

15 PATHWAYS TO LOCALISE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

INSPIRATION FROM CITIES IMPLEMENTING LOCAL
ACTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO GLOBAL GOALS



CONTENTS

Local action transforms the world	3
A word from our partners	4
15 pathways to localise the SDGs	5
How to use the pathways to localise the SDGs	6
City stories of transformation	7
Closing words	23

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LOCAL ACTION TRANSFORMS THE WORLD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** is the result of a process among national governments across the globe that started at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). For the first time, the global community agreed on a comprehensive set of social, economic and ecological targets for the development of all countries, irrespective of their size, wealth, and geographic location.

Since sustainability gained prominence on the international stage in Rio in 1992, European cities have been among its foremost advocates and actors. Since their adoption in 2015, the SDGs have similarly been picked up by cities.

But why are the SDGs – goals set for **national governments** – considered relevant by **local governments**? Partnerships with multiple stakeholders have been recognised as a crucial component of strategies linked to the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, most SDGs will not be achievable without local level support. Cities are already contributing significantly and thereby supporting national governments in reaching the goals they agreed upon. Local governments worldwide are aligning their sustainability strategies with the SDGs, whose goals and targets are becoming a key reference framework for local policies, action plans and projects.

However, local implementation of the SDGs is not easy. As comprehensive as they are, they still need integration and require the transformation of our local systems, technologies and cultural habits.

The **15 Pathways** of the Basque Declaration offer ways to achieve this. They do not try to implement each SDG separately, but take into account their interrelated nature. In this publication, local governments and other local stakeholders can find inspiration from across Europe for their own initiatives.

Local action is the basis of the sustainable future the planet needs, and every pathway utilised will mean a step in the right direction.

In this publication, the 15 pathways of the Basque Declaration are illustrated by a selection of applications for the Transformative Action Award 2017-2019. These applications have been reviewed by a jury of experts, which includes representatives from the European Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank, UNESCO Etxea, the City of Aalborg (Denmark) and ICLEI Europe.

A WORD FROM OUR PARTNERS



**WOLFGANG
TEUBNER**

**Regional Director,
ICLEI Europe**

“The need for transformation towards sustainability has never been as urgent. We need a technological, socio-economic and socio-cultural transformation of our societies in order to limit catastrophic environmental consequences and ensure a decent quality of life for all. This publication shows the ability and potential of the local level to act, whilst contributing to the implementation of the SDGs on a global level.”



**THOMAS
KASTRUP-LARSEN**

**Mayor of Aalborg,
Denmark**

“The SDGs have placed sustainability high on political agendas, clearly reflecting the importance of action. The challenge is now for local governments to take these global goals and bring them down to a local level. Utilising the Basque Declaration for this purpose is an important step to go from global goals to local action, thereby supporting our national governments to achieve the goals they agreed upon.”



**IÑAKI
ARRIOLA**

**Minister for the Environment,
Territorial Planning and
Housing,
Basque Government**

“The Basque Declaration is the cornerstone of the Basque Country’s efforts to implement the Paris Agreement and the SDGs at the local level, along with the Udalsarea 2030 network of sustainable Basque municipalities. Udalsarea 2030 supports the local deployment of the Basque Country’s policies with the support of tools, including a methodology to address the SDGs at the local level and monitor the contribution.”



**KARL-HEINZ
LAMBERTZ**

**President,
European Committee of the
Regions**

“The SDGs must be the EU’s guiding compass if it is to leave a socially just, sustainable future for every citizen. Backed by a robust future EU budget and strong regional investment, the EU must create policies that work locally so no region, city, town and village is left behind.”



**European Committee
of the Regions**

15 PATHWAYS TO LOCALISE THE SDGs

The 15 Pathways of the Basque Declaration find their origin in the **Aalborg Charter** (1994), an urban sustainability initiative inspired by the 1992 Rio Earth Summit's Local Agenda 21 plan, and developed to contribute to the European Union's Environmental Action Programme, "Towards Sustainability".

By the 25th anniversary of the Charter in 2019, thousands of local governments were signatories and had committed to co-creating local sustainability strategies with their citizens

In 2004, the **Aalborg Commitments** defined a set of 50 targets to frame these strategies.

The next step came in 2016 with the **Basque Declaration**, which recognises the need for a transformation in all aspects of society. The Declaration provides **15 pathways** for local leaders to find innovative ways to engage with civil society in order to meet **economic, environmental** and **social** challenges. It marks the importance of finding sustainable solutions for the benefit of the local population.

The Basque Declaration offers guidance for **socio-cultural** (pathways 1-5), **socio-economic** (pathways 6-10) and **technological** (pathways 11-15) transformation of societies and contributes to the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.

BASQUE DECLARATION FAST FACTS

900 endorsers

+600 cities engaged

+100 local Transformative Actions

15 pathways

FROM THE AALBORG CHARTER TO THE BASQUE DECLARATION

1994

THE AALBORG CHARTER

WHY

do local authorities have to pursue sustainable development?



2004

THE AALBORG COMMITMENTS

WHAT

needs to be done to achieve sustainable development?



2016

THE BASQUE DECLARATION

HOW

can we implement the transformation for sustainability?

HOW TO USE THE PATHWAYS TO LOCALISE THE SDGs

Although the pathways do not correspond directly with the 17 SDGs, each of them offers a way to start implementing clusters of interrelated SDGs. At the same time, more than one pathway will be needed to fully implement one SDG. There is **no one-size-fits-all** approach to localising the SDGs; the best way to do so depends on individual local realities.

The pathways on the following pages are illustrated with stories taken from the Transformative Action database of the **Sustainable Cities Platform**.

The purpose of the stories is to provide inspiration for action, rather than the formulation of yet another action plan. The examples also give insight into how to implement the goals using an integrated approach across sectors and departments.

For each story, the most relevant pathway and SDGs are indicated, based on an independent assessment by ICLEI Europe. They show the diversity of approaches across topics, geographical locations and local cultures.

For full descriptions of the 15 stories and many more, visit the Transformative Action database at

www.sustainablecities.eu/transformative-actions-database

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TIP! COMBINING MAKES YOUR TRANSFORMATION STRONGER

The transformation is expected to be more effective when multiple pathways of the Basque Declaration are used together in combination.



CITY STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION



PATHWAY 1: We will develop a “culture of sustainability” based on equal access to municipal services for all citizens regardless of their age, religious affiliation, ethnic identity or gender, and reflect this particularly in our budgeting and educational systems.

City: Nilüfer, Turkey

Towards an Exemplary Participatory Local Democracy: Nilüfer Citizens’ “Republic”

As rapid urbanisation puts pressure on local government services and capacity, Nilüfer found new ways to ensure locals be engaged and become active. Using three concurrent initiatives, Nilüfer is increasing civic engagement and participatory local democracy. This was done through Neighbourhood Committees with quotas to ensure participation of underrepresented groups; an Innovation Centre where city stakeholders bolster innovation; and citizen-owned Energy Cooperatives. Mobilising the grassroots level for local affairs has led decision making, politics, entrepreneurship, energy policy and distribution, and the local economy to be more participatory and accessible for all.

SDGs:



© Municipality of Nilüfer



For more info:





PATHWAY 2: We will actively involve our citizens and go beyond participatory planning into participatory implementation by supporting and using new approaches like co-production, co-design and co-innovation.

City: Bologna, Italy

Civic imagination: Giving value to citizen engagement

Residents in Bologna have a long history of strong civic engagement. However, regulations made it too complex for citizens to improve their neighbourhoods. In response, the City created a Civic Imagination Office and designated a Civic Imagination Deputy in government. Through this initiative, Bologna passed an urban commons regulation, signed over 400 collaborative pacts with communities, celebrated “Civic Collaboration Day,” launched District Labs, and more. These activities went beyond citizen engagement, enabling citizens to become active decision-makers in local policy and co-designers of innovations through processes such as participatory budgeting and public “design-thinking sessions”. This strategy transformed the public participation process, unlocking huge civic potential that would have otherwise remained blocked by overly bureaucratic processes.

SDGs:



© City of Bologna

For more info:





PATHWAY 3: We will re-think the boundaries between public and private services, activities and tasks, and seek to encourage local private and civic engagement.

City: Tirana, Albania

Orbital Forest: A balance between the city and nature rediscovered

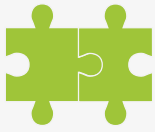
Over the past 30 years, Tirana has seen a rapid increase in its population, going from 280,000 in 1989 to its current level of close to one million. This rise has presented the city with numerous challenges, among them urban sprawl and a reduction in green space. The ratio of open green space for every 100,000 inhabitants in Tirana is only 4.6 hectares. In an attempt to tackle these problems, the City set itself the aim of planting a forest around Tirana to tackle urban sprawl, expand green space, and increase air quality in the city. Local residents have been encouraged to play an active role in the process by sponsoring trees and helping with their planting - this has led to two million trees being planted around Tirana.

SDGs:



For more info:





PATHWAY 4: We will promote social innovation, social enterprises and civic engagement that support the education, training and social inclusion of marginalised groups and immigrants.

City: Lousada, Portugal

Integrated education for sustainability

Lousada is a densely populated municipality located in rural Portugal. However, despite its rural setting, there is in general a low appreciation for the importance of nature among residents. The City is facing numerous environmental problems, such as water pollution, forest fires, invasive plant species, habitat and landscape degradation, and biodiversity loss. Since 2017, the municipality has used a sustainability strategy structured on several axis - research; environmental education; social engagement; and infrastructure. The aim was- to promote environmental practices, inspire and support alternative ways of creating conservation areas and job opportunities, and reconnect local citizens with the rural landscape. Some of the results achieved include the planting of 40,000 native trees with the support of over 4,500 volunteers; the restoration of over 20 hectares of degraded land; the creation of more than 20 wildlife ponds; and an increase in waste recycling by over 500 tonnes per year.

SDGs:



© Municipality of Lousada



For more info:





PATHWAY 5: We will nurture the “sharing economy”, “collaborative economy” or “civic economy” and other approaches that combine the ideas of entrepreneurship, civic engagement and societal transformation.

Organisation: Gebiedscoöperatie Westerkwartier, The Netherlands

The Westerkwartier’s regional development co-operative

The *Westerkwartier* region faces challenges seen in many non-urban areas, such as fewer job and educational opportunities, an ageing population, and reduced local public transport services. In 2014, five local organisations came together to found Gebiedscoöperatie Westerkwartier, a cooperative designed to strengthen the region’s resilience in the face of these challenges. The group jointly crafted a regional agenda to guide development projects. At its core, the agenda asserts that new business and economic models are necessary to regional sustainability and inclusivity. By 2019, the cooperative had expanded to include 17 member organisations spanning six distinct sectors; helped found new companies with well-being at their cores; begun taking steps to build an inclusive job market with a focus on individuals with disabilities; and more. By focusing on cross-sectoral solutions, the cooperative has engaged students, governments, companies, agricultural organisations, and researchers in innovative regional economic development.

SDGs:



© Gebiedscoöperatie Westerkwartier



For more info:





PATHWAY 6: We will turn the challenges in front of us into opportunities for our local economies in key areas such as decentralised renewable energy production, local food production, innovative transportation concepts, new approaches to social services and many other innovations.

City: Ghent, Belgium

Gent en Garde: Transforming the food system

Food consumption and production methods have a major impact on the environment, public health, and societies. Recognising its role in reducing food waste and the emissions associated with food production, the City of Ghent launched the Gent en Garde project to transform its local food system. The project involves using participatory governance models, including a food policy council, redistributing surplus food destined for waste to people in need through the Foodsavers platform, and investing in agricultural land for local food production. In addition, schools receive training on how to build and implement community gardens, whilst new initiatives such as 'Veggie Day' promote vegetarian diets. Since launching the project in 2013, the city has seen impressive results, with increases in the number of farmers markets, residents opting for vegetarian diets, and community gardens, with over 42 schools receiving training in community gardening. The city has also seen a marked decrease in CO₂ emissions, saving approximately 762 tonnes of CO₂ emissions in its first ten months of operation.

SDGs:



© City of Ghent

For more info:





PATHWAY 7: We will create and close local value chains, facilitate innovative cooperation of businesses in order to capture local and regional value, create small scale local investment opportunities and jobs, and to increase the public income.

City: Mannheim, Germany

Mannheim auf Klimakurs (Mannheim on a climate-friendly course)

The City of Mannheim has committed itself to greater climate protection under the campaign “Mannheim auf Klimakurs”. With the aim of making energy and climate measures more visible, the campaign consists of four spheres of activity: role models, sustainable districts, local communities, and active businesses. The City administration wants to be a role model itself through actions like adopting high energy efficiency standards for its own buildings. The City promotes climate-friendly district development by working with relevant stakeholders on implementing integrated district schemes and climate-friendly urban development. Through measures such as cycling campaigns, Mannheim is also raising awareness of climate protection. As an industrial city, Mannheim is working with local businesses on advancing sustainable economic activity. Indeed, many have already signed an agreement committing to this. Overall, the campaign has resulted in more than 60 climate protection measures, with many more set to come in the future.

SDGs:



© City of Mannheim



For more info:





PATHWAY 8: We will apply innovative approaches to financing including such as crowd-funding, cooperative financing or the blending of public and civic funding, or complimentary currencies.

City: Zaragoza, Spain

100ideasZGZ: Towards a “zero ideas wasted” city

Zaragoza’s citizens are demanding more participation in city matters. At the same time, economic constraints are limiting the local authority’s capacity. In this context, Zaragoza has shifted its role from being a leader to being a facilitator of urban innovation and started the 100ideasZGZ programme to turn citizens into city-makers. The programme encourages citizens to suggest policy ideas through hackathons and an Open Urban Lab. The best ideas are identified, developed collaboratively by all stakeholders and transformed into pilots. Some projects have also been crowdfunded. Initiatives include educational programmes on energy savings, public parking spaces for bikes, and an eco-friendly and socially responsible last-mile delivery service. Moreover, the programme has resulted in higher levels of civic engagement and more awareness of civic matters among citizens.

SDGs:



© City of Zaragoza

For more info:





PATHWAY 9: We will purchase products and services with high environmental performance and take into account the social and economic impacts of a purchasing decision.

City: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Integrated customer-centric sustainable transport service for the elderly and disabled

Every day, about 30,000 people in Rotterdam, who are unable to travel independently, rely on public transport. However, strict procurement requirements can reduce the user-friendliness of modified and inclusive transport services. Rotterdam has therefore developed new procurement objectives that mean transport services put users first, are as climate-friendly as possible, increase social cohesion, and are priced fairly. First, this required the City to understand users through comprehensive research. Then, prior to tendering, market meeting days brought together sectors including communications, ICT, healthcare, and transport, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach. As part of tendering, meetings were held with different potential consortiums and relevant stakeholders, including focus groups for adults and students. Client satisfaction was a key performance indicator, and partnerships were encouraged to compete for the tender. This allowed small- and medium-sized enterprises to be competitive and encouraged cross-sectoral partnerships. This has resulted in transport that better meets user needs, is close to being zero-emission, and produces more than €2 million in annual social return on investment.

SDGs:



© City of Rotterdam



For more info:





PATHWAY 10: We will pursue the development towards a circular economy to reduce the need for natural resource consumption and the production of waste.

City: Helsingborg, Sweden

Circular economy for everyone

Helsingborg is a rapidly growing municipality, with an aim to reach zero waste by 2030. This is being done through four major initiatives. First, the City and its waste company educate about 3,000 students per year on environmental topics such as waste prevention. Second, the waste company has transformed municipal waste management; including creating an innovation-driven industrial park where waste is refined into new raw materials. For example, household plastic is converted into railway sleepers. Third, a public-private partnership allows for waste collection on demand, which has reduced the number of times bins are emptied by over 30 percent. Finally, a cutting-edge sewer system is being piloted that sorts water, allowing heat from grey (bath, shower and laundry) water to be used to recover nutrients from wastewater, whilst food waste and black (toilet) water are turned into biogas. With this new sewage system, three times more phosphorous and seven times more nitrogen is recycled annually compared to traditional systems. Through this diversified approach, household waste has reduced, waste recycling has increased, and Helsingborg has been recognised as Sweden's most environmentally friendly city three years in a row.

SDGs:



© City of Helsingborg

For more info:





PATHWAY 11: We will wisely select and apply new and smart technologies that support the necessary socio-cultural and socio-economic transformations and serve the interest of the citizens and the public good.

City: Alba Iulia, Romania

Alba Iulia Smart City Pilot Project

In order to overcome social and economic challenges and foster civic engagement, the City of Alba Iulia is implementing smart solutions. The City has joined forces with private companies and the national ministry responsible for communication and information services to test and implement 100 different smart city solutions. This type of partnership is unique for Romania and is the first smart city project developed jointly by the national government, a local authority and private companies. Furthermore, it is also unique in that the private companies who propose smart city solutions are responsible for covering the costs of testing and implementing those solutions. Through the project, the City hopes to increase civic engagement, digitalise public services, and ultimately make the city more attractive, sustainable and liveable. Some of the results so far include the installation of 228 Wi-Fi hotspots across the city, the development of an air pollution monitoring system, the introduction of digital devices and educational resources in every school in the city, and the development of an app that allows residents to report problems they encounter.

SDGs:



© City of Alba Iulia

For more info:





PATHWAY 12: We will use public procurement as an instrument to accelerate the market introduction of innovative and sustainable technologies, and will ensure that their application is demand driven, and enables decentralised local solutions to the challenges we face.

City: Geestland, Germany

Together, acting sustainably, innovatively, holistically and courageously to future-proof our city

The City of Geestland was created in 2015 following a merger between the City of Langen and the Municipality of Bederkesa. Alongside environmental problems, the City has limited economic resources that have been further stretched by the population increase resulting from the merger. To combat these problems, Geestland has turned to sustainable solutions. Among the environmental measures implemented is the procurement and installation of new LED streetlights. This has allowed Geestland to lower its annual CO₂ consumption associated with street lighting from 600 tonnes to 108 tonnes. In addition, it has helped to save money, with the yearly spend on street lighting falling from €316,000 to €57,000. Through their initiative, the City has been able to reduce its environmental footprint and reallocate the money saved to other vital public services.

SDGs:



© Stadt Geestland



For more info:





PATHWAY 13: We will address the digital divide in our local societies and provide the appropriate infrastructure and support needed for all groups to have equal access to information and digital services.

Organisation: Civocracy working with the City of Lyon, France

Co-creating a sustainable future for France's second city: The power of community

Since 2016, the City of Lyon has taken steps to ensure meaningful citizen participation across a range of initiatives. Traditional participation methods can limit the engagement of certain demographic groups, such as young people. To address this, Lyon partnered with Civocracy, a civic technology company, to combine offline tools with digital ones. These methods were first used in a project to rejuvenate a major city park, with over 500 participants using the Civocracy platform. Ideas were also gathered from groups such as schoolchildren and senior citizens using offline methods and then uploaded to the platform. What's more, the platform ensures transparency and engages citizens, as the service allows them to consult and share ideas with the City. The project was such a success that the City partnered with Civocracy again to plan educational structural change – this time over 3,000 people participated. Lyon will undertake numerous sustainability projects through to 2030, and hopes that through varied citizen engagement methods and collaborative project development and implementation, residents will also be educated on various sustainability topics.

SDGs:



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For more info:





PATHWAY 14: We will support open data standards and take care that collected public data will not be controlled by private actors, but remain available for our local governments in order to improve our policies and services for the citizens.

City: Gdynia, Poland

Gdynia sustainable through openness

Gdynia is implementing smart technological city solutions, while fostering relationships of trust with citizens. One key example is their transparency with respect to urban data. The city runs a portal on which nearly 200 data sets related to public services are freely accessible. What makes this portal unique is its accessibility; the datasets are presented in such a way that they are comprehensible for all users. To improve access to information further, the city launched an education portal in 2018 that gives teachers, students and parents access to data (updated hourly), charts and analysis. These indicators are now supporting educational establishments to better plan their activities. Finally, Gdynia has an application to ensure transparency of public activities. This application includes a so-called “Resident’s Assistant”, which allows inhabitants to contact municipal services directly and report concerns. Currently the “Assistant” has about 15,000 active users, whilst 70 percent of complaints are solved within two weeks. Together, these tools have enabled better contact between citizens and the local government, increased transparency, and, as a result, helped foster higher standards of living in Gdynia.

SDGs:



© Danutaniemiec

For more info:





PATHWAY 15: We will prepare our policies, our public management and governance systems as well as our urban societies for the socio-cultural changes that are triggered by innovative and smart technologies in order to maximise the positive impacts.

Organisation: Udaltalde 21, Arrankudiaga, Basque Country

Nerbioi-Ibaizabal Supramunicipal Sustainability Office

Udaltalde 21 Nerbioi-Ibaizabal was created by 11 small municipalities in the Basque Country who, individually, did not have the capacity and resources to work on environmental issues. By combining their resources and adopting a supra-municipal cooperation model, the 11 municipalities have been able to work together under a common sustainability strategy. Udaltalde 21 Nerbioi-Ibaizabal consists of a supra-municipal sustainability office, a procurement service, and an energy observatory and portal. Through these mechanisms and using shared tenders, the municipalities have been able to reduce their collective energy consumption, costs associated with waste collection, and their joint environmental impact, while increasing the efficiency of services they provide to residents. Their cooperation has also provided them with access to grants and projects that were previously unattainable to them as individual municipalities.

SDGs:



© Udaltalde 21

For more info:



MORE INSPIRATION FROM THE DATABASE

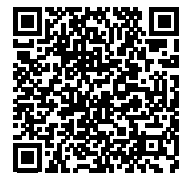
© City of Umeå



City: Umeå, Sweden

Fritidsbanken Umeå - a sharing service with environmental impact

This project is a public library for sports equipment, toys and leisure items. Sharing these resources reduces environmental impact and allows children overcome the economic barriers associated with participating in cultural activities.



© Associazione Amici del Nidiaci in Oltrarno Onlus



Organisation: Associazione Amici del Nidiaci in Oltrarno Onlus, Florence, Italy

Oltrarno Sostenibile

This project uses community gardening and environmental education to promote the inclusion and integration of immigrant families in Florence.





CLOSING WORDS

The Transformative Actions in this publication are an urgent reminder of the need to change the way we think, plan and act. The variety of city stories from across Europe illustrate that there is no excuse not to act.

Ultimately, the acceleration of bottom-up action and change may further push and accelerate the ambition of global frameworks for sustainability and climate change.

If you are inspired by the actions presented in this document and want to showcase your own local Transformative Action, then visit www.sustainablecities.eu.



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