



The Urban Lab of Europe!

NEWS

PROJECT

UFIL - Urban Forest Innovation Lab
Cuenca, Spain

TOPIC

Jobs and skills in the local economy

EDIT 12 AUGUST 2022
BY ROSSELLA SOLDI

Zoom-in #3 - Lessons learnt in UFIL

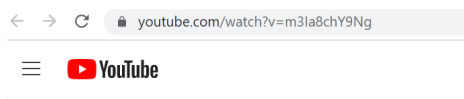
See on UIA website



UFIL is close to its completion and project's partners were invited to point out the main lessons learnt throughout implementation. By sharing this experience, other cities wishing to locally replicate a forest bioeconomy initiative may possibly benefit from the knowledge gained in this UIA project.

This zoom-in summarizes the lessons learnt identified by UFIL's project partners. Its core is the video made and featured by the City of Cuenca and its partners, where they directly tell us about their experience. You can look at the video on YouTube.

Click [here](#) and enjoy!



City of Cuenca: the importance of 'awaking the sleeping giants'

Cities have available different resources and opportunities to locally create employment and economic development. The Mayor of the City of Cuenca, Dario Dolz Fernandez, explains how the project highlighted the **importance of awakening the city's 'sleeping giants'**. In the case of Cuenca, the 'sleeping giants' are the over 54,000 hectares of forests owned by the municipality. The lesson learnt is to value in a sustainable manner the potential of existing resources, especially if these resources are owned by the public administration.



Dario Dolz Fernandez
Mayor of Cuenca

University of Castilla-La Mancha: look for common focus and synergies

The University of Castilla-La Mancha is a project partner with a regional scope. Thus, it was fundamental for its research and innovation groups variously related to the forest bioeconomy area **to converge on a common line of action** in order to effectively support the project. According to César Sánchez Meléndez, the lesson learnt is that **within a relatively big partner synergies among existing working groups are necessary for the creation of shared solutions**. They are also at the core of the creation of a wider ecosystem where the university exchanges knowledge and ideas with the private sector.



César Sánchez Meléndez
Vice Chancellor UCLM of Cuenca

Polytechnic University of Madrid: act as a changemaker and build the ecosystem

The Polytechnic University of Madrid, represented by Carmen Aviles Palacio and Camilo Muñoz Arenas, highlights the importance for a project to tackle a concrete change. In the case of UFIL, the change was represented by **proposing solutions** for the sustainable use of forests **that were not previously imagined**. Besides acting as a '**changemaker**', the lesson learnt is that a project's impact and the future sustainability of project's initiatives are more likely if an **ecosystem of actors at the territorial level is developed and involved**.



Camilo Muñoz Arenas

Carmen Aviles Palacios

Polytechnic University of Madrid. Higher school of forestry engineering

Forest Stewardship Council: emphasize effective communication and avoid too academic approaches for business development

Gonzalo Anguita Alegret, Executive Director of FSC Spain, highlights the **importance of having an operative communication plan** in order to effectively connect the project with the target audience - a lesson whose relevance was amplified by the occurrence of the pandemic. A second lesson is the need, **in a bioeconomy development project, to emphasize the participation of the business sector** and avoid too academic approaches.



Gonzalo Anguita Alegret
Executive Director FSC in Spain

European Institute of Design of Madrid: add value by using creativity and design

The **interaction of design and creativity with other disciplines adds value to the transformation of reality**. According to José Francisco Garcia from the European Institute of Design, UFIL clearly demonstrates the potential of this approach.



José Francisco García

Head of IED Innovation Lab in European Institute Di Design of Madrid

Khora Urban Thinkers: keep the focus, experiment and fail (but go ahead), and be inclusive

Khora Urban Thinkers supports the City of Cuenca in the management of the project. Its CEO Pablo Macías Bou points to three key lessons learnt. First, as a project develops over 3-4 years, it is necessary to **keep it focused on its scope over time**. Second, it is important to **be ready to fail** - especially if the project is meant experimenting something new. Third, comprehensive and well-mixed partnerships may still need the input of other stakeholders and thus it is important to **keep the group open and be inclusive**



Pablo Macías Bou

CEO Khora Urban Thinkers

Cuenca Council Wood SA: be ready to think and operate differently

ACMSA is the municipal company focused on wood's primary transformation and commercialization. Its CEO David Serrano Cruz explains how the project **widened the company's vision**. Originally focusing on wood extraction and primary processing, ACMSA is now considering other business opportunities, also as a consequence of interacting with young entrepreneurs who are much more interested in new technologies and online ways of selling products.



Business Confederation of Cuenca: being local implies full commitment

CEOE-CEPYME Cuenca is the most representative business organization in the province. Its local dimension makes it close to the needs of Cuenca's entrepreneurs. According to Raquel Álvarez Torres, **being a local entity implies full involvement and dedication of time** to a project like UFIL whose scope is the strengthening of the territory's productive fabric .



Jobs and skills in the local economy

See on UIA website 