



2024 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT



Funded by
the European Union



UN
DP





"For us it is crucial to involve our residents in this initiative. They will be able to grow their small and medium business and help our village to develop as a sustainable tourism destination. Our online sessions have helped us to draw the right picture and develop our initiative even further,"

Farkhad Ashurbeyli, Project Manager, Urva Municipality, Azerbaijan

"The M4EG initiative has been a transformative experience for our community. The training and support provided have empowered us to launch successful crowdfunding campaigns, enabling us to enhance local infrastructure and create inclusive spaces for our residents. The impact is visible in our sports field project, which is set to become a vibrant hub for both children and adults,"

Ina Olearciuc, Investment Attraction Specialist, Anenii Noi City, Moldova

"The Portfolio Approach enabled us to determine the main direction of the Mykolaiv City economic transformation for future decades, taking into account its competitive advantages and applying the principles of dynamic management. Also, it allows to test the main options and identify the most effective ones for future scaling up the Portfolio activation results",

Tetiana Shulichenko, Head of the Economic Development Department, Mykolaiv City Council, Ukraine

"Innovative methods of learning and hackathons give a chance to youth to actively participate in the city's green development process".

Leila Dadashova, Winners of the Green Hackathon, Rustavi, Georgia

"With the M4EG project we are embracing a portfolio approach to address the complexities of urban development. This approach recognizes that there is no single solution to the challenges cities face. Seeing support from the EU and UNDP, and commitment of the government, the investors have become further enthusiastic!"

Husik Sahakyan, Areni Mayor, Armenia

"It was a pleasure to be part of this project and gain insights into various methodologies while working on the investment catalogue. Thank you for this valuable opportunity."

Dali Kachibaia, Senaki Municipality, Georgia

This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Mayors for Economic Growth project and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



2024

IN NUMBERS

434+

local authorities
in 5 countries

63

local authorities demon-
strating change through
grant programmes

1852

municipal staff with practical
know-how to re-think local
economic development with
a future and system lens

Crisis pivot in Ukraine, Moldo-
va, Armenia: **120** local authori-
ties supported and **44,000+**
displaced people and refu-
gees directly supported

6

courses launched under the
Urban Learning Center in total

Launch of the
**Pathways for
Economic Growth
(P4EG) Methodology**

309

networking and learning
events organized since
the end of 2021

M4EG continue to have high
engagement – with more than
10,000 participants so far in
recorded workshops and events

At least **3.1m** people reached
over social media, with more
than **3,000** communication
activities since 2021

BASIC M4EG DATA

Title of project	Mayors for Economic Growth
Contract Number:	ENI2020 / 416-147
Duration of project	54 months: 1 Jan 2021- 30 Jun 2025
Target Countries	Eastern Partnership Countries where M4EG is currently implemented: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
Reporting period	1 January - 31 December 2024
Type of report	Annual Progress Report
Date of submission	May 2025
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 previous 2021 and 2022 Annual Report and the 2023 Mid-Year Brief, and the 2022-2023 Country Reports.
Total project cost	€12,094,364
European Union	€11,800,000
UNDP	€294,364
SDG contribution (main)	  SDG8: Decent work and economic growth, SDG11: Sustainable cities
Regional Programme Europe and CIS (2022-2025)	Outcome 1: 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
Gender Marker (as per UNDP policy: 0-3)	GEN1. However, the project has strengthened its gender mainstreaming during implementation, including embedding a stronger focus on diversity and inclusion, women leaders, and gender responsive programming for the new output 3 on Ukraine crisis response, recovery and renewal.
Digitalisation Marker (as per UNDP policy: 0-3)	Digital Technology Marker: 2 Note: outputs significantly enabled through digital technology as most sessions are conducted online with online workshop tools, introduced to municipality staff. Generative AI also introduced, including for urban planning purposes. Digital Results Marker: 1 Note: to be further assessed; for now, the project is surely contributing to digital transformation of society and inclusive digital ecosystems, both in terms of increasing digital capabilities of municipal staff and several digital technologies used or promoted through the grants and learning programmes.



Background & Strategy

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 introduced an integrated approach to local economic development planning but to accelerate desired investments for local level transformation, the second of M4EG aims to serve as a platform to enable and learn about systemic transformation.

During the implementation of the phase 2 of the initiative, the M4EG network increased to 350 re-committed and 84 newly jointed local authorities, 63 seed-funds/innovation grants activated, and 10 local authorities undergoing through a process of “portfolio” development. 3 funding facilities were available to the local authorities in the network: the EU Call for Proposal for pilot projects (ref. 170157, 2021), the Annual Portfolio Call (2022-2022), and M4EG Innovation Project Call (2021-2023), the latter now called Urban Imaginaries Programme. In addition, a special crisis component was added, as the EU's Response and Renewal Programme for Moldova and Ukraine (2022-2024) was launched in 2022. In 2024, M4EG responded to the growing need for financial and funding support in secondary cities through a series of targeted financing initiatives.

ABBREVIATIONS

ALC	Agirre Lehendakaria Center
CO	Country Office
CoP	Community of Practice
CPI	Centre for Public Impact
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the European Commission
DoA	Description of Action (i.e., the approved project document description)
EaP	Eastern Partnership countries
EC	European Commission
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
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 Plans
MDD	Municipal Development Document
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
M4EG	Mayors for Economic Growth (Facility)
P4EG	Pathways for Economic Growth
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TOC	Theory of Change
ULC	Urban Learning Center
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

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



2024 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Contents

2024 in numbers	3
Basic data	4
Background & Strategy	5
Abbreviations	6
Executive Summary	8
Progress Review: Key Activities and Results	11
Crosscutting-Integration	54
Partnerships and Sustainability	56
Update on risks and mitigation measures	58
Key Challenges, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	60
Communication, Visibility and Knowledge Generation	62
Financial Summary	65
Annual Workplan for 2025	67
Appendixes	69



Funded by
the European Union



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 2024.

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

A 2022-built [Urban Learning Center \(ULC\)](#) offered M4EG network a diverse set of learning opportunities for municipalities. A new series of courses was introduced throughout the reporting period, including:

- [Foundations for Future Readiness for Cities](#)
- [Pathways for Economic Growth \(P4EG\)](#)
- [Green & Just Transition](#)
- [Smarter and Inclusive Cities](#)
- [Community Listening in Practice](#)
- [Funding and Finance for Municipalities](#)

Most courses were complemented by networking, peer-to-peer engagements, and broader participation opportunities, both online and offline. By the end of the year, nearly 1,332 learners had enrolled in the ULC.

In 2024, the M4EG initiative was featured at major global and regional events, including the 22nd European Week of Regions and Cities, the 12th World Urban Forum in Cairo, and the 29th UN Climate Change Conference in Baku. These events facilitated knowledge sharing, strengthened networking on global level.

Component 2 DEEP: Municipal pilot projects building on existing LEDPSs are successfully implemented

The 63 unique seed-funds or grants ranging from EUR 15,000 to EUR 225,000 awarded to municipalities participating in M4EG have made significant progress during 2024.

Together with Demos Helsinki, M4EG has evaluated the impact of urban portfolios through the "[Urban Development Beyond Growth](#)" research and key findings highlighted improvements in green energy, cultural heritage engagement, and community cohesion.

Since 2023, M4EG has been focusing on enhancing local funding efforts. [Financing research by UNDP and Arup](#) identified barriers to municipal financing and a [Funding and Finance for Municipalities](#) course under the ULC was launched to tackle the capability barriers.

Key achievement under the Portfolio Journey marked the finalization of five portfolio journeys in Areni (Armenia), Batumi (Georgia), Kutaisi (Georgia), Ceadir-Lunga (Moldova) and Mykolaiv (Ukraine) by December 2024. It is expected that finalization of other Portfolios will be conducted by June 2025.

Following the finalization of the grant implementation by the Urban Imaginaries (UI) Programme Cohort 2, with 9 municipalities from Azerbaijan and Ukraine, the Urban Imaginaries Programme Advanced Cohort scaled the impact through mentorship and peer exchanges in 8 selected cities from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine with a special focus on mobilizing additional funding and partnerships for scaling.

In March, the Pathways for Economic Growth (P4EG) framework, a methodology set to design a new generation of local economic development plans was launched.

Component 3 CRISES: Ukraine crisis emergency and refugee response, recovery, and resilience

17 out of 18 municipalities under the EU Response and Renewal Grant Programme have finalized implementation of their activities in Moldova and Ukraine. Key achievements include creating living conditions for internally displaced people (IDPs), establishing rehabilitation and resource centers, generating employment through various enterprises, and enhancing access to services.

National Gender Consultants supported the initiatives with mainstreaming efforts, providing guidance to municipal teams to integrate gender-sensitive approaches. A guide was launched in Ukraine in December and will be translated to other languages during 2025. In Moldova, M4EG continued supporting local authorities hosting Ukrainian refugees by promoting inclusion and access to services. Initiatives included the “Friendship for Peace” football tournament to foster youth connections, cultural event participation, and the installation of Wi-Fi hotspots in 14 communities. Refugees also benefited from language and professional training, improving integration and job prospects. Energy efficiency grants helped upgrade infrastructure amid the energy crisis. Additionally, Ukrainian Friendship Ambassadors were appointed and trained to enhance local crisis response capacities.

Overall, the 2024 crisis response component supported 13 municipalities in Ukraine with at least 180,156 direct and indirect beneficiaries, among them 40,267 IDPs and in Moldova 21 municipalities, with close to 26,000 direct beneficiaries.

Communication and visibility

Throughout 2024, at least 36 national media outlets in targeted countries covered and published M4EG-related stories. A standout example was an interview with the Mayor of Mykolaiv in POLITICO Living Cities, following his participation in the European Week of Regions and Cities.

The utilization of advanced analytics tools, such as Google Analytics and the media monitoring tool Determ, enhanced the understanding of audience behaviours and preferences, which in turn optimized website and social media content to ensure communication efforts were effective and impactful. Through these strategic communication efforts, M4EG reached over 821,000 people within the reporting year.

Key challenges, risks, and recommendations

Heightened regional conflicts and growing political tensions delayed project activities especially in Ukraine and Azerbaijan and to allow more time for implementation of the municipal grant programmes, the project was extended until June 2025.

To support the design of the third phase of M4EG, an external evaluator was engaged to capture learnings and effects of the phase 2. The evaluation revealed that the project has demonstrated high relevance and effectiveness and fostered long-term municipal development through participatory governance and innovative tools. Key recommendations were around building more synergies and networks with similar initiatives, enabling access to finance, building evaluative capacity of the municipalities and improving the M&E framework of the project. These recommendations have been embedded in the phase 3 project.



Funded by
the European Union



Progress Review

KEY ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

1 January-31 December 2024

KEY ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

[Activities are aligned with the DoA and the AWP and results are referred to in alignment with the results framework]

Strengthening the learning aspects in the M4EG

The M4EG Secretariat continues to strengthen the programme's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approaches over 2024. A key focus has been deepening the integration of qualitative methods alongside the existing quantitative indicators.

Project Evaluation Findings

During June-August 2024, the project underwent an independent external [evaluation](#), highlighting several key findings:

The project demonstrated high relevance, effectively addressing municipal needs through systems approaches for development. Close collaboration with UNDP and the EU ensured strong visibility and engagement. Coherence was evident in its peer-to-peer learning model, strengthening regional voices and encouraging municipalities to explore diverse funding sources. The effectiveness of the project was notable. Key strengths included flexibility, strong communication, and inter-country exchanges. Efficiency was ensured through cost-effective and well-coordinated implementation.

Regarding sustainability, the project fostered long-term municipal development, strengthening participatory governance and deploying innovative tools. However, sustainability is vulnerable to risks such as war, displacement, and investor shortages. The project also had positive cross-cutting effects, particularly on women, refugees, and marginalized groups. Despite challenges, the project successfully adapted to changing contexts, reinforcing its impact and resilience.

¹ In line with the European Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus's involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises

M4EG Survey on Adoption of Best Practices

In December 2024, the project conducted an online survey across 181 local authority representatives in the EaP countries to evaluate the adoption of best practices in municipal development under the M4EG initiative. An average percentage of adoption of best practices across five countries amounted to 73% (Armenia 59.66%, Azerbaijan 60.00%, Georgia 86.95%, Moldova 90.19% and Ukraine 67.92%). New practices have been applied especially in participatory processes, green and energy efficiency projects and around access to finance.

"For local government initiatives aimed at economic growth, it is essential to focus on projects that stimulate sustainable development, community involvement and attract investors,"

shared a respondent from Moldova

The explanation on different levels of adoption of best practices lies within key challenges identified and which included lack of resources (67%), difficulties in adapting practices to local contexts (42%), and limited technical expertise (29%). Additionally, 14% of respondents cited a lack of support from management and colleagues as a barrier to implementation.

"Thank you for learning, for the opportunity to engage in communication with experts and colleagues, and for gaining invaluable experience that we can use to improve the lives of our residents and community development. Thank you for helping communities and providing support in such a difficult time,"

noted a respondent from Ukraine

Municipalities expressed a strong need for additional support, particularly in accessing funding (74.6%), training (58.7%), and networking and partnerships (54.4%). Other priorities included leadership support (34.6%) and peer learning opportunities (30.4%).

"It was highly valuable to learn and utilize the AI platform that enables municipalities to effectively plan various aspects of urban development," commented a respondent from Georgia

¹ In line with the European Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus's involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises

PROGRESS AGAINST EACH OUTPUT

OUTPUT 1

EaP municipalities are supported in their participation in the M4EG initiative

The first output of the programme is accessible to all members of the M4EG, providing a platform for networking and learning across the region. It introduced a next-generation local economic development plan currently known as P4EG along with learning courses and activities under the Urban Learning Center. Additionally, this output continues to assist selected municipalities with customized technical support to design and implement seed funds as part of the second output.

Activity 1.1.1

Support to the EU Call for Proposals

This activity was completed in 2021 and reported in the 2021 Annual Report.

Activity 1.1.2

Review of the LEDP process and adapting the methodology and review of plans

On 6th March 2024, M4EG launched a new generation of local economic development plans, the Pathways for Economic Growth (P4EG) methodology which marks a significant milestone for the initiative. P4EG is heavily focused on the green transition and sustainable economic growth within the planetary boundaries.

The final P4EG Methodology consists of a Guidance Note and Online course content offered under the [Urban Learning Center](#). The course consists of seven modules that introduce tools and strategies to support the development of the P4EG. It can also be taken as a standalone course by individuals interested in enhancing their understanding of alternative approaches to economic development.

The launch of the P4EG methodology gained significant interest amongst the network ([link to the P4EG Launch](#) and [link to the P4EG video](#)).

In June 2024, a workshop on the P4EG methodology was conducted in Ukraine and 91.8% of the workshop participants agreed on the relevance of the P4EG methodology. The respective course is available in [Ukrainian](#) at the Urban Learning Centre. After piloting the P4EG in Baghdati, Georgia, it is being now piloted in Moldova with cities of Stauceni and Ceadr-Lunga, which will be finalized in 2025. The indicator of LEDP development remains frozen, as agreed with the steering committee, due to the crowded local development strategy space in the region.

Activity 1.1.3

Portfolio Development

The 10 frontrunner cities (see table below) involved in the Portfolio Journey are progressing toward their portfolio options finalization and five cities have already finalized the roll out of designed options. The portfolio approach enables cities to adopt a comprehensive perspective on their economy and liveability, fostering a space for experimentation and strategic shifts in a direction driven by municipal leadership and partnerships. This method encourages adaptability, opportunity identification, and action reassessment.

During 2024 the activities focused on capturing learnings from the first phase of implementation and generating collective decisions through sensemaking for designing additional growth funding interventions, which are to be finalized in 2025.

Local authority	Country	Mission – North Star	Comments and results/effects so far
Areni	ARM	Sustainable Tourism	The challenges the region faces are linked to insufficient infrastructure and underdeveloped waste management, resulting in environmental pollution and affecting tourist activity in the area. The specific area of interest in the space of urban makeover that the city has decided to address through this project is that of sustainable tourism, both from an economic and environmental perspective. In addition to that, the project is intended to attract and direct additional financial resources to the community to renew parts of its local infrastructure, as well as the diversification of the local economy by exploring possibilities of interconnected value propositions, as well as exploiting new niches and alternative tourism offerings, such as eco, gastro and adventure tourism.
Gyumri	ARM	Cultural Tourism	The specific area of interest in the space of urban makeover that the city has decided to address through this project is that of developing resilient and equitable cultural tourism. The project aims to build municipal capability to own and drive the overall strategy for cultural tourism development in Gyumri. Its vision is to turn Gyumri into an international cultural destination, whose development would benefit local communities, visitors and the continuous preservation and replenishment of the city's cultural assets in the long term.
Kapan	ARM	Participatory Community	A fragile economic system with high dependencies, characterized by dominant industry (mining), hyper-local clients, markets and supply chains limiting the competitiveness of other businesses, and low diversity of jobs struggles to attract young talent. High uncertainty and volatile context of a border community affect the individual well-being, without well-developed supportive mechanisms to address the mental health needs and build individual resilience mechanisms for all residents. Specific areas of intent: exploring and possibly defining new sectors for local economic development, strengthening the municipality's role as the orchestrator for the local economic and social cohesion development.
Icherisheher	AZE	Wellbeing Smart Old City	Due to the political challenges and Municipal Administration's shift in priorities Icherisheher administration decided to withdraw from the project. Funds have been transferred to support "Urva Sustainable Development" Modality under the Urban Imaginaries programme and will be finalized in 2025.
Khirdalan	AZE	Entrepreneurship and Talent	For its residents, Khirdalan's proximity to Baku makes the city go by the identity of a suburb or satellite city of Baku, where one comes to sleep at night. Many Khirdalan residents work in Baku or in neighboring Sumqait. While its strategic location somewhat solves the problem of employment for Khirdalan's residents, there is a need to harness the local resources and talent to make Khirdalan an attractive destination for residents to live and work. The Administration and the Project work hand in hand for direct support and transformation within this vision. One of the biggest challenges in 2024 was the preparation for early 2025 municipal elections.
Batumi	GEO	Startup Ecosystem	The Object of the Portfolio is recognized as an emerging Startup Ecosystem in Batumi. This ecosystem will be composed of a system of start-ups and various types of supporting organizations that work together towards a shared intent, employing and sharing their distinct resources and capabilities to develop and help Batumi's economy be more diverse and knowledge-driven. The Portfolio results include creation of a startup physical space of interactions, promoting startup education through various learning initiatives, empowering municipal staff with knowledge about startups and ecosystem development, studying narratives, connecting Batumi to existing startup ecosystems and networks.

Local authority	Country	Mission – North Star	Comments and results/effects so far
Kutaisi	GEO	Smart Eco City	Kutaisi's Urban Makeover Portfolio is designed with the intent of transforming the city into a "Smart Eco City". This encompasses a sustainable, resource-efficient city that respects and integrates with its natural environment, ensuring a healthy and comfortable existence for its citizens while utilizing data and technology for informed decision-making. Kutaisi has implemented smart waste management by establishing waste separation stations and introducing automated sensor systems for monitoring container fill levels. Green mobility initiatives include installing four EV charging stations and exempting electric vehicle owners from parking fees. The city has also transformed the administrative building of "Kutaisi Transport Company" into a sustainable, energy-efficient demonstration site. To promote resource sustainability, a drinking water station was installed to encourage reusable containers and reduce single-use plastics. Through the Eco-Innovation Academy, young talents receive support for developing creative and eco-smart city initiatives. Additionally, municipal representatives have enhanced their skills through international study visits, trainings and webinars, fostering knowledge exchange and innovation.
Ceadir-Lunga	MLD	Energy Transition	In Ceadir-Lunga, the Energy Transition portfolio tells a compelling story of strategic, sustainable urban development powered by the implementation of series of energy efficiency improvements. At its core, the project, facilitated by a meticulous Portfolio Approach, is dedicated to transforming the city into a model of green energy adoption. The plan outlines a clear, data-driven approach for assessing progress, from enhancing the energy efficiency of public buildings to modernizing street lighting with solar-powered units, and even fostering energy independence through the installation of solar panels on key public infrastructure buildings. This initiative not only signifies a leap towards reducing the city's carbon footprint but also encompasses a broader vision of engaging the community through educational activities on energy efficiency, thereby weaving a narrative of innovation, community involvement, and sustainability that resonates throughout Ceadir-Lunga and surrounding areas.
Mykolaiv	UKR	Deep Blue Transition	Approximately half of Mykolaiv's residents have been forced to leave, seeking safer conditions amidst the ongoing conflict. The city's unemployment rate has more than doubled, with numerous businesses relocating their operations and workforce. Tax revenues have plummeted by over 30%, and the toll of Russian artillery has left more than 8,000 civilian structures damaged. On both organizational and individual levels, the war creates conditions of uncertainty about the future and reduced capacity to for long-term planning. Key uncertainties for the city include the scale of war damage and pervasiveness of the unexploded ordnance (UXO) and its pollution, intensity and proximity of fighting, and return or non-return of residents. The uncertainty and complexity of the situation significantly inflicts the capacity for long-term planning. Mykolaiv city administration is acting simultaneously on response and renewal of the city and is through the portfolio leveraging the maritime industrial identity of the city to initiate a "Deep Blue Transition" of Mykolaiv – a change that will facilitate continuous development of its economy, social, technological, and environmental systems.
Ternopil	UKR	Green Comfort City	The main challenge for Ternopil is the ongoing war that has a substantial influence on the city's economy, resulting in the disruption of supply chains, rising inflation and unemployment rates, as well as low business activities. Additionally, the city experiences an influx of a high number of IDPs (approx. 30 000) coming from the war-torn regions of Ukraine, while many residents emigrated abroad. A high number of veterans returning to the city require the creation of quality and inclusive public infrastructure. At the same time, the city administration is in search of a strong identity for the city that will become a driver for further development and attracting talents and businesses. The portfolio intent "Green Comfort City" should have determinative system effects, by creating a new value economy and inclusive and sustainable community with collective ownership. The city intends to become a knowledge hub of sustainable green practices and a leading municipality in Ukraine on green transition which will lead the city to attract and develop more financial instruments to stimulate further growth.

For an overview of grant implementation, please see the table under Output 2 below.

Activity 1.1.3.0 **Launch of a call for interest for all municipalities**

Activity 1.1.3.1 **Criteria and guidelines development for the selection of municipalities**

Activity 1.1.3.2 **Tool for social listening**

Most of the activities were completed in previous reporting periods.

In 2024, a “[Community Listening in Practice](#)” course was designed, launched and offered under the Urban Learning Centre. It serves as a comprehensive guide on how to implement the process of community listening and proactively involve the community in the design and evaluation of interventions, to support responsive policies and enhanced public services. Additional information on the course is provided under Activity 1.2.2.

Activity 1.1.3.3 & 1.1.3.4 **System analysis and representation for municipalities & Portfolio Ideation**

Please see the 2021, 2022, 2023 Annual Reports for more background information on how system analysis and representation are used in the Portfolio Journey programme.

Portfolio Iteration Bootcamps in Armenia and Azerbaijan

The iteration of the portfolios for the Armenian cities, Gyumri and Kapan and for the Azerbaijani city, Khirdalan took place in April and May 2024. The 3-day workshop with key municipal staff included a) sensemaking and intelligence gathering from the options implemented, b) a foresight exercise to scan the horizon for trends and drivers of change and, c) the ideation and design of new options. After the in-person bootcamps, the municipal teams prioritized and further detailed the design of the options and developed option concepts ready for implementation.

Activity 1.2.1

Annual Forum – Future-Fit Cities and More

The next Annual Forum is scheduled to take place in April 2025 in Moldova. It will continue under the Future-Fit Cities brand, with thematic adjustments to better address the specific needs of municipalities. The forum is expected to host up to 100 participants from the M4EG network and development partners.

Although the Annual Forum was not planned for 2024, the M4EG team actively participated in and co-organized a series of regional and global events.

Event	Session and Topic	Partners
22nd European Week of Regions and Cities 2024, Brussels	Future Ready Cities: Scaling Sustainable Urban Missions: Highlighted the innovative journeys of 10 M4EG cities in pioneering the mission economy concept.	UNDP, DG NEAR, and Demos Helsinki
World Urban Forum (WUF) 12 in Cairo 2024	“The Future of Ukrainian Cities – Transformation Through Radical Collaboration”: Ukrainian Cities Rebuilding Amidst Crises	UNDP, ARUP, Cities of Mykolaiv and Trostianets
	“CityScape 2050 GenAI-Powered Urban Futures Workshop”: AI tools in Urban Planning	City Experiment Fund, the Ministry of Finance of Slovakia.
29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) in Baku	Urban Finance for Climate Action: Scaling Innovation & Partnership in Secondary Cities in Eurasia.	UNDP, EUD, Arup, AfD, CEB
	Launch of the Financing Course and Research	



EU's Ambassador to Azerbaijan, UNDP IRH Manager and UNDP Azerbaijan Resident Representative before M4EG's session

Activity 1.2.2

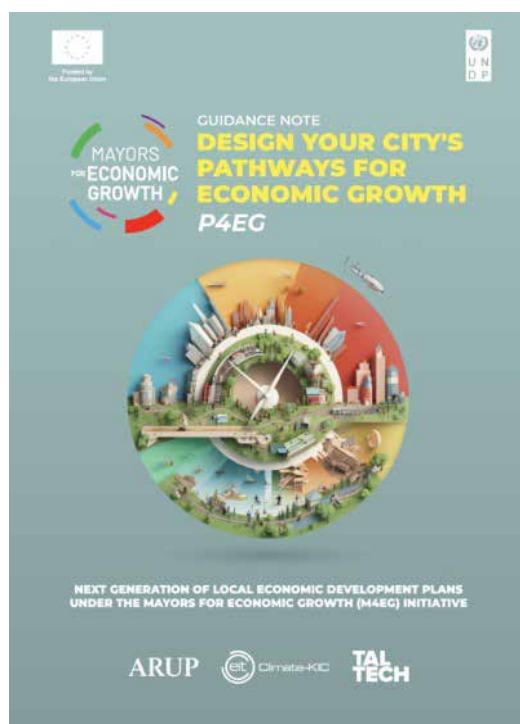
Urban Learning Center

Please see 2021, 2022 and 2023 Annual Reports for background information on the ULC and its conceptualization.

Since its launch on the SparkBlue platform in 2022, the Urban Learning Center (ULC) has been continuously updated with new learning materials and enhanced user experience features to better support municipal practitioners in their capacity-building efforts in 2024.

Courses under the ULC

Following the launch of the course Foundations for Future Readiness in 2023, in 2024, six key resources under the ULC were finalized, launched, and offered as online and offline course content. These resources aim to introduce innovative learning approaches to the M4EG municipalities. They are:



Pathways for Economic Growth (P4EG)

The course is designed for self-paced learning and features a variety of activities tailored for both online and in-person workshop settings. The course consists of seven modules that introduce tools and strategies to support the development of the P4EG. It can also be taken as a standalone course by individuals interested in enhancing their understanding of alternative approaches to economic development. The course is since February 2024 uploaded to and accessible on the ULC SparkBlue platform.

 [Link to the online P4EG MOOC](#)

 [Link to the Guidance Note](#)

 [Link to the launch recording](#)



Green & Just Transition

The course builds on the introductory module of the course Foundations for Future Readiness. The deep-dive course introduces the key concepts, solutions and planning processes essential for a Green & Just Transition and what this entails for cities and towns in integrating sustainable and equitable climate action into local economic development and planning. Drawing on successful cases and through modules focusing on climate neutrality, climate action planning, and integrated pathways for monitoring, evaluation, and learning, the course provides a comprehensive understanding of climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies. The course is since the launch in May 2024 uploaded and accessible on the ULC SparkBlue and the UNDP Knowledge Platform. More than 130 attendees showed interest in the launch that featured a conversation with the director of NetZeroCities initiative and the participating cities of Gabrovo, Bulgaria and Rzeszow, Poland.

- [Link to the online Green & Just Transition course](#)
- [Link to the offline Green & Just Transition course](#)



Smarter & Inclusive Cities

The course builds on the introductory module of the course Foundations for Future Readiness. This course provides a deep dive into several key topics to help municipalities embrace a smarter and more inclusive urban future. The course includes modules on Inclusivity for Smarter City Development, Smarter Governance, Smarter Implementation, Adoption and Monitoring and provides a range of opportunities to learn through successful examples from around the world focusing on providing inspirational and practical insights that can be applied to your context. The soft launch of the course was coupled with the prominent event on urban practices, the Singapore World Cities Summit 2024.

- [Link to the online Smarter & Inclusive Cities](#)
- [Link to the offline Smarter & Inclusive Cities course](#)



Community Listening in Practice

The course provides an entry point into the methodology of community engagement, focusing on the important aspects of connecting with people and understanding their needs and perspectives. The course consists of real-world examples, practical insights, and useful tools to explore the layers of community engagement and its potential for positive change. The introductory content provides key concepts, emphasizing the essential skills of deep listening and conducting insightful interviews with members of your local community. The course is since July 2024 uploaded and accessible on the ULC SparkBlue Platform and the UNDP Knowledge Platform.

■ [Link to the online Community Listening in Practice course](#)

■ [Link to the offline Community Listening in Practice course](#)

■ [Link to the launch recording](#)

The ULC learning offerings have gained substantial interest within the M4EG network and beyond by strengthening the capacity of technical municipal staff on essential topics for the green, inclusive and sustainable development of their communities.



Funding and Finance for Municipalities

The course addresses the challenges of main revenue sources for municipalities, common bottlenecks to accessing funding and finance at a local level, and provides a foreseen solution, better understanding of the enabling conditions to improve access to funding and finance at the municipality level and identification of practical ways to do so. The course is since the launch in November 2024 uploaded and accessible on the ULC SparkBlue (in Armenian, Azerbaijani, English, Georgian, Ukrainian) and the UNDP Knowledge Platform. The course was during the event "Urban Finance for Climate Action" at the COP29.

■ [Link to the online: Funding and Finance for Municipalities](#)

Below is an overview of people signed up to the ULC courses on SparkBlue

	English	Armenia	Azerbaijani	Georgia	Romanian/Russian	Ukrainian
Foundations for Future Readiness	136	49	13	105	115	165
P4EG	63	n/a	9	n/a	16	11
Funding and Finance	54	9	10	30	n/a	30
Green & Just Transition	151	32	8	46	16	66
Smarter & Inclusive Cities	61	n/a	11	26	17	7
Community Listening in Practice	54	n/a	4	n/a	17	5
Total	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332

*For numbers regarding attendance for in-person workshops please refer to Appendix 1.

*Note that for courses where statistic is not available on country level the course is yet to be made available in national language.

ULC Beyond M4EG

While the ULC courses are primarily designed for a broad range of municipal officials part of the M4EG, the ULC is gaining recognition beyond the network. This is evident through the site traffic and participants outside the M4EG who are continuously finding value in the ULC learning offerings. Such as exemplified in the quote below:

The P4EG program stands out as one of the few online courses that are meticulously planned, well-organized, and clearly articulated, maintaining a logical flow throughout. It successfully incorporates emerging development concepts, providing informative and interactive content. [...]. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to my professional development.

Temesgen Berisso, independent participant in the P4EG course

ULC at the “Municipal Enterprises for Local Authorities Training

In April 2024 the Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development (ICPSD) expressed interest in the ULC and extended an invitation to two modules from the Foundations course as stand-alone workshops to Kosovo's municipality officials at a “Municipal Enterprises for Local Authorities Training” under the Strengthening Local Climate Action project. The opportunity to engage with the ICPSDA served to test out the relevance and was an opportunity to adapt, continuously improve and scale the offerings of the ULC beyond the EaP.

Activity 1.3.1

Platform development, regular publication, and maintenance

Throughout 2024, the project's website (<http://eum4eg.com>) continued to serve as a media hub, aggregating and sharing stories from Country Offices with a wider audience. User activity remained stable compared to 2023, with 6,400 active users. The website also played a key role in enhancing the visibility of newly launched ULC courses and providing updates at both regional and national levels.

As mentioned above, the ULC is designed on the **SparkBlue platform** with UNDP's in-house project capacities where the online learning opportunities are hosted, and the possibility of peer-to-peer online engagement is made possible. The site is open access for all M4EG municipal staff after login.

Activity 1.3.2

National Consultations & Network

Throughout 2024, we have seen that the interest in the M4EG initiative continues to increase among municipalities as well as others across and beyond the EaP countries. In 2024, the network grew to 434 local authorities. The following sections provide a snapshot of the events and engagements carried out by the M4EG Secretariats and country networks in 2024.

Country Networks in 2024



ARMENIA

The M4EG network in Armenia now includes 33 member municipalities. Throughout 2024, various networking activities were organized, such as Crowdfunding Sessions, the Areni Trail & Gastro Fest, and an in-person workshop for the "Green and Just Transition" ULC course. These events brought together 21 representatives from the member municipalities.

Implementation in Armenia focused on finalizing portfolios in Areni, Gyumri and Kapan and Urban Imaginaries in Alaverdi, Ashtarak, and Charentsavan.



AZERBAIJAN

In 2024, the M4EG team in Azerbaijan engaged in multiple initiatives that led to notable progress within member municipalities. A standout example is the Urva Municipal Team, which successfully completed its learning journey under the Urban Imaginaries programme. This effort culminated in the opening of a Tourism Information Center and the creation of a distinctive village brand aimed at promoting local food production.

Azerbaijan city cases were shared in regional and global events such as in the "Future Ready Local Governance" Regional Workshop in North Macedonia, where Chairman of the Khirdalan Municipality, Mr. Orkhan Musayev shared his experience with portfolio approach at local level and what changes it has brought to the daily operations of the municipality.

One of the biggest events in Azerbaijan was COP29, where M4EG participated alongside the EU and Arup and delivered a dialogue session focused on unlocking financing for climate action in cities.



GEORGIA

Throughout the year, the signatories were offered various engagement and networking opportunities, thereby fostering partnerships, peer learning and experience sharing, including 15 events. With rolling out new ULC courses, 207 municipal staff members enrolled and attended online and offline sessions (88 participants) deepening their knowledge on topics such as green and just transition, funding and financing alternatives and working in complexity.

2024 Key Highlights:

- 1** All In – M4EG Achieves Full National Coverage in Georgia. In 2024, the M4EG network in Georgia reached full national coverage with the addition of four new municipalities, successfully bringing together all 64 municipalities across the country under the initiative.
- 2** Strengthened Engagement and Knowledge Sharing. A key achievement of M4EG has been maintaining a dynamic and engaged network. 190 members have joined a dedicated M4EG Georgia Facebook group for discussions, resource sharing, and collaboration. Those who participated in M4EG learning courses and training programs, 87% reported applying good practices in their respective municipalities. Importantly, 95% confirmed that M4EG learning tools were instrumental in implementing these practices effectively.
- 3** Expanding Beyond M4EG. M4EG promoted municipal leadership in Innovative approaches. As a result, a good practice of Portfolio Co-design was replicated by Poti City, demonstrating the scalability, potential and impact of the approach.

Key events:

Webinar Cities Alive: Designing Cities That Work for Women

Funding and Investment Preparedness Academy. The Academy is a pilot learning and training initiative created to empower 10 selected municipalities with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively attract and manage municipal investments and create a favourable environment for local economic growth. 10 investment catalogues were drafted.

Driving innovation with AI-centered events and community-focused engagement: Series of workshops on testing AI tools for planning

Tbilisi Economic Forum 2024 "Healthy City: Green, Ecologically Clean Environment, Flexible and Sustainable Urban Development." Dedicated M4EG presentation on portfolios, AI tools, finance academy.

M4EG Georgia partnership with academia
M4EG Georgia has established a collaborative partnership with academia, specifically with the Applied Social Psychology program at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia. This partnership aims to integrate academic research with municipal development efforts by providing students with practical experience while supporting local governance initiatives. In 2024, three students were actively involved in designing a study and conducting an analysis of the Central Park user satisfaction research in Poti.



MOLDOVA

In the past year, six more Moldovan municipalities joined the M4EG Network in Moldova leading to 65 members as of December 2024. 2024 was a pivotal year for Moldova, marked by significant challenges and progress across various development sectors.

Moldova faces significant challenges due to migration, economic losses, and inadequate infrastructure. Amid the ongoing war in neighboring Ukraine, local authorities are grappling with the integration of Ukrainian refugees while dealing with their own issues such as energy crises, shrinking economies, and high inflation. These communities often lack the necessary human and financial resources to support refugees effectively while managing their existing responsibilities.

With the support of M4EG, localities such as Ceadîr-Lunga, Sireți, Taraclia and Geamăna have implemented energy efficiency projects, attracting investments for interventions such as thermo-insulation of kindergartens and modernization of street lighting, etc., which has contributed to energy savings and reduced expenses for over 20,000 inhabitants.

Key events:

Mayors' Forum in Ungheni on 12-14 November with 90 mayors and deputy mayors from 26 districts. [Watch testimonials](#) from municipal teams participated in the Forum.

On July 11, 49 Moldovan mayors joined the Mayors' Forum, supported by the EU and UNDP, to explore new opportunities for growth and innovation offered by the perspectives of the EU accession.

On 10 June, Ceadîr-Lunga, a city and municipality in Gagauzia, southern Moldova, held its first ever Development Forum. The event was supported by the M4EG.

On 9 May, M4EG actively participated in the European City event in Chișinău, engaging the public with a series of interactive quizzes that showcased important facts and achievements in Moldova's local economic development. Engaging and informative materials were designed for both adults and children, ensuring a broad audience could participate and learn.

By the end of 2024, the M4EG Network in Ukraine united 217 signatory municipalities. 20 signatory municipalities/LAs are engaged in deep demonstration interventions and 284 members enrolled in ULC's courses

In 2024, Ukraine's socio-economic challenges deepened due to the ongoing war. Over 3.7 million people were displaced internally, with an additional 6.7 million seeking refuge abroad. Energy infrastructure was heavily impacted, with Russian attacks between March and August 2024 destroying key power generation and distribution facilities, disrupting vital services such as water, heating, and public health systems. The war has strained Ukraine's economy, with rising unemployment and reduced productivity. Despite these hardships, inter-group tensions between internally displaced persons and host communities have remained low, reflecting the resilience of Ukrainian society. These socio-economic and energy challenges have added complexity to the work of M4EG, requiring flexible and adaptive approaches to support municipalities.

"Our innovative project "Digital Clinic" has very useful and fantastic contribution to the Sumy community development. The closer any resident to the doctor and can ask or consult him on any issue the more chances he has to be treated quickly and effectively and more chances to have a healthy community. For us it is very important our residents of the community are healthy in these difficult times for Ukraine because a healthy local community is a healthy and prosperous local economy,"

Oksana Kubrak, Head of the Strategic Development Department of the Sumy City Council, member of the City team, Urban Imaginaries Programme

Networking and events

Innovation Challenge in partnership with BOOST: 12 MSMEs selected to generate innovative ideas under the Mykolaiv and Ternopil Portfolios for Blue and Green Economy.

On June 27-29, 2024, the M4EG team participated in the Lviv Urban Forum under the theme "Taking Responsibility." This international event convened approximately 1,300 participants from Ukraine and abroad, discussing practical steps for Ukraine's urban transformation. M4EG sessions included a Workshop with Mykolaiv Portfolio Team, P4EG Methodology Workshop and Systems Thinking for Sustainable Adaptation and Resilience

On 31 October Kyiv hosted the First "Mykolaiv – City on the Wave" International Conference dedicated to the prospects of sustainable recovery and systemic transformation of Mykolaiv's economy through blue economy principles organized by Mykolaiv City Council in cooperation with Mykolaiv Oblast State Administration and the UNDP in Ukraine, with financial support from the European Union and the Kingdom of Denmark.

OUTPUT 2

Municipal pilot projects building on existing LEDPs are successfully implemented

This output is focused on implementing pilot projects within municipalities, a key aspect of the "deep" engagement strategy. Building on the technical assistance from Output 1, this second output facilitates investment, dynamic management, and insights from pilot projects, employing a funding scheme and an iterative process of listening, sensemaking, and co-creation. To ensure scale and impact demonstration, majority of the funds support local authorities deeply engaged in the Portfolio Journey, while the remaining grants back small-scale investments across the region through the Urban Imaginaries Programme.

As of December 2024, 63 unique seed-funds/grants have been granted to local authorities as members of M4EG. The amount of these ranges from EUR 15,000 to EUR 225,000 per municipality. All of these seed-funds, except for a few urgent response grants, are coupled with hands-on learning and design journeys with the intention to improve the municipalities' initial ideas and project design.

Portfolio Journey

The Portfolio Journey is a three-year-long program for in-depth learning and implementation based on systems thinking. All portfolios have gone through their initial steps of community listening, sensemaking and portfolio design and have started their first seed fund implementation. Five portfolios finalized their implementation in 2024 in Areni (Armenia), Batumi (Georgia), Kutaisi (Georgia), Ceadir-Lunga (Moldova) and Mykolaiv (Ukraine) by December 2024. It is expected that finalization of other Portfolios will be conducted by June 2025.

Spotlight Portfolio in Crises Context

MYKOLAIV, UKRAINE Deep Blue Transition

Mykolaiv is a significant city in southern Ukraine, known for its shipbuilding industry and strategic location along the Southern Bug River. Founded in 1789, Mykolaiv has grown into a vital economic and cultural centre. It boasts a rich maritime heritage, with multiple shipyards and a port that facilitates trade and transportation. The city suffered during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, being the site of a major battle and numerous other attacks. Recent efforts have focused on revitalising its economy and infrastructure, particularly through green and blue economy initiatives.

Mykolaiv's portfolio focuses on transforming the city's economic and environmental landscape by leveraging its maritime identity and resources. This initiative aims to create sustainable development pathways that enhance the quality of life for residents while promoting innovative and eco-friendly practices. The portfolio involves a wide range of stakeholders such as the Mykolaiv City Council and the Ukrainian Association of Business Support Centers.

The Mykolaiv City Council hosted "[Mykolaiv – City on the Wave](#)" international conference dedicated to the prospects for the sustainable recovery and systemic transformation of the city's economy and introduced a new economic model for the city based on the principles of "blue" and "green" economies along with the Mykolaiv's [Community Development Strategy](#) and key projects for the restoration and transfor-

mation of the region's territories and districts, including: [Online platform](#) for the blue and green economy; Concept of revitalization of the Mykolaiv Shipyard; Concept of revitalization of the Maritime Industrial Park; Concept of reconstruction of the building of the former Educational Centre "School of Young Sailors" into the Public Space "AquaPort"; Sustainable blue and green transformations of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which started with [5 Innovation Challenge](#).

"Thanks to its strong community and historical heritage in shipbuilding and port infrastructure, Mykolaiv is already moving towards a modern, diversified blue economy. It is a new ecosystem based on the principles of sustainable development and the circular economy,"

Oleksandr Syenkevych, the Mykolaiv City Mayor, stated that Mykolaiv is extremely important for Ukraine's economic recovery.

The event and Mykolaiv's new vision was widely communicated in regional media and some national outlets, for example Vikno Vidnovlennia (the biggest national outlet dedicated to Ukraine's recovery and Pragmatika (one of the leading urbanism outlet in Ukraine). in Ukraine)

Spotlight on Portfolio Implementation

BATUMI, GEORGIA

Startup Ecosystem Development

Batumi's Start-up Ecosystem Portfolio is built around following pillars:

Diversify and broaden Batumi's talent pool by retaining talented local youth and attracting external, high-skilled talent.

Contribute to a renewed urban identity by making Batumi Georgia's second startup capital.

Ignite interest, develop startup-savviness, and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation with a particular focus on youth.

Improve City Hall's capacity to enable Batumi's startup ecosystem.

Key Developments

Batumi successfully completed key activities defined under the portfolio with results seen in various areas of the city system supporting start-up ecosystem development:

Promoting Startup education through various events and trainings: such as Technologies and Future Jobs at Batumi Tech Park

The Batumi Startup Space is set to open in 2025, providing a co-working space for local and visiting startups/entrepreneurs and hosting community events.;

Boosting the local STARTUP community in Batumi: showcasing startup success stories, mentorship sessions, demo days etc.;

Equipping the portfolio team with knowledge and IT equipment;

Defining the Communication strategy supporting entrepreneurship;

Design and development of Startup Information Portal;

Co-organizing startup networking events and key partnerships with the Batumi Tech Park and Startup Grind & Startup Connect, including Startup summit, Startup World Cup - National Competition

Connecting with investors, Startup Investment Forum in Batumi Vol. 2 – September 2024 brought together startup founders, angel investors, and ecosystem members from Tbilisi and Batumi.

Urban Development Beyond Growth Research on Portfolio Journey

Together with Demos Helsinki, M4EG has initiated the report Urban Development Beyond Growth, which aims to capture and assess the diverse impacts resulting from our Portfolio Journey across various municipalities. All of the portfolio cities have reframed their complex challenges using the Urban Makeover concept which encompasses more holistic vision of urban transformation across various sectors like vibrant communities, cultural well-being and new value creation in addition to economic development. The report has sought to examine the impacts of city activities across a broad spectrum of outcomes, not just traditional economic metrics. By moving past traditional development paradigms, we seek to understand and enhance the multifaceted growth of urban areas.

The final report is finalized and published:
[Urban Development Beyond Growth](#)

Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2

In 2022 and 2023, 18 local authorities participated in the Urban Imaginaries Programme under M4EG, each receiving up to EUR 60,000 for project implementation. These authorities were introduced to human-centered design principles, which informed their grant implementation strategies. In 2024, Arup was contracted to support an advanced cohort of cities to scale the impact of their grants, attract new opportunities for national and international partnerships, and help them secure additional financing. In the end of January 2024, the Selection Committee endorsed eight municipalities for the advanced cohort: Poltava, Sumy, Lviv and Trostianets from Ukraine, Cahul from Moldova, Charentsavan from Armenia, and Poti and Tskaltubo from Georgia.

Key activities included mentorship and city-specific coaching sessions, facilitating workshops on scaling effects, and documenting the outcomes and recommendations for future iterations of the program. The programme highlighted strategies such as encouraging private sector investment, fostering partnerships, applying for grants, engaging citizens, and promoting economic sectors to mobilize resources and enhance the impact of local projects.

Activity 2.1.3

M4EG Annual Portfolio Call & M4EG Annual Innovation Projects Call

Please see the 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports for more background information. 28 local authorities are part of the two ongoing programmes. The table below provides an overview of the ongoing and planned interventions.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Portfolio Journey Programme: 2-3 year long mission-oriented economy programme (known as portfolio approach in UNDP) with design, dynamic management and iterative implementation of up to EUR 225,000						
Areni	Armenia	Sustainable Tourism	€225,000	Community Vision; Areni's identity and brand diagnostic and needs assessment; cultural gems; festival of national dishes; platform for hospitality businesses, municipal capacity building as development orchestrator; refugee crisis response.	€225,000	During initial implementation stage the portfolio has already engaged a wider number of stakeholders with more than 350 people from the nine villages (part of the municipality/community) to set a vision for the new economic profile of sustainable tourism hub. New cultural gems, such as a mountain hiking trail leading to a hidden cave church and revealed national-traditional dishes with potential of turning into new touristic offerings have been identified and introduced through developed partnerships and expanded interventions, development of Areni branding and mechanisms for collection of tourism feedback, etc. An ad-hoc option to support the municipality in addressing the refugee crisis was designed and implemented in October-December 2023.
Gyumri	Armenia	Cultural Tourism	€225,000	Co-creation of municipal green spaces; modernizing Mher Mkrtchyan museum; Art & Culture Technology Lab at the Aslamazyan Sisters Gallery; Open Data Database for accurate tourist information; Data collection to create baseline information for tourism in Gyumri	€70,000	Design of identity, intent and interventions/options for the seed-stage of the portfolio options was completed in June 2023. Political instabilities within the Gyumri municipality have affected the design and implementation of options, however, the portfolio team has been able to come up with flexible and alternative establish working relations decision making. To overcome the challenges and proceed with options activation it was decided to proceed with partner organizations initially involved in the design of options together with the municipality. This takes place in close liaison with the newly nominated acting mayor of Gyumri.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Kapan	Armenia	Well-being Economy; Diversification of economic opportunities	€225,000	Business advisory services; Business networks and access to new markets; Data management system development; career development and entrepreneurship camp for young people; Development of local human potential; refugee crisis response.	€172,300	An ad-hoc option to support the municipality in addressing the refugee crisis emerged as a result of the arrival of displaced population from the Nagorno Karabakh was designed in October 2023 and completed by December 2023. The Kapan municipality portfolio team actively continued promoting alternative economic growth by encouraging farmers to adopt innovative agricultural practices, such as greenhouse farming, rabbit farming, and beekeeping, to counter climate change and diversify from the region's mining focus. Additionally, measures were taken to strengthen local businesses including connecting entrepreneurs with established networks and providing access to training through partnerships with Mantashyants Business Club and Manasyan Group, who have been facilitating business exchanges and training sessions. Furthermore, through collaboration with an Armenian IT company Kapan municipality has developed a social database that will improve the delivery of social services by identifying community needs, tracking assistance, and coordinating with various stakeholders. This knowledge management system has been in operational testing mode by the end of 2024.
Icherisheher	Azerbaijan	Smart Old City; Heritage in service of societal, economic and innovation challenges		(13 options/interventions designed)	0	Portfolio design has been completed but the city withdrew from the programme prior to the implementation of the grants.
Khirdalan	Azerbaijan	Entrepreneurship and Talent	€225,000	Knowledge generation; new city brand/identity, youth talent matching, youth entrepreneurship narratives	€30,000	One of options has been activated, second option in the process of procurement. Portfolio has been updated with additional options as per municipalities needs.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Kutaisi	Georgia	Eco-Smart City	€225,000	Smart waste demonstrator, learning and exchange programme blueprint, 'eco wallet', green mobility – behavioral nudging proof of concept	€205,436	Kutaisi set up a strong inter-disciplinary team to support the portfolio approach under the mayor's leadership. Kutaisi has implemented smart waste management by establishing waste separation stations and introducing automated sensor systems to monitor container fill levels. Green mobility initiatives include installing four EV charging stations and exempting electric vehicle owners from parking fees. The city has also transformed the administrative building of Kutaisi Transport Company into a sustainable, energy-efficient demonstration site. To promote resource sustainability, a drinking water station has been installed to encourage the use of reusable containers and reduce single-use plastics. Through the Eco-Innovation Academy, young talents receive support to develop creative and eco-smart city initiatives. Additionally, municipal representatives have enhanced their skills through international study visits, training sessions, and webinars, fostering knowledge exchange and driving innovation.
Batumi	Georgia	Start-up Ecosystem	€225,000	The new startup space, networking in ecosystem, city hall is learning, startup information portal, networking and connecting Batumi; Startup education;	€168,265,2	Batumi successfully completed key activities defined under the portfolio positions, including: promoting Startup education, developing functional concept with operational plan, design recommendations and marketing plan and branding for the space, renovation and equipping of physical space – STARTUP BATUMI; organizing events for local STARTUP community in Batumi: showcasing startup success stories, mentorship sessions, demo days etc); equipping portfolio team with knowledge and IT equipment; defining the Communication strategy and action plan; design and development of Startup Information Portal; co-organizing startup networking events in cooperation with the Batumi Tech Park and Startup Grind &Startup Connect, including startup summit, Startup World Cup - National Competition, educational side events.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Ceadir-Lunga	Moldova	Energy Transition	€200,000	Kindergarten roof insulation and solar panel installation Residential energy audit pilot Automation of 35 public lighting metering units Solar-powered pedestrian crossing lights Smart House system at City Hall Green Energy Support Fund for residents Investor menu and investment forum Electronic info board at City Hall EV charging station installation Smart bus stops and transport tracking app Green education materials for kindergartens	€200,000	The energy efficiency portfolio in Ceadir-Lunga was implemented in three phases and completed by autumn 2024. Phase 1 concluded in mid-2023, Phase 2 reached 80% by the end of 2023, and all planned activities were finalized in the third phase. Major achievements include the renovation and insulation of the kindergarten roof and installation of 20 kW solar panels, resulting in a 30% reduction in heat loss and 70% energy savings, with an investment of USD 79,800. The city upgraded its public lighting system by automating 35 metering stations and installing solar-powered pedestrian lights, totaling USD 39,600. It also established the Green Energy Support Fund with an initial USD 7,940 and launched an investor outreach campaign and forum supported with USD 10,800. A digital information board was installed at city hall for improved public access and transparency (USD 8,470). To support green mobility, two EV charging stations were installed (USD 3,570), along with two smart bus stops equipped with solar panels and live tracking (USD 45,650). Educational materials promoting green energy were distributed to kindergartens, reaching over 1,000 children (USD 4,710). UNDP provided approximately USD 200,000 for these activities and additionally supported the city in mobilizing USD 60,000 from the Polish Challenge Fund, in partnership with EuroCentrum (Poland). All funds have been disbursed and implementation is complete, delivering tangible improvements in energy use, urban infrastructure, and community engagement.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Mykolaiv	Ukraine	Renewal – Blue Economy	€225,000	Innovation challenge fund, startup accelerator, Portfolio Hub space in city, information campaign, economic clustering study and technical support, etc.	€91,100.31	In August 2024 the Portfolio Team developed and launched a new additional project in order to continue the previously launched activities and to enhance the potential of the city of Mykolaiv for growth and development, support the city's transition to blue economy principles through access to knowledge and innovation, and systematically engage the community in development processes. The activities within project will allow to equip the newly created PortfolioHUB and Blue Economy Lab, to Develop pre-project documentation for the Aquaport public space building as a space for youth maritime profession education and public participation and to organize a study visit European countries to familiarize with the successful experience in implementing industrial development tools – industrial parks – with the development of practical recommendations for selecting and organizing the work of an effective management company in Mykolaiv. The initiative is co-financed by the Danish Innovation Facility (USD 75,000) and is planned to be finalized till the end of May 2025.
Ternopil	Ukraine	Renewal - Green Transition, Green Comfort City	€225,000	Developing a Green Transition Strategy; Implementing a nature-based solution for public area; Supporting green innovations in the MSMEs sector (UNDP Innovation Challenge); Establishment of the Green Transition Hub.	0	The portfolio is currently in its active implementation phase. The municipality has already established the EcoHub to promote green transformation and has conducted two study visits to other Ukrainian cities to learn best practices in energy efficiency and waste management. At present, the Community Development Strategy, focused on green transformation, has been developed and awaits approval from the local city council. The Implementation Plan for the Strategy and the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan are also under development. Additionally, the partners are introducing a nature-based solution through the creation of a therapy garden. Finally, the portfolio team is finalizing the Innovation Challenge, an accelerator program designed for MSMEs in the green economy. All activities are expected to be completed by May 2025.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Portfolio Journey Programme: 2-3 year long mission-oriented economy programme (known as portfolio approach in UNDP) with design, dynamic management and iterative implementation of up to EUR 225,000						
Alaverdi	Armenia	Cultural Life	€60,000	Improved and sufficient cultural house building conditions	€60,000	Testing of misc. cultural events as part of the journey to find the best match. Design of cultural house done and tender process ongoing. Content of culture house activities under design (through public hearing). Approx. additional USD 170,000 mobilized from central government for the culture house.
Ashtarak	Armenia	Public Transportation Mobility, public transport reform	€60,000	Renovation of bus stops, mobility strategy, new busses	€60,000	Renovating of existing bus stops and procurement for new buses initiated. Finalized transportation system map and plan for the local authority. Approx. additional USD 210,000 mobilized from central government for public transport (bus stops, busses, improvement of roads). Ongoing talks with private entities to build new relationships and supply options.
Charentsavan	Armenia	Public Square; Re-imagining central street and center	€60,000	Blueprint for square, community engagement, procurement of light infrastructure works	€60,000	Finalized blueprint and tendering for construction company. Public engagement and hearing around residents' and private sector needs and interest for the urban space – signature space for the amalgamated community.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Cahul	Moldova	Waste management	€60,000	Waste management infrastructure (10 new collection platformss) and social engagement activities	€60,000	All funds transferred and implemented by the end of 2023. The Urban Imaginaries project focusing on waste management in Cahul Municipality has yielded significant results and garnered positive feedback from stakeholders. The principal areas of impact are as follows. Improved Waste Infrastructure, with the construction of ten (instead of initially planned five) enclosed waste collection platforms and installation of separate waste collection containers have significantly enhanced the municipality's waste management infrastructure. Increased Awareness and Engagement: The project's awareness-raising activities, including drawing contests for young people and educational games for children in kindergartens, have successfully engaged residents across different age groups. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under the Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.
Călărași	Moldova	Sustainable Waste Collection Platforms	€60,000	3 new waste and recycling platforms in the town with video surveillance and social engagement activities among different age groups	€60,000	All funds transferred and implemented by the end of 2023. The Urban Imaginaries project in Călărași Municipality significantly improved waste management infrastructure and community engagement. Results include: construction of three enclosed waste collection platforms with improved lighting and surveillance, reducing waste scattering. Creation of urban art objects from recyclable waste materials, beautifying platforms and raising awareness about recycling. Educational initiatives, such as contests and games, engaged youth and promoted environmental stewardship. Development of a regulatory framework for waste evacuation services increased contracts and revenue for the Municipal Enterprise.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Lviv	Ukraine	Life-long education for better integration of IDPs in hosting community	€60,000	Creation of the space for comprehensive service provision system for psychological support, employment and social integration of residents	€54,014	All project activities were finalized in January 2024. The mechanism of engagement of IDPs and residents into social and economic activities through obtaining non-formal education was established. Also, the partner built a referral mechanism for psychological support, employment assistance, and social integration provided by the Lviv City Council, local NGOs, and the business community. Finally, the educational space for fruitful communication, education, and training of the beneficiaries was created. During project implementation, the team identified that the residents of the city and IDPs need constant psychological and employment support from the project specialists to cope with the problems caused by war in Ukraine. Particularly, reskilling programs were in high demand among both city residents and IDPs. Finally, the creation of referral mechanism within the project resulted in catalyzing the provision of comprehensive support in the city for most vulnerable war-affected persons. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under the Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.
Trostianets	Ukraine	Improved MSMEs support services	€60,000	Strengthening of entrepreneurship activity in the community, creation of a Training and Advisory Center for Business	€40,510	The project activities were finalized in 2024. To address the requests of the local businesses for trainings and consultations on starting and running businesses, the Training and Advisory Center for Business Representatives was established. The newly created Center became the local hub (trainings, advisory, mentoring etc) for local businesses from several nearby communities in the Sumy region of Ukraine. Before starting the learning and other activities for local businesses, consultations with local businesses took place, during which the exact training needs were identified. This allowed the project to meet the expectations of the local businesses. The activities of the Center are planned to be scaled up to other municipalities in neighboring oblasts. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under the Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Sumy	Ukraine	Digitalization of healthcare services provision	€60,000	Creation of a model of an electronic patient support system “Digital Clinic” in medical institutions of the city	€57,583	The project activities were finalized in 2024. Before all project activities the user analysis for the design of the specialized software and the series of workshops to identify “hotspots” and insights for future project implementation were conducted. The results of the pilot phase were analyzed. It was confirmed by the doctors, senior medical personnel and other stakeholders, as well as patients in the hospitals that currently there is no efficient mechanism for communication between medical staff and the patients to allow fast and productive communication for the provision of effective treatment. The specialized software and application for the “Digital Clinic” will simplify the communication between medical personnel and will improve their communication with patients. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under the Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.
Melitopol	Ukraine	Access to admin services for members of a temporarily occupied community	€60,000	Creation of the Communication Point at the "Open Assistance Space "SAME TUT" to support IDPs of the community	€59,100	The project activities were finalized in 2024. The effective mechanism in receiving, processing, and answering the requests of IDPs from Melitopol has been established at the Communicative Point “SAME TUT” in Zaporizhzhia City. IDPs are assisted with addressing the most urgent issues (administrative, housing etc.). This helps reduce social tension and support their adaptation and integration into new communities. The municipality faced the challenge that many IDPs from Melitopol also settled down in different big cities, which resulted in the need to replicate Communicative Point launched in Zaporizhzhia. As a result of the project implementation in 2023, more than 10 additional Communicative Point “SAME TUT” were established in other cities in 2024, including Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa in order to support IDPs from Melitopol with their primary needs.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Poltava	Ukraine	Community greenhouse as public space for interaction between IDPs and host community	€60,000	Specialist support for IDP needs, social integration events and offers, construction of community green-house	€55,160	The project activities were finalized in 2024. Before the project started, the municipality faced the problem of low integration of IDPs into the Poltava community. During project implementation, it was revealed that the number of IDPs that need support had not reduced in the community and also they need constant comprehensive support from local authorities, specialists, and residents of the community. Under the project, specialists (psychologist, consultant on employment, and consultant on legal issues) were contracted to support IDPs and other most vulnerable war-affected people for their adaptation and integration into the community. Trainings, round tables, and social integration events were held to involve residents of the community and IDPs to the joint activities on the bases of the newly built greenhouses. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under the Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.
Sabail	Azerbaijan	Second Breath – rehabilitation center for women released from correctional facilities	€60,000	Details under design	0	Procurement process for implementation at final stages.
Naftalan	Azerbaijan	Community space for under privileged families	€60,000	Details under design	0	Procurement process for implementation at final stages.
Mingachevir	Azerbaijan	Transition to LED lighting at household level	€60,000	Details under design	€25,0	Procurement process to be finalized and completed by end of Q1 2024. Additional procurement to be conducted due to remaining balance.

*Repurposed from Icherisheher portfolio.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Urva	Azerbaijan	Development of tourism destination route and promotion of locally produced goods	€60,000 + 225,000*	Details under design	€40,000	Municipal team has completed the development and design of the branding of the local product and hired an expert to work with direct beneficiaries of the initiative.
Samtredia	Georgia	Developing sports facilities and new identity of the city	€60,000	Rehabilitation of the swimming pool, Space for children	€57,788.1	Building on this legacy, municipality developed the ambitious mission to become a hub for promoting a healthy lifestyle in the western Georgia. Before the pandemic, a swimming pool operated in the municipality, but it was eventually closed. Through the M4EG Urban Imaginaries program, the city hall engaged with the community, listened to their needs, and decided to revitalize the sports complex. With EU-UNDP M4EG funding, Samtredia began restoration of the swimming pool, with plans to renew other sports facilities in the future. For the swimming pool, municipality allocated additional funds (USD 117,000) from the local budget. In addition to promoting a healthy lifestyle, this initiative has slowly begun to generate economic benefits, as local entrepreneurs have started opening small shops and offering various services to visitors.
Tskaltubo	Georgia	Developing vibrant cultural and social space	€60,000	Establishment of a Cultural Hub, Engaging small entrepreneurs in cultural event	€56,217.8	The municipality completed implementation of the project. An amphitheater for public events is arranged at the premises of the museum. Several cultural and educational events already took place along with outreach and stakeholder engagement, including private sector. With additional grant funding secured by the municipality, an educational corner is arranged in the Museum. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under the Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.

Local authority	Country	Thematic / mission focus	Total grant amount	Name of Interventions/ Options designed	Funds implemented or under contract	Comments and results/effects so far
Poti	Georgia	Arranging central park, increasing its accessibility	€60,000	Park multifunctionality, adapted public space for all	€55,689.7	The project implementation was divided into two phases: • Creating an open space for watching sports and cultural events with a screen and chairs. • Installing two attractions/swings. At the first stage, a LED monitor was purchased, co-financed by the municipality, to be used for diverse events. The monitor's settings allow it to be used flexibly in different locations. At the second stage, the space was adapted further, with installations and attractions suitable for people with disabilities. Safe play attractions were added, including an adapted lens and a special wooden house with a ramp for children in wheelchairs. Additionally, chess tables were custom-made to accommodate people of all ages and abilities, including wheelchair users. Project is completed, however the process of arranging the multifunctional space continues. With the help of M4EG municipality is conducting survey to learn about citizens' satisfaction with the park and their further needs to plan upgrades accordingly. The municipality was selected to continue its journey under Urban Imaginaries – Advanced Cohort Part 2. Please navigate to Output 2 section of the report for more detailed information.
Rustavi	Georgia	Promoting green entrepreneurship among youth through applying innovative approaches; developing environmental services	€60,000	Metaverse academy simulation, High tech learning course, technical tools/ machinery	€54,716.1	Implementation of the initiative is completed. The main goal of the project was to involve the youth in the process of creating municipal green services, to equip the corresponding service center of Rustavi City Hall with modern equipment, which will contribute to the growth and development of recreational spaces in the city. Hence, the project is directly related to the environment and climate change. More info is available in the Georgia Highlights 2023-24.

Cost-sharing and attracting additional funds

The M4EG Secretariat has seen that many recipient municipalities are able to cost share or attract additional funding based on the project proposal or idea generated under the M4EG programmes. A total of USD 1.8m has been mobilized so far.

Table: Additional resources mobilized on top of the grants under M4EG to further scale the idea/pilot project.

Country	Municipality	Amount (USD)	Source of co-funding
Armenia	Alaverdi	230,000	Central government
Armenia	Charentsavan	14,000	Central government
Azerbaijan	Urva	25,000	Central government (State Tourism Agency)
Georgia	Baghdati	203,000	GIZ, Germany
Georgia	Batumi	283,000	Local municipal budget & in-kind
Georgia	Poti	50,000	TBC Bank
Georgia	Samtredia	117,000	Local municipal budget
Georgia	Tskaltubo	7,000	Danish Development (DANIDA)
Moldova	Ceadir-Lunga	83,262	Local municipal budget
Moldova	Ceadir-Lunga	40,000	Poland (MFA Challenge Funds)
Moldova	Cahul	14,512	Local municipal budget
Moldova	Calarasi	31,103	Local municipal budget
Moldova	Response & Renewal municipal co-financing	168,000	Local municipal budgets
Moldova	Refugee Response (Sireti, Geamăna, Taraclia)	28,885	Local municipal budgets
Ukraine	Mykolaiv	422,000	Government of Denmark
Ukraine	Response & Renewal municipal co-financing	247,915	Local municipal budgets
Total amount			1,842,677

Activity 2.1.4

Finance and investment preparedness

In early 2023, responding to local needs and donor interest, M4EG initiated a new work stream focused on diversifying resources and mobilizing additional funding and financing for municipalities and urban systems. Approximately EUR 100,000 were reallocated for the 2023-2024 period to enhance the mobilization of extra funding and financing for M4EG initiatives at the local level. Throughout 2024, the Secretariat undertook several foundational activities to expand finance and investment preparedness, such as mapping funding and financing programmes and aligning them with the M4EG grant programmes and EaP Economic and Investment plan priorities, as well as initiating partnership discussions with EIB, AFD, UNCDF and EU4Business to explore synergies and consultations with financing partners and organizations. A closer cooperation was established with European Investment Bank in supporting the project implementation of the Framework Loan in Armenia under the Resilient Syunik Programme.

Research and Learning - Financing Research: "Ideas to Enhance Finance and Funding Capabilities for Municipalities in Eastern Partnership"

To better align with the regional context and the needs of cities, UNDP's Internal Task Team on urban contracted Arup for research, conducted through a combination of desk-based research and interviews with stakeholders, and which sought to identify the primary obstacles faced by municipalities in the EaP in accessing a wider array of financial resources. Furthermore, it sets out solution pathways and ideas for unlocking additional funding for urban development initiatives.

The research is finalized and published: [Ideas to Enhance Finance and Funding Capabilities for Municipalities](#). The findings are being discussed and utilized in the next phase planning of M4EG.

ULC Course on Finance and Funding

To improve the capabilities of local authorities in EaP, M4EG developed a course "Financing for Municipalities" with Arup. This course aims to provide participants with an overview of the funding and finance landscape for municipalities. It focuses on the enabling conditions necessary for attracting finance and practical ways municipalities can improve these conditions at a local level for their projects. Both the research and the course were launched during COP29 in Baku in November.

Finance Fridays

Finance Fridays is a learning ritual taking place every fortnight on Fridays within the M4EG team. Each session focuses on one topic around municipal finance, providing space to learn from a video or an expert and have a group discussion around it. Finance Fridays was designed to develop the team's capabilities and to support the development of a common vocabulary and shared understanding of the landscape of municipal financing for the region. The series of 7 sessions between May and June included various themes: challenges faced by municipalities, business model canvas, municipal-owned enterprises, investment curve for different project stages, revolving funds, innovative finance, and tokenization.

Embedding Financing into Deep Programmes

Throughout the M4EG grant programmes different scaling, funding and partnership modalities have been explored. E.g the Advanced Urban Imaginaries Programme is currently being implemented with funding/financing focus (see Urban Imaginaries section for more details). The Portfolio Journey is exploring different access to finance options e.g for green/blue economy SMEs accelerators in Ukraine, for start-up's in Georgia under the Batumi Start-up Ecosystem Portfolio and for tourism SMEs in Armenia. Investment Menus and Profiles have been developed in Poti, Georgia and Ceadir-Lunga, Moldova to boost the visibility and attractiveness of their investment projects. The Response & Renewal programme is looking into access to finance and/or business development support opportunities for social enterprises in Ukraine. See more detailed descriptions for a Crowdfunding Academy in Moldova and Funding and Investment Preparedness Academy in Georgia.

M4EG Crowdfunding Academy in Moldova

The M4EG Crowdfunding Academy is an interactive training program designed to empower local authorities by enhancing their skills in preparing and conducting successful crowdfunding campaigns. The online trainings were completed in March 2024 and the in-person event took place on 9-10 of April. The [two-day workshop](#) covered the entire crowdfunding process, from selecting local priorities to choosing a platform, conducting communication campaigns, and ensuring transparency in fund collection and reporting achievements. With expert guidance, each municipality developed a campaign strategy for their proposed project, a communication plan, identified communication channels, and visual elements to engage the public.



Participants at the Crowdfunding Academy on April 9-10

3 crowdfunding campaigns successfully raised funds for implementing projects in their community. One of the first successful campaigns was launched by the city of Anenii Noi and they raised around US\$3,000. Their campaign, Sports Ground – A Place for Inclusive and Fun Interaction for Parents and Children, aimed to create an inclusive playground for all children at the Andrieș kindergarten, including children from Ukrainian refugee families. The [blogpost on Crowdfunding Academy in Moldova](#) is published.

Another Crowdfunding Academy was launched in Armenia and will be finalized in 2025.

Funding and Investment Preparedness Academy in Georgia

In 2024 M4EG Georgia designed and launched a Funding and Investment Preparedness Academy. The Academy is a pilot learning and training initiative created to empower local authorities with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively attract and manage municipal investments and create a favourable environment for local economic growth. Recognizing the pivotal role local authorities, the academy aimed to provide a comprehensive platform for professional development, fostering a local professionals well-versed in strategic investment attraction. 10 municipalities developed their investment catalogues comprising three key components: (a) essential municipal data on the local business environment, (b) investment properties, and (c) development project ideas.

[Link to the UNDP Georgia Facebook page on the academy](#)

[Link to the UNDP Georgia LinkedIn and Instagram article about the academy](#)

Currently, M4EG grant programmes have been able to mobilize an additional USD 1.9 million funding mainly from internal municipal, government and donor grant resources. Despite some private sector grants, it is obvious that tapping into more complex financing capital requires tackling the barriers identified in the financing research in the future. The project team will do more detailed mapping of the mobilized resources in 2025.

OUTPUT 3

Ukraine crisis emergency and refugee response, recovery, and resilience

EU-M4EG Response and Renewal Programme

The “EU Response and Renewal Grant Programme for M4EG” (RRP) is a light fund structure, more background information can be found in the 2022 Annual Report. The process started at the end of 2022 when M4EG had open calls for project ideas, and in February 2023 the M4EG Selection Committee selected 18 cities in total from Ukraine and Moldova for the programme. Seven cities were selected under Lot 1 – Response & Immediate Recovery, namely Chortkiv (Ternopil Oblast), Hlukhiv (Sumy Oblast), Kamianets-Podilskyi (Khmelnytskyi Oblast), Slavuta (Khmelnytskyi Oblast), and Velyka Oleksandrivka (Kherson Oblast) from Ukraine, and Carpineni and Volintiri from Moldova.

As part of Lot 2 – Renewal & Anticipation, the following 11 cities were selected: Bucha (Kyiv Oblast), Chernivtsi (Chernivtsi Oblast), Kharkiv (Kharkiv Oblast), Nizhyn (Chernihiv Oblast), Nova Kakhovka (Kherson Oblast), Slavutych (Kyiv Oblast), Velyki Luchky (Zakarpattia Oblast), and Voznesensk (Mykolaiv Oblast) from Ukraine, and Copceac, Cimislia, and Drochia from Moldova.

In total, 17 initiatives have been concluded in both Moldova and Ukraine by the end of December 2024.

In Ukraine, thirteen local initiatives helped communities and internally displaced persons to adapt in radically changing environment by strengthening community resilience, promoting their recovery, and identifying ways for sustainable growth in the face of the war. Municipal enterprises have been set up to promote the employment of internally displaced persons. A sewing workshop was opened in Nizhyn, which will provide 30 new jobs; Chortkiv opened a social service centre; Velyki Luchky opened a centre for the collection, processing and sale of wild plants, and Slavuta opened a micro greenery enterprise.



Workers of the newly-created Nizhyn sewing workshop. Photo credit: Dmytrii Korchak / UNDP Ukraine

Several communities have created integration spaces to facilitate the social adaptation of internally displaced persons. These spaces include a communication hub in Chernivtsi, a resource centre in Kamianets-Podilskyi, an adaptation and integration hub in Slavutych, and a support centre for internally displaced persons from Nova Kakhovka (opened in Odesa).

Several institutions were opened to facilitate access to services important to both the local population and internally displaced persons. In particular, **the first-ever comprehensive rehabilitation department** in the city was established in Bucha, and an educational space, the Education Centre for Adults, was opened in Voznesensk. In addition, the frontline village of Velyka Oleksandrivka restored the administrative and public services provision to its community. Two communities managed to help solve the problem of IDPs' accommodation: shelters for 80 and 100 people were built in Hlukhiv and Slavutych, respectively.

The programme also implemented large-scale and innovative ideas: an **online platform** for an interactive 3D model of Kharkiv and the Slavutych community **Comprehensive Restoration and Development Plan** for 2024-2027 were created.

“Looking back at the Response and Renewal grant programme results, we can confidently say that its rapid deployment during the first year of full-scale war allowed us to provide timely support to Ukrainian communities and disadvantaged citizens. In the future, the supported initiatives will provide a good basis for the economic and social development of the participating communities, their inclusive growth and building a better future.”

The EU Delegation to Ukraine

In Moldova, five municipalities underwent a transformative journey. In Cărpineni, a newly established Refugee Integration Center offers professional training, re-skilling, and educational activities for Ukrainian children. The center, developed in partnership with an NGO and a gender specialist, also promotes gender equality and women's empowerment. The Local Action Group supports this effort by providing free Romanian language courses and facilitating professional retraining.

In Volintiri, a business center inaugurated in November 2024 focuses on small business development and refugee accommodation. It includes four business spaces and offers training on entrepreneurship alongside housing support. Copceac has launched a multifunctional center delivering four integrated social services to refugees, vulnerable groups, and businesses. The completed infrastructure is complemented by local authority training in social service delivery and sustainable economic planning.

Cimișlia improved public mobility and access to services through the purchase of two minibuses and the construction of a new bus station. These upgrades enhance access to jobs, healthcare, and education for all residents, including refugees and low-income groups. In Drochia, energy efficiency upgrades at Kindergarten No. 5 “Little Red Riding Hood” have created a more comfortable and creative learning environment for around 200 children. Renovations included insulation, a new roof, and a mural-painted façade, benefiting both local and refugee families.

Strengthening Capabilities of Local Public Authorities in Crisis Management

Started first in fall 2023 and lasted till mid spring 2024, Ukrainian Friendship Officers (UFOs) played an important mid-layer to help Ukrainian refugees overcome language barriers, unfamiliar legal systems, and limited access to resources left many refugees feeling isolated and uncertain. The officers were deployed as not just service providers but rather vital bridges between refugees and the local communities, ensuring that no one feels abandoned or alone in their time of need.¹⁴ Ukrainian Friendship Officers were strategically placed in Balti, Cahul, Calarasi, Carpineni, Ceadir-Lunga, Cimislia, Copceac, Donduseni, Drochia, Palanca, Selemet, Straseni, Telenesti, and Ungheni. UFOs'

efforts included accurately tracking refugee demographics, providing essential information, and assisting the most vulnerable. Officers have facilitated employment opportunities, promoted social integration, and ensured the dissemination of reliable information. They have also coordinated aid efforts, implemented crisis responses, and shared best practices. These comprehensive efforts have brought stability and hope to many refugees, significantly aiding in their integration and helping them rebuild their lives in their new communities. By the end of their assignment, UFOs organized social cohesion events to bridge cultural divides, foster understanding, and build trust between refugees and local communities.



A refugee integration center in Cărpineni

Gender Mainstreaming of the Response & Renewal Initiatives

To support a more effective, sustainable, and inclusive implementation on the local level of the Response & Renewal Programme, in 2023 the M4EG Secretariat in both Ukraine and Moldova engaged a National Consultant on Gender Mainstreaming.

In Ukraine, 20 municipality teams, supported under the Portfolio Journey, Response and Renewal, and Urban Imaginaries Programs, received recommendations and guidance on how to improve their projects by integrating a gender-sensitive approach in their projects. Finally, the “[Guidelines for gender mainstreaming](#)” in projects implemented by municipalities have been developed.

The Gender Consultant from Moldova conducted mentoring sessions with municipalities in Copceac, Drochia, Volintiri, Cimislia, and Carpieni, focusing on integrating gender mainstreaming into local economic recovery initiatives. Follow-up support during project implementation ensured that gender equality considerations were effectively embedded, contributing to sustainable development outcomes under the M4EG Response & Renewal Programme. These efforts aimed to empower local authorities to foster inclusive growth and resilience in their communities. The consultant also presented key findings and lessons learned, providing comprehensive recommendations to further strengthen gender-sensitive approaches within the programme.

Please refer to the 2024 mid-year report to see the evaluation reports of the gender consultant in Moldova.

Activity 3.3.

Response and Renewal Programme

Overview of grants and progress under Response and Renewal Programme

In total 13 local initiatives of Ukrainian municipalities and five from Moldova have been selected for support and supported with the M4EG project in 2023-2024. The status of implementation and achieved results for each municipality are presented in the table below.

Local authority	Country	Focus of intervention	USD amount of Agreement	Update on implementation, results and effects so far
Chortkiv	UKR	Response: Improvement of access to social services for vulnerable population (IDPs and people living in difficult conditions) in the Chortkiv Territorial Community through establishment of the Center for Social Services.	USD 46,107	The project has been completed in May 2024. The partners established a Center of Social Support for IDPs and local vulnerable groups, creating 4 new jobs in the community. Also, a series of trainings have been conducted for IDPs. They include trainings on professional orientation, project management, fundraising, as well as upskilling workshops.
Hlukhiv	UKR	Response: Creation of favourable living conditions for short- and long-term residence of IDPs and conflict-affected population in Hlukhiv City of Sumy Oblast.	USD 49,061	The project has been completed in February 2024. The partners created comfortable conditions for residence for 70 IDPs and persons, whose homes have been damaged, in the local dormitory. Under the project, the respective repair works and procurements of necessary furniture and equipment have been conducted.
Velyka Oleksandrivka	UKR	Response: Restoration of administrative and public services in the Velyka Oleksandrivka Urban Village of Kherson Oblast.	USD 34,090	The project has been completed in April 2024. The partners have restored provision of remote administrative and public services in the community through procurement of vehicle and mobile case. Also, necessary equipment and furniture have been procured within the project to ensure provision of the administrative and public services in the stationary Center for the provision of administrative services in community located close to the frontline.
Slavuta	UKR	Response: Creation of conditions for economic and social integration of IDPs into the Slavuta Territorial Community. Support of IDPs' employment at the local level.	USD 23,806	The project has been completed in April 2024. In Slavuta, the partners established a municipal microgreen production and created 3 new jobs for IDPs. Also, the local partners engaged more than 100 community members, including over 50 kids and their parents, who actively participated in trainings and workshops on microgreen cultivation.
Kamianets-Podilskyi	UKR	Response: Social integration of IDPs into the Kamianets-Podilskyi Territorial Community through establishment of the Municipal Resource Center for IDPs Support to provide social, humanitarian, legal, and other assistance.	USD 49,338	The project has been completed in April 2024. The partners have established a municipal Resource Center to support IDPs. Within the project, more than 1000 IDPs received consultations, and 190 persons participated in the trainings on psychological support and professional development.

Local authority	Country	Focus of intervention	USD amount of Agreement	Update on implementation, results and effects so far
Kharkiv	UKR	Renewal: Support to the war affected Kharkiv on its way to sustainable modernization and restoration. Support in Developing of the concept of a Master Plan of the City using leading international experience.	USD 110,170	The project has been completed in May 2024. The partners developed a 3D model of the city and preserved its historical landmarks through conducting 3D scanning. The city also contributed to the project by conducting detailed damage assessments of residential buildings.
Slavutych	UKR	Renewal: Creation of a complex cross-sectoral management mechanism for crisis response in the Slavutych Territorial Community of Kyiv Oblast.	USD 109,352	The project has been completed in May 2024. Under the project, the partners established a Shelter for 100 IDPs; organized trainings and workshops on psychological rehabilitation, psychological art therapy, personal development, and photo- and videography for over 150 persons; created the Adaptation and Integration Hub and an online information service to support IDPs; conducted three sociological and two surveys strategic sessions; elaborated a Plan for Comprehensive Recovery and Development of Slavutych; supported further development of local businesses through the provision of trainings and launching an online information service Business Integration; organized two social cohesion events for more than 250 persons and the Interregional Forum Unbreakable Ukraine with participation of over 100 persons.
Chernivtsi	UKR	Renewal: Support in adaptation and integration of IDPs and conflict-affected population to the Chernivtsi Territorial Community through involving them in the activities of the newly established Community Cohesion Center.	USD 270,186	The project is in active phase of implementation and is planned to be completed in April 2025. The partners have finalized conducting educational programs and trainings, as well restoration works to establish a communication and integration space for IDPs. The duration of the project has been extended due to the delay with disruptions of production of furniture and the need to identify a new supplier.
Nova Kakhovka	UKR	Renewal: Creation of conditions for organizational support of IDPs and conflict - affected population through establishment of the Community Center for Support of IDPs in the Nova Kakhovka Community.	USD 49,733	The project has been completed in June 2024. The partners established a Center to support IDPs from Nova Kakhovka. Also, a series of psychological trainings and consultations have been conducted within the project to support IDPs.

Local authority	Country	Focus of intervention	USD amount of Agreement	Update on implementation, results and effects so far
Nizhyn	UKR	Renewal: Creation of conditions for employment and socio-psychological adaptation of IDPs through launching a new sewing direction at the existing communal enterprise in the Nizhyn Community.	USD 144,989	The project has been completed in April 2024. The partners established a municipal sewing workshop, creating 30 new jobs for IDPs and other vulnerable categories. The respective repair works and procurements of sewing equipment and furniture were conducted within the project. Also, a series of practical sewing trainings have been conducted for the workers of the sewing workshop. They were complemented by group psychological activities, the need in which was identified during the community listening at the initial stage of project development.
Bucha	UKR	Renewal: Provision of the wide range of rehabilitation services to the population of the Bucha Territorial Community of Kyiv Oblast. Establishment of the Complex Rehabilitation Department on the basis of the Bucha Consultative and Diagnostic Center.	USD 97,851	The project has been completed in April 2024. As a result of the project, a complex rehabilitation department at the Bucha Consultative and Diagnostics Center has been established in Bucha. The city residents have access to rehabilitation outpatient care. The project also supported creation of 8 new jobs in the municipality.
Voznesensk	UKR	Renewal: Development and implementation of the concept of sustainable restoration of the Territorial Community of Voznesensk using modern approaches of urbanism and digital spatial modelling.	USD 137,751	The partner established an Adult Education Center by conducting repair works and purchasing equipment. Computer equipment has been purchased for the municipality team to increase its capacity for digital spatial modelling.
Velyki Luchky	UKR	Renewal: Increasing economic activity and improving tourist attractiveness of the Velyki Luchky Territorial Community by establishing the Center for collection, processing and sales of wild plants.	USD 80,580	The project has been completed in May 2024. As a result of the project, the Center for collection, processing and sales of wild plants has been established. Also, 3 new jobs have been created for IDPs in the community, and 130 persons participated in the trainings and workshops.

Local authority	Country	Focus of intervention	USD amount of Agreement	Update on implementation, results and effects so far
Cărpineni	MLD	Response: Creation of refugee integration center. The center will provide refugees and local citizens with opportunities for professional training and re-skilling, and their inclusion in the economic processes in the region. Premises will also be provided to organize learning activities for Ukrainian children.	USD 97,364	Completed. The partner was consulted by gender specialist to boost consideration of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) agenda. An Integration Centre was created in Cărpineni, which ensures the professional reprofiling of refugees and their socio-economic inclusion. Activities for preschoolers were organized in the Centre, so that parents can get involved in the workforce.
Volintiri	MLD	Response: Development of small businesses and accommodation space for refugees. By creating four spaces for the beginning entrepreneurs to start their businesses; to provide learning in the field of starting a business; to offer an accommodation for refugees.	USD 52,042	Completed. The Business centre building was renovated: the roof was repaired; the exterior walls were insulated, and the heating system was installed. Works were fully completed in December 2024.
Copceac	MLD	Renewal: Create a multifunctional center of public services for refugees, socially vulnerable groups of population, and businesses. This is a combination of four social services in one place to achieve the main goal - empowering refugees from Ukraine, residents, and the business community at the local level.	USD 150,000	Completed. The building of the Centre of multifunctional social services in Copceac has been renovated and opened in December. In addition to the infrastructure modernization, local authorities in Copceac benefited from training to strengthen their capacities in the field of social services and develop their skills in efficient and sustainable economic planning.
Cimislia	MLD	Renewal: Improved public transport and access to public services and job opportunities. Through this intervention, it is aimed to improve citizens' mobility, facilitate the integration of refugees and vulnerable groups, and stimulate the local economy.	USD 95,000	Completed. Two new minibuses were purchased in the city of Cimișlia and a bus station was built. Thus, all residents, including refugees and people with low incomes, have access to public transport, which ensures their mobility and facilitates their access to the workplace and essential services, such as healthcare.
Drochia	MLD	Renewal: Energy Efficiency measures in a kindergarten for the quality provision of educational services and adapting them to the needs of refugee families from Ukraine as well for the local population.	USD 143,350	Completed. About 200 children are receiving quality education in a more comfortable and creative environment, after the kindergarten no. 5 "Little Red Riding Hood" was completely renovated: the walls were insulated, the roof was replaced, and the facade was painted with a mural.



Funded by
the European Union



UN
DP



CROSSCUTTING- INTEGRATION

CROSSCUTTING-INTEGRATION

The M4EG initiative continues to advance inclusive and sustainable development by embedding crosscutting themes such as gender equality, social cohesion, and resilience into its programming. In response to the war in Ukraine, M4EG has prioritized support for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine and refugees in Moldova. This includes employment initiatives, social adaptation spaces, and access to essential services in Ukraine, while Moldova has seen improvements in social services, education, and public transport to aid refugee integration.

To ensure gender perspectives are mainstreamed, a National Consultant on Gender was engaged in both countries during 2023–2024. Moldova also launched a support hub for Ukrainian refugees, deploying Ukrainian Friendship Officers and engaging around 500 people—especially children—in cultural and environmental activities.

In Armenia, M4EG promotes cultural and economic integration through heritage preservation and creative industries. Efforts include documenting traditions in Vayots Dzor, enhancing tourism in Areni, and revitalizing cultural infrastructure in Gyumri and Kapan. These initiatives not only preserve heritage but also stimulate local economies and community identity.

M4EG's broader vision is anchored in social equity, environmental stewardship, and economic resilience. Through tools like the Systems Portfolio and Human-Centered Design, and platforms like the Urban Learning Center, the initiative supports cities in becoming inclusive, green, smart, and resilient. Looking ahead, M4EG plans to expand its focus on energy resilience in Moldovan communities.



Funded by
the European Union



PARTNERSHIPS & SUSTAINABILITY

PARTNERSHIPS & SUSTAINABILITY

M4EG continued engagement under the ULC with partners Ove Arup, Climate KIC, and the Tallinn University for Technology (TalTech) and has collaborated closely on the ULC launches of the Pathways for Economic Growth, Smarter and Inclusive Cities, and Green and Just Transition courses.

M4EG collaborated with Arup Italy for the design and implementation of the Urban Imaginaries Advanced Cohort with selected 8 municipalities from the previous cohorts. This collaboration focused on developing knowledge and workshops around the topic of scaling and financing and included co-designing the workshops, mentorship and in-person activities. The collaboration with Arup Italy has brought new knowledge and experiences on how to scale grants and projects with a team of experts ranging from urban planning background to financing experts.

After onboarding the new technical provider for the work on portfolios, Demos Helsinki and M4EG have focused on iterating the portfolios with the new batch of interventions, as well as an idea pool for further interventions that cities can utilize even after the project. The collaboration has also focused on developing the practice of capturing learnings and collectively developing insights for further iteration. Several insight reports were provided for the municipality teams, as well as coaching sessions to support the municipalities in tackling their complex challenges, while often the local context has changed from the original starting points. Demos Helsinki also co-designed and co-led the M4EG session for the EU Week of Regions and Cities in October and produced the research report on Urban Development Beyond Growth.

Looking back at 2024, the M4EG continued to build on its future-readiness and sustainable economic growth priorities, ensuring municipalities are equipped for evolving challenges, including green and smart transitions. Municipalities are now moving beyond exploration to implementation, with concrete actions in renewable energy, smart city solutions, and creative industries. By embracing these innovative economic strategies and diversifying local economies, they are positioning themselves to capitalize on emerging opportunities, fostering long-term resilience and sustainable development. Most of the municipalities have established local partnerships with their CSOs, foundations, community groups, innovation and tech parks, academia and private sector increasing the local capacities and capabilities and ensuring sustainability of the initiative.



Funded by
the European Union



UPDATE ON RISKS & MITIGATION MEASURES

UPDATE ON RISKS & MITIGATION MEASURES

The regional project team, in close consultation with DG NEAR and relevant EU Delegations, applies flexibility and adaptability to ensure the most effective and relevant rollout within the evolving country contexts. The Risk Matrix is regularly updated and can be found in Appendix 5 of this report.



Funded by
the European Union



KEY CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the current political climate in Azerbaijan, major network events, visibility and implementation of some grant programmes couldn't be executed, and the plans have been postponed with an aim to implement them later in 2025 or repurposing funds.

Under the financing work, the low level of appetite of the municipalities to get engaged with borrowing is an indication to take a broader lens into the financing work and to collaborate more with national stakeholders.

Also, given the current political climate in Georgia, major networking events, visibility efforts, and the implementation of certain grant programs face delays, with plans being reassessed for execution in 2025. The evolving situation requires a flexible approach to ensure continued engagement with local stakeholders while mitigating risks associated with political sensitivities.

These have implications mostly for the next phase of M4EG but due to the country-specific delays the project was extended until June 2025 to allow time to complete the municipal grant programme especially in Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Armenia.



Funded by
the European Union



COMMUNICATION, VISIBILITY & KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

COMMUNICATION, VISIBILITY & KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

In 2024, the M4EG team focused on amplifying human-centered stories from targeted countries, with a strong emphasis on strategic partnerships with national and local media outlets. This approach significantly enhanced the initiative's visibility and engagement across the Eastern Partnership region.

Key communication and outreach highlights are following:

Nearly 40 media national outlets picked up and shared M4EG-related stories in targeted countries what were tracked through media monitoring tool.

Approximately 50 video and text-based human-centered stories were produced across M4EG country offices, highlighting impactful local initiatives.

A storytelling-driven communications strategy remained central to M4EG's success, particularly evident in Moldova. The M4EG brand has become one of the most recognized UNDP initiatives in the country, achieving strong national media presence and visibility.

The M4EG website maintained a steady audience in 2024, with 6,400 visitors, matching the engagement levels of the previous year.

The Secretariat remained committed to advancing the M4EG objectives by effectively conveying the initiative's value and achievements. Through strategic enhancements to the communications approach, M4EG aimed to further increase understanding and support among local authorities, partners, and the broader expert community. Overall, more than 820,000 people were reached throughout the 2024 reporting year.

The M4EG initiative has been generating knowledge and actively incorporating insights into implementation through several streams, and this is reflected in the Urban Learning Center, the creation of knowledge products, and the learning activities reported (for more details please navigate to sections Urban Learning Center and Annual Forum). Below is a summary of knowledge products developed and published during 2024 and how their insights are actively incorporated into the implementation of the initiative.

PUBLICATIONS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

1. Urban Development Beyond Growth

The publication connects the discussion around the systemic/mission-based approaches and beyond/post/de-growth development, which is extremely relevant and timely currently.

2. Ideas to Enhance Finance and Funding Capabilities for Municipalities

Research aims to equip municipal officials with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively manage their finances and projects, and in turn, contribute to the achievement of sustainable development at the local level.

3. Community Listening in Practice

Community Listening in Practice provides an entry point into the methodology of community engagement, focusing on the important aspects of connecting with people and understanding their needs and perspectives

4. Smarter and Inclusive Cities

In addition to the course, publication provides a range of opportunities to learn through successful examples from around the world focusing on providing inspirational and practical insights that can be applied to your context.

5. Green & Just Transition

Drawing on successful cases and through modules focusing on climate neutrality, climate action planning, and integrated pathways for monitoring, evaluation, and learning, the course and publication provides a comprehensive understanding of climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies.

6. Funding and Finance for Municipalities

A Hands-on Guidance to Improve Project Funding. Coupled with the course, findings emphasize the need for enhanced resource mobilization strategies to empower municipalities to fund and implement their development goals successfully.



Funded by
the European Union



UN
DP



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The 2024 delivery target is EUR 4,228,893 as per the Annex III in Addendum No.2.

The total eligible costs for the project in 2021-2023 are EUR 7,106,380.6. In 2024 as of 31st of December 2024, total eligible costs are EUR 3,316,428.85 and total legal commitments are EUR 657,895.10.¹ For 2024 the total expenditure and commitments up to date are EUR 3,974,323.95

The Total Project Costs including commitments for 2021-2024 are EUR 11,080,704.54.

The following is a snapshot of expenditures in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 per UNDP unit:

¹ Individual consultant agreements, Grant amounts and general expenses are included.

UNDP Unit	Cost incurred (EUR) in 2021*	Cost incurred (EUR) in 2022*	Cost incurred (EUR) in 2023*	Cost incurred (EUR) in 2024*	TOTAL Cost incurred (EUR)
ARM	56,449.47	381,312.60	180,521.13	813,700.34	1,431,983.54
AZE	25,717.06	91,661.90	128,220.08	187,949.28	433,548.32
GEO	21,954.21	176,270.28	448,661.68	522,598.75	1,169,484.92
MDA	14,603.43	171,874.12	826,378.88	585,585.74	1,598,442.17
UKR	33,601.54	366,742.29	1,278,119.27	936,954.29	2,615,417.39
IRH	320,462.31	1,255,843.41	1,327,986.94	927,535.55	3,831,828.20
TOTAL	472,788.01	2,443,704.60	4,189,887.98	3,974,323.95	11,080,704.54



Funded by
the European Union



UN
DP



ANNUAL WORKPLAN FOR 2025

ANNUAL WORKPLAN FOR 2025

For the final year of the initiative, the focus will be on the following:

Capture results & learning of the 63 implementers – ensure strong feedback loops to broader network to share results and foster more peer-to-peer engagement. Launch a survey with the network members to capture feedback and results.

Grant implementation: Support municipalities in finalizing their grant interventions according to the project designs.

Urban Learning Center: Boost the visibility of the courses, especially Funding and Finance course, and increase the uptake of the courses in each country.

Crisis component: Capturing learnings and evaluating the impact.

Continue strengthening the access to funding and finance aspects through:

- Support all Portfolio Cities with interventions aiming to attract funding or financing.
- Regional Political Economy research to understand the economic dynamics in each country
- National financing events organized: e.g. Crowdfunding Academy in Moldova
- Investors' events and continued dialogue with partners to explore synergies. E.g. AFD led UPFI East, EIB in Syunik etc.

Knowledge Products: Finalization of Urban Makeover Manual on Portfolio Journey

Network engagement: Regional Forum in Chisinau to kick-off the phase 3 of M4EG and celebrate the results of phase 2.

The 2025 Regional Annual Work Plan was endorsed by the M4EG Steering Committee after its meeting on 4 February 2025. See Appendix 3 2025 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 2025 is EUR 759,090, which was agreed during the Steering Committee meeting in February 2025. Please see Appendix 4: Annex 3 2025 Budget for more information. Small adjustments to the 2025 budget will be expected, while preparing the Addendum 3 in June 2025 due to the Azerbaijan office closure to redistribute savings.



Funded by
the European Union



APPENDIXES

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

2024 Progress Overview

Appendix 2

Financial Report for 2024 as per Annex 3 Budget

Appendix 3

2025 Regional Workplan as per last Steering Committee

Appendix 4

2025 Budget as per Annex 3 Budget

Appendix 5

Updated Risk Matrix 2025



Funded by
the European Union



2024 **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

2021 - 2024