

01

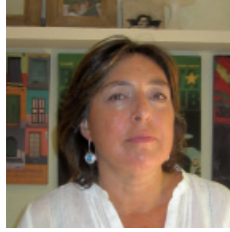
Methodological Guides
URB-AL III

Identification, Systemisation and Exchange of Successful Experiences in Local Social Cohesion



urb-al III
Oficina de Coordinación y Orientación - OCO

Identification, Systemisation and Exchange
of Successful Experiences in Local Social Cohesion



Olga Del Rio

Doctorate in Communication Sciences (UAB) with over 20 years' experience in international cooperation for development. She is a researcher specialising in cooperation for development, democratic governability and human rights, gender in development, communication and ICT for development, as well as methodological tools and social research. She is a lecturer at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Girona. Academic coordinator of the Barcelona module of the European professional specialisation master's degree in Inter-Mediterranean Mediation and consultant for the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others.

This document has been produced with a grant from the European Union. The contents of this document is the exclusive responsibility of the author and should in no way be considered to reflect the European Union's position.

Published by: URB-AL III Programme
Còrsega, 273-279 08008 Barcelona
Tel. +34 934 049 470
Fax +34 934 022 473
E-mail info@urb-al3.eu
www.urb-al3.eu

© Publishers: Diputació de Barcelona
(Orientation and Coordination Office
of the URB-AL III Programme)

Editorial Board: Agustí Fernández
de Losada, Octavi de la Varga, Eduardo
Feldman, Carla Cors, Víctor Godínez
and Verónica Sanz
Editing: Directorate for Communication
of Diputació de Barcelona
Design: Estudi Josep Bagà
Printing: DRG
DL: B.33453-2011

01

Methodological Guides
URB-AL III

Identification, Systemisation and Exchange of Successful Experiences in Local Social Cohesion

Olga Del Rio



urb-al III
Oficina de Coordinación y Orientación - OCO

Contents

9	Prologue
11	0. Objectives and structure of the guide
<hr/>	
13	PART I: Brief Conceptual Notes
15	1. Social cohesion: central pillar of EU-LA relations
17	2. Social cohesion: definition
19	3. Social cohesion in the URB-AL III Programme: dimensions and components
23	4. Successful experiences in social cohesion: conceptualisation and classification
<hr/>	
27	PART II: Phases in the Process of Identification, Systemisation and Exchange of Successful Experiences in Social Cohesion
29	5. Process phases
31	6. Phase I: preparation and formalisation of the initiative
31	6.1. Diagnosis and preparation of the initiative
33	6.2 Insertion into an existing network/platform/programme
35	6.3 Process of consultation and attracting other actors
37	6.4 Start-up of the initiative
41	7. Phase II: public call for applications, identification and systemisation of successful experiences
41	7.1 Establishing the conditions and dissemination of the call for applications
42	7.2 Obtaining applications and preselection
45	7.3 Identification and mapping of experiences
46	7.4 Systemisation and dissemination of experiences
50	7.5 Format for systemising local social cohesion experiences
56	7.6 Selection, inventory and dissemination of systematised experiences
59	8. Phase III: exchange and transfer of experiences
59	8.1 Objective and conditions for the exchange
62	8.2 Exchange of successful experiences in local social cohesion
67	8.3 Experience replication/transfer processes
70	BIBLIOGRAPHY
72	APPENDIX 1: Conceptual Development of the Social Cohesion Components Used in the Guide

Prologue

It is a pleasure to present the publication of the guide *Identification, Systemisation and Exchange of Successful Experiences in Social Cohesion*, produced by the URB-AL III Orientation and Coordination Office with the aim of providing a methodological tool for modelling, transferring and exchanging such experiences.

In this edition, the European Commission's URB-AL Programme, a benchmark for EU-LA decentralised cooperation, aims to contribute to increasing the degree of social cohesion in the heart of subnational Latin American governments. To this end, proposals are put forward to consolidate or promote social cohesion processes and policies, through partnerships or exchange of experiences, in a limited number of cities and territories in Latin America, which could become reference models capable of generating debates and indicating possible solutions for Latin American subnational governments that wish to boost social cohesion dynamics.

Through 20 projects, executed in partnership with local and regional governments, work is in being carried out directly in 75 Latin American territories, with an impact on 500 municipalities in the region. In order to accompany the projects so that they meet their objectives, and to contribute to social cohesion in Latin America, above and beyond the projects, the OCO has promoted a number of actions. One such action is the publication of this guide, which aims to provided a methodology for the different

actors directly involved in the programme and other subnational governments in the region so they may identify, systemise and exchange successful experiences in local social cohesion.

In our opinion, in the context of the current crisis, while its impact on Europe and Latin America differs, it directly affects public social cohesions policies, and stimulating processes of exchanging successful experiences and facilitating the basic conditions for the replication is now more relevant than ever. Therefore, we are pleased to release this new publication, and hope it will prove particularly useful for the territories involved in the URB-AL III Programme and for all local public actors who seek to improve the quality of life of the population in their territories.

Agustí Fernández de Losada
Director of International Relations
at Diputació de Barcelona and
General Coordinator of the Orientation
and Coordination Office of the
URB-AL III Programme

0. Objectives and structure of the guide

This guide is produced by the Orientation and Coordination Office (OCO) of the URB-AL III Programme. Its purpose is to both serve the programme (and, hence, the decentralised cooperation projects executed within it) and transcend it. The guide is also intended for use by other European and Latin American subnational governments which, even if they do not participate in the URB-AL III Programme, still have successful experiences to share in the field.

Its central aim is to offer a methodology, accessible to a wide range of profiles and processes, for the identification, systemisation and exchange of successful local social cohesion processes.

The methodological guide presented here is divided into two parts. Part I establishes the conceptual foundations for the proposed methodology. This part of the document is structured into two blocks:

/ The first of them focuses on the conceptual and operational definition of the notion of social cohesion on which the guide is based.

/ The second refers to the conceptualisation and type of successful experiences adopted in this document.

Part II discusses and details the steps proposed by the guide to initiate a process for identifying and systemising successful social cohesion experiences, as well as exchange and replicability actions. This part is divided into three further phases:

/ A first phase, in which the initiative is designed. In this context, insertion into an existing network or platform is discussed.

/ In the second phase, routes and formats for a public call for applications, identification and systemisation of successful experiences are proposed.

/ The third phase provides a brief discussion of the exchange of experiences and the basic conditions for the replicability of successful experiences.

Part I:
Brief Conceptual Notes —

1. Social cohesion: central pillar of EU-LA relations

Since the Rio de Janeiro Summit (1999), social cohesion has become the central pillar of relations and political dialogue between the European Union and Latin America. Thus, after the statements from the EU-LA summits in Guadalajara (2004) and Vienna (2006), the heads of state and government meeting in Lima in 2008 reaffirmed that social cohesion is a priority issue that has to be approached by governments in both regions in order to overcome the problems arising from poverty, social inequality and exclusion.

'We confirm that the fight against poverty, inequality and exclusion to achieve or increase social cohesion is a key policy priority of the strategic partnership between our regions. They remain an important focus for our dialogue and cooperation at national, sub-regional and regional level. We reiterate the primary responsibility of our governments, cooperating with all relevant actors, among them civil society, to implement policies towards this objective' (Art. 11 of the Lima Declaration).

These priorities were reflected in the document on regional programming for the period 2007-2013,¹ which enabled a series of programmes aimed at increasing social cohesion in Latin America to be launched. URB-AL III is one of those.

Its general objective is to contribute to increasing the degree of social and territorial cohesion within subnational and regional groups in Latin America.

Its specific aim is to consolidate or promote social cohesion processes and policies, supported by partnerships or exchange of experiences, in a limited number of cities and territories in Latin America, which may become reference models capable of generating debate and indicating possible solutions for Latin American subnational governments that wish to boost social cohesion dynamics.

¹ http://eeas.europa.eu/la/rsp/07_13_es.pdf

2. Social cohesion: definition

Social cohesion is not a monolithic concept, nor does it indicate a fixed condition. At a high level of abstraction, it may be asserted that the central issue in this paradigm is the permanent search for a state of equilibrium in the social dynamic (OCO, 2010).

There are different ways of conceptualising social cohesion. The definition adopted by the Orientation and Coordination Office of the URB-AL II Programme is:

‘A socially cohesive community on any scale, whether local, regional or national, depends on its members sharing a sense of inclusion and belonging, participating actively in public affairs, recognising and tolerating differences and enjoying a degree of equality in access to public goods and

services and the distribution of income and wealth. All of this should take place in an environment where institutions generate confidence and legitimacy and where the rights of citizenship are fully exercised’².

² See *Reference Document of the URB-AL III Programme*, Orientation and Coordination Office, 2010, pp.10-100 http://www.urb-al3.eu/uploads/documentos/DocumentoBase_def.pdf; this quote is taken from the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), *Cohesión Social: ¿qué definición? Acción local y nacional* [Social Cohesion: What definition? Local and national action], paper presented at the 1st European Union-Latin American and Caribbean Local Government Forum, 29 and 30 November 2007; see <http://www.forum-localgovts-uealc.org>.

3. Social cohesion in the URB-AL III Programme: dimensions and components

This manual for identifying and exchanging successful experiences in local social cohesion is based on the approach to social cohesion adopted by the OCO in the framework of the URB-AL III Programme. This programme focuses on improving processes and local public policies designed to increase social cohesion in territories through actions

undertaken in five sectors (or dimensions) of intervention: productive-occupational, civic, territorial, institutional and social. This perspective maintains that social cohesion, is not just an empirically observable social model, but constitutes a reference point to be aspired to. Thus, in line with the European Commission, in the perspective

Table 1: Sectors of intervention (or dimensions) to improve local social cohesion

Dimensions	Explanation
Productive and occupational dimension: equal access to employment and the benefits of economic growth	<p>This involves integrated policies for local economic development and employment, through support for small and medium-sized businesses, the formalisation of economic activity, active policies for employment and vocational training, the regulation of migratory flows and the productive use of remittances from emigrants, among other strategies.</p> <p>These policies must be conceived with a view to improving social integration in the territory via decent employment and stimulation of the local economy.</p>
Social dimension: universal access to basic social services and public safety	<p>This involves generating policies to increase the quality and coverage of basic social services (primary education and technical vocational training, health, water, basic sanitation, refuse collection, etc.) in the territory.</p> <p>It also includes policies to promote public safety through education and prevention.</p> <p>These policies, which may adopt complementary public-private strategies) should be seen as instruments for building, guaranteeing and strengthening citizenship.</p>
Territorial dimension: reduction in territorial imbalances	<p>This involves promoting policies for urban integration, social urban planning and improvements to peripheral areas, included in integrated strategies for territorial planning and management.</p> <p>It also includes fostering fuller cross-border cooperation. The overall aim is to ensure greater levels of territorial cohesion, eliminating factors of discrimination against social groups linked to their place of residence.</p>
Civic dimension: developing active citizenship	<p>This is a transversal dimension, which affects all the others but is significant in its own right.</p> <p>It refers to the construction of a socio-cultural identity focussed on gender and respect for diversity, especially via the participation of civil and citizen organisations in the definition, implementation and monitoring of public policy, emphasising the inclusion of unrepresented individuals and groups in the decision-making processes.</p> <p>It also includes specific measures such as policies dealing with culture, young people, the inclusion of a gender focus in public strategies and institutions and multi-cultural coexistence.</p>

Dimensions	Explanation
Institutional dimension: strengthening institutions and local taxation systems	As in the case of the previous dimension, the institutional dimension is transversal but has characteristics of its own. It applies to the generation of cross-sector strategic planning processes for social cohesion, the strengthening of local institutions (on the political, administrative and technical levels), the creation or consolidation of institutional mechanisms for public-private cooperation in local and regional management, identifying and exploiting complementary features of different levels of municipal, regional and national decision making (multilevel governance) and strengthening the local taxation system with a view to redistributing wealth.

Source: OCO, 2010a

adopted by the OCO, social cohesion is a multidimensional phenomenon, to which contributions may be made through actions, policies and/or projects with goals in one or more of the abovementioned dimensions. These contributions do not just consist of

making progress in the corresponding sector of intervention, but also in developing and strengthening the five components that characterise a cohesive society (belonging, equality and social inclusion, participation, recognition and legitimacy).

Table 2: Components of social cohesion

Components	Explanation
Equality and social inclusion	Social cohesion presupposes a broad, systemic commitment to distributive justice and equality. A society which does not guarantee equality of opportunity to all its members generates dynamics of social distancing and differentiated capacities that undermine cohesion or make it impossible. Social cohesion is closely related to economic institutions, especially the market, and it can be seen as a bridge between the social and economic areas. Exclusion from the market, especially the labour market, is a clear threat to social cohesion. Inclusion, however, over and above the labour and economic spheres, presupposes the existence of a system of social protection which is able to guarantee safety and support for all, protecting them from need, risks and situations of vulnerability. For instance, it covers risks associated with disease, lack of self-sufficiency, drug addiction, poverty and isolation, among others.
Belonging	This component is related to the development of a sense of 'social connectivity' where people share basic values and commitments. A threat to social cohesion is associated with the feeling of isolation which, in some circumstances, may arise among certain individuals and social groups.
Recognition	This component refers to the positive mediation of differences of identity, religion, culture, politics, race, and values, and any other differences which are characteristic of a society. Members of a society who perceive that others accept and recognise them contribute to social cohesion, while it is threatened by rejection and intolerance or excessive efforts to achieve unanimity and uniformity.
Legitimacy	Social cohesion is a collective construct; it cannot be reduced to the sum of the individuals that comprise it. This component includes the strategic role of institutions (both public and private) and mechanisms or spaces for mediation which ensure connections between individuals. Social cohesion depends to a great extent on the legitimacy of these institutions and is threatened when they are not representative.
Participation	Social cohesion presupposes the widespread involvement of the populace in public issues (not only governmental in this case). Lack of incentives and reasons for public participation are often considered a threat to social cohesion.

Source: OCO, 2011

In the conceptualisation adopted by the OCO, equality and social inclusion, legitimacy, participation, recognition and belonging are no longer simply analytical

components, but become some of the key principles guiding public action in building more cohesive territories.

4. Successful experiences in social cohesion: conceptualisation and classification

In the spirit of the conceptual framework adopted by the OCO, in this manual, *successful experiences in social cohesion* are understood as:

‘the set of actions, public policies and projects that not only have a positive impact on a specific public agenda issue, related to one (or more) of the five intervention sectors (or dimensions) identified by the European Commission (productive and occupational, social, territorial, civic and institutional), but also, thanks to this impact, these actions, public policies or projects contribute to developing and strengthening (some of) the five components that characterise a cohesive society (belonging, equality and social inclusion, participation, recognition and legitimacy)’.

From this perspective, a successful experience is equivalent to a best practice. The latter ‘refers to the set or sequence of procedures, working methods, technologies and other elements of experience considered

essential to generating positive results and which are themselves transferable (in similar contexts or with the necessary adaptations). An experience may include various practices which need to be accurately documented, given that they are central to the experience and may help generate the transfer of experiences leading to the desired change’ (EUROsociAL, 2006).

Successful experiences, in turn, may be classified according to two criteria: firstly, whether or not their results have undergone formal assessment processes (an innovative experience, in the case of not having undergone a formal assessment process, and a proven experience, if they have) and, secondly, whether, as well as being formally assessed, they have been transferred to other contexts (transferred experiences). Based on these criteria, this guide distinguishes between: innovative experiences, proven experiences and transferred experiences.

Innovative experience	Proven experience	Transferred experience
These are experiences considered as successful, relevant and potentially transferable by the institutions that have developed and undertaken them. The results of these experiences have not undergone formal assessment processes.	These are formally assessed successful experiences which, in accordance with the assessment, have met their objectives effectively, efficiently and sustainably. These experiences are limited to the institution that undertook them.	These are successful experiences that have undergone formal assessment and which have already been transferred to other contexts.

Table 3: Types of successful experiences

Source: In-house production based on EUROsociAL, 2006

Another important aspect in processes of identifying or exchanging successful experiences is to define the objectives for the process. The objectives may be varied and will affect the design of the process. Some possibilities are given below:

- / Promoting excellence
- / Legitimising government actions
- / Promoting partnerships between equivalents
- / Promoting shared management of knowledge

Part II: Phases in the Process
of Identification, Systemisation
and Exchange of Successful
Experiences in Social Cohesion

5. Process phases

Once the more conceptual part of this methodological guide has been developed, it then focuses on the operating aspects, designing the process and including the proposed mechanisms and formats. The aim is that this second block is practical and easy to read and apply.

This guide seeks to offer a methodological proposal that can be used by any actor who wishes to initiate exchange and replicability processes for successful experiences (innovative, proven and/or transferred), these being local/territorial actions, public policies or projects. Three major phases are proposed to this end:

Phase I: preparation and formalisation of the initiative

- ↓ Diagnosis and preparation of the initiative
- ↓ Insertion into an existing network/platform/programme
- ↓ Process of consultation and attracting other actors
- ↓ Start-up of the initiative

Phase II: Identification and systemisation of successful experiences

- ↓ Establishing the conditions and dissemination of the call for applications
- ↓ Obtaining applications and preselection
- ↓ Identification and mapping of experiences
- ↓ Systemisation and dissemination of experiences
- ↓ Selection, inventory and dissemination of systematised experiences

Phase III: exchange and replicability of successful experiences

- ↓ Conditions for exchange
- ↓ Exchange of local social cohesion experiences
- ↓ Replication/transfer of experiences

6. Phase I: preparation and formalisation of the initiative

The preparatory phase covers the need to guarantee minimum conditions to initiate the exchange and replicability processes for successful local social cohesion experiences with a decent chance of success.

- ↓ Diagnosis and preparation of the initiative
- ↓ Insertion into an existing network/platform/programme
- ↓ Process of consultation and attracting other actors
- ↓ Start-up of the initiative

6.1. Diagnosis and preparation of the initiative

Starting up an identification and exchange process for successful local social cohesion experiences requires:

- i. The existence of successful experiences (innovative, proven and/or transferred) which are considered potentially useful for dealing with a specific problem in other contexts [offer].
- ii. The existence of actors interested or potentially interested in these successful experiences (innovative, proven and/or transferred) [demand].
- iii. The existence of a programme, group or organisation with political will, institutional strength and prestige, territorial presence and the technical and material resources to carry out the exchange of successful experiences

(innovative, proven and/or transferred) or, at the least, to provide the initial boost, long enough for it to become institutionalised in any of the possible formats.

- iv. An initial self-assessment of the potential of the planned exchange initiative. This initial self-assessment may be based on a checklist before starting an initiative. The checklist is only meant as a guide for the analysis of certain aspects that experience has shown to be important.

A format is proposed below which, logically, may be modified, improved, updated or adapted to each moment and context.

Aspects to consider	Yes	No
1. Has a need been identified, or is there a desire to boost an explicit demand, to exchange successful experiences (innovative, proven and/or transferred) with a positive impact on social cohesion at a local level?		
2. Has a prospective diagnosis been performed to assess the quantity and quality of the real and potential demand?		
3. Is there a programme, group or organisation capable of promoting the exchange of successful local social cohesion experiences? Can it be accessed?		
4. If the programme, group or institution in question exists and is accessible, does it have the necessary capacity to promote the exchange? Is it a prestigious point of reference in the field for European and Latin American cities?		
5. If the programme, group or institution in question exists, if it is accessible and has the necessary capacity to promote the exchange, does it have the human and technical resources with sufficient skills to lead the initiative?		
6. If the programme, group or institution in question exists, if it is accessible and has the necessary capacity to promote the exchange, does it have the necessary material and financial resources to lead the initiative?		
7. If the programme, group or institution in question exists, if it is accessible and has the necessary capacity to promote the exchange, does it have enough resources and experience in promoting, disseminating, raising awareness and communicating to lead the initiative?		
8. If there is no programme, group or institution with the capacity to promote the exchange, or if they are not accessible, are the necessary resources available to create and promote an ad hoc exchange initiative?		
9. Has the initiative to promote the exchange process been planned on the basis of objectives and results?		
10. Has a viability and sustainability study been performed for the initiative?		
TOTAL		

Table 4: Proposed checklist for preliminary self-assessment of the initiative

Obviously, if most points are answered positively, this would indicate a high likelihood of success in developing the initiative to promote an exchange process;

equally, a high number of negatives would indicate that more time is required to develop and create appropriate conditions.

6.2. Insertion into an existing network/platform/programme

Leaving to one side programmes and initiatives created *ad hoc* to exchange successful experiences by those with a experience for which they consider there to be a demand, networks between local authorities and second-level institutions³ are ideal spaces for systemising and exchanging successful experiences, which local governments may access.

This guide proposes that the initiative be inserted into an existing, consolidated second-level network or institution, with territorial presence and, as far as possible, made up of local governments. This can increase the likelihood of the initiative's success and sustainability over time.

Inserting the initiative into a second-level network or institution covers a number of important aspects in terms of the initiative's operation, viability and sustainability, among them:

/ Coherence with the new global situation.

/ Coherence with numerous Latin American, European and international initiatives, that have identified the second-level networks or institutions as optimum resources for mutual learning, determination and dissemination of successful experiences and innovative approaches.

/ Levels of territorial and/or sector-based implementation that represent a good starting point.

/ The means to disseminate, promote and assess the initiative between different actors involved.

/ The means to coordinate with other initiatives: possible multilevel coordination (governmental and non-governmental; local, national and international, etc.) and multi-sector coordination.

Specific second-level networks and institutions provide differential advantages (and disadvantages). Therefore it is also useful to have a brief checklist to establish criteria for identifying the most appropriate format for inserting the initiative.

³ Beatriz Sanz, (2008, p. 141) states that second-level organisations arise out of cooperation between a group of local authorities, based on a territorial logic. They are 'umbrella' organisations that provide services to local bodies arising from them and to which a number of municipal functions are normally delegated. Groups and federations of municipalities, consortiums and associations of local powers are the most common format.

Aspects to consider	Yes	No
1. Does the second-level network/organisation allow its member to interconnect through a broad system of relations?		
2. Does the second-level network/organisation count the promotion of social cohesion among its priorities?		
3. Does the second-level network/organisation count among its priorities disseminating the exchange of successful local public policy experiences?		
4. Does the second-level network/organisation permit/favour the continuation of lines of action and have the capacity to overcome local circumstantial contingencies?		
5. Does the organisational culture of the second-level network/organisation permit/promote participation of international cooperation?		
6. Is the second-level network/organisation involved (or does it have the will to become involved) in local management through the dissemination and exchange of successful local cohesion experiences?		
7. Does the second-level network/organisation have widespread territorial presence in Latin America and/or Europe?		
8. Does the second-level network/organisation have spaces/mechanisms for democratic/participatory management?		
9. Is the second-level network/organisation institutionally strong and recognised by other local, national and international actors?		
TOTAL		

Table 5: Aspects to consider for the choice of the second-level network/organisation in which the successful experience exchange initiative is to be placed (checklist)

Source: Adapted from Sanz, 2008

As in the previous case, if most points are answered positively, this would indicate a high likelihood of successfully developing the initiative; equally, a high number of negatives would indicate that more time is required to develop and create appropriate conditions.

6.3. Process of consultation and attracting other actors

Once the decision has been made and the insertion into a second-level network or organisation agreed, a process starts that may have various formats. The organisation interested in starting up the initiative for identifying and exchanging successful local social cohesion experiences may have differing visions on how to organise and structure the process.

Before creating a possible team or work plan, a number of actions need to be undertaken for the institutional launch of the initiative:

- i) Identification of the interested/involved actors.
- ii) Presentation of the initiative and/or consultation and/or dialogue with the actors identified as important and/or influential.
- iii) The establishment of agreements with relevant actors.

To identify actors, a matrix to analyse participants is proposed, which enables information relevant to decision making and designing relevant communication strategies for each participant to be gathered and summarised.

Identified actors	Basic characteristics	Potential interest for the actor in the planned initiative (a)	Interest in 'the initiative' that the identified actor maybe have (b)
UCLG	International city network. Includes XXXX cities (X in Latin America). Highly important and influential	Increased visibility and presence of the UCLG in Latin America	=International visibility =Legitimacy of the initiative
URB-AL programme	EU programme. Focussed on supporting local social cohesion policies. Runs X projects in Latin American municipalities. It has a budget of XXXX for the period 2010-2013.	Meeting the programme objectives	Technical and financial cooperation
AECID	Spanish cooperation agency. Present in X Latin American countries.	Master Plan mandate in decentralised cooperation. MUNICIPIA programme, with goals of exchanging successful experiences in LA.	Technical and financial cooperation
EC	The European Commission and EuropeAid have several programmes that promote social cohesion in public policies		
Members of the network			
Etc.			

Table 6: Example matrix for identifying possible actors to support the initiative

Table 7: Checklist for the process of identifying actors to support the initiative

Aspects to consider	Yes	No
1. Have the relevant actors been identified and characterised sufficiently, based on criteria of importance and influence?		
2. Have agreements been established with other actors that enable the initiative to be started with good chances of stability and success?		

Source: Adapted from Sanz, 2008

Once the appropriate agreements have been reached, the next step is to start up the initiative.

6.4. Start-up of the initiative

The start-up of the initiative arises out of the processes of consultation, dialogue and discussion, along with the agreements reached.

From this starting point, the structure and operating and decision-making mechanisms must be defined, along with the forms of organisation, location, type and amount of human, material and technical resources, etc. These aspects are prior requirements for defining the objectives and the work plan that will guide the activities in the initiative.

Initiatives such as these require strategic and operational planning.

Strategic planning focuses mainly on establishing general directives, objectives and strategies. It revolves around elements at the top of the planning levels (represented by the organisation's vision, mission, broad goals and overall strategies).

Operational planning focuses on more specific details such as daily progress towards meeting the wider objectives. It is concerned with levels such as: expected results, activities, managers, resources, deadlines, costs and any other elements that make the long-term strategic planning decisions operational.

Note: The data in the table are hypothetical (THERE ARE NO DATA) and are not necessarily the case.

Before taking the next step, a checklist is proposed to assess the actor identification process.

	Degree of detail/level of objectives	Scope/emphasis	Timescale	Main questions	Elements	Parties involved	Documents
Strategic planning	Directives, alignments and general objectives	The whole org. Priority emphasis in the area	Long term	Who are we? *Why we exist *Who we exist for *What we do *What we believe in	Mission *Purpose *Targets and other involved parties *Products and services *Values	All levels of the organisation: * Directive levels * Operational units: -Personnel -Volunteers *Users or targets *Other people involved *Planning committee	Strategic plan
				What to we aspire to? *Where we want to be in 3 to 10 years	Vision		
				Where are we? *Characteristics of the current situation	Diagnosis *External *Internal		
				What do we want to achieve?	Objectives		
				How can we get there?	Strategies		
Operational planning	Specific objectives, results	Areas, units, departments, sectors. Priority emphasis on internal aspects	Short term	What will we do to get there?	Projects, services, processes, activities, etc.	* Operational units	Operational plans
				How will we know if we have achieved it?	Indicators and means of verification		
				When will we do it?	Execution timelines or calendars		
				Who will do the work?	Assigning responsibilities		
				What resources are needed and how much do they cost?	Budget		

Source: Luis Cámara (2005), *Planificación estratégica. Guía para entidades sin ánimo de lucro que prestan servicios de inserción socio laboral*, Madrid, CIDEAL

Table 8: Relationship between strategic and operational planning

It is worth stressing the importance of having defined objectives, a work plan and the necessary financial resources. Experience shows that the processes of identifying and exchanging successful experiences require partnerships capable of generating far-reaching processes.

Table 9: Checklist for the initiative start-up

Aspects to consider	Yes	No
1. Has a form of organisation and flexible, democratic decision-making process that permits/facilitates the incorporation of new partners been defined?		
2. Has a structure been defined based on result-orientated management?		
3. Has a strategic and operational planning been established?		
4. Are technically appropriate personnel and the necessary resources available to carry out the operational planning?		
5. Does the planning incorporate an appropriate and sufficient communications plan?		

7. Phase II: public call for applications, identification and systemisation of successful experiences

In this phase, the public call for applications is launched, which will lead to the start of the process of identifying, systemising and exchanging successful local social cohesion processes.

Given that the call for applications should be structured to take into account different types of successful experiences (innovative,⁴ proven,⁵ transferred⁶), before its launch, its objectives need to be defined.

- ↓ Establishing the conditions and dissemination of the call for applications
- ↓ Obtaining applications and preselection
- ↓ Identification and mapping of experiences
- ↓ Systemisation and dissemination of experiences
- ↓ Selection, inventory and dissemination of systematised experiences

4 Innovative: These are experiences considered as successful, relevant and potentially transferable by the institutions that have developed and undertaken them. The results of these experiences have not undergone formal assessment processes.

5 Proven: These are formally assessed, successful experiences which, in accordance with the assessment, have met their objectives effectively, efficiently and sustainably. These experiences are limited to the institution that undertook them.

6 Transferred: These are successful experiences that have undergone formal assessment and which have already been transferred to other contexts.

7.1. Establishing the conditions and dissemination of the call for applications

The conditions for the public call for applications to take part in a successful local social cohesion experience exchange process should be sufficiently affordable and accessible to the public at large.

The affordability condition presupposes that the conditions should be clear and contain all relevant indications to facilitate their application. To do this, for each of the forms indicated, these conditions must state the following:

/ What the objectives of the call for applications are.

/ What type of institutions or organisations may participate.

/ What conditions need to be met.

/ What deadlines have been established.

/ What documentation should be presented and in what format.

/ What channels should be used for the application.

/ Where to apply.

The accessibility conditions presuppose that, as well as dissemination in all the languages of the countries and territories where there are possible applicant institutions or organisations, adequate communication channels and formats are used. This aspect presupposes the need to draw up a small communications diagnosis, which includes information on the most appropriate messages, channels and formats for reaching the previously defined target public.

It may be necessary to go beyond providing information and carry out awareness-raising campaigns aimed at decision makers in the target public of subnational administrations. By the same token, this phase should also generate and implement an information and an awareness-raising strategy. The use of mass or specialist media can be an excellent tool, but a communication and awareness-raising strategy should incorporate other formats.

7.2 Obtaining applications and preselection

The successful nature of an experience of local social cohesion is accredited following established criteria. This guide uses those developed by the Orientation and Coordination Office of the URB-AL III Programme.

As explained in previous sections, contributions are made to local social cohesion when one of its *components* (equality and social inclusion, belonging, recognition, legitimacy and participation) is developed and/or strengthened in a given territory through actions, policies and/or projects that are part of the public intervention in the territory in question, with objectives in one or more of the following sectors of intervention (or *dimensions*): productive-occupational, civic, territorial, institutional and social.

Furthermore, conceptually, a successful experience for local social (whatever its nature: innovative, proven or transferred) is always based on these *components* and *dimensions*.

In this phase, the collection and documentation of applications is aimed at an initial preselection. This should help identify whether the established criteria for consideration as a 'successful local social cohesion experience' have been met. This initial preselection, which is based on a small format presented below, has the following basic objectives:

/ To distinguish between local public policies for social cohesion and others that, although successful, do not incorporate the basic components of social cohesion or do not involve any of the identified basic components.

/ To reduce the effort involved in systemising the experience without the guarantee that it will be considered an experience in social cohesion by the organising body.

Name of the project/action/public policy:						
Institution/s presenting the experience: Contact details (contact person, position, address, phone and fax number, email address, website)						
General objective of the initiative (maximum 3 lines) Specific objective (maximum 6 lines)						
Type of initiative: Action Yes/No		Project Yes/No		Public policy Yes/No		
...whether the initiative is part of a second-level network, programme or organisation which may serve as a platform for launching or exchanging experiences Name of the second-level network/programme/organisation: _____ Coordinating city: _____ No. of partners: _____ Partners in Latin America: _____ Partners in Europe: _____						
Components		Dimensions				
Does/did the initiative have an explicit objective or is/was it clearly in line with the objective of...? ⁷		...equal access to employment and the benefits of economic growth	...universal access to basic social services and public safety	...developing active citizenship	...reduction in territorial imbalances	...strengthening institutions and local taxation systems
...promoting equality and social inclusion?		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...increasing legitimacy?		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...strengthening participation?		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...fostering recognition?		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...increasing the feeling of belonging?		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Forms of experiences:						
Innovative experience? Yes/No		Is the systemisation of the experience attached? Yes/No (Indicate a relevant website)				
Proven experience? Yes/No		Explain the type of assessment (internal/external; based on results) (maximum 7 lines) Is a formal assessment attached? Yes/No (Indicate a relevant website)				
Transferred experience? Yes/No		Explain the type of assessment (internal/external; based on results) (maximum 7 lines) Is a formal assessment attached? Yes/No (link) Is the report/systemisation of the transfer attached? Yes/No (Indicate a relevant website)				

Previous page:
Table 10: Format for
preselecting applications

This file, accompanied by the requested documents (as well as those the organisation considers relevant), will be sent within the established timeframes, to the address and in line with the other conditions specified in the call for applications.

With this file and the appended documents, the specially set-up commission will preselect those it considers *local social cohesion experiences*.

7.3. Identification and mapping of experiences

Once the deadline has elapsed, the experiences will be analysed by the working team set up for the purpose. This team will select those experiences that can be considered successful for local social cohesion, based on the criteria established by this manual (or those defined by the relevant body). This process uses the information included in the above file and the attached documents.

Experiences of each of the three types will be selected.

/ The selected experiences will be included in a general mapping, which will classify them according to the components and dimensions of social cohesion, as well as the level or degree of validation, i.e. as innovative, proven or transferred experiences.

/ The selected experiences will be invited to systematise their experience for inclusion on the 'Map of Successful Experiences in Local Social Cohesion' website.

/ The 'mapping' will be available and disseminated over the Internet, with a keyword text search engine to help identify relevant experiences by component and dimension.

/ Each applicant body will receive a personalised answer whatever the decision, as well as information on the inventory and an invitation to *show an interest* in the experiences included in the mapping.

/ This show of interest will enable the initiative working group to see what kind of experiences create most interest for exchange and transfer processes.

/ The experiences that produce the greatest interest will be considered

⁷ See conceptualisation in the table 'Components' in previous chapters and Appendix 1.

priority when providing technical/ financial support for systemisation by the working group, if such technical support is requested by the institution(s) presenting the experience.

This support for systemisation is not conceived as an off-loading of responsibility by the institutions presenting the initiative, but as support for skill-building in them.

7.4 Systemisation and dissemination of experiences

Those experiences that have generated the greatest interest (in the different time periods established by the working team leading the initiative) will be invited to systematise their experience. They may also request and/or receive technical support for the initiative.

The systemisation is based on the need to document, improve and share the wealth of accumulated experiences. In the case of identifying and exchanging successful experiences (innovative, proven or transferred), the systemisation also has to offer standardised, significant and relevant information that simplifies these process of identification and exchange between actors of different levels and characteristics.

The systemisation involves recovering the experience, capturing the significance of the reality, the action and its effects. It is also a process of critical reflection, of assessing the actions undertaken, which requires communication, socialisation and legitimacy to become a reference for other social cohesion processes.

Systematising a successful experience is more than just producing a report or describing the experience. Systemisation requires the development of communication skills, such as the skills of synthesis, supporting assertions with evidence and clear and concise argument.

Before starting the systemisation process, various aspects should be taken into account that enable the scale of the process to be assessed and adequate decisions made, while being aware of what this will represent for the organisation.

The table below may be used as an essential checklist before starting the process of systematising a successful experience. Once the decision to systemise a successful experience has been taken and before its start, the process should be planned and budgeted.

Table 11: Aspects to consider BEFORE starting the systemisation

What aspects of the plan, programme and project (initiatives) will be analysed?
<p>There needs to be shared knowledge regarding why and for what purpose the systemisation is to be carried out, as the are many possible reasons for it. The most common ones are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve execution of the project. • To learn about the dynamics of the project. • To provide elements that demonstrate the validity of the proposal developed by the project. • To make changes to the levels and forms of participation.
Who will coordinate the systemisation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish whether the systemisation will be coordinated only by internal agents or a person outside the institution will be used. • Determine the responsibilities of the person in charge of coordination and who will be responsible for providing specific support to the coordination work.
Who will participate in the systemisation process?
<p>It is useful to define whether everyone involved in the experience will take part or whether key informants will be selected, with the possibility of incorporating new participants, depending on the needs arising in the process.</p>
What methodology and tools will be used?
<p>The systemisation proposal should provide a clear description of the methodology, techniques and instruments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings, focus groups, direct observation, review of documentation and witness statements may be used. • Qualitative and quantitative methodology may be combined or used alone.
What type of information will be used?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is worth defining whether qualitative information alone, related to people's perceptions, opinions and feelings, is to be used. • Another alternative is to use quantitative information, figures, percentage and measurements. The use of one of the two options determines what type of information will be obtained by the end of the process, as well as the working method to obtain these results. • At this point, the type of documents to be used needs to be established: video recordings, written material, archives, etc.? From what periods?
What type of information will be used?
<p>This point helps establish a work plan and a timescale for all the accompanying activities from a list of requirements for each stage, which should also consider material and human resources.</p>

Source: Red Cross, 2007, p. 13.

A systemisation process requires, firstly, the political and technical will to systemise and, secondly, the systemisation itself. An example of both aspects is given below:

a) Political will and technical capacity to systemise

- a.1. Top management decision with the agreement of the interested parties (institution/funding).
- a.2. Drawing up of the terms of reference for the systemisation.
- a.3. Selection of the team of experts or consultants to carry out the systemisation.
- a.4. Planning the systemisation.
- a.5. Starting the systemisation.

b) Reconstruction of the experience (systemisation)

- b.1. Review of document produced in executing the successful experience.
- b.2. Identification of the milestones (successes) from the point of view of social cohesion.
- b.3. Adding to the information using techniques to gather information from documents, interviews and focal points, among others.
- b.4. Compiling and analysing the actions carried out in the successful experience.
- b.5. Drawing up the document resulting from the systemisation.
- b.6. Sharing the results at different levels of the organisation and with key actors in the process.

b.7. Communication and dissemination of the results of the systemisation, participation in exchange and replicability actions.

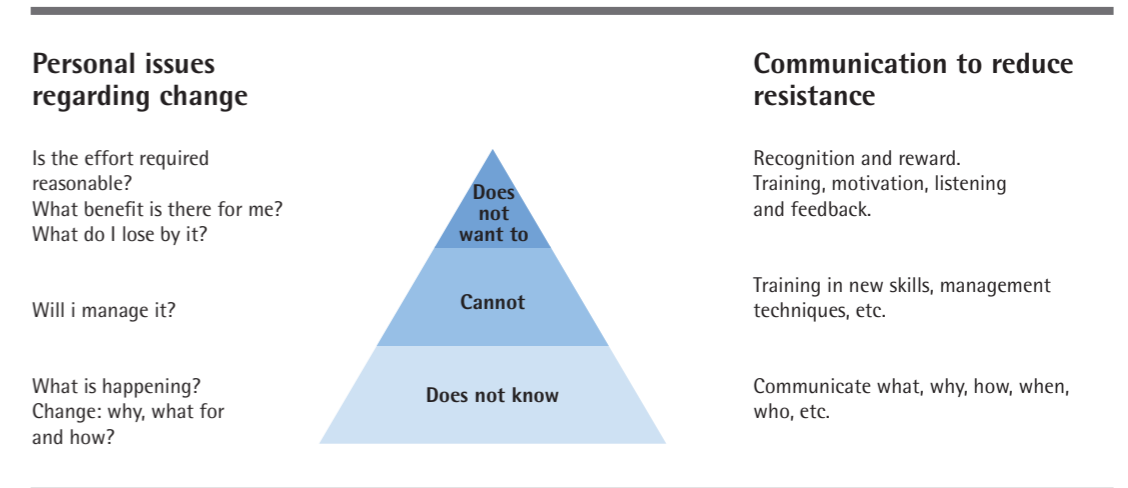
The systemisation process may be complex and time-consuming if not incorporated into the organisation's culture, but relatively simple when it is.

Thus there may be a degree of resistance and difficulty; the most common problems are: i) lack of time among the different participants; ii) lack of comprehension among the participants (the people involved see the systemisation process as complicated); iii) lack of human resources, time, etc.; or iv) lack of available information to conduct it, etc.

Resistance to change is inherent in humans and has been widely studied and documented. Overcoming such resistant requires the definition and planning of actions to overcome it.

Minimising resistance and difficulties requires: i) a firm commitment and political will among managers (which could lead to integrating systemisation into quarterly planning, seeking an external specialist or assigning a budget item), ii) stimulating participation (e.g. offering specific skill-building), and iii) reducing resistance through an internal communication strategy.

Table 12: Resistance pyramid



Source: Based on the Nieder and Zimmerman resistance pyramid, adapted from Timothy J. Galpin (1998), *The Human Side of Change*. Ediciones Diaz de los Santos

The systemisation process provides a document covering the processes, lessons, methodologies and impacts of the experience.⁸

Below is a brief proposal for the specific systemisation of successful experiences in local social cohesion policies, with the aim of standardising the formats of experiences involved in an exchange process. This proposal does not exclude the possibility of conducting more wide ranging or in-depth systemisation processes.

The information proposed for the work in systemisation of successful local social cohesion processes, and which will be added to the summary file already presented, is based on the dimensions and components indicated in the conceptual section of this guide.

⁸ An example of the systemisation of the Ecuador programme of the ART-UNDP initiative can be seen at the following link:
http://www.art-initiative.org/images/users/10/files/countries_287_art%20ecuador%20reflexiones%20metodologicas%20y%20avances%202008_2009.pdf

7.5 Format for systemising local social cohesion experiences

This section proposes the standardised format, structure and content⁹ for successful experiences to be systemised for inclusion in the inventory and in the dissemination strategies proposed in this guide.¹⁰

It is structured into several numbered sections, ranging from summaries to longer explanations. It is proposed as a model format to be improved and adapted by organisations that use it completely or partially.

Following page:
Systemisation of local social cohesion experiences

⁹ See Appendix 1 for the conceptual development of the components of social cohesion: equality and inclusion, legitimacy, participation, recognition and belonging.

¹⁰ This standardisation aims to unify the format and content offered by different experiences to improve management of the information by everyone involved.

1. Basic details (cover)					
Name of the project/action/public policy: Link to project/action/public policy document:					
Institution/s presenting the experience: Contact details (contact person, position, address, phone and fax number, email address, website)					
General objective of the initiative (maximum 3 lines) Specific objective/s (maximum 6 lines)					
Type of initiative: Action Yes/No Project Yes/No Public policy Yes/No					
...whether the initiative is part of a second-level network, programme or organisation Name of the second-level network/programme/organisation: Coordinating city: No. of partners: Partners in Latin America: Partners in Europe:					
Components	Dimensions				
Does/did the initiative have an explicit objective or is/was it clearly in line with the objective of...¹¹	... equal access to employment and the benefits of economic growth	...universal access to basic social services and public safety	...developing active citizenship	...reduction in territorial imbalances	...strengthening institutions and local taxation systems
...promoting equality and social inclusion?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...increasing legitimacy?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...strengthening participation?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...fostering recognition?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
...increasing the feeling of belonging?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

¹¹ See conceptualisation in the table 'Components' in previous chapters and Appendix 1.

Type of experience	
Innovative experience? Yes/No	Is the systemisation of the experience attached? Yes/No (link)
Proven experience? Yes/No	Explain the type of assessment (internal/external; based on results) (maximum 7 lines) Is a formal assessment attached? Yes/No (link) Is the systemisation of the experience attached? Yes/No (link)
Transferred experience? Yes/No	Explain the type of assessment (internal/external; based on results) (maximum 7 lines) Is a formal assessment attached? Yes/No (link) Is the systemisation of the experience attached? Yes/No (link) Is the report/systemisation of the transfer attached? Yes/No (link)
Comments/logos	

2. Logic of the project/action/public policy		Name of the project/action/public policy:
Logic of the project/ action/policy	Problems faced	Brief description (max. 10 lines)
	Causes (of the problems)	Brief description (max. 10 lines)
	Objectives	Brief description (max. 10 lines)
	Strategy	Brief description (max. 10 lines)
	Key actors	Brief description (max. 5 lines)
	Actions developed and progress made	Brief description (max. 10 lines)
	Indicators	Brief description (max. 10 lines)

Note: If considered useful, a document may be attached to provide more detailed information.

3. Contributions of the project/action/public policy to the components of social cohesion...	
Key questions ¹²	Answers provided by the project/action/public policy ¹³
...Equality and social inclusion	
Does it increase equality of opportunity in accessing basic rights and the conditions necessary to <i>enjoy</i> them, favouring specific groups or the whole population of marginal territories, and, specifically, one or more of the following rights: work, health, education, safety, justice, housing and a healthy and clean environment?	
Does it undertake actions, in one or more area of society, directed at the social inclusion of specific groups of excluded people, using instruments such as: / measures for integration or re-integration into the labour market and/or / financial transfers (measure of redistributive policy) and/or / care goods and services (material, emotional, informative assistance) and/or / measures to develop the social capital of people (relational capital and personal skills) to confront conditions of exclusion?	
Does it incorporate the gender perspective? How? (Is it a specific, neutral or redistributive policy?)	
Does it aim to create a universal social protection system or facilitate protection measures and services to prevent exclusion in the face of events and/or conditions that increase social vulnerability in one or more of these areas: old age, disability, disease, violence, lack of income/poverty (unemployment or lack of job security), dependency, etc.?	
Does it strengthen the service system intended to responded to situations of inequality and exclusion, such as: / increasing coverage, also through creating new services / improved quality and capacity to provide care, also by means of innovation in the service system?	
Does it guarantee compatibility of the development of the territory with sustainable reproduction of environmental goods and services, with the aim of providing them for future generations?	

3. Contributions of the project/action/public policy to the components of social cohesion...	
Key questions ¹²	Answers provided by the project/action/public policy ¹³
...Participation	
Does it promote, or is it based on, a multi-actor system of governance in which private and civil subjects, well rooted in the local community and who democratically represent the interests of the groups or collectives affected by the policy in question, participate in the decisions and its assessment?	
Does it use mechanisms to integrate the opinions, needs and proposals of the population interested in the policy/action/project in question into decision making, also facilitating their involvement in the monitoring processes?	
Does it combat phenomena that can arise with public participation, such as a lack of preparation to face the issues, cronyism and partisanship, the emergence of community leaders who take possession of collective representation based on particular interests, gender domination, etc.?	
Does it incorporate the gender perspective in actions aimed at promoting public participation? How?	
... Legitimacy	
Does it make public action transparency mechanisms effective: promoting publicity and access to information on procedures, contents and decisions adopted in exercising public service, including the use of budgetary resources and accountability in government actions?	
Does it bring service provision to the citizens' places of residence?	
Does it train public operators to be accountable to the public for their actions and provide better-quality services?	
Does it show a will to prevent and punish corruption and a commitment to justice?	
Does it promote or recognise the autonomous initiative, commitment and the implication of civil society (private agents, association, etc.) to undertake activities of public interest, based on the principle of horizontal subsidiarity?	
Does it act impartially, i.e., does it clearly and actively avoid cronyism and granting favours?	

3. Contributions of the project/action/public policy to the components of social cohesion...	
Key questions ¹²	Answers provided by the project/action/public policy ¹³
...Belonging	
Does it produce initiatives that strengthen the practice of values shared by most of the local population, in particular civic behaviour (respecting rights and responsibilities in interpersonal coexistence) and freedom and personal safety?	
Does it show a capacity to deliberately promote general interests above corporate or private interests?	
Does it create or extend spaces for coexistence to all the public (centres, squares, parks, etc.)?	
Does it initiate mechanisms for mediation and reconciliation between different sectors of the public in conflict?	
Is it part of a strategic development plan based on an agreed vision of the future for the territory as an element for building a common identity for its inhabitants?	
...Recognition	
Does it promote recognition and appreciation of differences in the framework of the values and rules of coexistence to all local society?	
Does it prevent and/or combat manifestations of intolerance towards people with marginalized identities (gender, ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinions, etc.), including sanctions against the people responsible?	
Does it implement affirmative actions (preferential treatment) in favour of groups that are historically victims of discrimination due to specific identities?	

12 Taken from the document *Aportes a la cohesión social. Pautas para las misiones de la OCO* [Contributions to Social Cohesion. OCO Mission Guidelines] Version 2-0. URB-AL III Orientation and Coordination Office (OCO-URB-AL III).

13 If necessary, include tables, text, etc.

7.6. Selection, inventory and dissemination of systemised experiences

The systemised experiences will be analysed by the working team set up for the purpose. This team will select those experiences that can be considered successful for local social cohesion, based on the criteria established by this guide (or those defined by the relevant body).

Selection as an innovative experience, proven experience and/or transferred experience of local social cohesion will be carried out from the viewpoint of a 'quality certificate', so that territorial governments firmly committed to social cohesion, which have also made the effort to undertake the systemisation, acquire a degree of comparative advantage in terms of public opinion, other governmental and non-governmental actors and international cooperation.

The proposed evaluation position should be open enough to enable innovative proposals to be selected, but sufficiently restrictive so that in the mid-long term, it acts as an incentive for local administrations to obtain the 'Quality certificate for public local social cohesion policies'.

Experience shows that incentives are useful so that local administrations become associated with quality processes for social cohesion. For this reason, it may be worthwhile for the platform established also to identify other types of measures regarding donors, civil society and other governmental actors that offer comparative advantages to local governments with firm commitments to social cohesion.

The selected experiences of each form will be included in a general inventory, which will classify them according to the components and dimensions of social cohesion, as well as the level or degree of validation, i.e. as innovative, proven or transferred experiences.

The inventory will be available on the website of the associated network or platform and/or in one or more of the existing best practice databases and/or observatories. It should have a key word text search engine, to facilitate identification of relevant experiences by component or dimension.

Equally, each body that has undertaken a systemisation will receive a personalised answer whatever the decision, as well as information on the inventory of systemised experiences and an invitation to *show an interest* in the experiences included in the inventory.

This show of interest will enable the initiative working group to see what kind of experiences create most interest for exchange and transfer processes.

The systemised experiences that produce the greatest interest will be considered priority when support for the transfer/replicability by the working group, if such technical support is requested by the institution(s) presenting the experience. This technical or financial support for transfer/replicability is not conceived as an off-loading of responsibility by the institutions that have presented the initiative, but rather as support for skill-building in them.

Finally, dissemination of the systemised experiences in national and international forums is recommended.

8. Phase III: exchange and transfer of experiences

Once a number of systemised successful experiences are available, the exchange or transfer process may start.

- ↓ Objectives and conditions for the exchange
- ↓ Exchange of local social cohesion experiences
- ↓ Experience replication/transfer processes

8.1 Objectives and conditions for the exchange

'The exchange of experiences is explicitly mentioned in the Guadalajara Declaration as an appropriate instrument for promoting public policies for social cohesion. It is a comprehensible choice given that, among the different learning formulae between partners, exchange of experiences is characterised by a clearly horizontal coordination in which all the actors are involved on an equal level.' (EUROsociAL, 2009, 39)¹⁴

Experience exchanges bring together public administrations committed to social cohesion and a change in management procedures and policy direction in Latin America and Europe. It is an extremely practical, results-orientated work mechanism which aims to generate and support reform and improvement processes in public administration.

The experience exchange is set up as a two-way learning flow that enables a whole set of solutions to be analysed and then adapted to suit the 'receiver' country. Its flexibility is therefore neither a virtue nor a vice, but rather an intrinsic quality in the very definition of the instrument.

An experience exchange should be (EUROsociAL, 2006):

- i) *Relevant* with respect to the policies that are to be strengthened in Latin American countries, which require a clear identification of needs.
- ii) *Realistic and practical*: the aim is to identify clearly documented, and possibly sufficiently proven, experiences in Europe and Latin America, which can be transferred (with appropriate adaptation) to obtain specific results in the direction and procedures of public policy management in one or more of the identified dimensions (productive and occupational, social, territorial, civic, institutional), responding to 'demands' or requests from Latin American and European countries.
- iii) *Result of a compromise between participating public administrations* to make changes in political direction and management and administrative procedures as a result of the experience exchange and the will among European and Latin American public administrations to transfer their experiences.

¹⁴ <http://www.fiiapp.org/uploads/documentos/643d3676b5b813cc985753e1f4678610.pdf>

GOLD selection of references and resources relevant to experience exchanges and best practices in European and Latin America¹⁵

Europe

- Aalborg+10 and Aalborg commitments homepage (<http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/default.aspx>)
- Best Practices Hub Vienna (<http://www.bestpractices.at>)
- Cities of Tomorrow-International Network for Better Local Government (http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xchg/SID-0A00F0A-8EB7B3A7/bst/hs.xsl/prj_5925_5936.htm)
- CIVITAS - Cleaner and Better Transport in Cities (<http://www.civitas-initiative.org/main.phtml?lan=en>)
- eGovernment Good Practice Framework (<http://www.egov-goodpractice.org/>)
- Energy Cities (<http://www.energie-cites.org/>)
- EURADA - Association of Regional Development Agencies (<http://www.eurada.org/benchmarking.php?menu=8>)
- European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) (<http://www.ecdpm.org/>)
- European Commission - Urban Environment (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/home_en.htm)
- European Local Governments (ELGO) (<http://www.elgo.co.uk/>)
- European Local Transport Information Service (ELTIS) (<http://www.eltis.org/Vorlage.phtml?lang=en>)

- Local Sustainability: European Good Practice Information Services (<http://www3.iclei.org/egpis/>)
- REVE Jura-Léman (<http://www3.iclei.org/egpis/>)
- SMILE: the Gateway to Sustainable Mobility (<http://www.smile-europe.org/frame1.html>)
- SURBAN - database on sustainable urban development in Europe (<http://www.eaue.de/winuwd/list.htm>)
- Sustainable European Regions (SER) (http://www.sustainable-euroregions.net/workingtopics_sern.aspx)
- URBACT (<http://www.urbact.org/>)

Austria

- MUNICIPIA (<http://www.municipia.at/>)
- Platform for the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme of the UN-HABITAT and the City of Vienna (<http://www.bestpractices.at/main.php?page=hub/overview&lang=en>)

Bulgaria

- Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR) (<http://www.flgr.bg/en>)
- National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (<http://www.namrb.org/>)

France

- Sénat - centre for local collectives (<http://www.senat.fr/territoires/index.html>)
- Comité 21-French Committee for the Environment and Sustainable Development (http://www.comite21.org/bonnes_pratiques/index.ph)
- Villes Internet (<http://www.villes-internet.net/>)

Germany

- Good Practices for sustainable urban development in Münster (http://www.muenster.de/stadt/exwost/index_e.htm)

Italy

- Interregional Observatory for Development Cooperation (O.I.C.S.) (<http://www.oics.it/home.asp>)

Spain

- Best Practices Bank (BBP) (<http://www.diba.es/bbp/cat/default.htm>)

United Kingdom

- Commission for Rural Communities (<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/themes/~best-practice>)
- LGA European & International Unit (http://www.international.lga.gov.uk/case_studies)
- Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) (<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors>)

Latin America

- Cities for a more Sustainable Future (<http://habitat.aq.upm.es/bpn/>)
- Experience from the Latin America and the Caribbean-UN-Habitat Best Practices Programme (<http://habitat.aq.upm.es/bpal/>)
- Best Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean (<http://www.mejorespracticas.org/>)
- Transfer of Best Practices (<http://www.premiomedellin.buenaspracticas.org/>)

- *América Latina Genera*. Knowledge Management for Equality (<http://www.americalinagenera.org/es/>)

Argentina

- Bank of Local Experiences (BEL) (<http://bel.unq.edu.ar/bel/>)

Brazil

- Public Management and Citizenry (<http://inovando.fgvsp.br/>)
- Network of Local Management Data Banks (<http://www.web-brazil.com/gestaolocal/>)
- Best Practices <http://melhorespraticas.caixa.gov.br/pintadas/summary.asp?idioma=e>

Mexico

- E-Local (<http://www.e-local.gob.mx/wb2/ELOCAL/>)

Chile

- Municipium / Assistance and Training Service for Local Development (SACDEL) (<http://www.municipium.cl/>)
- Sub-Secretariat of Regional and Administrative Development (SUBDERE) (<http://www.subdere.gov.cl/1510/channel.html>)
- <http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/gold/list.asp?orgtype=2&L=es>

¹⁵ <http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/gold/?L=es>

8.2. Exchange of successful experiences in local social cohesion

Each experience exchange should be designed as a process consisting of a number of linked, interdependent phases, consisting of:

- i) The strategic and operational definition of the proposed processes.
- ii) Identification and systemisation of successful experiences.
- iii) Technical and budgetary planning and timing.
- iv) Forms of execution and monitoring.
- v) Evaluation and systemisation of the results obtained.

The lessons learnt from the different exchange actions indicated should be managed so that they become a critical mass of empirical knowledge available to the different actors. The systemisation of this empirical knowledge may give rise to sets of tools available for local and territorial actors.

Four levels of exchange are proposed, based on the interests, skills and development of local administrations, as well as the capacity of the initiative to provide appropriate accompaniment. The four levels would be:

1. Information and consultation.
2. Consultation.
3. Dialogue.
4. Discussion and partnering.

These levels identify different degrees of implication in the process. The first level is the one that requires least involvement while the last level requires the most. Also, each level of exchange opens a series of specific possibilities (see table below). The last of the levels (partnering) is the only one in which transfer or replicability is possible, as this involves establishing formal agreements between the partners.

The levels are presented in more detail here.

Information and communication	<p>Process by which information is transmitted and exchanged, or communication is established between actors with the aim of finding out about other experiences, actors, processes, etc.</p> <p>Most commonly used media: press releases, activity reports, public announcements, emails, internal and external newsletters, open-door sessions, lectures, leaflets, websites, and databases, among others.</p>
Consultation	<p>Process that involves obtaining information from the actors (interested parties) and taking it into account to correct plans/decisions/goal-setting, etc.</p> <p>The consultation helps provide new perspectives/factors/external alternatives to the institution, which would otherwise be inaccessible.</p> <p>The final decision still lies with the institution, but the input obtained may influence the direction taken to differing degrees.</p> <p>It is essential to provide feedback on the results of the process to the people consulted.</p> <p>Most commonly used media: surveys, meetings, <i>ad hoc</i> consultation committees, discussion forums, consultation mailboxes, seminars, etc.</p>
Dialogue and discussion	<p>This involves an exchange of points of view and opinions. It goes further than consultation as it explores different perspectives, needs and alternatives with the end goal of promoting mutual understanding, trust and cooperation with respect to a strategy or initiative.</p> <p>The actors involved may influence the dialogue agenda and its results.</p> <p>Effective dialogues requires an <i>a priori</i> non-judgemental attitude, and there must be a commitment to listen and act or react appropriately.</p> <p>Most commonly used media: consultation committees and panels, agreement councils, round-table discussions, forums, on-line chats, debates, knowledge fairs, etc.</p>
Partnering	<p>This may be defined as the process by which a number of people and/or profit or non-profit organisations from the public and/or private sectors work in a team with the same social objective and share resources and skills.</p> <p>Most commonly used media: partnering agreements, local development agreements with various actors from the territory, collaboration frameworks, alliances, etc.</p>

Source: Sanz, 2008, p. 162

There is plenty of literature and resources available on the support website for actions associated with each level.

With respect to knowledge fairs, these may occur at the four levels.¹⁶ Fairs are tools to disseminate acquired knowledge. At the fairs or 'events', best practices are promoted and people seeking knowledge can interact directly with the key figures in successful experiences, through exchange mechanisms, such as stands, business meetings and knowledge-transfer agreements. Unlike workshops and seminars, the fairs provide specific mechanisms for adapting and transferring knowledge and establish alliances with other public institutions and international organisations (UNDP, 2005).

The objectives of knowledge fairs are:

/ To provide opportunities for multiple actors to disseminate their achievements and exhibit their programmes and experiences to donors, authorities, other institutions and potential partners.

/ To facilitate face-to-face networking and promote South-North and South-South cooperation in creating shared agendas.

/ To help people and institutions benefit from the experience of others.

/ To stimulate interest in collaboration in the future and the development of new programmes.

/ To build skills (governments, social organisations and private companies).

The 'initiative' may serve as a broker between supply and demand of knowledge in areas of local public social cohesion policies.

According to the UNDP (2005), fairs provide the following to enable participants to find out about the experience:

/ Lectures present the most relevant topics regarding the experience and international experts provide the conceptual foundations for their analysis.

/ At workshops or round tables, the key pillars of the experience are discussed in greater depth, analysing the decisions made, the policies, the plans and the programmes developed to put them into practice. It is the protagonists themselves who describe the experience.

/ To find out specifically about each component of the experience, the participants visit knowledge stands where the protagonists in the experience exhibit specific programmes and projects, their results, innovative solutions and obstacles and how they overcame them.

/ To facilitate knowledge exchange, fairs offer business roundtables, where participants can sign with the exhibitors letters of intent to undertake horizontal cooperation processes.

/ The fairs may include an online link-up to facilitate a knowledge exchange that provides information on best practices and interaction tools such as online forums, audiovisual tools and public and private chat rooms.

16 According to the Spanish Royal Language Academy, a fair is the archetypal place of exchange: products are exhibited, promotional events are held, lectures and discussions take place, specialist services are offered and business roundtables are organised. The purpose is to bring supply and demand together with an end goal of exchange. The knowledge fair, in particular, is an activity for the horizontal exchange of knowledge and experiences, freely accessible, where different actors and levels mix and interact in various formats (recommended resource: Steve Denning - n.d.).

Knowledge fairs offer highly varied opportunities to share experiences (ICT-KM¹⁷), such as:

Information exhibit / stand / Information points / booths

They offer the chance to contact the presenter individually. During the market times, the permanent host attends the market stand. As a visitor, you can easily contact ‘sellers’ and other ‘customers’.

Poster / exhibition board

Posters are self-explanatory and usually include text and graphic elements that describe the project. All these elements will be present at some time during a fair.

Online demonstration

Brief presentations that include an online demonstration or presentation lasting about 15 minutes. These are opportunities to gather relevant information quickly and contact the presenter and other visitors.

Demonstration video

These provide an opportunity to show videos documenting worthwhile experiences. The film should last between 10 and 20 minutes.

Workshops

At workshops, participants are invited to events followed by a debate (or question-answer session).

Crazy Corner

The ‘crazy corner’ basically consists of a large notice board. You can ask ‘crazy questions’ (unexpected and constructive questions) and find answers. Furthermore, ‘crazy answers’ can be posted that might help open people’s minds.

Chill-out Corner

This is a place to relax with a fridge and comfortable chairs. It is a place to talk and hold discussions with colleagues.

Chat / Talk Show

An interactive session where people discuss an issue or respond to questions from the host and the public. They are an alternative to presentations on similar issues. For example, how to implement a knowledge exchange strategy? What works? What lessons have been learnt?

Meetings between colleagues

These bring together groups of colleagues so they can obtain information on a problem, project or activity, and draw lessons on knowledge from the participants and their experience.

17 See the ICT-KM initiative: <http://ictkm.cgiar.org/>

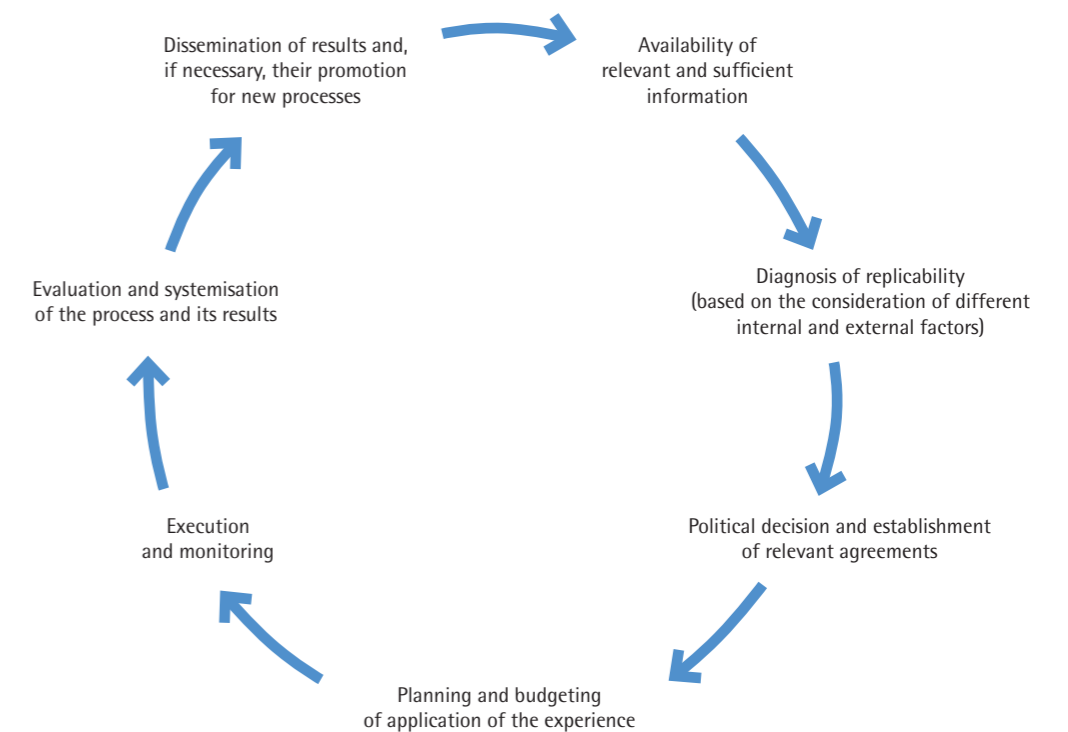
8.3. Experience replication/ transfer processes

For an experience to be applicable, at least three conditions are required:

- (a) A real need that the experience meets.
- (b) A will and, in the best-case scenarios, vocation to meet the need.
- (c) The experience is effectively sustainable.

As well as these, certain guidelines should be followed to give the process a fair chance of success. The following model is proposed as a basis.

Table 13: Replicability process



Source: in-house

It is important to note that, for an experience to be replicable, relevant information on the experience is essential. In this sense, if the success of the replication depends largely on the quality of the information available, then it should be complete, accurate, objective and, indeed, critical.

The systemisation of experiences, as defined so far, may not be sufficient for their replicability. Therefore, it may be necessary to look more deeply at the systemisation, including those aspects identified as pertinent and relevant, such as operational, structural and budgetary aspects, among others, and conduct a diagnosis of replicability that takes into account internal and external aspects.

As well as information, certain conditions are required to favour the chances of success for the replicability of an experience. These are indicated in the following checklist:

Table 14:
Checklist of conditions
for replicability

Aspects to consider	Yes	No
Previous aspects		
Is the need for the experiences felt by the actors involved and was it demanded by them?		
Is there significant political will among the actors involved and is this shown in the availability of human and material resources to implement the project/action/public policy?		
Contextual aspects		
Are the country's levels of decentralisation and deconcentration similar? Would the differences affect the chances of success?		
Are the priority levels for social cohesion in the national development plan similar? Would the differences affect the chances of success?		
Are the multilevel coordination mechanisms/structures for social cohesion in the countries similar? Is the role of local government comparable?		
Are the country's levels of decentralisation and deconcentration in local government similar? Would the differences affect the chances of success?		
Internal aspects		
Is the priority for social cohesion in the local development plan similar? Could the differences affect the chances of success?		
Are there similar stable coordination mechanisms between regional and local actors and civil society? Could the differences affect the chances of success?		
Are there similar local government inter-sector coordination mechanisms? Could the differences affect the chances of success?		
Is there similar availability of human resources specialising in social and gender cohesion?		
Does local government currently have public policies that that promote social cohesion? What are they? What percentage of the previous year's budget was assigned to social cohesion policy?		

The replication/transfer processes should be based on establishing medium- to long-term partnerships, formalised through specific agreements.

Finally, the efforts made by all the parties involved and the results obtained (mistakes can also be learnt from) should lead to a systemisation of the replicability experience thus creating critical knowledge.

Bibliography

IDB-Department of Sustainable Development (2006). *Social Cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean. Analysis, Action and Coordination*. New York: Inter-American Development Bank. (<http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=733597>).

CÁMARA, Luis (2005). *Planificación Estratégica. Guía para entidades sin ánimo de lucro que prestan servicios de inserción socio laboral*. Madrid, CIDEAL. (http://www.kalidadea.org/kompartiendo/kompartedocumentos/calidad/3.planificacion_estrategica%20CIDEAL.pdf).

CEPAL (2007). *Social cohesion. Inclusion and a sense of belonging in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Santiago de Chile: Economic Commission for Latin America. (http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/0/29030/2007-219-Social_Cohesion-web.pdf).

European Commission (2007). *Latin America Regional Programming Document 2007-2013*. (http://eeas.europa.eu/la/rsp/07_13_en.pdf)

COFI (2009). *Guía para detectar unas buenas prácticas en torno al género y la cohesión social*. Gender and Social Cohesion Seminar. Cartagena de Indias (December). (www.e-cofi.net/fichero.php?id=174&tzona=1).

Red Cross Paraguay (2007). *Sistematización de experiencias en trabajo comunitario*. Asunción, Paraguay: Red Cross Paraguay. (<http://www.desaprender.org/blogs/7/post/32/download>).

DENNING, Steve (n/d) *The horizontal organizational ritual: the knowledge fair*. (<http://www.stevedenning.com/Knowledge-Management/knowledge-fairs.aspx>)

EUROsociAL (2006). *Guía Metodológica para la Gestión del Ciclo de un Intercambio de Experiencias*. Madrid: EUROsociAL Coordination Office. (http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/eurosocial/documents/guia_metodologica_eurosocial.pdf).

EUROsociAL (2009). *Documentando buenas prácticas*. Madrid: EUROsociAL Coordination Office. (<http://www.fiiapp.org/uploads/documentos/643d3676b5b813cc985753e1f4678610.pdf>).

GALPIN, Timothy (1998). *The Human Side of Change. A Practical Guide to Organisation Redesign*. Madrid: Ediciones Díaz de los Santos.

LAHERA, Eugenio (2004). *Política y políticas públicas. Serie Políticas Sociales, n.º 95*. Santiago de Chile: Economic Commission for Latin America. (http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/5/19485/sps95_lcl2176p.pdf).

MARTÍNEZ, Ignacio and SANAHUJA, José Antonio (2009). *La agenda internacional de eficacia de la ayuda y la cooperación descentralizada en España*. Working Document 38, Madrid: Fundación Carolina. (<http://www.fundacioncarolina.es/es-ES/publicaciones/documentostrabajo/Documents/DT38.pdf>).

MORA ROSICH, Ramón, MORET SABIDO, Lluïsa and EZPELETA PASTOR, Tomás (2006). *La transversalidad como impulsora de mejoras en la administración pública. En un contexto de desarrollo de un sistema de servicios sociales*. Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal.

OCO-URB-AL III (2010a). URB-AL III Programme monitoring system. Practical guide.

OCO-URB-AL III (2010b). Reference Document of the URB-AL III Programme. (http://www.urb-al3.eu/uploads/documentos/DocumentoBase_def.pdf)

OCO-URB-AL III (2011). *Identificación de los Aportes Probables de las Políticas Públicas Apoyadas por los Proyectos y sus Socios a la Cohesión Social*. Version 4-0 (May).

UNDP (2005) *Feria de conocimiento de gobernabilidad local en América Latina*. Regional project results (Phase I. 2002-2005). Preliminary report. Bogotá. (http://www.dhl.hegoa.ehu.es/ficheros/0000/0372/PNUD_Feria_Gobernabilidad_Local_A.L._2005.pdf).

RODRÍGUEZ HERRERA, Adolfo and ALVARADO UGARTE, Hernán (2008). *Claves de la innovación social en América Latina y el Caribe*. Santiago de Chile: Economic Commission for Latin America. (http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/2/34682/Claves_de_innovacion_social.pdf).

ROTH DEUBEL, André-Noël (2006). *Políticas Públicas. Formulación, implementación y evaluación*. Bogotá D.C.: Ediciones Aurora.

SANZ CORELLA, Beatriz (2008). *Guía para la acción exterior de los gobiernos locales y la cooperación descentralizada Unión Europea-América Latina. Vol. 2: Elementos para la construcción de una política pública local de cooperación descentralizada*. Barcelona: Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation European Union-Latin America. Diputació de Barcelona. (<http://www.observ-ocd.org/temp/libreria-231.pdf>).

APPENDIX 1: Conceptual Development of the Components of Social Cohesion Discussed in the Guide

As indicated in the first part, this guide is based on conceptual and operational development and definition carried out by the URB-AL III OCO, in the document entitled *Aportes a la Cohesión Social* [Contributions to Social Cohesion] Version 2-0, March 2011, from which the following text is taken.

PARTICIPATION: Conceptual approximation

Social cohesion presupposes the widespread involvement of the populace in public issues, not only governmental in this case.

Social cohesion is commonly regarded as being threatened by a lack of incentives and paths for public participation. On the other hand, increasing the populace's participation so that it strengthens social links, trust and a disposition to cooperation and reciprocity, favours progress towards greater levels of social cohesion.

Constituting and strengthening social actors with opportunities for self-determination, empowered to represent interests and demands, requires institutional spaces for participation in local public politics. It also requires the formalisation or rights and proof that they are understood and respected, promoting organisations that enable citizens' social networks to spread and grow, so they may participate and influence major strategic decisions in territorial development and in local government decision-making processes.

Building and extending skills for public involvement and the production of strategies that enable the appropriation of propositional, negotiation and executive instruments and skills on the part of excluded social sectors are key factors for social cohesion. In the case of marginal and poor communities, these conditions also require access to networks that transcend their context and promote the formation of community social capital.

Both access to networks that transcend the closed circle of the poor community and community social capital in different forms of association are important elements of this process of empowering the populace, which is necessary to ensure greater levels of public and community participation.

From the perspective of social cohesion, the desired community is not a community without conflict or contrast, but rather one with conflict and contrasts that are appropriately handled. To provide appropriate development frameworks for the whole populace, the local institutional order must enable citizens' participation in key decisions and debates regarding the rules of the game that govern the community, including, above all, transparency and accountability of people in government.

Collective participation in setting social goals and executing policies with the participation of their legitimate beneficiaries are rules required to make them effective. The role that key actors such as local authorities play

in this task is crucial. On the basis of these considerations, participation is also closely related to the principle of horizontal subsidiarity, in accordance with which public service systems must be planned and managed by authorities that are functionally and territorially closest to the public.

Territorial proximity implies the centrality of local governments; functional proximity refers to the role played by social organisations that bind and represent the vast interests of a given group¹⁸ and that perform services of general interest¹⁹.

Democratic representation of the interests for specific social groups and the development of socially relevant activities are two elements that legitimise these bodies in formally undertaking a public role. This role is not superimposed on the responsibilities of territorial public powers, but is carried out in association with them.

Recognition of these bodies as actors in a multi-actor governance system²⁰ is part of a wider reassessment of the forms of distributing and carrying out the public

function. Thus the administrative system changes from one based solely on public institutions to another that includes and stresses the active role of organisations close to the public from the functional perspective (and which may be preferable given their greater proximity to the interests, views and expectations of the target groups for policies, programmes and public services).

The idea of cooperation between the public and private sectors mainly falls within this attempt to overcome a vision of public order focussed exclusively on administrative bodies that answer to elected local governments, homogenous in terms of their links to the political and party representation circuit. Systems of governance that incorporate these private and civil bodies in the creation and implementation of collective decisions must be interpreted positively, in the sense of an extension to democratic participation, to the political process, but they are not without risks, among them the debilitation of representative bodies.

LEGITIMACY: Conceptual approximation

This component includes the strategic role of institutions (both public and private) and mechanisms or spaces for mediation which ensure connections between individuals.

18 Unions representing workers, universities, the community of teachers and students, chambers of commerce, companies, etc.

19 For example, in the case of chambers of commerce, the promotion of economic development, support for the internationalisation of companies, technical advice, mediation with institutions, etc.

20 Alternative to forms of government characterised by hierarchical control and concentration of power, public administration and its political leaders.

Social cohesion depends to a great extent on the legitimacy of these institutions and is threatened when they are not representative. Achieving a higher level of social cohesion should translate into more efficient operation of the main components of the institutional system, in particular public and government order.

This efficiency is expressed in the quality of the public policy formulation processes, which means that decision-making bodies are able to adopt policies with a high degree of social consensus, within a short-, mid- and long-term vision of the territory, as well as being effectively viable in terms of execution, and also because they are based on participation and agreement processes between actors.

A 'quality' local public policy must be stable, which is the same as saying it must last for a certain length of time. It should have a degree of adaptability and, therefore, possess the capacity to adapt to changes in circumstances (such as those produced by an economic crisis, natural disasters or any other unexpected event). It responds to certain requirements for coordination, both in terms of design and implementation, with the other public policies (local, subnational and central). It should specifically pursue efficiency in the resource assignment process (often it is not important what is spent but how it is spent).

All of the above presupposes that the social actors involved in the decision-making processes are capable of reaching sustainable agreements on the basic

content of local government public policies. Such sustainability over time, or continuity, implies low levels of volatility in identifying and setting targets for territorial development, which is possible to the extent that they are no longer determined by changes in government.

These agreements presuppose the existence in the community of a significant ability to generate consensus, a capacity that may be considered an essential pillar of legitimacy, which is more likely to be reached when all the parties or social groups identify with the general purposes of the local public policy, in which they recognise themselves. In other words, when society is cohesive.

BELONGING: Conceptual approximation

This component is related to the development of a sense of 'social connectivity' where people share basic values and commitments. A threat to social cohesion is associated with the feeling of isolation which, in some circumstances, may arise among certain individuals and social groups.

The opposition between 'included' and 'excluded' individuals or social groups almost always leads to a consideration of institutional cohesion mechanisms (such as those linked with employment, education and other social policies). It can also lead to other basic cohesion factors, such as family, race, trade group, etc. In both cases, other forms of connection or 'social connectivity' in which individuals find solidarity and various directions

for their life projects and action within society are left to one side.

Thus, as well as institutional mechanisms themselves, it is essential to consider the operation of structures and dynamics in more traditional areas and with strong community roots that form the universe of the group's or individual's sense of belonging: traditions, the neighbourhood, religion, adhesion to political practices or parties, the union and, more generally, various systems of group and identity affinity and identification, whose weight in each territorial field is different but not insignificant: sport, community-based civil organisations, popular culture in its most diverse manifestations (cuisine, music, handcrafts, festivals, celebrations, etc.), civic culture and more. These are forms of association that ensure 'connectivity' and which in many cases operate autonomously in relation to large socialising institutions and government cultural policies (local, subnational or central).

These forms of association are key instances of mediation between relations between individuals and social groups, on the one hand, and the market and governmental field, on the other. Its recognition is fundamental to the extent that in all society they are potent generators of social cohesion. However, in some specific contexts, the sense of belonging can also generate undesirable social exclusion dynamics; therefore in the social cohesion perspective, a 'plural and multiple' sense of belonging is proposed.

RECOGNITION: Conceptual approximation

This component refers to the positive mediation of differences of identity, religion, culture, politics, race, values, and any other differences that characterise a society.

Members of a society who perceive that others accept and recognise them contribute to social cohesion, while it is threatened by rejection and intolerance or excessive efforts to achieve unanimity and uniformity.

As a community grows and diversifies, and this is especially true in urban environments and large metropolitan areas, so does its social diversity and multicultural nature. This is a historic and socially complex reality, which nowadays is manifested in phenomena such as internal and international migration or the active presence of cultural minorities, but also in the development of a higher sense of justice regarding rights and demands of gender, age, sexual preferences, lifestyles and alternative models of coexistence, among others.

When a community does not positively assimilate differences of identity, these become sources of inequality that undermine social cohesion and democratic legitimacy itself. This is because, in practice, it is equivalent to taking away certain individuals and social groups rights to exercise their citizenship effectively and live in conditions of greater cultural freedom. An essential condition for equality (and strengthening the egalitarian principle within the

political culture and social practices) is cultural liberty, expressed as the recognition that everyone, whatever ones identity, has the same rights.

When cultural and social diversity is not recognised, the notion of equality narrows and, in most cases, is confined to the economic sphere. In numerous local Latin American environments, the problems and challenges facing social cohesion are strongly marked by an inequality of 'origin' or 'belonging', which, over and above the various forms of expression in each particular territorial context, manifest themselves in different demands for recognition that not only constitute a distinctive feature in social relations, but also an area that permanently demands the definition of public policies to promote equality and respect for diversity.

EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: Conceptual approximation

Equality of opportunity and inclusion are closely interrelated concepts. Indeed, equality could be understood as a condition for inclusion, given that inequality is a major obstacle to reducing social exclusion.

Inclusion also refers to a status or circumstance (that of being included or not included) and a process (one may switch from being excluded to included, and vice versa). Social inclusion may be defined as the situation in which every citizen enjoys certain standards of living historically established by the society they belong to. These standards reflect the operational implementation of basic

rights, or goods and conditions of a decent life, which should be guaranteed so that everyone has the chance to define and pursue a coherent life project with their particular values and preferences.

Thus a lack of equality of opportunity in accessing and enjoying such rights produces exclusion. Given that societies are dynamic, changing bodies, differentiated from within, there are two types of obstacle to ensuring or maintaining inclusion: the first refers to deficiencies in the social system that prevents rights being fully exercised (e.g. a discriminatory education system, a health system that does not cover the whole population, etc.). These are the breaches or conditions of inequality, i.e., structural deficiencies that mainly affect the sections of the population who are least able to demand their rights or obtain the resources to ensure their wellbeing (marginal, peripheral urban areas where poverty is propagated, abandoned rural areas, discriminated ethnic minorities, etc.).

The second obstacle consists in the emergence of unfavourable events that undermine personal autonomy and/or increase the difficulties, leading to possible social exclusion (unemployment, old age, disability, disease, etc.).

An equal and inclusive society does not mean everyone is equal, i.e. it does not make everyone fit into pre-established patterns. Its ideal and norm is that everyone has the same opportunities for development. Thus, it is concerned

with removing structural obstacles that maintain the exclusion of certain social groups.

Also, a society of this kind creates a system of services and functions so that everyone has the necessary protection from events that increase the risk of exclusion. The purpose of the protection systems is to neutralise (and/or shelter people from) the negative effects of disadvantaged conditions, with greater emphasis on vulnerable sectors, for whom the risk of falling into social exclusion is higher (the unemployed, immigrants, single-parent families, poorly educated youth and adults, etc.).

In many countries, especially in Europe, the provisions of the protection systems are defined nationally, while management of the services is at the local level. In any event, even in more centralist states, the interdependence between the two levels of government is high, and the processes of definition and management are not neatly separated.

01

Methodological Guides URB-AL III

URB-AL III is a European Commission regional cooperation programme, whose goal is to contribute to increasing social and territorial cohesion among subnational and regional groups in Latin America.

Headed by Diputació de Barcelona, the mission of the URB-AL III Orientation and Coordination Office is to support the execution of the programme, providing technical assistance and accompanying different projects to contribute towards achieving their goals.

