires investing in local public policy making and related dialogues involving the different stakeholders. It implies a focus on vulnerable people (including in recent years the huge number of displaced persons that arrived in Pemba following the conflict in the region of Cabo Delgado). Furthermore, it puts a premium on exploring, particularly for infrastructure or regeneration works, how modalities of 'co-management' could be put in place to ensure sustainability.

¹² See brochure produced by the C2C on the partnership. Fundação E35. <https://shorturl.at/sogyF>

• **Investing in “deep democracy”.** This seen as core objective considering the political economy challenges involved in the democratisation/decentralisation processes in Mozambique. It touches upon the exercise of power (as forged by the history and culture of the country) and the search for more effective state-society relations, underpinned by fair tax systems. The main lesson learnt here is that these are complex, non-linear change processes requiring time, amongst others because they imply major behavioural changes. The C2C has sought to work on fostering ‘deep democracy’ (i.e. changes that go beyond formal modifications of laws or institutions) by focusing on the need to systematically start with the formulation of local public policies (before the projects come in to support them) and to ensure a meaningful participation of citizens. The latter is a complex endeavour as many barriers can exist for the voice of citizens to be heard and taken seriously. The C2C managed over time to support the establishment of four community committees which are now empowered enough to engage in local public policymaking and in the demand for transparency and accountability. Furthermore, building open, legitimate and accountable local governments is equally a long-term task, with ups and downs as leadership changes and may have different perspectives on the matter. Over the last years, the MaisPemba could take significant steps into raising local revenues because the new mayor was open to move on this and on the related challenges to ensure transparency and public integrity

• **Mobilising own resources (taxes as well as social capital).** One of the key approaches adopted by the C2C was to see decentralised cooperation projects merely as providers of “seed money” to support interventions. The real work was to ensure, right from the start, that public actors and communities would consider what they can do with the “own resources” of the territory (taxes and social capital).

• **Financial diversification based on performance.** The C2C partnership has been able to build over time a diversified portfolio of income source, both public and private, securing the continuation of the relationship, broadening the areas of work and ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. One of the key aspects for the creation of a more robust financial diversification resides in the efforts done to establish local medium- to long-term policies. This enables to approach other donors with projects that have strong institutional support, coupled with municipal reinvestment of own resources, and coherence in implementation. Looking for funds is a common task for the two cities and the continuous cooperation between the two municipalities, which has proven results, brings added value to the proposals and act as a guarantee for international donors that may want to support actions in the area. While the Italian partner has more resources to invest into fundraising, the project design remains fundamentally a cooperation, improving the quality and feasibility of the projects. The C2C partnership also facilitated the creation within the municipality of a Department for International Cooperation. The engagement of the local private sector remains challenging. While larger international corporations from the energy sectors have invested in cooperation through corporate social responsibility initiatives, local businesses have been far less engaged. This is mainly due to a lack of trust between the public and private sectors, which is still a barrier that needs addressing to ensure sustainable financial diversification.

• **Multilevel approach including city diplomacy.** The key lesson here is that it seems appropriate to first test out scaling up local innovations at national level in Mozambique (as the partnership did for years, as reflected in their abovementioned vision). There is substantial evidence -also from the recent project supported by the EU- of real influence being exercised at national level. Multilevel governance working groups set up in the framework of the project, involving provincial administrations and ministries, have provided opportunity to test and adapt successful practices in education and solid waste management at both provincial and national levels. Additionally, including the National Association of Mayors—of which the Mayor of Pemba is currently vice president— among the project stakeholders has helped expanding the project’s outcomes beyond the local context. The C2C partnership has the ambition to go further in this multilevel approach by expanding its city diplomacy at global levels. This process is still incipient and should mature in next years -as both cities share an understanding of the potential benefits that such an engagement could bring along.

1.3 The impact: changes in national legal and regulatory frameworks

In addition to the previous examples mentioned in this section we can highlight some concrete examples of the impact of the projects in shaping urban policies in different areas at the national level.

EXAMPLES



Some examples of policy changes

In Uganda, policy recommendations from the **“Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development In the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area”** led to the creation of a Cabinet Memorandum for national adoption. The IRAS system for digitising local revenues has been implemented in over 100 municipalities and districts. This illustrates how well-researched policy recommendations can lead to national policy changes and widespread implementation.

Cuba’s digital policy initiatives were significantly influenced by the **“Centro Histórico de La Habana”** project coordination team working with the Ministry of Communications. This collaboration led to the development of the Policy for Digital Transformation, the Cuban Digital Agenda, and the AI Strategy. These policies aim to enhance national digital infrastructure and services, showcasing the impact of projects on shaping digital and technological policies at the national level.

In Libya, the Ministry of Local Government incorporated training materials and partners from the **“REBUILD”** project into their national training strategy for municipal staff. This emphasises the value of integrating project-

based training programs into national strategies to improve governance.

In Mexico, in the framework of the initiative **“Metro Resilience Guadalajara”** the integration of resilience and innovation into metropolitan instruments like POTmet and PACmetro received national recognition and influenced similar approaches across the country. This highlights the role of resilience and innovation in setting benchmarks for sustainable urban management.

The initiative **“Edinet - Insights into tomorrow cities”** in Moldova identified the need for national legal provisions for General Urban Plans and mobility plans, along with improved public acquisition procedures and regional transport operators. This points to the importance of identifying gaps in national legal frameworks and advocating for necessary reforms.

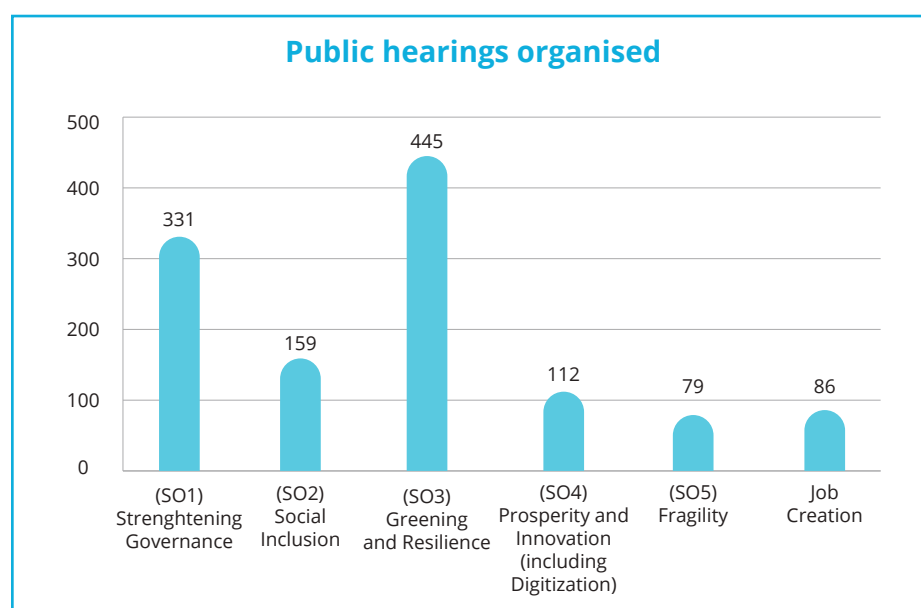
In the Democratic Republic of Congo, reforms in provincial finances undertaken in the framework of the initiative **“Renforcement des compétences administratives et financières de la province du Nord Kivu”** influenced national revenue collection methods, emphasising digital tools for financial governance.

Section 2: Citizen participation and local democracy

Citizen engagement and participatory processes at the local level are essential for fostering local democracy and ensuring sustainable development. These approaches empower citizens and their communities by enabling them to have a direct say in decisions that affect their lives and environment. By actively involving citizens and local communities in decision-making, municipalities and subnational governments can create policies and initiatives that are more responsive to the actual needs and priorities of the people they serve. The importance of citizen engagement cannot be overstated. It enhances transparency and accountability, building trust between the government and the community. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), participatory governance leads to better public policy outcomes and strengthens the social contract between citizens and the state OECD, 2020¹³). When citizens participate in decision-making processes, they are more likely to support and adhere to the outcomes, creating a more cohesive and resilient society. Reflecting this trend, **participatory processes that encourage citizen engagement have been widely promoted and implemented in the partnerships funded under CITIES, utilising a variety of approaches and tools.**

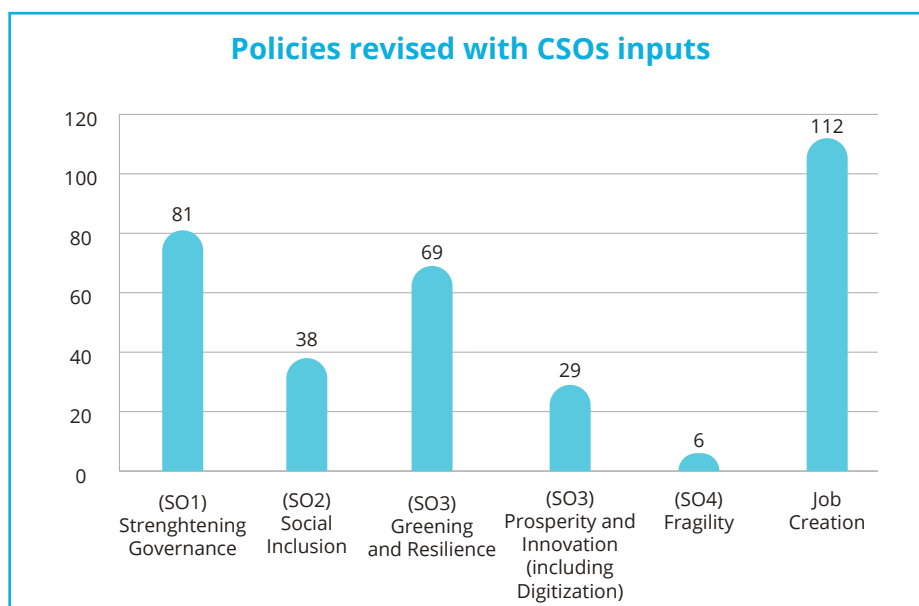
2.1. The approaches and tools used to engage with citizens

Public Hearings have been the most extensively used tool across all objectives, particularly in “Greening and Resilience” (SO3) and “Strengthening Governance” (SO1), indicating a strong preference for direct interaction with citizens to gather feedback and involve them in decision-making processes. Other objectives, such as “Social Inclusion” (SO2), “Prosperity and Innovation” (SO4), and “Job Creation,” have also relied on public hearings, though to a lesser extent.

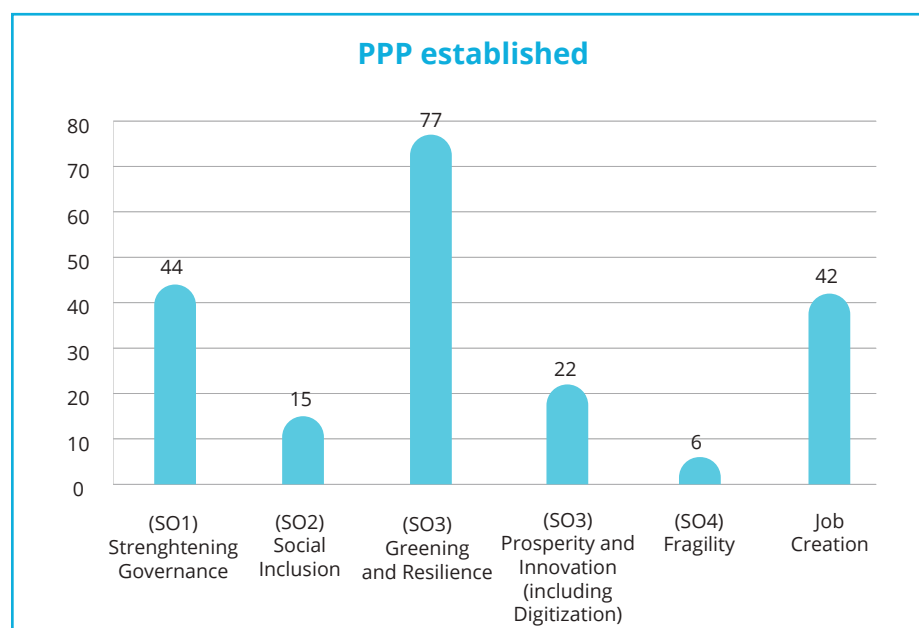


13 OECD, (2020). “Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave.” OECD Publishing.

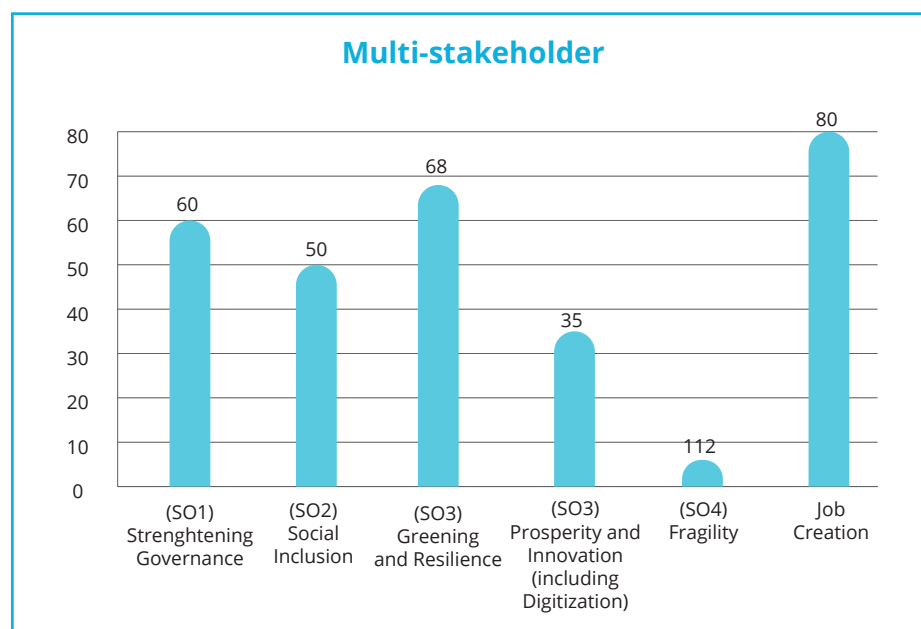
Policies Revised with CSO Inputs: This approach is prominently used in objectives like “Strengthening Governance” (SO1), “Greening and Resilience” (SO3), and “Social Inclusion” (SO2), highlighting the emphasis on incorporating civil society’s input in policymaking to ensure inclusivity and representativeness. “Job Creation” also shows notable engagement through policy revisions, reflecting efforts to align employment strategies with community needs.



PPP (Public-Private Partnerships) are notably present in objectives such as “Strengthening Governance” (SO1), “Social Inclusion” (SO2), and “Greening and Resilience” (SO3), indicating a strategic approach to leverage private sector as well as non-profit expertise and resources for public goals. “Prosperity and Innovation” (SO4) and “Job Creation” have also relied on PPPs, underscoring the role of cross-sector collaboration in driving economic and social development.



Finally, **multi-stakeholder fora and platforms** are significant tools under “Job Creation,” “Greening and Resilience” (SO3), and “Social Inclusion” (SO2), facilitating dialogue and cooperation among various stakeholders.



Now from a thematic perspective, looking into the different objectives individually:



Strengthening Governance (SO1) shows substantial engagement through public hearings and policy revisions, indicating a robust focus on transparency and accountability. The presence of PPPs and multi-stakeholder fora suggests efforts to include diverse actors in governance processes.



Social Inclusion (SO2) efforts demonstrate balanced use of all engagement tools, particularly public hearings and policy revisions, reflecting comprehensive efforts to foster inclusivity and equity. The establishment of PPPs and multi-stakeholder platforms indicates a holistic approach to addressing social inclusion.



Greening and Resilience (SO3) is dominated by public hearings, highlighting strong community involvement in environmental sustainability efforts. The significant use of multi-stakeholder fora and PPPs also underscores collaborative approaches to resilience building.



Prosperity and Innovation (SO4) shows moderate use of all tools, with a focus on public hearings and policy revisions, suggesting a balanced approach to fostering economic growth and innovation. The inclusion of PPPs and multi-stakeholder platforms emphasizes the role of innovation through cross-sector partnerships.

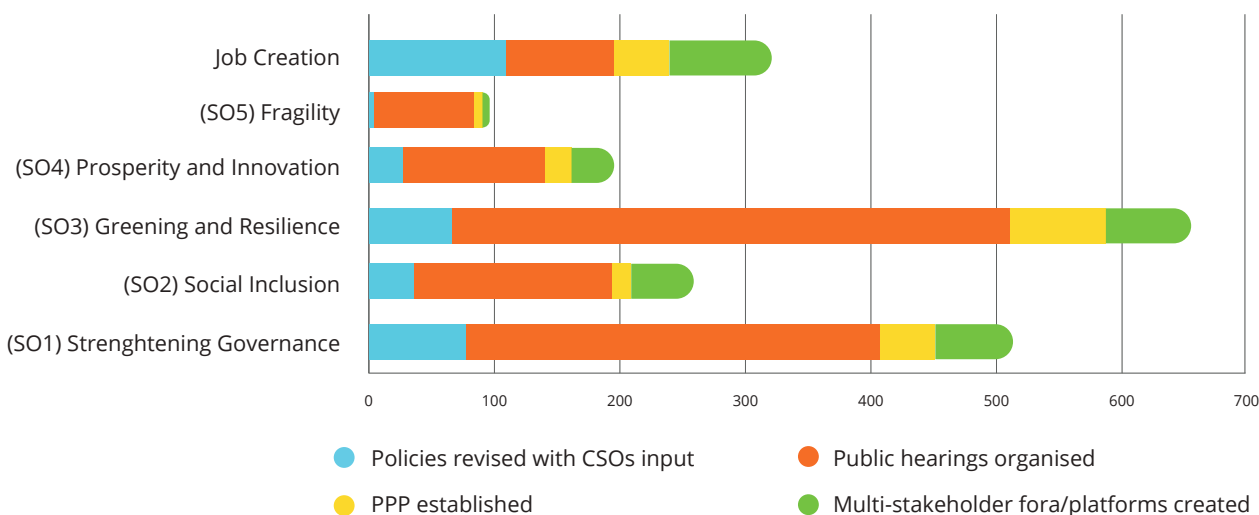


In Fragility (SO5) public hearings and multi-stakeholder fora are the primary tools used, highlighting potential areas for expanding engagement.



Job Creation records strong engagement through public hearings and multi-stakeholder fora reflects a focus on inclusive economic strategies. The use of policy revisions and PPPs indicates efforts to align job creation strategies with broader economic policies and private sector involvement.

Citizen engagement per theme



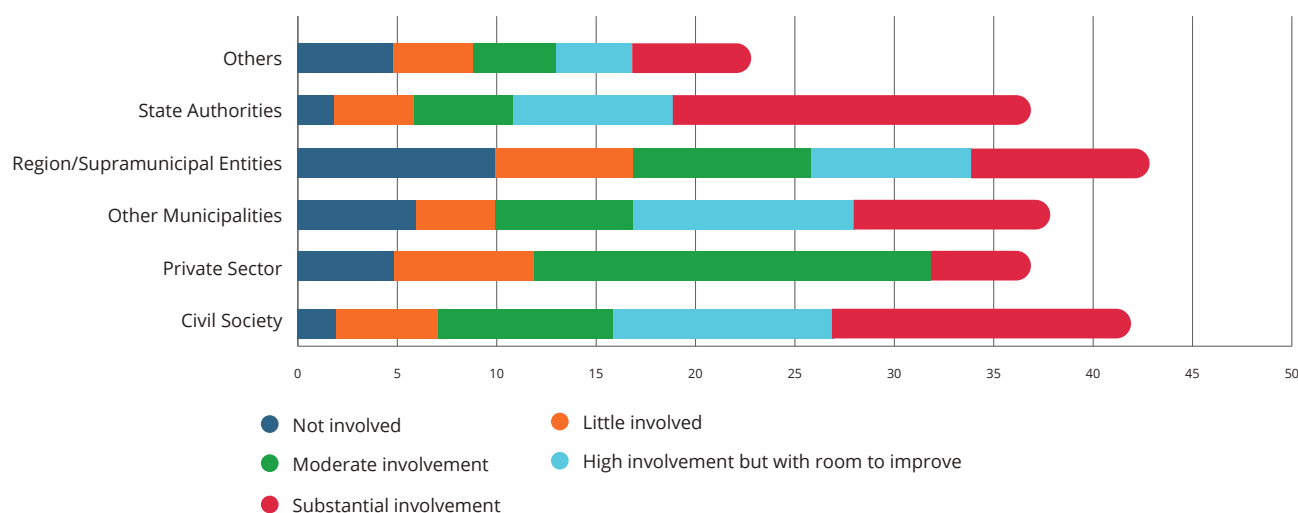
2.2. The actors engaged

With regard to the actors involved in these participatory processes, **civil society and state authorities** emerge as the most consistently engaged stakeholders, with the majority of projects rating their involvement as substantial. Specifically, civil society received a rating of 5 in 15 instances, indicating strong community participation and engagement across many initiatives. Similarly, state authorities were rated 5 in 18 projects, reflecting robust governmental support and alignment with broader national policies and frameworks.

The **private sector and regional entities** show moderate levels of involvement, with ratings frequently falling in the 3 to 4 range, on a 1-5 scale with 1 indicating non-involvement and 5 meaning a substantial involvement. The private sector's involvement was rated 3 or 4 in 20 projects combined, suggesting a generally moderate engagement but highlighting the potential for increased participation. Regional entities also showed similar patterns, with 17 projects rating their involvement as 3 or 4. These findings indicate that while there is a reasonable degree of collaboration with the private sector and regional bodies, there remains room for enhancement to fully leverage their potential in local development efforts.

Other **municipalities and additional actors exhibit varied levels of involvement**, with ratings spanning the full scale from 1 to 5. Inter-municipal cooperation received high involvement ratings in 10 projects but also saw the lowest engagement in 6 projects, indicating inconsistencies in fostering collaboration among municipalities. The involvement of other actors was rated high in some cases, with 6 projects giving a rating of 5, but also faced challenges in others, as reflected by lower ratings in several projects. These variations suggest that while some projects successfully engage a wide range of stakeholders, others struggle to do so, pointing to the need for **tailored strategies to enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration** and maximise the impact of local development initiatives.

Level of engagement by actors



The analysis of the modalities used to involve the different actors reveals a comprehensive and inclusive approach, marked by the widespread use of multiple methods to integrate diverse perspectives and expertise into the decision-making process while ensuring that no single group is excluded from participation.

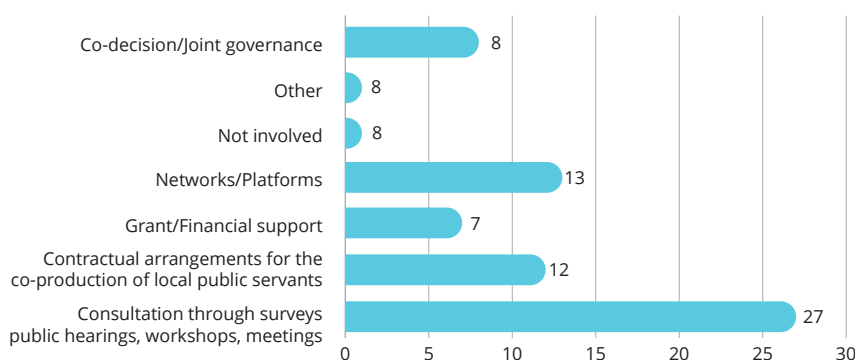
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these results demonstrate a well-rounded strategy for participatory governance

Consultations through surveys, public hearings, workshops, and meetings appears to be the most universally applied method, reflecting its effectiveness in gathering broad inputs and fostering dialogue. **Contractual arrangements and co-decision/joint governance are also prominently utilised**, indicating a commitment to deeper, more formalised partnerships and shared responsibilities in governance. The inclusion of grants and financial support as a modality further emphasises the practical support provided to enable meaningful participation, while networks and platforms facilitate ongoing collaboration and communication. Overall, these results demonstrate a well-rounded strategy for participatory governance that leverages a combination of consultative, collaborative, and supportive approaches to engage a wide range of stakeholders.

This tendency can for instance be observed in the case of the modalities employed to engage with the public sector, which reportedly engaged in implementation by all but three of the partnerships. As shown in the chart below, the private sector was engaged primarily through Consultation through surveys, public hearings, workshops, meetings (39% of cases), Contractual arrangements for the “co-production of local public servants” (17% of cases) and Networks/Platforms (19% of cases).

Modalities for the involvement of the Private Sector



2.3 Key ingredients of success

The surveyed partnerships have also provided qualitative information about the key success factors underpinning participatory initiatives. The following box summarises these factors, as perceived by the participating cities and municipalities, and provides illustrative examples.

EXAMPLES



Key Ingredients and Success Factors for Successful Participatory Initiatives

1. Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement: Successful initiatives actively involve a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors and levels, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

Example - The **“FLEURIR - Favoriser L’Écosystème Urbain”** project in Rosso, Mauritania, demonstrated the importance of integrating diverse stakeholders, including municipal councillors, technical teams, and civil society members. This inclusive approach ensured broad-based support and active citizen involvement in governance processes.

2. Effective Communication and Collaboration: Open and continuous communication between stakeholders, coupled with collaborative decision-making processes, enhances mutual understanding and cooperation, leading to more effective outcomes.

Example - The **“Grand Forum Citoyen Agenda 21 Local de Douala 1er”** in Cameroon engaged

local communities through 104 forums, involving 22 villages, 4 neighbourhoods, and 26 traditional chiefs, enhancing dialogue between various community groups and local authorities.

3. The value of Educational and Capacity-Building Programs: Investing in education and capacity-building initiatives equips community members with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in and contribute to sustainable development efforts.

Example - The **“Fomento del desarrollo urbano, integrado, inclusivo, resiliente y ecológico”** project in Villa María, Argentina, implemented the Formación de Formadores program, educating participants on environmental sustainability and empowering them to become community educators.

4. Leveraging Local Knowledge and Expertise: Successful participatory initiatives recognize and leverage local knowledge, ensuring that development plans are contextually relevant and effectively address the specific needs and priorities of the community.

Example - The **“GenerACTOR - Community Gardens for Good Governance”** project in Barranquilla, Colombia utilised the Urban Local Group (ULG) methodology to harness local expertise in co-producing city strategies and action plans.

5. Transparent and Accountable Processes: Transparency and accountability in decision-making processes build trust among stakeholders, ensuring greater acceptance and support for the initiatives.

Example - The **“Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development In the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area”** emphasised transparency in the selection of beneficiaries for basic services through a survey with predefined criteria, ensuring community trust and buy-in.

6. Focus on Sustainability and Long-Term Impact: Prioritising sustainability ensures that the benefits of participatory initiatives are long-lasting and contribute to the broader goals of environmental and social resilience.

Example - The **“CRIC - Climate Resilient and Inclusive Cities”** project in Indonesia organised 210 dialogue events to develop climate mitigation and adaptation plans, emphasising long-term environmental sustainability.

7. Utilisation of Technology and Innovation: Incorporating technology and innovative solutions can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of participatory initiatives, making it easier for citizens to engage and for processes to be more streamlined.

Example - The **“El Centro Histórico de La Habana”** project in Cuba, integrated digital tools to streamline urban processes and enhance public services, also focusing on digital literacy among citizens.

8. Cultural and Social Relevance: Tailoring initiatives to align with local cultural and social contexts increases community engagement and ensures that the initiatives are well-received and supported by the local population.

Example - The **“Respira Córdoba”** project in Argentina engaged local communities through culturally relevant themes such as historical and environmental preservation, drawing significant participation and fostering a sense of community.



Successful participatory initiatives recognize and leverage local knowledge.

In addition to these examples, feedback received from the surveys and the debates during the 2024 global event in Barcelona (bringing all the cities together) point to an important lesson learnt related to the need to properly “localize” attempts to foster local democracy and governance. European partners can provide examples of ‘good practice’ on meaningful citizen participation in the affairs of the city or on changes in the exercise of public power (towards more transparency and accountability). But at the end of the day contextual conditions in the partner country will largely determine what changes are feasible and how progress can be made. This is illustrated by the experience gained in Cabo Verde in the C2C partnership between Praia and Madrid (see box below).

FOSTERING LOCAL DEMOCRACY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PREVAILING POLITICAL ECONOMY CONDITIONS



The C2C partnership between the municipality of Praia (Cap Verde) and Madrid sought to adapt local integrated urban development planning to the SDGs through multi-actor and multi-level governance approaches - with a particular focus on water and sanitation in the poorest areas (barrios).

From the outset, different objectives were on the radar: (i) to roll out the programme on the basis of meaningful citizen participation “adapted to the local context”; (ii) to raise awareness among citizens on what it means to deliver a public service like water and sanitation, including behavioural changes on their side; (iii) to foster a tripartite dialogue through an adequate

institutional set-up - facilitating collective action between the city, the agency in charge of water delivery (ADS) and the citizens.

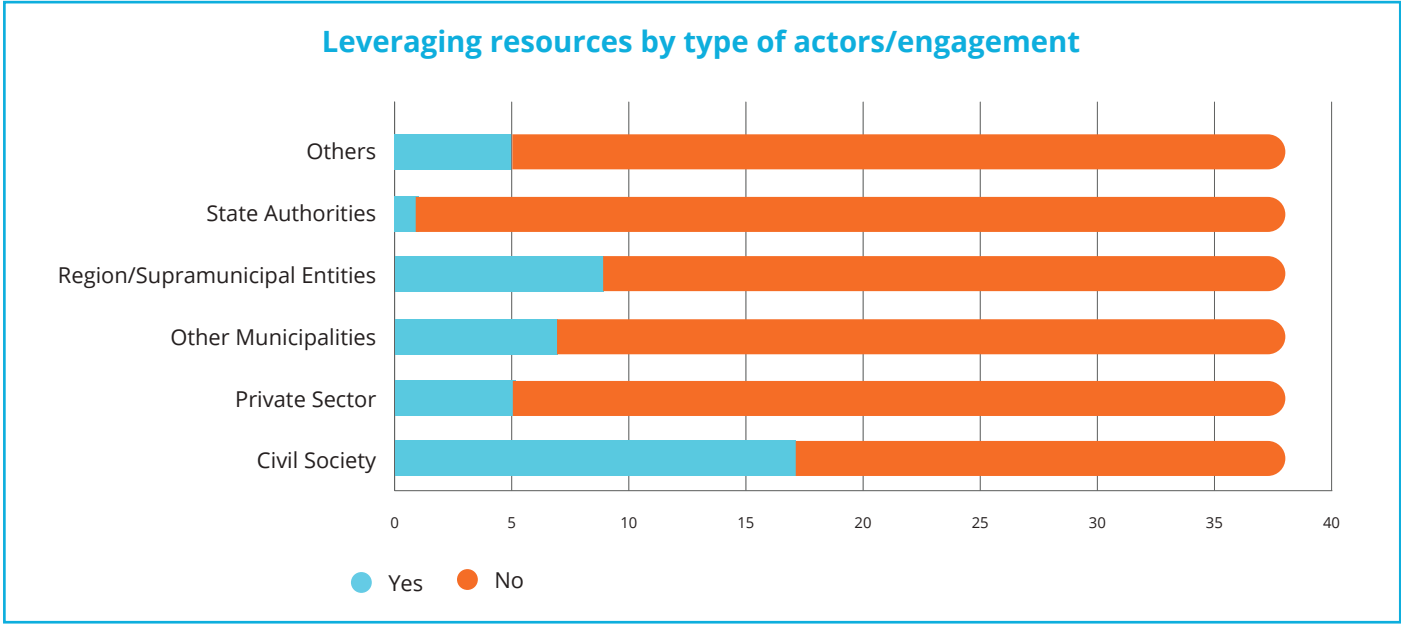
Four major lessons are being learnt in implementation:

- ***Need to localise approaches to participation.*** In Madrid, there are consolidated mechanisms to systematically involve citizens and ensuring their feedback on key local issues and reforms, primarily organised through digital means. That model could not be transported to Praia, where there is also a tradition of getting citizen inputs but in a less structured manner and with citizens acting as “part of a community” rather than as individual citizens.
- ***Direct engagement respecting the logic of ‘proximity’.*** Quite some attention was paid to ensuring a genuinely participatory process with citizens in targeted areas / barrios. More than 3000 enquires were ensured in the barrios, using (trained) local youth community facilitators to come to a credible understanding of local power dynamics, citizen’s dynamics as well as ambiguities towards public service delivery (e.g. illegal sourcing of water).
- ***Institutionalising dialogue.*** While consultations take place between the municipality and the citizens on a wide range of issues, there is no formal framework to ensure that all inputs from citizens are integrated in municipal systems for planning and decision. The C2C therefore tries to push forward the idea of setting up a Council for citizen participation that would ensure a more structured approach and follow-up.
- ***Effective changes take time at all levels.*** Implementation was not without challenges considering prevailing political economy conditions (including levels of mistrust) at all levels (politicians, the technical water agency, citizens and other groups). Progress has been achieved in building more effective linkages between the city and the technical agency regarding water and sanitation provision in poor neighbourhoods. However, challenges remain in terms of relations between the technical agency and citizens, the acceptance of the need for a structured tripartite dialogue or the time it takes to create behavioural changes among poor citizens targeted by the program (e.g. to maintain hygienic infrastructure installed or to accept to pay for water).



2.3. The impact of citizen engagement: leveraging resources for local development

One first dimension to assess the impact of the participatory approaches implemented by the Cities within the framework of the programme is the level and nature of the resources which have been leveraged as a result of such engagement (see Box below for types of resources mobilised). In this respect, the analysis reveals mixed results, which vary significantly depending on the type of actor involved.



Civil society shows a relatively balanced outcome, with **nearly half of the partnerships being successful in leveraging resources**. This indicates that civil society is a significant player in providing cities and municipalities with concrete ideas, proposals, volunteer work and other resources. However, there is still room for improvement to increase the success rate.

Collaboration with other municipalities has been moderately successful, with 9 instances of success. This suggests that **inter-municipal cooperation is beneficial but could be further improved**. Strengthening these partnerships can help share best practices, resources, and support across municipalities.

Academia has seen limited success, with only 7 successful instances. This indicates that while academia can provide valuable research, data, and technical expertise, the **existing modalities might not be fully capitalizing on these strengths**. Developing more targeted engagement strategies with academic institutions could enhance their contribution.

The private sector has a low success rate, with only 5 instances of successful resource mobilization out of 38. This suggests that **current modalities might not be effectively engaging the private sector or that there are barriers to private sector participation that need to be addressed**. Enhancing private sector involvement



could potentially bring in more financial resources and innovative solutions.

State authorities also show limited success, **with only 5 instances of effective resource mobilization**. This suggests that state-level engagement strategies need to be re-evaluated to improve their effectiveness. Ensuring that state authorities are more involved could provide municipalities with better access to regulatory support, funding, and policy alignment.

Finally, regional entities have the lowest success rate, with only 1 successful instance, highlighting significant challenges in engaging these entities. Addressing the barriers and creating more effective modalities for their involvement could unlock additional resources and support for municipalities.

Types of resources mobilised

Financial Resources

- **Co-financing from Civil Society:** Civil society contributed financial resources to support pilot projects.
- **International Funding:** International funds and programmes, such as the UNIDO or the United Nations Capital Development Fund provided additional resources to support technical assistance, and pilot projects.
- **University Investments:** Universities invested to establish co-working offices and support project activities.

Non-Financial Resources

- **Community Engagement:** Civil society and local communities provided spaces for workshops, food, and logistical support.
- **Logistical Support from Regional Governments:** Regional governments facilitated logistics and organised events.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Various

actors, including ministries, academia, and NGOs, provided ideas, advice, and technical knowledge.

Technical Resources

- **Technical Assistance and Training:** Projects received technical assistance and training from organisations like ICMPD, which funded strategic planning processes. Municipalities also benefited from technical knowledge and professional expertise in policy development and strategic planning.
- **Use of Digital Platforms:** Resources were mobilised to develop digital platforms for public service management, as seen in the contributions for developing a digital platform and entrepreneurship programs.
- **Support from Academia:** Academic institutions contributed to knowledge management, training, and the development of technical guides. For example,

universities were involved in creating schools of sustainable development and providing technical training.

Human Resources

- **Volunteer Work and Community Participation:** Civil society and local communities actively participated in various project initiatives through volunteer work and capacity-building activities. For instance, civil society provided human resources for rehabilitation projects and waste collection campaigns.
- **Collaboration with Public Administrators:** Public administrators worked alongside citizens in urban local group assemblies to co-manage local initiatives.
- **Professional Expertise:** Various stakeholders, including academia and private sector professionals, offered their expertise in different project areas. For example, the private sector supported the investment in fishery ports and provided new technologies for urban smart solutions.

Section 3: Capacity Development Dimension

3.1 Types and thematic focus of capacity development activities

Capacity development is a critical component in building skills at the local level for governments. As such, it has been one of the axes chosen by all projects, whether through different methods (with physical presence, residential or online training courses, study visits, job shadowing, awareness-raising activities and conferences). It seeks to equip municipal leaders, staff, and other stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively manage urban governance frameworks, practices, and tools. Through the programme, thousands of people have been reached that have played a part in setting up sustainable urban strategies.

Trainings

All projects have implemented some form of capacity development, with

- **over 2700 municipal staff receiving some form of training** with the aim to enhance their knowledge of urban governance frameworks, practices, and tools;
- **over 250 study visits or international exchanges** have taken place in the framework of the programme
- **roughly 650 smaller or bigger awareness-raising activities on urban governance** covering topics such as co-governance, urban regeneration, transparency, integrated planning, job creation, or the sustainable development goals to name a few.

The training topics cover a broad spectrum, from environmental resilience to digital transformation (as illustrated in the table below), accounting for the diverse challenges and opportunities that cities involved in the Programme encounter and

target. Partnerships provided estimates on the amount of people that were trained in the different topics, based on available indicators or internal record of overall participation in formal and informal training activities.

The activities themselves ranged greatly in terms of focus, outreach and duration. We have examples of training programmes imparted to local officials (training on gender mainstreaming for municipal workers of Avellaneda, Argentina imparted by the Italian partners), specific sessions targeting selected stakeholders (e.g. training for trainers for Universities in Libya), to massive short-term training imparted onto citizens (e.g. training on job creation in sustainable agriculture for 6000 female citizens in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, over 4000 people reached by door-to-door training on waste management and urban health in Avellaneda, Argentina).

In alignment with the responses related to the specific objectives of the call (see details in sections 5 to 7), **training sessions focused on “Climate Change, Resilience, and Environment” engaged**



the most individuals - reaching out to over 4000 individuals – highlighting the essential role of environmental sustainability and resilience in contemporary urban settings. The topic of “Territorial Planning and Management” followed closely – reaching approximately 2385 individuals – demonstrating the programme’s effectiveness in supporting local needs and leveraging local expertise to inform urban planning strategies. Notably, these two topics also emerged as the most popular overall, with 24 and 27 partnerships actively engaged in them, respectively.

Training topics	Total Estimated Number of Participants	Number of partnerships
Climate change, resilience, and environment	4201	24
Integrated Territorial planning and management	2385	27
GESI (Gender and Social inclusion)/HRBA (Human Rights-Based Approach)	2545	18
Job creation	7471	17
Information and Communication Technologies/Digitalisation	2390	21
Participatory systems	4446	19
Innovation & start-ups	2582	18
Urban Health	5336	9
Others (please specify)	2096	11
E-governance	1548	13
Fragility risks and resilience	1473	9

“Job creation” and “Gender and Social Inclusion/HRBA” also stood out in terms of trained individuals on average, although the extremely high numbers we obtained for the field of job creation is a direct result of one single project engaging in massive training (6000 individuals). They were selected by roughly half of the respondents, 17 and 18 respectively, similarly to “Information and Communication Technologies/Digitalisation” (21 partnerships), “Participatory systems” (19 partnerships) and “Innovation & start-ups” (18 partnerships), highlighting the importance of adaptability in the grassroots job market, inclusive governance, digital transition and participatory governance within these decentralised cooperation projects. Fewer partnerships working on “Urban Health” and “Fragility risks and resilience”, in line with last year’s results, may signify that these areas are either niche or emerging focal areas within the cities involved in the Programme. **Overall, this breakdown emphasises the nuanced and multi-faceted training needs inherent in urban governance.**

Study visits

Study visits are a vital tool for strengthening collaborative efforts supported by decentralised cooperation: they encourage shared learning and facilitate the exchange of best practices. Partnerships approach to study visits differed, covering a wide range of set-ups, i.e. **group exchanges, international training courses and summer schools as well as individual job-shadowing, benchmarking missions or political missions etc.**

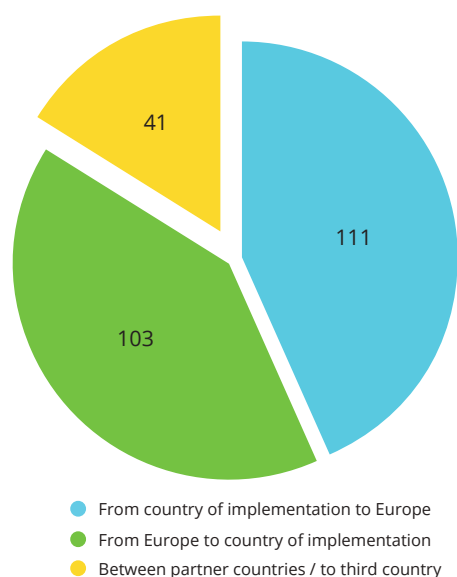
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Study visits encourage shared learning and facilitate the exchange of best practices.

A substantial 88% of projects have organised at least one study visit. What's more, an impressive **29% of respondents have taken it a step further by facilitating more than 5 study visits** until now, demonstrating their commitment to immersive learning and collaboration. **In total, the Programme has supported 255 individual or group study visits.** The significance of these visits in such a large number of projects highlights their essential role in fostering effective and meaningful decentralised cooperation, which is fundamentally about sharing experiences, promoting reciprocal learning, and building partnerships across communities.

The Programme supported the organisation of 111 study group visits from the countries of implementation to Europe, while the number in the opposite direction is only slightly lower (103). Additionally, as several partnerships involved triangular cooperation, a non-negligible number of study visits took place between partner countries (45).

Study Visits supported by the Programme





EXAMPLES

Some examples of study visits

Visiting a third country sharing similar social and economic reality - A delegation from São Tomé and Spain participated in a **"REHDES"** project study visit to a third partner country, Cape Verde. They visited municipalities on Fogo and Santiago islands, focusing on sustainable urban waste management. The visit facilitated the exchange of knowledge and best practices between Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe, emphasising circular economy initiatives and addressing shared urban waste management challenges. It was particularly useful and appreciated as both São Tomé and Cape Verde share similar challenges in urban waste management.

Summer schools on Local Development - the city of Trento hosted a summer school entitled **"Local Development for Sustainable Cities"** which saw the participation of the Mozambican partners **"MUDAR"** project coming from the Municipality of Beira and IFAPA (training centre). The Summer School focused on good territorial practices in Trentino, relevant for the pilot infrastructure project **"Urban Regeneration of the informal Macuti-Miquejo neighbourhood of Beira"**, starting from the key concept of "local development" understood as the joint intervention of public and private local actors on specific resources present in a specific territory which, through processes of change and transformation, improve the well-being of the communities that inhabit it. The main objective of the Summer School was to promote the construction of a network among the actors involved to integrate approaches, share good practices and organise a strategic vision of local development, while focusing on relevant themes such as Green Cities and Digital Services, Waste

Management, Bio-economy, Public-private alliances and social innovation

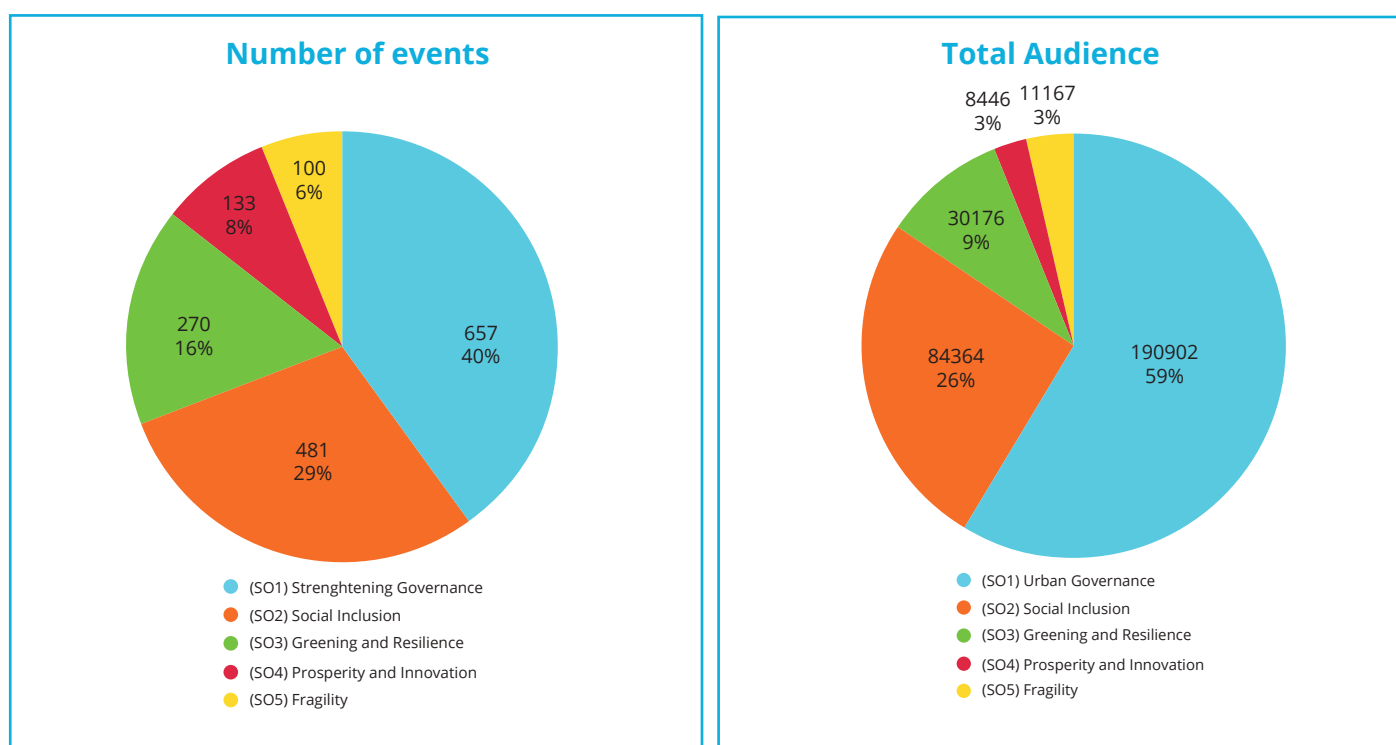
Cross-border Cooperation - The study visits played a crucial role in the **"FLEURIR"** project by promoting the sustainable management of the Senegal River's resources and fostering a cooperative space between the two banks of the Senegal River – Rosso, Mauritania, and Podor, Senegal – facilitated by FAMSI. The participation of a wide range of actors, including municipal representatives, members of local associations, and international partners, enriched the exchanges and collaborations. Moreover, direct interactions during visits have strengthened interinstitutional and cross-border relationships, consolidating the foundations for sustainable cooperation.

International missions to network and foster innovation - The **"FRIENDSHIP"** project involved a total of 21 places in Slovenia, Montenegro, Turkey, and Mongolia, including the Head of departments of the Darkhan-Uul province governor's office, IDEF committee members, Project Steering committee members, Local business entrepreneurs, and NALAS delegation. The visit facilitates networking opportunities and fosters collaborations between local stakeholders from different countries, including government officials, business leaders, and community representatives. Amongst the most noteworthy results, participants from all countries were inspired to adapt or replicate in their own contexts Turkey's initiatives in youth empowerment and social innovation, including youth entrepreneurship programs, social impact initiatives, and community development projects.

Awareness raising activities

The capacity building approach has been largely employed by most respondents – all but one of the respondents reported having organised at least one awareness raising event – in a variety of settings, with a wide range of audiences and topics, e.g. from smaller meetings targeting selected stakeholders to massive campaigns reaching out to thousands of citizens. This brings in a heterogenous set of data, which – in a similar fashion to other areas of the survey – is moreover exacerbated by the variety of available indicators and approaches to data collection.

The majority of awareness-raising activities reported fit under the specific objective “Strengthening Urban Governance”, with a total of 656 activities or events reported by 34 partnerships. The other objectives scored significantly less both in terms of activities/ events and number of partnerships addressing those objectives (see charts below).



The topics addressed by the awareness-raising activities vary – in accordance with the wide range of themes and activities supported by the Programme.



EXAMPLES

Awareness raising activities

Mass activities sensitising on social inclusion or SDGs - The project **“Amélioration de la Gouvernance Urbaine et de l’Ouverture Sociale dans les Communes de Haho 1, Haho 2, Haho 3 et Haho 4 dans la Préfecture de Haho au Togo”** has produced 14 image kits to use during monthly mass awareness raising activities organised in the different canton capitals, villages, and neighbourhoods focusing on Citizen Control of Public Action (CCPA), Gender equality, the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), Accessibility for people with disabilities, Social inclusion, Economic empowerment of women, Political participation of women, Birth registration, Education of young girls, Women’s access to land, Participatory approach and civic engagement. In Brazil, the **“Inovajuntos”** project instead ensured a space to share best practice in urban governance and SDGs with the over 9000 participants of the annual CNM **“March to Brasilia in defence of municipalities”**.

Engaging with international campaigns – A group of 10 municipalities joined forces with the **“mUEve Project”** to celebrate Urban October with a gender perspective as a tool to encourage reflection on the empowerment of women in the public spaces of Costa Rican cantons. Internationally, UN-Habitat promoted Urban October as a series of events and discussions about the challenges and opportunities facing cities and sustainable urban development. For this occasion, the municipalities coordinated actions in their communities to promote greater use of public spaces and highlight the right to the city, with a particular emphasis on the female perspective.

Information sessions meet training - The **“SLEC”** project has organised a hundred meetings at regional level to present, inform, discuss, and validate the institutional diagnosis with local stakeholders, discussing various governance and management models. These meetings provided opportunities to exchange national and Mediterranean best practices. Additionally, a hundred socio-energy diagnosis workshops were conducted with civil society to discuss the environmental and climatic vocation of each

municipality and various topics for strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders.

Local or international conferences on urban governance - The Programme has supported the organisation of at least 5 conferences on urban governance, for instance the Urban Forum of Greater Ouaga bringing together several hundred people from the communes of Greater Ouaga, secondary towns of Burkina Faso, universities, regional and national services, civil society. The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona was a catalyzer for the organisation of two conferences on metropolitan urban governance - the International Conference of Metropolitan Resilience (CIRM) organised together with the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara (**“Metro Resilience Guadalajara”**), as well as an international conference on metropolitan governance organised by the **“Gobernanza Metropolitana”** project (OPAMMS, El Salvador – AMB, Spain). In Habana, Cuba the Programme supported the organisation of two international events on digitalization and the management of heritage cities.

Local sensitization to greening - Several projects targeted citizens to sensitise and educate about waste management, urban health, or the importance of citizen support to maintain urban greening like through the **City Link Banjul-Oostende** project.

Webinars were a very popular tool used to train as well as to raise awareness on specific topics, especially in the pandemic and post-pandemic world, e.g. focusing on “caretaking urbanism” (**“Ciudades que Cuidan project”**) or economic productivity and sustainability of community gardens (**“GenerACTOR”**).

Street theatre and the arts - The partnership between the North Kivu province, RDC and the Municipality of Woluwé Saint Pierre, Belgium used street theatre companies in their public awareness campaigns to sensitise people on the importance of declaring births and deaths at registry offices. These campaigns have enabled them to reach a more diverse public, contributing to the success of the project.

3.2 Beneficiaries of capacity building efforts

The different components of the capacity building dimensions attracted and served diverse audiences, based on themes and topics, training aims and needs, local contexts and cultural peculiarities. What follows are the tendencies that could be observed through the available data presented by the projects.

Trainings

Overall, local governments have directed their efforts primarily internally towards their own staff with an estimated total of around 2700 executive, council, administrative municipal staff being reached. This is almost two and a half times the number of private contractors (estimate 1150 persons) and 60% more than the number of civil society leaders that were trained through these activities (estimate 1708 persons). Several partnerships set up training sessions, study visits, job shadowing to support the implementation of other activities, depending on a continuous need assessment.

CASE STUDY

SUPPORTING DECENTRALISATION BY SUPPORTING LOCAL STAFF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN TIMOR LESTE

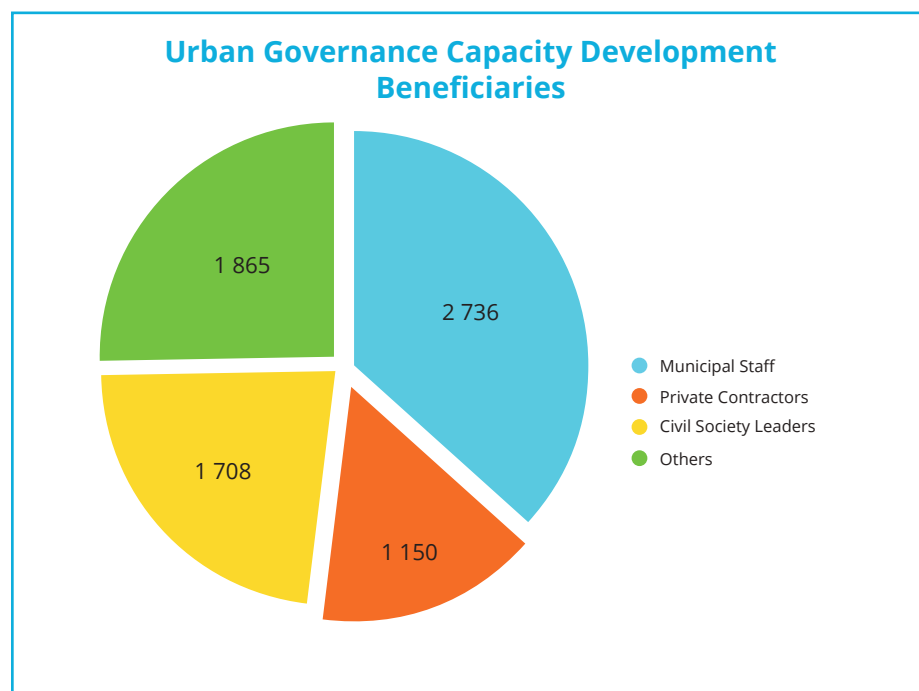


The project implemented in Dili, Timor Leste by the municipal authority in cooperation with the Municipality of Lisbon, Portugal and the Union of Portuguese-Speaking Capital Cities, aimed to address skill gaps in municipal administration. This initiative targeted key areas including municipal management, human resources, financial oversight, inspection, spatial and urban planning, resilience, and operational urban services. This effort is part of the broader decentralisation process led by the Ministry of State Administration, which involves transferring competencies to local municipalities. Navigating a complex administrative landscape, the project directly and indirectly facilitated exchanges

on local democracy and service delivery practices at both local and ministerial levels, to the point that it influenced the ministerial plan to set up municipal citizens' desks nation-wide.

To lay the basis for any future work, the partnership focused on enhancing basic language and IT skills for senior and administrative municipal staff. This training aimed to bridge gaps in local knowledge and ensure access to existing materials (very limited in the local Tetun language), improve public services, and establish a fully operational citizen's desk as well as a training centre accessible to the local population and other municipalities. Additionally, local staff received training on public space accessibility and urbanism. The collaboration with European and global partners provided the Dili administration with valuable examples of effective service delivery, strategic local development, and best practices. This exposure inspired the establishment of the seeds for a functional and transparent local administration, fostering a more efficient and responsive municipal governance.

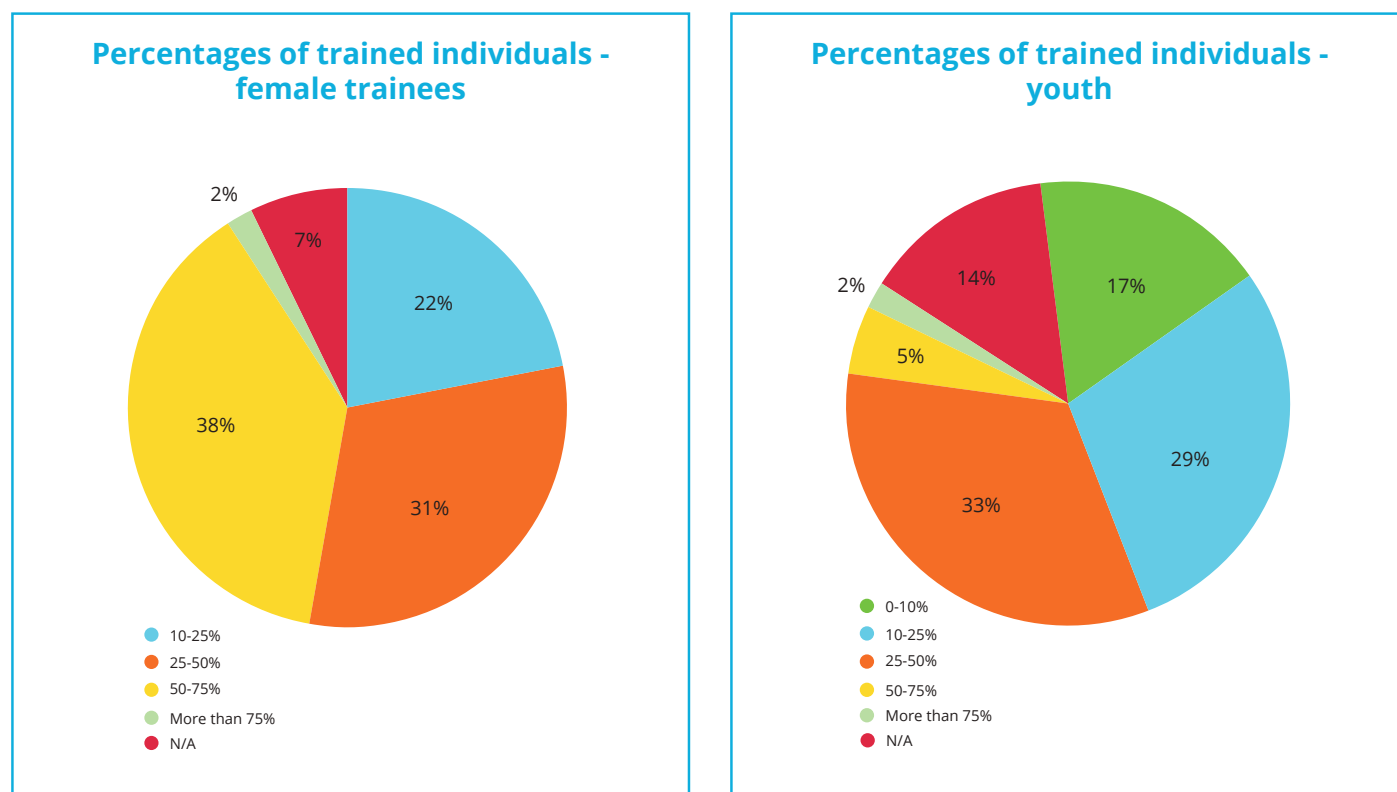
Activities also reached out to an additional estimated total of 1865 of other beneficiaries. If we consider these numbers, the total number of beneficiaries is around 7460 people throughout the 41 projects that have provided information on this specific issue.



Women and youth participation in training activities

From the data collected it seems that although the majority of trained individuals were male, although 69% of available answers are situated in a range where the actual numbers could be around the balance, with 41% of respondents ensuring a commendable gender balance in their activities by involving between 50 and 75% female trainees and a 33% of respondents involving between 25 and 50% female trainees. Only one project claimed to have more than 75% female beneficiaries of their training activities, while 9 had a significantly lower female involvement (10-25%).

The involvement of youth – individuals aged 15 to 29 – was satisfactory for these activities with 69% of projects reporting an involvement between 25% and 75% and only 21% reporting rates lower than 25%.



Women and youth participation in awareness raising activities

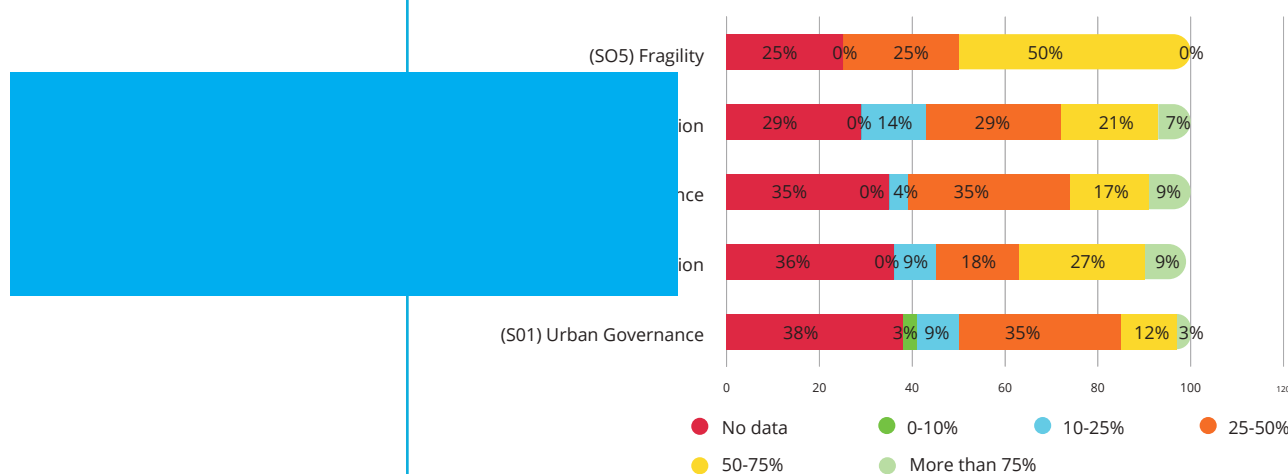
Participation of women and youth in awareness-raising activities was monitored, utilising precise data or informed estimates where available. For female participation, data was obtained for 62% to 75% of reported activities, varying by objective. However, data collection on youth participation was notably lower, with only approximately half of the responses providing information. This significant data gap, especially pronounced for youth participation, highlights a need for a more structured approach during the application stage to enhance future reporting accuracy.

It is noteworthy that **women participation reaches its highest in activities focused on social inclusion and fragility, and is at its lowest in activities addressing urban governance at large, as shown in the chart below.** This trend may suggest both an existing representation gap and the adoption of more targeted outreach in areas directly related to gender equality. On average, female participation varies significantly, ranging from a low of 34.6% in urban governance awareness activities to a high of 52% in events targeting fragility.

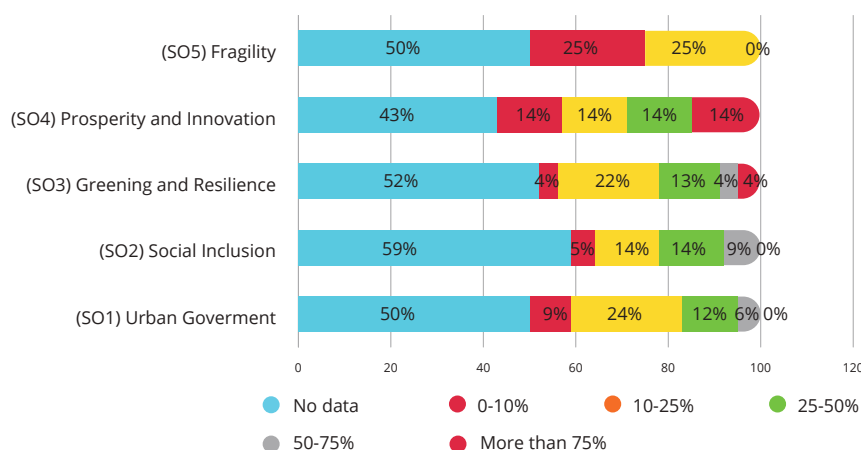
If we look into examples, we have several examples of the same partnership reporting high rates of female participation (70-75%) in the sessions on early childhood care and gender or community campaigns on adolescent reproductive health, gender-based violence prevention, menstrual hygiene, prevention of illicit use of drugs, dangers of irregular migration while only much lower participation rates (30%) in activities on integrated planning, social audit capacity building, E-government, rural development through territorial approach.

Average youth participation follows a similar trend: at its highest in activities most likely to directly target youth such as job creation (31.2%) while lower in urban governance activities (20%). It is surprisingly at this level in social inclusion activities (20.5%), although it's clear from a glance at the specific topics that the focus was more on gender equality and inclusion of people living with disabilities.

Women participation - Awareness raising activities



Youth participation - Awareness raising activities



3.3 Key ingredients of success of capacity development activities

“

Through the survey we were able to identify several examples of successful practices issued from these decentralised cooperation experiences.



The sharing of best practices and knowledge between partners was a fundamental aspect of all partnerships. Almost all partnerships reported having used all of the above tools to develop skills, share knowledge, raise awareness, which was functional to the successful implementation of all other components of the project - be it pilot projects, infrastructure, policy-reform, implementation of strategic plans and new approaches. **Reciprocal learning, in particular, is key to successful decentralised cooperation:** not only is it key for stakeholders and leaders from partner countries to explore existing practices in Europe but this is true also for the opposite, with European partners benefiting from learning about the contexts and realities of their counterparts in the country of implementation.

Through the survey we were able to identify several examples of successful practices issued from these decentralised cooperation experiences - which have been presented above through the different examples of capacity building activities, trainings, study visits. Based on a revision of the projects' applications and ROM reviews, partnerships had different approaches to need

assessments and indicators, with several partnerships reviewing or complementing their initial plan based on new knowledge, implementation experience and/or a process of ROM reviewing initiated by the European Delegations managing the projects.

Projects have targeted different audiences and at different scales, as described above, based on their own needs and their capacities to reach out to the different actors. A more thorough evaluation would be able to determine whether each partnership was successful in fulfilling their plans, and the actual impact of these activities, but all partnerships reported that capacity building activities were fundamental in the implementation of all components of the projects.

Below, we selected the Avellaneda-Pordenone partnership to illustrate several of these successful aspects of learning.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR BETTER MUNICIPAL AND INTERMUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT – THE CASE OF AVELLANEDA AND PORDENONE

The project titled “Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado, inclusivo, innovador y sostenible de la ciudad de Avellaneda y la región,” led by the Municipality of Avellaneda in Argentina in collaboration with the Municipality of Pordenone, Italy, and the Mercociudades Network, successfully carried out several capacity-building initiatives.

These activities targeted municipal staff, teachers, local actors, and the broader community. The project's goal was to address the challenges faced by Avellaneda and its surrounding urban and rural areas, which had suffered from twenty years of unplanned growth. It aimed to implement effective urban planning regulations, improve access to and use of statistical data, and enhance metropolitan coordination. Additionally, the project sought to tackle social exclusion, environmental degradation, and financial crises affecting a significant portion of the population.

The right need assessment, the right expertise - Capacity building was a central focus of the project from its onset, with its results and impact closely linked to the implementation of new skills in key areas. These areas included solid waste management, female entrepreneurship and inclusion, revitalization of educational offer through STEAM education, regional development, and the collection, management, and utilisation of municipal data for policy making. The project outline included selected training objectives, needs and indicators at application stage - based on Avellaneda's knowledge of their own reality, matching them with the right expertise available at local level or from the project partners. After the start of the implementation, the collaboration between the municipalities, with the European Union Delegation, and the feedback from a ROM reviewer, led to the adaptation and addition of some components. Notably, an internal training module was introduced to develop a gender strategic plan across all municipal departments.

Strategic use of capacity building activities - The partnership was very attentive to make sure that the right competencies were developed at different levels of staff within the municipality (political, technical, administrative) and that information and knowledge about the new approaches to sustainable development fostered by the project were backed-up by municipal staff with the right training. The partnership adopted a variety of tools, based on training needs, audiences and objectives:

- Massive awareness-raising campaigns about solid waste management effectively informed the general public, addressing several thousand citizens through the action of trained individuals running door-to-door sessions
- In other cases targeted activities aimed directly at municipal staff were designed to develop the necessary skills in data collection, gender mainstreaming, social inclusion and education.

The establishment of the Municipal Directorate of Statistics and Social and Economic Studies was complemented by specialised training for both administrative and high-level municipal staff. This training focused on data collection and analysis, which was then presented to citizens through

an e-governance platform. The goal was to centralise and systematise data collection, ultimately enhancing efficiency and transparency. Other internal training efforts focused on rural and urban censuses, linked to metropolitan integration, and industrial censuses related to productivity and the promotion of female entrepreneurship.

- Based on a need assessment conducted by all partners during the project, a training component focused on gender was added. This involved intensive training on gender mainstreaming for municipal staff, with the aim of integrating gender considerations into all project components, not limited to female entrepreneurship and social inclusion.
- The STEAM education component, addressed through the “Tiempo Oportuno” initiative, aimed to combat educational poverty affecting around 50% of children and youth in the city. This initiative targeted not only local teachers but also municipal staff responsible for education and parents, recognizing their crucial role in improving access to quality education.



Fostering reciprocal learning as a basis for cooperation - Study visits provided the teams from both municipalities with valuable insights into the unique characteristics of different contexts, allowing them to better address the challenges they faced. These visits facilitated the search for relevant expertise, helped calibrate inputs, and enabled the adjustment of planning to fit local realities. Involving both political figures and technical experts, these exchanges laid the groundwork for ongoing and potential future cooperation. As a result, Avellaneda has joined a Covenant of Mayors involving a network of 12 municipalities from the Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions in Italy. This collaboration aims to draw on their experience in intermunicipal and regional development, which has been identified as a key area for future work within the framework of the continued partnership.

Recognizing the impact of new knowledge and skills - For the partners involved, **the impact of these capacity building component has been characterised as a more strategic and thoughtful approach to municipal action**, even if the impact in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes has not been systematically measured or tracked within this project – which we understand is the case in many other projects. Rather, these capacity building activities have been viewed as stepping stones supporting the successful implementation of the different components of the project, such as pilot projects, policy reforms, and infrastructure development. Consequently, the overall impact of capacity-building efforts is or should be reflected in the quality and success of these components, which is challenging to assess at present since the project is still ongoing. Nevertheless, the project's responsiveness in adapting training objectives to emerging needs and introducing new topics for exchange is testament of an existing dialogue within the partnership focused on high-quality, strategic development of the territory and of a commitment to reciprocal growth proper to successful decentralised cooperation.



3.4 Understanding the impact of capacity development activities

Evaluating the degree to which capacity development activities are successful in engendering actual change is inherently challenging, in that it would need to consider several variables such as pre-existing knowledge, organisational culture, external economic and political factors. Changes in practices and governance effectiveness take time to manifest, making it hard to capture immediate results. However, training and awareness-raising, complemented by international study visits, have been fundamental blocks supporting all other activities, ensuring the development of shared knowledge, new skills, and new approaches that have largely influenced the success of the project overall.

In the data collection we have presented more quantitative metrics – when and if they were available to respondents – to get a basic understanding of who were the direct beneficiaries of these activities, in which numbers, and what the most common activities and topics have been. We assume that most, if not all activities we presented were inscribed in ad-hoc knowledge and skill-building strategies or plans developed by the partnerships to target identified needs and to aspire to the planned impact. We have not delved deeper into whether or how each partnership tracked learning or evaluated the impact of such activities.

As with all other components of the projects, **the cooperation between European and other partners has been fundamental in exploring training needs, accessing new knowledge, and adopting new perspectives.** This is very visible in study visits, which offered invaluable opportunities to literally enter new learning spaces both for the hosting and the visiting groups and build an enlarged learning community where knowledge, skills and motivation are multiplied. Through study visits – which can be considered a materialisation in space and time of the international partnerships – project stakeholders had the ability to build networks, have a first-hand experience of different realities, explore innovative tools and be inspired, establish resourceful relationships with other like-minded stakeholders, often increase motivation and, by being confronted with other realities, reflect on their own skills, governance realities, urban sustainability practices.

Section 4: Infrastructure investments (linkages with the EU Global Gateway strategy)

The analysis of the data reveals that the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme has a substantial focus on urban infrastructure development, with the majority of projects reporting significant infrastructure contributions. Out of the 42 projects surveyed, 36 confirmed the development of urban infrastructure, highlighting the Programme's emphasis on enhancing infrastructure in participating cities. These projects cover a wide array of infrastructure types, including educational facilities, solid waste management systems, parks, and urban green spaces, among others. This diversity reflects the Programme's comprehensive approach to addressing urban challenges and fostering sustainable urban environments.

In addition, the data also show that some projects have leveraged additional funding sources through co-financing or public-private partnerships (PPPs). This approach suggests that while EU grants form the backbone of the funding, there was also in some cases a concerted effort to engage local stakeholders and the private sector in the development process. These collaborations not only provide additional financial resources but also promote local ownership and long-term sustainability of the infrastructure developed.



The analysis of the data reveals that the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme has a substantial focus on urban infrastructure development.

City-to-city partnerships geared at fostering integrated urban governance can also contribute to the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy. The Global Gateway is an ambitious plan to mobilise up to €300 billion in investments by 2027 to finance high-quality, sustainable infrastructure projects globally. It focuses on five key investment areas: digital technology, climate and energy, transport, health, and education and research. C2C partnerships could be relevant in the Global Gateway process from the identification of needs, to planning, financing and implementation of development investments. The infrastructure's needs identification and planning components featured prominently in the C2C programme -though by nature there are limits to the amounts of funding that can be attracted under decentralised cooperation approach as larger infrastructural works require the mobilisation of important private/public investments.

In this context, it is important to consider how the EU's Global Gateway Strategy could help cities to address their infrastructure needs. The OECD is currently undertaking a study for the EU on how C2Cs can leverage private investments.



4.1. Partnerships for Sustainable Cities and its Role in Investment Mobilisation

Forty-two projects responded to the survey, with only one not addressing the question about infrastructure development, while five explicitly stated that they did not carry out any infrastructure-related activities.

This leaves us with 36 projects that reported undertaking infrastructure projects as part of their initiatives under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme. Among these, a significant number—23 projects—reported that EU project funds fully financed their infrastructure projects. However, three of these projects also mentioned co-financing from other sources, creating a discrepancy in the reporting. Based on additional details provided by three projects (“GenerACTOR”, “Fomento del desarrollo urbano, integrado, inclusivo, resiliente y ecológico de la ciudad de Villa María y su región”, and “Praia + Inclusiva”), it is reasonable to infer that 20 of these projects likely relied exclusively on EU funding for their infrastructure developments.

The survey responses also indicate that nine projects reported co-financing their infrastructure projects with other sources, although the specifics of these sources were not provided. This lack of detailed information makes it difficult to fully understand the extent and nature of the financial partnerships involved. It is essential to recognise that the concepts and terminology used across the projects are non-standardised, leading to varied interpretations by project reporters and managers. In many instances where co-financing is indicated, it likely refers to in-kind contributions—such as labour, materials, and expertise—provided by local communities, municipalities, civil society organisations, and the private sector. However, there is a significant gap in clarity regarding whether these in-kind contributions have been systematically and accurately valued and incorporated into the total project costs for the infrastructure that has been built, repaired, or improved. Addressing these discrepancies will require more standardised reporting guidelines and better valuation methods for in-kind contributions to ensure a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of project financing.

Additionally, four projects claimed to have leveraged public-private partnerships (PPPs) for their infrastructure investments. However, two of these projects also reported that their infrastructure was fully financed by EU funds, which contradicts the concept of a PPP. As a result, only two projects appear to have successfully acted as catalysts for private investment in sustainable infrastructure through PPPs, with one reporting additional co-financing.

Overall, the survey results provide an incomplete and sometimes contradictory picture of the financing modalities used for infrastructure development within the programme.

The discrepancies in reporting, such as projects simultaneously claiming full EU financing and co-financing or PPP involvement, suggest that there may be misunderstandings or inconsistencies in how the questions were interpreted or answered. This highlights the need for clearer guidelines and more precise reporting mechanisms in future surveys to better capture the complexities of project financing and ensure a more accurate reflection of the diverse funding strategies employed by these urban development projects.

4.2 Financing, types and audiences of urban infrastructure development support

Type of infrastructure financing

The data on supporting urban infrastructure development through various projects reveals diverse funding approaches and contributions to sustainable urban growth. The analysis categorises the projects based on their funding mechanisms and the extent of infrastructure development achieved, taking into account the discrepancies highlighted here above. Key insights from the data include the following:

1. Infrastructure Fully Financed by EU Grants: A significant number of projects received full financing for infrastructure development through EU grants. These projects span various initiatives, from building resilience and solid waste management to enhancing urban governance and energy transition. Notably, projects such as “BRUD: Building Resilience through Integrated Urban Development,” “Unesco Heritage for Sustainable Cities (USC),” and “Twin Cities in Sustainable Partnership” have used the EU grants to finance their infrastructure fully, ensuring robust support for urban sustainability and resilience. This category includes 23 projects showcasing the substantial role of EU funding in driving urban development.

2. Co-Financing and Public-Private Partnerships: Several projects utilised co-financing with other funding sources or leveraged public-private partnerships (PPPs) to support infrastructure development. Projects like “Fortalecida la Gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador” and “El Centro Histórico de La Habana” demonstrate the importance of collaborative funding strategies in expanding the scope and impact of urban infrastructure projects. These approaches enable the pooling of resources and expertise from multiple stakeholders, enhancing the sustainability and scalability of urban development initiatives. This category includes 16 projects, reflecting a collaborative approach to funding.

3. Catalysts for Private Investment: Some projects acted as catalysts for private investments in sustainable urban infrastructure. Projects such as “Projeto InovaJuntos” and “Program



on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development In the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area” highlight the role of project initiatives in stimulating subsequent private sector participation in urban development.

4. No Infrastructure Development: Conversely, a few projects like “FLEURIR - Favoriser L’Écosystème Urbain” and “AcessoCidades” did not focus at all on infrastructure development, indicating diverse project objectives and approaches within the broader urban development framework. This category includes a mix of projects focusing on enabling private investments or not directly engaging in infrastructure development.

Overall, the analysis underscores the catalyst role of EU grants in financing urban infrastructure in the context of city-to-city partnerships, the value of co-financing and public-private partnerships in enhancing project scope, and the importance of strategic initiatives to attract private investments for sustainable urban development.

One interesting example of continuity and synergy between two projects funded by the EU is the project “GenerACTOR—Community Gardens for Good Governance, Active Citizenship, and Participation”, which has combined the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities grant with other EU grant funding. It also demonstrates that grants can be used as seed capital to attract additional grants, develop feasibility studies for larger infrastructure projects, or promote PPPs. Similarly, two other projects specify in the survey the co-financing sources: the infrastructure in the municipality of Villa María, Argentina, which was co-financed with municipal government resources, and; the project, “Adapting local integrated urban development plans to sustainable development objectives through multi-actor and multi-governance approaches (Praia-Cape Verde),” which mentions the contribution of other partners without specifying the origin of resources.

Overview of the urban infrastructures supported

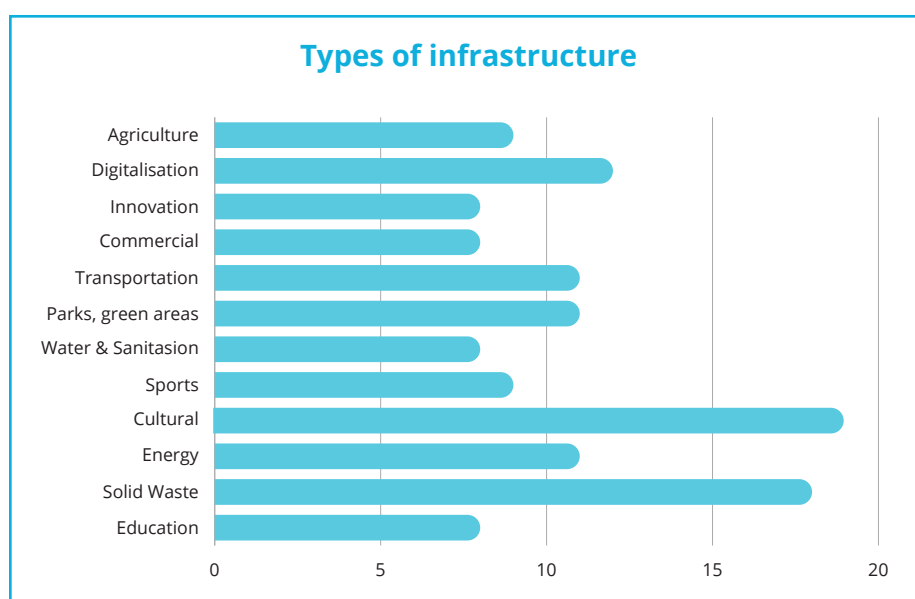
The survey responses offer a comprehensive view of the infrastructure types supported under the initiative. **The most frequently supported infrastructures are cultural facilities (19 projects) and solid waste management (18 projects).** This indicates a strong focus on preserving cultural heritage and enhancing waste management systems.

Digital infrastructure projects also feature prominently, with 12 projects reporting investments in this field, reflecting the

growing importance of digital connectivity and smart systems. **Transportation, energy and parks/green areas are equally prioritised, with 11 projects** reporting investments in these sectors, showing a balanced approach to improving urban mobility and environmental sustainability. **Eight projects have reported investments in water & sanitation projects, another eight have invested in Educational infrastructure and nine in Sports facilities.**

Though less frequent, **agriculture (9 projects) and innovation (8 projects)** demonstrate a diverse investment in food security and technological advancement in diverse realms of urban development. **Commercial infrastructure has been supported by eight projects** that aim to stimulate economic activities and provide commercial opportunities for local businesses.

Overall, the graphic illustrates a well-rounded approach to infrastructure development. It addresses various aspects of urban life and sustainability, aligning with the broader goals of enhancing community well-being, environmental sustainability, and economic growth.



The sectors covered by the projects are fully aligned with the Global Gateway priorities: digital technology, climate & energy, transport, health, and education & research. This alignment results from the objectives prioritised by the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme mainly “improve resilience and greening of cities and, improve prosperity and innovation”.



Local priorities can drive project selection and funding allocations, even when they do not align perfectly with higher-level strategic goals.

The examples showcase the substantial impact of various projects on infrastructure development across different sectors. **Digital platforms and smart systems** are prominently featured in the digitalisation of cities, highlighting the importance of technology in enhancing governance and service delivery. **Urban agriculture and green spaces** are also prioritised as part of greening the cities, with several projects focusing on community gardens and tree planting to improve urban sustainability and overall living conditions for citizens.

Waste management and sanitation projects are crucial in promoting public health and environmental sustainability. These initiatives focus on creating infrastructure for recycling centres and sanitation facilities, addressing critical urban challenges. **Cultural and community facilities** have emerged as a key focus area within many urban development projects, with 19 projects dedicated to preserving cultural heritage and enhancing community engagement through the development of cultural centres and public spaces. This emphasis on cultural and community infrastructure is particularly interesting because it represents the largest number of projects, despite not being a central focus of the EU's Global Gateway (GG) initiative, which primarily targets large-scale infrastructure development.

One possible explanation for this disparity is the difference in priorities at various levels of governance. While the GG initiative is geared towards large-scale infrastructure projects that align with broader strategic objectives like connectivity, energy, and digital infrastructure, the priorities at the local level may differ significantly. Local communities often place a higher value on cultural preservation, social cohesion, and public spaces that directly impact their daily lives and well-being. These local priorities can drive project selection and funding allocations, even when they do not align perfectly with higher-level strategic goals. Cultural and community facilities contribute to the social fabric of cities, offering spaces for social interaction, education, and cultural expression.

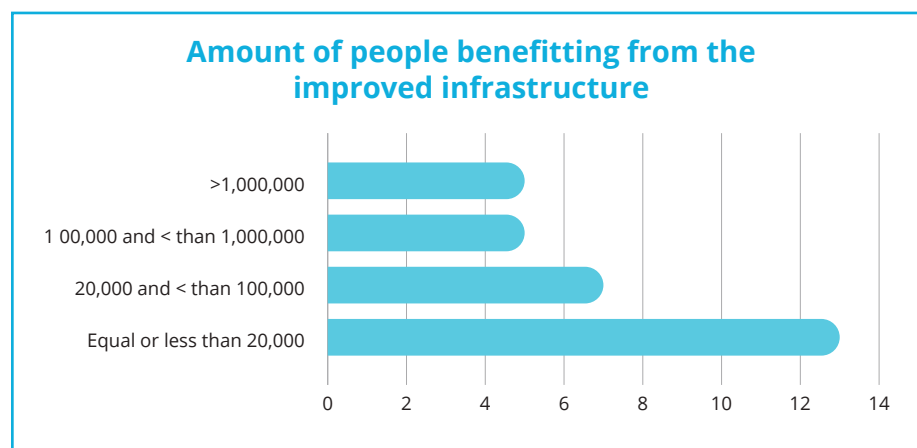
Energy efficiency and renewable energy projects underscore the commitment to sustainable energy practices and reducing carbon emissions. These initiatives aim to promote energy-efficient solutions and renewable energy sources, contributing to global efforts to combat climate change. The data highlight the diverse and comprehensive approach to infrastructure development, addressing various aspects of urban life and sustainability.

Target audiences

These projects aim to improve the lives of different demographic groups across numerous regions. The analysis focuses on the

total number of beneficiaries and their distribution across various categories, such as children, youth, women, men, and people living with disabilities (PLWD).

The available responses show a wide range in the number of beneficiaries. Three projects reported more than one million of beneficiaries. The **“Metro Resilience Guadalajara” project has over 5.2 million beneficiaries**, primarily because it addresses a major metropolitan area. Other significant projects include the **“Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development” in Greater Kampala, which benefits around 2.5 million people**, and **“Services Locaux Energie Climat” in the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima (TTAH) region in Morocco, which targets 4 million individuals**. The following projects have reported beneficiaries exceeding one hundred thousand people: **“Strengthened Governance of the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador,” which benefits 270,312 people**; **“Improving solid waste management in Windhoek, Namibia,” which benefits 300,000 people**; and **“Improving strong sanitation governance in 19 medium-sized cities in Burkina Faso,” which benefits 750,000 people**.



Focus on Youth and Children

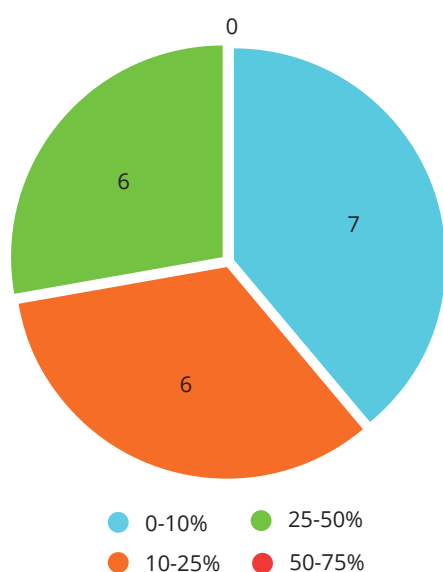
In analyzing the distribution of beneficiaries under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme, it is important to clarify that the total number of projects that participated in the survey is 42. However, only 36 of these projects reported having constructed infrastructure. **Within these 36 projects, 19 specifically reported benefiting children (aged 0-14 years).**

The pie chart illustrating the percentage of children beneficiaries shows that out of these 19 projects, **7 reported having 0-10% of their beneficiaries as children**, **6 reported 10-25%**, and **another 6 projects reported 25-50% children beneficiaries**. This distribution suggests that while children are considered in these urban

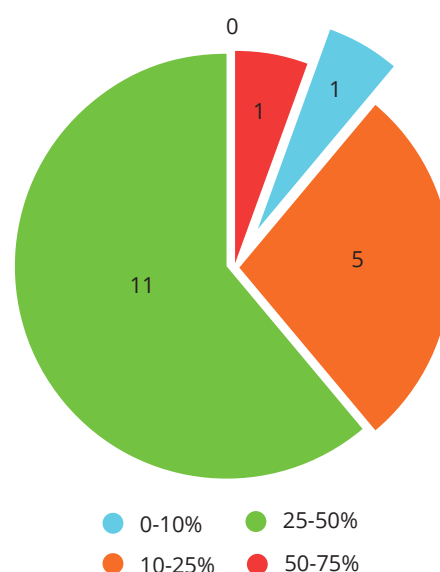
development projects, their involvement is varied. The absence of projects with more than 50% children beneficiaries indicates that, although children are factored into project designs, they are not the primary focus. The broader goals of these initiatives likely aim to address various urban development issues that indirectly benefit children through improvements in community infrastructure, education, and environmental health.

Similarly, for youth (aged 15-29 years), out of the **36 projects that reported having built infrastructure, 18 projects have directly benefited youth**. The corresponding pie chart shows that among these 18 projects, **11 reported having between 25-50%** of their beneficiaries as youth, highlighting a significant focus on youth engagement. This segment constitutes the largest portion, reflecting the programme's emphasis on involving young people in urban development initiatives. Conversely, **5 projects reported 10-25% youth beneficiaries, with only 1 project each reporting 0-10% and 50-75% youth beneficiaries**. Notably, no projects have more than 75% of their beneficiaries as youth. This data suggests that while youth are a key consideration, the level of their involvement varies across different projects, with the majority ensuring moderate youth engagement, possibly in alignment with broader objectives that require inclusion of diverse age groups for comprehensive urban development.

Percentage of children beneficiaries (0-14 years)



Percentage of youth beneficiaries (15-29 years)



Gender Balance and Inclusion

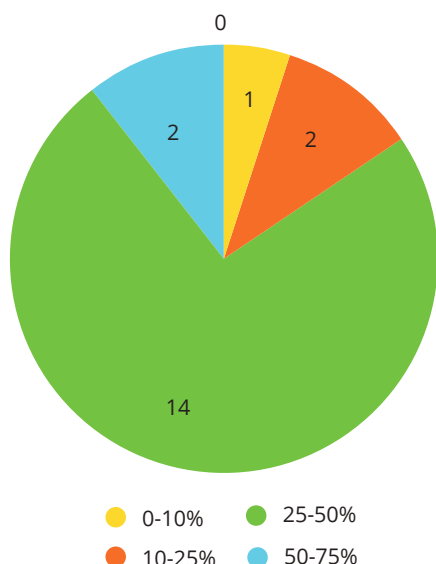
The total number of projects that participated in the survey is 42. However, only 36 of these projects reported having constructed infrastructure. **Within these 37 projects, 19 specifically reported benefiting women. The most significant portion, representing 14 projects, shows that 25-50% of the beneficiaries are women.** This indicates a strong effort toward gender inclusivity within these projects, highlighting a considerable focus on ensuring women's participation and benefit from urban development initiatives.

Notably, three projects report having 50-75% women beneficiaries, suggesting that these projects have made substantial progress in promoting gender equity. However, there are still segments where women's representation is less prominent: two projects fall into the 10-25% range, one project in the 0-10% range, and two projects with more than 75% women beneficiaries. This variation indicates that while many projects strive to include women, there is a need for more consistent and targeted approaches to achieving higher levels of female representation across all initiatives. Overall, the data reveals both the successes and areas for improvement in the effort to integrate women into the benefits of sustainable urban development.

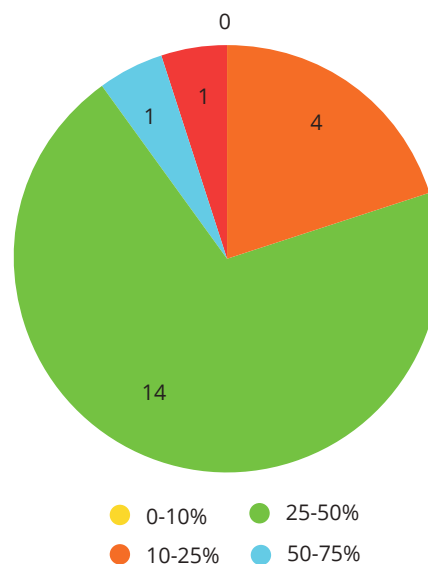
The projects that have reported benefiting more than 50% of women are "Metro Resilience Guadalajara" (51%), "Promotion of inclusive, innovative, and sustainable integrated urban development of the city of Avellaneda" (70%), and "Inclusive development and sustainability of the Fronteira da Paz" (75%).

The pie chart illustrates the percentage distribution of adult men who have benefited from the infrastructure projects under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme. **Twenty projects out of the 37 which have built infrastructure have answered this question. A significant majority, represented by 14 projects, have between 25-50% male beneficiaries.** Conversely, 4 projects have 10-25% male beneficiaries, showing a moderate level of involvement. There is a small proportion, with 1 project (5%) having 50-75% male beneficiaries, and another 1 project falling in the 0-10% range. Notably, there is one project with 90% male beneficiaries ("REBUILD" project in Libya). This last case is interesting in its approach to gender equality: whilst the female beneficiaries rates in infrastructure initiatives is rather low - it targets fishery, a traditionally male-dominated field - the partnership has otherwise proactively addressed women empowerment and gender mainstreaming, taking steps such as disaggregating data by gender, funding travel companions for women unable to travel alone internationally, and engaging in discussions about gender balance.

Percentage of adult beneficiaries (women)



Percentage of adult beneficiaries (men)

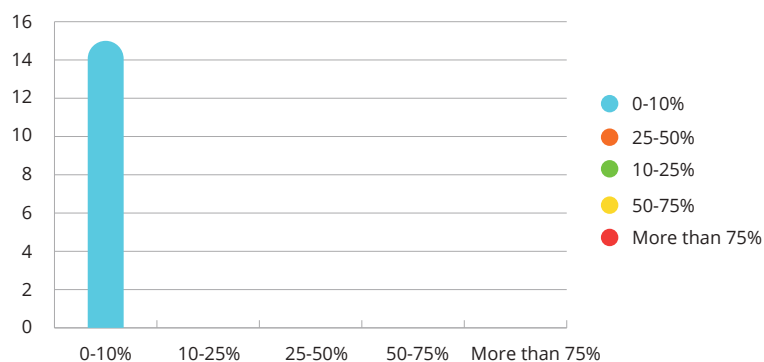


Supporting people living with disabilities (PLWD)

The graphic shows the percentage of **people living with disabilities (PLWD) who have benefited from 15 different projects**. A significant majority of the projects (14 out of 15) report that between 0% and 10% of their beneficiaries are people living with disabilities.

This data highlight the efforts made in the reach and impact of the projects towards one of the most vulnerable groups. Such efforts could involve designing infrastructure and services that are accessible to all, providing specific support and training programs for PLWD, and actively engaging with PLWD communities to understand and address their unique needs and challenges.

Percentage of beneficiaries that are PLWD (People living with disability)



4.3 Main results and best practices in infrastructure development

Identifying the beneficiaries of infrastructure projects by gender and age can be challenging due to the diverse and multifaceted nature of the infrastructure types involved. The types of infrastructure span a broad range, including cultural, solid waste management, digitalization, parks and green areas, education, sports, transportation, and more.

Each of these categories serves different segments of the population in varied ways. For example, digitalization and education infrastructures are likely to have a broader impact on youth and adults who are engaged in educational and professional activities. In contrast, parks, green areas, and sports infrastructure might cater more to families, children, and young adults.

Moreover, the usage patterns and benefits derived from these infrastructures can vary significantly within each demographic group. Improved water and sanitation facilities may primarily benefit women, especially in rural contexts, while both women and men, especially the youth, are likely to benefit from sports and transportation infrastructures. Similarly, infrastructure like cultural centres and innovation hubs can attract a wide age range, from young adults to older citizens, making it difficult to quantify and categorise the specific beneficiary groups precisely. The overlapping nature of these benefits, combined with varying levels of engagement and the dynamic urban contexts, adds complexity to accurately assessing and reporting the direct impacts on specific gender and age groups.



RESULTS



Results in Infrastructure Development

Digital Platforms and Smart Systems - Several projects, such as **“Ciudades que cuidan: Tibás y Coslada”** and **“Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area,”** emphasise the implementation of digital platforms and smart systems. These initiatives enhance governance, citizen participation, and efficient service delivery.

Urban Agriculture and Green Spaces - Projects like **“City link Ostend Banjul, Partnership for Sustainable City Development”** and **“GenerACTOR - Community gardens for good governance, active citizenship and participation”** focus on urban agriculture and the creation of green spaces. These projects aim to improve urban sustainability and community well-being by developing community gardens and planting trees.

Waste Management and Sanitation - Projects such as **“Improving solid sanitation governance across 19 medium-sized cities in Burkina Faso”** and **“Amélioration de la Gouvernance Urbaine et de l’Ouverture Sociale dans les Communes de Haho 1, Haho 2, Haho 3 et Haho 4 dans la Préfecture de Haho au Togo”**

highlight efforts in solid waste management and sanitation. These initiatives focus on creating infrastructure for recycling centres, waste pits, and sanitation facilities to improve public health and environmental sustainability.

Cultural and Community Facilities - Initiatives like **“El Centro Histórico de La Habana hacia un modelo de ciudad inteligente”** and **“Fortalecida la Gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador”** illustrate the development of cultural and community facilities. These projects aim to preserve cultural heritage and enhance community spaces by constructing and rehabilitating cultural centres and public spaces.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy - Projects such as **“Services Locaux Energie Climat: Outils de transition énergétique et climatique du développement urbain intégré (SLEC)”** and **“FRIENDSHIP-Strengthening EU- Mongolia Friendship through Equitable, Resilient and Innovative Growth in Darkhan Uul-Province”** focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions. These initiatives aim to promote sustainable energy practices and reduce carbon emissions.



Conclusion

Although there are shared objectives and some degree in alignment in terms of investment focus, in practice, very limited connections exist so far between the 57 projects and Global Gateway. There is a potential to enhance these connections by enhancing information flows and awareness on opportunities offered to cities as well as by facilitating their inclusion through appropriate modalities.

The Global Gateway's mechanisms, such as the **Team Europe Initiative** and the **European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+)**, could offer significant potential benefits for the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities. The **Team Europe Initiative**, which promotes coordinated action among EU Member States and financial institutions, might enable comprehensive support that aligns with the

diverse needs of local projects. This coordinated approach could amplify the impact of urban partnerships by pooling resources, expertise, and strategic planning to address complex urban challenges more effectively. Meanwhile, the **EFSD+** could provide financial guarantees and blending facilities that reduce investment risks, making it easier to attract private investments into sustainable urban infrastructure projects. By leveraging these mechanisms, the partnerships might not only secure the necessary funding to scale up their initiatives but also ensure that these projects contribute to long-term sustainability and resilience goals. **This potential synergy between local urban projects and the broader strategic mechanisms of the Global Gateway could enhance the likelihood of creating transformative urban environments that align with both local priorities and global sustainability targets.**

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There is a potential to enhance these connections by enhancing information flows and awareness on opportunities



Section 5: Focus on specific objectives: Social Inclusion, Greening and Resilience

In this section the contribution of the C2C partnerships to social inclusion, greening and resilience are analysed. Each of these interconnected urban governance challenges has featured prominently in the various projects funded under the programme.



5.1. Social inclusion

Social inclusion at the local level refers to the process of **ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to participate fully in community life**. The concept encompasses access to services, opportunities for civic engagement, and the elimination of social barriers that hinder full participation. It implies fostering a sense of belonging and respect for diversity within the community.

The implications of social inclusion are profound, as it can lead to stronger, more cohesive communities, reduce social inequalities, and enhance overall well-being. Effective local-level social inclusion initiatives often involve collaborative efforts among governments, non-profits, businesses, and residents to create inclusive policies, provide support services, and promote inclusive attitudes and practices. By prioritising social inclusion, local governments can build resilience, foster economic development, and ensure that everyone has a voice in shaping the community's future.

The survey reveals how the **overwhelming majority of partnerships contribute to social inclusion, with 37 out of 42 survey responses affirming this objective**. This suggests a strong focus on addressing inequality and supporting women, youth and marginalised groups across the partnerships surveyed.

The projects focus on tackling the needs of diverse groups, including:

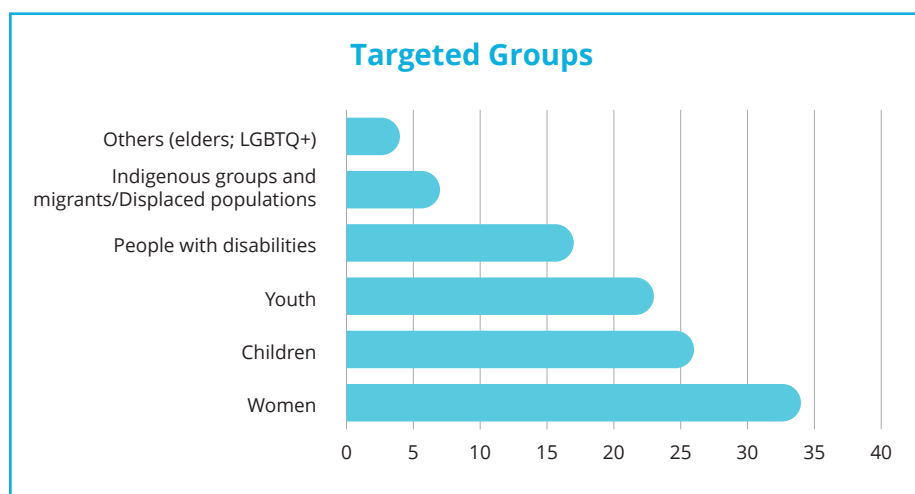
- **Women** (in 34 partnerships) are consistently highlighted across various responses, reflecting their importance in social inclusiveness efforts. This indicates a strong commitment to addressing gender-specific issues and promoting gender equality.
- **Children and Youth** (26 and 23 mentions respectively) also receive significant support, with projects providing essential resources and opportunities for younger populations to foster their development and empowerment.
- **People with Disabilities** are also widely targeted (in 18 partnerships). This reflects a recognition of the need to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness for individuals with disabilities, promoting their full participation in society.
- **Indigenous Groups and Migrants/Displaced Populations** (7 and 9 mentions respectively) are also targeted, though to a lesser extent compared to the primary groups. Efforts in these areas are essential for addressing the unique challenges faced by these communities, such as cultural preservation and integration.
- **Other Groups:** The “Others” category is mentioned 4 times, suggesting there are additional specific groups considered, including groups such as the elderly, LGBTQ+ individuals, or other marginalised communities.

It is also worth mentioning that many responses indicate an **intersectional approach**, targeting multiple groups simultaneously. For instance, several entries combine women, children, youth, and persons living with disabilities. This suggests a comprehensive strategy to tackle social inclusiveness by addressing overlapping vulnerabilities, from an intersectional lens.

The survey responses also provide a comprehensive overview of the project’s active areas to foster social inclusion, highlighting significant trends and priorities.



The survey responses also provide a comprehensive overview of the project’s active areas.



Empowering youth through targeted programs is a recurring theme, reflecting a collective acknowledgment of the need to invest with targeted initiatives in the younger generation. By providing opportunities and support, the different partnerships aim to equip youth with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to contribute meaningfully to their communities. This focus not only helps in individual capacity building but also ensures a sustainable and resilient future workforce that can drive economic and social development. The emphasis on youth empowerment is aligned with global trends that recognize the critical role of young people in achieving long-term development goals.

The **integration of marginalised and vulnerable groups** emerges as another key area, underscoring the project's commitment to social justice and inclusion. This approach aims to address systemic inequalities and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to opportunities and resources. By focusing on the integration of these groups, the different project seeks to create a more cohesive and equitable society. This includes efforts to reduce poverty, enhance access to basic services, and foster environments where marginalised populations can thrive.

Gender-responsive urban planning and access to basic services further complement these efforts by ensuring that urban development projects consider the specific needs and challenges faced by women and other gender minorities. By integrating gender perspectives into urban planning, the projects aim to create safer, more inclusive, and more sustainable urban spaces. Access to essential services such as water, sanitation, energy, and public transport is also seen as fundamental by the partnerships to improve the quality of life and ensure that urban residents can live with dignity and security. The focus on these areas reflects a holistic approach to urban development that prioritises equity, sustainability, and the well-being of all citizens.

EXAMPLES

Examples of social inclusion initiatives supported by the Partnerships

“FLEURIR - Favoriser L’Écosystème Urbain, environnemental, économique et social Intégré de Rosso Mauritanie” focuses on empowering women and youth by providing them with entrepreneurial skills and training in sustainable economic fields. By offering support to women from various sectors and training youth in renewable energy and earth masonry, FLEURIR aims to foster economic resilience and social inclusion in Rosso, Mauritanie.



“Fortalecida la Gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador” enhances urban mobility and promotes socioeconomic initiatives such as urban gardens. By improving sidewalks with universal accessibility and fostering urban gardening, the project aims to create inclusive and sustainable urban environments in San Salvador.

“Unesco Heritage for Sustainable Cities (USC)” involves the development of school Agendas 21, creating a platform for dialogue among traditional authorities, and organising forums for migrants. These activities aim to integrate various community groups into the governance process, promoting sustainable and inclusive urban development in Douala.

“GenerACTOR - Community gardens for good governance, active citizenship and participation” empowers women through capacity-building workshops and community gardens, engages children in school-based activities focused on

sustainability, and integrates migrants by working with high migration neighbourhoods. This project fosters active citizenship and participation across diverse community groups.

“AcessoCidades - cidades mais acessíveis e conectadas” focuses on reducing inequalities through experience exchanges and workshops on public transport financing and data-driven systems. The project addresses the needs of low-income families, women, children, and the elderly, promoting accessible and connected urban environments.

“ECOGOBTUR - Empoderamiento de Comunidades y Gobiernos Rurales a través del Turismo Sostenible en El Carchi” empowers rural communities and local governments in El Carchi through sustainable tourism initiatives. By planning and implementing these initiatives, the project aims to enhance economic opportunities and promote environmental sustainability in rural areas.

“Ciudades que cuidan: Tibás y Coslada, una alianza a favor de gobernanzas participativas centradas en la inclusión social” established community centres, digital empowerment programs, and training on violence prevention and response. It also promotes learning-service actions for youth, aiming to create participatory governance and inclusive social environments in Tibás and Coslada.

“Moving towards Recovery: Bogota’s transportation system as a catalyst for environmental sustainability and gender equality in the post-COVID-19 era (AVANTIA)” identifies gender barriers in the transport sector and organises international workshops to share best practices in public bicycle-sharing services. By implementing gender-focused policies and strategies, the project promotes environmental sustainability and gender equality in Bogota’s transportation system.



Additionally, as highlighted under section 3 of the report, **several of the capacity development efforts deployed by the partnerships have been directed towards strengthening local staff capacities to address social inclusion.** Through training programs, study visits and peer exchanges, partnerships have invested in building the skills and knowledge of local staff, enabling them to effectively implement social protection measures and inclusive policies.

Investing in capacity development for local staff has **several key benefits. It enhances their ability to design and execute inclusive programs, improves service delivery, and ensures that social protection systems** are effective and responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable populations. Moreover, well-trained staff can better engage with community members, understand their specific challenges, and develop tailored solutions that promote long-term social cohesion and resilience. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that several partnerships have been explicitly active in strengthening social protection systems. Out of the surveyed projects, **17 have utilised their partnerships to strengthen their social protection systems with EU support.** This indicates a significant portion of the projects have successfully leveraged this support to enhance their social safety nets and provide better protection for vulnerable populations.

5.2. Greening and Resilience

Out of the 42 projects surveyed, a significant number reported active contributions to improving resilience and greening in their respective cities. These initiatives span a range of focus areas including environmental policies, climate change adaptation and mitigation, transport policies, and sustainable tourism practices, among others.

Quantitative analysis

The data reveals a multifaceted approach to urban resilience and greening, with a notable emphasis on climate change adaptation and mitigation across various projects. **For instance, projects like “BRUD” and “GenerACTOR” focus on implementing nature-based solutions and promoting sustainable urban agriculture,** which not only enhance urban green spaces but also contribute to climate resilience by improving local biodiversity and reducing urban heat island effects. These initiatives demonstrate the importance of integrating ecological and environmental considerations into urban planning to create sustainable and resilient cities.

Additionally, the projects highlight the significant role of community engagement and participatory approaches in achieving urban sustainability goals. **Many projects, such as**

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The projects illustrate a robust commitment to enhancing urban sustainability and resilience through a diverse array of initiatives.



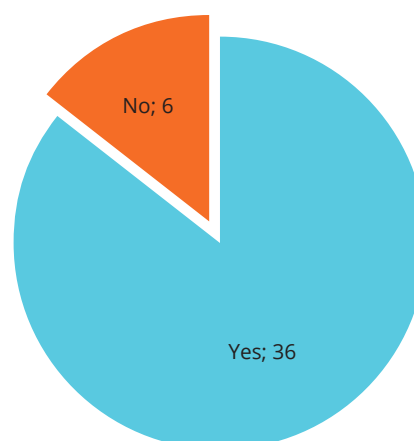
“ECOGOBTUR” and “GenerACTOR”, involve local communities in planning and implementing activities, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards environmental conservation. This participatory approach ensures that the projects address local needs and priorities, enhancing their effectiveness and sustainability. Furthermore, the **integration of digital platforms and smart systems in projects like the “Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development” in Kampala** underscores the growing importance of technology in enhancing governance and service delivery in urban areas.

The projects illustrate a robust commitment to enhancing urban sustainability and resilience through a diverse array of initiatives. By focusing on key areas such as climate change adaptation, biodiversity, sustainable modes of production, and environmental policies, these projects contribute significantly to improving the quality of life in urban areas. The integration of community engagement, participatory approaches, and technological innovations further enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives, ensuring that they address local needs and priorities while promoting broader environmental goals.

Number of projects

The graphic illustrates that a significant majority (86%) of the projects contribute to improving resilience and greening of the cities, with only 14% not contributing in these areas. This high percentage indicates a strong focus on environmental sustainability and resilience within the scope of these projects.

Projects contributing to improving resilience and greening of the cities





The main areas of activity include climate change adaptation and mitigation, environmental policies, biodiversity, sustainable modes of production, and transport policies.

The projects that implemented actions concerning the resilience and greening of cities report activities on several related topics. For example, 22 projects worked on **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation**. 15 projects have carried out activities related to the **Protection/Conservation of biodiversity**, while 18 projects have contributed to formulating or adjusting **Environmental Policies**. 12 projects have contributed to **Introducing Sustainable Production Modes**. Ten projects addressed the improvement, updating, and adjustment of **Transportation Policies**. Finally, six projects mention others, specifying actions that do not fit into the above categories.

Area of work

The dataset provides insights into the focus areas of various projects under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme. The main areas of activity include climate change adaptation and mitigation, environmental policies, biodiversity, sustainable modes of production, and transport policies.

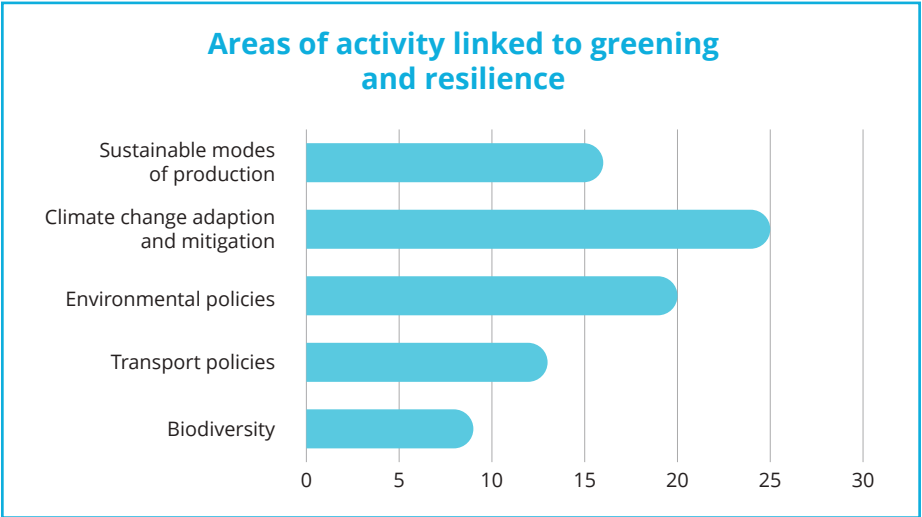
Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation is a predominant focus across many projects. For instance, projects like “BRUD”, “USC”, and “Twin Cities in Sustainable Partnership” are specifically targeting climate change adaptation and mitigation. These projects are implementing measures to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to climate change impacts.

Several projects emphasise the development and implementation of **environmental policies**. Examples include projects like “Fortalecida la Gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador”, “Improving Solid Waste Management in Windhoek”, and “Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado inclusivo, innovador y sostenible de la ciudad de Avellaneda y la región”. These projects aim to create regulatory frameworks to support environmental sustainability.

Projects such as “FLEURIR”, “ECOGOBTUR”, and “Alianza Oriente Sostenible” are actively working on **biodiversity conservation**. These initiatives involve protecting and enhancing natural habitats and promoting the sustainable use of resources. **Sustainable Modes of Production** is also significantly covered, with projects like “ECOGOBTUR”, “Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado inclusivo, innovador y sostenible de la ciudad de Avellaneda y la región”, and “REBUILD”. These projects promote sustainable agricultural practices, eco-friendly production methods, and circular economy principles. A smaller but notable number of projects are addressing **sustainable transport policies**. Examples include “AcessoCidades” and “MOVE IT like Lublin”. These projects aim to improve urban mobility while reducing environmental footprints by promoting public transport and reducing traffic congestion.

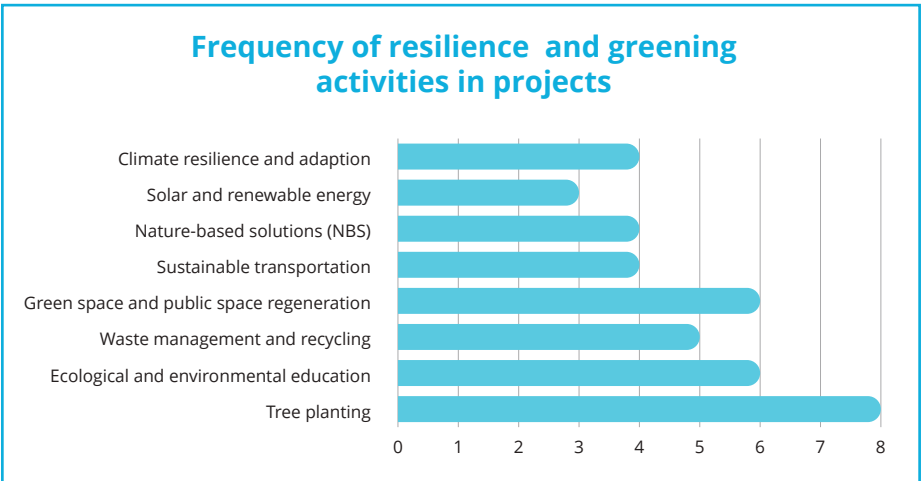


Overall, the data suggests that the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme is making substantial contributions towards creating resilient, green, and sustainable urban environments. The diverse range of focus areas ensures a holistic approach to urban sustainability, addressing both immediate and long-term environmental challenges.



The bar chart illustrates the frequency of resilience and greening activities across various projects under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme. The data indicates that tree planting is the most common activity, featured in eight projects. Ecological and environmental education closely follows, implemented in six projects. Waste management and recycling, along with green space and public space regeneration, each appear in five and six projects, respectively, indicating a strong focus on improving urban green areas and promoting sustainable waste practices.

Sustainable transportation, nature-based solutions (NBS), and climate resilience and adaptation activities are present in four projects each, showcasing a balanced approach to addressing urban sustainability challenges. Solar and renewable energy initiatives are also notable, integrated into three projects, reflecting a commitment to clean energy solutions.



EXAMPLES



Examples of Urban greening/resilience activities

Some examples of the actions implemented by the projects are listed below, to show field examples of the different categories explained above.

Waste Management and Recycling - Projects such as **“BRUD”** in Tajikistan, focus on collecting, reducing, and recycling trash. This also includes slope terracing and tree planting to prevent soil erosion and improve the urban landscape. The project **“Improving Solid Waste Management in Windhoek, Namibia”** is another significant initiative focusing on improving solid waste management, recycling, and circular economy policies.

Ecological Landscaping and Urban Greening - Many projects emphasise tree planting and the creation of green spaces. For instance, the **“City Link Ostend-Banjul”** partnership planted over 500 trees in the inner city, 1000 coconuts at the beach, and 10,000 mangroves in the wetlands. The **“Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado inclusivo”** project in Villa María, Argentina includes planting 10,000 trees and creating over 5 kilometres of bike lanes.

Sustainable Transportation - The **“AVANTIA”** project in Bogotá, Colombia focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and promoting the use of electric bikes for last-mile delivery. The **“Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development”** in Kampala, Uganda introduced electric motorcycles and constructed charging stations to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

Educational and Community Engagement - **“GenerACTOR”** project has implemented Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in urban gardens and promoted sustainable modes of production through community workshops in Barranquilla, Colombia. The **“FLEURIR”** project in Rosso, Mauritania and Podor, Senegal includes school environmental education modules and community visits to protected areas.

Policy and Planning - Projects like **“Fortalecida la Gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador”** focus on updating metropolitan policies for sustainable territorial management. The **“Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado”** project in Avellaneda, Argentina has developed a Sustainable Mobility Plan for 2030, including the creation of bike lanes and urban mobility policies.

Overall, the data underscores the effectiveness of the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme in implementing diverse and impactful greening and resilience activities. These projects not only address immediate environmental concerns but also lay the groundwork for sustainable urban development in the long term.



Section 6: Job creation and private sector dimension (including PPPs)

The European Union's Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme has not contemplated in its original objectives the promotion of the private sector both for job creation and for the construction of infrastructure and delivery of public services. However, as explained above, many of these projects are part of a broader effort to address economic challenges in cities, stimulate private-sector engagement, and, in some cases, have reported the develop public-private partnerships (PPPs) that drive inclusive growth. This dimension focuses on supporting job creation, sustainable consumption, and production practices, particularly through the establishment of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), training programmes, and financial support mechanisms.

A significant trend in the projects supported by the programme is the emphasis on specialised training programmes and grants aimed at social enterprises and local firms. These initiatives are designed to build capacity and provide the necessary skills for sustainable economic activities. For instance, several projects have reported creating jobs (see also section 1 of this report) in sectors such as urban agriculture, waste management, and digital services. The integration of circular economy principles is another key trend, with projects focusing on sustainable consumption and production practices. This approach not only generates employment but also promotes environmental sustainability by encouraging the reuse and recycling of materials.

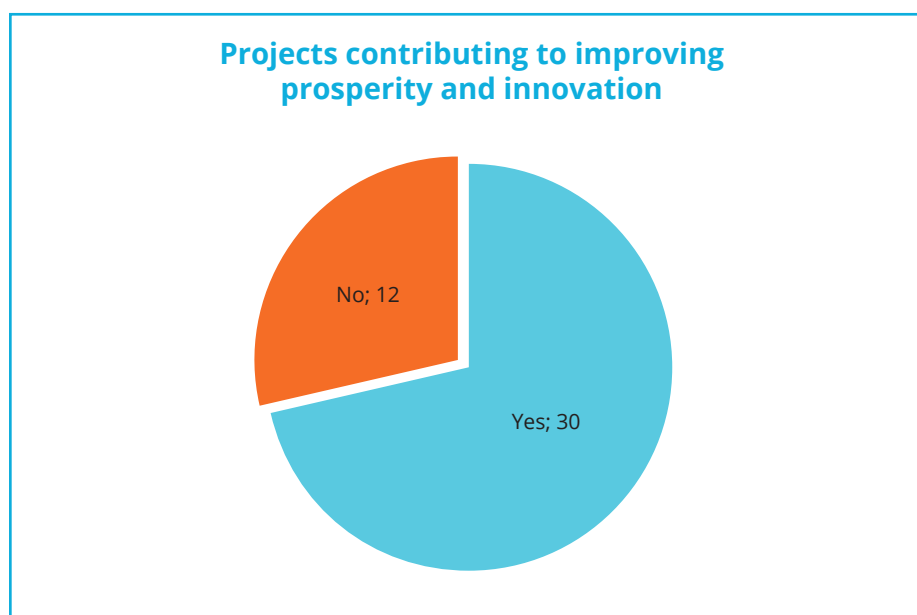
6.1 Quantitative and qualitative overview of the projects contributing to improve prosperity and innovation

The data reveals a significant commitment to fostering prosperity and innovation through the various projects under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme. One notable trend is the emphasis on specialised training programmes and grants for social enterprises and local firms, which are crucial for building capacity and driving economic growth. The focus on sustainable consumption and production practices, such as the reuse and recycling of materials, has not only generated employment but also promoted environmental sustainability. This dual focus on economic and environmental goals highlights the innovative approach of integrating circular economy principles into job creation strategies.

By supporting MSMEs and start-ups, the programme has facilitated the emergence of new business models and technologies, contributing to the overall economic resilience and prosperity of urban areas. This approach not only addresses immediate economic needs but also lays the foundation for long-term sustainable development and innovation.

Prosperity and Innovation

Out of the 42 projects evaluated, a significant majority, 30 projects, have reported contributing to the improvement of prosperity and innovation. This represents approximately 71% of the total projects, indicating a strong focus within the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme on fostering economic growth and innovative practices. Conversely, 12 projects, or about 29%, did not identify their initiatives as contributing directly to prosperity and innovation.

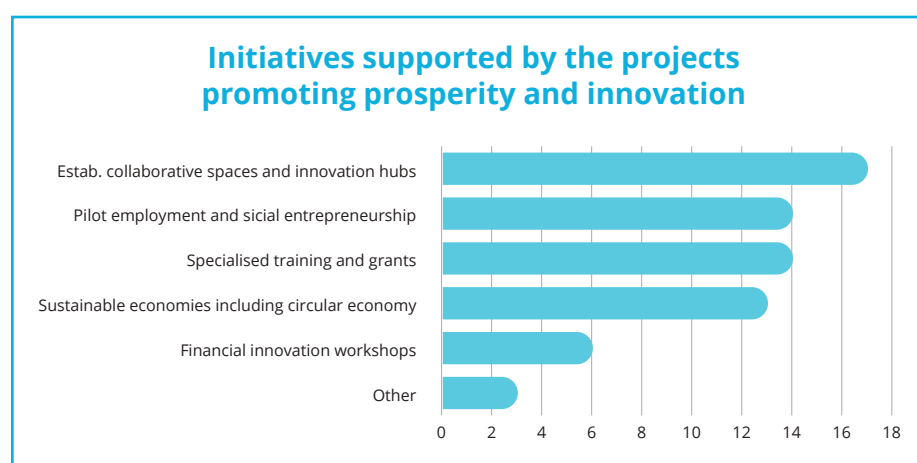


Types of initiatives

Thirty-one projects provided information on the types of activities that have promoted prosperity and innovation, mainly selecting more than one answer (only 10 of the 30 mentioned having supported one type of initiative only); the graph below presents the results. The most frequently supported initiative is the establishment of collaborative spaces and innovation hubs, with 17 projects highlighting this approach. This trend indicates a strong emphasis on fostering environments that promote innovation, collaboration, and shared resources, which are essential for sustainable urban development and addressing complex urban challenges.

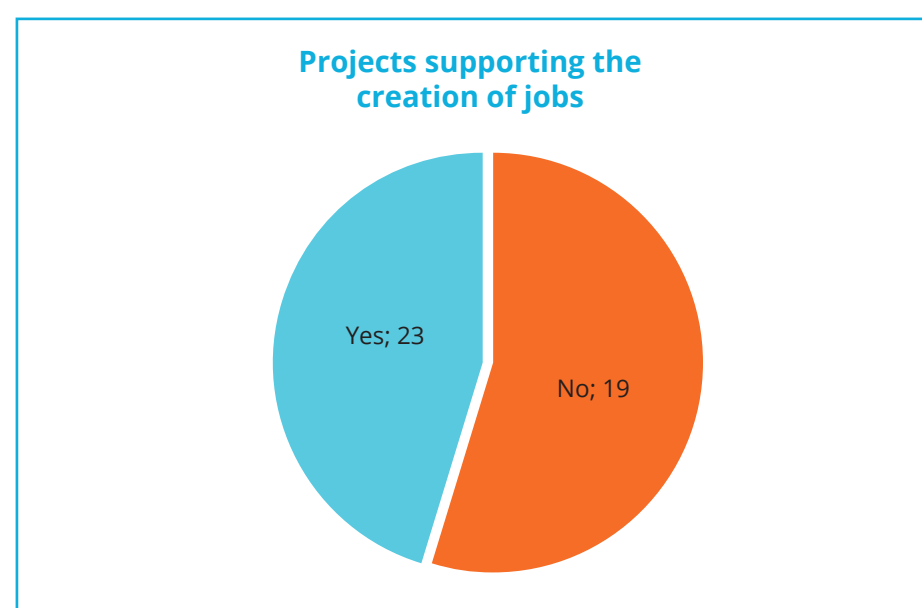
Following closely are pilots for employment and social entrepreneurship, specialised training and grants, and sustainable economies including circular economy, each supported by 14 projects. These initiatives demonstrate a comprehensive strategy

aimed at enhancing economic opportunities, building capacity, and promoting sustainable practices. Financial innovation workshops are supported by 7 projects, showing a moderate focus on equipping stakeholders with the skills and knowledge to access and manage innovative financing solutions. The presence of 3 projects in the 'Other' category suggests additional unique or specialised initiatives that do not fit into the predefined categories, reflecting the diverse approaches taken by the program to achieve sustainable urban development goals.

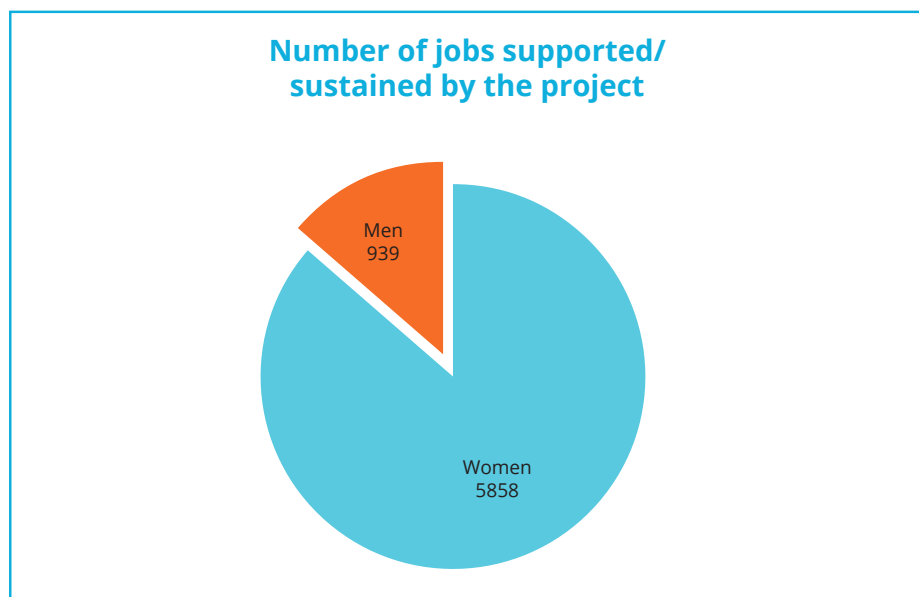


Beneficiaries and types of jobs created by partnerships

More than half (55%) of the 42 Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme projects have reported contributing to job creation, showing a positive trend in employment support through the programme.



The projects have notably favoured women in job creation, with women holding the vast majority of supported jobs (5,858) compared to men (939). This emphasis on female employment is crucial for promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment. However, it also points to a need for balanced gender strategies to ensure men are not disproportionately left behind in job creation efforts.



However, it is important to note that one project “Appui à la croissance économique urbaine et à la gouvernance métropolitaine du Grand Ouaga (PAGO)” represents around 90% of the total jobs created by the programme, distorting the general overview. Additional analysis was made to understand the performance of the Ouga project in terms of job creation (see box below)

CASE STUDY

JOB CREATION IN THE “GRAND OUAGA” PROJECT



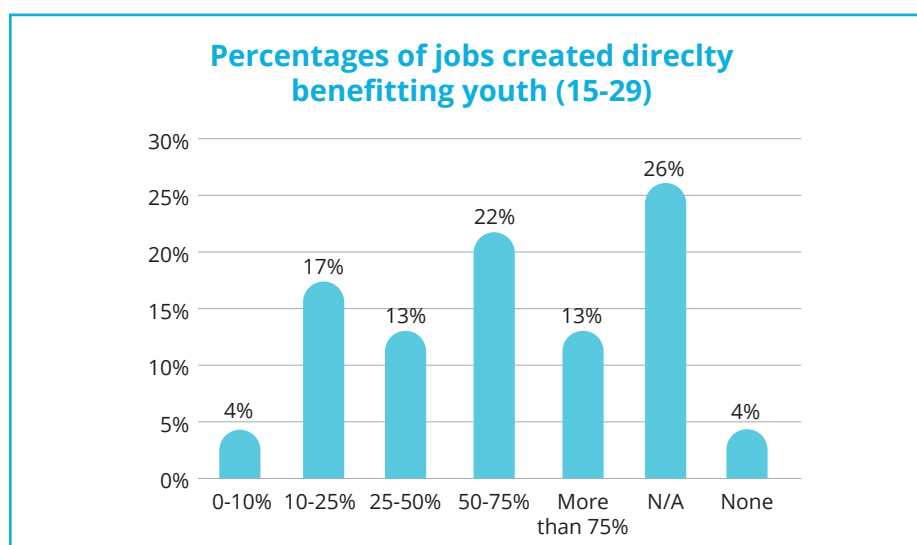
The institutional development of the Metropolitan area of “Grand Ouga” has been driven for years by municipal actors with vision and determination to address the multidimensional challenges of Burkina Faso’s capital - confronted with a rapid growth during to demographic factors and security challenges in the country (leading to a substantial influx of displaced persons). This process has been supported by partner cities over time as well as by other external agencies.

The longstanding C2C partnership with Lyon obtained new funding through the EU-funded program ‘Partnerships for Sustainable Cities’ and took the decision to use it to push forward two elements of its integrated strategy for the development of “Grand Ouaga”, i.e. urban economic growth and governance. Underlying the overall intervention is a strong belief among the municipal actors involved that local democracy needs to generate concrete development dividends in order for social cohesion to be fostered and democratic values to be anchored. Governance structures should “not exist merely on paper” but deliver the goods and ensure an effective collaboration between the various communes that form part of the metropolitan area.

With the help of additional funding beyond the EU grant, two main economic activities were set-up in relation to: (i) urban agriculture and (ii) ‘artisanat’ (with a focus on women producing traditional Burkina dresses). With regard to the former, Grand Ouga has developed perimeters in the green belt of the city providing small plots of land to all in all 4000 beneficiaries for market gardening and production of vegetables for city consumption. In the latter case, an integrated approach has been followed to identify, train and provide opportunities to hundreds women (selected in a transparent manner through the social services of communes) to become producers of a star product such as the traditional Burkina dresses (for which there is a great demand, also in the region). These project activities are underpinned by a regularly updated strategic plan for the territorial development of Grand Ouaga, translated in many other programmes and supported by various internal and external funding sources to help ensure coherence and sustainability.

Among the projects with reported having created jobs for youth (15-29 years), the highest concentration, 22%, falls within the 50-75% range, suggesting that a significant portion of the jobs created in these projects highly benefit the youth demographic. Additionally, 17% of the projects reported that 10-25% of their created jobs benefited youth, reflecting a moderate level of engagement with this age group.

Moreover, 13% of the projects indicated that more than 75% of their job creation efforts directly benefited youth, highlighting a strong commitment to youth employment in a portion of the initiatives. Similarly, another 13% of the projects reported benefiting youth within the 25-50% range. However, it is noteworthy that 4% of the projects fell into the lowest category (0-10%) and another 4% indicated that none of the jobs created benefited youth, pointing to areas where youth employment could be further prioritised. Overall, the chart underscores the variability in the extent to which projects focus on youth employment and suggests potential areas for strategic enhancement to ensure more consistent youth engagement across all initiatives.



The EU initiatives under the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme demonstrate a broad spectrum of job creation and support across various sectors. The projects cater to diverse employment needs, from temporary construction jobs to long-term sustainable agriculture and cultural preservation roles. The emphasis on green jobs, skill development, and community-based employment highlights the EU's commitment to sustainable urban development. Furthermore, targeted efforts to include women and youth in the workforce are evident, ensuring that the benefits of these initiatives are widely and equitably distributed.

The data collected highlight the diverse job types and sectors supported by EU initiatives. **As seen in the BRUD project, seasonal construction jobs** indicate temporary but crucial employment opportunities that help sustain local economies. Similarly, projects like the “Fomento del desarrollo urbano” in **Villa María leverage cooperatives for waste management**, demonstrating the integration of community-based approaches in urban sustainability efforts. The **“GenerACTOR” project focuses on specialised training in urban gardening** and sustainability practices, underscoring the importance of skill development in promoting long-term employment and community engagement.

Several projects emphasise job creation in green and sustainable sectors. For instance, the **“UNESCO Sustainable Cities” project in Douala supports micro-projects related to cultural preservation**, which likely creates jobs in the arts and cultural sectors. The “GenerACTOR” project’s Gardeniser training program is designed to build skills in urban agriculture, enhancing job prospects in community gardening and environmental sustainability. Similarly, the **“Projet appui a la croissance économique urbaine et à la gouvernance métropolitaine du Grand Ouaga” focuses on urban agriculture, agroforestry, and women’s crafts**, promoting jobs in traditional and sustainable crafts and agriculture.

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The data collected highlight the diverse job types and sectors supported by EU initiatives.

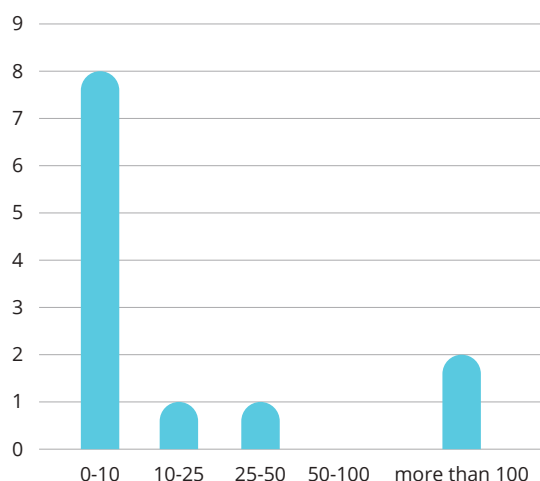


Projects like “Moving towards Recovery” in Bogota specifically target female employment in the public transport sector, highlighting efforts to bridge gender gaps in traditionally male-dominated fields. **The “Bouaké Ville Durable” project supports youth-led initiatives**, clearly focusing on empowering younger populations through entrepreneurship and skill development. The “Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development” in Kampala includes jobs in data collection, system development, and revenue collection, indicating a blend of technical and administrative roles that are critical for urban governance and financial management.

SME supported

The provided graphics depict the support and leadership within Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) facilitated by the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme. The analysis and conclusions from these graphics highlight key aspects of the program’s impact on MSMEs, particularly regarding the extent of support provided and the leadership dynamics within these enterprises.

Number of MSME applying sustainable consumption and production practices that have been supported by the project

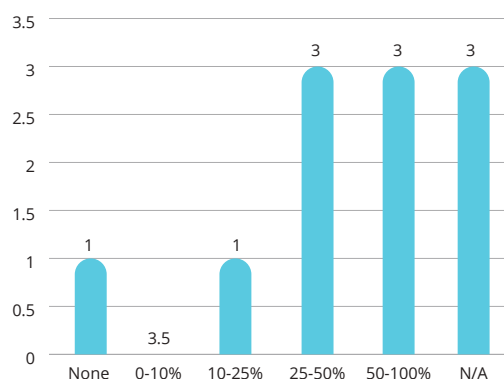


The bar chart above provides insights into the number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) supported by various projects, with data reported from 12 out of the 42 projects. A clear majority, 8 of these 14 projects, indicated supporting 0-10 MSMEs. This trend suggests that most projects may have been constrained by resources, focusing their efforts on a smaller number of MSMEs to provide more intensive and tailored support. Alternatively, this could reflect a strategy aimed at deep, rather than broad, impact within local business communities.

In contrast, a smaller number of projects reported supporting more MSMEs. Specifically, one project each reported supporting 10-25 and 25-50 MSMEs, respectively, indicating a moderate level of outreach and impact. Notably, one project stands out by supporting more than 100 MSMEs, showcasing a significant scale of impact and possibly reflecting a robust allocation of resources and effective outreach strategies.

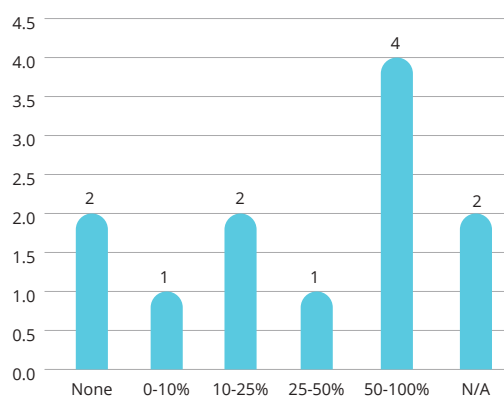
This wide range in the number of MSMEs supported highlights the diverse capacities and strategies of different projects within the programme, emphasising the importance of context-specific approaches in enhancing the effectiveness and reach of MSME support initiatives.

Women-led MSMEs



Half of the projects reported medium to high-rates of women-led MSMEs supported through the programme, with a quarter (25%) of the projects reported that 50-100% of the supported enterprises are female-led and an additional 25% reporting 25-50%, demonstrating a strong commitment to gender inclusivity and empowerment within these initiatives. Additionally, 8% of the projects reported no female-led enterprises, and a further 25% of initiatives could not provide information about this indicator.

Youth-led MSMEs



A third (33%) of the projects reported that 50-100% of the supported enterprises are youth-led, highlighting a strong emphasis on empowering young entrepreneurs in these initiatives. Additionally, 17% of the projects reported no youth-led enterprises, which may suggest either a lack of targeted support for youth entrepreneurship or challenges faced by young people in leading enterprises in these contexts.

Other categories include projects with 10-25% and 25-50% of youth-led enterprises, respectively representing 17% and 8% of the total, indicating a moderate level of support for young leaders. This distribution underscores the importance of targeted strategies to enhance youth participation and leadership in enterprise development, ensuring that young people are adequately supported and given opportunities to thrive as entrepreneurs.

EXAMPLES



Focus on Sustainable Consumption and Production practices

The data indicate that various EU-support projects have implemented diverse, sustainable consumption and production practices. These practices include waste separation, recycling, composting, promoting green economy initiatives, and sustainable transport solutions. The variety of sustainable practices implemented demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of the EU's support in promoting sustainability. Projects are tailored to address specific local needs and contexts, which enhances their effectiveness and relevance.

Waste Separation and Circular Economy - The project **"Fomento del desarrollo urbano, integrado, inclusivo, resiliente y ecológico de la ciudad de Villa María y su región"** focuses on waste separation and the use of new technologies in the circular economy.

Urban Gardening and Sustainability Practices **"GenerACTOR"** has indirectly engaged the private sector by promoting urban gardening and sustainability practices, which could lead to long-term sustainability through the sale of produce.

Youth Involvement in Sustainable Initiatives - The **"Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development"** in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area focuses on specific initiatives, such as the operation of electric charging stations by youth groups.

Local and Sustainable Sourcing - The **"FRIENDSHIP"** project in Mongolia highlights the move towards local and sustainable sourcing, where MSMEs are encouraged to source materials and services locally. This reduces transportation emissions and supports local communities, aligning with broader environmental sustainability goals and community resilience.

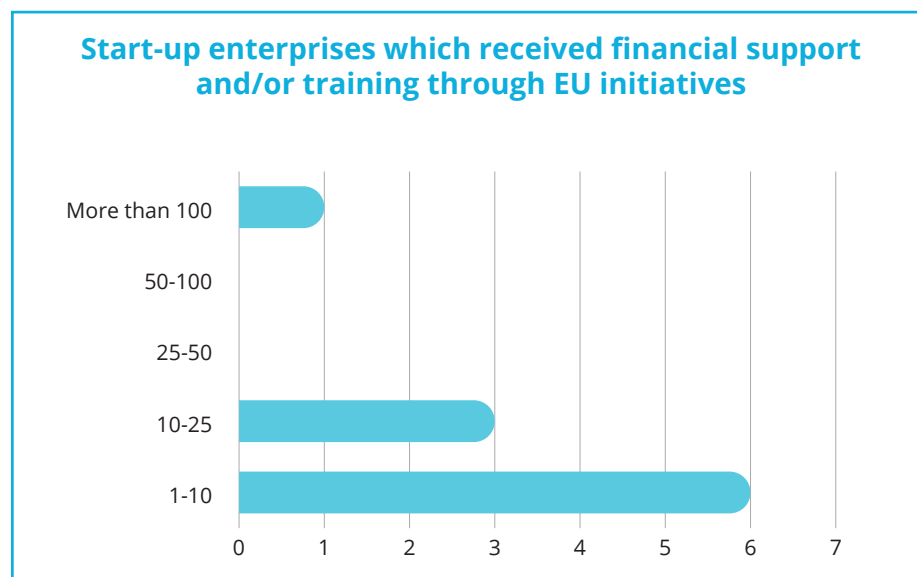
Incorporating Circular Economy Principles **"Metro Resilience Guadalajara"** emphasises incorporating circular economy principles into various stages of waste management and procurement processes. This approach ensures that sustainability is embedded in all activities, from diagnostics and collection to separation, valorisation, and final management of waste.

Start-ups promoted

The bar chart illustrates the number of start-ups that have received financial support and/or training through EU initiatives across 10 projects out of the 42 total projects. **The majority of projects (6 out of 10) report supporting between 1-10 start-ups, indicating that while a significant number of projects do offer support, the scale of assistance per project tends to be relatively modest.** This could reflect the early stages of start-up ecosystems in these regions or the targeted nature of the support provided.

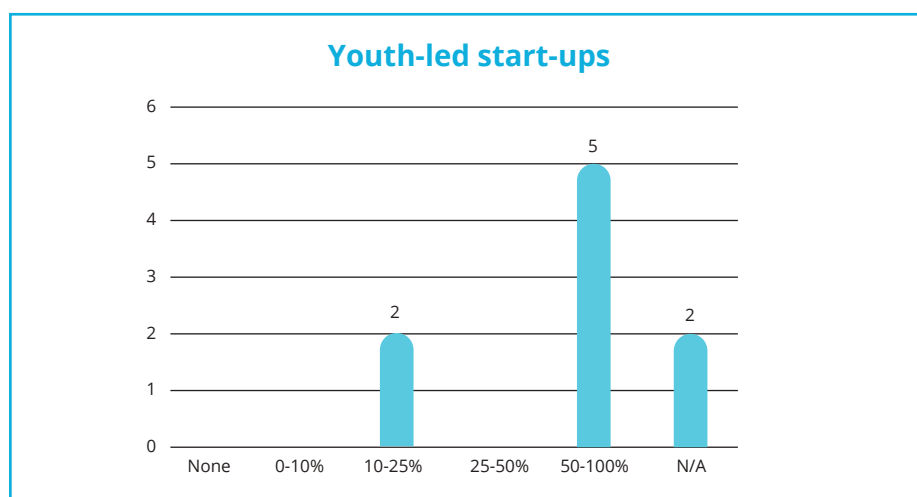
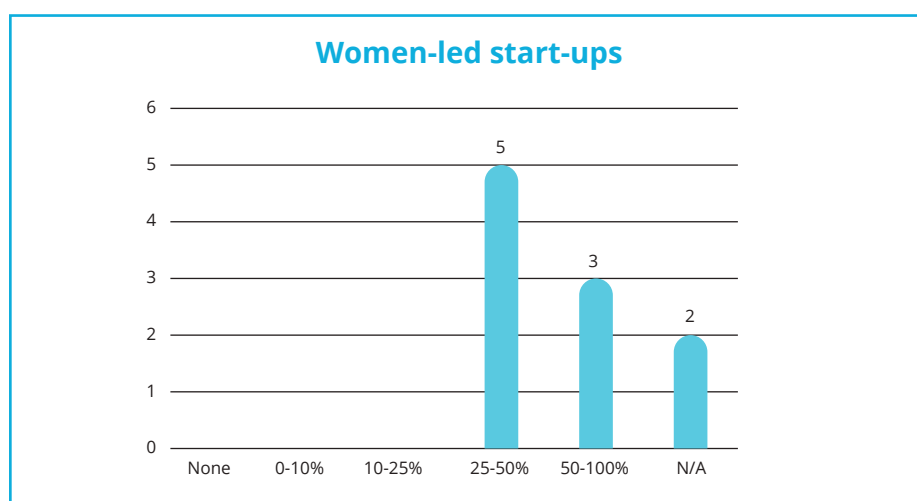
Notably, a smaller number of projects have supported larger cohorts of start-ups. Three projects reported supporting 10-25 start-ups, which shows a more substantial engagement with the entrepreneurial community. **Only one project reported supporting more than 100 start-ups, indicating a particularly large-scale intervention aimed at fostering new business ventures.**

The absence of any projects in the 25-50 and 50-100 support ranges suggests that there might be a gap in medium-scale start-up support initiatives. This distribution underscores the need for a balanced approach to nurturing start-ups, potentially scaling up support where feasible to bridge the gap between small-scale and large-scale interventions.



The graphic shows the distribution of start-up enterprises led by women across the projects that provided funds or training for such initiatives. **Out of the 10 projects that offered financial support or training to start-ups, only 8 have reported their data.** The initiatives show great support for female entrepreneurship and women-led start-ups, with half of **respondents reporting supporting 25-50% women-led start-ups and a further 30%**

supporting in majority women-led start-ups. Two projects stand out for their substantial effort to female entrepreneurship, notably the “Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado inclusivo, innovador y sostenible de la ciudad de Avellaneda y la región” which specifically targeted female entrepreneurship as a component of their project and “Parceria para o Reforço da Governação Urbana, Inclusão Social e Promoção do Empreendedorismo em Díli, Timor-Leste” which partnered with the Timor-Leste Business Women Association (AEMTL), specifically to empower young women’s role in generating family income.



The graphic above illustrates the distribution of support to start-up enterprises led by youth across the 10 projects that provided financial support or training. The reported numbers show that a significant portion of these efforts targeted youth-led initiatives - through specific grants or collaboration with youth groups, with more than half of respondents reporting that more than half of start-ups they supported were youth-led. The presence of projects supporting 50-100 youth-led enterprises highlights a commitment to fostering youth entrepreneurship on a larger scale, aiming to create significant economic and social impact through the empowerment of young entrepreneurs.

EXAMPLES



Innovation promoted by the partnerships

The data reveals a broad range of successful innovations supported by different projects. These innovations span various sectors, including waste management, public lighting, social inclusion, financial and technological integration, and more.

Supporting female contributions to innovation
Each innovation reflects the unique context and needs of the local communities involved. For instance, the **“Fomento del desarrollo urbano, integrado, inclusivo, resiliente y ecológico de la ciudad de Villa María y su región”** project highlights the purchase of machinery for creating plastic wood, which adds value to the work of women cooperatives and creates new jobs.

Innovative empowering women and enhancing Governance - The **“Projeto InovaJuntos”** emphasises implementing an app to support women victims of domestic violence by providing employment opportunities, thus breaking the cycle of violence through financial independence. Similarly, the **“GenerACTOR”** project stands out for its co-creative governance model, which engages various stakeholders in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and enhancing social cohesion.

Environmental sustainability is a recurring theme in successful innovations.

Environmental and Health Innovations for Sustainable Communities - The **“FRIENDSHIP”** project in Mongolia introduces biochar for soil health and smokeless stoves to reduce respiratory illnesses caused by coal consumption. These innovations address environmental concerns and aim to improve public health and agricultural productivity. The **“Metro Resilience Guadalajara”** project focuses on circular waste management, involving community-operated waste collection centres to enhance waste valorisation and transparency.

Tech-Driven Innovations - Technological integration and financial innovations are also prominent. The **“Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area”** highlights the implementation of an integrated revenue administration system and renewable energy pilots. These initiatives streamline municipal financial processes and promote sustainable energy use.

Youth-driven Innovation - The **“REHDES”** project focuses on training youth in entrepreneurship and circular economy and supporting innovative business ideas through public contests.

6.2 Key ingredients of success

The successful innovations supported by these projects are holistic and tailored to the specific needs of their respective communities. These projects ensure greater relevance and effectiveness by addressing local challenges.

Many innovations prioritise social inclusion and empowerment, particularly of marginalised groups such as women and youth. By providing tools for financial independence and engaging stakeholders in governance, these projects contribute to long-term social stability and community resilience.

Environmental sustainability and public health improvements are key outcomes of several innovations. Projects focusing on sustainable waste management, renewable energy, and non-toxic agricultural practices demonstrate the EU's commitment to addressing global environmental challenges while enhancing local living conditions.

Technological and financial innovations play a crucial role in creating economic opportunities. By modernising financial systems and supporting entrepreneurial ventures, these projects help build robust local economies, fostering innovation and economic growth.

In summary, the most successful innovations supported by the EU-funded projects reflect a balanced approach that integrates social, environmental, and economic objectives. These innovations address immediate local needs and contribute to broader goals of sustainability, inclusivity, and economic development.

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These projects ensure greater relevance and effectiveness by addressing local challenges.



Section 7: Smart solutions and smart cities

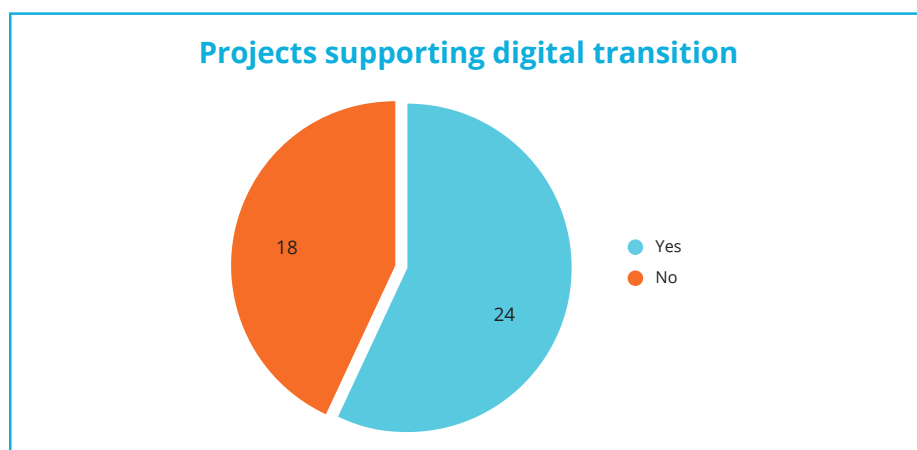
Globally, cities are increasingly turning to digital technologies to improve urban governance, service delivery, and sustainability. Key trends include the adoption of smart infrastructure, e-governance platforms, and digital literacy programmes. These trends are driven by the need to make cities more efficient, resilient, and inclusive, addressing issues such as traffic congestion, energy consumption, and citizen engagement. The European Union has been at the forefront of promoting digital transformation and smart urban solutions. Policies such as the European Digital Strategy and the Urban Agenda for the EU emphasise the importance of digitalisation in achieving sustainable development goals. These policies advocate for the integration of digital technologies in urban planning and management, fostering innovation and ensuring that cities are equipped to handle future challenges. The EU also prioritises digital inclusion, ensuring that all citizens have access to the benefits of digital transformation.

The Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme exemplifies the EU's commitment to these global and European Union trends. The programme supports projects that enhance e-governance, develop digital infrastructure, and promote digital literacy. These initiatives align with the EU's broader policy goals by improving urban governance, fostering sustainability, and enhancing citizen engagement. By supporting smart city solutions, the programme contributes to the EU's vision of creating cities that are not only technologically advanced but also sustainable and inclusive.

7.1 Quantitative and qualitative overview of projects supporting digitalisation

The data highlight significant strides in digitalisation across various projects within the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities programme, underscoring its critical role in modern urban development. Numerous projects have supported the digital transition through diverse initiatives, including the development of e-governance platforms, smart city infrastructures, and digital literacy programs. For example, some projects have focused on digital governance and infrastructure, enhancing public service efficiency and citizen engagement. These initiatives have led to measurable improvements, such as the creation of apps for managing municipal services, which streamline administrative processes and improve public access to essential services. The integration of digital solutions in urban planning and management not only enhances operational efficiency but also fosters greater transparency and community participation.

Furthermore, the data reveal a concerted effort to bridge the digital divide by promoting digital literacy and skills education. Various projects have implemented comprehensive digital literacy programs aimed at empowering communities with the necessary skills to navigate and benefit from digital platforms. This focus on education is pivotal in ensuring that all segments of the population, including women and youth, can participate in and contribute to the digital economy.

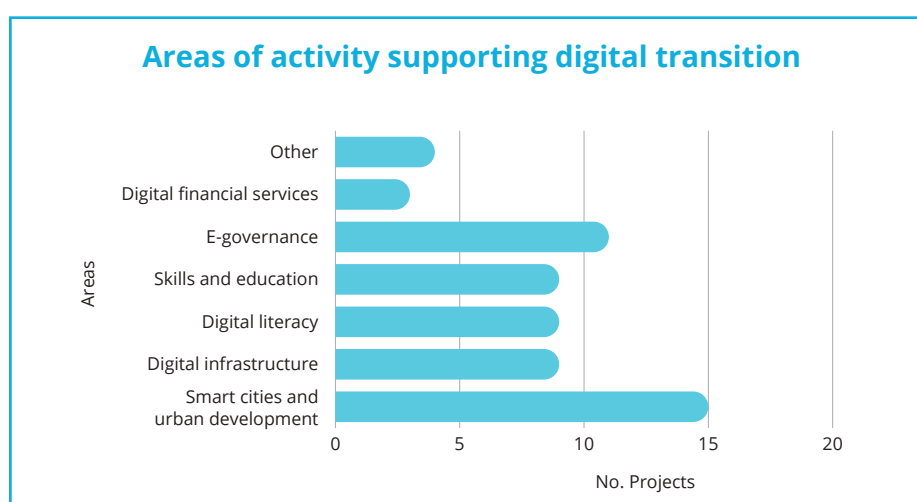


Digital Transition and Digitalisation

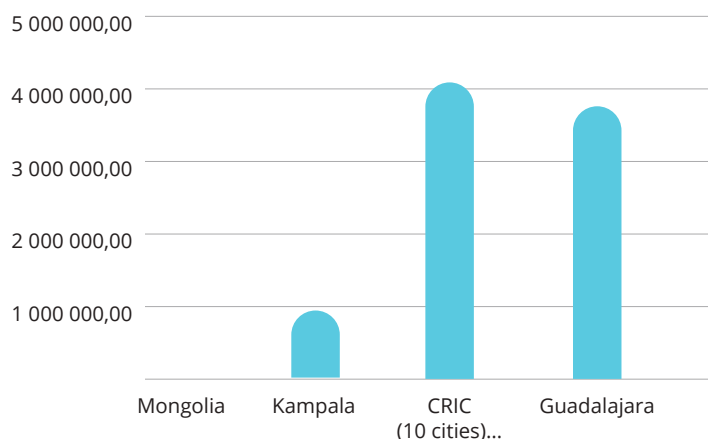
The first pie chart indicates that 24 projects have supported digital transition, while 18 have not. This demonstrates a significant focus on digital initiatives within the EU's efforts, although a considerable number of projects have not yet incorporated digital components.

The bar chart categorises the areas where these projects have contributed to digital transition. The highest number of projects (15) have focused on smart cities and urban development. E-governance (11 projects) and digital infrastructure (9 projects) also feature prominently, highlighting a strong emphasis on leveraging technology for urban and governance improvements. Skills, education, and digital literacy, each supported by 9 projects, show a commitment to building digital capabilities among citizens.

The bar chart below shows the estimated number of people benefiting from enhanced digital governance in various regions. "CRIC" (10 cities in Indonesia) leads with around 4.5 million beneficiaries, followed by Guadalajara with approximately 3 million. Kampala and Mongolia have significantly lower numbers, indicating varying levels of digital governance implementation and reach across different regions.



55. How many people can you estimate have benefitted from enhanced access to digital governance?



The substantial number of projects supporting digital transition (24 out of 42) underscores the Sustainable Cities Programme project's commitment to integrating digital solutions into urban development and governance. This reflects the broader global trend towards smart city initiatives and the digital transformation of public services.

The emphasis on smart cities, e-governance, and digital infrastructure indicates strategic priorities for the EU. These areas are critical for creating efficient, sustainable urban environments and transparent, accessible governance structures. By focusing on these areas, the projects aim to enhance the quality of life in urban settings and ensure that governance processes are more streamlined and citizen-friendly.

The varying number of beneficiaries across different regions highlights the disparity in the implementation and impact of digital governance initiatives. While some regions like Indonesia and Guadalajara have seen large-scale benefits, others like Mongolia and Kampala are still in the earlier stages of digital integration. This suggests a need for tailored approaches that consider regional contexts and capacities to maximise the effectiveness of digital interventions.

EXAMPLES



Innovation and the digital transition

Digitalising Public Services - Several projects, such as those in San Salvador and Villa María, have focused on digitalising public services. San Salvador's efforts include general digitalisation, while Villa María has created an app for managing municipal services, improving efficiency, and citizen engagement.

Enhancing Citizen Involvement - The **"GenerACTOR"** project has implemented an e-governance platform to enhance citizen involvement in city administration. This effort promotes transparency and participatory decision-making and empowers local communities.

Geodatabase and AI Training - The **"Alianza Oriente Sostenible"** project has provided a geodatabase for 23 municipalities, aiding decision-making processes. It also focuses on training public employees and the community in artificial intelligence to improve efficiency.

Automated Revenue Management - The **"PIFUD"** project, implemented in Kampala, Uganda has fully automated revenue management systems, resulting in a five-fold increase in revenue collections. This includes digitalised taxpayer registers and automated collection mechanisms, significantly enhancing municipal financial management.

Digital Transformation of Cultural Heritage - The **"Centro Histórico de La Habana"** project has established a digital transformation group to enhance the digital management of cultural heritage. This includes automating library catalogs and creating digital repositories for preservation and access.

Urban Sustainability and Smart Technologies - The initiatives undertaken by the **"Edinet"** project have had a substantial impact on urban sustainability and the quality of life for residents. The introduction of smart technologies in city management has led to more efficient service delivery and resource utilisation. For instance, the installation of photovoltaic systems and smart lighting not only reduces energy consumption but also lowers the city's carbon footprint, contributing to global climate action efforts. Moreover, the focus on digital literacy and skills development ensures that residents are equipped to navigate the digital world, access online services, and participate in e-governance.

Emphasis on Digital Skills and Education - The **"FRIENDSHIP"** project reports improvements in digital literacy, skills, and education, alongside e-governance and smart city developments.

7.2 Key ingredients of success

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A substantial number of projects are actively involved in supporting digital transition in various forms.

The data reveal a significant commitment to digital transition and smart cities within the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities Programme. A substantial number of projects are actively involved in supporting digital transition in various forms. These include e-governance, digital literacy, skills and education, and the development of smart cities and urban infrastructure. For example, the project “Fortalecida la Gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador” focuses on smart cities and urban development, highlighting efforts to digitise public services to enhance efficiency and accessibility.

Many projects have reported specific, measurable improvements as a result of their digitalisation efforts. For instance, “Fomento del desarrollo urbano, integrado, inclusivo, resiliente y ecológico de la ciudad de Villa María y su región” created an app for managing public services, which significantly streamlined citizen services, particularly parking management. Similarly, “El Centro Histórico de La Habana” has made notable strides in the digital transformation of cultural heritage management, including the digitalisation

of library catalogues and the creation of digital repositories. These efforts not only improve operational efficiency but also enhance transparency and accessibility to public services and cultural resources.

The impact on beneficiaries is also noteworthy. Several projects have reported significant numbers of people benefiting from enhanced access to digital governance. For example, the “Program on Integrated Local Finances for Sustainable Urban Development in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area” has benefitted nearly one million people through automated revenue management systems and digital financial services. Projects like “FRIENDSHIP-Strengthening EU-Mongolia Friendship through Equitable, Resilient and Innovative Growth in Darkhan Uul-Province” have seen improvements in e-governance and digital literacy, with thousands of individuals gaining new skills and better access to urban development initiatives. These examples underscore the critical role of digital transition in promoting sustainable urban development and improving the quality of life for urban residents.



Section 8: Fragility Dimension

Fragility at the local level refers to the **vulnerability of communities to various shocks and stresses, such as economic downturns, natural disasters and conflicts (often related to political instability and poor governance)**. Fragile communities often lack the resources, infrastructure, and institutional capacity to effectively respond to and recover from these challenges. This notion highlights the critical need for robust local governance systems able to provide support that can withstand and adapt to adverse conditions. The concept of resilience is central to addressing local fragility, as it involves building the capacity of communities to not only survive but thrive in the face of difficulties. Resilience encompasses the ability to anticipate risks, absorb shocks, and recover quickly, ensuring long-term sustainability and well-being. Local resilience strategies may include strengthening social networks, diversifying economic opportunities, investing in disaster preparedness, and promoting inclusive governance. By fostering resilience, communities can mitigate the impacts of fragility, enhance their adaptive capacities, and create a foundation for enduring stability and prosperity.

8.1 Approaches followed

The survey reveals how almost **half of the partnerships contribute to strengthening resilience in contexts of fragility, with 18 out of 42 survey responses confirming this as one of their main objectives**. Of these, 14 partnerships have placed a special emphasis on **promoting local level dialogues** (involving multiple stakeholders) to address fragility, restore trust, and foster collective action.

On a more qualitative note, the analysis of the provided information reveals a **consistent emphasis on consultation and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders** (as also examined in section 2 above), including government levels, the private sector, academia, and civil society organisations (as highlighted in section 2 on participation and local democracy above). This approach is highlighted across multiple initiatives, suggesting it is a foundational element (i.e. key success factor) in managing cities during crises or fragile situations.

Furthermore, there is a **recurring mention of improving institutional arrangements for city management**, underscoring the need for robust governance structures to effectively address crises. The inclusion of trainings on diverse topics indicates a commitment to capacity building, ensuring that stakeholders are well-equipped to handle complex challenges.

Additionally, the qualitative information **highlights the importance of exchange programs where local authorities can share experiences, particularly in fragile situations**. This peer learning aspect seems crucial for knowledge transfer and the adoption of best practices. Pilot activities aimed at enhancing basic service delivery by local authorities also feature prominently, reflecting a pragmatic approach to addressing immediate needs and testing innovative solutions.

REBUILD PROJECT



The REBUILD project exemplifies an innovative approach to resilience-building in fragile environments, particularly in Libya, where the political landscape is complex and volatile. Initiated in the framework of the Nicosia Initiative by the European Committee of the Regions, REBUILD focuses on fostering long-term, sustainable development through peer-to-peer partnership.

REBUILD's unique partnership approach to resilience

REBUILD is not a typical project focused on short-term outputs; instead, it is a process-driven partnership designed to build mindsets and systems across ten Libyan municipalities. The project emphasizes the importance of partnership-building, systemic change, and continuous support. Unlike traditional development projects, REBUILD prioritizes the cultivation of local governance capacities and the strengthening of relationships between Libyan and European partners.

Key to this approach is the transversality of the project, which serves all partner municipalities regardless of political divisions. This feature has fostered trust among partners, consolidated relationships, and laid the groundwork for territorial resilience and solidarity during challenging times. The presence of a Liaison Manager in Europe, who speaks Arabic and understands the political sensitivities, along with a Project Coordinator in Libya, has been crucial in navigating the complex political landscape and ensuring the project's adaptability to changing circumstances.

For example, when the Government of National Unity was established in Libya, unifying the eastern and western ministries, REBUILD adapted by involving the Ministry of Local Government, facilitating dialogue and minimizing potential conflicts over the concept of decentralized partnership.

Capacity building and training

Capacity building and training are central pillars of the REBUILD project, recognized as essential for empowering local administrations to lead development processes. The project has successfully conducted training at the local level through ten Libyan universities, strengthening the relationship between municipalities and academic institutions.

One particularly impactful initiative was the two one-week summer schools organized abroad, which combined theoretical training with practical case studies from European contexts. These study visits and guided discussions have led to tangible outcomes, such as the establishment of a recycling tires facility in Benghazi, which began as a direct result of insights gained during the summer school in Trento.

The REBUILD project has also transformed local mindsets regarding the value of training. Initially, there was scepticism among mayors and municipal officers about the relevance of capacity building.

However, as demonstrated by the Mayor of Tobruk, who became a strong advocate of training after witnessing improvements in municipal performance, the project has successfully changed perceptions and attitudes towards the importance of continuous learning.



Fostering collaboration and trust

REBUILD has played a significant role in fostering collaboration and trust among local stakeholders, including municipalities, civil society, and the private sector. The project emphasizes the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD), which involves structured partnerships with local stakeholders and encourages multi-actor synergies.

A notable example of this collaborative approach is the pilot project on fishery sector development. In Zliten, the Mayor brought together fishery entrepreneurs from multiple municipalities to establish a coordination mechanism aimed at optimizing efforts for the achievement of the Eurocode for Libyan fish exports to the EU. Similarly, in Tobruk, the municipality worked with various fishermen's associations to systematize data and reduce negative competition, highlighting the project's success in promoting joint efforts and fostering sustainable development.

Overcoming challenges

Implementing the REBUILD project in a fragile environment like Libya has not been without its challenges. Financial transfers from Europe to Libyan bank accounts were initially hindered by international controls and embargoes. The project overcame this obstacle by partnering with a financial intermediary and relying on the strong solidarity and proactive approach of its local partners.

Another challenge was managing the relationship with central government institutions, which were not accustomed to municipalities taking a leadership role in international cooperation projects. The Liaison Manager and Project Coordinator played a crucial role in mediating these relationships, but most of all the strong commitment of mayors and municipal officers has ensured that the project remained aligned with local priorities while navigating the complexities of decentralization.

The fast-changing context of Libya also required a high degree of flexibility and adaptability. For instance, the shift in focus from waste management to water quality monitoring was necessary to ensure the project's relevance to the local context. This ability to adapt to changing circumstances has been key to the project's continued success.



Lessons learned

The REBUILD project offers several key lessons that can be applied to similar contexts elsewhere:

1. **Transversality and Multilevel Dialogue:** Maintaining a multilevel dialogue with both local municipalities and national authorities is essential for keeping the project relevant and alive, even in politically sensitive environments.
2. **Presence, Patience, and Flexibility:** In conflict-affected settings, it is crucial to remain flexible and patient, adapting plans as needed while maintaining continuous engagement with local partners.
3. **Community of Practice:** Establishing a community of practice minimizes isolation, fosters a sense of belonging, and strengthens the commitment to public interest among participants.
4. **Field Visits:** These reinforce the sense of proximity and value among local partners, boosting motivation and ownership of the project.
5. **Continuity and Communication:** Minimizing turnover among both international partners and project focal points as well as ensuring effective communication across linguistic and cultural barriers are critical for building trust and ensuring the sustainability of the partnership.

When it comes to **how CSOs were particularly involved in the projects**, the following results emerge. This focus is relevant considering the paramount role played by CSOs in fragile situations, by providing essential services, advocating for vulnerable populations, and fostering community resilience. Their deep-rooted presence within communities allows them to understand and address local needs effectively, bridging gaps where government and larger institutions might fall short. CSOs facilitate social cohesion by engaging diverse stakeholders and promoting inclusive participation, which is vital for maintaining stability. Additionally, they serve as critical watchdogs, ensuring accountability and transparency in crisis management efforts.

The data from the survey reveal that a **varying number of CSOs addressing resilience and fragility have benefited from project support**, with most falling within the 1-25 range. The qualitative data also provides concrete examples of how partnerships have added value in reaching out to CSOs. The added value includes improved community engagement and social cohesion, leveraging the expertise of various stakeholders, and tailored strategies to fit local contexts.

EXAMPLES



Strategies used by the project to build resilience

Within the Partnership “GenerACTOR”, involving civil society actors in Barranquilla has promoted social integration and trust among diverse populations, aiding in faster identification of target groups. Challenges identified include navigating different governance frameworks, ensuring effective coordination among diverse stakeholders, and tailoring initiatives to local needs. These challenges were addressed through continuous dialogue, technical support, and adapting project strategies to local regulatory environments.

The “FRIENDSHIP” Project in Mongolia collaborates with various CSOs in many areas. By May 2024, they had partnered with 15 civil society organisations. The project included a pilot in waste management in the Model Neighborhood and initiatives with the Association of Mongolian Women Engineers, Technologists, Mathematicians, and Scientists to support young people through STEAM programs. Challenges faced included the occasional lack of initiative and

monotony within CSOs, which made achieving results harder.

In Santarém, the project “InovaJuntos” empowered women who were victims of domestic violence by providing employment opportunities and training, thereby enhancing their financial independence and resilience. The partnership facilitated these women in finding jobs, participating in training courses, and connecting with employers, enabling them to escape abusive situations. Challenges in Santarém included coordinating efforts among various CSOs and managing limited resources, but these were mitigated by fostering stakeholder engagement and continuous training.

Similarly, the “CRIC” project in Indonesia facilitated the involvement of CSOs in climate working groups and training activities, ensuring knowledge retention and transfer among stakeholders despite government official turnover.

In summary, several partnerships have significantly contributed to enhancing resilience and addressing fragility through tailored local initiatives, community engagement and stakeholder collaboration. Challenges remain in coordination and sustaining long-term community involvement, but continuous dialogue and flexible strategies have proven effective in overcoming these obstacles.



Final Remarks

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

Several **key lessons** were learnt during the implementation process of the 57 city-to-city partnerships supported under the “Partnerships for Sustainable Cities” program.

First, in terms of **opportunities offered by the program**, those which have been most highlighted by the C2Cs partners include: (i) facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges and mutual learning; (ii) addressing concrete problems “on the ground” related to inclusive and sustainable urban development; and (iii) enhancing levels of dialogue and collaboration between local governments and the citizens. All this impacted positively on the **ownership of decentralised cooperation processes** - even those recently initiated with EU-funding.

Second, the program confirmed the potential of the **decentralised cooperation modality to achieve a plurality of outcomes**. Though the various C2C partnerships are at a different stage of maturity and capacity, the large majority managed to achieve an interesting mix of outcomes. These include:

- (i) a wide range of **developmental** outcomes across different sectors, from digital solutions and green infrastructures to social inclusion and jobs creation for instance;

- (ii) **policy** outcomes (e.g. the formulation of new urban policies at local level -some of which influenced national level policies);

- (iii) **institutional** outcomes (e.g. strengthening the overall capacity of local governments to act as legitimate and accountable public entities);

- (iv) **local democracy** outcomes, particularly in fragile settings (e.g. inclusive local level dialogues, trust building initiatives, citizen participation);

- (v) **financial diversification** outcomes, particularly in more mature partnerships (e.g. enhanced mobilisation of public and private funding, establishment of PPPs).¹

This plurality of outcomes -that also contributes to deliver on the **EU’s own geopolitical external action priorities** (e.g. green and digital transitions, democracy, peace and security) - shows that it might be **in the interest of the EU to reconsider the place and weight of decentralised cooperation as an aid modality in its overall development policy toolbox**. From the perspective of localising the SDGs, the instrument of DC can have an added value that complements and blends positively with other EU aid modalities and other initiatives such as the Global Gateway process and the Team Europe approach. There is also evidence that DC processes work well in fragile contexts.

¹ Though the data collected show that there is still a way to go in terms of ensuring the mobilisation of the local private sector.



While several C2C partnerships were framed within a long-term relationship based on trust and strong ties, some of them had a rather limited ambit, primarily focused on achieving short-term development outcomes.

Third, while this monitoring exercise mainly sought to capture projects' achievements, there was space for partnering cities to also reflect on the **major challenges they encountered** during implementation as well as on the **sustainability** of their partnerships. While several C2C partnerships were framed within a long-term relationship based on trust and strong ties, some of them had a rather limited ambit, primarily focused on achieving short-term development outcomes through aid - an approach which inevitably reduces the scope to utilize the full potential of DC. Many outcomes reported above require further consolidation for effective transformational change to take place. This reflects the **complex, non-linear and medium/long-term nature of DC processes**. A particular challenge relates to the **time needed for institutional and behavioural changes** among both local government actors (e.g. in terms of modalities to exercise power and ensure transparency/accountability) and citizens (e.g. in terms of civic engagement, willingness to pay taxes, embrace new norms). On the other hand, **politics** can sometime interfere and disrupt DC processes, hence affecting the effectiveness and sustainability of these partnerships.

that effectively empower local authorities as well as on **strategic support by the international community, including the EU**. The latter includes political support for decentralised cooperation as a specific instrument², access to dedicated smart funding as well as meaningful participation in the roll-out of major investment schemes such as the EU Global Gateway -all areas in which much progress can still be achieved.

Fourth, for city-to-city partnerships to flourish and achieve sustainable results, a **conductive ecosystem** is required, based on development-friendly **decentralisation policies**

2 This requires a commitment on the part of the EU Delegations that is not limited to monitoring the pace of their execution and respecting the financial procedures, but which integrates the political dimension in a dialogue with the Government.

Annexes

ANNEX 1:
A PROPOSAL FOR A PROGRAMME RESULTS BASED FRAMEWORK
<https://shorturl.at/Z1n7r>

ANNEX 2:
STRATEGIC MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE
<https://shorturl.at/fXOPc>

ANNEX 3:
REPORT 2023
<https://shorturl.at/WjdFz>

ANNEX 4:
LIST OF PARTNERSHIPS





Annex 4:

List of partnerships

Call for proposals	Lot	Contract Number	Project title	Applicants	Co-applicants	Action location	Region	Scope	End date
2020	3	420705	Fomento del desarrollo urbano integrado, inclusivo, resiliente y ecológico de la ciudad de Villa María y su región	Municipality of Villa María	Municipality of Asuncion Municipality of Braga	Argentina	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	01-03-2025
2021	3	428384	Promotion of inclusive, innovative and sustainable integrated urban development of the city of Avellaneda and the region.	Municipality of Avellaneda	Municipality of Pordenone	Argentina	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	28-02-2025
2020	3	421354	Respira Córdoba: "Recuperando el valor histórico-patrimonial y paisajístico del Área Central desde la gobernanza urbana"	Municipality of Cordoba	Cordoba City Council	Argentina	South America	Sub-municipal	30-09-2024
2020	4	421733	ABC.GoV: Alliance for Better City Governance	Vanadzor Municipality	Municipality of Pila Gyumri Municipality Staff, Community Management Institution	Armenia	Asia	Sub-municipal	31-01-2025
2019	4	412943	Capital Cities Collaborating on Common Challenges in Hazardous Waste Management - Yerevan, Warsaw, Tirana	Yerevan Municipality	Municipality of Tirana City of Warsaw	Armenia	Asia		30-06-2024
2020	5	420778	AcessoCidades: cidades mais acessíveis e conectadas	National Front of Mayors	National Association of Italian Municipalities Confederation of Cooperation and Solidarity Funds	Brazil	South America	Sub-municipal	29-02-2024
2020	5	420779	Desenvolvimento inclusivo e sustentável da Fronteira da Paz	North-Western Peninsular Atlantic Axis	Santana Do Livramento City Hall	Brazil	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-12-2024
2019	3	408982	Inova Juntos - Triangular Urban Cooperation for Innovation and Sustainability	National Confederation of Municipalities	Centre for Social Studies	Brazil	South America	Sub-municipal	31-10-2024
2021	3	428383	Integrated and Sustainable Urban Regeneration Milan Rio - REMIRIO	Municipality of Rio de Janeiro	Polytechnic of Milan Getulio Vargas Foundation MM Spa Municipality of Milano	Brazil	South America	Sub-municipal	14-03-2025
2021	1	428400	Improving solid sanitation governance across 19 medium-sized cities in Burkina Faso	Commune of Châtelleraut	Municipality of Kaya	Burkina Faso	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-12-2024
2020	1	420635	Projet d'appui à la croissance économique urbaine et à la gouvernance métropolitaine du Grand Ouaga	Ouagadougou City Hall	Lyon Urban Community Bamako City Hall	Burkina Faso	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	30-06-2025
2019	1	408966	Accompagnement des communautés urbaines de Douala et Yaounde dans la mise en oeuvre des plans de mobilité urbaine soutenable	Urban Community of DOUALA	Bordeaux Metropole Urban Community of Yaounde	Cameroon	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	19-11-2024



2020	1	420679	Unesco heritage for sustainable cities	Arrondissement commune of Douala 1st	Municipality of Saint Louis Municipality of Montemarciano City of Hoskovo	Cameroon	Africa	Sub-municipal	11-01-2025
2019	1	408957	Adapting Local Integrated Urban Development Plans to the Sustainable Developments Goals Through Multi-stakeholder and Multi-Governance Approaches	Municipality of Madrid	Praia City Council Waters of Santiago	Cape Verde	Africa	Sub-municipal	28-02-2025
2020	6	420076	Améliorer l'accès à l'eau, promouvoir l'accès à l'information pour la population de Bangui et renforcer les capacités de gestion des cadres de la Mairie de Bangui.	City Hall of Bangui	Association of Mayors of Central Africa	Central African Republic	Africa	Sub-municipal	16-02-2023
2020	3	421001	Alianza territorial para la sostenibilidad y la competitividad en el Oriente Antioqueño-Colombia	Municipality of Rionegro	Governorate Central Department Municipality of Sant Cugat del Vallès	Colombia	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-01-2025
2021	3	428386	Community gardens as a Gen-erACTOR for good governance, active citizenship and participation	Lazio-ANCI Lazio Regional Association of Municipalities	Resources for Rome Special, Industrial and Port District of Barranquilla Replay Network Siembramas	Colombia	South America	Sub-municipal	31-12-2024
2021	3	428394	Moving towards Recovery: Bogotá's transportation system as a catalyst for environmental sustainability and gender equality in the post COVID-19 era.	World Association of Major Metropolises	Barcelona Institute for Global Health Mayor's Office of Bogota Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)	Colombia	South America	Sub-municipal	31-03-2025
2020	6	420771	Renforcement des compétences administratives et financières dans la Province Nord Kivu en République Démocratique du Congo	Municipal Administration of Woluwe-Saint-Pierre	North Kivu Province	Congo-DRC	Africa	Supra-municipal (rural area)	31-01-2024
2020	5	420637	Ciudades que cuidan: Tibás y Coslada, una alianza a favor de gobernanzas participativas centradas en la inclusión social	Municipality of Coslada	Municipality of Tibas	Costa Rica	South America	Sub-municipal	28-02-2025
2019	3	408985	MUEVE: Movilidad Sostenible, Urbanismo, Equipamiento, Valoración del Espacio Público, y Enverdecimiento y Equidad	National Union of Local Governments	Fomento de San Sebastian VNG International	Costa Rica	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	06-07-2025
2019	3	410287	El Centro Histórico de la Habana hacia un modelo de ciudad inteligente con énfasis en el fomento de la economía creativa, en el marco del 500 Aniversario de la Fundación de la Ciudad	Office of the Historiador de la Habana	Union of Iberoamerican Capital Cities	Cuba	South America	Sub-municipal	31-12-2025
2020	3	420943	Empoderamiento de Comunidades y Gobiernos Rurales a través del Turismo Sostenible en El Carchi, Ecuador (ECogobTur)	City Council of La Palma del Condado	Autonomous Decentralised Provincial Government of Carchi GAD Del Cantón Mira Municipal Government of Montúfar	Ecuador	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	15-07-2025

2019	3	409429	Fortalecida la gobernanza del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador para la adopción e implementación de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible	Planning Office of the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador	Metropolitan Area of Barceloneta	El Salvador	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-12-2023
2019	1	408969	City link Ostend-Banjul – partnership for sustainable city development	City of Ostend	Banjul City Council	Gambia	Africa	Sub-municipal	30-11-2024
2021	1	428416	Kanifing Environmental Transformation Programme (KETP): Using a sustainable focus on new integrated waste management approaches to drive environmental, social and economic transformation in Kanifing.	Kanifing Municipal Council	Peterborough City Council Opportunity Peterborough	Gambia	Africa	Sub-municipal	31-12-2024
2021	1	428393	HORESD: Holistic reinforcement for sustainable development.	Mancommunity of La Ribera Alta	Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly Praia City Council	Ghana	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	30-06-2024
2021	1	428395	TWIN-CITIES IN SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP: Co-creation of an integrated urban governance for the green, sustainable and inclusive development of Sekondi-Takoradi – Ghana	Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly	Municipality of Palermo	Ghana	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-12-2024
2020	5	420747	A Sustainable Urban Marketplace: Participatory urban governance for safe, green and inclusive fresh market management in Indonesia	Municipality of Górá Kalwaria	North Halmahera Regency	Indonesia	Asia	Sub-municipal	31-03-2025
2019	2	408981	Climate Resilience and Inclusive Cities	United Cities and Local Governments UCLG-Asia Pacifique	Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management University of Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée Pilot4dev Ecolise All India Institute of local self government	Indonesia	Asia	Sub-municipal	31-12-2024
2019	2	408979	Smart Change - Strengthening Urban Governance, Prosperity and Innovation in Jakarta	City of Berlin	Jakarta Capital City Government	Indonesia	Asia	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	30-09-2023
2020	1	420699	Partenariats pour des villes durables en Afrique subsaharienne	City Hall of Bouake	Municipality of Reutlingen Commune of Bobo-Dioulasso	Ivory Coast	Africa	Sub-municipal	28-02-2025
2020	4	422410	Research and Education Building Urban Institutions for Local Development (REBUILD)	Autonomous Province of Trento	Municipality of Gharyan Municipality of Central Tripoli Bine Walid Municipality Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia Azzawiyah Municipality Sirte Municipal Council Municipality of Zliten Sebha Municipality Zintan Municipality Tobruk Municipality Benghazi Municipality	Libya	Africa		31-03-2025

2019	1	408970	Appui à la région de Nouakchott pour un Développement Durable Résilient et équitable (AREDDRE)	Nouakchott Regional Council	International Centre for Development Studies Agglomeration Community of Grand Paris Sud Seine Essonne Sénart Global Fund for Cities Development (FMDV)	Mauritania	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-12-2024
2020	5	420766	FLEURIR _ Favoriser L'Écosystème URbain, environnemental, économique et social Intégré de Rosso	Andalusian Association of Municipalities Fund for International Solidarity (FAMSI)	Town Hall of Rosso Podor City Hall	Mauritania	Africa	Sub-municipal	31-01-2025
2021	3	428389	Metro Resilience Guadalajara	Metropolitan Planning Institute of the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara	Metropolitan Area of Barcelona	Mexico	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-01-2025
2020	4	421644	Edinet - Insights into tomorrow cities	City Hall of Edinet Municipality	Alba Iulia Municipality	Moldova	Europe	Sub-municipal	28-02-2025
2020	4	421885	MOVE IT like Lublin" – a Chisinau public transport sustainable development initiative	City Hall of Chisinau Municipality	Municipality of Lublin	Moldova	Europe	Sub-municipal	31-01-2025
2021	2	428390	FRIENDSHIP-Strengthening EU-Mongolia Friendship through Equitable, Resilient and Innovative Growth in Darkhan Uul-Province	Darkhan-Uul Province Municipality	Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe	Mongolia	Asia	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-01-2025
2020	4	422459	Service Local Energie Climat : outil de transition énergétique et climatique du développement urbain intégré	Council of the Tanger Tétéouan Al Hociema Region	Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur South Region	Morocco	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	25-11-2025
2019	1	408968	MAISPEMBA - A city to city and multistakeholder approach for an integrated, sustainable and inclusive urban development of the city of Pemba	Municipality of Reggio Emilia	IREN Spa Eduardo Mondlane University Municipality of Milano Pemba City Council National Council of Architects, Planners, Landscapers and Conservators MM Spa	Mozambique	Africa	Sub-municipal	31-12-2024
2021	1	428391	Mozambique Integrated Urban Development by Actions and Relationships: Empowering Local Governance (MUDAR)	Autonomous Province of Trento	University of Trento University of Zambeze Training Institute for Public and Municipal Administration in Beira Beira Municipal Council Centre for International Cooperation	Mozambique	Africa	Sub-municipal	30-04-2025



2020	1	420680	Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Inhambane Province – SIRI Project	Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation	Regional Development Agency Saint Louis Government of Inhambane Province Lansstyrelsen Skane – County Administrative Board Skåne Regional Development Agency of Sédhiou	Mozambique	Africa	Supra-municipal (rural area)	10-10-2025
2021	1	428399	Erongo Sustainable Governance LAB: Participatory urban governance for resilient, safe and inclusive multi-functional public spaces in Namibia	Municipality of Czerwonak	Walvis Bay Municipality	Namibia	Africa	Sub-municipal	30-06-2025
2020	1	420678	Improving Solid Waste Management in Windhoek/Namibia	Free Hanseatic City of Bremen	City of Windhoek	Namibia	Africa	Sub-municipal	31-03-2025
2021	3	428401	Nasê tenonde gotyo (let's go ahead): Resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities in Paraguay	Mariano Roque Alonso Municipality	Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences UNA Municipality of El Carmen de Viboral Provincial Council of Jaen	Paraguay	South America	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	28-02-2025
2020	1	420700	REHDES: Reforço Holístico para o Desenvolvimento sustentável	Consortium of La Ribera	Municipality of Mosteiros District Council of Agua Grande	Sao Tome and Principe	Africa	Sub-municipal	31-08-2023
2019	1	408977	Metropolitan Governance of the Energy Transition (MGET)	World Association of Major Metropolises	Municipality of Madrid City Hall of Dakar	Senegal	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-10-2026
2020	1	420703	Strengthening local governance, decentralization and sustainable urban development through a territorial approach to local economic development in Sierra Leone	Port Loko District Council	Western Area Rural District Council Kailahun District Council Kenema City Council Municipality of Fano	Sierra Leone	Africa	Sub-municipal	31-03-2024
2021	2	428388	Building Resilience through Integrated Urban Development: Solid Waste Management, Efficient Public Lighting and Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction in Khorog, Tajikistan	Office of the Mayor of Khorog Town	University of Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée	Tajikistan	Asia	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	24-12-2024
2021	2	428398	Partnership for the improvement of urban governance, social inclusion and entrepreneurship promotion in Dili, Eastern Timor – Dili, Sidade no Ema	Union of Luso-Afro-American-Asian Capital Cities	Lisbon City Hall Dili Municipality Authority	Timor-Leste	Asia	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	30-04-2025
2020	1	420970	Amélioration de la gouvernance urbaine et de l'ouverture sociale dans les communes de Haho1, Haho2, Haho3 et Haho4 la Préfecture de Haho au Togo	Urban commune of Notse	Municipality of Bapaume	Togo	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-01-2025
2019	4	408987	ASIMA TUNIS: Planification Stratégique et gouvernance multinationale pour une ville métropolitaine résiliente	MedCities Association	Metropolitan Area of Barcelona Municipality of Tunis	Tunisia	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	31-07-2025



2019	4	408986	AUTREMENT - Pour une mobilité durable et participative à Kairouan et Mahdia	City of Strasbourg	Municipality of Mahdia Association of Local Democracy Agencies Municipality of Kairouan CEREMA CODATU	Tunisia	Africa	Sub-municipal	28-02-2024
2020	4	422330	BEST TAG - Blue Economy for the Sustainable Towns of Taranto And Gabes	Municipality of Taranto	Municipality of Gabes	Tunisia	Africa	Sub-municipal	stopped
2019	1	408978	Integrated Program on local finances for sustainable urban development in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA)	Kampala Capital City Authority	FMDV - Global Fund for Cities Development	Uganda	Africa	Supra-municipal (urban/metropolitan area)	11-11-2024
2020	5	420787	Partnership for Strengthening Governance, Resilience and Greening of Jinja Municipal Council	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa	Municipality of Soria Jinja Municipal Council	Uganda	Africa	Sub-municipal	stopped



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