

Urban development



UfM-labelled project UPFI Bouregreg Valley (Morocco)

The Mediterranean region is characterised by one of the fastest urbanisation rates worldwide, with almost **60% of the total population already living in urban areas**. By 2030, nearly 80% of the Southern Mediterranean population will be concentrated on just 10% of the land, predominantly on the coast.

Rapid urbanisation calls for a bottom-up approach and region-wide solutions, as well as the mobilisation of all actors, to address an increasing number of demographic, socio-economic, environmental and technological challenges both at local and regional levels.

In 2018, the **UfM Thematic Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Housing** met to start evaluating the current situation in UfM member states and identifying needs and policy gaps, in order to develop a concrete action plan.

The UfM Secretariat also paved the way for the launch of the **UfM Thematic Working Group on Urban Regeneration**, which will likewise develop an action plan. The UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting will periodically inform member states and the UN on the progress of the UfM Urban Agenda, as well as on the advancement of the UN agenda for sustainable urban development in the Euro-Mediterranean region (for more information, see the box: Connecting the Mediterranean with the Global Agenda).

“Through the support of the UfM Secretariat and the discussions within working groups, the outcomes of the Urban Agenda for the EU serve as an inspiration to share good practices and design solutions collectively.”

Wallis Goelen Vandebroek, Senior Expert, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Concrete steps towards the UfM Urban Agenda

The Second **Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development** (Cairo, May 2017) established a UfM regional platform for dialogue and technical cooperation towards a sustainable, innovative and integrated development agenda. Through its three working groups, and in coordination with the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee, the platform seeks to effectively translate the **UfM Urban Agenda** into concrete action.



Smart cities for a sustainable future in the Mediterranean

UfM member states unanimously endorsed the Euro-Mediterranean **Smart City Innovation Centres** project on 20 September 2018. This regional project aims to replicate, in three Southern Mediterranean cities – Alexandria (Egypt), Fez (Morocco) and Tunis (Tunisia) – the success of the Nice Smart City Innovation Centre in France.

Promoted by the Euromed Cities Network, the project will involve local authorities, research and academic institutions, and leading smart-city-related companies. These actors will be able to exchange knowledge and pool data in a single location, **multiplying opportunities to develop smart urban services and solutions** that will ultimately improve the quality of life of the three cities' 7 million inhabitants.

WELL-PLANNED AND MANAGED URBANISATION: A POWERFUL TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The UfM Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Housing defined sustainable homes as:

- Healthy, durable, safe and secure
- Affordable for the whole spectrum of incomes
- Using ecological, low-energy and affordable building materials and technology
- Resilient to potential natural disasters and climatic impacts
- Connected to decent, safe and affordable energy, water, sanitation and recycling facilities
- Using energy and water efficiently and equipped with on-site renewable energy generation and water recycling facilities
- Non-polluting to the environment and protected from external pollution
- Well connected to jobs, shops, health and child care, education and other services
- Properly integrated into, and enhancing of, the social, cultural and economic fabric of the local neighbourhood and the wider urban area
- Properly run and maintained, renovated in a timely manner



Innovation and finance combine for sustainable urban development

The **Urban Projects Finance Initiative** (UPFI) is an innovative tool that coordinates the actions of financial institutions to achieve the common goal of constructing sustainable cities in the Mediterranean region. Funded

by the European Commission and co-managed by the AFD and the EIB, with the support of the UfM, it aims to **identify and select flagship sustainable urban development projects** likely to be politically endorsed by the UfM member states and implemented in the short term.

As the initiative in its current form will be phased out in December 2019, the UPFI has been extended with a new format for the 2018-2020 period, thanks to an allocation of €4.5 million under the EIB's Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI). The new UPFI-ERI aims to fund the preparatory phases of new urban development projects in the Balkans and in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

“The UfM plays a key role in guiding the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the Euro Mediterranean Region, and is closely working with EIB and other regional actors to identify innovative and impactful projects in affordable housing and urban regeneration.”

Gerry Muscat, Head of the Urban Development Division, EIB



CONNECTING THE MEDITERRANEAN WITH THE GLOBAL AGENDA

The UfM Secretariat organised a networking event on the implementation of the UN's New Urban Agenda in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Held during the 9th session of the World Urban Forum (Kuala Lumpur, 10 February 2018), it was co-organised with UN-Habitat, the European Commission and the EIB.

Following this meeting, UN-Habitat, UNDP and UN Women signed a joint letter of support for the UfM Urban Agenda as an effective means of contributing to these two global agendas in the region.

THE SOUTHERN SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ARE URBANISING RAPIDLY WITH GROWTH RATES OF MOST MAJOR CITIES BETWEEN

1.5% – 2% PER YEAR

Source: CIDOB