



Proposal

ACTION PLAN 2016

MEDCITIES GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dubrovnik, 10th-11th November 2015

Summary

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Context

MedCities is facing 2016 with renovated energies and commitment to promote urban sustainable development as a means to build a peaceful, stable and prosper region in the Mediterranean i.

To that end, this Action Plan proposal for 2016 maintains the three strategic lines defined in 2015 which respond to the three major functions of the network: networking, elaboration of projects and lobbying.

MedCities is in the process to consolidate the enlargement of the network started in the General Assembly held in Barcelona in 2013. To that end, increasing ownership by all members will be particularly sought. The decentralization structure of MedCities will be consolidated in 2016, with an increasing role for the regional antennas of Sfax and Al Fayhaa as an instrument to provide closer assistance to our members.

Regarding to projects, MedCities has traditionally been a project-oriented network, dedicated to the identification and implementation of projects. This will continue to be the case for next year. Projects are essential to the network, and we will improve procedures in order our members to continue seeing MedCities as a platform to implement and promote their projects.

Third, as developed since its creation, MedCities will act as lobby of cities to promote local cooperation in the region as a means to create synergies and to foster collaboration among territories. We will continue raising the voice of local authorities in several international *fora*, and to advocate for local authorities role when designing the future of our regions.

MedCities will also contribute to the different multi-lateral initiatives aroused to give response to the pressing challenges the region is facing. To that end, and with the engagement of all members, we are sure to contribute to bring prosperity to our beloved Mediterranean region.

Last, but not least, in 2016 MedCities will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. This will be the occasion to reinforce our commitment to face the challenges ahead and to congratulate ourselves for a quarter of century of cooperation and friendship among Mediterranean cities.

MedCities General Secretariat team

Action Plan 2016

| | Specific Objectives | Actions |
|--|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">MedCities, a network of Mediterranean cities</p> | <p>1. Strengthen the network</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To increase ownership of MedCities by its members - To make MedCities association fully operative. - To increase number of members, particularly from EU Countries. - To consolidate the bet to enlarge the network in the Balkans and Adriatic region. - To continue working on the new funding framework for the Association. |
| | <p>2. Reinforce communication activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To implement the Communication Strategy of MedCities. - Engage members in standard communication activities (newsletter, website, etc.). - To develop the 25th Anniversary campaign involving all members of the network |
| | <p>3. Consolidate regional antennas of the network</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To empower the regional antennas of Sfax and Al Fayhaa. - To redefine the role of the KTC of Malaga. - To organize knowledge sharing activities and training actions on urban sustainable development for members of the network - To represent the Association in regional events. - To identify the needs of the cities and new project ideas. - To involve all cities in the decentralization of the network beyond the KTCs (<i>hubbing</i>) - To promote contact with national Authorities and EU Delegations. |

| | Specific Objectives | Actions |
|---|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">MedCities, a platform of projects</p> | <p>1. Support cities in defining and implementing City Development Strategies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cities Alliance Strategic Planning Tunisia - To review and update existing CDS - To accompany cities in elaborating new CDS and implementing Local Development Offices. |
| | <p>2. Support members in implementing strategic projects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out capacity-building and technical assistance projects. - To engage in region-wide capacity building activities (CISUD, CMI, etc) - To accompany members in seeking funding opportunities. - To disseminate good practices on strategic projects implementation - To implement urban development projects - To integrate refugee dimension in the definition of new urban projects. |
| | <p>3. Promote and implement multilateral and bilateral cooperation project</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To participate in Interreg MED call for projects. - To present projects at ENI CBC MED and ENI MID ATLANTIC through thematic working groups. - Promote bilateral cooperation between members. - To participate in other multilateral projects calls. |

| | Specific Objectives | Actions |
|---|--|---|
| MedCities, a lobby of cities | 1. Serve as a platform for members to internationalize their initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To disseminate at international level successful initiatives of members. - Endorse members in their international campaigns |
| | 2. Establish international alliances for the promotion of Urban Sustainable Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To continue participating in multi-actor cooperation schemes on urban development in the Mediterranean: CMI Urban Hub and UfM Experts Group. - To strengthen cooperation with strategic allies towards a greater integration of actions. |
| | 3. Advocate for local authorities in the Mediterranean | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To represent Mediterranean local authorities in international Fora on local governments: ARLEM, UCLG, MCSD Steering Committee. - To strengthen the network vis-à-vis EU institutions. - To accompany decentralization processes - To participate in the EU Structured Dialogue with Associations. - To reinforce cooperation with Mediterranean organizations such as Arco Latino, CRPM, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, ... |

MedCities, a network of Mediterranean cities

1. Strengthen the network

During the last years, MedCities is increasing the number of members coming from the Southern rim of the Mediterranean. The challenges of the network for 2016 are to consolidate the engagement of current members, the rapprochement to other European Mediterranean cities, and to define a strategy to enlarge the network in the Balkans and the Adriatic region.

A priority for the network will be to diversify funding sources to guarantee the projects and initiatives emerged from the members of the Association. To achieve this objective, it will be important to make MedCities association fully operative.

2. Reinforce communication activities

In 2016, MedCities will continue its efforts to increase accountability vis-à-vis members and other actors. The General Secretariat will work on the revision of the Communication Strategy to adapt it to the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the network and the new challenges established in this Action Plan 2016. Communication will serve as a transversal tool to achieve the objectives of the network.

Moreover, MedCities will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. The General Secretariat, together with all members, will define a campaign that will include different activities to be implemented. The main objective will be to disseminate the importance of urban sustainable development and the work done by MedCities in the Mediterranean region during the last 25 years.

In that sense, engaging members in communication activities and the definition of other actions will be a priority.

3. Consolidate regional antennas of the network

MedCities will continue working on the consolidation of the decentralization of the network through the Knowledge Transfer Centers (KTC) of Al Fayhaa and the KTC of Sfax, to strengthen the network and to offer proximity assistance to the members of the network.

The KTCs are an instrument for the members of the network and other cities interested in MedCities to define and develop their own projects, to create new partnership and cooperation schemes with other actors, and to reinforce the capacities of their technical staff in the field of strategic urban planning.

The KTCs have also the responsibility to represent MedCities in regional events and to disseminate its activities across their area of influence.

MedCities, a platform of projects

1. Support cities in defining and implementing City Development Strategies

MedCities has advocated for the importance of City Development Strategies (CDS) as a tool for developing the city strategically, by introducing the future vision of the city and defining the strategies and projects necessary in order to achieve such vision.

MedCities will continue accompanying its members in the process of definition of their CDS, based on our long-tested methodology that enhances the participation of citizens and the engagement of local actors in order to guarantee the ownership and success of the CDS.

Moreover, MedCities will continue collaborating with the members of the network that have already defined their strategies in the follow-up of their implementation as well as in supporting them in updating these strategies, when necessary. The General Secretariat is already engaged in conversations with international actors in order to contribute to long term national programs that promote urban strategic planning as a tool for sustainable development, being Tunisia the most advanced project drafted.

2. Support members in implementing strategic projects

MedCities is convinced that it has to serve to its member as a platform for the promotion of strategic projects implementation. For that reason, we will continue accompanying our members in the task of defining, seeking for funding and implementing strategic urban projects, in different ways.

Such accompaniment goes beyond the mere searching for funding opportunities, which is of course a crucial element for the network. It includes also other kind of activities such as capacity-building of the municipal structures, either technical or political. Capacity-building activities can be done “on the job”, through technical assistance projects, the exchange of experiences, dissemination of good practices as well as through the day-to-day collaboration with the municipalities in the implementation and follow-up of urban projects.

Mainstreaming capitalization events and technical exchanges in all the implemented projects is a strategy to guarantee that the experience of one city will have multiplier effects on other members.

Furthermore, our work in 2016 will also be directed towards the participation in capacity-building activities in the frame of wider regional initiatives or in collaboration with international actors in the Mediterranean region.

Last, and following the recent developments in the Mediterranean region, MedCities is interested in accompanying those members that have been facing the stresses of the so-called

refugee crisis in integrating the dimension of the reception and the service provision for refugees in the definition of new urban projects.

3. Promote and implement multilateral and bilateral cooperation project

MedCities is also a platform for the creation of new cooperation projects among its members. As such and given the fact that the new programming period of the European Union has been launched during 2015, we are willing to work towards the definition of multilateral and bilateral cooperation projects at different levels.

First, by working with our members on the imminent ENI CBC MED Sea Basin Program call for projects, which will be launched during 2016, by defining and submitting various thematic cooperation projects to be led directly by MedCities or by its members. In 2016, the definition and preparation of such projects will be crucial for the network and the engagement of its members is needed in this process.

Apart for the MED Sea Basin Program, similar work will be undertaken for the ENI MID Atlantic Program, EU national cooperation programs in specific countries or other international cooperation projects that go beyond the EU programming scheme.

Last, during the last months MedCities has worked in the Interreg MED call for projects. By participating in relevant modular or capitalization projects under this program we are convinced that we will offer valuable knowledge to our members. We will be able to capitalize methodologies, experiences and practices that these projects promote in order our cities to profit from them.

MedCities, a lobby of cities

1. To serve as a platform for members to internationalize their initiatives

MedCities intends to be a platform for its members in order to scale up their international initiatives. Being a network of more than forty members provides a remarkable showroom in which to share those initiatives that seek international dimension.

Candidacy to international awards, events organization, or other transnational campaigns can be integrated in this objective. The General Secretariat will encourage members to integrate that MedCities can serve to their international strategies and dissemination of activities region-wide.

2. To establish international alliances for the promotion of Urban Sustainable Development

MedCities will continue to participate in a large scale of multi-actor cooperation schemes on urban development in the Mediterranean, in which it is seen as a reliable partner. The objective is to give voice to Mediterranean local authorities and to identify projects and initiatives that can serve to the interests of our members.

MedCities has historically been characterized by a cooperation approach to projects, considering that working with others not only enriches projects but also is a guarantee to its successful implementation. To that end, we will continue to establish strategic alliances with those actors participating actively in urban development initiatives in the region. Integration of actions is needed in order to assure efficiency in the implementation phase and to amplify the scope of the projects developed by the members of the network.

3. To advocate for local authorities in the Mediterranean

MedCities also develops an important task in representing Mediterranean local authorities in several *fora*, such ARLEM, the Political Bureau of the Mediterranean Commission of UCLG, the Mediterranean Commission of Sustainable Development, among others.

In 2016, MedCities intends to increase its interlocution capacity with EU Institutions, both in Brussels, taking place in the EU Structured Dialogue with Associations, and in the country delegations. We will also advocate for our members to actively participate in the decentralization debates taking place in several countries, particularly in the Southern rim of the Mediterranean. Finally, greater coordination with other regional networks is sought in order to guarantee the complementarity of actions.