Sustaining and scaling-up

Sustaining and scaling up are ways in which cities can leave a legacy from their project.

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Summary

Sustaining and scaling up are ways in which cities can leave a legacy from their project. Cities participating in EU funded projects should be able to find ways to continue their activities after developing good practices. It is also important to ensure that practitioners and decision makers at all levels have access to the knowledge and know-how that was created during an innovative project to improve the design and implementation of integrated territorial development strategies and action plans in the new programme period.

This chapter explores a selection of UIA projects from the viewpoint of sustaining, scaling up and transferring the project's themselves and their know-how. After an overview of definitions, the following pages examine the key methods and tools that cities use to develop long-term sustainability. The chapter is concluded by an in-depth look into a number of good practices from the case studies and collects a set of recommendations.

Vilawatt engages with the Energy Cities Forum and the UIA Just Transitions and Climate Adaptation event

Definitions and interpretations

Sustaining, and scaling-up are frequently discussed in relation to urban, regional and national policy. Although there are no widely accepted definitions, one definition used by UN agencies in the context of rural development (IFAD, 2015) and others (Jowett & Dyer, 2012) describe scaling up as: the expansion, adaptation and sustainment of successful policies, programmes or projects in different places and over time to reach more people.

For this study we have developed a set of definitions. A project can be thought of as sustainable when a continued utilisation of its results can be assured after the completion of the funding period of the project. This can be achieved in two different ways. Either by securing ongoing alternative funding, as some projects, especially certain revenue-based projects will always need additional finance to continue. This might come from the municipalitie's own budget, from additional grants from ERDF or from elsewhere. Some projects are capable of

continuing into the future without fresh funding because they are based on a viable business model. For example a workspace which will continue to sustain economic activity as long as the building is in good shape and where the rental income is the income source.
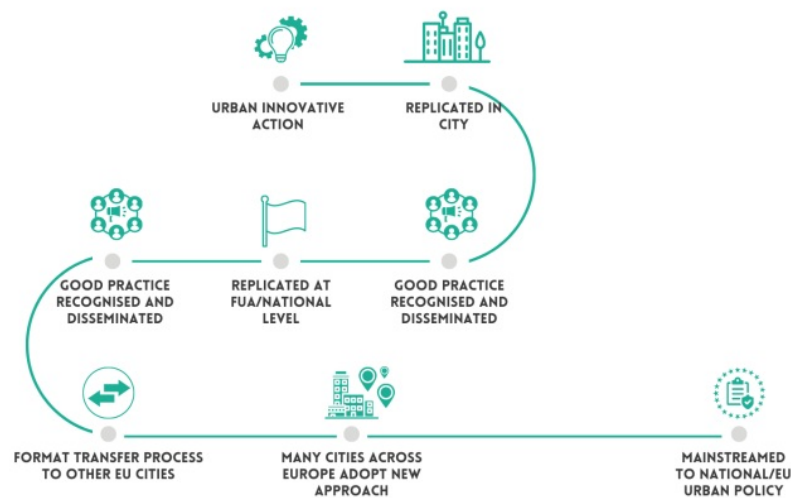
Idealised Spiral model of replication and mainstreaming (adapted from Mulgan/Nesta versions)

Scaling up refers to the deliberate efforts to increase the scale and therefore impact of successful innovations so as to benefit more people. Scale can be increased by expanding the size of the original project to cover more territory and/or more population. Expansion mostly happens within the same administration.

Scaling up can also be increased by spreading and transfer. Spreading can occur informally, for example by another city visiting the project to learn how it was done and then going on to implement something similar back home. It can also happen more formally through a funded transfer mechanism for example through the URBACT programme which opened a call for proposals for UIA round 1 projects wishing to transfer their approach in early 2020. Five pilot UIA/URBACT transfer networks were selected.

Some preparatory actions are possible within the funding envelope of the UIA project itself, especially around developing toolkits, websites and other dissemination activities as well as hosting visits from other cities for field visits.

Projects can also increase their impact through policy mainstreaming. Policy mainstreaming represents a stage when the new innovation becomes normal practice for example in the original municipality, in its Member State or even at EU level. Urban innovations that have made this leap since the millenium include shared cycle schemes and more recently shared electric vehicles (scooters, bikes and cars).

The spiral diagram (see Figure 6.1) assumes a certain linearity which may be altered in practice. Not every project goes through the stages in the diagram in the same order or starts at the same place. Some approaches within UIA were of immediate interest to other cities and attracted considerable interest from the outset. As part of its capitalisation strategy, UIA encouraged projects within the same Urban Agenda theme to work together especially in the later stages of the programme. For example, Utrecht plan Einstein took part in a review of migrant and refugee integration projects in Antwerp in June 2019 along with three other projects from round 1 of UIA which led to a report by UIA experts.

In analysing sustaining, scaling up and transfer the research questions were developed according to the four principles: place-based approach, multi-level governance, participatory approach and cross-sectoral approach. The hearings with project coordinators and partners aimed to answer a range of questions:

- Did the project develop long term sustainability?
- Did the project succeed in obtaining new funding for its continuation and/or expansion after the UIA funding ended and from where?
- To what extent will the MUA replicate the place-based approach?
- How can projects be upscaled and what are the place-based, partnership and cross-sectoral conditions?
- Will the main urban authority apply the same place-based approach in the future? What have been the longer-term

organisational effects within the city's administration?
- Was the project transferred or spread to other similar areas, in the city or to other cities?

Analysis of the case studies and key takeaways

#1 Preparing for sustainability and scaling-up

USE-IT in Birmingham (see box below), included a work package in their application dedicated to the transferability of project results. Many of their approaches, such as the mapping of community assets, analysis of procurement spend by anchor institutions, have been documented by the project. Similarly, DARE-Ravenna's production of a digital archive with material collected together with citizens during urban exploration and analyses sets the ground for future strategies of local development ensuring the project sustainability.

Translating project materials into a common language (normally English) is one precondition for cities in other Member States to understand and use them easily. This is more easily done under the project budget than afterwards.

Local consolidation and trans-national transfer of USE-IT! approach

USE-IT! City of Birmingham (UK), developed a successful bid in 2016 inspired by a desire to change the city's approach to regeneration and make it more innovative, together with other organisations.

The project coordinator aimed to build on the success of Use-It! in Birmingham. The consortium's goal was to ensure that the USE-IT! approach was not restricted to the West Birmingham and Smethwick area covered by the Greater Icknield Master plan, but through learning and evaluation explored how it could be rolled out to other neighbourhoods in the city and inspire political and economic change within Birmingham City Council and the relatively new West Midlands Combined Authority.

"The East Birmingham program is the largest ongoing in the city and is being carried out with USE-IT! approach". USE-IT! Project coordinator

Evidence for this is in the 2021 local plan for East Birmingham which states: "The city council has made a commitment to support local co-operatives and community enterprises. These will provide ownership and enable people to drive the development of their local economy through community-led economic development. Local Wealth Building can also be included in Ward Plans going forward." USE-IT! Project coordinator

Additionally, Birmingham City Council was successful in its application to lead an URBACT Transfer Mechanism with the cities of Poznan (Poland), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), and Trapani (Italy). However, it was found to be unrealistic to transfer all of these activities from Birmingham to the other cities within the eighteen-month timeline of the transfer network. However, through URBACT, it was possible to transfer the principles of USE-IT!, some of the activities and set the foundations for realising other activities in the longer term through the Investment Plans which each of the partners produce as their main output for the network.

Key takeaway 1

Dedicate specific resources and work towards sustaining and scaling up the project from the outset.
Sustaining, scaling up and transfer of project results should be in the head of project managers from early in the project. UIA projects are recommended to have a work package or targeted activities aiming at sharing the approach and the core elements of their work which could help other cities facing similar challenges. This requires good documentation of the project itself, toolkits, accounts of the learning process and the resources needed to repeat the project elsewhere. Cities involved in innovative actions should see it as part of their mission

to spread knowledge of what they have achieved and how to do this.

#2 Build in sustainability

The photos showing tumbleweed blowing through the sites of previous Olympic Games and EXPOs are a stark warning that sustainability is not a given unless you plan and budget for it. UIA projects adopted a range of approaches for assuring their continuation. One way is to ensure that the approach is sustained. Prato Urban Jungle deployed a number of participative approaches (see Section 3) such as placemaking activities and events, combining them with longer-lasting actions such as the development of digital monitoring platforms (greenApes, Prato Forest City) and awareness toolkits (The City of Plants, Green Generation) to ensure long term durability and lasting impacts on the ground. Each of these approaches has been documented and is ready for other cities to use. In Paris the original 10 schoolyards are maintained within the municipal budget allocated to the schools and necessary maintenance carried out by local technical units in each district. Utrecht succeeded in securing its future budget to continue operations at the second of their locations Haydn but is also planning to extend operations to other locations (see #3 below).

Key takeaway 2

Every project should plan for its financial sustainability for the medium term after the UIA financing ends. This plan should include exploring future funding options, forecasts of revenue and expenditure and ways of ensuring that all assets created by the project are maintained and have a future use.

#3 Scaling up and replicating in the city

A first step towards scaling up can be to replicate within the municipality. OASIS in Paris built on the method and achievements of converting the first 10 schools funded by the UIA grant to make plans for the conversion of a further 60 schools with a dedicated budget from the city to achieve this over the following years. They have also extended the approach to other types of places and spaces including streets, office courtyards and housing areas (see Box below). Vilawatt in Viladecans developed its approach to urban innovation through the Vilawatt project. Its first step was to open up the energy efficiency measures to the whole city under the guidance of its PPCP, the public private citizen partnership. Since the project's completion the city has taken the same approach for other policy fields in which the city is trying to find new solutions through what they call the MIA or Model for Innovation in Viladecans. It helps that the city's chief executive is the former coordinator of Vilawatt.

Plan Einstein (Utrecht) have not only consolidated the funding for their existing activity but extended the approach to migrant integration and plan to use it in a wider range of locations across the city. This will mean that joint training courses in English, IT skills and entrepreneurship where migrants or refugees are mixed with people from the host community will be organised in more locations in the city as well as cultural and informal social activities. Home Silk Road (Lyon) has implemented a second homelessness facility comprising 51 units at La Base also in Villeurbanne and using a similar methodology to Home Silk Road by making temporary use of a site.

The partnership of the Air Heritage project in Portici which foresees the development of an innovative, pervasive and versatile way of monitoring air quality that is integrated with the ordinary institutional monitoring, clearly identified the essentials for transferring and scaling project's outputs. In the first instance, the modelling solutions will only have to be re-calibrated and the IT infrastructure can easily be adapted to a new place. They estimate that to replicate in other cities three full time staff would be required for 12-18 months.

Future of OASIS within and beyond Paris

OASIS, Paris has transformed ten schoolyards across the city into cool, publicly accessible oases to combat the urban heat island effect as part of climate adaptation while strengthening social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

This project is an excellent example that ticks all three boxes - sustainability, scalability and transferability. Heat waves are becoming more common in Europe and beyond, and cities are looking for coping solutions. Every city has schoolyards and many of them are made in hard surfaces, therefore the project has high potential for replication and transfer. In addition, the cross-sectoral approach and benefits, as well as the agile methodology that can be used in urban, rural and metropolitan areas, makes the project very attractive for replication.

"It is very interesting to see how many cities from France, Europe or the whole world are interested in learning

more from Paris. And I think that shows the need for such projects... The value of a cross-sectoral project with multiple benefits, from climate adaptation to children's wellbeing to outdoor learning, has now become a hot topic. How can schools invest in different learning after the pandemic? So I think this is also a good way to understand the value of the project." OASIS, UIA expert

One aspect of OASIS that is challenging for other cities is its co-design aspect working with children, teachers, parents and others in the community on the future design of the playground. The project partners developed open access methodologies, tools and documentation to facilitate transfer. Active communication through participation in events, presentations within networks and media coverage also paid off and brought a lot of visibility to the project.

Community involvement strengthened the sense of shared pride and co-ownership. This has helped to ensure continuing support at local level. OASIS also succeeded in changing the work processes and mindset within the participating partner organisations, leading to new activities and collaborations.

The project was well integrated into wider city policies, starting with the Resilience strategy, and given greater impetus through the adoption of the 15-minute city strategy. As a result OASIS was quickly scaled-up at the city level. From the initial ten schoolyards transformed in 2020, the approach was replicated to another 25 schoolyards in 2021 and a total of 70 schoolyards will have been completed by end of 2022, representing about 10% of all the total inthe city. The goal is to eventually transform all schoolyards with direct street access in the city. There is also a potential to expand to other public spaces, such as churchyards, public housing lands, campus sites.

The project also inspired other initiatives which used the OASIS methodology: OASIS STREET - a greening of more than 100 streets around schools in Paris; a greening of a campus by students working on the evaluation of OASIS; and an Erasmus+ project facilitating knowledge transfer between cities.

Other municipalities in the conurbation such as Seine St Denis showed interest and started to collaborate with the project to transform their schoolyards into cool islands. Enormous interest also came from other French cities, with over 70 cities requesting more information or visits to the completed sites, and 15 international cities showing interest in the OASIS approach.

OASIS schoolyard after transformation in Paris

Key takeaway 3

Replication starts at home. For any administration it is important to understand from the outset what it entails, in organisational terms, to replicate the actions of a project previously implemented elsewhere. This is best achieved by making the first replica in or near the home city. One project can inspire many other cities to start similar activities - in this regard OASIS Paris with nearly a hundred other cities in France following their approach is perhaps the market leader. This was achieved through a very active media campaign. Other cities have been facilitated by the open access materials that the project developed. This is particularly useful for co-designing

with children as the future users.

#4 Participating in trans-national exchange and transfer networks

Many other cities in Europe are facing the same challenges that UIA projects have tackled. Two of the case studies, Vilawatt in Viladecans (see Box below) and USE-IT! in Birmingham succeeded in leading URBACT transfer networks based on their UIA project experience . However, trans-national exchange is hampered by the cost and by languages. This is where EU funded transfer mechanisms can be of benefit although more could be done to make these available to all the successful UIA projects.

PUJ Prato's comprehensive approach integrating simple and complex actions ensuring long term impacts has been appreciated internationally, leading the city to a partnership with the City of Taichung in Taiwan and to join the H2020 project UPSURGE.

Focus on transfer

After completion in 2020, Vilawatt's experience has been recognised as worthy of being transferred to other European cities. The partner cities in this innovative Urbact UIA Transfer Mechanism (UTM) are Seraing in Belgium, Nagykanizsa in Hungary, and Trikala in Greece.

In a series of webinars, the project partners have learnt about the five pillars that make up Vilawatt Innovative Practice: retrofitting, energy communities, public-private-citizen partnerships, energy pooling, citizen engagement in energy efficiency strategies, and incentive programs to generate project buy-in.

"What we are transferring is the main functions or objectives of the different pillars of the project, not the exact solutions Vilawatt applied." Viladecans municipality representative

Participation in Urbact UTM has already helped the partner city Trikala with its Energy Transition Strategy 2030. Trikala is developing such a strategy as one of the six Greek municipalities chosen by the EU to be part of the 'Climate Neutral and Smart Cities' initiative. This will make the city climate neutral by 2030, twenty years earlier than the European Green Deal for other European cities. Within this mission, research and innovation, combined with novel forms of governance and collaboration, and citizen participation transferred from VILAWATT will play a decisive role.

Key takeaway 4

Engage in transnational exchange and transfer activity. During a project other cities from Europe may well express interest in the project and wish to visit to learn from the experience. Cities may look for EU transnational networks that are working on similar issues to team up, collaborate together, and transfer the projects' approach. In this regard, as aforementioned, URBACT already has the experience and infrastructure to facilitate international transfer networks. Moreover, perhaps as part of the European Urban Initiative or through URBACT, the proposed national contact points whether based on a city network, or in a ministry could help cities to team up in national transfer networks and to provide further resources for exchange.

#5 Mainstreaming of the UIA project approach

As well as transferring to other European cities, parts of Vilawatt's approach has been transferred and upscaled to other districts of Viladecans making it one of the main drivers to accomplish the Viladecans 2030 Strategy. Similarly, the City of Ljubljana in a post-project strategy included some of the activities derived from the APPLAUSE project in its Environmental Action Programme 2021-2027, and invasive alien plant species prevention and processing will be part of the strategic goal of the conservation of nature and green areas in the City of Ljubljana. Finally, in the case of the Plan Einstein project, the Municipality of Utrecht has succeeded in getting Plan Einstein approach on integration of migrants and refugees as the basis for all new refugee reception centres in the Netherlands at national level. This includes the notion of co-residence where young people from the host community live alongside the refugees and activation from day one. These approaches have been incorporated

into the new National Integration Policy which has been led at national level by the minister who was formerly deputy mayor of the city overseeing the project. The European Commission has referred to Plan Einstein as one of the top ten innovative projects on the topic of migration. It was also included in a campaign by the Human Rights Office of the United Nations as a good practice.

Key takeaway 5

Mainstream the approach developed under UIA for future strategies at local and national level. Upscaling the impact can also be achieved by policy mainstreaming whereby it is built into local and national strategies for the future. In this way UIA projects become a starting point either for other local urban innovations or for how national policies are delivered. Utrecht's Plan Einstein illustrates what is possible.

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