

MedUrbanTools: A sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean

“Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with a view to planning cities that will work for everyone, in order to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” is one of the Flagship initiatives under the Objective 3 “Planning and managing sustainable Mediterranean cities” of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025.

Background

The proposal for the creation of a toolkit on urban development addressed to decision-makers, notably local authorities, and experts in the Mediterranean region was led by the Mediterranean Cities Network (MedCities), in cooperation with different regional actors participating in the Urban Hub of the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI). It was first presented during the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) in July 2017 and is the first such initiative to have successfully addressed the topic from a Mediterranean perspective.

MedCities is committed to the development of the toolkit, building on its own capacities as well existing partnerships on urban issues at the regional level. The process involves the strengthening of existing regional networks of cities, as well as the development of new ones, that will contribute to the creation of the sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean.

Objectives

The Sustainable Urban Toolbox aims to provide the necessary resources to ensure that Mediterranean cities are planned cities, inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. It also aims to contribute to creating a common understanding among practitioners and decision-makers of the challenges faced by Mediterranean cities and provide local decision-makers with knowledge on relevant successful experiences from the region that can be used, adapted and updated to inspire sound policymaking.

Leadership and partnership

MedCities leads the Mediterranean sustainable urban toolbox project, which associates different actors working on sustainable urban development in the region, including members of the Urban Hub of the CMI which brings together urban experts from institutions such as the World Bank, Cities Alliance, GIZ, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), IEB, UNDP, Agence des Villes et Territoires Méditerranéens Durables (AVITEM), CODATU and MedCities. The process is also open to the participation of MCSD members and other partners, considering the added value of mutualising efforts in a knowledge-sharing activity.



MedCities is financing the pilot phase of the initiative which mainly involves the members of its own network. The objective for the second phase of the project is to diversify donors and to enrich the process with the academic and technical expertise of additional Mediterranean local authorities, urban experts and other stakeholders.

During the pilot phase of the toolbox development, 37 cities have contributed their successful experiences to the knowledge base:

- Albania: Tirana
- Croatia: Dubrovnik
- Cyprus: Larnaka, Limassol
- Egypt: Alexandria
- France: Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier
- Greece: Thessaloniki
- Italy: Ancona, Bari, Genoa, Roma, Taranto
- Jordan: Amman, Ramtha
- Lebanon: Byblos, Jezzine
- Morocco: Agadir, Casablanca, Chefchaouen, Tanger, Tetouan
- Palestine: Hebron, Ramallah
- Spain: Barcelona, Cornellá, El prat de Llobregat, Malaga
- Tunisia: Bizerte, Gafsa, Nabeul, Sfax, Sousse, Tunis
- Turkey: Bodrum, Izmir

Main achievements

The pilot phase of the initiative has identified eleven topics under which 50 best practices from Mediterranean cities have been shared: 1) Environment and Climate Change; 2) Waste; 3) Water; 4) Energy; 5) Strategic Planning; 6) Economic Development; 7) Housing, Urban Planning and Mobility; 8) Innovation; 9) Ports and Tourism; 10) Culture and Identity; 11) Health and Social Rights. A “project sheet” to ensure consistent structure in the presentation of Best Practices has also been elaborated.

In addition, ten experts from the region have been interviewed for the production of 40 video clips included in the knowledge base – which contribute to the debate while increasing visibility of the initiative.

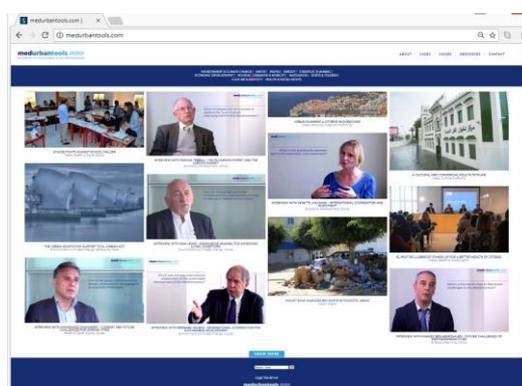
The digital platform that will host the toolbox is currently being developed and a communication strategy to promote awareness of the initiative is being drafted.

MedUrbanTools web-based Knowledge Sharing Platform

Knowledge collected for the creation of the sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean is organized in a database accessible through the MedUrbanTools knowledge sharing platform.

The platform’s user-friendly and appealing interface is designed to allow the user to progressively discover content of interest by selecting among thematic categories (topics) or among the three types of records held in the database:

- Cases: best practices developed in Mediterranean cities;
- Voices: video clips from Mediterranean experts;
- Resources: Material developed under previous projects, grouped under:
 - Methodologies: Thematic documents and plans;
 - Tools: Specific instruments for city planning and management;
 - Technological solutions: Innovative responses to existing challenges.



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Challenges and the way forward

- To successfully complete the pilot phase 1 of the initiative after the recent launch (May 2018) of the MedUrbanTools web-based Knowledge Sharing Platform;
- To mobilize the involvement of additional actors in the project, both international organizations and local authorities;
- To further develop the “Resources”, capitalising on on-going and past projects developed by MedCities and other actors;
- To implement the communication strategy and significantly raise awareness of the toolbox, including thorough events and workshops;
- To open the platform to more expert contributions and to offer a floor for debates through a specific forum.

Resources

Med Cities: www.medcities.org

Urban Hub of the Center for Mediterranean Integration: <https://tinyurl.com/yd7azyuk>

MedUrbanTools: www.medurbantools.com



United Nations Environment Programme
Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinating Unit
Barcelona Convention Secretariat
www.unepmap.org