

ABSTRACT – BACID TIRANA

More than 30 local experts have been invited to compare the Smart City endeavors of two European capitals, in order to build capacities for optimized decision making and processes of governance. For this purpose, Tirana is being supported by the BACID – Building Administrative Capacities in the Danube Region – program of the Austrian Development Agency. Accordingly, BACID facilitated an exchange of information and best practices with Smart City Vienna. Urban Innovation Vienna (UIV), Vienna's Smart City Agency, acted as Tirana's partner organization. The focus was put on strategy, organizational development and governance, as well as on project initiation (sourcing of innovation) and management of Smart City-related innovation. As various stakeholders are relevant in both, Austrian and Albanian ecosystems, open innovation formats (collaborative platforms, etc.) were also discussed. Additionally, spotlights were on the digital transformation of European cities and how digitization could be pursued in a sustainable and human-centric – in a distinctively European manner.

Similar to Vienna, Smart Tirana is pursuing a holistic strategic approach. People (talent recruiting), living, economy, public spaces, eco-friendly mobility and rural life (cf. in the context of sustainable tourism, etc.) were defined as focal points. Just as in Vienna (cf. quality of life, resource preservation and innovation), this may well imply many topical interrelations as well as conflicting targets that will have to be resolved via smart solutions. But keeping an eye on the big picture is a challenge for all municipal administrations, because they deal with multiple areas that are scattered widely across their areas of competence. Facing multiple horizontal challenges (e.g. climate change, globalization, digital transformation, demographic change and a global pandemic, etc.), it is obvious that municipalities cannot simply "go it alone". Instead, cities have to seek collaboration with science, private business and NGOs/NPOs, as well as with national and regional legislatures and governments and other communities to turn themselves into sustainable habitats. Another indispensable step towards tackling complexity via substantive collaboration is creating a monitoring system based on appropriate indicators that allow a city to collect high-quality quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress, identify topical interrelationships and looming or potential conflicts between goals and targets.