

ACTIVITY REPORT

MEDCITIES GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Izmir, 13th-14th November 2014

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MedCities, a *network* of Mediterranean towns

The year 2014 has been crucial in the creation of Association MedCities and the consolidation of the enlargement approved in the last General Assembly. The network has made an important effort to improve its communication materials and to decentralize its functioning, through the consolidation of regional antennas and the promotion of bilateral cooperation among members.

1. Constitution of the Association

Following the mandate of the last General Assembly, the General Secretariat has launched the process of constitution of the new MedCities Association. This required the approval of the Statutes presented in Barcelona and the approval of adhesion to the association by the Municipal Councils of the member cities.

The approval of Statutes finished, by written procedure, on 21st January 2014. Since then, 26 cities have finished the internal procedure to adhere to the Association. Moreover, 11 cities are currently finishing this procedure to formally become members. Finally, 8 cities have not started the procedure yet. Some of them are going to process of dramatic turmoil in their countries. It is still early to state which of these cities will finally drop membership of the MedCities Association.

Cities that have completed membership procedure	Tanger, Tetouan, Chefchaouen; Tunis, Sfax, Sousse, Kairouan, Djerba, Bizerta, Gabès, Mahdia, Monastir, Sidi Bou Said; Urban Community of Al Fayhaa (Tripoli, El Minah , El Badowi and Kalamoun), Saida, El Minah, Jezzine, Zgharta, Dannieh; Larnaka, Limassol; Izmir; Dubrovnic; Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, Málaga, Tirana.
Cities undergoing membership procedure	Barcelona, Roma, Marseille, Thessaloniki, Nabeul, Agadir, Benghazi, Silifke, Tripoli, Sidi Bouzid, Byblos.
Cities not having started membership procedure	Montpellier, Lyon, Ancona, Haifa, Ashdod, Alexandria, Alepo, Latakia, Gaza, Zarqa.

Finally, the legal registration of the Association is moving forward and it is foreseen that this will be completed before the end of 2014. 2015 will be the first year in which MedCities will operate as an Association. This will have several benefits to the functioning of the network such as ease to present proposals to call for projects in the name of the Association and to facilitate the payment of yearly fees by the members. The legal personality of the Association will also reinforce its international presence and allow the direct contract of services.

2. Decentralization of the Network

One of the mandates of the last General Assembly of MedCities was to deepen the decentralization structure of MedCities, to better respond to the needs of its members through proximity assistance.

The objective is to consolidate the decentralization structure of the USUDS project beyond the project scope, through the consolidation of the cities of Sfax (Tunisia) and the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa (Tripoli, El Minah and El Badawi in Lebanon) as territorial antennas of the network.

The network has secured funding for the functioning of the KTCs of Sfax and Al Fayhaa for 16 months, starting on November 2014 with the support of Barcelona Municipality and the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona.

The role of these antennas will be to provide proximity assistance to the cities of the network such as:

- Informing about new call for projects.
- Support in partnership building for new projects.
- Carrying out technical assistance for the implementation of projects through urban experts.
- Identifying Best Practices to promote P2P learning.
- Support in the search for funding to implement new Strategies.
- Guaranteeing the sustainability of the KTCs after these 16 months.

With this process, MedCities successfully accomplish an old objective which is to increase ownership among Southern cities in the functioning of the Network and to promote a truly networking approach of cooperation among cities.

Finally, Malaga continues to operate as Knowledge Transfer Centre for Methodology and Best Practices based at CIEDES Foundation, with the support of MedCities General Secretariat.



Mashrek Dissemination Seminar on City Strategies, organised by KTC Alfayhaa. Tripoli, 26 June 2014.

3. New MedCities communication strategy

During the last year, MedCities has strengthened its communication activities. After the end of the USUDS projects, the USUDS platform has been integrated in the new MedCities website which is presented in this General Assembly. This process, which was a mandate of the last General Assembly, has been an opportunity to refresh contents and sections of MedCities website, created a decade ago.

The new MedCities website offers a set of instruments to our members that are foreseen to be assets for the implementation of projects. The creation of a bank of future projects (Showroom), a catalogue of Best Practices, a Community for intranet work and a Resources and Strategic planning toolbox are some examples of this willingness. Moreover, each member city will have an own site within MedCities website to present its city and the main priority projects and activities. The General Secretariat will provide assistance to the members in the update and maintenance of these sites.



For the first time, MedCities is active in the social networks (Facebook and Twitter) and issues a monthly newsletter reporting the main activities of the network and its member. Up to now, this newsletter was a communication tool of the USUDS project which now becomes a broader instrument at the service of all members.

The network has also engaged in significant efforts to better communicate its activities. As a result of this, the General Secretariat issued a leaflet on the main results of the USUDS project. Moreover, the final publication of the USUDS project, which is presented in the framework of this General Assembly, has been elaborated as a tool to present the activities of the network to our partners and stakeholders.

All these initiatives are being crystallized in a new MedCities Communication Strategy which is currently under development.

4. Peer-to-peer cooperation among members

The USUDS Project has served as a testing ground to explore further bilateral cooperation among the members of the network. The Associates of the USUDS project carried out technical assistance missions to cities developing their city development strategy in order to boost projects identified in the Action Plan.

As a result of these missions, further cooperation is sought between those participating in these technical assistance missions.

The Municipality of Marseille and the Municipality of Sousse have elaborated a joint project to work on urban lighting and energy savings. Marseille is also cooperating deeply with Al Fayhaa in several projects.



Third technical misión of Marseille in Sousse. 6 October, 2014

The Municipality of Barcelona provided technical assistance to the cities of Sousse on water cycle management and to the city of Saida in the reformulation of the fishermen harbour.



First mission of Barcelona Municipality in Sousse.
26-29 January 2014



Proposal of the reformulation of the fishermen harbour and the seafront promenade of Saida, by Barcelona Municipality

As a result of these assistances, Barcelona and Saida are working for the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding. Barcelona has also signed a cooperation agreement with the city of Tetouan.

Bilateral cooperation among members is a powerful tool to advance in the implementation of projects. The General Secretariat will continue to seek such cooperation partnerships.

MedCities, a platform to build City Development Strategies and implement urban projects

The year 2014 has been marked by the ending of the USUDS project, which has had a transformative effect for the whole network. The General Secretariat has made a significant effort to identify new funding for projects through new EU programs, cooperation agencies and international organizations. This effort should give results in the coming months with the effective launching of such projects. This has not been an impediment for the implementation of other projects.

End of USUDS Project

One of the core activities of MedCities during the last twelve months has been the finalization of the USUDS Project. It officially ended on October 21st, and it is currently going under the process of final reporting and auditing. The outcomes of the USUDS Project are:

- City Development Strategy of 3 cities: Sousse, Saida, Larnaca
- Creation of three Knowledge Transfer Centres in Málaga (Spain), Sfax (Tunisia) and Tripoli (Lebanon - Al Fayhaa) for the support of cities interested in elaborating and implementing a sustainable urban strategy, through:
 - Missions for the dissemination of strategic planning in cities of Lebanon, Tunisia, and other Mediterranean countries
 - Organisation of two methodological seminars on strategic planning, of online debates and working groups on methodological issues
 - Organisation of three dissemination seminar on strategies of urban development. These seminars have been crucial for the enlargement of the Network and the rising interest for urban development strategies in the region.
 - Preparation of a report with updated information on strategic city planning in the Middle East region.
- Promotion of the short-term implementation or advancement in strategic projects, through:
 - Implementation of 2 pilot projects on poverty alleviation:
 - Saida: Supporting Traditional Handicrafts in the Old City
 - Sousse: Fighting School Failure in Marginalised Neighbourhoods
 - Organisation of technical assistance missions by Associate partners of USUDS:
 - Technical Assistance on Water Cycle Management in Sousse - Preliminary Project for a Rainwater Harvesting Complexe de L'Étoile du Sahel (City of Barcelona)
 - Technical Assistance on Public Infrastructure in Sousse – Cooperation on the Management of Public Lighting and Energy Savings (City of Marseille)

- Technical Assistance on Economic Promotion in Sousse – Support for the Creation of a Structure of Coordination of Local Development Activities (Barcelona Provincial Council)
- Technical Assistance on Infrastructure in Saida – Preliminary Project for the Revitalisation of the Fishermen’s Harbour and upgrading Medina coastal façade (City of Barcelona)
- Technical Assistance on the Green and Open Areas in Saida – Proposal of a System of Public and Green Spaces (Area Metropolitana de Barcelona)
- Elaboration of specific studies on critical issues identified in the strategy of Larnaca:
 - Study for the Assessment of the Image and Self-image of Larnaca
 - Study for the Assessment of the Sustainable Economic Development of Larnaca
 - Workshop and study for the criteria of the visioning and planning of Wastani Plain in Saida and the future urbanisation of the city

Preparation of strategic projects for the network

A. CISUD Project (ARLEM)

In the framework of the 5th Plenary Session of the Euro-Mediterranean Local and Regional Assembly (ARLEM) that took place in Tangier on February 24th, MedCities was commanded to elaborate a project for capacity-building on integrated urban development to Mediterranean local and regional authorities’ political leaders and staff. The project foresees pilot projects to be developed in 8 cities, country workshops and a regional policy dialogue

This project is promoted by ARLEM, in coordination with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, which intends to labelize the project during the first term of 2015.

MedCities worked for the creation of a Consortium together with the French Agence des Villes et Territoires Durables en Méditerranée (AVITEM), the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the Public Administration School of Catalonia (EAPC). This Consortium has worked in the drafting of the project which was submitted to ARLEM on July 2014. The elaboration of the proposal has served to establish privileged relationships with international institutions as the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, ARLEM and several local and regional authorities of the Mediterranean (Catalonia, PACA, the network of Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe (CRPM). MedCities has participated in international meetings to prepare the project in Tangier, Marseille, Brussels and Barcelona.

Some amendments are being introduced before the end of 2014 in order to start the labelization process. Negotiations for securing funding are also under way.

B. ESDEVET Project

Several Tunisian cities have formally showed their interest in developing urban sustainable development strategies. This has been a result of the dissemination task undertaken by the KTC of Sfax during the USUDS Project.

The KTC hired a consultant to elaborate a project to extend the USUDS project to other Tunisian cities, including the creation of the Local Development Office of Sousse and Sfax and reinforcing the role of Sfax as KTC. The result is the ESDEVET Project (Extension des Stratégies de Développement des Villes en Tunisie). 8 Tunisian cities have expressed their interest in participating: Gabès, Mahdia, Djerba, Monastir, Nabeul, Gafsa, Kairouan and Bizerte.



Training session of dissemination of Urban Development Strategies for Tunisian cities, organised by KTC Sfax. 27th February 2014

This project was presented last October 2014 to Tunisian authorities in a joint mission between MedCities Secretariat, Sousse, Sfax and the Fédération Nationale des Villes Tunisiennes (FNVT). On October 10th, a delegation composed by MedCities Secretariat, the FNVT, the KTC of Sfax and the city of Sousse was organised in order to present the project to Tunisian national authorities. The project has the support of the General Direction of Local Authorities of the Ministry of Interior and General Direction for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of International Cooperation and Development. Funding to implement it is currently under negotiation.

Implementation of projects

i. Capacity-building for the update of Tetouan PCD

The update of the PCD of Tetouan (Plan Communal de Développement) is a project coordinated by AERYC (America-Europe Association of Regions and Cities), with technical assistance offered by the team of Medcities General Secretariat, and the participation of the consultancy Urban Quality Strategies (EQU) .

The project has been focused on the evaluation and reprogramming of the strategic plan, and the presentation of the Action Plan for the period 2011-2016. This project complements another initiative from Andalusian Network for Territorial and Urban Strategic Development (RADEUT) about the follow-up and the update of the Tetouan Strategic Plan. Technical assistance was based on training and consultation from the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB), acting as General Secretariat of MedCities, and EQU to a local team of the City of Tetouan, and support, assistance and coordination of AERYC.

The activities undertaken were:

- Overall assessment of the previous PCD (analysis and diagnosis)
- Participatory process of reflection on the new Plan.
- Establishment of a set of indicators about the changes in the city from the PCD starting
- The development of the new Plan of Action
- Training and exchange of experiences in Barcelona in a seminar developed in October 2014.
- Establishment of a monitoring system for the implementation of the PCD.



Exchange and training visit of the Delegation of the Communal Development Plan of Tetouan. Barcelona, 13-14 October 2014

The closing mission of this project was developed on 4th-5th November 2014. The project has been funded by the Provincial Council of Barcelona.

ii. Capacity building for the update and boost of the CDS of Sousse



Medina of Sousse

Following the successful experience with the update and establishment of a monitoring system for the PCD of Tetouan, AERYC and the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, acting as General Secretariat of MedCities, presented a new project proposal to develop a similar project in Sousse.

Sousse elaborated its Strategy as part of the USUDS project. The municipality of Sant Cugat del Vallès (Spain) also participates in the project. The project is funded by the Provincial Council of Barcelona and has been approved. It will be launched in early 2015.

iii. SUDeP Call for projects

The European Commission launched a call for projects on energy savings through its Non-State Actors and Local Authorities Program, managed by DG DEVCO. MedCities worked for the constitution of partnerships among member cities in order to present projects to this call.

Finally, 3 projects were presented:

- Tetouan, AMB and Malaga on energy savings in mobility
- Al Fayhaa, Marseille, AVITEM on air quality
- Larnaka and Dannieh on energy savings in public lighting.

Unfortunately, only the project presented by Larnaka and Dannieh was selected to go through the second stage. It is currently been assessed and the resolution will be published in the coming weeks.

This has been a pioneer initiative for the network and the Secretariat is committed to continue this approach for future EU or international calls. The establishment of MedCities antennas in Al Fayhaa and Sfax will definitely contribute to this end. The network, thus, becomes a platform for elaborating and presenting multi-partnership projects and identifying future partners.

iv. RECONET Project

RECONET is a project of technical assistance presented by the Urban Community to Al Fayhaa to a Call for projects launched by the Delegation of the European Union in Lebanon. Al Fayhaa will offer support to the Unions of Municipalities of Kura and Jerd El Kaiteh, also in Lebanon, paving the way for the future elaboration of a city development strategy. Two Lebanese universities are also partners of the project.

The General Secretariat offered support to the UC of Al Fayhaa in the elaboration of the project Concept Note and Full Application Form. This is rather innovative for the network as it becomes an example of how the General Secretariat can offer assistance to our member cities in preparing proposals to be presented to international calls. This approach is to be further used in the coming years.

MedCities, a *lobby of cities* to reinforce the role of local authorities in the Mediterranean

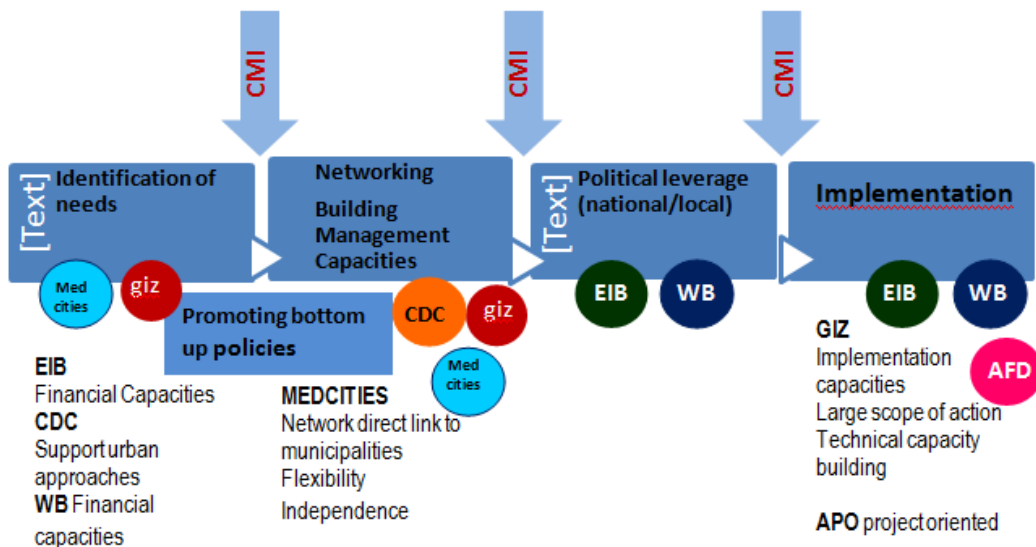
2014 has been a year to reinforce the network vis-à-vis international actors. MedCities has been present in several international forums and strengthen cooperation with our partners. MedCities is seen internationally as an active and project-oriented network. This visibility is put at the service of our members to contribute to the implementation of their projects.

CMI URBAN HUB

MedCities has continued to participate in the meetings of the Urban Hub of the Center for Mediterranean Integration of Marseille. This is the main forum for coordination of the most active actors on urban development in the Mediterranean. A part from MedCities, major institutions participate in the Urban Hub, namely: the World Bank, the French Agency for Development (AFD), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), Cities Alliance (CCAA), the European Investment Bank (EIB), Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC). These institutions share information and identify synergies in order to strengthen cooperation among their programs.

In the meeting of the Urban Hub held in Frankfurt in February 2014, MedCities was recognised as one of the most performing actors in identifying cities needs and participating in capacity-building activities on urban development in the Mediterranean.

Role of CMI: smoothen the transition from one phase to the other



Union for the Mediterranean - Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI)

MedCities has been directly involved in the launching of the Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI), promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in cooperation with the French Agency for Development (AFD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) and with the participation of international financial institutions.

The purpose of this financial initiative is to identify and select sustainable urban development projects likely to be endorsed by the Union for the Mediterranean and financed and implemented in the short term. In the first phase of UPFI, 22 projects have been selected among which two will be developed in MedCities members (Taparura project in Sfax and Oued Martil project in Tetouan). The twenty-two projects receive financial support to elaborate feasibility studies to make the project bankable so international financial institutions can invest in the future.

MedCities has lobbied to include these two projects among the twenty-two selected. It is foreseen that a new pipeline of UPFI projects will be launched in 2015. MedCities will continue to work so more of its members' projects are included in this transforming initiative at regional level.

A part from this, MedCities participates in the Senior Experts group on Urban Development promoted by the Secretariat of the UfM. MedCities participated in the last meeting of this group that was held last April 28th in Barcelona.

European Transparency Register

Medcities has been registered in the European Transparency Register as an organization that is working with the EU Institutions in the implementation of its different activities.

The Transparency register has been set up and is operated by the European Parliament and the European Commission. More than 6000 organizations are included in the register. They belong to local and regional governments, citizen's associations, NGOs, businesses, trade and professional organizations, trade unions, think tanks, lobbies, etc.

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/homePage.do?redir=false&locale=en>

Structured Dialogue on the European Structural and Investment Funds

Medcities has been chosen by the European Commission to be one of the organizations to be consulted on the implementation of the European Union Cohesion Policy. This Platform will allow our association to have fresh information about the future EU policy for urban areas and influence with our interests. With this approach Medcities will support the work of the Commission as regards the development of cohesion policy, the policy of rural development, the Common Fisheries Policy and the integrated maritime policy in different areas of expertise; Assist the Commission on questions relating to the implementation of support from

the European Structural and Investment Funds; Monitor the evolution of policy in the field of partnership and multi-level governance; Exchange experience and good practice in this field.

FMDV

The Global fund for cities development (FMDV) was created in October 2010 at the initiative of Metropolis, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and 34 founding members (cities and city networks). It is an international political organisation which aims to strengthen solidarity and financial capacity by and among local authorities and is complementary to existing mobilisation, coordination and advocacy networks.

FMDV meets the need expressed by local governments to have their own instrument that is: Operational and effective in order to help contracting authorities find expert, sustainable and viable financial solutions for projects and activities led by territorial authorities; Tailored to the specific needs and realities of territories and to the capacity and competences of administrative teams and their local partners, applying a principle of subsidiarity, efficient management and know-how transfers; Independent *vis-à-vis* governments, the private sector and the main international donors so that it can operate in line with the key directions defined by the local authorities themselves. FMDV provides technical expertise and financial engineering throughout the urban development project process (definition, fundraising and organisation).

Medcities and the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (First Vicepresident of this organization) have started a very positive cooperation for the fundraising of projects of the Medcities members. A call for projects was launched by the Medcities Secretariat and Chefchaouen answered with a project that is now analyzed by the FMDV Team. On the other hand, the Mayor of Tetouan and President of Medcities will participate in the conference *Resolutions Africa: Financing African cities*, organized by FMDV in Marrakech next 10-12 December.

Strategic Alliances

MedCities has started a process to formalize the long-term cooperation that exists with several institutions working for Mediterranean cooperation. The new MedCities website has a section on Strategic Alliance to give the opportunity to our partners to increase the visibility of their actions. Three Strategic Allies have been included in the website during the last year, namely the Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Mediterranean Association of Chambers of Commerce (ASCAME) and the Ibero-American Center for Urban Strategic Development (CIDEU).

Moreover, a cooperation agreement with CAT-MED Platform was signed on September 2014 in Malaga.



Signature of Cooperation agreement with CAT-MED Platform, Málaga 15 September 2014

Participation in regional forums

Since the last General Assembly, MedCities has been represented in several regional and international forums.

In ARLEM, the General Secretary attended the Plenary Session held in Tangier on February 24th and the SUDEV Commission, which took place in Marseille on September 19th.

MedCities was also present at the Med Cooperation Days, organized by CRPM, Regione Lazio with the support of Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, held in Rome on November 10th-12th. In this occasion, the network was represented by Mr. Mabrouk Kossentini, President of the Special Delegation of Sfax.

Finally, MedCities is cooperating with the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) in the organization of the conference “The challenges of the Mediterranean Urban Agenda: The importance of public-private partnerships for an innovative urban planning”, that will take place in Barcelona next 15th and 16th of December.