Funded by the European Union

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

M4EG GEORGIA KEY HIGHLIGHTS

2022 REPORT

“We had organized the viewings before as well, but it did not gather so much public like the one we organized for testing the prototypes – what made a difference was reaching out to people by the information medium they are most comfortable with (social media group) and asking them what they would like to see. The turnout was unexpectedly high“

Irakli Lezhava
Poti municipality

“People were happy when we were approaching them for an interview – they were happy realizing that their opinion mattered”

Marekhi Kankadze
Tskaltubo municipality

“We noticed that a bench in the newly renovated park had been moved to a different location where people found it more comfortable to sit. It made us think that had we, at the municipality, designed the park together with our residents, this would not have happened”

Lasha Ormotsadze
Samtredia municipality

“We have engaged in a number of design experiments in Rustavi previously, but in this learning journey, we were able to go into details of exploration and the purpose mattered”

Misha Lobzhanidze
Rustavi municipality

“The exploration process was intense, which required distribution of workload to several people, new functions have emerged demanding new skills, like conducting user research and sensemaking. Without diversified team you cannot achieve much”

Nino Gvasalia
Poti municipality

“The key value of this process is that it has helped for people to identify their role and municipality its own role through an iterative process which changed the initial vision based on municipality perception to the one reflecting the view of the ordinary people”

Irakli Lezhava
Poti municipality

"With green interventions, Kutaisi promotes a green circular economy – and this eco-smart transformation stimulates the well-being of all. "We are starting the eco-smart future-ready city today. We can say that's an old city with new opportunities."

Ioseb Khakhaleishvili
Mayor of Kutaisi

ABBREVIATIONS

CfI	Call for Interest
CO	Country Office
EaP	Eastern Partnership countries
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GITA	Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency
LA	Local Authorities
LEDP	Local Economic Development Plans
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and infrastructure of Georgia
M4EG	Mayors for Economic Growth (Facility)
NALAG	National Association of Local Authorities in Georgia
NSM	National Steering Mechanism
RPA	Responsible Party Agreement
ULC	Urban Learning Center
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Background & translated version of the intro video

Key figures

number of new members	12 (5 in 2022)
number of reconfirmed members	48
people reached via comms channel	at least 30,000
number of events/sessions	51 events, sessions, meetings • 15 events • 11 Urban Imaginaries mentorship sessions • 6 Portfolio learning sessions • 16 Portfolio team working meetings • 3 inspiration sessions
number of grantees	• 2 Portfolio Journey • 4 Urban Imaginaries

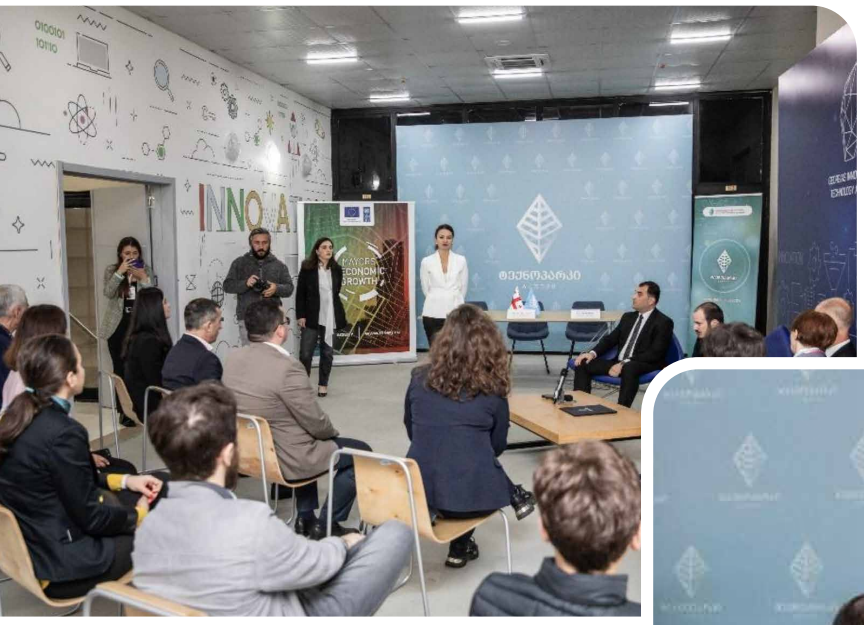
Connecting the network

Date	12 April 2022
Title	Portfolio Bootcamp
Description	Portfolio Bootcamp was conducted for all portfolio municipalities across the region. The bootcamp comprised 4 sessions of half day and was a mix of training and work on the portfolios.
Outcomes	As a result: • first part of the portfolio was prepared, and information gathered for options design follow-up workshop • Mayor updated about the portfolio progress • Portfolio design team gathered first time offline to share ideas on the co-design process, content, opportunities, and challenges • Trilateral Memorandum of Understanding planned among GITA, UNDP and Batumi City
Media/posts	UNDP Georgia

Batumi team attending M4EG portfolio bootcamp

Meeting Batumi Mayor, Mr. Archil Chikovani

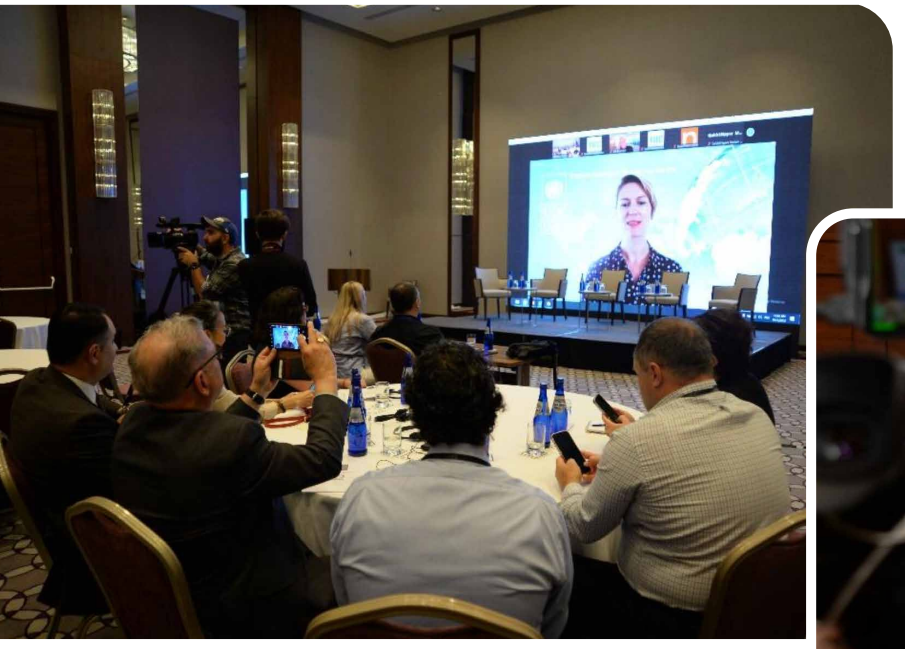
Date	19 May 2022
Title	Signing ceremony
Description	Signing Statement of Intent between the Batumi City Hall, UNDP, and Georgia's Agency for Innovation and Technology
Outcomes	As a result: • institutional partnership framework was set involving central and local government institutions. • Joint actions committed (such as pre-accelerator program, deo day, other meeting with stakeholders, networking events etc) • Commitment taken to promote Startup Ecosystem development
Media/posts	Batumi Tech Park



Head of GITA, Mayor of Batumi and UNDP Resident Representative Nick Beresford

Date	28 July 2022
Title	M4EG Show & Tell regional hybrid event
Description	Show & Tell event in Kutaisi hosted more than 71 (20% women) people present in-person.
Outcomes	The Show & Tell platform provided Mayors and their teams more visibility and light peer2peer learning. All participants are encouraged to reach out to other M4EG members and partners for more information and inspiration, and to keep building their networks across the region.
	As a result: • Six Georgian municipalities – the deep demonstrators received certificates of appreciation for their commitment, active engagement and participation in Urban Imaginaries and Portfolio learning and co-design processes. • Pilot on LEDP 2.0 and new generation of guidelines was launched • Engagement and support from the MRDI side was ensured
Media/posts	Kutaisi city, Baghdati Municipality UNDP Georgia – Show&Tell video

Date	10 September 2022
Title	Startup World Cup National Competition
Description	There is a need to connect Batumi with existing networks and mature startup ecosystems to learn about other systems' processes, and to leverage existing knowledge, people, and models. To connect Batumi to networks in Georgia and abroad, this year the Batumi City Hall and UNDP M4EG joined the Startup Grind Georgia, which organizes Startup World Cup (SWC) 2022 in Batumi. Participants – 135 (54; 40% - women) The event aimed to ensure: **1.** Visibility of Batumi among international influencers/opinion leaders in startup/venture community. It's "a place" **2.** Very high-level speakers on startup topics, raising understanding and interest in high-growth startups **3.** Connecting diverse local participants from students to local business leaders and service providers to international outsource companies, freelancers, and remote-work startups.
Outcomes	As a result: • Batumi made a statement on building startup ecosystem and gained increased visibility from the respective community/ecosystem members • Batumi City hall established connection with the speakers, guests, Barkley University representatives, USAID Economic Security Programme and other stakeholders • Established partnership between Batumi city and Startup Grind
Media/posts	UNDP Georgia



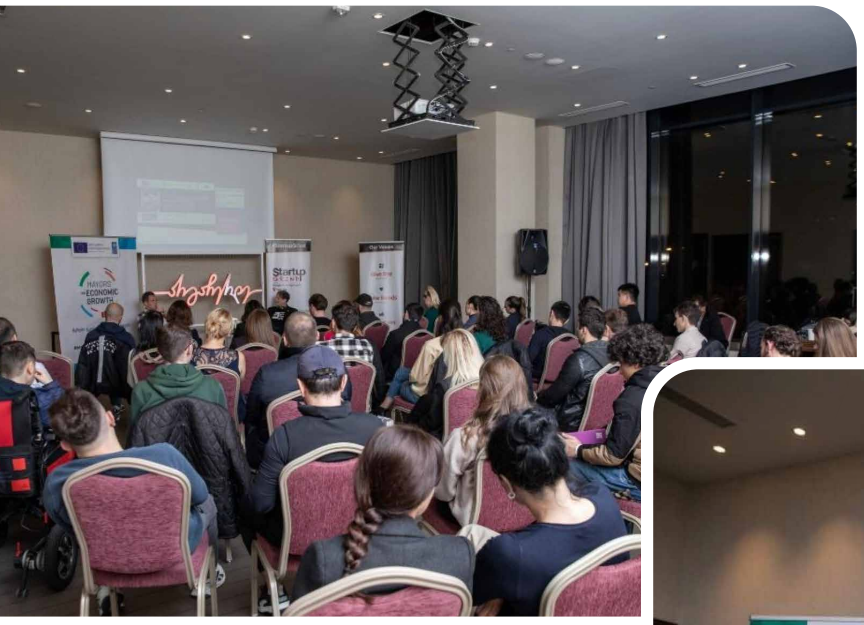
Date	11-13 October 2022
Title	Workshop with Portfolio and Urban Imaginaries municipalities in Kakheti
Description	On 11-13 October 2022, M4EG conducted a workshop with the teams of the the "Portfolio and "Urban Imaginaries municipalities. The purpose of the meeting was to share experiences between the municipalities, provide mutual learning and introduce UNDP narrative and financial reporting requirements defined per Letter of Agreement to be signed with selected municipalities for implementation of pilot projects.
Outcomes	• 5 finalized LoAs and one RPA • Networking among deep demonstrators • 23 staff members from 6 municipalities familiarized with UNDP LOA requirements
Media/posts	UNDP Georgia

Date	18-19 October
Title	Polish-Georgian Investment Forum
Description	The purpose of the event was to support Georgian municipalities in attracting investments. Within the framework of the forum, regions and municipalities had the opportunity to present their investment potential and offers, to learn about the expectations of investors and to facilitate the establishment of business connections between Georgian and Polish entrepreneurs. The organizers of the forum were the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy of Poland, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia and the Administration of the State Trustee in the Kakheti region, and the forum was supported by the joint initiative of the European Union and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) - "Mayors for Economic Growth".
Outcomes	M4EG signatory municipalities from Imereti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhum-Kvemo Svaneti and Kakheti took part in the forum. They presented investment opportunities in their respective municipalities and took part in discussions about future cooperation. By participating in the forum, municipalities gained good experience in communicating with investors, promoting local investment potential and attracting potential investments.
Media/posts	National media - Imedi News, Interpressnews Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure

Date	8-9 November 2022
Title	LEDP 2.0 Pilot Launch
Description	In 2022, Ove Arup, Climate KIC, Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech), and UNDP devised a new methodology and piloted the new concept and methodology in Baghdati, Georgia. The Arup team introduced EU Green Deal to 19 Georgian municipalities. The described activity was undertaken with 19 municipalities from Georgia in November 2022. Inception workshop with Baghdati municipality to Pilot LEDP 2.0 was dedicated to discussion of the outline of new methodology. As part of the visit to Baghdati, the Arup and UNDP representatives visited local business service center, biggest resort in Sairme, local museums.
Outcomes	As a result: • Up to six municipalities expressed readiness to develop LEDP 2.0 once pilot is completed • Working process on a new LEDP started with Baghdati • Working team was formed • National consultant hired to support Baghdati team
Media/posts	Baghdati Municipality Baghdati video

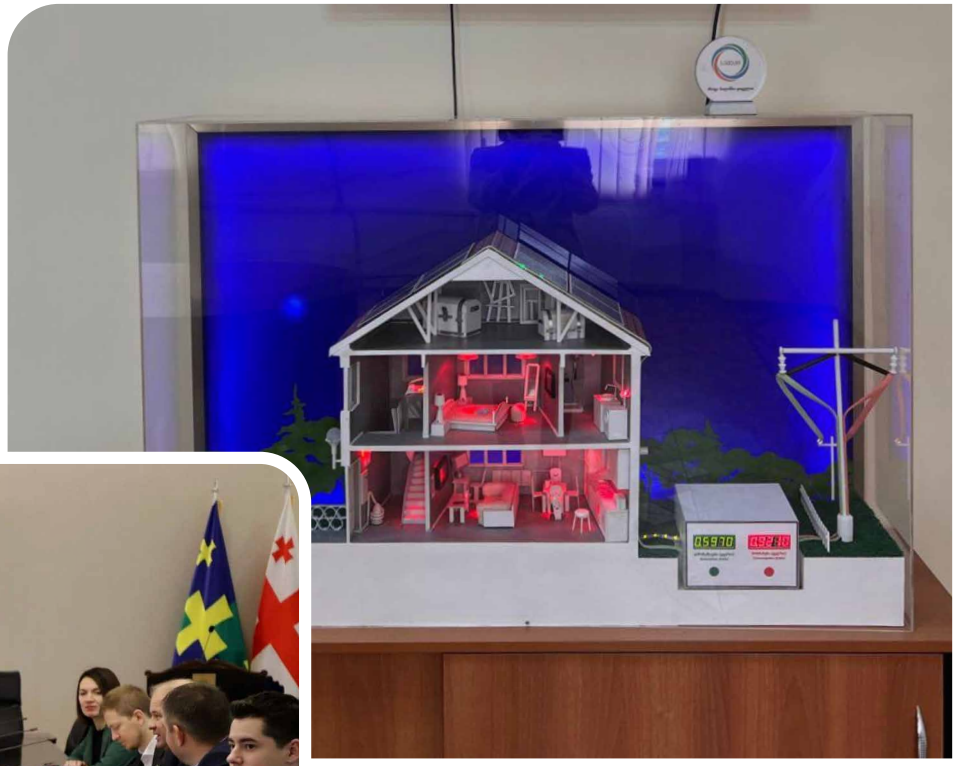
Date	14-18 November 2022
Title	Kutaisi Portfolio team's participation in the Barcelona Smart City Expo World Congress
Description	Purpose of a study visit was to acquaint Kutaisi Municipality core team members, engaged in Portfolio Design process, with various technological innovations and trends in the field of Smart management of the municipalities by attending Smart City Expo World Congress, the most leading annual event for the cities, within the frameworks of the Mayors of Economic Growth (M4EG) Facility. Arranging a study tour was outlined during the design of the portfolio, under which Kutaisi Municipality has decided to support its environmental resilience ambitions and advance its transformation towards becoming a Smart Eco City. The Municipality as an orchestrator of the city transformation needs to adopt a learning mindset and continuously keep up to date with new developments and innovation, which is defined under the Portfolio option "Learning and exchange program Blueprint". Connecting to others with experience and learning from them is a critical new skill in the toolbox of local administrations. Smart City Expo World Congress was selected as a destination of study tour due to the fact that it is one of the biggest gatherings of urban stakeholders and the world's greatest showcase of intelligent solutions. Through promoting social innovation and identifying collaboration opportunities, the event is dedicated to creating a better future for cities and their citizens. Smart City Expo World Congress gathers leaders from the most innovative companies, governments and organizations to move cities towards a better future. In 2022, Smart City Expo World Congress will focus on eight main tracks: Enabling Technologies, Energy & Environment, Mobility, Governance, Living & Inclusion, Economy, Infrastructure & Buildings, and Safety & Security. Participation of municipal core team members (Mayor, Head of economic department and representative of Local NGO), in Smart City Expo World Congress, will allow Kutaisi to learn and network with thousands of international attendees, share its voice in front of a global and promote Kutaisi Eco Smart City Portfolio, professional audience and find the latest solutions and case studies how to tackle the challenges that the cities face today.
Outcomes	As a result: • Kutaisi Mayor and members established new connections with other cities' representatives and innovators • Got inspired by smart solutions other cities are already testing and applying
Media/posts	Kutaisi city

Date	26 November 2022
Title	Networking events in Batumi - CARU • ქარუ
Description	Meeting Successful Georgian Founders; the first Startup Grind networking event in Batumi Special speaker was CARU • ქარუ's Nika Abashidze, who shared his experience of starting and growing in Georgia and entering the US market. 65 participants (20 women) attended. The event was supported by the EU, Bank of Georgia, Mayors for Economic Growth, UNDP, Chelti Winery, Batumi City Hall and Batumi Tech Park, Medialab, Terminal, NEXIA TA and Hilton Batumi.
Outcomes	As a result: • Batumi city hall and Tech park had an opportunity to present Startup Ecosystem Portfolio to the audience, got to know local community and startupers
Media/posts	Startup Grind Tbilisi



Date	30 November 2022
Title	National Steering Mechanism (NSM) in Georgia – first meeting
Description	The role of the NSM is to provide (non-binding) strategic guidance, ensure relevance to the national/local policy context, deploy cutting edge approaches, and are in line with the principles and practices, and that there is continuous consistency and coordination with country level development processes. The NSM seeks to: Provide strategic advice on activities and act as one feed-back mechanism for the project, Ensure that different branches and levels of government and key stakeholders are regularly informed and contribute to the project implementation. Provide guidance on alignment of national level M4EG project with the Government's priorities in the areas of regional and local/municipal development, principles of the Decentralization Strategy and European Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as Sustainable Development Goals.
Outcomes	As a result: • First advisory council meting was conducted with participation of key partners representing academia, think tank, NALAG, MRDI and M4EG signatories
Media/posts	Tweet

Date	3-4 December 2022
Title	Ceadir-Lunga study visit in Kutaisi
Description	Hosting Delegation from Moldova, Ceadir-Lunga Municipality representatives study visit in Kutaisi. wo M4EG #portfolio Mayors and their teams from Moldova and Georgia met to exchange experience and discuss their #portfolios on #energyefficiency, #wastemanagement and #urbanmobility. #Kutaisi demonstrated good practices, #municipalservices and excellent partnership with #universities and non-government organizations for city's #eco #smart future.
Outcomes	As a result: • Partnership established between the two municipalities • Ceadir-Lunga learned about Kutaisi good practices
Media/posts	Kutaisi



Date	16 December 2022
Title	Best Practice Program
Description	Best Practice Program 2022 is a flagship project of National Association of Local Authorities (NALAG), launched several years ago with the EU support, identifying and awarding best municipal practices in specific nominations. Best Practice award event is held annually and is a key event for municipalities.
Outcomes	As a result: • Kutaisi received Best Practice award for Eco-smart Potfolio
Media/posts	UNDP Georgia

Date	20 December 2022
Title	Meeting Successful Georgian Founders – the second Startup Grind networking event in Batumi
Description	Batumi hosted second Startup Grind Fireside Chat on 20th December in collaboration with M4EG. PulsarAI representative Sopo Chkoidze shared her success story and all the mistakes and challenges she had to face through her entrepreneurial journey. Audience had the opportunity to ask questions about startup ecosystem and get information on what it has to offer.
Outcomes	As a result: • Local community members learned about successful startup • Networking of ecosystem members was ensured
Media/posts	Startup Grind Tbilisi UNDP Georgia tweet

Other events

• Portfolios in Practice – cases of Georgia and Azerbaijan (June 30, 2022)

• Urban Makeovers: Building Vibrant Cities (September 21)

Pushing the boundaries: Pioneering for change

Testing new tools and approaches

Batumi

Quote	Intended effects: • Diversify and broaden Batumi's talent pool by retaining talented local youth and attracting external, high-skilled talent. • Contribute to a renewed urban identity by making Batumi Georgia's second startup capital. • Ignite interest, develop startup-savviness, and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation with a particular focus on youth. • Improve City Hall's capacity to enable Batumi's startup ecosystem.
Issue	Start-up Ecosystem Portfolio
Goal	• Diversify and broaden Batumi's talent pool by retaining talented local youth and attracting external, high-skilled talent. • Contribute to a renewed urban identity by making Batumi Georgia's second startup capital. • Ignite interest, develop startup-savviness, and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation with a particular focus on youth. • Improve City Hall's capacity to enable Batumi's startup ecosystem.
Status	Selecting startup ecosystem development was a brave and smart decision of the City Hall. Batumi team enthusiastically engaged in portfolio co-design process, proactively engaged partners, reached out to local community and fully followed the process. • Batumi set a framework for trilateral partnership with Georgia's Technology and Innovation Agency (of Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development) and UNDP through signing statement of intent • Conducted the youth narrative research • Identified new space in the city center and is developing a concept • Help a Startup World Cup (SWC) National Competition with StartUp Grind in 2022 • Expanded partnership with Startup Grind and will co-host the SWC in 2023 • Launched pre-accelerator program together with the Batumi tech Park in December 2023

Kutaisi

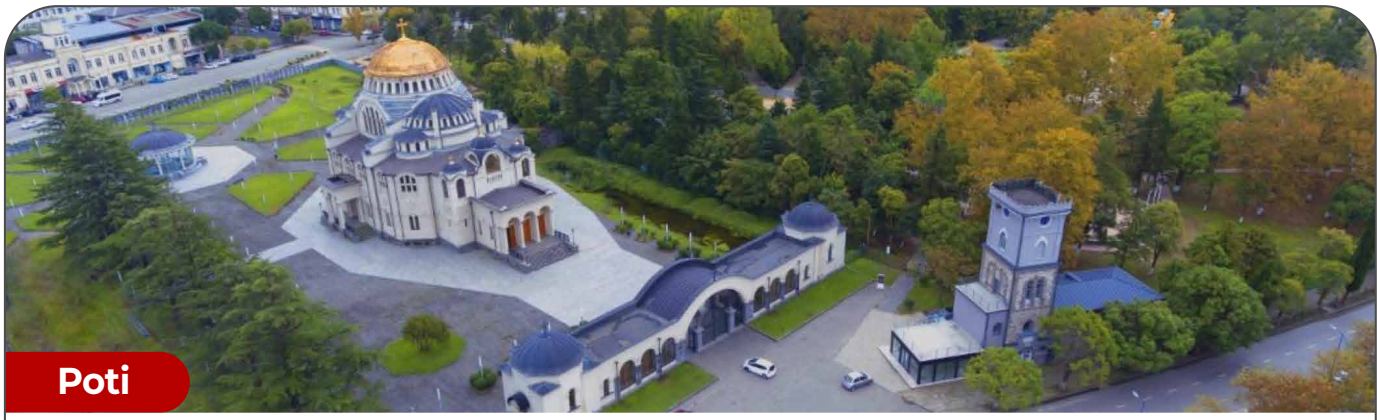
Quote	"With green interventions, Kutaisi promotes green circular economy – and this eco-smart transformation stimulates well-being of all." "We are starting the eco-smart future-ready city today. We can say that's an old city with new opportunities." **Ioseb Khakhaleishvili, Mayor of Kutaisi**
Issue	Eco-Smart City
Goal	• Become an attractor for stakeholders with sustainable interest and agendas. • Engage with Kutaisi's citizens, visitors, and businesses to become active stewards of the environment and urban-natural ecosystems and resources. • Inform and lead an agenda for sustainable policies and incentives at a country level.
Status	• Kutaisi set up a strong inter-disciplinary team to support the portfolio approach under the mayor's leadership • Kutaisi won the Best Practice Award of municipalities in Georgia for its work under M4EG • Under the Portfolio option "Learning and exchange program Blueprint", the Kutaisi team participated Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona, allowed Kutaisi to learn and network with thousands of international attendees, shared its voice, and promoted Kutaisi Eco Smart City Portfolio • Municipality with the Imereti Scientist's Union "Spectri" developing the concept of a new learning program focused on sustainability • The municipality has announced tenders for installation of Smart Waste - Street demonstrator and charging stations for electric vehicles

Samtredia

Quote	"We noticed that a bench in the newly renovated park had been moved to a different location were people found it more comfortable to sit. It made us think that had we, at the municipality, designed the park together with our residents, this would not have happened." **Lasha Ormotsadze, Samtredia municipality**
Issue	Developing sports facilities and new identity of the city
Goal	Rehabilitation of the swimming pool, space for children
Status	After a high number of consultations and outreach to residents, municipality has purchased construction/technical documentation for rehabilitation of indoor swimming pool to serve the needs of the locals and neighbouring communities. The municipality will cost share part of the reconstruction.

Tskaltubo

Quote	"People were happy when we were approaching them for an interview – they were happy realizing that their opinion mattered" – Marekhi Kankadze, Tskaltubo municipality
Issue	Developing vibrant cultural and social space
Goal	Establishment of a Cultural Hub, Engaging small entrepreneurs in cultural event
Status	Tender processes ongoing, several cultural events conducted along with outreach and stakeholder engagement, including private sector, for the best possible design of the outdoor cultural space. Now arranging educational corner in the Museum, and an additional facility of the cultural hub they are creating. Also partly cost shared by municipality.



Poti

Quote	"The exploration process was intense which required distribution of workload to several people, new functions have emerged demanding new skills, like conducting user research and sensemaking. Without diversified team you cannot achieve much." **Nino Gvasalia, Poti municipality**
Issue	Multifunctionality park, adapted public space for all
Goal	Arranging central park, increasing its accessibility, installing swings adapted for children with different disabilities, installing big screen for sports and cultural events
Status	Poti is finalizing procurement process

Rustavi

Quote	"Rustavi is not afraid of innovations" – Revaz Barbakadze, Rustavi city
Issue	Promoting green entrepreneurship among youth through applying innovative approaches; developing environmental services
Goal	Promoting green entrepreneurship among youth through applying innovative approaches; developing environmental services
Status	$59,930 RPA was signed with the Rustavi Innovation Hub, which helps the city to implement initiative planned under the Urban imaginaries.

Learning opportunities

- 11 Urban Imaginaries - CPI weekly mentorship session
- Learning sessions under UI: Systems Thinking, Social Listening, Sensemaking
- Learning sessions under Portfolio: Deep Listening, Portfolio Design Bootcamp (four sessions), Dynamic management
- Inspiration sessions "Storytelling for Systems Change" (July 20, 2022)
- Inspiration sessions "Participatory Foresight" (September 6, 2022)
- Inspiration sessions "Human Learning Systems" (October 25, 2022)
- Launch of Urban Learning Center (December 7, 2022)

Other highlights

M4EG Georgia established partnership with academia. Particularly, with the program of "Applied Social Psychology" Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia. As part of the partnership, three MA students had practice within M4EG, providing research resources and support to signatories.

Library

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