EUROPEAN URBAN RESILIENCE FORUM

2024 TOPICAL REPORT 3

THEMATIC STREAM: ENABLING THE TRANSFORMATION TO RESILIENT, ADAPTIVE, AND CLIMATE-NEUTRAL CITIES AND REGIONS

TOPICS OVERVIEW

This stream focuses on the following key areas to foster climate resilience and urban sustainability:

- **Financial mechanisms**: exploring strategies for bridging financing gaps in adaptation projects, including via public-private partnerships.

- **Mobilizing stakeholders**: emphasizing the importance of collaboration across different levels of governance and sectors. Topics include tools for cross-sectoral coordination and involving communities in co-creating resilient solutions.

- **AI tools and innovation**: highlighting the role of AI and innovative technologies in accelerating urban transformation and climate action.

MAIN TAKE-AWAYS

Financing

Bridging the gap between financiers and cities remains a significant challenge, particularly in developing accessible financing tools for territorial adaptation projects. Although various strategies and well-developed tools are available to support urban resilience initiatives, many remain underutilized due to limited awareness and capacity in cities. To attract private investment, projects must be bankable, and cities need to demonstrate tangible benefits to justify private sector involvement.

EXAMPLE 1

Oslo, Norway

Oslo has introduced a Climate Budget, which sets specific targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions across various sectors. The budget allocates funds for climate-friendly initiatives such as expanding public transport, promoting cycling, and enhancing energy efficiency in buildings, thereby facilitating the city's transition to climate neutrality.

EXAMPLE 2

EU Smart Cities Marketplace

The Smart Cities Marketplace offers a range of services for cities, investors, SMEs, and other stakeholders seeking to finance projects for smart cities.

Partnerships and collaboration

Maturing collaboration processes is crucial. Despite shared goals, businesses and organizations often struggle to agree due to different backgrounds. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are highlighted as crucial for leveraging local resources and expertise. Nevertheless, there's debate about the extent of private sector involvement in adaptation efforts. Some argue that climate adaptation should primarily be a government responsibility.

EXAMPLE 3

Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen collaborates with private businesses to enhance climate adaptation through innovative infrastructure projects. Partnerships focus on creating sustainable urban spaces, such as green corridors and flood-resilient parks. These initiatives not only mitigate climate risks but also promote biodiversity and improve quality of life for residents

EXAMPLE 4

Rotterdam, The Hague

Rotterdam has established public-private partnerships to fund and implement projects that increase the city's resilience to flooding and extreme weather events. Initiatives include the development of floating buildings, smart water management systems, and green infrastructure. These partnerships leverage private sector expertise and investments to complement public efforts in building a climate-resilient city.

Community Engagement for Resilience

Examples from various cities emphasize the importance of engaging communities as active partners in resilience planning. Strategies for successful engagement include listening to community conversations, creating spaces for meaningful dialogue, and building trust through collaboration and empowerment of community leaders to lead adaptation initiatives. Emphasizing local strengths rather than vulnerabilities further empowers communities, fostering a sense of ownership and resilience in planning and implementation efforts.

EXAMPLE 5

Zurich - Data-Driven Resilience Planning

Zurich Resilience Solutions provides localized climate hazard data to assess risks and vulnerabilities. Data helps communities and cities enhance preparedness for physical, social, and economic vulnerabilities. The UCRP tool supports advanced knowledge sharing for identifying and addressing risks effectively.

EXAMPLE 6

Red Cross Climate Emergency Neighborhoods Program in Spain (Equipos de Respuesta Básica en Emergencia – ERBE)

Teams of county volunteers who provide a basic response to an emergency and/or catastrophe, guaranteeing a faster, more effective and flexible intervention, oriented to the person; involving the population in prevention and preparedness.

AI and innovation

AI and innovation play a pivotal role in advancing urban sustainability. This is a significant opportunity for climate action, as AI has the potential to drastically reduce carbon emissions and transform cities into more resilient, sustainable spaces. However, no opportunity comes without challenges. AI technologies are resource-heavy and require substantial infrastructure, which can pose barriers for some cities and communities. We must ensure that the benefits of AI are accessible to all, leaving no one behind in the journey towards a climate-neutral future. By embracing both the potential and the responsibility that comes with innovation, we can create cities that are not only smarter but more equitable and sustainable for everyone.

EXAMPLE 7

Dortmund, Germany

Dortmund uses AI to manage urban tree coverage, helping mitigate the effects of heatwaves by protecting green infrastructure. Their approach demonstrates how AI can reduce climate risks in a practical and scalable way.

EXAMPLE 8

Tampere, Finland

Tampere focuses on the principle that more information does not always lead to better understanding. Their AI initiatives prioritize actionable insights for sustainable urban planning and decision-making.

EXAMPLE 9

Google's Global Climate AI Tools

Google's AI-powered tools, like wildfire prediction and flood forecasting, provide early warnings that save lives and mitigate risks.

Smart Resilient Cities

By integrating smart technologies and sustainable infrastructure, cities can enhance their resilience, ensuring better preparedness and adaptability to evolving risks. Tools like smart grids optimize resource management, while predictive analytics improve climate modelling and disaster response. Importantly, becoming a smart, resilient city is not about competition but collaboration, fostering partnerships and shared solutions to build sustainable, adaptive urban environments.

EXAMPLE 10

Cloudburst Management Plan in Copenhagen

Copenhagen has implemented a comprehensive Cloudburst Management Plan to address the growing frequency of intense rainfall caused by climate change. The plan incorporates measures such as underground reservoirs, green roofs, and permeable pavements to effectively manage stormwater and mitigate flood risks.

EXAMPLE 11

Superblocks in Barcelona

Barcelona's Superblocks initiative seeks to transform urban spaces by reconfiguring traffic flow, reducing vehicle emissions, and creating pedestrian-friendly zones. This strategy enhances urban resilience by addressing air pollution and mitigating heat island effects while also promoting sustainable mobility and fostering community engagement.

SESSIONS

- Panel discussion - **Our common Mission: collaboration for a resilient and climate-neutral future**

- Panel discussion - **Adaptation Finance: Bridging the Gap Between Financiers and Cities**

- Workshop - **Bridging the Gap: Mobilizing Local Resources for Climate Resilience Through Public-Private Partnerships**

- Workshop - **Unlocking Finance for Smart Resilient Cities**

- Panel discussion - **Communities as Active Partners to Enable Urban Climate Resilience**

- Panel discussion - **AI and Innovation for Resilience**

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EUROPEAN URBAN RESILIENCE FORUM

26 - 28 June 2024
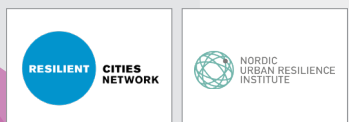
Valencia, Spain

MAIN ORGANISERS

- ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability EUROPE
- European Environment Agency
- AJUNTAMENT DE VALÈNCIA
- EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL — An initiative of the European Commission

CO-ORGANISERS

- REGILIENCE — Regional Pathways to Climate Resilience
- Regions4Climate
- P2R PATHWAYS2RESILIENCE
- LOCALISED
- adaptation Agora
- CARDIMED
- Rethink Action
- RESCUE ME
- Smart Cities Marketplace
- GO GREEN ROUTES
- Google

SUPPORTERS

- European Investment Bank
- European Committee of the Regions
- Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy EUROPE
- RESILIENT CITIES CATALYST
- Gold Standard
- CDP DISCLOSURE INSIGHT ACTION
- MULTISOURCE

IN COOPERATION WITH

- RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK
- NORDIC URBAN RESILIENCE INSTITUTE
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