



# **Experiences and Governance Mechanisms at the Local and Urban Level for SD and 2030 Agenda Implementation**

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## Introduction: The role of the local/urban level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs

This Quarterly Report (QR) will focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local and urban level. The local or urban level is often described as the level that is able to affect the greatest amount of change when it comes to sustainable development, as it is the level that is closest to citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders, and is argued to be able to understand their needs better than other, more encompassing levels, such as the regional or national level. Many of the practical examples that are described in this QR were chosen based on the 15<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop, which focused on local/urban level implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, where many of the local/urban level examples in this Report were presented in keynote presentations.

Although the 2030 Agenda attributes responsibility for the implementation of the 17 SDGs to the national level, the local and urban levels have their part to play in the effective implementation of the SDGs. Cities, municipalities, and communities were felt to be so vital to the successful attainment of the SDGs that there is one SDG ([SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable](#)) that specifically targets the local level, including both the urban and municipal level. SDG 11 is accompanied by a subset of targets, which is further disaggregated into indicators that all levels can use to measure their progress towards this particular SDGs, which can be seen below in Table 1. Municipalities and cities should attempt to address the this SDG, as many of the sub-goals and indicators that cities and municipalities will be addressing with SDG 11 have spill-over effects into other SDGs, such as SDG 8 (good jobs and economic growth) and SDG 13 (climate action). Being able to address many of the other SDGs within this singular SDG, provides municipalities and cities with the opportunity and flexibility to determine how implementation best suits their needs and local contexts.

**Table 1: SDG 11 and subsequent goals and indicators**

<b>SDG 11</b>	
<b><i>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</i></b>	
11.1	By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
11.2	By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
11.3	By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
11.4	Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
11.5	By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
11.6	By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
11.7	By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
11.a	Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
11.b	By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

11.c	Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials
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Source: Information from *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, p. 18-19

Apart from dedicating SDG 11 to the local level, the 2030 Agenda, in its main text, also puts a focus on the urban level:

§34 We recognize that **sustainable urban development** and management are crucial to the quality of life of our people. We will work with local authorities and communities to **renew and plan our cities and human settlements so as to foster community cohesion and personal security** and to **stimulate innovation and employment**. We will **reduce the negative impacts of urban activities** and of chemicals which are hazardous for human health and the environment, including through the environmentally sound management and safe use of chemicals, the reduction and recycling of waste and more efficient use of water and energy. And we will **work to minimize the impact of cities on the global climate system**. We will also take account of population trends and projections in our national, rural and urban development strategies and policies. We look forward to the upcoming United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito, Ecuador.<sup>1</sup>

The more pronounced attention that the urban level receives from the 2030 Agenda is most likely due to the fact that it is the first time in human history that more people live in urban areas than in rural areas. Since the focus of this QR is Europe, the number of people in the European Union that live in urban areas is high. According to the World Bank, nearly 75% of the population of the European Union lives in urban areas as of 2016. Urban areas, therefore, play a significant role in Europe's ability to not only meet SDG 11, but also each of the remaining 16 SDGs. The effective implementation of the SDGs at the urban level, as well as the municipal level, is very important. However, the urban and municipal levels cannot be solely responsible for the entire implementation process, because, as the 2030 Agenda states, it is a joint effort between national, local, business, stakeholders, and citizens. Each actor has their part to play in the implementation process, and while the local and urban levels are where most of the implementation will take place, all actors must be involved, as the 2030 Agenda makes abundantly clear in paragraph 45:

§45 We acknowledge also the **essential role of national parliaments** through their **enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets** and their role in **ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments**. **Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities**, sub-regional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organisations, volunteer groups and others.<sup>2</sup>

It is the interplay between the national, municipal and urban levels that will become important in the implementation of the SDGs, because if the local and urban levels do not receive the necessary stimuli and incentives from the national or European Union level to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, such as expertise, finances, laws, overarching and all-

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<sup>1</sup> Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, p. 9

encompassing strategies, then it becomes harder for some municipalities and cities to move forward on implementation measures.

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability also reinforces the same notion of the urban level being extremely important in the implementation of the SDGs, in one of its published “ICLEI BRIEFING SHEET - Urban Issues, No. 02”, and even go far as to confidently claim that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have been adopted in an urban world.<sup>3</sup> In this Briefing Sheet, ICLEI argues that in order for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to be successful, urban areas must be taken into account, because they represent half of the world’s population and nearly 70% of the global economy. It is for this reason that action at the city-level is crucial, and the likelihood of the SDGs being successful is considerably greater if local and regional governments are sufficiently empowered, because, as ICLEI also points out in this Briefing Sheet, “local and subnational governments have already been engaging with the majority of the thematic content covered by the SDGs, but they **cannot meet the scale of the challenges to sustainable development forecasted within the 2030 Agenda without the support and enabling frameworks from national governments and international agencies.** In this regard, the SDGs are coming into force at exactly the right time, because even though local governments are increasingly being recognized for their accomplishments as champions for sustainable development, they require capacity and resources to ensure that further urban development is well-organized and equitable. Whether or not local governments are sufficiently empowered will determine whether the SDGs succeed or fail.”<sup>4</sup> ICLEI, therefore, has reinforced the importance of §45 of the 2030 Agenda, highlighting the responsibilities that the national level has to the local level in providing them with the best possible resources for them to truly be able to implement the SDGs.

Although the implementation of the SDGs at the local and urban level will depend on how many resources the national level makes available, this ICLEI Briefing Sheet also states that cities and municipalities are presented with a lot of unique opportunities to develop practical solutions to challenges that have proven to be problematic and divisive for national governments. For those local governments that have been pioneers in sustainable urban development, the SDGs provide a platform that will allow them to push the pace of progress even further.<sup>5</sup> The ways in which cities and municipalities can push forward on sustainable development issues will be covered more in chapter 1.

As it has been established that the 2030 Agenda puts a high degree of focus on the role of the local and urban levels in the implementation of the SDGs, this Report will next be examining what the local and urban levels have been doing so far to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs since the Agenda’s adoption in September 2015.

However, before delving into what the local and urban levels have done and are doing in implementing the SDGs, the first chapter of this Report will look into what the local and urban levels have done in the past with respect to sustainable development in an effort to assess whether these past experiences dealing with sustainable development provide a framework and structure that could help the local/urban level in their SDG implementation efforts. The

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<sup>3</sup> ICLEI, Cities and the Sustainable Development Goals, ICLEI BRIEFING SHEET - Urban Issues, No. 02, 2015, p. 1

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 3

chapter will look into Local Agenda 21, 'Sustainable Cities', 'Resilient Cities', and 'Smart Cities' to see how these experiences in sustainable development can be used in relation to the SDGs and their implementation.

As the 2030 Agenda reinforces the notion that countries should not be attempting to 'reinvent the wheel' when it comes to the integration and implementation of the SDGs, but rather incorporate them into existing structures, it becomes important to know and understand if pre-existing programs for sustainable development are well-suited to integrate such a comprehensive and holistic approach that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs present.

Although the local and urban level are important in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, some cities and municipalities need more support than others when it comes to sustainable development and the integration of the SDGs not only in sustainable development strategies and planning, but also in their capacities to be able to deal with this overarching agenda. Chapter two, therefore, will look into the support networks that are working closely with the local and urban level in the implementation of the SDGs, focusing on how they are able to aid them in implementation.

Chapter three will build off of chapter one by providing practical examples of cities and municipalities that are actively implementing the SDGs, looking into how they were able to implement them and the challenges and successes they have had.

## Chapter 1: Utilization of Past Sustainable Development Experiences for the Implementation of the SDGs

In an effort to be able to better gauge how previous sustainable development efforts and programs can be used to incorporate and integrate the SDGs, this chapter will focus on specific initiatives that are targeted at sustainable development, such as Local Agenda 21 (LA21) and 'Smart Cities' to determine how the local and urban levels are using these programs, and the experiences gained from having used them, to integrate and implement the SDGs. One example of a very successful LA21 program comes from the German region of North Rhine-Westphalia, which has set up its own LA21 program called the "Regional Consortium Agenda 21 of North Rhine-Westphalia" (*Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Agenda 21 Nordrhein-Westfalen*), or LAG 21 NRW, in which it has established projects within the region at the local level that are geared towards the Rio Earth Summit's Agenda 21, as well as the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Since the local level is of vital importance for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, initiatives, programs and projects that have sustainable development at their core and are designed to help the local level in their sustainable development pursuits are also of vital importance to being successful with regards to the implementation of the SDGs.

As the importance of the urban level was already established in the introduction, it will be beneficial to look into what cities have been doing with respect to their sustainable development, such as becoming 'Sustainable Cities', 'Resilient Cities', and 'Smart Cities', as it may be informative in discerning how these cities may deal with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. As cities tend to be microcosms of the national level, dealing with the implementation and integration of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at this level provides a potentially smaller scale test-bed that could be scaled up to different levels if proven successful at the urban level or sub-urban level. As cities that fall within the 'Sustainable City', 'Resilient City', and 'Smart City' concepts tend to have been leading and setting the pace for sustainable development, they will become even more important for the holistic and interconnectedness that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs represent. Therefore, this QR will focus on the 'Smart City' concept and has chosen two case study examples to look at more in-depth, namely Malmö in Sweden and Vienna in Austria.

### Local Agenda 21

One of the results of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit was a document called Agenda 21. This document contained a chapter entitled "Local Authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21" (Chapter 28), which gave birth to the global **Local Agenda 21 (LA21)** movement. Within this chapter of Agenda 21, it states that each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues. Local authority programmes, policies, laws and regulations to achieve Agenda 21 objectives would be assessed and

modified, based on local programmes adopted. Strategies could also be used in supporting proposals for local, national, regional and international funding.<sup>6</sup>

LA21, therefore, took this main concept and developed it into a participatory, multi-stakeholder process to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of a long-term strategic plan that addresses local sustainable development concerns. These processes include: multi-sectoral engagement in the planning process through a local stakeholder group, which serves as the coordination and policy body for moving toward long-term sustainable development; consultation with community partners, such as community groups, non-governmental organizations, businesses, churches, government agencies, professional groups and unions in order to create a shared vision and to identify proposals for action; participatory assessment of local social, environmental and economic needs; participatory target setting through negotiations among key stakeholders or community partners in order to achieve the vision and goals set out in a community action plan; monitoring and reporting procedures, such as local indicators, to track progress and to allow participants to hold each other accountable to a community action plan.<sup>7</sup> One example of a very successful LA21 region, is in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, which has a very strong tradition in LA21, where several municipalities and cities within this region have LA21 programs in place.

### Local Agenda 21 in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Although it has been almost 30 years since the Rio Earth Summit and the creation of Agenda 21, the principles and themes it addresses with respect to sustainability and sustainable development are still very relevant in today's world.

One of the most active regions with respect to Local Agenda 21 is North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) in Germany, where the region has developed an independent network, LAG 21 NRW, that is made up of municipalities, civil society organizations, associations, and other actors in NRW, which, through education, consulting, projects, and campaigns, tries to strategically support and help in the practical implementation of local sustainability processes. LAG 21 NRW funded and sponsored by many institutions, such as the German Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, The Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, etc.<sup>8</sup> Apart from having many sponsors and supporters, LAG 21 NRW also has a large group of partners with which it actively cooperates.<sup>9</sup> LAG 21 NRW is made run by a Board that consist of no more than 10 members, who make decisions in the running of LAG 21 NRW.<sup>10</sup> Also of great importance to LAG 21 NRW are its members, which range from representatives of communities, organizations,

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<sup>6</sup> Agenda 21, Chapter 28, sub-point 28.3, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> ICLEI. *Local Governments' Response to Agenda 21: Summary Report of Local Agenda 21 Survey with Regional Focus*. International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Canada. May 2002.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.lag21.de/verein/foerderer-sponsoren/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.lag21.de/verein/kooperationspartner/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.lag21.de/files/default/pdf/Verein/SatzungLAG21NRW022017.pdf>

associations, institutions, etc.<sup>11</sup> The network, on the whole, is made up of many diverse stakeholders that range from many different levels of government.

LAG 21 NRW is committed to the decisions that were made during the 1992 Earth Summit, which resulted in the Local Agenda 21 document, upon which LAG 21 NRW is based. Since 2016, LAG 21 NRW has also been committed to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. These two agendas provide the guiding principles for LAG 21 NRW's work, which is reflected in its strong association with sustainability and sustainability issues. LAG 21 NRW supports, advises and accompanies communities and civil society actors in the development and implementation of sectoral and integrated sustainability strategies.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to aiding communities in the development and implementation of sustainability strategies, LAG 21 NRW also imparts knowledge to all members of civil society regarding sustainability, which helps not only in knowledge transfer, but also in bringing different actors together in order to initiate stronger participatory processes, as this serves to better embed decided upon sustainability goals and targets into society and societal actors.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to North Rhine-Westphalia and Local Agenda 21, the LAG 21 NRW was founded in 2001 as a community network, which sought to enable an exchange between local communities, as well as to implement projects and campaigns from across the region regarding sustainable initiatives that came from the local level. NRW then professionalized the Agenda 21 process, which allowed for it to become better anchored in politics and government administrations.<sup>14</sup>

LAG 21 NRW is convinced that a transformation to sustainable development can only happen through a process in which civil society, politicians, government administrations, research and economics can participate equally. LAG 21 NRW, therefore, focuses on activities that will help in initiating and guiding these much needed processes of change.<sup>15</sup>

One project that the LAG 21 NRW has lead is the "Global Sustainable Communities in North Rhine-Westphalia" (*"Global Nachhaltige Kommune in Nordrhein-Westfalen"*). Within this project, LAG 21 NRW seeks to counsel 15 municipalities in NRW in their development of strategies for global sustainable development. The objective of the Global Sustainability Communities Project is to make a systematic contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The 15 model communities are currently working on developing their sustainability strategies in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The strategies that are being developed by these 15 model communities in NRW must also take into account the "[German Sustainable Development Strategy](#)", which was updated and published in January 2017, as well as the "[Sustainability Strategy for North Rhine-Westphalia](#)". The project accompanies and advises these communities through one-on-one advisory sessions, workshops, and networking events with other municipalities in this project. In addition to taking into account the 2030 Agenda, the "German Sustainable Development Strategy", and the "Sustainability Strategy for NRW", the municipalities enrolled in "Global Sustainable Communities" must also strive towards a

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.lag21.de/verein/mitglieder/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.lag21.de/verein/leitbild/>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

sustainable and integrated urban development policy that connects the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development and fosters cross-sectoral thinking and activities. All of these communities should be striving towards this when they are developing their sustainability strategies.

## The ‘Sustainable City’, ‘Resilient City’, and ‘Smart City’: What do they all mean?

As cities can be considered microcosms of the national level, they are often the frontrunners when it comes to sustainable development, acting as test beds for programs, initiatives and sustainable city concepts. While many of the concepts that cities use to characterize and define themselves, such as the ‘Smart City’, ‘Sustainable City’, Resilient City’, ‘Green City’, ‘Climate City’, etc. have core aspects of sustainable development at their hearts, the way in which they approach sustainable development in terms of the challenges they wish to overcome, as well as the way in which they choose to overcome them, is what helps to define and characterize them. However, apart from these different, and often confusing, concepts that certain cities ascribe to when it comes to sustainability and sustainable development, the cities themselves need to be looked at as individual entities with individual and unique contexts. Meaning, cities can describe themselves as being ‘Smart Cities’, such as Malmö in Sweden or Vienna in Austria, but the way in which they utilize the ‘Smart City’ concepts can be wholly different. Both may utilize information communication technologies (ICT), but for different purposes. It is, therefore, difficult to prescribe a certain standard to the concept of the ‘Smart City’. This also holds true for all other types of concepts that deal with sustainability and sustainable development, whether that be ‘Climate Cities’, ‘Resilient Cities’, ‘Sustainable Cities’, etc. It is, however, valuable to know the different ways that cities are dealing with sustainability and sustainable development. Therefore, the different concepts of cities that deal with sustainability and sustainable development will be explored. For the purpose of this Report, the concept of ‘Smart Cities’ will be given more priority, as the 15th ESDN Workshop will address the ‘Smart City’ concept, as ‘Smart Cities’ have increasingly risen to prominence over the last few years.

ICLEI has a useful toolbar on their [website’s homepage](#) in which they generally define the different types of sustainable city concepts, which, for the purpose of this Report, will be used to differentiate between the different nuances between these concepts.

## The ‘Sustainable City’

Although this Report references these concepts as all relating to sustainability and the sustainable development of cities, ICLEI has a separate concept devoted to ‘Sustainable Cities’. ‘Sustainable Cities’ are typically characterized as cities that work towards an environmentally, socially, and economically healthy and resilient habitat for existing populations, without compromising the ability of future generations to experience the same.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.iclei.org/activities/agendas/sustainable-city.html>

As will be seen in the definitions of some of the other concepts, many of the defining characteristics of certain concepts are also a main focus of other concepts, such as the 'Resilient City', discussed below. One can notice that within the 'Sustainable City' concept there is a clear reference to resilience, showing that sustainable city concepts may, in fact, incorporate other sustainable city concepts within their own definitions. Although the 'Sustainable City' has a clearer focus on the balance and interplay between the traditional themes of sustainable development: environment, society and economy, the theme of resilience still plays a significant role in the assurance that cities can deal with shocks in whatever form they may take, environmental, social, and/or economic.

## The 'Resilient City'

A 'Resilient City' is prepared to absorb and recover from any shock or stress while maintaining its essential functions, structures, and identity as well as adapting and thriving in the face of continual change. Building resilience requires identifying and assessing hazard risks, reducing vulnerability and exposure, and lastly, increasing resistance, adaptive capacity, and emergency preparedness.<sup>17</sup>

As the 'Sustainable City' already alluded to, resilience has to do with shock absorption and adaptation. However, the 'Resilient City' concept does not necessarily reference sustainability or sustainable development to the same extent, or in the same way the 'Sustainable City' concept does, in which resilience is built into the city in a way that goes beyond the continued administration of city services to also include the fundamental themes of sustainable development and building up resilience in these areas while, at the same time, focusing on generational equity.

## The 'Smart City'

For ICLEI, Smart Cities are the ones that look at the big picture, using resource efficiency and technological progress as well as taking overall urban governance into account to achieve a wider vision of sustainable cities and communities. This balanced approach ensures that the adoption of smart solutions in cities is people-focused, benefits urban citizens and ultimately leads to a safe, inclusive and sustainable future.<sup>18</sup>

'Smart Cities' do this by transforming data and technology into tools to analyze, monitor and optimize urban systems as they strive towards environmental, economic and social sustainability. However, cities also need to critically evaluate the impact of technology solutions and ensure that the interests of their citizens are at the core of ongoing Smart City discussions. The rapid development of technology is digitalizing urban systems, altering physical (e.g. energy, water, waste, transportation) and social (e.g. social and economic inclusion, governance, citizen participation) infrastructures. This brings new opportunities but

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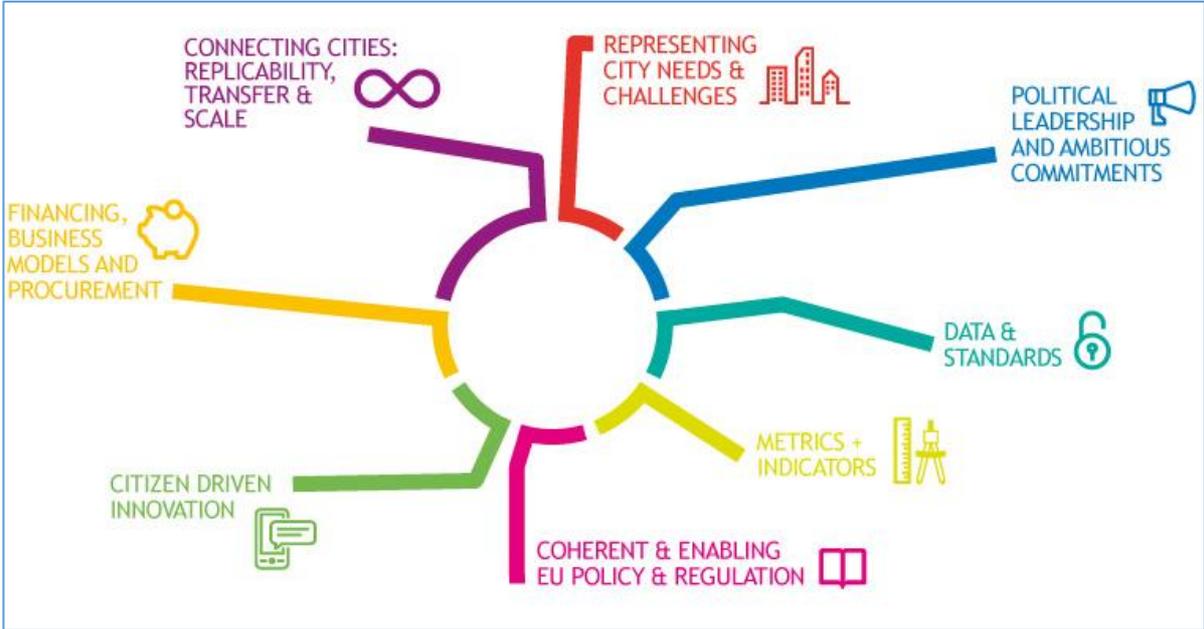
<sup>17</sup> <http://www.iclei.org/activities/agendas/resilient-city.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.iclei.org/activities/agendas/smart-city.html>

also consistent challenges to overcome: cyber security, job loss and privacy are only some of the critical areas where purely technology-driven approaches show their limits.

Eurocities also contributes to the concept of the ‘Smart City’ by characterizing the concept as “being used to describe modern urban competitiveness and highlight the growing importance of social and environmental capital in profiling the attractiveness of a city.”<sup>19</sup> A city’s performance, therefore, can no longer solely rely upon its hard infrastructure, or what Eurocities describes as ‘physical capital’, but on the availability and the quality of communication and social resources: “A smart city must be a good place to live, offering the best possible quality of life with the lowest possible use of resources. A smart city is also an inclusive place, using technology and innovative solutions to improve social inclusion and combat poverty and deprivation.”<sup>20</sup> Eurocities works towards and supports the development of cities that are healthy, use energy-efficient and renewable sources of energy, as well as lead the way in the usage of advanced ICT. In figure 1, below, Eurocities lists the typical characteristics that are typical of ‘Smart Cities’, in which these myriad of different sectors need to be linked together to provide the city with the best and most efficient services. ICT can help in the interlinking of the different sectors.

Figure 1: Eurocities’ ‘Smart City’ Characteristics



Source: Eurocities’ Webstie: <http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/issues/smart-cities-issue>

The ‘Smart City’ concept from ICLEI and Eurocities shows that ICT solutions are at the forefront of sustainable city development. These ICT solutions should make the services that a city offers across its many different sectors more interrelated and interconnected. This heightened interconnectedness helps in assuring that a city is run and managed in a more efficient manner, in terms of resources used, to better include social and environmental factors that play a direct role in the well-being of a city’s citizens. Examples of the ‘Smart City’ city concept and ICT mechanisms to promote sustainable urban development are Malmö in

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/issues/smart-cities-issue>  
<sup>20</sup> <http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/issues/smart-cities-issue>

Sweden and Vienna in Austria. Both cities were chosen because they are well-recognized as being leaders in 'Smart City' city development and are well-known in Europe.

## Malmö, Sweden

Malmö is often credited as being one of the frontrunners when it comes to cities that are pursuing sustainable development in Europe. Many of the ways in which Malmö goes about sustainable urban development can be attributed to advances in technology, or putting technology to use in finding better solutions to social and environmental issues, thereby reflecting very closely the concept of the 'Smart City'. In May 2014, the Malmö City Council adopted the "Översiktsplan För Malmö" or "Comprehensive Plan for Malmö", which is only available in English in the form of a summary.

According to the foreword of the Plan<sup>21</sup>, the City of Malmö has experienced a successful transformation from industrial city in crisis to a modern, environmentally aware and forward-looking city. This new comprehensive plan is a strategy for a new era, looking towards Malmö in the 2030s.

The comprehensive plan is a representation of the City of Malmö's long-term vision for development and shows how planning can contribute to its implementation. Although the future is always shrouded in uncertainty, Malmö wants to develop in areas that are more predictable and where it can better plan and steer the course of events, such as in the area of technology and development that relies upon different types of technologies.

Economic, social and environmental sustainability are key objectives for the continued development of Malmö. The strategy to maintain Malmö's inward expansion was developed, because dense urban areas are more resource efficient and therefore have reduced environmental impact in comparison with low-density development. A compact city provides a strong foundation for a safe and vibrant urban environment and will do much to increase the appeal of Malmö.

The different ways in which Malmö tries to achieve the goals set out in its Comprehensive Plan are manifold: the City of Malmö has published a top-10 list of its accomplishments towards sustainable development, "Sustainable Malmö Top Ten". Some of the examples are listed below, which shows the many different ways in which Malmö addressed sustainable development. The examples provided below were chosen to impart a more mixed view of some of the activities Malmö is doing for sustainable development and to see which activities were ranked towards the top and which one more towards the bottom.

### **#1: Sustainable urban development**

"In the Western Harbour modern architecture is combined with ecological sustainability. Using locally produced electricity and many green spaces it is an internationally recognised symbol for sustainable urban development. The Western Harbour is a testing ground for new environmental technology, a model for the rest of Malmö. Ten years of sustainable urban

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<sup>21</sup> [http://malmo.se/download/18.1256e63814a61a1b34c1b34/1491298772439/OP\\_english\\_summary\\_hemsida.pdf](http://malmo.se/download/18.1256e63814a61a1b34c1b34/1491298772439/OP_english_summary_hemsida.pdf), p. 2.

development can be traced here, from Bo01, Sweden's first district with a nearly fully local renewable energy system based on the sun, wind and water, to the new generation of sustainable construction, e.g. Fullriggaren and Kappseglaren. Each part of the expansion has its own special environmental features with everything from a completely open storm water management system in the first stage, to the latest stage with waste grinders for all 600 apartments so that the organic waste can become biogas for buses and cars. Malmö's largest expansion area, Hyllie, is to be the Öresund Region's climate-smartest district. By 2020 the energy supply in Hyllie will be 100 percent provided by renewable or recycled energy. Hyllie is one of few places in the world where a large-scale smart grid is being created, that doesn't only include solutions for electricity, but also for heating and cooling. This is where the energy systems of the future are tested enabling people via smartphones to actively calculate, control and influence their own energy consumption, and also be able to produce energy themselves. It's going to be easy to live a climate-smart lifestyle in Hyllie.<sup>22</sup>

### **# 3: Apple-cores becoming biogas for the buses (reducing the mountain of waste, creating sustainable energy)**

“Malmö is the first large city in Sweden to make a political decision that all households in the city must collect organic waste. The new system, which piloted in Augustenborg, is now implemented city-wide. All organic waste then ferments into biogas that we can run buses and cars on. Already today the city buses in Malmö runs on 100 percent renewable fuel, mainly biogas. The positive climatic effect using biogas becomes significantly greater compared to petroleum and can, incredibly, become more than 100 percent, as it doesn't just replace fossil fuels but also takes care of the waste. As a bonus there are nutritional substances left behind in the digestion residues which can be spread back over the growing fields, replacing artificial fertilizer.<sup>23</sup>”

### **# 7: Sweden's first Fairtrade City (sustainable consumption)**

“The City of Malmö is working along procurement lines towards increasing the share of organic and ethically labelled goods, and to reduce the use of dangerous substances and chemicals. In 2006 Malmö became Sweden's first certified Fairtrade City, something that has an influence on the council's procurement and range of goods. Many of Malmö's restaurants, cafés and hotels offer their guests ethically labelled products and many shops sell fairly traded goods with everything from foodstuffs and flowers, to clothes, footballs and interior decoration. More than 200 places of work in Malmö have made a conscious decision to take ethical coffee breaks in their staff rooms. The City of Malmö has increased its internal purchase of ethically certified coffee from 0.5 % in 2006 to 92% in 2015!<sup>24</sup>”

Many of the top-10 sustainable achievements that Malmö has made in terms of sustainable development reflect a very ‘Smart City’ oriented approach, as Malmö makes use of ICT in an attempt to improve the way in which the city develops, from waste management, to the

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<sup>22</sup> <http://malmo.se/Nice-to-know-about-Malmo/Sustainable-Malmo-/Nyheter-Sustainable-Malmo/2016-11-15-Sustainable-Malmo-Top-Ten.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://malmo.se/Nice-to-know-about-Malmo/Sustainable-Malmo-/Nyheter-Sustainable-Malmo/2016-11-15-Sustainable-Malmo-Top-Ten.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://malmo.se/Nice-to-know-about-Malmo/Sustainable-Malmo-/Nyheter-Sustainable-Malmo/2016-11-15-Sustainable-Malmo-Top-Ten.html>

building of a more compact city, to the way in which it produces its energy. Many of these projects and initiatives are tested within specific districts in the city, which serve as test beds that can be scaled up to the entire city and even beyond. Looking back to figure 1 from Eurocities, Malmö attempts to utilize ICT to link the different sectors and areas a city has with one another, in order to increase the efficiency and output of the city with a more minimal waste of resources. Through the Comprehensive Plan, Malmö has high level political support behind its sustainable development plans. Many sectors important in making sure that they city functions well, such as living, energy, and transportation, are connecting and reconnecting in different ways, such as using food waste from houses and apartments to fuel public transportation. These initiatives are undertaken to not only make Malmö appear as a frontrunner in terms of sustainable urban development, but also, and more importantly, to make the quality of life for people living and working in Malmö better.

### Vienna as a ‘Smart City’

Much like Malmö, Vienna also strives to utilize ICT in aiding the city to develop along a more sustainable path. Vienna was chosen as an example, because it has, for the last several years been ranked as one the world’s cities with the highest quality of life. The city also has a long history with city planning and sustainable development, such as the STEP 2005, only available as a shortened report in English, and STEP 2025, which serve as the city’s blueprint and guide to development. The main coordinating body for city planning is the Municipal Department 18: City Development and City Planning. When it comes to being a ‘Smart City’, Vienna has a specialized department called TINA Vienna, which works closely with the Municipal Department 18, and has a team of 20 people, and are mainly responsible for the administration of the ‘Smart City’.

In 2014, the City of Vienna adopted a comprehensive framework strategy, “Smart City Wien Framework Strategy” that details how Vienna will develop over the short, medium, and long-term until 2050. The Viennese ‘Smart City’ approach is based on resource conservation and how resources are used in order to drastically reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and dependencies in connection with scarce and finite resources, while at the same time trying to increase Vienna’s already high quality of life, in which participation by society is being considered increasingly important in determining the city’s future: “Ultimately, Smart City Wien stands for change based on innovation, active organisation and, where necessary, the development of new forms of public and private service delivery.”<sup>25</sup>

Within the Framework Strategy the concept of the ‘Smart City’ is elaborated upon and what that exactly means for Vienna. “As a smart city, Vienna must also be resilient and hence robust, flexible, adaptive and able to react quickly and in keeping with the challenges when faced with internal and external influences. In this, resilience is strongly dependent on the availability of room to manoeuvre, on the possibilities for self-organisation or for re-organisation of economic and social systems, on social coherence, on the competencies of residents and on a flexible and innovative administration.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Smart City Wien Framework Strategy*, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

The main goals of the Framework Strategy up until 2050 focus on three intertwined pathways towards development: 1) Quality of life, which entails social inclusion, participation, healthcare and the environment; 2) Resources, such as those used in the energy sector, mobility sector, in buildings and in infrastructure, and 3) Innovation, in which the education sector, economics, research, technology and innovation (RTI) come together to provide solutions for the other two main goals of the Smart City Wien Framework Strategy.

In order to support the goals in the Framework Strategy, the city of Vienna has many projects that it runs that deal with the three main goals. A comprehensive list can be found on the [Smart City Wien website](#) under [Projects](#). Although Vienna does not have a ranking list like Malmö, some of the projects it does feature, are very much ingrained in increased citizen participation in the cities development, which ranges from renewable energy, to apps designed to initiate conversations between citizens and the city. Below we list some examples:

### **Solar Energy for Everyone**

“More than 6,000 Viennese are already involved in the expansion of the use of renewable energy. By 2030, 40 % of the energy consumption should come from renewable energy. By investing in community-funded solar power plants, Viennese citizens have the opportunity to participate in the development of renewable energies. Citizens’ power plants mark the beginning of the dawn of a solar energy future for Vienna, and show the city’s clear commitment to developing solar energy.

Setting up your own ecological energy supply system is not always an option, particularly in a big city where 80 per cent of the population lives in rented flats. As part of the development of various renewable energy sources, using solar energy is essential for climate protection and constitutes a key step towards phasing out the inflationary use of fossil fuels. The city of Vienna strongly supports photovoltaic energy production, which started its boom in Vienna throughout the last few years.

On May 4, 2012 the first citizen solar power plant opened on the site of the Donaustadt power plant in the north of Vienna. Within the last four years 24 Citizens’ Solar Power Plants with 26,000 panels were constructed, which generate a total of approximately 6.8 MWp. The energy is fed into the Vienna power grid and provides solar power for approximately 3,000 local households.<sup>27</sup>”

The Solar Energy for Everyone project functions by allowing every private person with a residence in Austria to participate. The Vienna Energy (Wien Energie) company is responsible for the setting up and maintenance of the solar panels, whereby citizens can buy entire solar panels, or half solar panels, for a price of 950 Euros and 475 Euros respectively. Citizens then rent the panels back to Wien Energie and receive 3.1% of their investment back, which is deposited once per year into their bank accounts. Citizens are able to keep the solar panels for the entire lifetime of the panel, which is about 25 years long, at which point Wien Energie will buy the solar panels back from citizens at the original price.<sup>28</sup> If one citizen were to buy a full solar panel, they would receive, at the end of 25 years, 736.25 Euros from all 25 years of

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<sup>27</sup> <https://smartcity.wien.gv.at/site/am-solarkraftwerk-beteiligen/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://smartcity.wien.gv.at/site/projekte/menschen-gesellschaft/buergerinnen-solarkraftwerk/>

renting the panel back to Wien Energie, plus the original 950 Euros, which would be a total of 1,686.25 Euros per full panel.

## **Re-use CO2**

“Carbon dioxide can be a valuable resource for industry. It can, for example, be used as a fertilizer in greenhouses to improve plant growth. But for reasons of climate protection, it would be problematic to produce CO2 for this purpose, using fossil fuels. Filtering CO2 out of the exhaust gases from industrial processes, and turning it into something useful would be much more environmental friendly.

As part of the flagship project “ViennaGreenCO2”, that is co-supported by Shell and the Austrian Climate and Energy Funds, TU Wien is working with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Shell and other partners to develop a new kind of carbon-dioxide separation technique that is both cost- and energy-efficient. First separation tests in the laboratories of TU Wien have already proven that the technique works. Within the “ViennaGreenCO2” project, the separation process will now be further developed and the practical viability of the new concept will be demonstrated at pilot scale at the power plant from Wien Energie.”

## **“Sag’s Wien” (“Say it Vienna”) Application**

With the new “Sag’s Wien” application citizens can report a concern, a danger point or a malfunction to the Vienna City Administration at any time and place in the city.

With the digitization strategy of the City of Vienna, the opportunity for the Viennese people to participate should be further increased. Vienna is already taking a pioneering role and wants to further expand it. Within the framework of the strategy, the City of Vienna has developed a new app called “Sag’s Wien”, which allows citizens to communicate their concerns to the city administration in 30 seconds.

With “Sag’s Wien” Vienna becomes more mobile, more personal, more networked – and the dialogue between citizens and the administration is improved. The app was, together with committed Viennese people, developed as part of the “Digital Agenda Vienna”.

## Chapter 2: Impulses and Support from Existing Local and Urban Networks in SDG Implementation

This chapter provides an overview of the support mechanisms and activities that existing local and urban networks provide to their members for their efforts to implement the SDGs. The networks that were selected for this Report were chosen because they represent the more established networks, such as ICLEI and Eurocities, as well as more locally based networks that will be present at the 15th ESDN Workshop in Berlin in October 2017.

Networks can provide a significant support to the local and urban level when it comes to the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation. In the following paragraph, it will become clearer how networks can be a viable tool in order to communicate the SDGs, launch campaigns for the SDGs, and create platforms to share lessons learned and best practices in those cities that might need an impulse or more support for implementing the SDGs.

### ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

The Local Governments for Sustainability network, [ICLEI](#), is a leading global network that consists of



1,500 cities, towns and regions that commit to building a sustainable future. It is also a movement driving positive change on a global scale through programmes and campaigns on local sustainability, and a resource centre offering information, tools, networking, training and consulting services.

ICLEI's vision is a world of sustainable cities that confront the realities of urbanization, adapt to economic and demographic trends and prepare for the impacts of climate change and other urban challenges. Therefore, ICLEI unites local and sub-national governments in creating positive change through collective learning, exchange and capacity building. ICLEI applies an integrated approach to sustainable development that focuses on the sub-national level to become sustainable, low-carbon, ecomobile, resilient, biodiverse, resource-efficient, healthy and happy, with a green economy and smart infrastructure.

ICLEI has a [European Secretariat](#) which represents local governments in all relevant policy processes for sustainability in Europe. In this regard, ICLEI works together with other European networks, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, and many other organisations involved in formulating EU policies and strategies.

Regarding their support mechanisms and activities, ICLEI provides **training guides, case studies, regional updates on activities and information services to build capacity, share knowledge**, and support local governments in building more sustainable cities.

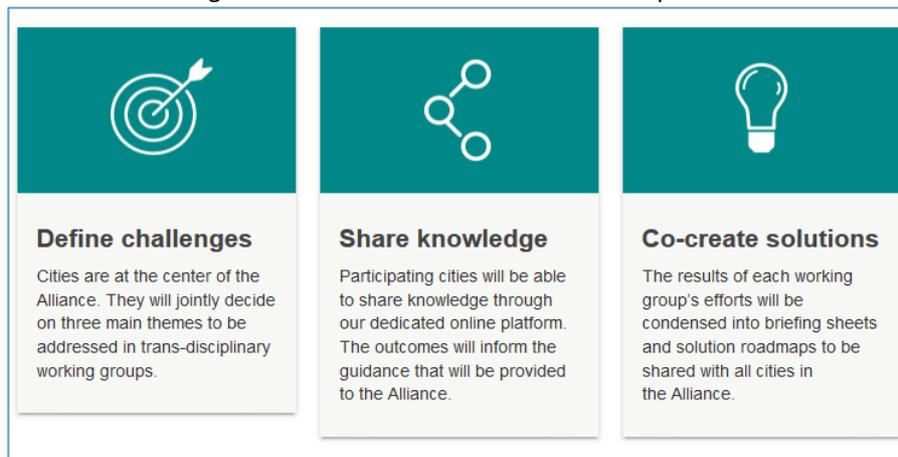
ICLEI mainly developed two initiatives to help local governments in addressing the sustainable urban development transition by building strategies and developing leadership capacities:

- **Smart city:** this approach brings together what ICLEI has identified as important characteristics to move towards smart cities. These entail thinking about solutions

that could benefit the people of the city (people at the center), the local context, smart cities standardization process, strategic partnerships, city-business cooperation, and integrated thinking. ICLEI’s smart cities agenda is advanced through conferences, workshops and events regularly advertised on their website.

- **Urban Transitions Alliance:** the Urban Transitions Alliance is an initiative funded by Stiftung Mercator and managed by ICLEI. The Alliance is an opportunity for cities to become global leaders in sustainable urban development. The Alliance’s purpose is to help cities identify common challenges, share knowledge, co-create solutions and foster strong working relationships with local government peers, the research community and the private sector.

Figure 2: ICLEI’s Urban Transitions Alliance pillars:



Source: [ICLEI’s website](#)

Particularly relevant for the communication of the SDGs at the local level are the [ICLEI Briefing Sheets](#), which provide background information on current themes and ongoing debates concerning local sustainability. At present, to highlight the linkage between the SDGs and cities, ICLEI released a total of 7 Briefing Sheets covering the following topics:

- (1) From MDGs to SDGs: What are the Sustainable Development Goals?;
- (2) Cities and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (3) Introducing a new Global Goal for Cities and Human Settlements;
- (4) The importance of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for cities and communities;
- (5) Implementing the SDGs in cities;
- (6) Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating the SDGs;
- (7) Towards the New Urban Agenda: Linking with international processes.

To support cities’ engagement with the SDGs, ICLEI released several [examples and case studies](#) about local actions and pioneering work that can help local governments become inspired to take action. For each Goal, ICLEI provides a case from the Global North and one from the Global South. Action examples cover all 17 SDGs, while case studies focus on SDG 11, “Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, and related targets. An interesting case study example comes from the city of Barcelona that has been the first European city to develop and implement Solar Thermal Ordinance (STO). This made compulsory to use solar energy to supply 60% of running hot water in new buildings,

renovated ones or buildings changing their use. Another good case study example is Växjö city in Sweden that has developed numerous projects to educate citizens about ways in which they can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions themselves. Växjö's programs aim to raise awareness and encourage citizen engagement. A program example is the Teleborg school photovoltaic (PV) system and Climate Idols, which shows how citizen involvement is key to implementing successful measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. These and many other case studies related to SDG 11 can be found on ICLEI's website.

## Covenant of Mayors



**The Covenant of Mayors** brings together thousands of local and regional authorities that voluntarily commit to implementing EU climate and energy objectives and developing a more sustainable energy future for their territory. The movement started in 2008 with the support of the European Commission

and provides a bottom-up support for the implementation of the EU Climate and Energy Package adopted in 2008 by the head of state and government. As of October 2017, the movement counted 6,706 signatories.

Since 2015, the Covenant of Mayors decided to focus on Climate and Energy, which has been translated into putting particular attention on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction commitments and climate change adaptation. The initiative has been defined by Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete as the “world’s biggest urban and energy initiative”. Indeed, signatories pledge to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 40% by 2030. The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is open to all local authorities.

On its website, the Covenant of Mayors collects all the Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs) and Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) submitted by the signatories and/or accepted by the European Commission (Figure 3). At the time of writing this report, there were 5,963 Action Plans listed on the Covent of Mayors’ website.

Figure 3: Covenant of Mayors Action Plans search function

All these Action Plans are ranked by date of formal approval. All actions undertaken by the signatories within the Covenant of Mayors framework are described in the following documents.

**5954 Action Plans found.**

- ✓ Action Plans accepted
- ✗ Action Plan submitted
- ✗ Pending clarifications requested

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ... 119 120 Next »

Signatories	Council deliberation	Commitments	Analysis	Status
Gandesa, ES	28 Sep 2017	2020		✓
Mont-Roig de Camp, ES	13 Sep 2017	2020		✓
ISORELLA, IT	10 Aug 2017	2030 ADAPT		✓
Bagnolo Mella, IT	31 Jul 2017	2030 ADAPT		✓
Fiume Veneto, IT	31 Jul 2017	2020		✓
Mentana, IT	31 Jul 2017	2020		✓
Postalesio, IT	21 Jul 2017	2020		✓
ERMIONIDA, GR	18 Jul 2017	2020		✓
Montelupo Fiorentino, IT	27 Jun 2017	2020		✓
Vielsalm, BE	26 Jun 2017	2020		✓
ORISTÀ, ES	31 May 2017	2030 ADAPT		✓

Source: [Covenant of Mayors website](#)

In addition, the Covenant of Mayors releases several [case studies](#) with examples of Smart City activities from all over Europe. Two kinds of case studies are published by the Covenant of mayors: the first one is developed by the movement and consists of 2 pages of information about the activity in a determined country, and the second one redirects to the [European Climate Adaption Platform \(ADAPT\)](#). However, in both cases, the aim of the case studies is to present successful activities and policies implemented by signatory cities and to show concrete results in the field of sustainable local development that can inspire other cities.

## Eurocities



**Eurocities** was founded in 1986 by the mayors of six large cities: Barcelona, Birmingham, Frankfurt, Lyon, Milan and Rotterdam. Since then, Eurocities is a network of major European cities. Currently, the network brings together local governments from over 135 European large cities and over 45 partner cities. Eurocities offers its members a platform for sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas, which is made possible through eight

thematic forums<sup>29</sup>, a wide range of working groups, projects, activities and events. The aim of the network is to reinforce the important role that local governments should play in a multi-level governance structure.

Eurocities is part of the **Sharing Cities project** funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

The aim of the Sharing Cities programme is to provide the basis and develop a common approach towards the development of Smart Cities. The project fosters international collaboration between industry and cities and seeks to develop Smart City solutions with a high market potential. The project also includes a framework for citizen engagement at the local level in order to build trust between cities and citizens. Sharing Cities includes 35 partners from cities, industry representatives, NGOs and academia. The project set 10 goals including:

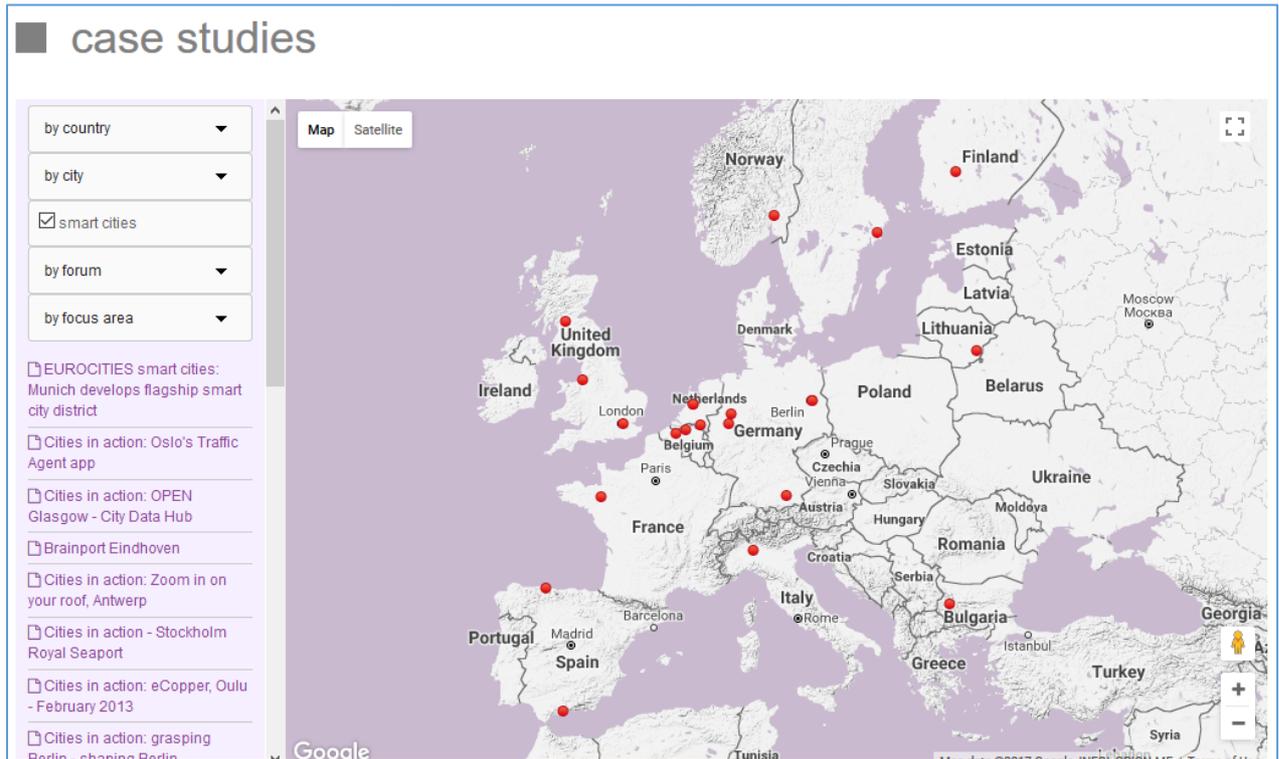
1. Aggregate demand and deploy Smart City solutions;
2. Deliver common and replicable innovative models;
3. Attract external investment;
4. Accelerate take-up of Smart City solutions;
5. Pilot energy efficient districts;
6. Shift thinking irreversibly to local renewable energy sources;
7. Promote new models of e-mobility;
8. Successfully engage with citizens;
9. Exploit 'city data' to maximum effect;
10. Foster local level innovation, creation of new businesses and jobs.

In addition, Eurocities releases several short cases studies around the topic of Smart Cities. These include information about city activities towards becoming more sustainable. Figure 4 below shows the Eurocities map highlighting where Smart City activities are happening.

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<sup>29</sup> Eurocities eight thematic forums include culture, economy, environment, knowledge society, mobility, social affairs, urban development and cooperation.

Figure 4: Eurocities Smart City activities map



Source: [Eurocities website case studies section](#)

## Climate-KIC

**Climate-KIC** is the largest European public-private innovation partnership focusing on climate change. Climate-KIC was created in 2010 by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) together with two additional Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). EIT's aim is to create sustainable growth and Climate-KIC is supporting this mission by addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation. The main purpose of the community is to integrate education, entrepreneurship and innovation, with the goal of transforming knowledge and ideas into economically viable products and services that can help mitigate climate change.



One of the main Climate-KIC working issues concerns Urban Transition. With respect to the Urban Transition activities, Climate-KICs foster urban transformation through collaboration between infrastructure, governance and investment. The idea behind Urban Transitions is:

- **Integrated and Systemic Innovation:** to foster innovation that can synergise city systems and infrastructure
- **Smart and Sustainable Development:** Urban Transitions works for sustainable development through articulating new model of values and making sense of complex data.
- **Education, Facilitation and Capacity Building:** Urban Transitions fosters collaboration by bringing diverse and competing stakeholders together in order to share best practice and knowledge in urban transformation.

In addition, Climate-KICs provide some recommendations on why different urban scales should be considered, as urban investment and implementation decisions generally take place at different levels. By taking into account the different scales and their interactions it could be easier for decision-makers to understand how to integrate systems at different levels. Climate-KIC developed flagship programmes and projects to better understand each of these scales, which include the Building Technologies Accelerator (BTA) flagship programme, Urban Transitions' Smart Sustainable Districts (SSD) flagship programmes, and Urban Transitions' innovation and start-up projects. All the information is collected in the **Urban Transition theme booklet**.

## Council of European Municipalities and Regions<sup>30</sup>



The **Council of European Municipalities and Regions** (CEMR) was created in 1951 and brings together national associations of local and regional governments from 42 European countries, and is able, in this way, to represent all levels of territories (local, sub-national and regional). CEMR is also a member of the Global Task Force of local and regional governments recognised by the UN, which is the European section of UCLG, the world organisation of local and regional governments.

Since its creation in 1951, CEMR promotes the construction of a united, peaceful and democratic Europe founded on local self-government, respect for the principle of subsidiarity and the participation of citizens. Its work is organised around two main pillars:

1. Influencing European policy and legislation in all areas having an impact on municipalities and regions;
2. Providing a forum for debate between local and regional authorities via their national representative associations.
3. Regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, our CEMR's work consists in four main strands:
  1. **Awareness raising of their constituencies** by organising regular trainings and workshops for European members on the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. The Council encourage its members to work with their counterpart in partner countries, through city-to-city cooperation;
  2. Secondly, **awareness raising of EU institutions** on the role municipalities, cities and regions play in the achievement of the SDGs: more than 65% of the goals will not be achieved without local governments' engagement;
  3. The Council takes action on **monitoring and reporting** by encouraging its members to take part in the national voluntary reporting process, and by providing them with a simple online, visual, monitoring tool (the Reference Framework for sustainable Cities) to help them in their reporting to the national level, to EU institutions and finally the UN through the Global Task Force;

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<sup>30</sup> The information provided in this paragraph are taken from CEMR official website as well as provided to the ESDN by a representative of the network

4. **Lobbying at international level** to make the voice of local and regional governments heard in the UN system.

CEMR is also a lead partner of the **PLATFORMA project**, the European voice of local and regional governments working on decentralised cooperation. The project started in November 2008 with the purpose to keep track of the implementation of the first European Commission communication on local and regional governments in development cooperation. In 2015, through a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission (DG DEVCO), the signatories committed to take action by following common values and objectives aimed to tackle global poverty and inequalities, while promoting local democracy and sustainable development. PLATFORMA reflects the diversity of local and regional governments' realities in Europe and across the world and it aims to foster experience sharing among them and to reinforce local and regional governments' specific role in development policies.

On its website, the PLATFORMA project collects a number of studies produced by partners on how to reinforce dialogue and capacity building of local and regional governments in EU partner countries. In addition, it also publishes global and regional reports with the objective of providing the state of play of local government associations in EU partner countries and serves as a basis for future policy proposals. Also, the PLATFORMA project organizes several event taking place in different cities worldwide. You can keep track of the events on the project [website](#).

While the five organizations presented above have European level coverage, some actions have also begun to be undertaken at the national and regional level. Two examples are the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International) and the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG). These two organizations and their initiatives will be briefly described in the following section.

## VNG International

**VNG International** (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten) is the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. The organization strengthens local governments, their associations, training institutes and decentralization task forces both in developing countries and in countries in transition. In addition, the association develops high quality services such as benchmarks for local governments all over the world.



VNG International developed different projects dealing with local development and sustainability. These include:

- **Global Goals Municipality Campaign**
- **Inclusive Decisions At Local Level (IDEAL)**
- **Local Government Capacity Programme**
- **Local Government Resilience Programme**

In particular, the Global Goals Municipality Campaign (Gemeenten4GlobalGoals) was created to support the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and focuses on the importance of local government,

a key agent in the new development agenda. The campaign started shortly after the adoption of the SDGs in September 2015 with the aim to inform local governments in the Netherlands on the content of the SDGs and to encourage them to take their responsibilities in realizing the Goals. In the Campaign, VNG International undertook a role which consists of:

- **Informing** on the Global Goals, the international dimensions and how Dutch municipalities can contribute in realizing the goals;
- **Facilitating** exchange by forming and expanding the network of municipalities and facilitating interaction within the network and beyond;
- **Encouraging** activities in municipalities that contribute to the SDGs;
- **Advising** in order to support the translation of global agendas to local contexts and capabilities.

### Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)<sup>31</sup>

**The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities** (VVSG) is the representative organization of Flemish municipalities. The main purpose of the association is to promote strong local authorities through the development and support of initiatives that are able to enhance the quality of local policy.



Since 2015, VVSG (International) has been spreading the SDG-message. The association organized training sessions for local civil servants on the SDGs and their link with local governments. Furthermore, VVSG organized an international conference on the SDGs, mostly attended by Flemish municipalities and their city-to-city link colleagues from the Global South. Together with this conference, VVSG published a publication on the SDGs (**Glocal**).

Additionally, VVSG provides material on localizing the SDGs:

- The publication '**Local support for global challenges**', with information on the 17 SDGs and their targets and what local governments can do to achieve them;
- An **animation film on localizing the SDGs**, available in four languages
- The declaration of commitment '**Local goals, global focus**', available in four languages. This declaration has already been signed by about 60 Flemish municipalities, but also by multiple municipalities in the South because of municipal international cooperation.
- A gameboard helping local governments disclose what actions and activities they are already undertaking that can be linked to the SDGs
- SDG banners, pins, posters and facts
- Monthly article on good practices with regard to one SDG. These articles will be translated into English.

Most importantly, VVSG kicked off a pilot project on integrating the SDGs into local policy-making. In total, 50 Flemish municipalities, which is 1/6 of all Flemish municipalities, have signed up for the project. 20 municipalities have been selected to work intensively with VVSG to incorporate the SDGs into local policies, with sights set on the local elections in October

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<sup>31</sup> The information provided in this paragraph have been provided by a representative of the network

2018. This project is based on experiment: the association will work with the 20 municipalities to determine what is possible, what works, and what does not work. Eventually, tools and guidelines on consolidating the SDGs in local policy-making for all 308 Flemish municipalities will be made available. The first tool is planned to be distributed this fall. VVSG will also organize a concluding event in 2019 and an international SDG event in 2021.

## Chapter 3: Practical Examples of SDG Implementation at the Local Level

This chapter will build upon the first chapter, which looked into how sustainability and sustainable development have grown and changed over time, by exploring some practical examples of the implementation of the SDGs at the local level in Europe, which have often been built upon programs that have a rich history grounded in sustainable development, such as Local Agenda 21. Some of the practical examples that will be looked at in this chapter have also decided to move away from, or replace, past sustainable development programs with strategies that actively seek to incorporate and implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The examples that are provided were chosen, because of their unique experiences and because representatives from these cities presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop about their city's experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

### Hannover, Germany

Hannover is an interesting practical example, because while it has decided to embrace and integrate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, it has a long history of support for Local Agenda 21. Hannover's affiliation with LA21 goes back to 1995 when the City Council decided to join this program. This decision was further strengthened when the city signed the Aalborg Charter in 2006. In order to work out the logistics of implementing a Local Agenda 21, the city of Hannover established the Agenda 21 Office in 1996. In order to receive feedback from city actors regarding LA21, there were city-wide dialogue processes, such as workshops, that occurred with citizens and other actors to decide upon goals and measures that they wanted to see for the city. These were then presented as suggestions to the City Council. From these dialogue processes many projects were established that exist not only with the cooperation of the city administration, but also exist outside of it. Some projects have been included in Action Programs for City Development from 2001 to 2005. Some projects have even fostered further discussions to take place,<sup>32</sup> which shows that Hannover was successful in establishing a Local Agenda 21 that was able to garner participation from many different actors, who were able to work together to not only create their idea of an effective LA21, but also engage with it, the city administration and each other to create events, projects and discussions about sustainability related issues.

The establishment of LA21 in Hannover would most likely not have been possible without the Agenda 21 Office, which was renamed to the Agenda 21 and Sustainability Office, as it is able to bring many different societal actors and stakeholders, deal with the environmental issues, social issues, political issues, and economic issues, etc. together, so that they are able to develop informational and educational materials, design and implement projects and campaigns, as well as support discussions relating to sustainable development.<sup>33</sup> Establishing a coordinating body seems to be very important when it comes to affecting city-wide change regarding sustainable development. The Agenda 21 and Sustainability Office is responsible for: 1) Local sustainability strategies; 2) Sustainability indicators and reporting; 3) Fair Trade; 4)

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Umwelt-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/Agenda-21-Nachhaltigkeit/Agenda-21/Lokale-Agenda-21/Agenda-Prozess>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Umwelt-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/Agenda-21-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltige-Kommune/Agenda-21-und-Nachhaltigkeitsb%C3%BCro>

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: awareness raising about the SDGs; 5) Procurement that follows social standards and does not use child labor; 6) Sustainable lifestyles; 7) Global environmental and resource conservation; 8) Education for sustainable development/environmental education for schools and nursery schools and global learning; 9) Coordination of “Children Forest Hannover” (*Kinderwald* Hannover) as a place of learning outside of school; 10) Community partnerships with countries from the global South; 11) Sustainable economics; and 12) Sustainable event planning.<sup>34</sup>

When looking at the current situation in Hannover, the city seems to have decided to transition away from, and actually replace Agenda 21 with the 2030 Agenda, as Hannover has already recognized and acknowledged that it is, in some way or another, directly affected by all the SDGs. The region of Hannover, therefore, wants to honor the SDGs and ensure that people are able to live well, but in a way that conserves resources and allows the region to remain sustainable.

Within the public administration of the Hannover region, there has already been many areas in which sustainability has been actively pursued and implemented, such as in areas that concern the environment. When it comes to SDG 15, Life on Land, the region of Hannover is already engaged in measures to protect biodiversity, including plants and animals, the designation of nature reserves and for the protection of moorlands.<sup>35</sup>

While the region of Hannover will undoubtedly be affected by all of the SDGs in some way, the region itself has identified particular SDGs that are more relevant for them in their pursuit in integrating the SDGs. The identification of priorities is an important step in being able to deal with SDG implementation, as some SDGs have greater importance for particular areas, or are able to be better dealt with given a city’s, municipality’s, or region’s specific context. The region of Hannover has been able to identify that it has a very distinct responsibility to SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities. Regarding SDG 11, the region of Hannover is a pioneer in the sense that they have developed a sustainable mobility concept through the Transportation Development Plan (Verkehrsentwicklungsplan), which takes the environment into account.<sup>36</sup>

However, the region also acknowledges that there are other areas that require its attention, such as inclusive education, life-long learning, securing a sustainable energy supply, provisions that need to be taken in protecting the climate, climate change adaptation, the development of more resilient and reliable infrastructure, and support for sustainable economic growth, in which it is important for everyone to find a decent job. The region of Hannover also realizes that without the entire region working together, the 2030 Agenda would remain ineffective.

## Ludwigsburg, Germany

Much like Hannover, Ludwigsburg also makes use of a specially designated body to handle the way in which the city deals with sustainable development, which is called the Council for

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Umwelt-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/Agenda-21-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltige-Kommune/Agenda-21-und-Nachhaltigkeitsb%C3%BCro>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Umwelt-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/Regionale-Agenda-2030>

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Umwelt-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/Regionale-Agenda-2030#eztoc13564264\\_1](https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Umwelt-Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/Regionale-Agenda-2030#eztoc13564264_1)

Sustainable City Development. The way in which the Council fosters sustainable development in Ludwigsburg won the city the German Sustainability Award in 2014. The way in which the city of Ludwigsburg approaches sustainability is based on stakeholder participation, which includes members from the government administration, the City Council and citizens, who gather together every three years at events called “Future Conferences”, the last of which took place in 2015, to discuss ideas for the city’s “City Development Concept” (*Stadtentwicklungskonzept* (SEK)), which acts as a guide for the city regarding how the city should continue to develop in a sustainable manner.<sup>37</sup>

The SEK is then used to make master plans for each of the city’s 11 thematic fields, which each have their own goals embedded within them. This separation allows for everyone to be able to keep track of the topics discussed in the “Future Conferences” and the SEK, as well as how and when goals and targets are being met.<sup>38</sup>

Once the participatory and implementation processes have ended, the city administration evaluates the progress of the SEK and the process begins again from the beginning with an assessment of the current situation within the city and the further development of any strategic goals, such as the SDGs, for example. This then leads to these goals being discussed amongst the stakeholders of Ludwigsburg at the “Future Conferences”, which, in turn, helps to inform the city how it should set up the SEK and how to then break it down into smaller master plans for each individual goal of the SEK.<sup>39</sup>

As the last “Future Conference” was in 2015, it is not surprising that the SDGs are not so prominently featured in the SEK. However, as 2018 marks another three year mark, and, hence, another “Future Conference”, the SDGs will be a main theme for Ludwigsburg leading up to the Conference in June, 2018. However, before the Conference, the city has already been active in promoting the SDGs to citizens. In July 2017, a flyer stand was set up outside of the Nature Vision Film Festival, which distributed flyers with the 17 SDGs on them and asked citizens to indicate which 3 SDGs were most important to them. So far, the Council for Sustainable City Development has received around 100 filled-out flyers.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to awareness raising campaigns like this, the city administration of Ludwigsburg will also discuss the alignment of the SDGs with each and every masterplan of the SEK. This will then lead to an open SDG workshop in December, 2017, as well as to a preparatory meeting in February, 2018, where the participatory process will be discussed. As previously mentioned, this will then culminate in the “Future Conference” for 2018, in which stakeholders will come together to discuss the future of the city’s sustainable development path and help to develop the next SEK and master plans for the cities 11 thematic fields.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> [https://www.ludwigsburg.de/,Lde/start/stadt\\_buerger/Stadtentwicklungskonzept.html](https://www.ludwigsburg.de/,Lde/start/stadt_buerger/Stadtentwicklungskonzept.html)

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.ludwigsburg.de/,Lde/start/stadt\\_buerger/Stadtentwicklungskonzept.html](https://www.ludwigsburg.de/,Lde/start/stadt_buerger/Stadtentwicklungskonzept.html)

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.ludwigsburg.de/site/Ludwigsburg-Internet/get/params\\_E853152870/1110806/2016\\_04\\_01\\_Pr%C3%A4sentation\\_NSE\\_Homepage.pdf](https://www.ludwigsburg.de/site/Ludwigsburg-Internet/get/params_E853152870/1110806/2016_04_01_Pr%C3%A4sentation_NSE_Homepage.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Tobias Großmann. *SD and SDGs activities in the City of Ludwigsburg*. Presentation at the 15th ESDN Workshop. 17 October 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Tobias Großmann. *SD and SDGs activities in the City of Ludwigsburg*. Presentation at the 15th ESDN Workshop. 17 October 2017.

## City of Ghent, Belgium

The City of Ghent is unique when it comes to the SDGs, because it represents 1 out of 8 SDG Voices, which is the name that Belgium came up with to refer to their SDG ambassadors, and Ghent is the only city to have become one. The idea for Belgium's SDG voices came from the spokespersons for the 2030 Agenda that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had chosen, and consisted of well-known personalities, such as the soccer player Messi, singer Shakira, and Belgium's Queen Mathilde. The Federal Institute for Sustainable Development took this idea and created a partnership with The Shift, which is a Belgian sustainability network that brings together 350 companies, NGOs and other organizations to stimulate partnerships and help co-create sustainable business models, in order to accomplish something similar to what the UN did, in Belgium. They decided to appoint 8 Belgian SDG Voices. These SDG Voices represent 8 organizations, which had been selected via a double selection procedure. This procedure entailed the enlistment of a committee consisting of 17 experts from civil society, who were tasked with creating a list of organizations with the biggest potential to carry out the SDGs in Belgium. Once the list of organizations was compiled by the expert committee, the list was put forward to a jury of communication experts, who chose the final 8 organizations with the best resume regarding sustainable development and in reaching the wider public.<sup>42</sup>

The main aim of these different organizations is to spread the message of the SDGs to their specific stakeholders and members of civil society, which will create a snowball effect by being able to reach people that are generally not reached with generic media and internet campaigns about sustainable development.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to being a SDG Voice, the city of Ghent has also created a platform to deal with sustainable development and the implementation of the SDGs. The platform consists of many meetings between different stakeholders in the city, including policy-makers and politicians. The platform seeks to develop and discuss ideas that stakeholders have and to then translate those ideas into concrete plans and action. It is the goal of the city to be able to extend and expand this platform to firstly engage with citizens, organizations and businesses more and gauge their reactions to these platform discussions, and the subsequent plans and actions that are taken based on those discussions.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from expanding the platform within the city, Ghent also wants to expand the platform to be able to discuss the SDGs with other well-established networks that have been dealing with sustainable development and the SDGs, such as ICLEI and Eurocities.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> E. Mulholland, A. Bernardo & G. Berger (2017), Communication and Awareness Raising in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: Activities and Challenges, ESDN Quarterly Report 44, April 2017, ESDN Office, Vienna. p. 19-20.

<sup>43</sup> IBID. p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> Anja Van den Durpel. Ghent. Presentation at the 15th ESDN Workshop. 17 October 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Anja Van den Durpel. Ghent. Presentation at the 15th ESDN Workshop. 17 October 2017.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, we provide conclusions based on the various examples that have been described in the preceding chapters and offer some reflections about what has been happening with regards to sustainable development at the local and urban level, as well as the practical implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

### ‘Smart Cities’ and LA21

By looking at both Malmö and Vienna and their approaches to the concept of the ‘Smart City’, there are many similarities between the two cities. Both cities set a high standard and goal on maintaining and even improving upon the already high quality of living they provide for their citizens. The way that both of these cities approach this goal are also similar in that they want to integrate ICT and innovations to better maximize and capitalize on efficiencies in order to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, resource use, and resource consumption. However, the ways in which these two cities do that are different, such as Malmö using the waste from households to power busses, or Vienna encouraging its citizens to invest in solar panels. Both have the same goal, but have different methods for achieving it, with one city not necessarily being ‘smarter’ than the other. Therefore, the concept of the ‘Smart City’ is addressed by both, but in different ways.

The overall concept of the ‘Smart City’ feeds back into and even assumes the role of the ‘Sustainable City’ in that many of the reasons why a ‘Smart City’ pursues ICT inspired developments and innovations, is because there is an already existing background and history of ‘Smart Cities’ pursuing the goals of sustainable development. The ‘Smart City’ arguably takes the ‘Sustainable City’ concept further, and seeks to test new ideas and technologies on a smaller scale, which, as witnessed in Malmö through its #3 ranked project, can take place at the district level. ‘Smart Cities’ allow for these type of projects to come to fruition and be tested, re-imagined, adopted or discarded, whereas that may not be possible at the national level, for example, or in cities that do not have the necessary capacities or structures needed to support having, maintaining and sustaining a ‘Smart City’.

While ‘Smart Cities’ may represent very particular cases when it comes to most cities, as there needs to be certain infrastructure already in place for a city to develop as a ‘Smart City’, cities in general are not less important when it comes to sustainable development. The same is also true of the non-urban local level. The ways in which these levels can interact and deal with issues in sustainability and sustainable development can be different than how ‘Smart Cities’ deal with them.

However, even if the methods for addressing sustainable development may be different, due to different contexts and resource constraints, and set-up of the municipality or city, many similarities are still present. The Local Agenda 21 in North Rhine-Westphalia puts great emphasis on having a platform and other fora for sustainable development, where civil society, politicians, government administrations, research and economics can participate equally. This is also very similar to Figure 1’s illustration of Eurocities’ idea of what it means for a city to be smart (see page 14): many sectors need to be integrated and brought together. North Rhine-Westphalia, however, may not be addressing sustainable development using the

same 'Smart City' methods as Malmö or Vienna, but it is still addressing the same core ideas of sustainable development.

When it comes to the implementation of the SDGs, it seems as if the non-'Smart Cities' may be further ahead of the 'Smart Cities', as there are not many 'Smart Cities' that seem to be working or integrating the SDGs. Malmö may be the exception, however, as representatives were present at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017. The City Council has also chose to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and use them as leading principles for the city.<sup>46</sup> However, in North Rhine-Westphalia, many municipalities and cities have already created sustainable development strategies that take into account the SDGs and will try to implement them, develop indicators to measure them, and then subsequently monitor them. These strategies are linked to the North Rhine-Westphalia Regional Sustainable Development Strategy and the German Sustainable Development Strategy, which shows that while 'Smart Cities' may be forerunners in many areas, they may still need to rely on EU and national signals and mechanism to know how to plan their strategies and what can be expected of them from the national and European level. Going back to Figure 1, coherent and enabling EU policy is a key factor in not only the 'Smart City', in terms of effective sustainable development, but also at all levels. This can also be extended to national policies and strategies on sustainable development, which in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is vital, since the national level is responsible for implementation. All levels, therefore, need to work together to create a more conducive environment for sustainability and sustainable development to thrive, so that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs can be better incorporated into not only local and urban development strategies, but also national and European Union strategies.

## Support Networks for SDG Implementation

In general, what emerged from a short analysis of the activities of the various networks described in this chapter, is that different types of impulses and support actions are applied by local and urban networks in order to foster the development of more sustainable cities. Both local and urban networks appear inclined to publish case studies and take part in projects and initiatives that investigate urban development challenges and opportunities. More interactive tools, such as animation movies, gameboards, and campaigns, seem to be particularly common within local networks, like VNG International and VVSG, rather than European level networks. Although several events are organized by both types of networks, workshops and other face-to-face activities are less likely to happen.

To sum up, local and urban networks are certainly working in order to move towards sustainable cities and for this purpose they are developing an increasing number of strategies to reach more people and support local governments in understanding and engaging with SDG implementation. However, in order to achieve the SDGs, it is necessary for more people and stakeholders to become engaged in their implementation. Therefore, impulses and support activities are a priority, on which it is essential to continue working towards.

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<sup>46</sup> <http://malmo.se/Nice-to-know-about-Malmo/Sustainable-Malmo-/Malmo-participates-in-High-Level-Political-Forum-at-the-UN.html>

## Practical Examples of SDG Implementation

It can be seen from the experiences in Ludwigsburg and Hannover that a coordinating body for sustainable development is very important in being able to effectively organize activities, meetings, conferences and workshops that deal with sustainable development issues and also bring in many different stakeholders that include citizens, City Council members, and members from the city administration. The process that the Council for Sustainable City Development of Ludwigsburg has developed over the last decade, since the very first “Future Conference”, seems to work very effectively in achieving mass participation, as well as concrete goal setting by way of the SEK and the master plans. The same is true of Hannover and the Agenda 21 and Sustainability Office.

The way in which Ludwigsburg will continue to use this well-established process to implement the SDGs and allow city stakeholders to debate and discuss on them holds very true to the essence of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as the city is bringing them closer to the people and trying to affect real change at the local level, which can also be said of Hannover and the Agenda 21 and Sustainability Office. Both offices play very distinct and important roles in how the SDGs will be implemented in the respective cities. Successful cities, when it comes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, may be characterized by highly engaged city-appointed organizations that are in charge of organizing workshops with stakeholders, crafting strategies that incorporate the SDGs, evaluate past processes and improve upon them.

Ghent is also following a very similar path to Ludwigsburg and Hannover when it comes to holding many stakeholder meetings over a significant period of time, in an effort to bring people, politicians, and city administration together to discuss the city’s future regarding sustainable development. Being an SDG Voice provides Ghent with a platform to raise awareness for the SDGs, much like “Future Conferences” also raise awareness for the SDGs, and increase the number of people who are participating in the entire process of sustainable development.

Some similarities can also be seen between these practical examples, the example of LAG 21 NRW, and the ‘Smart City’ examples of Malmö and Vienna. The main governance mechanisms that they have in common is a responsible body, or bodies, that coordinate sustainable development within the city or the region. This responsible body, whether that is an office or department of the city administration, or a network that is funded through many partners and stakeholders, is invaluable and necessary to be able to efficiently and effectively begin to implement sustainable development measures, including the SDGs. These bodies are able to develop the mechanisms and processes for more participation in their city’s future and its future development. The bodies are necessary for ensuring that the essence of the 2030 Agenda is upheld, namely that the Agenda is an agenda for everyone, and that everyone has a responsibility to sustainable development. The ways in which these bodies in these cities and the region of North Rhine-Westphalia are able to bring diverse stakeholders together, develop participatory and awareness raising approaches on an iterative basis is what is actually demanded of them by the 2030 Agenda, and have the ability to create positive reinforcement loops that could see more enhanced participation, which may lead to a more rapid uptake of the SDGs within society, as well as in on-the-ground, practical implementation. Local and urban networks, also have a role to play in these processes, as Ghent has alluded

to, because they allow for good practice cases to be collected and shared, saving on potential duplication of efforts. These support networks also offer cities, such as Ludwigsburg, Hannover, Malmö, Ghent, Vienna, etc., the opportunity to learn more and exchange with their peers, which is vital in the learning process about what works and what does not.

