



The Urban Lab of
Europe!

THEORETICAL
BACKGROUND

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Appendixes

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UIA has funded 86 urban innovation projects in this programming period. These have been spread across the 14 identified call topics, closely aligned with the priorities of the Urban Agenda for the EU.

Just Transitions was not one of the UIA's call themes. Consequently, this has not been the focus on the ten case studies presented here. Rather, they have utilised their resources under the banner of Energy Transitions, Climate Change Adaptation, Circular Economy or other topics.

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Appendix 2: What barriers do cities face in ensuring their transitions are accessible and affordable to all?

Even if the need for cities to further support their transition and to make it affordable and accessible to all is now clear, they are facing major barriers and challenges. As a background, this research analysed key barriers identified by cities, through interviews as well as during an event organised by UIA on 27 and 28 April 2022 in Seville, Spain, on “[EU cities acting for just transitions and climate adaptation](#)”. The 15 individual barriers are divided in three categories: Barriers faced by cities, by residents and other barriers. The definitions are given in Table 6 below.

Barriers encountered by cities

Disclaimer: many of these barriers refer to difficulties encountered by municipalities for a range of local issues and local policies, especially in sustainable integrated development, beyond Just Green Transitions. They have been studied at length elsewhere. Here, this work focuses on the specificities of Affordable and Accessible Green Transitions, and the relevance of these barriers under this topic.

Table 6: Barriers' definitions

Barriers encountered by cities

Lack of strong vision / leadership	The climate emergency and the need for Green Transitions is high on the agenda for almost all cities, which acknowledge their role in delivering solutions. Yet, not all elected representatives share this inclusive vision; the complexity of the issues & challenge as well as a lack of knowledge can partially explain this. For example, sustainable energy policies need to consider that the needs and barriers of individuals in energy poverty are peculiar and cannot be addressed with the traditional approaches to the sustainable energy transition: leaders should be aware of the need for new methods.
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Lack of policy / delivery system	Cities share the concern about inclusivity in the Green Transition. Yet too often there is a lack of strategy or a local plan which clearly include this goal. Any such plan would need to be aligned and/or complementary to regional and/or national frameworks. Therefore, no action is being taken. For example, action to ensure that everybody can access nature-based solutions to address climate adaptation, requires policies targeted at specific neighbourhoods (e.g., with limited green space) and/or specific vulnerable groups.
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Lack of data and knowledge on vulnerable groups and their main issues Too often, municipalities do not fully grasp the issues at stake or the current situation, the neighbourhood concerned, the people concerned, the implications for the neighbourhoods and their residents, the short and long-term effects on society and the climate. For example, women use public transport more and in a different way to men, which prevents them from making the most of existing services. However, few cities have gender breakdowns on service use and better data is needed.

Lack of an enabling funding framework In some instances, cities seek to implement innovative & inclusive solutions to support the green transition but are hindered by the existing financial framework (budget, spending rules and/or procurement rules) Some cities need to learn how to navigate and make the most of policies or legal opportunities to intervene. For example, procurement rules can make it difficult to bring the most relevant renovation company into a social housing initiative.

Lack of municipal funds Surprisingly, in the survey in Seville, only a quarter of the respondents mentioned funding as an issue for implementing solutions. Yet, it is clear that municipalities face competing objectives and priorities as well as limited and declining budgets to deliver policies. For example, economic priorities might be prioritised over sustainability, which could be in turn be prioritised over sustainable actions for vulnerable groups.

Lack of cross-departmentalism Public administration often works in silos, making a holistic view or holistic delivery of local suitably tailored and joined-up solutions very difficult.

Lack of monitoring & evaluation of the policies & actions Municipalities also often lack a monitoring framework that ensures iterative evaluation and improvement of solutions against clearly identified objectives. For example, a public transport strategy designed without follow-up monitoring of the types of people who use it (women, disabled, etc), in which areas (urban-peri-urban), the time of use, frequency of use, prevents the service from being improved and in tune changing needs.

A civil servant skills deficit Readjusting the ways municipalities work requires project management skills, but also skills in design thinking, risk management, participative methods, & social innovation. Such skills are often missing. For example, involving vulnerable groups in the design of green solutions and addressing their needs require co-creation skills.

Difficulty with reaching out to vulnerable groups For some cities, it is difficult to identify vulnerable groups or communicate with them, in a way that is meaningful to them. There might also be a lack of 'bridges' or 'intermediaries' (e.g., NGOs, mediators, translators, etc.) to reach out to them. For example, in terms of energy poverty, migrants are often off the radar and there are barriers (language, culture, trust, knowledge, ...) that limit their ability to benefit from public support.

Barriers encountered by residents

Lack of knowledge of the offer by the vulnerable people	Information on the proposed solutions is not always known to all the potential beneficiaries, communication channels are not relevant and/or the information not understandable in a clear and meaningful way, relevant to the needs of the specific groups. For example, renovation funds might not be widely communicated and might require individuals to look for the information, which does not come directly to them, even if in need.
Lack of adequate provision for vulnerable people	If solutions fail to account for the realities and needs of the target groups, the latter will have no interest in seeking to access them. For example, captive owners are specific types of low-income people, who, although they own their homes, cannot afford to renovate them and face increasing threats of energy poverty. They have specific characteristics, including specific financial, cultural, or social difficulties with engaging in renovation work and they require targeted actions.
Vulnerable people's inability to seize opportunities	Many solutions/services require residents to have some skills, resources, and the time/availability to understand them and/or to access/use them. For example, increasing the use of alternative means of transport requires being able to use them, e.g., the ability to ride a bicycle, which, surprisingly, not everyone knows how to do.
Lack of personal funds	Too many solutions still require large personal investments even if the return in the long run is beneficial to the residents. Many cannot afford it. At the same time, there can be a lack of financial incentives that would also help individuals who would like to upgrade the energy performance of their homes. For example, homeowners also have other financial priorities preventing them from embarking on home renovation.
Other Barriers	
Wicked socio-economic context	The proposed solutions are part of a wider socio-economic context to which they need to be tailored. For example, many cities interested in the green transition, seek to transition from a carbon-intensive manufacturing industry to a green, digital, and high-value industry that can generate sustainable and high-quality jobs. It's a colossal challenge and many cities lack the resources to influence the mechanisms in play.
Pre-existing urban planning context	Many cities were built under past construction, mobility, and urban planning standards, which do not comply with current standards of sustainability. For example, housing stock built in the 1960-70s are often low quality and in need of total refurbishment.
Intrinsic technological challenges	Many of the solutions needed for green transitions are innovative and not yet mature. They face different inherent challenges that still need to be addressed. For example, technologies for blue and green roofs have required numerous adjustments in recent years.

Appendix 3: Key Witnesses

Table 7: Key Witnesses

Key witness	Organisation	Topic
Anja de Cunto	Eurocities - Big Buyers	Public Procurement
Richard Harding	Co-author of a JRC Study on Smart Specialisation	Smart Specialisation
Elena Donnari Teresa Aristegui	DG ENER - Renovation Wave	Energy poverty
Brooke Flanagan	Eurocities - Net Zero Cities	Energy
Eugenia Mansutti Anna Iafisco	Eurocities—Covenant of Mayors + Social Affairs	Climate Energy Housing
Karel Vanderpoorten	DG GRWO - Affordable Housing Initiative	Housing
Michaela Kauer	UAP on Housing (City of Vienna)	Housing
Dara Trunbull Joao Goncalves	Housing Europe	Housing
Piotr Rapacz Madeleine Kelley	DG MOVE	Mobility
Peter Saelens	Eurocities	Mobility
Ivone Pereira	European Environment Agency	Climate Adaptation

Appendix 4: Sounding Board Members

Nuala Morgan—URBACT Permanent Secretariat

Pia Laurilla and Janis Krainis – European Commission, DG REGIO

Nathalie Guri—Eurocities

Carlotta Fioretti—European Commission, Joint Research Centre

Amelie Cousin—UIA

Tommaso Galli—UIA

Roberta Lixia—UIA

Ophelie Tainguy - UIA

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