



BARCELONA Municipal Executive Program for Urban Resilience in the Mediterranean

Concept note

1st Edition 2024: Green-Blue Cities

Barcelona 15th-18th October 2024

1. Introduction

To promote urban planning sensitive to climate change and the naturalization of Mediterranean cities, Barcelona City Council is organizing the first edition of the **BARCELONA MED Executive Program for Urban Resilience, focused on "Green and blue cities"**. This annual program intended for elected officials and senior technical officials of city councils in Mediterranean cities, has as its main objective the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and good practices in sustainable urban development and climate resilience, consolidating itself as a necessary and reference initiative in the region.

2. Context

The **Mediterranean region is warming 20% faster than the global average**, with temperatures expected to rise by 2.2°C by 2040. This will lead to more frequent, intense, and prolonged heat waves, impacting vulnerable urban populations, and intensifying torrential rain episodes. **Urban areas are 5 to 9 °C warmer than rural areas** due to the "urban heat island effect," caused by heat-absorbing surfaces and a lack of cooling vegetation. This leads to higher energy consumption, increased air pollution, and elevated health risks.

Challenges for Mediterranean cities include increased drought and flood risks, higher pollution levels, and soil degradation. Green infrastructure can enhance resilience by reducing temperatures, improving water management, and lowering pollution. Nature-based solutions (NBS) also boost public space well-being. Traditional urban planning often overlooks efficient water use and resilient plant species. **A holistic approach is essential for cities** to tackle climate change, focusing on empirical data and bolstering technical capacities and political commitment.

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Barcelona has pioneered climate-adaptive urban planning and aims to share its expertise to enhance local government policies across the Mediterranean. The annual executive training program will facilitate experience exchange and highlight effective actions, governance models, and best practices to strengthen city resilience to climate emergencies.

3. Objectives of the Program

1. Implement an annual Executive Program on Sustainable Urban Development in the Mediterranean, gathering municipalities from the region.
2. Strengthen knowledge about sustainable development policies and the ability to implement local policies.
3. Share good urban management practices of Barcelona with transferability potential.
4. Create a community for sharing experiences between technical and political staff from Mediterranean cities, promoting collaborative learning.
5. Strengthen technical cooperation between Barcelona and other Mediterranean municipalities, identifying new lines of collaboration.

4. Municipalities to be involved

The program targets Mediterranean city councils, with a preference for those with existing cooperation agreements with Barcelona. Cities include **Amman, Bethlehem, Gaza, Sarajevo, Saida, Tangier, Tetouan, Tripoli (Lebanon), and Tunis**. An annual restricted call will also invite local authorities from other Mediterranean cities.



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5. Call and Registration

In this 2024 edition, a restricted call will be launched for registration with clear requirements. A total of 10-15 councils will be selected, with a maximum of two representatives per council.

5.1 Selection criteria

- City size and number of inhabitants
- Description of specific problems in the city related to urban resilience
- Declaration of interest
- Summary of good practices or previous planning in the field

Travel expenses, including accommodation, will be covered for non-European participating cities and MedCities members. European MedCities members will need to cover their flight costs, while non-MedCities members will be responsible for both flight and accommodation expenses.

Dates: 15th to 18th October 2024

Location: Barcelona city.

Format: 4 days intensive course. The morning sessions will be dedicated to theoretical and practical training with external experts, and the afternoons to field visits on good practices in Barcelona.

6. Resources and funding

The program will be financed by **Barcelona City Council** for its first year, covering travel logistics, interpreters, translations, communication, and organization. The aim is to attract potential funders to support subsequent annual sessions, ensuring the program's sustainability and impact, leading this initiative, and providing a space for collaboration and learning to build greener and bluer cities.

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Agenda overview

Day 1. Tuesday

Urban Resilience Policies and Practices

- Welcome and course presentation
- Sustainable Future and Greener Agenda Med 2030
- European Green Pact and Sustainable City Transformation
- EU Mission Climate-Neutral Cities
- UNEP MAP Istanbul Environmental Friendly Cities Award
- Implications of the EU Nature Restoration Law
- Presentation of participating cities' challenges and best practices
- Barcelona City Council's sustainable urban planning model

Day 2. Wednesday

Green Cities: Enhancing Urban Nature and Public Health

- Urban Nature and Ecosystem Services
- Benefits of Nature for Urban Public Health
- Solutions Based on Nature in Urban and Coastal Environments
- Barcelona City Council's Nature Plan 2021-2023
- Public-private partnerships for promoting urban greenery
- Technical visits to naturalized urban spaces and green infrastructure

Day 3: Thursday

Blue Cities: Efficient Urban Water Management

- Water Management in Resilient Cities
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)
- WEFE Concept in Urban Planning: Water, Energy, and Food
- Drought management in Barcelona
- Technical Guide for Designing Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- Visits to SUDs and water regeneration stations

Day 4: Friday

Peer-to-Peer Collaboration and Future Planning

- Peer-to-peer work session: sharing knowledge and solutions
- Discussions on future collaborations
- Conclusions and closure



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Expected Impact

The program aims to create a dynamic knowledge network among councils, experts, and other stakeholders, encouraging collaboration and knowledge transfer. In the medium term, it seeks to see the adoption of more sustainable urban policies and improved resilience in participating cities. Long-term, the goal is to foster a cultural shift towards more equitable, sustainable urban development that is resilient to climate change impacts.

Conclusion

The **BARCELONA MED Executive Program for Urban Resilience offers a unique annual opportunity for Mediterranean cities to exchange knowledge**, improve urban policies, and increase climate resilience. With its focus on cooperation, the program aspires to be a key reference for building resilient urban environments in the Mediterranean region.