



Final results

Implementation phase

From 2020 until 2022, the project focused on the implementation of the action plans. In this final report the main challenges and opportunities for ABCitiEs will be presented. Overall, the ABCitiEs project has given insight into the unique role that collaborative partnerships can play in regenerating cities and improving neighborhoods in the areas of inclusive growth, cooperation and cohesion, but has also highlighted that challenges that are faced by these collaborative partnerships and the importance of inclusive partnerships and mutually agreed base-based outcomes.

Lessons learned

On the basis of the research and implementation phase, some of the most important challenges and opportunities that ABCitiEs faced were:

Challenges

- Trust: in many areas, but especially in Vilnius and Athens, building trust is still a major challenge, both between SMEs and SMEs and municipalities.
- Timing: timing is crucial to create momentum, but not always easy to influence
- Complex nature of places: places comprise people and communities interacting with one another and with objects (such as roads, buildings and parks) within a range of urban settings or contexts. Complex sociotechnical systems (urban, transportation or warfare) are difficult to analyze and require an understanding of the whole system rather than the parts.
- Fragmented and siloed nature of policy development and implementation: there needs to be greater focus on higher level institutional culture of local government, which is currently too fragmented and siloed. Capacity is needed to overcome silos which limit place based development, but also skills and competencies to deliver effective place leadership.

Opportunities

- Inclusiveness of collectives: places comprise people and communities interacting with one another and with objects, make sure to be inclusive to these people and communities and involve them in the decision process.
- Work with different scenarios: make sure to have a plan B and C if necessary to retain momentum.
- Attention for skills and training: pay attention to skills and training for all those who want to make positive change to their neighborhood, be it as an intermediary or as an SME or resident. Leadership, communication, management and financial skills are all crucial for building strong and successful collectives.
- Focus on mutually agreed place-based outcomes: outcomes should ultimately be place based rather than serving the purpose of a single organization. Therefore, we need to rethink what policy is and how it is done, as we shift to more flexible and iterative practices. A strong focus on mutually agreed place-based outcomes can further clarify intentions and improve successful collaboration.

ABCitiEs

Area based collaborative partnerships are 'geographically delimited, networked communities of entrepreneurs (and other stakeholders) that jointly enact their business environment to pursue economic goals as well as social and/or environmental goals'.

Project goals

The project wanted to raise awareness regarding opportunities for area based collaborative entrepreneurship in cities, and at the same time it aimed to stimulate policy makers towards adapting policies to support area based collaborative entrepreneurship.

Policy evaluation report

In 2020 the consortium published a policy evaluation report about the first two years of the project in which the results of the investigation phase and the action plans were presented. The policy evaluation report is available at the ABCitiEs website.

Visit our project on the web at
www.interregueurope.eu/abcities/

A consortium of 5 European regions – Manchester, Vilnius, Varaždin-Čakovec, Athens and Amsterdam – and 11 partners spent 4 years analyzing policies with regards to area based collective partnerships in their regions. In each region a number of collaborative partnerships were studied in detail to identify the main opportunities and challenges.