

PRACTICE

EDIT 12 OCTOBER 2022
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SECRETARIAT, AEIDL &
EUTROPIAN

Multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance

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This chapter explores a selection of UIA projects from the viewpoint of multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance.

Summary

European cities face many challenges that municipalities cannot tackle alone. The issues of climate adaptation, digital transition, housing or poverty – just to mention a few of the key themes identified by the EU's Urban Agenda – are so complex that they require multiple stakeholders in a multi-level to be able to address them. Such an integrated perspective of urban problems needs the cooperation of broader alliances around local governments, ranging from national and regional authorities to a variety of local stakeholders.

These alliances can be successful if they are based on the idea of power-sharing, that is, the participatory governance of resources and responsibilities (see section 3 for a discussion of participative approaches). Multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance are key to the implementation of integrated territorial development projects.

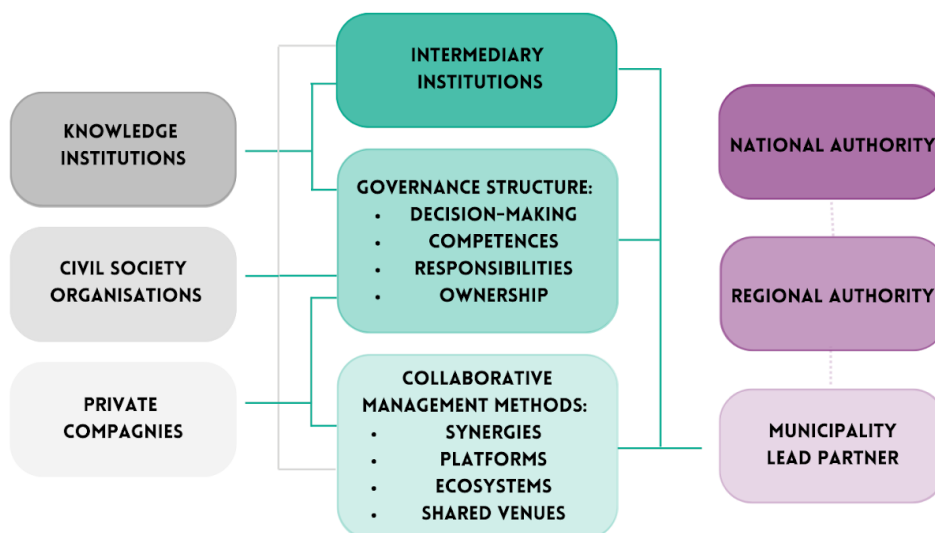
This chapter explores a selection of UIA projects from the viewpoint of multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance. After an overview of definitions, the following pages examine the key methods and tools that cities use to implement integrated projects locally, from partnership composition, co-design processes and collaboration mechanisms to horizontal co-governance and co-management structures and vertical cooperation with different levels of territorial authorities. The chapter is concluded by an in-depth look into a number of good practices and collects a set of recommendations.



Definitions and interpretations

The most important EU policy documents and frameworks underline the importance of multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance in integrated urban development processes. According to the recommendations of the Pact of Amsterdam and the New Urban Agenda, “vertical and horizontal multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation, both bottom-up and top-down, is key to good urban governance.” ([The New Leipzig Charter](#), p.7)

The multi-stakeholder approach is a key requisite of integrated urban development. The involvement of different stakeholders in decision-making and the co-design and co-creation of urban processes helps cities “manage conflicting interests, share responsibilities and find innovative solutions while also reshaping and maintaining urban spaces and forming new alliances to create integrated city spaces” (The New Leipzig Charter, p.6). With the diversity of their experiences and skills, civil society representatives, NGOs, community organisations as well as private enterprises and knowledge institutions can effectively participate “throughout the whole policy cycle in the planning and decision-making process, and implementation of integrated territorial strategies.” (JRC Handbook, p. 104)



Governance structures to connect partners. Source: Eutropian

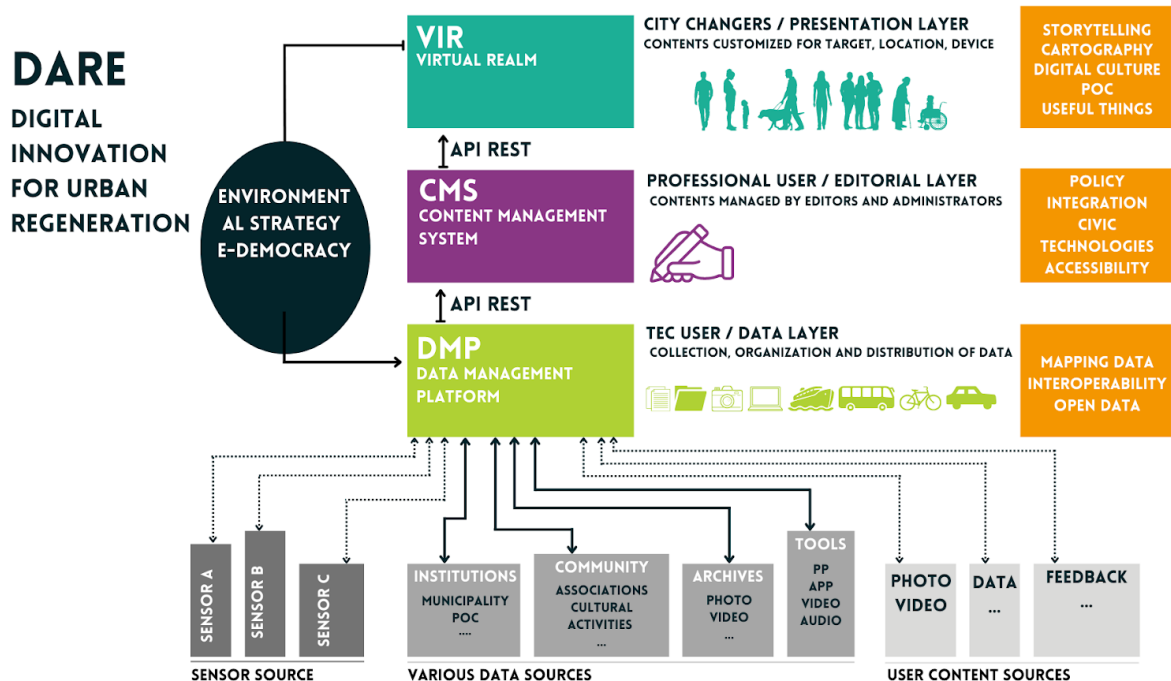
Multi-level governance is also a crucial element of urban processes: the cooperation of district and city administrations with provincial, regional, or national authorities can assure that their complementary competencies and jurisdictions address all the key themes of integrated urban development. Local authorities acting as “a formal link between small scale neighbourhoods and wider functional areas, with a decisive role in stabilising surrounding and wider rural areas” need to coordinate the “measures implemented at all spatial levels to ensure coherence and to avoid inefficiency.” ([The New Leipzig Charter](#), p.3) This is especially relevant for Sustainable Urban Development strategies whose governance is “inherently multi-level since it requires the involvement of the local level, as well as the regional and/or national level.” (JRC Handbook)

This chapter addresses the following research questions:

- How did projects identify the most relevant local actors to include in their partnership? What was the composition of the partnership (e.g. more public/ private, public/ social, public/ research) and how did this composition relate to the relevant UAEU topic?
- What kinds of governance models did projects use to ensure balanced power relations between partners? How did projects assure that all partners and stakeholders feel represented and heard in the process?
- What types of collaborative models for governance and management were developed to ensure integration of sectoral policies and promote synergies?
- How did projects ensure collaboration between institutional levels in the vertical chain (e.g. including managing

authorities and the regional or national level)?

- What level of political and strategic leadership was needed to ensure a collaborative and participative delivery mechanism?



The layers of the DARE platform. Source: DARE

Analysis of the case studies and key takeaways

Multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance manifest themselves in a variety of ways across the 12 examined UIA projects. Well-designed multi-stakeholder and multi-level partnerships bring together an efficient mix of competences, skills and knowledge to support the implementation of projects. Typically, cooperation between a diversity of partners is supported by different tools and methods, ranging from building on long-term alliances, convergence trainings, cross-departmental groups, umbrella organisations, intermediary bodies, organisational interfaces, or digital and offline platforms to well-structured co-management, decision-making and meeting structures, value chains, stakeholder events or shared working spaces.

For effective multi-level governance, the key is regular coordination with local, provincial, regional and national level governments and organisations, in the form of policy alignment, knowledge transfer, technical advice and funding programmes. The following pages recount some of the key aspects of multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance within the selected projects, based on this study's research questions and takeaways and are organised around the themes of partnership composition, multi-stakeholder governance structures, collaborative management, multi-level governance and leadership.

The cases presented here demonstrate the diversity of tools and methods used by cities and their partnerships to develop more inclusive, more cohesive and more efficient multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance structures. The 12 Urban Innovative Actions projects selected for this research correspond to very different socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. Similarly, the diversity of situations within which European municipalities develop their innovative strategies exclude any obvious one-size-fits-all solutions that could be shared with them. However, there are some approaches that are recurring among successful UIA projects and that offer some important learning points to be shared with other cities as well; the last part of this chapter enumerates some of these principles enabling better multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance mechanisms.

The creation of a strong partnership has proven to be a key component of successfully integrated UIA projects. Well-framed partnerships potentially cover broad thematic and professional fields and include complementary skill sets as well as capacities. The experiences of UIA projects demonstrate a variety of ways to make sure that they involve the most relevant local actors related to the chosen UIA topic.

In some cases, cities relied on long-term alliances that can create a longer-term impact. A specific momentum helps in bringing together key stakeholders in a city, such events can be former EU projects or a large-scale event (like a European Capital of Culture year) or an earlier funding application where local networks and logic of cooperation have been created. The most powerful UIA projects build on already existing partnerships that benefit from mutual trust, a shared language and synchronised ways of working together.

USE-IT! in Birmingham is a good example of how a UIA project can be part of a longer engagement and long-lasting alliances between partners. Focusing on supporting disadvantaged populations in the inner city through changes in the local administrative, health and educational strategies as well as new logics of investment and job creation, USE-IT! was preceded by almost a decade of cooperation between the local government, the university and the local hospital and health service. While a series of stakeholder events helped to extend the original partnership with over a dozen NGOs and social enterprises, a process of mapping and assembling existing initiatives in a specific area enabled the consortium to build on earlier visions and work towards long-term strategies. While the project framework connecting large investments (macro-assets) with community skills, talent and ideas (micro-assets) was difficult to grasp for many contributors of the project, the close cooperation between the partners helped them work according to these principles. An adept cooperation between so many different organisations required a trustful relationship between the partners as well as a “continuous coordination and tuning of the involved stakeholders” in order to “exploit synergies between the activities.” (Journal 2, p.19)

CitiCap in Lahti, Finland was conceived to change residents’ attitudes to mobility with the help of a Personal Carbon Trading scheme. In the design and implementation of the project, the City of Lahti engaged a variety of innovative SMEs and a business organisation as well as two universities. CitiCap drew on a momentum created by the 2021 European Green Capital title that helped to create a shared vision of carbon neutrality, raise the project’s profile and assure strong leadership and support among different municipal departments.

Similarly, the development of the partnership of **Cluj Future of Work** built on the momentum of Cluj- Napoca’s unsuccessful bid for the European Capital of Culture 2021 title, which prepared many ideas and collaborations put into action in FoW. In addition to long-term collaborations, cities have also built on already existing initiatives, connecting them and developing networks of cooperation around them. This requires a good understanding of initiatives, capacities and visions belonging to a territory. Mapping and assembling existing initiatives related to an area allows for including earlier visions in the joint work and avoiding conflicts over who determines the future of an area. The most successful UIA projects build on visions developed locally where the contribution of local stakeholders contributes to long-term engagement.

The **DARE project in Ravenna**, Italy, took a very conscious approach to mapping initiatives. Aiming at the regeneration of the city’s Darsena area with the help of a new digital culture focused on the neighbourhood, DARE could rely on the partnership developed for an earlier URBACT network. The URBACT method used in [Creative Spirits](#) allowed the city to build a local stakeholder group, develop relations with them and thus create a core partnership around which it could add new partners to fill competence gaps or strengthen certain areas in the local ecosystem. In order to involve people, initiatives or organisations active in the Darsena area, DARE undertook a careful [exploration of practices, projects and policies](#) that exist in the territory. This exploration helped in identifying the main themes, ideas and concerns that the Ravennati have projected onto Darsena, and that serve as a basis for the area’s urban regeneration (see additional details below).

In other cases, strong partnerships required the capacity to imagine unconventional alliances or untested synergies between “unusual suspects” or previously unrelated actors, connecting seemingly distant policy areas in a complementary manner. **OASIS in Paris** was created with the ambition of transforming schoolyards into green spaces as co-designed and co-built neighbourhood facilities adapted to climate change. For the implementation of the project, the formal partnership included the national weather service (France Météo), education and research institutes (ESIEE, LIEPP and LIGUE) and an urban planning and environment-related public service provider (CAUE) but also relied on external help from the Ministry of Education, the water company of Paris, district councils and educational communities. Pairing schools with weather service providers and urban planning and environmental organisations meant repositioning schools as key public infrastructure in the fight against climate change and stretching the boundaries of previously unconnected policy fields.

[DARE](#) in Ravenna shows the potentials of inclusive, multi-stakeholder governance. The project aimed at regenerating Ravenna's Darsena area. Building on the objectives and the core partnership around the local stakeholder group developed in the URBACT project [Creative Spirits](#), DARE brought together a variety of stakeholders to develop common visions and implement them with the help of a new digital culture. In this process, the Ravenna Municipality's goal was to act as a process enabler, helping its partners and communities in co-designing the future of the Darsena.

Besides three municipal departments, DARE involved a set of research centres, a university, NGOs, small enterprises and business support organisations. In order to encourage more intense exchanges and cultivate multi-stakeholder cooperation among partners as well as to address the complexities of the project and to overcome the language barriers between different disciplines and working cultures, the partnership developed two well-structured multidisciplinary and participatory governance structures, the Process organisers Team and DARE Redazione.

The [Process Organisers Team](#) consisted of project partners as well as experts selected through public procurement, bringing together expertise in the fields of strategic design, urban regeneration, real estate development, social innovation, collaborative governance, economic and technical feasibility, as well as fundraising. Besides supporting the partnership in a variety of activities, the main responsibility of POST was to monitor processes and connect the strategies, opportunities and needs of various local stakeholders, as well as to channel citizen participation into the DARE by organising a participatory process related to the urban regeneration tactics of the Darsena. This included the evaluation of the feasibility of each proposal to enable their realisation with appropriate financial planning support and communication.

Besides the co-management of actions, the project's communication was also carried out in a co-governed way. Telling the story of Darsena's transformation was coordinated by DARE Redazione, the governance body of DARE's communication activities. Involving all partners of DARE, the redaction team acted as an editorial board that connected stories, content and narration, in order to create a narrative of Darsena's transformation that was shared and contributed to by local communities and that allowed individuals and groups to find their place in the area's broader regeneration framework.

"We built on the URBACT logic, creating a group of stakeholders working together, instead of developing bilateral relations between the municipality and the single stakeholders. We appointed a process innovation manager to help us find the best patterns and methodologies for collaboration. The role of the Lead Partner in all this was also to help all partners keep an eye on the big picture and not disappear in the small tasks." DARE, Project coordinator

Key Takeaway 1

Building partnerships on existing initiatives or specific momentum can ensure long-term engagement.

Long-term initiatives or alliances can create a longer-term impact. Mapping and assembling existing initiatives related to an area allows for including earlier visions in the joint work and avoiding conflicts over who determines the future of an area. The most successful UIA projects build on visions developed locally where the contribution of local stakeholders contributes to long-term engagement. A specific momentum can also help bring together key stakeholders in a city, such events can be former EU projects or a large-scale event (like a European Capital of Culture year) or an earlier funding application where local networks and logic of cooperation have been created. The most powerful UIA projects build on already existing partnerships.

#2 Multi-stakeholder governance

Multi-stakeholder partnerships require governance structures that allow public and private sector organisations as well as knowledge institutions and civil society actors to cooperate in a horizontal way. With different working cultures, competencies and powers, such structures can enable all participating organisations to have a say in decisions and have their voices heard in the project's planning and implementation processes. One method that UIA projects used to connect stakeholders horizontally has been to establish intermediary bodies or organisational interfaces that can mediate between the different partners and move the core of the partnership outside the public administration into a relatively neutral institutional space. Organisations that are connected to the municipality in various ways but operate in relative independence from them can act as interfaces between

municipal departments and other urban stakeholders, allowing for more horizontal cooperation and co-governance processes during implementation. Some of the most innovative and inclusive UIA projects have not been closeted inside municipalities but operate in such semi-detached organisational spaces.

In **Košice 2.0**, two intermediary organisations, CIKE and K13 were at the centre of the project's daily operations. The intermediary position of these organisations was key in the flexibility and efficiency of their work and allowed them to innovate without the restrictions of public administrations. In the meanwhile, this position also helped them better relate to other non-public stakeholders by taking events and discussions out of the strictly administrative context. (see Box below)

In **Cluj Future of Work**, at the core of multi-stakeholder governance was the cooperation between the municipality and the Cluj Cultural Centre (CCC), itself an umbrella structure including 112 organisations and acting as a bridge between different sectors. This cooperation was strengthened by an intermediary body, the [Urban Innovation Unit](#). The unit was created in 2017 to bring ideas and knowledge from civil society to the local administration, to be developed into a Centre for Innovation and Civic Imagination, as a municipal body for interdisciplinary innovation projects. In order to reach the ambitious goals of FoW, this core partnership was extended to include a set of universities, art centres, the order of architects, business organisations, IT companies, a research centre and a regional development agency in a quadruple helix structure, many of them already in partnership with the CCC. The municipality and CCC established together a well-functioning system of co-management for the implementation of the project, including regular Steering Committee meetings with a shared decision-making structure and an annual conference focusing on the Future of Work.

Cluj-Napoca is not the only city that established umbrella organisations for more inclusive horizontal cooperation. While the formal partnerships within UIA projects are usually limited to a few partners, it is helpful to involve organisations that represent alliances of a sector or a territory: they can assemble a broader community, generate more in-depth knowledge about specific aspects of a project and improve the implementation of specific project elements.

Home Silk Road, the Lyon Metropole's UIA project, was a complex cooperation between partners from different sectors and different administrative levels. In order to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among non-public actors, a transparent governance structure was created in the form of a Société par Actions Simplifiée, an umbrella organisation to bring together all partners except for the public administrations. The Société par Actions Simplifiée or SAS format is widely used in civil society and social and solidarity economy due to its legal qualities that promote cooperation. The SAS, meeting regularly to make joint decisions, had a key role in the project's horizontal co-governance: having actors of different sizes sit around the same table empowers them all to act as protagonists of the project and ensures that partners know each other and work better together.

Air Heritage in Portici, Italy addressed the issue of air quality by developing participatory ways of monitoring, data management and related decision-making, prompting behaviour change among citizens. The partnership here included a university, a research institute as well as an environmentalist NGO, an SME and a regional environmental agency. The main governance body of Air Heritage was the Steering Committee, overseeing internal coordination within the municipality and external coordination with various partners and stakeholders beyond the formal consortium, including primary schools, citizen associations, environmental organisations, a shopkeeper association as well as the local public transport authority, a parking company and an e-bike service provider.

Focus On Intermediary Organisations

[Košice 2.0](#) Slovakia demonstrated the importance of organisations that act as an intermediary between the municipality, other local stakeholders as well as the broader community. It also exemplified a governance model that brings together public administration capacities with innovation outside the municipality.

As a result of growing awareness of the lack of a strong cultural-creative ecosystem and structures of civic engagement, Košice 2.0 aimed at improving well-being in the city with the help of a new logic of cooperation and a new narrative for cultural heritage connecting the cultural and creative industries with digital technologies and the public administration, as well as with new organisations and an innovation platform to support public officers in making informed decisions.

The project built on the legacy of the city's 2013 European Capital of Culture (ECOC): understanding the necessity of involving partners from different fields both in the design phase of the project proposal (as consortium partners) and in the implementation phase (as project stakeholders). The project brought together many organisations and initiatives that have been cooperating at least since the ECOC bid, ranging from knowledge institutions, private companies from the IT sector as well as NGOs and public bodies.

The daily operations of Košice 2.0 were managed by two spin-off organisations that grew out of the European Capital of Culture experience, Creative Industry Košice (CIKE), an NGO that created the main strategy for the development of cultural and creative industry in the city, and K13 – Košice Cultural Centres, an organisation that manages and administers a network of cultural venues. Both of these institutions are formally independent from the municipality in terms of decision-making while they're connected to the public administration through a variety of formal and informal operative links and communication channels that allow them to work more impactfully with both public servants and other stakeholders. The "hybrid" or "interface" position of these intermediate bodies as well as the newly established Citizen Experience and Wellbeing Institute (CXI) was crucial in the efficiency of their operations but it was also key for their central role in the governance structure of Košice 2.0.

"We have a mandate to work with people within the municipality, otherwise nobody would listen to us inside. But when you're only inside an administration, you're more restricted and don't have the space to think differently."
Košice 2.0, Project coordinator, CIKE

Key takeaway 2

Intermediary and umbrella organisations can help in developing more horizontal governance structures.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships require governance structures that allow public and private sector organisations as well as knowledge institutions and civil society actors to cooperate in a horizontal way. Organisations that are connected to the municipality but operate in relative independence from them can act as interfaces between municipal departments and other urban stakeholders, allowing for more horizontal cooperation and co-governance processes during implementation. Intermediary organisations can bring together a broader community, generate more in-depth knowledge about specific aspects of a project and improve the implementation of specific project elements.

#3 Collaborative management for synergies

Cooperation between different stakeholders requires careful management and coordination in order to get the best out of the partners' contributions. Besides clear partnership roles and transparent communication and decision-making structures, UIA cities have been using a variety of management and coordination methods to build better synergies between their partners. Some cities have developed platforms to strengthen horizontal cooperation. Digital or offline platforms can enable a partnership to collect and distribute knowledge in a transparent way and attract feedback and insights from the broader community, while also helping different stakeholders to connect with each other and exchange ideas directly, without the mediation of the municipality or other project partners.

Prato Urban Jungle in Italy, aiming at creating urban forests in three different urban areas, relied on a partnership including architecture studios, a research institute, a public utility provider, as well as environmental SMEs and an NGO. In order to coordinate cooperation between partners, the consortium used participatory and collaborative design approaches, shifting from plenary meetings to working groups involving a smaller number of participants and therefore allowing for more operational work. A key element in the project's multi-stakeholder cooperation was the platform [Prato Forest City](#) facilitating the cooperation between public bodies and citizens,

associations or private businesses, helping bottom-up initiatives to promote urban forestry projects. The platform acted as an “organisational interface between municipality, civil society and private partners” helping the city “manage conflicting interests, share responsibilities and find innovative solutions while also reshaping and maintaining urban spaces and forming new alliances to create integrated city spaces.”

DARE in Ravenna organised its information and data exchange around the DARE platform. The website [Darsena Ravenna Approdo Comune](#), operating as a graphic interface connected to the data and content management layers of the platform, assembled many voices to tell the story of the urban transformation of Darsena, connecting all events, data and stories to create a more holistic picture of the neighbourhood. More than a project website or a blog, while Approdo Comune served as a press office to provide information to the public, it also accommodates an [e-democracy tool](#), acting as a space for collaboration and voting.

CitiCaP in Lahti put innovative SMEs at the core of the project with the help of the Lahti Region Development Organisation and the Nordic Innovation Accelerator that played the role of platforms to connect and engage small businesses working in the field of mobility, data and smart devices. The Nordic Innovation Accelerator was launched during the preparatory phase of CitiCaP to shape the project and encourage new innovations to be inserted in the platform.

Besides platforms that connect different actors, UIA projects also developed ecosystems based on value chains. UIA projects often invest in ecosystem-building where different actors enter into networks of cooperation and develop synergies with each other. Depending on the challenges addressed, this ambition in most cases requires the design of a value chain where different activities (of research, participation, education, placemaking or service design) are connected in a logical cycle.

It is the case in **APPLAUSE in Ljubljana**, which introduced a new logic of tackling the challenge of invasive plant species by conceiving them as raw materials to be fed into the city’s circular manufacturing system. The partnership brought together a broad variety of entities, ranging from research institutes, manufacturing, design and data organisations to arboriculture and forestry companies and public utilities. The circular logic of the project required that the consortium developed a value chain where activities of education, plant collection and reutilisation are organised in a cycle. Therefore, all actors of this cycle, ranging from ecologists, educators, designers, printing houses, as well as public service providers needed to be involved in co-designing the processes born from this cooperation.

As most UIA projects deal with a great diversity of partners with different backgrounds and working cultures, they all have to engage in defining joint goals and developing a common working language. This requires spending time together, getting to know each other’s work and organisational logic, setting up regular shared moments and mutually accessible communication structures.

In the planning and implementation of the project, **OASIS in Paris** relied on a long co-design process to solve potential conflicts between contradictory public policies and objectives, challenges related to the children’s safety, maintenance of the school buildings and water management issues. The solution found by the project coordination meant collectively defining the project’s priorities, gradually shifting the emphasis from adaptable spaces to human well-being and social connections. In this process, organisational formats like Steering Committee meetings and a General Assembly guaranteed that all partners’ voices were heard.

Similarly to OASIS and other UIA consortia, a key issue in the Air Heritage project of Portici was to find a common language to “efficiently communicate managerial, technical and political perspectives within the delivery team” (Journal 1, p.14), in order to manage cooperation between partners that had not worked together before. A collaborative workflow was established as a result of a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings, allowing partners to communicate their needs and expectations and refine their roles and responsibilities as well as coordinate their work and build synergies. The integration of different partners’ work within the project is also helped by organising WPs around complementary experiences and expertise, thus helping partners to work together closely in pairs around specific tasks.

Many UIA projects face the challenge of organising a fluid workflow between partners that are scattered around in a city, a region or even beyond. For some of these projects, designating a space (a building or a larger venue) as project headquarters where different partners can regularly work together allows for more spontaneous and organic exchange between them. Such a continuous co-presence contributes to a better understanding of each other’s work and improves horizontal cooperation.

Plan Einstein, Utrecht developed a new approach to refugee reception facilities, by involving local young people in the refugees’ learning and living environment and turning the refugee shelter into a community venue with strong links to the neighbourhood. Plan Einstein partnership involved a set of universities and language schools, refugee support and social impact NGOs and a housing agency. While due to the diversity of the partnership, it took the partners some time to “find the right balance and align their approaches in terms of day-to-day management and communication” (Journal 1, p.7), the process of creating “one single story of the project and the building” (Journal

1, p.9) and the practice of working in the same space helped in collaborating more intensively. Besides regular meetings and biannual progress interviews with partners, the project's trajectory was supported by a sounding board, monthly meetings and bringing in the project input from a broader group of stakeholders.

Focus On Multi-Stakeholder Governance Mechanisms

[VILAWATT](#) in Viladecans, Spain aimed at developing a new energy culture to ensure a secure, clean and efficient use of energy, with the help of a new local energy supplier and an energy savings company to offer renovation investments. The VILAWATT partnership involves a wide variety of organisations: a set of municipal and private companies, research centres, cooperatives and public agencies.

Multi-stakeholder governance was at the core of VILAWATT: the project was organised around an innovative Public-Private-Citizen Governance Partnership at the local level (PPCP), involving the municipality together with local businesses and citizens, and acting as a central hub to provide energy and services related to energy culture, the retrofitting of buildings and a local currency linked to energy savings. The PPCP steered the process and embodied the project's horizontal leadership to coordinate the engagement aspects while project partners participated in the project's vertical leadership, "implementing individual parts of the programme by working down all the chains of levels." (Journal 1, p.38) The setting up of the PPCP is described below by a senior project coordinator from the municipality:

"We didn't prepare a strategic participatory plan at the beginning. So in our application form, we didn't foresee this. So once we had it clear in our minds that we needed to have a local currency working, we needed to create a PPCP and to have the ppcp, we needed to have two associations, which were not created from the beginning, they have had to be created. And also we didn't have any previous experience in Viladecans in associations linked to energy or environment or these kind of associations"

Cross-departmental work was key to the project's success: the Group of Municipal Enterprises allowed various public companies to act together as a single partner, ensuring effective coordination both internally and externally. The project's multi-level governance was assured by the involvement of other public authorities like the Housing Agency of Catalonia, the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and the Badia del Vallès city council. Furthermore, VILAWATT is aligned with the Catalan Strategy Energy Renovation at the regional level.

Key takeaway 3

Cooperation between different stakeholders requires well-designed management and coordination methods to build better synergies between partners. Digital or offline platforms can enable a partnership to collect and distribute knowledge in a transparent way and attract feedback and insights from the broader community, while also helping different stakeholders to connect with each other and exchange ideas directly, without the mediation of the municipality or other project partners. Cooperation between stakeholders has many different aspects. For example developing a common working language, designating a space (a building or a larger venue) as project headquarters where different partners can regularly work together also allow for more spontaneous and organic exchange between them, thus contributing to a better understanding of each other's work and improving horizontal cooperation.

#4 Multi-level governance

While the main protagonists of UIA projects are usually cities, they often rely on the support of provinces, regions or national organisations. By harmonising their objectives and defining complementary roles and competencies via a well-designed **multi-level governance scheme**, administrations at various territorial levels can effectively cooperate in planning and implementing multi-stakeholder initiatives.

When designing and implementing **Prato Urban Jungle**, the city of Prato was working in close cooperation with various levels of public authorities. A number of organisations from other levels participated in the PUJ Advisory Board including the Region of Tuscany, the province of Prato and the association of Tuscan municipalities as well as the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion and the National Association of Italian Municipalities. This helped to align the proposals for Prato with broader strategies on sustainable urban development, land use and climate change including the Regional Territorial Plan.

As urban challenges do not stop at administrative borders, many UIA cities have chosen to **work closely with**

neighbouring territories and their administrations. This allowed continuous urban areas to tackle their shared challenges together. In **USE-IT!, in Birmingham**, a multi-level partnership was also assured by the involvement of two adjacent local authorities (Birmingham City Council and Solihull Council) with the cooperation of the metropolitan level West Midlands Combined Authority.

Many UIA cities developed their projects in a way to **harmonise their objectives with provincial, regional or national guidelines.** Corresponding to priorities at different policy levels helped in turning UIA projects into regional or national lighthouses and facilitated their replication across regions or countries.

In **Paris**, to facilitate cross-departmental work and horizontal coordination between different fields and public bodies around **OASIS**, a series of new tools and methods were developed and training sessions were organised for the various municipal offices. While initiated by the City of Paris, OASIS was also aligned with multi-level policies in the form of the metropolitan, regional and national climate priorities and involved national-level actors in the implementation of the project.

In **Portici, the Air Heritage project's** multi-level governance was assured by the participation of the Campania Regional Agency for Environmental Protection, with the role of monitoring air quality and aligning the project to regional policies.

Besides public administrations at various territorial levels, **civil society organisations or professional networks operating at the national level can** also provide important support to UIA projects. National NGOs and umbrella organisations representing cities or various sustainable development fields can play an important role not only in informing and implementing UIA projects but also in disseminating and replicating them.

In **Ljubljana**, an innovative approach is tested through a "market/non-market" governance, where voluntary work is included in the supply chain. Citizens can opt for three levels of engagement: the DIY, the "let's do it together" and the "hand over".

In **Utrecht**, the multi-level governance of Plan Einstein involved the Dutch Council for Refugees, an NGO operating at the national level, while the provincial and regional governments, as well as the ministries of Internal affairs, Foreign affairs and Justice, were regularly invited to give feedback on the project's evolution – despite the project's logic being in contrast with national refugee policies.

In **Lahti**, while the evolution of **CitiCaP** was closely connected to the design processes of the city's key planning documents, including the new Masterplan and the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, the City of Lahti also worked together with other members of the National Land Use, Housing and Transportation network, inviting other Finnish cities to learn from the project and share their perspectives.

[Home Silk Road](#) in the Lyon Metropole is a good example of multi-level governance. Led by the Lyon Metropole, the project combined temporary housing with a variety of social and economic activities in a centrally located heritage building, thus helping vulnerable groups connect with the neighbourhood, develop new skills and build new networks.

Home Silk Road was based in Villeurbanne, a municipality on the eastern edge of Lyon's metropolitan area, as part of the transformation of the Carré de Soie area. Carré de Soie is situated at the border of Lyon city and Villeurbanne. Recently, Carré de Soie has been undergoing significant transformation and doubled its population in the past decade. In order to guide this transformation process, the Metropolitan Authority has been working with the Villeurbanne Municipality on co-designing an urban development trajectory through a new zoning plan (Plan Local d'Urbanisme) and creating a new urban centrality here with social and cultural services. The former silk factory complex L'Autre Soie was a natural choice by the two territorial authorities to be a driver of this dynamic.

Besides cooperating on the broader urban planning framework, the Lyon Metropole and the Villeurbanne Municipality worked together on the Home Silk Road project. While Villeurbanne took a lead in organising temporary use in L'Autre Soie and creating an economic programme for the area, the Metropolitan Authority took a coordinating role to bring together aspects of housing, culture and social services.

Other important partners that represent a multi-level approach include GIE La Ville Autrement, a structure that brings together different organisations working in the field of housing and emergency accommodation in the eastern part of the Lyon Metropole, and [CCO-Villeurbanne](#), a cultural centre with a metropolitan outreach and a long history in the neighbourhood. The cooperation of these non-public actors was coordinated via a transparent governance structure: the Société par Actions Simplifiée, widely used in civil society and social and solidarity economy due to its legal qualities that promote cooperation, acts as an umbrella organisation that contributes to a horizontal modality of co-governance.

"For more than 25 years, there has been an ambition in the Lyon metropolitan area to avoid concentration in the historical town and create other centralities around the region. This corresponded with the vision of Villeurbanne, situated at Lyon's eastern border, aiming to develop a new centrality together with the neighbouring municipalities." Home Silk Road, municipality representative

Key takeaway 4

UIA projects often need strong coordination between various administrative levels. Such coordination may take place along complementary roles and competencies that allow each actor to contribute with their regulatory, legislative or financial tools. By harmonising their objectives and defining complementary roles and competencies via a well-designed multi-level governance scheme, administrations at various territorial levels can effectively cooperate in planning and implementing multi-stakeholder initiatives. Furthermore, as urban challenges do not stop at administrative borders, many UIA cities have chosen to harmonise their policy priorities with provincial, regional or national guidelines or to work closely with neighbouring territories and their administrations.

#5 Leadership

For all UIA projects to be successful, sustainable and impactful, it is important that they enjoy broad support across the political and administrative realms. This **political and administrative leadership** can materialise in various forms. Most often, **vice-mayors** are directly involved in the planning and implementation phases of UIA projects, launching new initiatives, participating at events and bringing their perspectives and preoccupations into the process. These vice-mayors usually represent areas related to the key themes of the UIA projects, therefore they can be instrumental in bringing forward in the city council some of the issues key to the implementation of the projects. In some cases, UIA projects enjoy the direct support of **mayors**, especially when they come from professional backgrounds related to the given project theme or if the project is closely related to a policy priority brought forward personally by the mayor.

Similarly to other UIA projects, **Home Silk Road in the Lyon Métropole** was facing an uncertain future ahead of the municipal elections of 2020. The election of Cédric Van Styvendael to become the mayor of Villeurbanne did not only ensure the continuation of good cooperation between Lyon and Villeurbanne within Lyon Métropole,

but also guaranteed an informed and engaged political support to the project. The mayor's professional trajectory engaging with issues of housing and refugees – ranging from being director of Est Habitat in Villeurbanne and later director of the GIE La Ville Autrement, one of the partners of Home Silk Road – also raised the political importance of L'Autre Soie as a lighthouse project of Van Styvendael's first mayoral term.

Besides political leadership, the success of UIA projects also largely depends on **support from public servants and departments across city administrations**. Projects well-embedded in various municipal areas can also stimulate multi-level or cross-departmental work. Working groups that operate across departments or government levels can be the engine of multi-level cross-departmental cooperation by accelerating information exchange between different municipal, provincial or regional bodies and developing synergies between them.

In **Ljubljana**, a strong element of the **APPLAUSE** project's cross-departmental and multi-stakeholder governance was the city's "[One big city family](#)" principle that brings together all organisations delivering public services in the city and puts their 12,000 employees in regular contact with each other. Following the logic of this principle, each participating department and public company delegated members to the core project team. To connect municipal bodies with other partners, monthly consortium meetings, steering group and policy guidance group meetings were organised, but as the project evolved, local NGOs and community groups as well as representatives of ministries and professional associations were also involved in encounters.

Key takeaway 5

For broader impact, resilience and sustainability, UIA projects need to enjoy significant political and administrative leadership. While mayors can assure political backing and vice-mayors can help the design and implementation of projects in their own policy fields, public servants can also advance specific cases if engaged in the process. Besides political leadership, the success of UIA projects also largely depends on support from public servants and departments across city administrations. Projects well-embedded in various municipal policy fields can also stimulate multi-level or cross-departmental work. Working groups that operate across departments or government levels can be the engine of multi-level cross-departmental cooperation by accelerating information exchange between different municipal, provincial or regional bodies and developing synergies between them.