

Sustainable Urban Development in Georgia

Supporting sustainable, community-driven urban planning in Georgia

Georgian cities and climate change

Urban areas contribute greatly to carbon emissions and are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Thus, cities hold immense mitigation potential and face the urgent need to strengthen adaptation measures. Unlocking this could accelerate a green and just transition.

The national Climate Change Council (CCC) of Georgia monitors and coordinates the implementation of the country's climate strategy and the corresponding action plan. Half of all 64 Georgian municipalities are signatories of the Global Covenant of Mayors, committed to developing and implementing Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs). Nonetheless, localising Georgia's ambitious NDC commitments requires additional efforts. High levels of centralisation and a low level of capacities at local level pose challenges for Georgian cities in developing and financing integrated urban development projects for climate action. Moreover, participatory approaches to ensure the long-term social and economic impact of urban interventions are yet to be established as a standard.

Our approach: Urban Labs

To enhance participatory planning in Georgian cities, GIZ uses collaborative approaches to carry out experiments testing solutions in real-world settings, in the form of an Urban Lab. These experiments involve making changes to places or processes and then studying their effects. Urban Labs involve multiple stakeholders, including planners, policymakers, researchers, and citizens, who work together to identify challenges, develop solutions, and test them through small-scale interventions. This inter-disciplinary approach allows the creation of well-rounded solutions to complex

urban problems, thus fostering positive change in the selected cities.

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Project region	Georgia
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
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Following the Urban Lab approach, Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) in Georgia brings integrated urban infrastructure projects to readiness for funding – primarily in the fields of energy efficiency, mobility, waste management and public spaces. To this end, it works closely with selected cities in cooperation with national and sub-national stakeholders, experts of various fields, and local communities. By conducting real life laboratories, the project improves urban integration, citizen participation and inclusivity. In addition, the project works to improve local government and civil-society capacities in integrated planning and investment budgeting. Apart from infrastructure projects, SUD also supports the elaboration of Neighborhood Concepts (NCs) based on the work of the Labs involving the local community.

Benefits

The project strengthens a direct exchange between civil society organisations, businesses and the city administrations. It also mobilises stakeholders at national level to cooperate on multi-





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sectoral urban challenges, such as mobility and sustainable energy management. Georgian cities are therefore capacitated to develop participatory, climate-oriented and urban-integrated investment projects that are ready for financing.

National Urban Policy Reform

The Urban Policy Innovation Group (UPIG) serves as a forum in Georgia to discuss information collected by the Urban Labs in cities and propose adjustments to national urban development policy. UPIG's primary function is to recommend evidence-based reforms that promote climate-friendly, inclusive, and participatory city development practices.

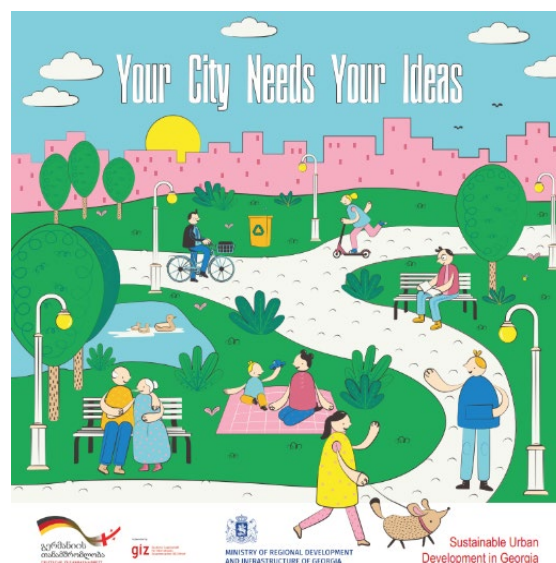
UPIG's activities encompass several key areas. The group ensures the Urban Labs' methodology aligns with Georgia's specific context and fosters collaborative, evidence-based policymaking. They also analyse ongoing urban development initiatives and disseminate relevant information among member stakeholders. Furthermore, UPIG identifies which urban development issues merit real-world exploration by the Labs and advises on the data collection process. Finally, UPIG plays a critical role in evaluating the project's effectiveness and ensuring the knowledge gained informs future urban development efforts in Georgia.

Facilitating knowledge exchange

To disseminate learnings and ensure the sustainability of knowledge production and exchange, the project supports networking events, bringing together local urban practitioners and sharing findings from the implementation of the Urban Labs, among other topics. Based on the project results and depending on the interest and needs of the network, knowledge products on various topics pertaining to sustainable urban development and climate action in cities are created and disseminated within the urban development community.

Envisioned results

The project produces climate-friendly and financially sound urban development plans and projects through collaboration between municipalities and citizens. This includes incorporating climate considerations into existing public urban investment proposals, creating new climate-oriented neighborhood development plans, and calculating investment costs. Policy recommendations are developed based on learnings from the Urban Labs, including demonstration projects, to improve national urban development policy and financing mechanisms. Finally, a network of Georgian experts is established to foster knowledge sharing on these critical urban development topics. These achievements collectively empower Georgian municipalities to pursue financing for their climate-conscious and participatory urban development projects.



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