



Mayors for Economic Growth Regional Program

Designing & rapidly activating Urban Transformation Portfolios with municipal governments

Who: European Commission (EU)

Where: Eastern Partnership, Europe & Central Asia

When: 2021 - 2023

Overview

Industry:

Urban Development

Program Size:

Kutaisi and Batumi (Georgia);
Ceadir-Lunga (Moldova); Areni,
Kapan, and Gyumri (Armenia);
Icherischeher and Khirdalan
(Azerbaijan)
~ \$14 million regional budget

Themes:

Sustainable & Smart Cities
Energy Transition
Startup & Investment

Core Activities:

Portfolio Design
Portfolio Activation
Dynamic Management

Further Reading:

[Reimagining Batumi](#)
[Public Sector as Insurer of last resort](#)
[UNDP: M4EG Pathways](#)
[Introducing City Snapshots](#)

Program Contact

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"We experienced firsthand the versatility of our City Stencil adapting it seamlessly to the various contexts. In particular, the training sessions that we conducted in 6 languages truly put our tools to the test!"

Challenge

How can local authorities address their leading urban challenge by adopting an accelerated and streamlined Portfolio approach?

Secondary cities in Eastern Europe have been facing profound socio-economic and demographic decline. The EU funded Mayors for Economic Growth program aimed at enhancing the capacity of local authorities to deal with this downward facing trend. To do so, the program required a uniquely adaptive approach to the design and activation of individual place-based city portfolios while ensuring coherence at the regional and program level.

Solution

CHÔRA designed a City Transformation Stencil for the [M4EG program](#) laying the ground for the identification of each city's core challenge and the design of place-based seed portfolios. Together with a portfolio activation facilitated by CHÔRA, where each city received 30 - 70k EUR in seed funding, the entire process took no more than 100 days.

Identified challenges were diverse ranging from the design of a portfolio for the establishment of a local start-up ecosystem in Batumi (Georgia), to the design of learning initiatives to fuel a green energy transition in Ceadir-Lunga (Moldova).

Through participatory workshops, a community listening phase and public servant's training seminars, CHÔRA designed and activated 8 Urban Transformation Portfolios.

Results

- **Batumi:** 50+ Portfolio stakeholders were actively engaged in the activation phase of the Portfolio. The Start Up World Cup brought investors such as Google Germany and World Bank to Batumi and over 100 other investors.
- **Ceadir-Lunga:** Its focus on community and capability focused energy transition reached over 150 individuals in the first 2 months and attracted international co financing.
- **New public service capabilities:** Cities built new skills, roles and functions to go beyond traditional administration including strategic project management, partnerships orchestration, impact measurement and change management.

"Through the portfolio approach, we identified the problem of the city and explored a number of possible solutions. The process has enabled us to apply new and innovative methods for greater impact and sustainability."