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UNDP
MAYORS
FOR ECONOMIC
GROWTH
Future ready
local authorities
in the EaP
ANNUAL
PROGRESS
REPORT
Year 1 JAN - DEC 2021
#FutureSmartUNDP

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Funded by the European Union

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"The new phase of the Mayors for Economic Growth initiative was devised in the midst of a pandemic crisis, illustrating the importance of considering new and innovate approaches when addressing unprecedented and systemic challenges."

Diana Jabłońska
DG NEAR Head of Unit C1 'Georgia, Moldova, Economic Investment Plan', M4EG Virtual Forum for Urban Transformation, 19 November 2021

"Selection process helped to revise our needs and plans, as well as nudged us to think how we can deal with the municipality challenges in a different way.

We are eager to learn more of it"

Testimonial from the Mayor of Areni municipality

2021 ACHIEVEMENTS

Setting the foundation for the new phase

235
local authorities recommitted to the Mayors for Economic Growth initiative &

32
new members

117
applied for 'deep' engagement: seed-funds and mentoring

33
were selected to benefit from:
a) EU's Call for Proposals for pilot projects,
b) Portfolio Journey,
c) Urban Imaginaries mentoring & seed-funds

50k+
people were reached in the Eastern Partnership through launching the initiative at country level (Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova & Ukraine[1])

200+
representatives were introduced to re-thinking local economic development with a systems lens

BACKGROUND & STRATEGY

Countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova[2], Ukraine) are emerging economies with uneven prosperity which makes the vulnerability of parts of the population a key challenge. Difficult geographical characteristics, the relatively small size of the economies, lack of diversification, and demographic challenges associated with emigration and low fertility rates combined with exposure to macroeconomic risks, create a complex development picture.

The Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) initiative was launched by the European Union (EU) in 2017 to support Mayors and municipalities of the EaP countries in becoming active facilitators for sustainable economic growth and job creation. The first phase of the initiative recorded high popularity: over 400 municipalities across the region had committed to the initiative's objectives, and over 250 local economic development plans (LEDPs) were designed. The M4EG Phase II, known as the "M4EG Facility", will build on and integrate lessons learned from the first phase while seeking to build synergies and avoid duplication with other local economic development (LED) programs already underway in the region.

The first phase introduced an integrated approach to local economic development planning. However, these plans have not all generated the desired investments for transformation. To achieve this result, the M4EG Facility aims to serve as a platform to enable and learn on transformation. This entails that the LAs explore how to apply a strategic innovation framework with new tools and methods, including engaging in deep listening (enhanced stakeholder engagement to better grasp and tap into narratives that exist in society), co-creation with diverse groups of innovators, investors, and public servants, activate portfolios and manage them (dynamic management), actively design bankable projects to attract private sector and other forms of financing, while simultaneously develop capabilities in local authorities.

During the implementation of the second phase of the initiative, the M4EG network will increase to 350 local authorities, and up to 70 seed-funds/innovation grants will be activated, and a minimum of 12 local authorities will go through a process of "portfolio" development. Three funding facilities will be available to the local authorities in the network: the EU Call for Proposal for pilot projects (ref. 170157, 2021), Annual Portfolio Call (2022-2023), and M4EG Innovation Project Call (2021-2023).

BASIC M4EG DATA

Title of project	Mayors for Economic Growth (aka M4EG Facility)
Contract Number:	ENI2020 / 416-147
Duration of project	48 months / 4 years: 1 Jan 2021 - 31 Dec 2024
Target Countries	Eastern Partnership Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
Reporting period	1 January - 31 December 2021
Type of report	Annual Progress Report
Date of submission	28 February 2022
Implementing Partner	UNDP
Purpose of Report	The report summarizes the achievements so far, identifies challenges, and outlines any mitigation strategies put in place by the project management. The report provides a brief update on the context of the project. The progress report builds on the previously shared Mid-Year Brief (Jan-June 2021)
Total project cost	€10,294,364
European Union	€10,000,000
UNDP	€294,364
SDG contribution (main)	**SDG8:** Decent work and economic growth, **SDG11:** Sustainable cities
Regional Programme Europe and CIS (2022-2025)	**Outcome 1:** #1: Structural transformation accelerated, particularly green, inclusive and digital transitions.
UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025	**Tier 2 Development Outputs:** E.2 Innovation capabilities built, and approaches adopted to expand policy options at global, regional, national and sub-national levels **Tier 3 Organizational Effectiveness:** 1.3 Cutting-edge strategic innovations and digital solutions cultivated for policy and programming

ABBREVIATIONS

CfP	Call for Proposals
CfI	Call for Interests
CO	Country Office
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the European Commission
DoA	Description of Action (i.e. the approved project description)
EaP	Eastern Partnership countries
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
IPSA	International Personnel Service Agreement
IRH	Istanbul Regional Hub (of UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS)
LA	Local Authorities
LEDO	Local Economic Development Officer
LEDP	Local Economic Development Plan
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
M4EG	Mayors for Economic Growth (Facility)
SB	Service Bands
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Note on definitions: depending on the country context and/or wording previously used in endorsed documents, the report uses local authorities, municipalities, and cities interchangeably.

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MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following represents an overview of the implementation of the activities under this project for the period 1 January-31 December 2021.

Kick-off and set-up of the initiative

As the initial year of implementation, the M4EG was successfully operationalized and launched in four countries[3] (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). The country networks were reignited with new membership application and outreach activities under the UNDP's secretariat: more than 230 Mayors and teams recommitted to the initiative, and more than 30 new members joined. More than 50,000 people in the Eastern Partnership were reached through the country events and the related media attentions garnered[4]. Well-recognized international and regional providers, including Ove Arup, Climate KIC, TalTech, Chora Foundation and Center for Public Impact, were brought on board to provide technical support to the local authorities in exploring system thinking[5] approaches to local economic development at the town and city level.

Component 1: EaP municipalities are supported in their participation in the M4EG initiative

The first phase of the M4EG (2017-2020) saw a high interest in the local economic development plans (LEDP) and methodology introduced, however many shortcomings were identified, such as "the LEDPs often lacked a tight logic to show how they would solve a problem in the local economy. Public investments (such as technology parks, wine tasting halls, marketplaces) were proposed without considering co-financing and partnerships, which might be a vital way to find financing for the investment and to ensure it meets the needs of the private sector."[6]

To better address these shortcomings, and to apply a system lens to a complex challenge such as economic prosperity within planetary boundaries, a review of the existing LEDP package was initiated. Innovative entities such as Ove Arup and international partners (Climate KIC and Tallinn University of Technology) were brought on board to provide technical support. The new LEDP concept and methodology will be piloted in 2022.

The new phase of the M4EG introduces systems thinking, which in contrast to the concurrent dominant scientific tradition of reductionism, is said to offer a more-integrated and cross-sectoral perspective[7]. With proven concepts, tools and methods, the second phase intends to improve the beneficiaries and partners' understanding of the complex systemic issues which threaten the sustainable future of towns and cities in the EaP countries, and in doing so improving the Mayors' decision-making and unlocking new partnerships and financing. As system thinking offers new approaches and opportunities to build resilience at the local level, in 2021, more than 200 representatives from local authorities were introduced to system thinking through: the Virtual Forum on Urban Transformation; national launches and outreach meetings; and the application process for the Portfolio Journey Call for Interest and Urban Imaginaries mentoring and seed-funds.

"The issues we face in the 21st Century are of an unprecedented scale; they are essentially connected and in processes of rapid, dynamic change; and they are fundamentally systemic. We have learned from experience that we cannot manage such complex, connected systemic issues through ad hoc, short term, sectoral interventions. We must recognise that systems evolve and behave in ways largely determined by their own characteristics and properties.
It follows that, if we are to intervene successfully, we must understand their behaviour so as to know how, where and when to intervene."

OECD, Systemic thinking for policy making – the potential of systems analysis for addressing global policy challenges in the 21st century, SG/NAEC (2019)4

A total of 13 local authorities were selected to benefit from the EU's M4EG Call for Proposals for pilot projects (CfP 170157)The project team ensured outreach and communication to the network on the EU's CfP, and two External Assessors were recruited to support DG NEAR in the review of proposals submitted.

Component 2: Municipal pilot projects building on existing LEDPs are successfully implemented
As of December 2021, 117 local authorities had gone through the devised selection process for the re-granting component (i.e. Portfolio Journey and Urban Imaginaries). Four had been selected for Portfolio Journey, a 2-3 year long capability development journey to de-risk and attract investment by moving away from a traditional project management approach, and each with the possibility to access up to EUR 225,00 to implement said approach. 10 local authorities were selected to take part in the Urban Imaginaries mentoring support with the possibility to access innovation grants (seed-funds) of up to EUR 60,000. The selection process for Georgia is expected to be finalized in January 2022, and late spring in Azerbaijan.

Visibility and outreach

Within the framework of the joint partnership, the project team took the appropriate measures to publicize the project activities and the EU funding. EU's visibility was ensured with appropriate branding, highlighting the core role and contribution of the Union in achieving project results and milestones, and ensuring transparency of actions. As the first year of implementation, a key output was the re-branding of the initiative to increase attractiveness among local authorities in the EaP and beyond, with a new logo and color scheme. The existing M4EG webpage is under re-construction, in line with the new branding. The initiative was launched at the regional and country-level in 2021 in the five implementing countries, apart from Azerbaijan, where the EU and UNDP jointly decided to reboot the initiative in March 2022.

Key challenges, risks and recommendations

2021 set the foundations for the phase 2. It was marked by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, where most of the internal and external engagement and support were provided virtually. Ensuring constructive engagement and necessary digital skills of local authority representatives will continue being a key challenge for the next years. Local elections in some of the implementing countries delayed national launches as well as the announcements of the Call for Interest for the Portfolio Journey and the Urban Imaginaries mentoring and seed-funds. The innovative nature of the project requires continuous and deep engagement with the local authorities, where working online poses a challenge. Tensions and the re-escalation of crisis in the EaP continue to be felt and constitute a high risk to closely monitor going forward.

The cascading effect of COVID-19 pandemic on central and local level public revenues and fiscal space is a felt reality of the local authorities in the network, and a key recommendation is for the project to strengthen the financing and investment focus to further explore and unlock economic opportunities. The project team has identified several complementary initiatives around local economic development in the implementing countries and a strong focus on avoiding overlaps and creating synergies need to be ensured going forward.

Total utilization of funds in 2021 was EUR 481,495.

*As a result of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the involvement of Belarus recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU is further suspending planned and ongoing programmes and activities with the participation of Belarusian public authorities and state-owned enterprises. The EU will continue to step up its support to Belarusian civil society.

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

RESULTS

RESULTS

The overall objective of this action is to enhance economic inclusive growth and job creation in the region by supporting local authorities in the EaP countries to design and implement LEDPs in line with the principles of good governance and sound financial management.

The specific outputs are:

1 EaP municipalities are supported in their participation in the M4EG initiative.

2 Municipal pilot projects building on existing LEDPs are successfully implemented.

OUTPUT 1: EAP MUNICIPALITIES ARE SUPPORTED IN THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE M4EG INITIATIVE

Activity 1.1.1 on support to the EU Call for Proposals

In support of the EU's M4EG Call for Proposals under the initiative (**EuropeAid/170157/DH/ACT/Multi**) of a total of €10M, two international external assessors with solid expertise on local economic and urban development were recruited. The two consultants assessed the concept notes in the spring of 2021 and the full project proposals shortlisted in early fall 2021. The EU announced the 13 successful applicants in December 2021.

Relatedly, UNDP helped disseminate information about the EU CfP as well as the new phase of the M4EG to local authorities through its existing country channels and networks. UNDP was subsequently approached by several local authorities in EaP countries for additional information. For those who were shortlisted, UNDP checked in with the respective LAs and offered to provide light technical support for the project proposal development.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

• NA

Changes introduced

• It was suggested by DG NEAR in late fall to further explore how the project team could support the selected local authorities during their EU grant implementation over the next years. A tailored mentoring or similar initiative is to be explored in 2022.

Achievements (vis-à-vis indicators if relevant)

• The two external assessors successfully reviewed the two stages of the EU's M4EG CfP.

Activity 1.1.2 EaP municipalities are supported in their participation in the m4eg initiative

This activity was initiated in spring 2021 with internal discussions within UNDP on scope and process. As any adaption and proposed new methodology, including LEDP templates and an online platform to host the LEDPs, are linked to the forthcoming Urban Competence/Learning Centre (Activity 1.2.2), a combined competitive procurement process for both activities was devised and **launched** in July 2021. The Urban Learning Center is envisioned as the learning and exchange platform between stakeholders, as well as offering visibility to the local authorities. The Center is expected to provide an evolving hybrid training programme or packages, including guidance on LEDP 2.0 development, hands-on training on innovative methods (e.g., deep listening, adaptive leadership, sense-making, strategic planning, and foresight), gender and diversity inclusion, publication of knowledge products and similar. The evaluation of the bids was completed in October and the selected vendor was Ove Arup in a consortium with Climate KIC and TalTech (Tallinn University, Institute of Technology). Arup and partners began an initial review of phase 1 documents at the end of the year. Full implementation of the review and piloting of the new methodology will begin in 2022.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

• This was a relatively complex procurement of services for the duration of the project timeline, hence additional time was spent on devising the announcement, the technical evaluation of bids, and contract negotiations.

Changes introduced

• The procurement process was combined for the review of LEDP, Urban Learning Center/ Programme, and knowledge products.

Achievements (vis-à-vis indicators if relevant)

• Service providers with strong international and relevant experience, including working directly with local authorities in Europe and beyond on urban transformations, are on board for designing a new LEDP concept and methodology and its piloting in 2022. The initial review of existing LEDPs and frameworks was conducted by Arup. A work plan and timeline for full implementation in 2022 are in place.

Activity 1.1.3 on Portfolio development

The portfolio journey for local authorities focuses on creating a responsive, resilient, and sustainable local space where the city or town will have increased economic opportunities and create a vibrant community in various and compact forms with an embracing mindset. A minimum of **12 local authorities** will roll out the portfolio approach and implement a total of **50 pilot initiatives** over the next three years of the project. The selected municipalities will go through an iterative portfolio cycle that starts with an initial 6-month design process and implement their portfolios with the funds under the Annual Portfolio Calls. After the first design and activation, each municipality will manage its portfolio through dynamic management and design iterations to continually learn and develop insights that will feed into the city or town development as well as policy recommendations. Throughout the process, the portfolio design and management will be supported with community engagement that includes active social listening and portfolio dialogues to engage wider stakeholders and their voices in the portfolio journey. The first cohort in 2022 will consist of 6 local authorities from Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia to be selected by the EU and UNDP through a transparent selection process (as stipulated in the CfP Guidance Document devised) and go through the first portfolio cycle.

The portfolio journey will apply the **Agora Framework**, an urban transformation framework - developed together with UNDP and Chora Foundation, to provide timely and cutting-edge policy-making advisory services and tools to manage complexity and resolve uncertainty in the city-systems focusing on the region of Europe and Central Asia[8]. Agora provides a set of design tools and intelligence about the city systems and can be applied to different urban contexts to accelerate portfolio design processes.

Under the M4EG, Agora will be adapted to the context in the EaP countries and aligned with the overall **Urban Makeover** concept of the M4EG. The portfolio journey will utilize the six main design components of the framework to apply systems thinking and build a coherent portfolio of development options for each city or town acknowledging their complex challenges and needs.

The portfolio journey started in late 2021 by assessing the EaP context through trend analysis and stakeholder mapping. Prior to the selection of the local authorities, the UNDP IRH team ran two intensive internal **learning programmes** for the UNDP country offices and EU delegation colleagues on the main principles of systems thinking and portfolio approach (Induction on Portfolio Thinking for the M4EG Facility – read learning blogs on this journey **here**) and portfolio design and management tools and methodologies (M4EG Portfolio Onboarding Sessions – see the Miro learning board **here**).

Induction on Portfolio Thinking for the M4EG Facility and **M4EG Portfolio Onboarding Sessions** were both designed and implemented for the UNDP and EU Delegation colleagues to introduce the why, what, and how of portfolio approach under the new M4EG Facility project. Induction on Portfolio Thinking was carried out as a series of lightweight training to support colleagues in portfolio projects with an introductory understanding of relevant topics such as systems thinking, organizational mindset shifts, why urban transformation portfolios, and different forms of portfolio management. Over the course of six different training sessions, we had a series of talks by system thinkers, portfolio managers, and external speakers followed by discussions and practical exercises to apply learnings.

Whereas the induction sessions were introductory sessions of the portfolio thinking and the topic, the onboarding sessions were more hands-on training sessions that exposed colleagues to test out the tools in the actual portfolio process. Onboarding modules consisted of seven different sessions that explored the cross-cutting M4EG theme of Urban Makeover, portfolio process, future trends, and portfolio MEL framework.

By piggybacking on an existing Long-term Agreement that UNDP has with four providers on strategic innovation and system transformation, the Chora Foundation was selected through a competitive secondary-bidding process. Chora will be the **partner** for steering the first cohort of six local authorities through the portfolio journey in 2022.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

· The onboarding and setup process at the regional and country level required additional time to be completed. Selection of municipalities was conducted at the end of 2021 and 2022, which pushed portfolio design in 2021.

Changes introduced

· Due to high level of interest from local authorities, the team in consultation with the EU, took on board 6 municipalities for the first year on the portfolio cohort instead of 4 that were planned, and decided to take additional 6 cities in 2022.

Achievements (vis-à-vis indicators if relevant)

· Training and onboarding materials were developed and tested out during the second and third quarter of 2021, which will expedite portfolio development. This will enable meeting the targets for portfolio cities by end of 2022 (instead of 2023).

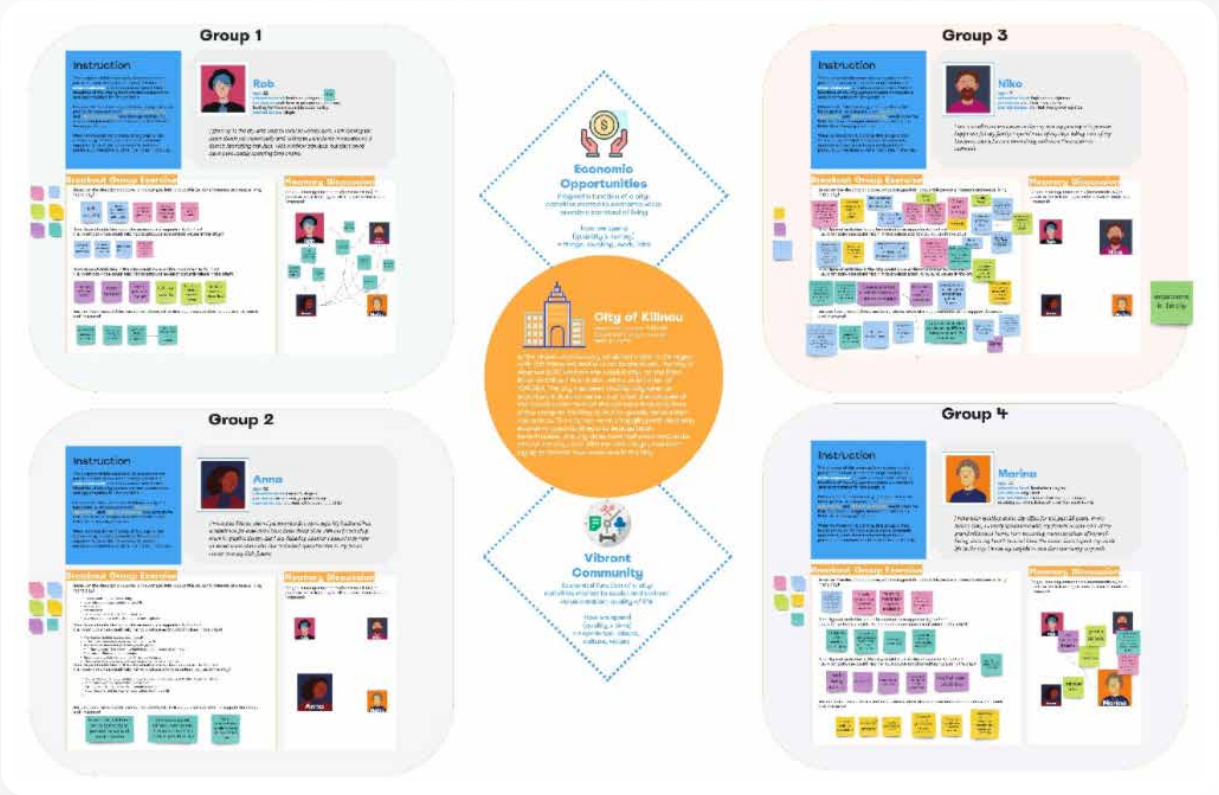


Figure 1 The first module of the Onboarding Sessions focused on exploring different identities and their needs and interactions in the imaginative city of Kilinau.

Figure 2 Illustration of the Portfolio Journey for the selected local authorities.

1.1.3.1 Criteria and guidelines development for selection of municipalities

Portfolio development was initiated with drafting and finalizing the criteria and guideline development for the selection of municipalities (shared as appendix to the M4EG 2021 Mid-Year Brief). An internal Selection Process Evaluation Guide was developed to support the selection process. It was decided with the EU that 4-6 local authorities will be selected for the first cohort.

An international consultant, Sean Dillon Lockie, the then Director and Head of the Urban Transitions and Cities Programme at the **Climate KIC Foundation**, was recruited to lead this work. A desk study on existing innovation funds criteria was conducted, and an initial workshop with UNDP offices (20 pax) on criteria setting was conducted. The criteria were kept light but focused and entailed inter alia a clear commitment to testing new approaches and an open mindset and capacity to do innovation; demonstration of collaborative and inclusive work, including with civil society and residents; consideration and commitment to gender equality aspects; and evidence of positive impact in a previous urban or other relevant development projects or initiatives.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

- NA

Changes introduced

- NA

Achievements

- A Guidance Document for applicants and corresponding guidance for selection was successfully devised, translated to the national languages, and used in the process for selection of municipalities to be a part of the innovation call and the portfolio call.

1.1.3.0 Launch of a call for interest for all municipalities

The Call for Interest Guidance Note for "Portfolios for municipal transformations" under the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Facility 2021-2024 and its eligibility criteria were translated to the national languages, and the CfI was launched at different times depending on the country context. As the M4EG combines the more traditional small grant approach with strong learning and capability building components on system thinking, it was necessary to ensure readily available communication materials and the like to better explain what was meant with the "portfolio journey" and "urban imaginaries". Each country held info sessions on the CfI before their individual country deadline for applications. Local authorities that were active members in Phase 1 were eligible to apply for this first cohort (same LAs that were eligible to apply for the EU's M4EG CfP). As per the Guidance Note developed, the application process included an online application, interviews or meetings with shortlisted candidates, and final endorsement of a **Selection Committee** consisting of senior colleagues at DG NEAR and UNDP Istanbul/Brussels. The Selection Committee met on 3 December 2021 and selected four local authorities from the application process of Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine. More information per country can be found below.

Ukraine was the first country to launch the CfI. Prior to announcing, the pre-developed detailed Guidelines for applicants were translated into Ukrainian and an online applications form was developed, which allowed organizing the process effectively in the later stages considering the big numbers of potential applicants. The initial information about the CfI was provided to the M4EG signatories at the National kick-off event conducted on 30 June 2021. The Call itself was announced on 23 July 2021 (with a deadline on 31 August 2021) for 120 municipalities/territorial communities with active membership status at end of phase 1.

Questions and requests for clarifications on different aspects of the CfI and application process were collected from the municipalities invited for the Call, grouped by substance, and addressed during an online info-session, which was organized to present the CfI and answer the questions of potential applicants on 16 July 2021. This approach proved efficient and allowed to address frequently asked questions during the online session and to prepare a Questions & Answers document, which was shared with the municipalities invited to apply.

By the deadline of 31 August 2021, 52 applications were received from eligible applicants, which were reviewed and scored during September 2021. 12 were shortlisted, out of which 5 were recommended for interviews. The series of interviews were conducted jointly with the IRH team and EUD to Ukraine in October 2021. Based on the results of the selection and taking into consideration a variety of factors, including the municipality's size and geographical location, economic profile and challenges faced, demonstrated will and confirmed commitment, as well as related risks, two pre-selected municipalities (Mykolaiv and Ternopil) were recommended for piloting the Portfolio Approach, while other shortlisted municipalities were recommended for Innovation Mentoring/Call. It was also noticed that the **municipality of Lviv** demonstrated a good understanding of applying a cross-sectoral approach to issues within the municipality. Therefore, Lviv can play a special role in the M4EG initiative as a "champion" or mentor to other members of the network and can be an inspirational example for other municipalities and help to demonstrate the power of the systemic approach to urban development.

Photo 1 Interview with Lviv City for Portfolio Journey & Innovation Mentoring/Grants

Armenia

The CfI was announced on 10 August 2021 for the 27 eligible signatories. Two online info sessions were organized to present the call details and answer related questions, simultaneously a Questions & Answers document was developed and disseminated among the signatories. By the deadline of 20 September 2021, 16 applications were received. The Review Panel scored all the applications and shortlisted 8 for interviews, which took place during October of 2021. Most of the interviews were conducted face to face by visiting the local authorities. Two communities were recommended for the Portfolio Approach and four for the Innovation Mentoring and Grants.

Moldova

The CfI was launched on 27 September. The M4EG initiative's official launch in Moldova on 5 October was utilized to promote the call for interest, where an online info session was organized back-to-back with the launch. By the deadline of 25 October, 12 LA had applied, and one LA was proposed for the Portfolio Approach, while two for the Innovation Mentoring/Grant, after a diligent selection process involving interviews held in cooperation with representatives of the EU Delegation in Moldova. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the launch, info session, and subsequent interviews as part of the call were held online.

On 22 December, UNDP and the EU Delegation in Moldova organized a join event to award the localities selected under the M4EG: a) EU's CfP pilot projects b) Call for Portfolios for Municipal Transformation, and c) Innovation Mentoring & Grants Cohort 2022.

Georgia

The new phase of the M4EG was launched on 21 July 2021 and presented the new M4EG facility to the local authorities and key stakeholders. The hybrid event hosted 75 participants, which learned about the planned activities and new opportunities envisaged within the new phase. As a result, seven new members joined the network. It was originally planned to initiate the CfI immediately after the launch, however, due to the tense political situation since the 2020 parliamentary elections, and the forthcoming pre-election campaign of the Local Elections, it was decided to postpone the call after the local election in October 2021.

The CfI was announced on 15 November for the 48 eligible signatories until 20 December 2021, allowing potential candidates some five weeks to prepare applications. Four information sessions were conducted altogether. One online session took place on 29 November 2021 for all eligible interested candidates. Three in-person info meetings were organized on:

(1) 24 November for municipalities from Easter Georgia (Tbilisi and 20 municipalities from 5 regions: Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Kakheti and Samtskhe-Javakheti).

(2) 6 December for 17 signatories from Imereti and Adjara.

(3) 7 December 2021 for 10 signatories from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti.

The mayors and/or Deputies and Local Economic Development focal points attended the meetings. The offline and in-person meetings resulted in applicants' high activity rate (77%), as eventually 37 out of 48 municipalities applied. This result represents clear evidence of Georgian municipalities' high interest and willingness to engage in the M4EG facility, and the good use of face-to-face meetings to better explain and share the intention and system thinking approach of the new phase. The selected process of the LAs in Georgia will be carried out in January 2022.

Photo 2 Joint EU&UNDP award event on 22 December in Chisinau.

Photo 3 M4EG Signatories selected for the EU's CfP in Moldova

Photo 4 Info Session for CfI in Tbilisi for M4EG members

List of endorsed municipalities by Selection Committee on 3 December 2021 for Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine:

Portfolios for Municipal Transformations

Local Authority	Country	Population
Areni	Armenia	11,309
Ceadîr-Lunga	Moldova	19,401 (2014)
Mykolaiv	Ukraine	474,751
Ternopil	Ukraine	224,134

Innovation Grants: Urban Makeover

Local Authority	Country	Population
Alaverdi	Armenia	24,262
Ashtarak	Armenia	25,000
Charentsavan	Armenia	20,363
Cahul	Moldova	30,018 (2014)
Călărași	Moldova	10,800 (2014)
Lviv	Ukraine	717,486
Trostianets	Ukraine	20,638
Sumy	Ukraine	258,057
Melitopol	Ukraine	153,112
Poltava	Ukraine	283,037

For an overview of the local authorities that so far have been selected for **1)** EU's CfP, **2)** Portfolio Journey, **3)** Urban Imaginaries (innovation mentoring and grant), please see this link or click on the below map image.

Difficulties encountered, risks, and measures taken

Georgia

Although the project was launched in July 2022, as described above, it was decided to postpone the launch of the CfI until after the local elections on 2 October. The reasoning for this decision was first to ensure higher interest and eventually buy-in from the newly elected Mayors, and secondly was a potential lack of capacity of LAsto fully engage in the application process, as all resources were likely to be focused on the upcoming elections. The Local Elections took place on 2 October 2021 and the second-round elections were scheduled in 20 municipalities on 30 October 2021. The subsequent weeks saw the formation of the new Mayors' offices.

Ukraine

The recent decentralization reform (the administrative part of which was essentially completed after local elections that took place in the second half of 2020) affected municipalities across the country, including the M4EG signatories. The communities' amalgamation and subsequent change of their area/population, as well as new leadership, many that were not previously involved in the previous phase of M4EG, required more efforts for outreach and time to engage. The new leadership may also provide new opportunities and interests, including piloting new approaches while supporting the transformations in the amalgamated/extended communities. The CfI in Ukraine also had its specificities given the relatively large number of potential applicants and size of the country, which required efficient virtual communications, including through social media platforms.

Armenia

The Portfolio Call timeframes coincided with the Territorial Administration reform and community amalgamation processes, where new administrative units were formed followed by local municipal elections. This overlap appears to have affected the motivation of the local authorities to apply for the call. Most of the signatories which were going through the amalgamation process during Fall 2021 decided not to apply because of the expected leadership change as the result of the local elections. The most common explanation from representatives of these local authorities was: "we cannot make any commitment for which we would not be responsible in a couple of months; we would rather wait for the upcoming elections, have the new Mayor and Community Council elected, and them taking the responsibility for any new initiative." Some of the signatory communities were still going through a post-election turbulent process in the months after the local elections.

Moldova

The administrative-territorial structure of the Republic of Moldova remains fragmented, and it is currently brought back to the forefront of priorities for the upcoming years. With a population of less than 3 million, the country has 898 town halls, 32 districts, and an autonomous territorial unit. Although the minimum threshold allowed by law for the formation of an administrative-territorial unit is 1,500 inhabitants, at least one-third of the administrative-territorial units no longer meet this criterion. At the same time, 9 out of 10 administrative-territorial units have a population of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants based on the 2014 census. This has been analyzed in several studies and policy papers and discussed on various platforms over the last 10 years, arguably without producing results. The M4EG facility in Moldova must be forthlooking and anticipate administrative changes that will affect local public authorities. The initiative will strive to consolidate capacities in identified regional/local leaders most likely to undertake administrative control over smaller localities in the eventuality of a reform.

Changes introduced

Azerbaijan

Due to a relatively low number of signatories in phase 1, and after discussions between the EUD and UNDP CO, a joint proposal was put forward to relaunch the signatory process in the 1st Quarter of 2022 to a larger set of local authorities and hence re-boot the membership base. The proposal was agreed to by DG NEAR & UNDP IRH in the fall of 2021. The CfI will be announced in spring 2022 and will be opened to all the new local authorities that have signed up for the initiative.

• For time and resource efficiency, it was jointly decided with DG NEAR in fall 2021 that for the Innovation Call for Proposal (see more information below under Output 2) to piggyback on the selection process of the Portfolio Approach/Journey. Hence, in its meeting on 3 December, the Selection Committee selected 10 local authorities from Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine to take part in the first cohort of the Innovation Mentoring & Grants - Urban Imaginaries cohort.

Achievements

• The first four (of a total of 12) local authorities were selected for the design, activation, and management of the portfolio approach, also known as the 'Portfolio Journey'. The Georgia selection will take place in January 2022.

• The CfI saw high interest from eligible local authorities, with a total of 117 applying for the CfI in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. As the new phase of the M4EG introduces new terms and approaches around system thinking, additional information meetings and documents were found helpful to better guide and boost interest within the country networks.

• The active participation of EUD focal points in the CfI selection process was found to be a good practice, as it helped ensure a more objective assessment of the shortlisted applicants and can help ensure that the resources allocated under M4EG are applied effectively and can synergize rather than duplicate other support provided by the EU in the Eastern Partnership countries.

1.1.3.2 Tool for social listening (development, translation, roll-out, maintenance)

Deep listening and community engagement practices are key to the design and an adaptive management of a portfolio. A community engagement framework and a social listening toolkit are expected to benefit both the municipalities in the portfolio journey as well as the wider city or town network in their planning efforts to capture a wide range of different voices and narratives in the urban or local systems.

In 2021, UNDP scanned possible partners and carried out outreach and in-house discussions to explore possible approaches on how to best build this into the Portfolio Journey and the forthcoming Urban Learning Center. As deep listening goes beyond traditional stakeholder engagement, it became evident that outside resources and in-house capabilities needed to be further strengthened, as foreseen in the original budget.

Consequently, a part-time Foresight and Social Listening Specialist will be recruited in early 2022, and a procurement process to bring on board a partner for the following two objectives will be initiated in early 2022:

• a deep community engagement framework and deep listening toolkit for the wider group of municipalities for a continuous community engagement and integration of the engagement tools in their daily work.

• to facilitate a learning-by-doing capability development for the wider group of municipalities to apply the engagement framework and deep listening tools in their local context to ensure the long-term sustainability of the provided methodology.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

• As the extended scope of this community engagement is relatively new in traditional development practice, additional time was used on exploring possible partners and avenues of implementation and hence no procurement process was launched in 2021. In the meantime, the partner recruited for the Portfolio Journey, the Chora Foundation, along with the M4EG team members, added stakeholder engagement components into the existing Agora Framework/Portfolio Journey process.

Changes introduced

• The soon-to-be-launched Foresight and Social Listening Specialist recruitment will be a part-time and home-based position. This addition is within the original budget heading of such support.

Achievements

• NA. Agreement, including with DG NEAR, on the process forward for 2022.

1.1.3.3 System analysis and representation (visual) for municipalities

To begin in 2022 as part of the design of the portfolio in the selected local authorities, the selected LAs and project team support are taking the following steps to unpack the complex challenges of local municipalities and explore and build portfolio interventions.

The first cohort of six LAs will map out the stakeholders and build local municipality profiles to unpack the complex urban system, followed by the municipality sensemaking workshop to scope out key actors, the role of the municipality (identity) and why we want to build a portfolio and which transformative effects the municipality would like to see (intent) using the Agora Framework. In addition to the system context analysis, this phase includes social listening and foresight analysis in parallel to better understand the different voices and narratives of the stakeholders and mental models about possible futures.

Through consolidating the **findings of system context analysis, social listening, and foresight analysis**, the team will apply these insights into building a **system canvas**, a hypothetical 3D model to provide a visual representation of the complex system. The canvas will serve as our basis to help identify areas of interest, which acts as a magnifying lens to identify key interactions and dynamics that are relevant to economic opportunities and vibrant communities to build strategic entry points or positions. All these outcomes (canvas, areas of interest, and positions) will be captured in a visual representation of the system to guide the portfolio ideation that would serve as learning options for the portfolio. The work will be carried out by the local authorities with the support from Chora and UNDP and executed during the Jan-April 2022 with the Cohort 1.

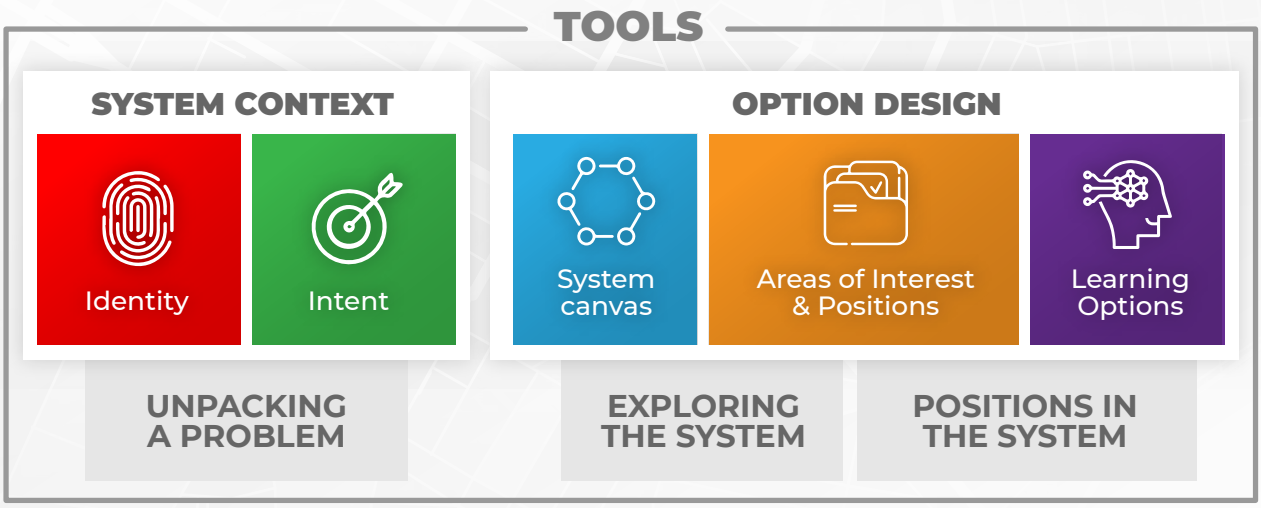


Figure 3 The portfolio design process is estimated to take six months during the first round. The municipality may use and explore tools such as system canvas, areas of interest, city personas, and identifying strategic positions. UNDP and partners will support the municipality with a mix of learning sessions on how to unpack a systemic challenge in urban system context, as well as how to explore and design a portfolio of options utilizing the mentioned tools. The process will be adapted based on what emerges throughout the journey, hence each municipality may have its unique journey.

1.1.3.4 Portfolio Ideation (multi-stakeholder workshops, research)

To continue the portfolio process from the system analysis and representation, portfolio ideation will be carried out as a follow-up to ideate and implement selected learning options for the portfolio at the beginning of April 2022.

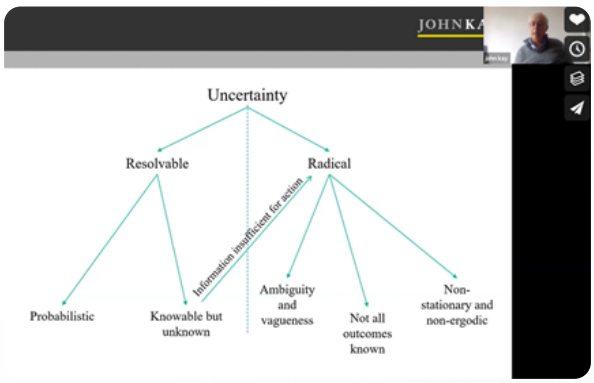
As the system analysis and representation of municipalities of the portfolio process will have multi-layered engagements to guide the LA teams' thinking of the portfolio, the municipality will start ideating and implementing the learning options from the identified positions, or strategic entry points. As each of the municipality portfolios is designed to provide actionable intelligence and policy recommendations for the complex challenges, each option will be a **learning option**, carefully ideated and procured to fit the context and give valuable insights to create economic opportunities and viable communities. Therefore, ideating options will be initiated by a **reconnaissance** (in-depth research and horizon scanning to get inspirations), setting up **design blueprints for possible activities**, and multi-stakeholder workshops at the local level to design, procure and implement pilot initiatives that are contextualized to test out new approaches into the existing complex challenges. We foresee that the portfolio ideation will start by the end of April 2022, followed by the system analysis and the representation, and are expected to complete the portfolio ideation by August 2022 with an aim to activate the first set of interventions in June 2022.

Activity 1.2.1 Annual Forum

An Internal Launch with the relevant EU and UNDP offices was held on 30 April 2021 with close to 90 participants from EU and UNDP offices in the EaP and beyond. Professor and well-renowned British economist John Kay was the key speaker of the internal launch (recording can be accessed **here**). John Kay presented ideas from his most recent book with Mervyn King, "Radical Uncertainty", points to the shortcomings of economic modeling and theories in a world in constant flux and where optimal solutions rarely exists and when they do are far too demanding for our imagination to be found. Hence, decision makers are faced with radical uncertainty, and the authors argue for disciplined pluralism: "a system that encourages lots of experimentation. It cuts off experiments that fail, and experiments that succeed are rapidly imitated."

In 2021, the annual forum was divided into two virtual events, one joint EU and UNDP internal event and one external event with the members of the M4EG network.

The **Joint EU-UNDP Partner Forum: Embracing complexity in economic development, and its implications** was held on 28 October (**recording link**). The purpose of the forum was to continue to have a shared space between EU and UNDP on learning about system transformation, bridging theory and practice. The event brought together a total of eight diverse practitioners and thinkers working on complexity and system transformation, with close to 130 EU and UNDP colleagues online. The first discussion focused on how change happens and was represented by leaders from various sectors, including the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia, while the second panel discussed the practice and examples of working on system transformation. Following the event, the EU and UNDP issued a joint **press statement** on the shared intent to work in complexity.



The **2021 Virtual Forum on Urban Transformation** focused on system transformation in urban settings and working in complexity throughout the European Partnership region (**recording link**). Jointly organized by the EU and UNDP, it was the first public forum under the new phase of the M4EG and brought together a large and diverse group of municipalities, research institutions, and others for a dialogue on how to radically change cities and towns to become more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable. The forum showcased emergent practice on urban transformation among the M4EG network of municipalities as well as the civic and private sector. A total of 120 representatives from local authorities, other partners, EU and UNDP participated in the live open event. A **press release** followed the event, and key nuggets of information and full video recording of interviews of two urban experts can be found **here**.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

• Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the forum was moved online.

Changes introduced

• NA

Achievements

• Two virtual events were successfully conducted. The internal EU&UNDP continued the discussion on working in complexity with a diverse set of speakers. These dialogues continue to highlight the speed of change and the need for development institutions to adapt their ways of working to allow for testing and discovery while maintaining a high level of rigor.

• The first public M4EG event under the new phase kicked off a promising dialogue on how to radically change cities and towns to become more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable, and showcased examples to this end.

Photo 5 Virtual Forum on Urban Transformations

Activity 1.2.2 Urban Learning Center

The procurement process for a service provider for the Urban Learning Center and its learning programme was combined with the procurement process of the new methodology for the Local Economic Development Plans.
The successful bidder was Ove Arup in consortium with Climate-KIC and TalTech. Devising the programme will begin in quarter one of 2022, and the Center will be hosted on the new M4EG website.

The Urban Learning Center will be available to all members of the M4EG network. The Programme will offer resources and training opportunities both online and off-line and may include inter alia:

• How to develop/adapt your LEDP – online and hybrid component and pilot the new methodology with a selected number of municipalities.

• Possible areas of capability development:

Strategy and foresight

Innovative methods (deep listening, sensemaking, etc.)

Leadership

Adaptive and agile management

Learning & monitoring and evaluation

Gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive & SDG budgeting

The Center aims to connect with practical experiences from successful transformation cases, such as the Basque region, Vienna, Scotland, etc., and as such it may enable and enhance networking between M4EG Facility and European and global networks of cities working on urban and local transformations.

The Center intends to ensure synergies with other activities and partners under the M4EG Facility. There will be regular online exchanges between local authorities - facilitating one-to-one conversations, creating fluid groups at the local level for online engagement to support change. The Urban Learning Center has a strong intention to promote the equal participation and representation of women, and groups made marginalized, in the conversations taking place on the platform.

Armenia workshop on 'rethinking local economic development'

To kick start the national network and mechanism under the new phase (described under activity 1.2.3), the Armenia Secretariat carried out a workshop on "Rethinking Local Economic Development" with the national network members on 21 and 22 December 2021. The Workshop aimed at engaging and networking with the M4EG members in the first substantive discussion in the second phase of the M4EG led by UNDP, including identifying interests, and reflections from phase 1. The Workshop reflected on accumulated experience and existing perceptions around local development challenges, the role of local authorities, and sought to inspire members to actively partake in phase 2 and readiness to test new approaches. System Thinking and Design concepts were introduced to the Workshop participants to develop inspiration for Phase 2 engagement.

Simultaneously, understanding of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and their linkage to local development was increased among the local authorities. In total 39 in-persons and 5 online representatives (out of which 22 Women and 22 Men) from 24 M4EG members participated in the Workshops[9]. The workshop participants were either the Local Economic Development Officers or other colleagues from the local administrations involved in community development planning and execution. *"At the workshop I realized why most of our previous community development efforts were not producing sustainable results. It's because we were trying to address complex issues with technical solutions. On the other hand, I now realize more clearly how our development efforts at the local level are interconnected with the Global Development challenges and agenda. I look forward to learning more about Systemic Design and applying new innovative approaches to our community administration,"* said Ashot Tserunyan, Charentsavan community LEDO.

Activity 1.3.1 Platform development, regular publication, and maintenance

A website developer, NVISH, was brought on board to design the new M4EG website (**https://www.m4eg.eu/**). The design and content of the website began in 2021 and the new webpage is expected to be online at the end of quarter one of 2022. In the meantime, key updates and information were posted on the existing site.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

- NA

Changes introduced

- NA

Achievements (vis-à-vis indicators if relevant)

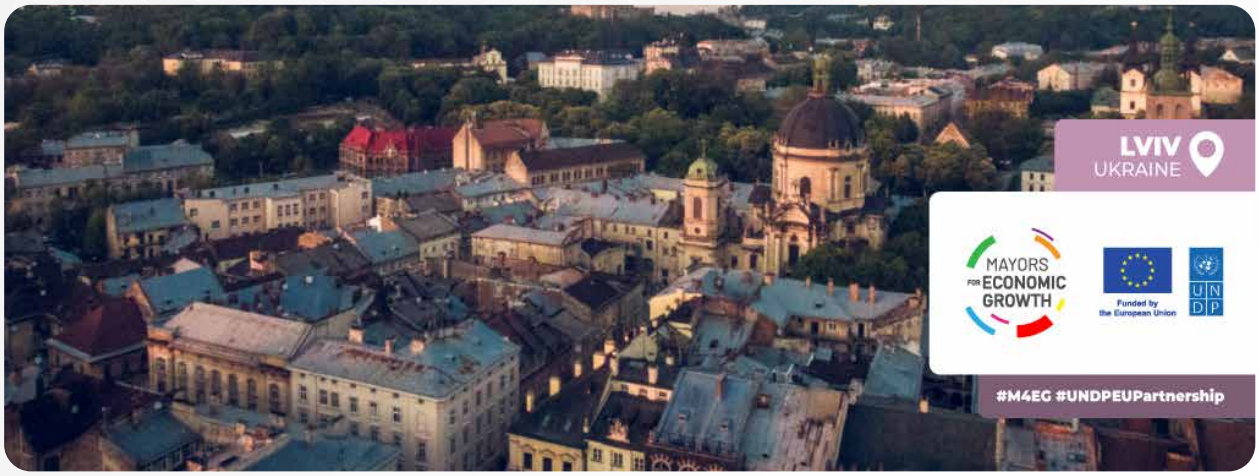
- The redesign of the website was initiated, and a new online version aligned with the new M4EG branding is expected at the beginning of Q2 in 2022.

Activity 1.3.2 National Consultations (strategic dialogues at the country level)

To revitalize the network, a revised M4EG Membership Form and General Principles of the M4EG Facility – Collaboration with Signatories (both shared in the 2021 Mid-Year Brief) were finalized and published in English on the **M4EG website**. The new documents were translated into national languages and distributed to the existing network. The existing members carried over their membership to the next phase of the initiative and had the option to re-commit through the new form. This also allowed for outreach to new possible members. UNDP (as host of the M4EG 'Secretariat' in each country) also reached out to the existing signatories to update the **Signatory/Member Files** (**example on existing web page**). The forthcoming web page will include an interactive map and information on all signatories.

The first phase of the M4EG introduced a hierarchy among members with 'junior' and 'active with excellence' status based on LEDP quality and its implementation and monitoring. Under the new phase with UNDP as secretariat, there will be no additional categorization beyond engaging in the 'broad' offer, available to all members (including a new methodology for LEDP and Urban Learning Programme), and 'deep'; members that are engaging in demonstration and capability building pilots and that were selected based on set criteria around capacity and willingness.

Relatedly, each national secretariat sought to establish a national mechanism to ensure relevance and strategic steer of the initiative at the country level. As noted in the Description of Action, the project will combine a bottom-up with a top-down approach to learning.
A non-binding, advisory **National Steering & Learning Mechanism** at the national level comprised of relevant local authorities, national associations of local authorities, external partners with expertise on system transformation, and relevant line ministries, is to be set up in the five implementing countries. These national mechanisms seek to enable learning on transformation, including the process of designing and implementing portfolios, to be shared across the different partners at the country level continuously, and to meet ideally physically at least once a year. As such, the national mechanism is a learning and validation platform, and not a decision-making body of the project. It is also of crucial importance that the national learning mechanism takes into account the normative lens of leaving no one behind, as a core principle and enabler for the 2030 Agenda. The national mechanisms will be supported by the respective UNDP Country Office. For more details on each national mechanism, its composition, and terms of reference, please reach out directly to the respective UNDP Country Office.



COUNTRY UPDATES

Armenia

By the end of Phase 1 of the M4EG, there were 27 signatories with active membership status (i.e., LEDP implementation and semiannual reporting on the progress). Before the official launch, the announcement for reconfirming acting membership status and signing up for not-active members was disseminated in August 2021, which was followed up by online consultations and individual conversations between UNDP and the LAs. As a result, 25 signatories re-confirmed their membership. Simultaneously, two new communities (Stepanavan and Noyemberyan) have signed up to M4EG. Thus, the total number of signatories in Armenia as of December 2021 is 27.

Given the flow of the National Local Administration Reform and related changes in both physical/geographical and administrative structures of the affected communities, 2021 was found not to be conducive for engaging new communities in the initiative. All the local communities/administrations affected by the reform were going through a local elections process, forming new Community Councils and local administration, and electing Mayors among the newly formed Councils. In some of the communities (both signatory as well as non-members), post-election turbulent processes are still felt. As the result of the Local Administration Reform, 78 local communities are formed in the country, each of which is a combination of urban and rural localities. (Yerevan is not affected by the reform and has a special status as the Capital.) In 2022, the Secretariat will actively engage the newly formed local administrations in M4EG's learning and networking activities. The Ministry of the Territorial administration might send an official note to the communities encouraging their engagement and membership. Simultaneously, individual and group meetings (both online and offline) would be held to present and discuss M4EG related details and potential benefits for the signatory communities.

Azerbaijan

As noted earlier in the report, EU and UNDP decided to re-boot the initiative in Azerbaijan through a new membership sign-up process. An informative letter on the M4EG was sent to the Head of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan in November 2021. A connection was established with the National Association of City Municipalities to increase the outreach and prepare the ground for additional signatories for the initiative. The national launch of the project is to be held in March 2022 with the CfI following thereafter in spring of 2022.

Georgia

During the first phase of the M4EG, 48 out of 64 municipalities became signatories. By the end of the first phase, 15 gained the acting with excellence status. All municipalities devised LEDPs mostly for the 2019-2020 timeframe. Some of these have updated the plans and endorsed them through local councils in 2021.

After introducing the new membership form and principles, all existing signatories from 10 regions confirmed their interest in maintaining membership. Seven new municipalities have joined the network. Several other municipalities have expressed their willingness to be part of the facility and communication with them is ongoing. Additional consultations with the new and potential members are needed in 2022.

In 2021 the draft Nation Steering Mechanism concept was developed. The mechanism will be composed of representatives of a diverse set of institutions, including the EUD, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG), Representative(s) of academia/think tanks, representation from M4EG members implementing innovation grants or other opportunities/initiatives, CSOs and private sector representatives, among others.

Moldova

As of December 2021, the M4EG had 38 members, some currently in the process of reconfirming their membership but engaged and interested. A national steering mechanism for the M4EG is currently being established in cooperation with the EUD . The mechanism will be comprised of a core group of representatives of the local authorities, national associations of local authorities, external partners with expertise on system transformation, and other relevant partners.

The launch event held in September of 2021 was attended by 65 participants and viewed over 400 times online. The focus in Moldovawill be on sustainable economic growth that creates more jobs and better income and contributes to improved living standards.

"The first phase of the facility involved more than 45 localities and resulted in the creation of a business incubator and several information centers, assisting overall 3000 beneficiaries. The second phase of the facility will provide funding opportunities for local authorities, to create their own "tailor-made" solutions and implement them in their localities, for the benefit of the citizens," said Jānis Mažeiks, European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

To reestablish the network the CO in partnership with the EUD will undertake visibility and outreach assignments in 2022. The first visibility opportunity will utilize the improved media coverage offered by the Europe Days events held in May as well as other opportunities. The CO team will secure a spot on the national media channel – Moldova 1 during one of the informative news programs aired at the time to promote initiative activities and successes. Additionally, the team intends to utilize other activities to be held during Europe Days as an opportunity to organize event promoting municipalities part of the facility with due consideration of the COVID-19 restrictions imposed at the national level. Lastly, in the fall of 2022, the CO team is considering an in-person event (*possibly a national annual forum) with high-level participation, similar to the one organized in December of 2021 to take stock of progress and promote the innovative approaches utilized in the pilot authorities.

Ukraine

At the end of the first phase of the initiative there were 186 signatories, including 120 with active membership status, and 66 with "junior" status (10 more signatories suspended their membership). All were reached out to when UNDP took over the secretariat function, including invitations to the national launch and information session on the CfI for Portfolio Journey. Considering the substantive changes in Ukraine's decentralization process taking place in between the two phases of the initiative, it was important to ensure that municipalities could make an informed decision to re-join the M4EG network with their current leadership, which was either re-elected or newly elected. Therefore, a process of membership re-confirmation was initiated among the "old" signatories. In parallel, the invitation for joining the network was disseminated among the other potential members through UNDP's country-wide partnership network, as well as EUD channels.

As of the end of 2021, 121 of the M4EG "old" signatories re-confirmed their membership by submitting a duly signed letter of confirmation, and 23 new municipalities/territorial communities submitted their requests for joining the network. By the end of December 2021, 102 of them provided all required information by filling in the Signatory Form, while others are in the process of completing the information. At the beginning of 2022, the country team will make special efforts towards extending the M4EG network by reaching out to both "old" signatories, that still have not re-confirmed their membership, and engaging new municipalities by presenting and explaining to them the opportunities provided under the M4EG initiative.

Photo 6
Moldova Launch,
the EU Ambassador to Moldova

The concept of the National Steering Mechanism (NSM) was developed in consultations with EUD colleagues, which is tentatively agreed upon and will be operationalized within the next reporting period. The composition of NSM will include up to 12 institutions and their representatives (which may rotate), invited to be part of the mechanism till the end of the initiative. The key institutions included in NSM are the line ministries (e.g., Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories, Ministry of Economy, Ministry for Digital Transformation), associations of local authorities (e.g., Association of Ukrainian Cities, All-Ukrainian Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities, etc.).

The M4EG key government partner in Ukraine – the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories (MinRegion) – was reached with a proposal to become an official initiative beneficiary. The initiative was presented in detail to the Ministry's officials responsible for regional policy development and implementation (including at the level of municipalities), and ways of further close cooperation were discussed and preliminarily agreed upon.
In the next reporting period, the country team will follow up to formalize these relations.
The close engagement of the MinRegion is important for the initiative, as it can be essential for promoting the new approach to local economic development planning (LEDP 2.0) and linking it to the state regional development policy implementation and a new 3-level strategic planning system (national/sub-national/local).

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

• Most country secretariats asked signatories from phase 1 of the M4EG to re-commit to the new concept of the M4EG, with re-submitting Membership Form and corresponding principles. This was an administrative and communication task that took considerable efforts in some cases, especially where local elections or administrative reforms had taken place and where new Mayors and or focal points (including the Local Economic Development Officers) from phase 1 had been replaced. This was however a necessary and effective step to introduce the new phase and its objectives and approaches, as well as UNDP as the new secretariat for the initiative.

Changes introduced

• NA

Achievements (vis-à-vis indicators if relevant)

• With the exception of Azerbaijan, the country networks in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were re-established through national launches, info meetings, communication, and outreach.

• The four national launches reached a minimum of 50,000 people in the Eastern Partnership countries (please see media monitoring report in the communication section).

OUTPUT 2:
MUNICIPAL PILOT PROJECTS BUILDING ON EXISTING LEDPS ARE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED

This output will ensure that local authorities have active and dynamically managed portfolios. The portfolios will be designed as an implementing arm of the LEDPs. Output 2 will build on the technical assistance provided under Output 1 for the implementation of LEDPs in complex systems and enabling transformation at the local level in line with the green agenda. This output will support investment, dynamic management, and the generation of insights from the projects.

The portfolio approach will be implemented through the funding schemes and the iterative Listening - Sense-Making - Co-Creation process. 70% (approx. 50 options/grants/interventions) of the funds will be channeled to a subset of local authorities to ensure scale and demonstrate the impact of the approach, while the remaining 30% will be available for small-scale investments across the region (approx. 20 grants).

Activity 2.1.1 Renewal Fund Development (Criteria & Guidance)

As described under activity 1.1.3.1, the criteria and guidelines development for the selection of municipalities for Portfolio was developed in 2021, and the selection of the first cohort of local authorities for the Portfolio Journey was conducted in December 2021. Hence began a stakeholder engagement and portfolio design phase. Together with Chora Foundation, UNDP will in early 2022 design a detailed guideline for which of the proposed options will receive financing. While keeping in line with UNDP policies, the team intends to design a disbursement mechanism that is based on the learning and performance of the portfolio. DG NEAR c1 will be closely consulted in the process. Each local authority part of the Portfolio Journey may access approximately EUR 225,000 over the next 2 years.

To recall, the Description of Action of the project calls for "an annual Mayors for Economic Growth Innovation Projects call open to all local authorities that are a part of the Mayors for Economic Growth Facility network."[10] It was agreed with DG NEAR c1 that instead of carrying out a one-off call for proposals in a transactional manner, the first step would be to bring interested local authorities into a learning cohort that would allow for more co-creation of interventions from the onset.

This "Urban Imaginaries" 2022 cohort is designed to support small initiatives that seek to reimagine or reinvent key aspects of urban living. Funding and technical support will go to interventions that can help transform the larger urban context and become catalysts for an urban make-over.

Urban make-over focuses on creating a responsive, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities with continuously increasing economic opportunities and vibrant social living. There are five focus areas identified: individual, home/community, work, city, knowledge.

In 2022, roughly 15 municipalities from the M4EG network will be provided with innovation mentorship to design impactful solutions to their local challenges. 7-10 of them will also be supported through a grant (up to 60,000 EUR) and mentorship over the implementation period of no longer than 12 months. The **Center for Public Impact** was brought on board to support this work stream in 2022. There will be two consecutive calls under Urban Imaginaries in 2022 and 2023.

As noted under activity 1.1.3.0, the call for interest for innovation grants/urban mentorship was in 2021 combined with the selection process of Portfolio Journey.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken

• NA

Changes introduced

• Important to note that considering the adaptive approach applied in the Portfolio Journey where each local authority selected may operate at different speeds and contexts, the allocation of portfolio funds would be more suitable and feasible on a more ad hoc basis, yet transparent and with a clear set of criteria.

• Urban Imaginaries Mentoring was introduced as described above.

Achievements (vis-à-vis indicators if relevant)

• Criteria and Guideline documents for selection of local authorities for a) Portfolio Journey and b) Urban Imaginaries mentoring was devised, where 4 local authorities were selected for the former, and 10 for the latter. Selection of LAs in Georgia and Azerbaijan will take place in 2022.

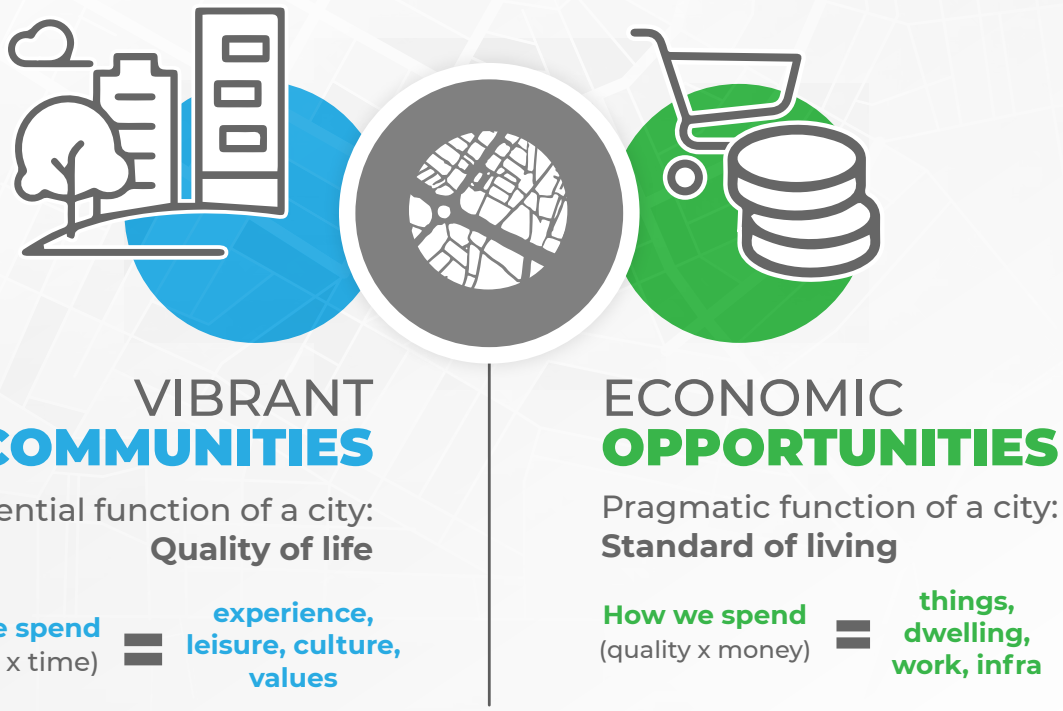


Figure 4 The Urban Makeover concept focuses on both the so-called hard and soft components of what makes a city or town attractive for its residents and visitors.

Activity 2.1.2 Portfolio Activation

This activity will begin in 2022.

Once the learning options (i.e., proposed grants/activities) for the portfolio are developed, then the municipalities will select several different learning options to activate in the portfolio based on the feasibility and affordability. Since the options in the portfolio are designed to produce learning and deliver a problem-solving mechanism of the system, each option will be picked based on these specific criteria and be implemented for each cycle. The exact criteria for the release of the funds for the activation of the options will be developed with Chora foundation in early 2022.

The portfolio cycle will include iterations of portfolio design and activation, reflecting on the insights gathered from the sensemaking and community dialogues of each phase. The target number of portfolio iterations will be at least two complete cycles for selected municipalities, considering the time and resource constraints.

2.1.2.1 Dynamic management and seeding (sensemaking workshops, semi-annually in each city with a portfolio) & 2.1.2.2 Sensemaking - regional intelligence generation &

This activity will begin in 2022.

After the learning options of the portfolio are activated, the dynamic management model of the portfolio would be utilizing **UNDP's Portfolio Sensemaking and Accelerating Protocol** to extract insights from the activities and further develop both portfolio briefs for re-designing the portfolio options as well as policy briefs to support the development of transformative policies in the selected municipalities. Sensemaking sessions will occur twice a year to learn from each option (activities), extract insights, and develop the intelligence of the system.

Activity 2.1.3 M4EG: Annual Portfolio Call & M4EG Annual Innovation Projects Call

As described under activity 2.1.1 (renewal fund development), the process has been tweaked to begin as a call for interest for both Portfolio and Innovation rather than a call for proposal. This allows for additional capability development, co-creation, and learning prior to implementing the seed funds. The implementation of the funds will start in 2022.

Operational set-up of the M4EG initiative
The project is now fully operationalized. The UNDP IRH Regional Project Team is in place, and close to all country-level personnel are on board and or have been assigned to existing personnel. In 2021, a total of five national Project Coordinators were recruited as well as country level Project Associates (part time), and the following positions to support the technical input and coordination across the five implementing countries:

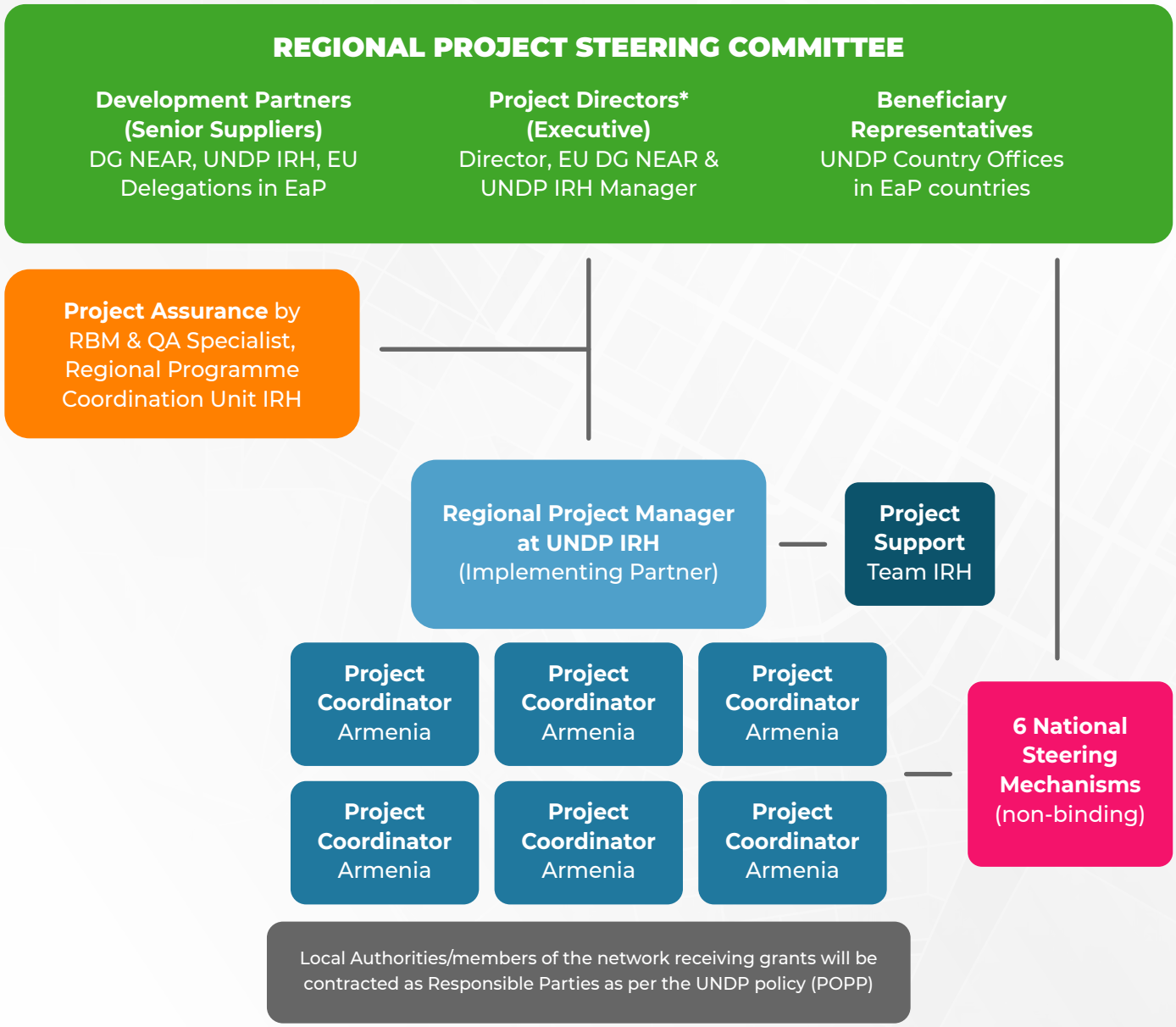
- **Regional Project Manager** (full-time)
- **Regional Project Associate** (full-time)
- **Strategic Designer** (part-time)
- **Learning Analyst** (part-time)
- **Communication Associate** (part-time)
- **Graphic Designer** (part-time)
- **Procurement Specialist** (part & short term for project start-up)

The UNDP Innovation Specialist/Adviser (part-time dedicated to initiative; cost-shared by UNDP) continues to provide technical leadership to the project.

In-country liaison with relevant governmental ministries as well as registration was ensured in the five implementing countries. No registration or implementation occurred in Belarus in 2021 as its membership to the Eastern Partnership is suspended.

As a result of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the involvement of Belarus recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU is further suspending planned and ongoing programmes and activities with the participation of Belarusian public authorities and state-owned enterprises. The EU will continue to step up its support to Belarusian civil society.

Project management set-up



*The Project Directors have set up a M4EG Selection Committee consisting of DG NEAR and UNDP IRH & Brussels that endorses the selection process carried out at the country level of local authorities to be engaged in mentoring and seed-funds. This is further described in the Call for Interest for Portfolio & Urban Imaginaries Guidance Notes.

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

MONITORING & LEARNING

MONITORING & LEARNING

2021 was the first year of implementation and hence a foundation year for the project where key building blocks were shaped. This entailed operationalizing the project by ensuring adequate human resources and procurement processes to bring onboard qualified personnel and providers; to re-establish the network of members at the country level; to selection the first cohort of local authorities that will take on and test the portfolio approach over the next years; and the operational and conceptual set-up of the two (renewal) funds: the Portfolio Journey and the Annual Innovation Call for M4EG members.

Implementation was shaped by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, with all regional meetings, workshops, and events kept online. Depending on national COVID-19 context and regulations, some events in-country were held in person. All engagement with technical experts was facilitated through virtual formats. Engaging local authorities virtually, requires new **digital skills**, and in some cases equipment, for all project team members and local authorities' representatives, and is identified as a specific risk in the updated Risk Matrix (Appendix 5).

#	Indicator / target	Target met (Y/N)	Comment
Output 1: EaP municipalities are adequately supported in their participation to the M4EG initiative			
1.1	10 more cities have signed up to the M4EG Facility	Yes	Total: 32 new members. 23 new members in Ukraine, 7 in Georgia, 2 new members in Armenia. Total re-committed or new members in 2021 are 264.
1.2	10 additional LEDPs formulated	No	As noted in the 2021 Mid-Year Brief, the Phase 1 conceptualization of the LEDPs will undergo substantial changes to better respond to the complex challenges faced by secondary cities in the EaP countries, and an updated concept and methodology will be offered to the M4EG members in 2022, to be piloted among a selected few for learning and adapting prior offered to all members. Target is realistically expected to be met in 2023.
1.3	30 additional staff/partners trained on innovative learning approaches, systems thinking, portfolio development (gender-dis-aggregated as a minimum)	Yes	44 LA representatives in Armenia (technical level) on rethinking local economic development through two 1-day workshops. 15 UNDP colleagues and 4 from EU delegations with increased understanding of portfolio/system thinking and its applicability through 17 internal learning sessions. A high number of LA representatives from Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova were introduced to concepts around system thinking through the 4 country launches, 2-4 information sessions on the CfI for Portfolio Journey per each country, and the regional Virtual Forum on 19 November.
1.4	10 knowledge exchange and networking events organized	Yes	External: 13 events/meetings Internal (EU&UNDP): 18 events/meetings 1 regional virtual forum to showcase emerging practice on transforming cities and towns in the European region (Nov 19.) 1 Internal Partners Forum between EU & UNDP, continuing the dialogue around embracing complexity in global development practice. As the new phase introduces a new way of working for development practitioners (moving from projects to portfolio practice), 17 internal sessions were conducted and offered to the core UNDP and EUD colleagues. Armenia: 1 national launch (hybrid), 2 1-day workshops for all LAs on rethinking LED. Georgia: 1 national launch (hybrid), 4 information and networking meetings organized as part of the CfI (1 online, 3 in person). Moldova: 1 virtual launch, 1 in-person event with the EUD to announce the winners of the EU's CfP, Portfolio Journey, and Innovation mentoring/grants. Ukraine: 1 national launch, 1 info session with LAs on the CfI for Portfolio (all virtually).
1.5	25 advocacy and outreach initiatives to increase awareness of citizens about EU support to local authori-ties in selected countries	Yes	53 advocacy and outreach initiatives to increase awareness were conducted (press releases by UNDP & EU, news pieces by local media, etc.). All activities mentioned EU and included both media pieces and UNDP and EU Delegations mutual products.
Output 1: EaP municipalities are adequately supported in their participation to the M4EG initiative			
2.2	5 small scale local level pilot projects on specific issues (e.g., innovation, gender equality)	No	As noted in the 2021 Mid-Year Brief, this target is delayed as the first cohort of both Portfolio Journey and Innovation Grants/Urban Imaginaries was selected in 2021 and consequently will undergo a design process that might take up to 6 months. Target is expected to be met during 2022.

Strengthening the LEARNING aspects of M&E
As noted in the 2021 Mid-Year Brief, the project team intends to complement the quantitative indicators above with qualitative methods, including pulse checks and close to real-time feedback loops among stakeholders to monitor perceptions and knowledge, capabilities, and possible behavior change. In addition to bringing innovation and stronger systems thinking into development programming, the project also provides an opportunity to test new configurations of **monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) functions**. Here, the project aims to experiment with the MEL principles presented in a recent thought piece by the Chora Foundation for UNDP.[11] See box to the side for more information on these principles.

A basic outline of **MEL framework for portfolios** has been identified and being further developed to ask on these three key properties of an effective portfolio, which are:

1. How emergent is the portfolio? E.g., what are emerging connections, interactions, and insights as a result of portfolio? (In both quantitative and qualitative measures of recorded number of interactions and assessments.)

2. How dynamic is the portfolio? E.g., does the portfolio communicate and function in a timely manner? (Frequencies and timespan of each portfolio options.)

3. How adaptive is the portfolio? E.g., based on the insights and intelligence from the emergent and dynamic properties of the portfolio, has the portfolio been perceptive and adaptive to these key learnings? (Decision-makings and evolvement of a portfolio throughout the cycle.)

The MEL framework for the 12 LAs going through the Portfolio Journey will feed into the overarching existing M&E framework of the project and be a key feature to measure both learning among the representatives from the local authorities and value addition of the portfolio approach.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Principles (MEL) for portfolios (simplified)

1
Embed MEL functions in implementation to enable quicker feedback loops

2
A (meta-level) question driven MEL to drive learning (beyond compliance)

3
Supplement numbers with qualitative documentation (narratives, storytelling)

4
A utilization-focused approach to evaluation where intended users of evaluation is empowered to design the 'how'

5
Visuospatial representation of portfolios for systemic observation of problem space

6
Starts small and not over-engineer the MEL system; be adaptive

7
Learn.

Update on risks and mitigation measures

Implementation was shaped by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, with all regional meetings, workshops, and events kept online. Depending on national COVID-19 context and regulations, some events in-country were held in person. All engagement with technical experts was facilitated through virtual formats. Engaging local authorities virtually, requires new **digital skills**, and in some cases equipment, for all project team members and local authorities' representatives, and is identified as a specific risk in the updated Risk Matrix (Appendix 6).

As described above under country updates, changes in the policy priorities at the local and national level due to turnover or reshuffling, including through **local elections**, hampered the kick-off and implementation start in some countries, including Georgia and Azerbaijan. The regional project team in close consultation with DG NEAR and relevant EU Delegation applies **flexibility and adaptability** to ensure the most effective roll out within country contexts. This led to inter alia the joint decision to re-launch the initiative in Azerbaijan in early 2022.

Though yet to materialize in the implementation, the cascading effect of COVID induced lockdown of the economy on central and local level public revenues and available human and fiscal capabilities continued to be underlined as a key risk going forward.

The updated Risk Matrix can be found in Appendix 6.

Partnerships and Sustainability

2021 was a foundation year for the project and a number of providers were brought on board to support the implementation in 2022. Among these are **Ove Arup**, a well-recognized international consultancy firm, that once began as world renowned architecture company and later expanded to international development and work with cities for systemic change across the world. **Climate KIC**, is a European innovation network working towards a zero-carbon economy. Climate KIK has worked with a high number of cities and towns in Europe, including leading now the EU's NetZeroCities initiative, funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework and supporting the European Green Deal. **Tallinn University for Technology (TalTech)** will bring in both an academic angle and hand-on smart city experience in Estonia and the region. These three partners will provide technical support for the new generation of LEDPs and the set-up and first modules of the Urban Learning Center.

For the first cohort of six LAs for the Portfolio Journey, the **Chora Foundation** is on board, a key partner for UNDP globally and regionally on strategic innovation. The **Center for Public Impact**, a non-profit that focuses on finding new ways of making governance more inclusive and effective, will provide mentoring under the Urban Imaginaries cohort of 2022.

The above providers offer a vast network, experiences and lessons from transformative efforts of towns and cities in the EU and its neighborhood for the members of the M4EG network to benefit from.

The project team also established or re-established connections with a number of organizations and practitioners to help inspire and share lessons of new trajectories of growth and re-thinking towns and urban spaces in the EaP through the national and regional events, including the Agirre Lehendakaria Center (ALC) in Spain, ViableCities in Sweden, and Dark Matter Lab based out of the UK.

As full implementation of the work streams begins in 2022, more information on local authorities engagement in the project to ensure sustainability will be a key focus in forthcoming reports. Similarly with knowledge and lessons learned generated by the project's activities.

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

COMMS & VISIBILITY

COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY

The M4EG Phase 2 was **rebranded** with a new logo and design identity to echo the start of a hopeful journey to changing town and cities in the EaP. The variety of bright colors used (see example on the side) symbolizes energy and town/city agency to reach the M4EG's intention, a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable city for all.

The full branding can be accessed **here**.
The new branding became a vital part of both online and offline events starting fall 2021. To streamline various communications and visibility tracks across the five implementing countries, the team prepared the Guidance Note on Communications and Visibility. The Guidance Note provides the overall frame, principles, and practical guidance on communication and visibility for UNDP and EU offices supporting the implementation of the M4EG. The Guidance Note is an internal and living document that will be updated throughout the project cycle.

Four **country-level launches** in the EaP region reached at least 50,000 people with close to 50 media hits and seven joint EU&UNDP publications and various social media pieces. Media from all countries where the M4EG launches took place spread the word on the new initiative. To illustrate, please see here some media hits from **Armenia** and the **Republic of Moldova**.

In late 2021, the team began the update of the old M4EG **website**. It is expected that the new website will not only have a fresh look in line with the Communication Guidelines but also will act as a repository for various publications and interactive tools to guide local authorities through the portfolio journey, as well as become a learning platform under the Urban Learning Center.

Media mapping was conducted to cover key challenges and media opportunities in the five countries. The media mapping brief report can be found online **here**.

At the end of 2021, the project team began producing visual materials, including videos and posters, to guide the target audience through the approaches to be piloted under the M4EG. A total of seven short **graphic videos** will be produced in 2022 for outreach and learning intentions.

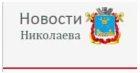
Figure 5 M4EG rebranding

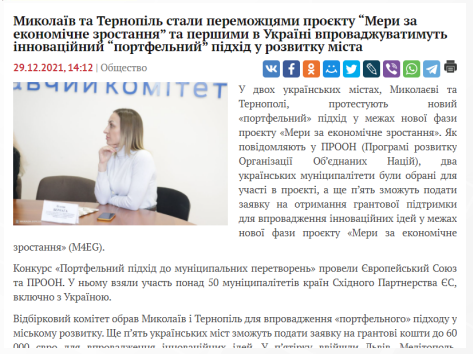
Photo 7 M4EG Guidance Note on Communication and Visibility

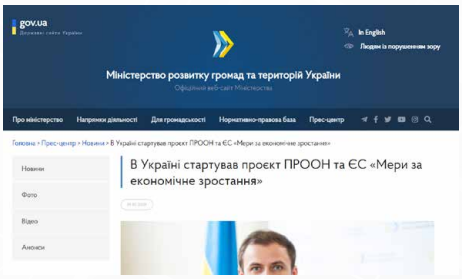
Photo 8 The EU Ambassador to Armenia at the national launch with the new M4EG branding in place.

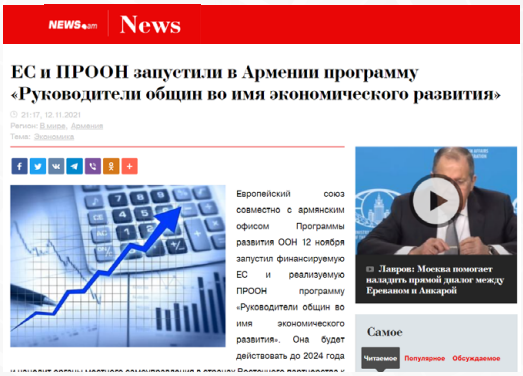
50K+ REACHED

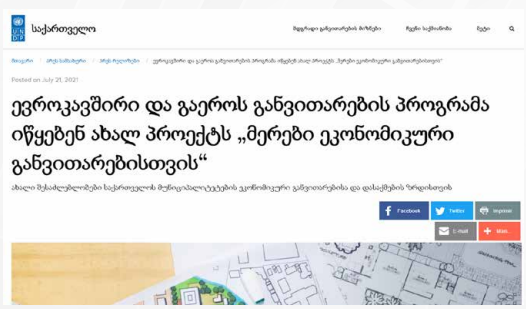
CLOSE TO 50 MEDIA HITS

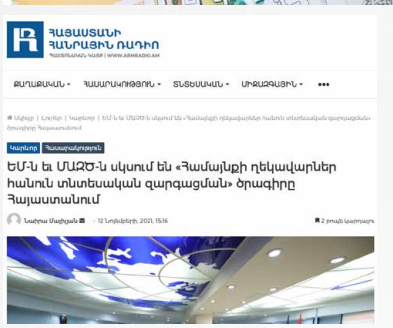












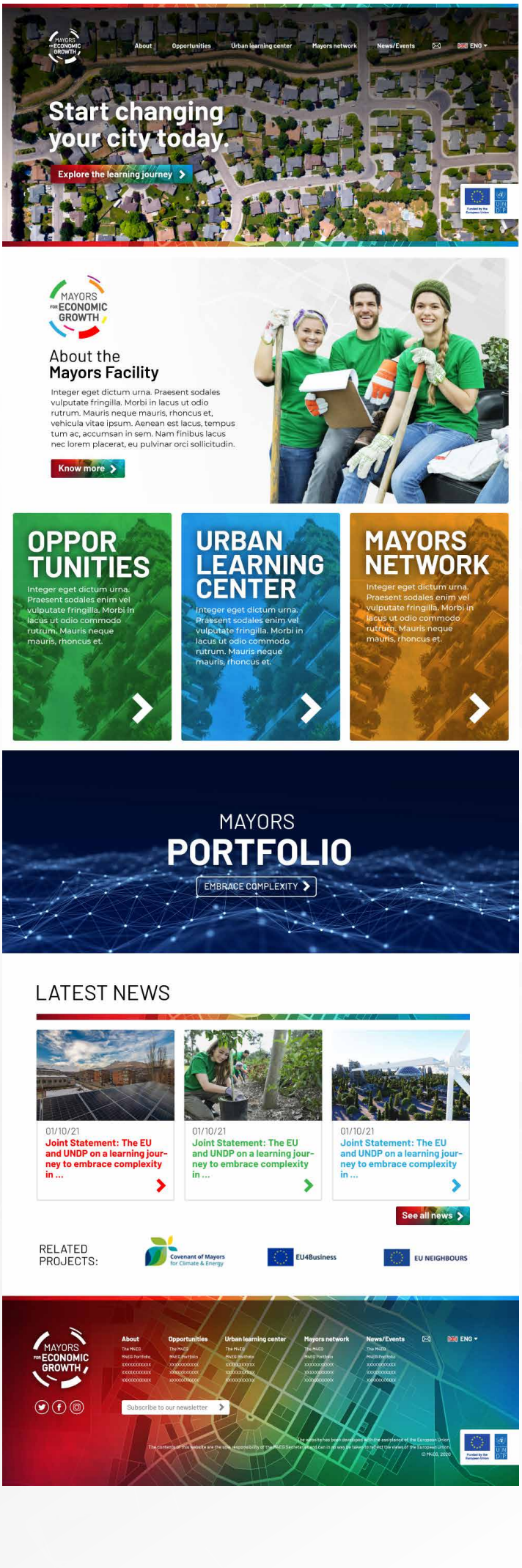


Figure 6

The forthcoming new M4EG website, under development in 2021.

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

2021 BUDGET & DELIVERY

2021 BUDGET & DELIVERY

During 2021 the planned delivery target was considerably adjusted down to a total of EUR 481,495[12]. This lower figure is based on the realities of continued online modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic where in-person meetings and missions were rare; delay of country level launches and activities due to local elections and related contexts; the recruitment time and onboarding of personnel; and the in-kind personnel support provided by UNDP at the IRH (note: the Project Manager role was cost-shared by UNDP until 24 August 2021).

The following is a snapshot of expenditures in 2021 per UNDP business unit:

UNDP Unit	Expenses (EUR)
ARM	56,449.47
AZE	25,717.06
GEO	21,954.21
MDA	14,603.43
UKR	33,601.54
IRH[13]	329,169.76
TOTAL	**481,495.46**

Please see the 2021 Financial Report (Appendix 2) for more details.

Several minor adjustments were made to the 2022 budget, none which require a formal amendment process. Please see M4EG Budget Explainer Note #3 (Appendix 4) for details.

Overall key challenges, lessons learned & recommendations

The foundation year of the phase 2 was shaped by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, where most of the internal and external engagement and support were provided virtually. Ensuring constructive engagement and necessary digital skills of local authority representatives will continue being a key challenge for the regional project.

Local elections in some of the implementing countries delayed national launches and or the announcements of the Call for Interest for the Portfolio Journey and the Urban Imaginaries mentoring and seed-funds, and flexibility and adaptability will continue to be key in the full implementation stage in 2022. Local elections are expected in some of the implementing countries in 2022, though at different scales depending on local administration context.

Tensions and the re-escalation of crisis, including armed conflict, in the EaP continue to be felt and constitute a high risk and challenge to closely monitor going forward using the intelligence generated by the local UNDP office and the EU Delegation. The project team will keep responding to the context as it emerges will be key.

The cascading effect of COVID-19 pandemic on central and local level public revenues and fiscal space is a felt reality of the local authorities in the network, and was echoed as a challenge by the local authorities as part of the CfI process in end 2021. A key recommendation is for the project to strengthen the financing and investment focus to further explore and unlock economic opportunities. This could entail looking further into the EU's Investment Plan for the Neighborhood more broadly, and specifically ensuring strong engagement of the private sector in the Portfolio Journey, and exploring how to utilize the innovation seed-funds in ways that can further attract financing for the local authorities.

The project team have identified several complementary initiatives around local economic development in the implementing countries and a strong focus on avoiding overlaps and creating synergies need to be ensured going forward.

As the project introduces change in status quo - new tools, approaches and mindset shifts around moving from a more traditional project and scientific reductionism approach to one of systems and integrated approach, additional efforts will be put on communication, outreach and advocacy in national languages, ensuring and addressing digital skills gap if needed, actively exploring more hybrid and in-person meetings when context allows, for a more active co-creation and engagement frame to ensure relevance, absorption and continued interest among the local authorities.

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

2022 WORKPLAN & FORECASTED DELIVERY

2021 WORKPLAN & FORECASTED DELIVERY

2022 will roll out the major workstreams of the project, with the following expected key highlights:

- Devise a new methodology package for LEDPs, pilot the new methodology for 1-2 municipalities per country.
- Design and activate a portfolio for change in 6 local authorities, and initiate the selection of the second cohort of local authorities for the portfolio journey
- Mentor and activate grants for “urban imaginaries” in minimum of 10 local authorities.
- Mentoring/capability development initiative of EU CfP beneficiaries.
- Devise and pilot the first module under the Urban Learning Center.
- A new M4EG website and Urban Learning Center platform.
- Hold an annual forum with all members; national forums and exchanges as applicable to country context.

See Appendix 3 Regional Annual Work Plan for more information. Country-level annual work plans are shared and crafted bilaterally with the respective EU Delegation and are made available to all Steering Committee members.

The planned delivery in 2022 is EUR 4.8m, with the caveat that the realized delivery will heavily depend on where the relevant local authorities are in their design process and implementation of portfolio or innovation grants.

Please see Appendix 4: Annex 3 2022 Budget for more information.

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix 1
2021 Progress Overview

Appendix 2
Financial Report for 2021 as per Annex 3 Budget

Appendix 3
2022 Regional Workplan

Appendix 4
Annex 3 2022 Budget

Appendix 5
M4EG Budget Explainer Note #3 (2022)

Appendix 6
Updated Risk Matrix 2022

REFERENCES

[1] The country launch in Azerbaijan will take place in Spring 2022, following outreach activities at national level.

[2] Hereinafter 'Moldova'.

[3] The initiative will be officially presented in Azerbaijan in Spring 2022, following outreach activities at national level to raise awareness on the initiative among interested municipalities.

[4] The figure is based on counting views on social media platforms in the implementing countries.

[5] Systems thinking is at the heart of managing complexity as it helps us to see the whole and not simply the parts of the systems. It is a holistic way of looking at the world, where the parts to a system, such as development challenges, can only be properly understood, and thus managed, when taken in relation to the whole system. Systems lens will help us to understand and identify where to act and interact in the interconnected and interdependent complex systems, such as municipalities.

[6] World Bank Group, Final Report, January 2021 (TF072882)

[7] OECD, Systemic thinking for policy making – the potential of systems analysis for addressing global policy challenges in the 21st century, SG/NAEC(2019)

[8] Agora, an urban transformation framework, was developed with Chora Foundation in 2020, and the key terminologies and the framework were adopted from Chora Foundation.

[9] Link to the Workshop Agenda and Brief Evaluation Report: https://undp.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/M4EGTeam/Shared%20Documents/General/Country%20docs/Armenia/Workshop%20in%20Dec2021?csf=1&web=1&e=G5q9jO

[10] Annex 1, Description of Action, p.22.

[11] Chora Foundation, Monitoring & Evaluation of Portfolios of Development Options, last revision date 13 February 2021.

[12] Please note that this figure does not include the 40% technical advisor cost-shared by UNDP as per the Special Conditions.

[13] Please note that IRH manages the regional technical contracts. The IRH component also includes the co-funded amount of this Action.

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MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Year 1 JAN - DEC 2021

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