




WP3 - Deliverable 3.5

Report on effective stakeholder engagement practices

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Abstract	The present deliverable - D3.5 “Report on effective stakeholders engagement practices” - developed within the Task T.3.3 “Societal Active Engagement - Creation and implementation of physical urban agoras” aims to report the level of stakeholder engagement in the UrbanWINS project. This document describes what went well and not so well in UrbanWINS experience.
Keywords	Stakeholders, Collaboration, Engagement, Dialogue, Participation
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1. Context

1.1. UrbanWINS project

UrbanWINS (“Urban metabolism accounts for building Waste Management Innovative Networks and Strategies” - project no. 690047) aims to develop and test methods for designing and implementing innovative and sustainable strategic plans for waste prevention and management in various urban contexts based on innovative, inter-disciplinary and participatory approaches. This will enhance urban environmental resilience and will guarantee progress towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns together with improvements in the recovery of waste and the use of recovered materials. Specifically, the development of strategic plans will be built on the basis of improved knowledge of the factors that influence the metabolism of cities and on the basis of a deep understanding of how those factors can be transformed into positive drivers of technological, non-technological and governance changes. The methods mentioned are being extensively tested in eight EU pilot Cities: Cremona, Torino and two cities that form part of the Metropolitan City of Rome (Italy), Leiria (Portugal), Bucharest (Romania), and Manresa & Sabadell (Spain).

The project involves 27 partners from six different countries (local authorities, research bodies & universities, companies, NGOs) under the coordination of the Comune di Cremona (Italy). UrbanWINS is a 36-month project and has a total budget of approx. 5 million euros.

1.2. Project work package context

The current deliverable is a component of WP3 - “Urban Agoras for societal transformation - waste prevention and management” that focuses on stakeholder mapping, mobilisation and engagement in a participatory process. This process aims to foster the emancipatory capacity-building of stakeholders for waste prevention and management within the framework of urban metabolism. Thus the process developed in WP3 was key to supporting UrbanWINS activities, especially the participatory development of a Strategic Planning framework for urban waste prevention and management (WP4) and the participatory testing of the Urban Strategic Action Plans in eight Pilot Cities (WP5).

Agoras were the main tool used for the innovative engagement of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the waste strategies. The Agoras were online and physical spaces where EU urban stakeholders were encouraged to meet and debate the strategic plans for waste prevention and management.

The WP3’s **specific objectives** included:

- the creation of a participatory approach ensuring that people are effectively involved in the process of co-constructing strategic plans for waste prevention and management;
- the participatory, technical capacity-building of the teams through “hands on” training;



- the identification and engagement of stakeholders in the urban Agoras where best waste prevention and management initiatives and tools will be debated;
- the evaluation and understanding of different social actors' level of waste prevention and management literacy;
- the creation of the online urban Agoras for the collaborative participation of all interested EU citizens;
- the creation of the physical urban Agoras for stakeholders from various sectors to support the collaborative development of strategies based on mutual learning in each city.

The involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process allowed the integration of different types of knowledge and the articulation of different points of view, which contributed to a more representative and holistic approach. The creation of such an inclusive participatory process, in which equity among participants was assured, resulted in the stakeholders' capacity-building and contributed to the process's sustainability.

In order to reach the proposed objectives, WP3 included three **components**:

1. the mapping of the EU, national and regional stakeholders;
2. the creation of the online urban Agoras based on various sectoral, thematic and impact criteria. These are hosted by the project platform and their main purpose is implementing a model of collaborative governance by continuously interacting with the physical urban Agoras in a continuous flux of exchanges with stakeholders;
3. the creation and development of the physical urban Agoras in each Pilot City in order to promote the stakeholders' active societal engagement at the local level.

1.3. Objective of the deliverable D.3.5

The deliverable D.3.5 Report on effective stakeholder engagement practices was developed within Task T.3.3 "Societal Active Engagement - Creation and implementation of physical urban Agoras". The deliverable reports on the stakeholders' engagement through the UrbanWINS participatory process and its analysis. This document presents the data related to the number of stakeholders involved in this participatory process and an exploratory analysis regarding it.



2. Deliverable methodology

2.1. Theoretical approach

We are currently living in a society where policy makers are challenged to develop innovative solutions to increasingly complex problems in order to better serve today's society. Policy makers can do so through the intelligent formulation of alternative Public Policies, thus pursuing continuous improvements in the decision-making processes (Ferretti, Pluchinotta, and Tsoukiàs, 2019).

This need is felt in the governing powers' various action levels, including the life cycle of public policies. Here, there is a need to move away from the traditional development model, which is limited to policies' formulation in "private" and subsequent implementation in civil society, and towards more collaborative policy formulation models.

Decision makers and other organisations involved in public policy design and implementation need to challenge themselves to open the decision-making process to as many actors as possible. This way, they can nurture public policies with heterogeneous perspectives, thus building the basis for public accountability and ensuring an interdisciplinary dialogue between disciplines and sectors.

Stakeholder engagement represents one way of opening these decision-making processes to those who are positively or negatively affected by them, contributing to the design and implementation of participatory public policies. Stakeholder engagement activities entail a range of positive effects.

The engagement of stakeholders through participatory processes offers them the opportunity for their opinions and public suggestions to be taken into account throughout the life cycle of the public policy (Asensio, 2010). This process leads to a greater understanding of the values advocated by different parties.

This is extremely important in processes and policies dealing with sustainability, an area that is by definition complex and interdisciplinary, and one that will be confronted with ever-increasing challenges. By incorporating public values and suggestions into political decisions, policy makers improve people's sense of empowerment and open the door for the development of holistic solutions to environmental problems (Lee et al., 2013 in Wan, Shen and Choi, 2018).

Inadequate Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder engagement is a two-way process aimed at bringing additional experiences and perspectives to the decision-making process. It is an important means by which local actors can acquire a sense of accountability and take responsibility for actions that influence long term policies - an approach known as social responsibility. According to the international standard ISO 26000 "Guidance on Social Responsibility", stakeholder engagement represents an "activity undertaken to create opportunities for dialogue between an organisation and



one or more of its stakeholders, with the aim of providing an informed basis for the organisation's decisions”.

However, some specialists assume that participation is only a vehicle for information and consultation; as a result of this assumption, meetings may have a passive format, without deliberation and with a low interactive component. These meetings aim to inform and consult, rather than to jointly build decisions.

This idea is reflected in traditional stakeholder involvement in environmental decision-making processes, which are mostly restricted to public hearings and consultation formats. These processes proved to be inadequate in terms of incorporating stakeholders' interests and aspirations, since they do not ensure that different types of knowledge are sufficiently integrated to substantiate informed and consensual decisions. These traditional methods are limited to contributing to the development of a sense of shared responsibility among stakeholders upon implementation of the decision.

Traditional participation in complex environmental planning and management decision-making processes has generated a substantial amount of controversy. Large, unstructured meetings with numerous attendees (and limited interaction) are usually carried out at the end of the process. When such meetings are held on complex issues, they lack interaction, an essential factor to settling disputes. Interactive, participatory approaches, therefore, might be the best means of expanding stakeholder involvement in this new context. Such approaches allow for interactive, structured and facilitated meetings, where stakeholder participation is inclusive, creative, and based on true dialogue (Vasconcelos, 2000).

In summary, collaborative governance, like any other scientific area, has a conceptual framework and requirements to support it, and both elements are necessary to ensuring its success. Creating collaborative inclusive settings, therefore, and promoting genuine dialogue (Habermas, 1970, 1991) require professional facilitation via the training of a target group, which, in this case, aims at effective local collaborative governance.

2.2. Methodology

In order to report on the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement, and to analyse the number of stakeholders involved in the UrbanWINS participatory process, it was decided that an analysis should be carried out to understand these numbers through an evaluation of the whole process. The applied methodology is based on two distinct parts:

- **1st part - Stakeholders engaged in UrbanWINS:** Evaluation of the participants' level of engagement in the Physical Agoras sessions
- **2nd part - Stakeholder engagement evaluation:** Evaluation conducted by the actors involved in UrbanWINS participatory process



2.2.1. 1st Part - Stakeholders engaged in UrbanWINS

To assess the number of stakeholders involved, and their level of involvement, in UrbanWINS, all the information regarding all participants in the Physical Agoras sessions that took place in each of the eight pilot cities was gathered.

The information collected was statistically analysed in order to identify the following indicators:

- Number of stakeholders involved in total and by Pilot City;
- Number of stakeholders engaged in total and by Pilot City;
- Number of stakeholders that participated in more than half of the Physical Agoras session per city;
- Number of stakeholders who followed the process, attending initial sessions and returning for the last, in total and by city;
- Ratio between number of cities' total sessions and number of sessions in which stakeholders participated

The strategies used to draw the stakeholders in to the process were also identified:

- How was information regarding the Physical Agoras disseminated?
- What was done to keep stakeholders in the process?

2.2.2. 2nd Part - Stakeholder engagement evaluation

In order to identify what was done during the participatory process that might have contributed to keep stakeholders in the process, it was considered important to evaluate the participatory process, since its dynamic could influence stakeholder engagement in the process.

The participatory process set up for UrbanWINS assumes that the stakeholders co-working with UrbanWINS actors - community activators, city representatives and technicians - are key to opening up the decision-making processes at a local level. So, to assess the general opinion of all actors concerning stakeholder engagement, an evaluation was carried out that encompassed two components:

1. Analysis of the evaluations filled in by the stakeholders at the end of each session;
2. SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis), which was undertaken by partners and project collaborators who were directly involved in the participatory process: technical partners, Pilot Cities and community activators.

The first component encompasses an analysis of the individual evaluations completed by the stakeholders during the eight sessions that took place in their Pilot Cities. The objective of this analysis was to identify the main pros and cons and to collect suggestions for improvement. These evaluations contributed to the continuous improvement of the process during its development.



The second component - the SWOT analysis - is a framework that was established to identify and analyse the internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factors that might have an impact on the process. This framework is considered to be a powerful support tool for decision-making because it reveals opportunities for success that were previously not articulated and highlights threats before they become too burdensome. To optimise this analysis, a set of topics were established that took into consideration the role of each actor (technical partners, pilot cities, community activators) (Table 1).

Table 1 - Topic for analysis by actor

QUESTION / TOPIC	PILOT CITIES	TECHNICAL PARTNER	COMMUNITY ACTIVATOR
Involvement / engagement of stakeholders	X	X	
Agoras general appreciation	X	X	X

Each partner (pilot cities and technical partners) organised an internal meeting where the analysis was jointly developed by all collaborators involved in the organisation and/or conduct of the session.

3. Results

3.1. Stakeholder engaged in UrbanWINS

Participants involved in Physical Agoras sessions

During the entire participatory process, Pilot Cities carried out seven to eight Physical Agoras sessions. Pilot Cities were responsible for trying to engage between 30 to 40 stakeholders for each session.

Figure 1 shows the variation in numbers of participants in Pilot Cities. The city that had the most variation in numbers of participants in the sessions was Bucharest, which averaged between 25 and 45 in each session. Manresa was the Pilot City with the most consistent numbers of participants in the sessions: around 25 stakeholders per session, followed by Sabadell, with an average of 20 per session. The two Spanish cities had to conduct some of their sessions internally due to political issues that were occurring at that time, but were, despite this, able to maintain consistency. Generally, all the cities managed to involve a significant number of participants and sometimes successfully achieved the goal of 30 participants. Only Torino consistently failed to reach this goal.



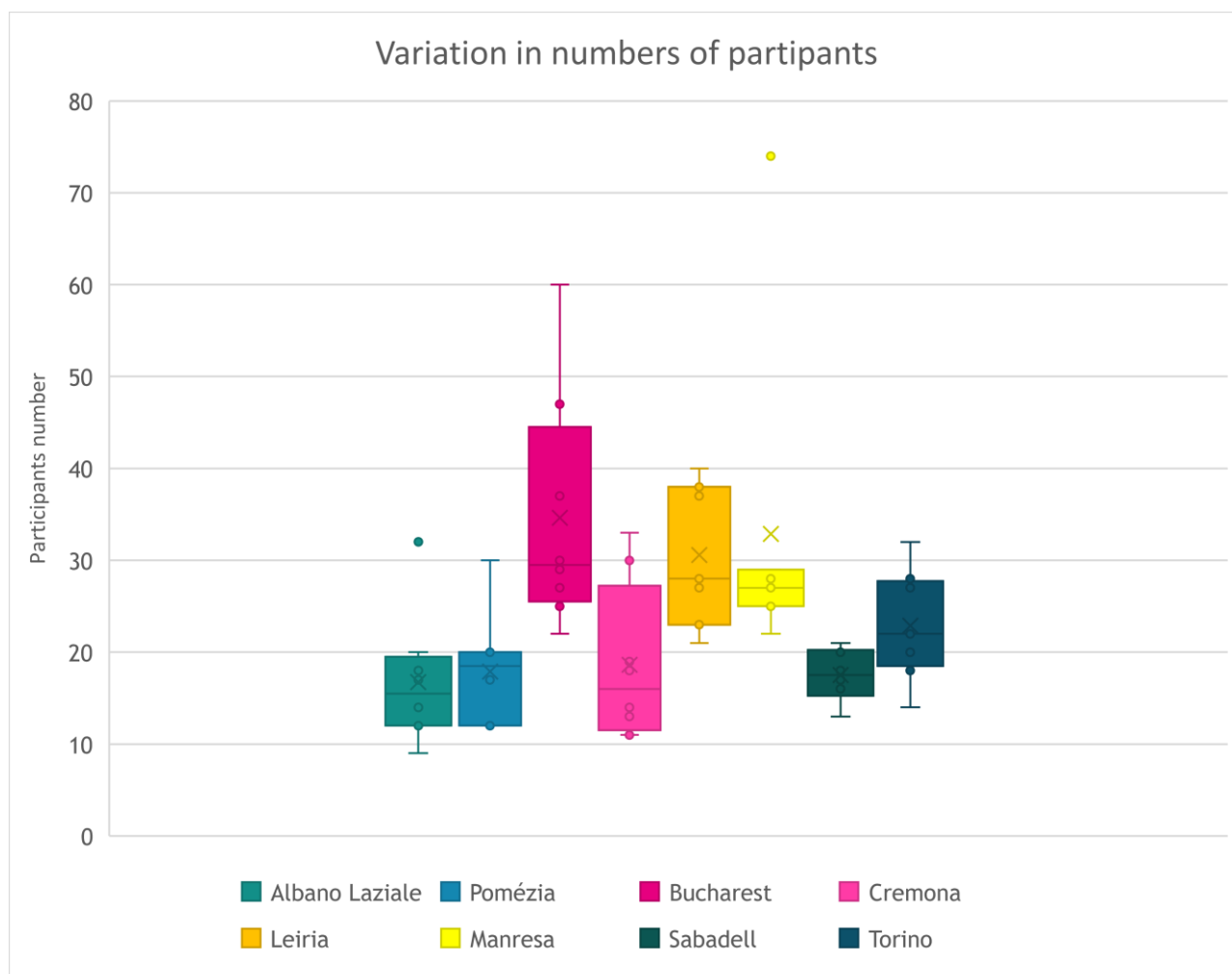


Figure 1 - Variation in numbers of participants by Pilot City

Due to a significant variation in the involvement of stakeholders in the participatory sessions, it was important to identify the factors that affected participation. Thus, the tendency of participations during the participatory sessions was observed and is presented in Figure 2.

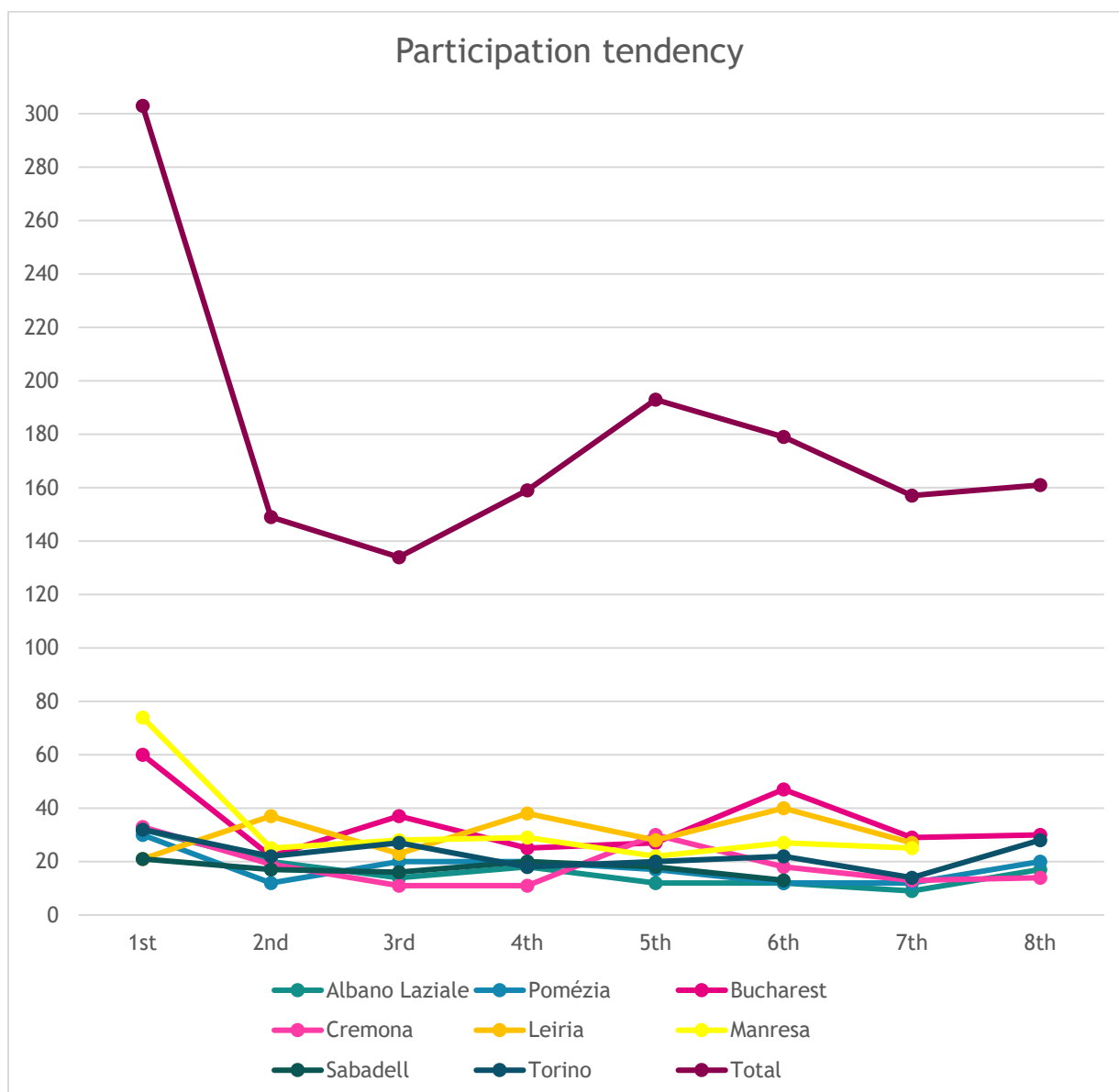


Figure 2 - Physical Agoras participants by session (Note: Sabadell does not have information on participants in the 7th session since they carried out a public event and it was not possible to register participation)

From this analysis, it is possible to conclude that participation was consistent throughout the participatory process. Globally, the first session was the one that brought together the most participants, while the third was the one that gathered the least. The first session had a high number of participants since in Bucharest alone the number of participants reached was 60. Due to the widespread communication regarding this process, and its “novelty”, many people showed up to the event; however, most of them wanted to debate other issues and problems not related to the project. As a result, only direct communication and invitations to relevant stakeholders were carried out for the following sessions so as to guarantee suitable participants. There is also a high number of participants in Manresa at the first session since this session was divided into two parts, thus enabling the participation of several stakeholders. However, for the following sessions, Manresa followed the same process as other cities.



At the 5th Physical Agoras session, there was an increase in the number of participants, which was related to the fact that this session had a different format from the previous ones: an open seminar. This format permitted the exhibition of the work carried out and of the project itself, bringing more participants to the process. The 7th and 8th sessions show a consistent number of participants, despite the gap of one year between these two sessions. This phenomenon highlights the fact that stakeholders were deeply involved in the process, since they came back one year later to see and assess the results of the process.

This consistent involvement is confirmed by the 45% of participants who returned to successive sessions following participation in the first one (Table 2). Manresa was the city that managed to keep the greatest number of stakeholders involved in the process, while Bucharest was the city that managed to bring in the greatest number of participants. This is also illustrated in Figure 3, which shows that Manresa is the city with the greatest percentage of stakeholders participating in more than one session and in more than a half of the sessions. In contrast, Bucharest, despite being one of the cities where stakeholders returned after the first session, had one of the lowest percentages of stakeholders that participated in more than half of the sessions. Leiria is the City that had the lowest percentage of stakeholders that followed the process and kept participating after their first session. It is important to stress that Manresa strongly mobilised the internal technicians of the municipality, which is the reason why it achieved these results.

Table 2 - Participants engaged in the UW participatory sessions (Physical Agoras)

	City	Stakeholders engaged	Total participation	Stakeholders engaged
ROME	Albano Laziale	70	134	48%
	Pomezia	86	143	40%
	Bucharest	182	277	34%
	Cremona	84	149	44%
	Leiria ⁽ⁱ⁾	139	214	35%
	Manresa	91	230	60%
	Sabadell ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	51	105	51%
	Torino	86	183	53%
	TOTAL	789	1435	45%

⁽ⁱ⁾In Leiria, an initial conference at the beginning of the participatory process increased the number of stakeholders engaged to 230, but this number is not included here because this analysis only took into account the participants in the Physical Agoras sessions.

⁽ⁱⁱ⁾In Sabadell, the last Physical Agoras session was held in association with a public event; therefore, it was not possible to include these participants in this analysis.



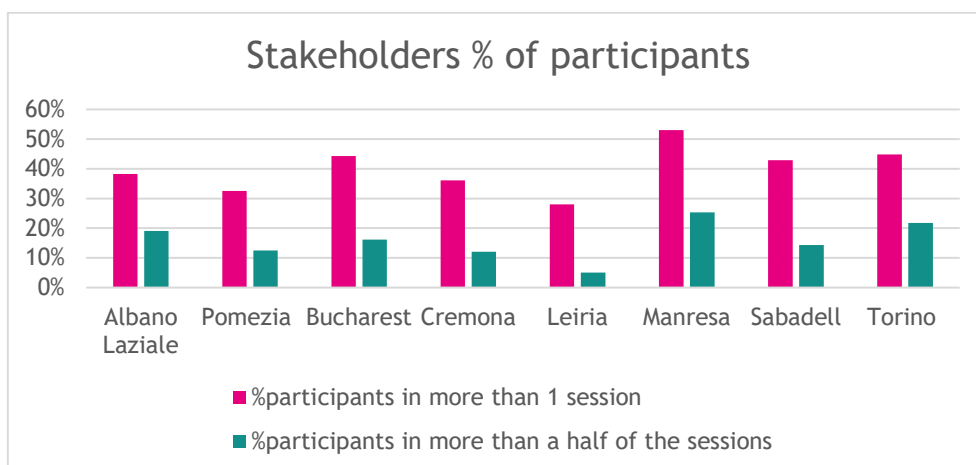


Figure 3 - Stakeholders' participation in the 8th Physical Agoras session

As mentioned above, Leiria is the Pilot City that had the least capacity to retain stakeholders in the process; this is confirmed by the fact (see Figure 4 below) that it was the city with the most new participants in the last session and the smallest number of participants who had already participated in the first couple of sessions. Manresa, Albano Laziale and Cremona were the cities with the most stakeholders who participated in the initial phase of the process and the least new stakeholders who participated in the final phase. This shows that in these cities the stakeholders were engaged in a more efficient way and followed the project closely.

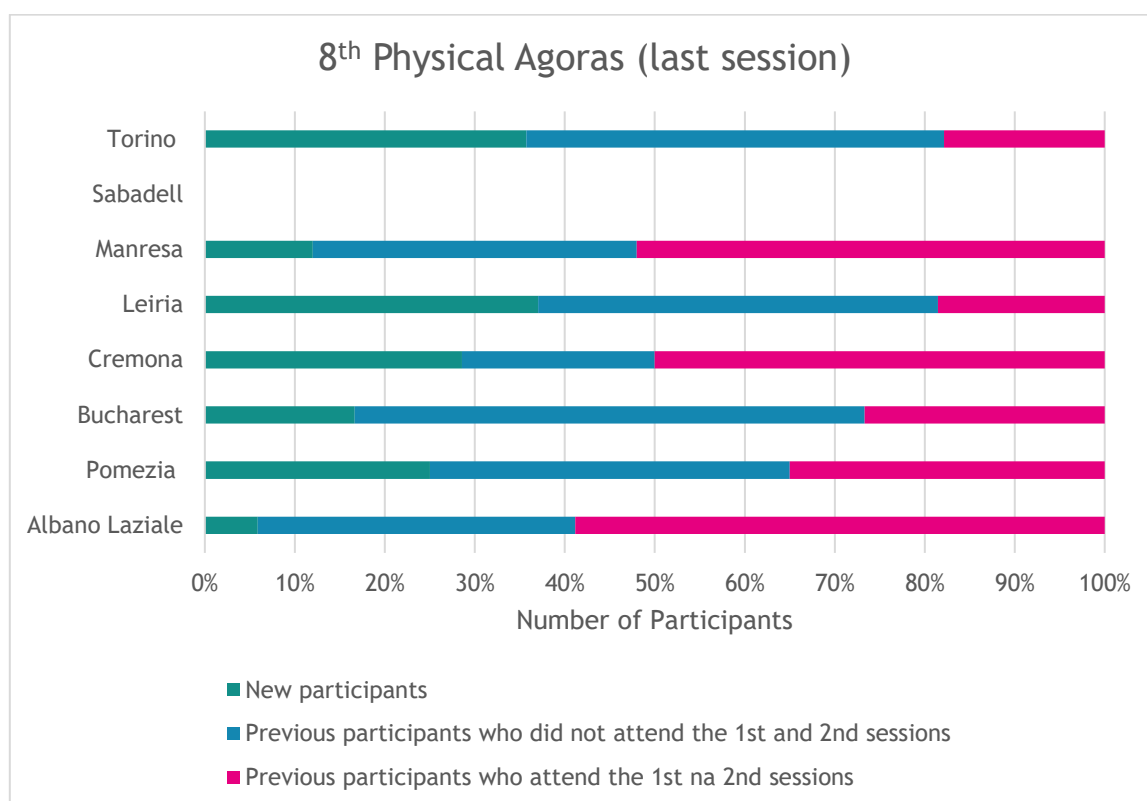


Figure 4 - Type of participants in the last Physical Agoras session
(Note: Sabadell does not have information in this graphic since they carried out a public event and it was not possible to register the participations)



Following the previous conclusion, and in light of Figure 5, it is also possible to note that Manresa was the city that engaged the most stakeholders, since it was the city with the most participants that were present in the greatest number of sessions. It is important to remember, however, that Manresa had a particularly intense involvement from local municipality technicians. Here it is shown that although participants of the last session in Albano Laziale were mainly people who had attended previous sessions, many of those participants did not attend beyond 25% of the sessions. In spite of this, almost all the cities had a significant number of participants that participated in at least 75% of the sessions. Leiria was the one with the fewest stakeholders participating in more than 75% of sessions.

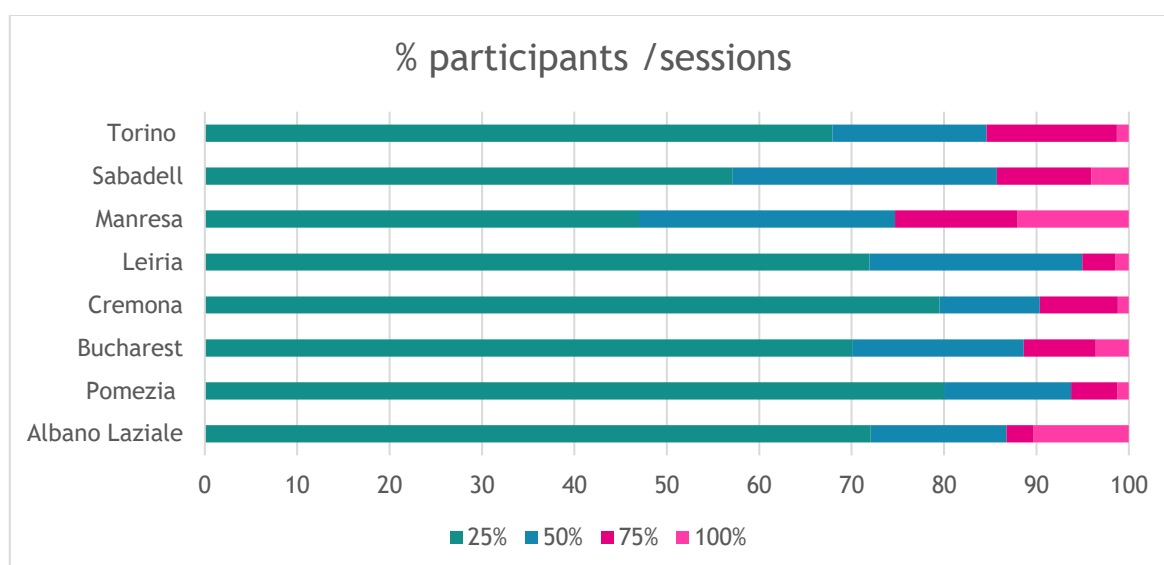


Figure 5 - Ratio between number of cities total sessions and the number of sessions that stakeholders participated

Overall, Albano Laziale, despite being one of the cities with the most consistent participation throughout the participatory process (Figure 6), was also the city with the least number of participants throughout the process. This city only contributed about 9% of the total 1435 participants. Bucharest, Leiria and Manresa were the ones that contributed the most. However, there is no significant disparity between the eight cities.

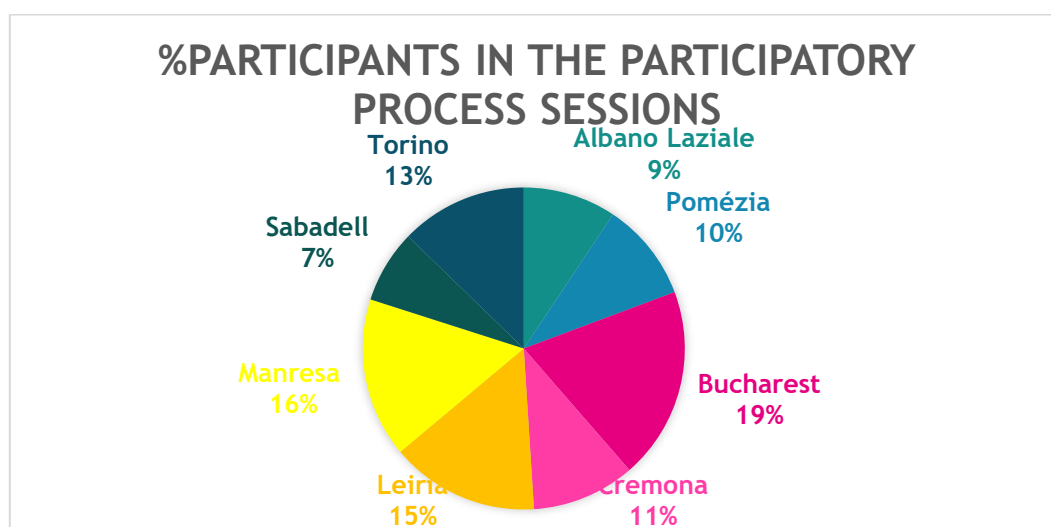


Figure 6 - Overall percentage of participants by Pilot City



Stakeholder engagement practices

To understand the results above it was important to explore how the communication of the Physical Agoras was conducted and if contact with the most consistent stakeholders in the Physical Agoras sessions was established differently across the cities.

In general, the Pilot Cities followed the indications presented in the Toolkit that was prepared by the FCT NOVA team and communicated information regarding the Physical Agoras sessions through an event poster, a press release, an UrbanWINS Facebook page event and the Online Agoras Platform, as well as via their social media. At the same time, all Pilot Cities sent e-mail invitations to a mailing list prepared by municipality representatives. Some cities contacted stakeholders who a) did not respond (e.g. Bucharest, Cremona); b) they considered the most relevant stakeholders (Manresa) via phone call. Manresa went one step further by conducting interviews with some of the stakeholders and afterwards inviting them to the Agoras session. Manresa municipality stated that this was particularly useful in developing contacts with university stakeholders and bringing them into the process.

This approach was important to bringing stakeholders to the Physical Agoras sessions, but did not constitute a guarantee that they were involved in the process. Thus, it was important to understand what was done in order to keep stakeholders engaged in the process. To this end, the Pilot Cities sent their participants a report following each session with the results of the session and also published the documents on the Online Agoras Platform and on their municipal webpage. During the entire participatory process, it was crucial to consider participants' opinions in preparing the following sessions; this way participants felt that they were a part of and included in the process. Thus, it was important to evaluate all the participatory processes and the Physical Agoras sessions to understand opportunities for improvement that could lead to more stakeholders being involved in the process. This analysis is reported in the section below.



3.2. Stakeholder engagement evaluation

3.2.1. Sessions evaluation by stakeholders

Here is the report on the evaluations done by the stakeholders, which were analysed by the technical team coordinating the Physical Agoras - FCT NOVA and the supervisor of the present deliverable. The Evaluations are grouped by similarity and relevance.

Positive points

From the evaluations conducted by stakeholders in the various Physical Agoras the following observations emerged. Table 3 below includes the positive points identified as being determining factors in engaging the stakeholders in the process.

Table 3 - Stakeholders evaluations - Positive points

MAIN TOPIC	POSITIVE POINTS
Thematic area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The fact that the issue was waste; ▪ The thematic groups; ▪ The debates, the exchange of ideas; ▪ The possibility of finding solutions jointly with other participants.
Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An open debate that allows the expression of opinions and suggestions, with a substantial level of participation and discussion, that guaranteed maximum participation in the debate.
Diversity of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The multitude of key persons/players, local entities and citizens; ▪ The expression of ideas from people with different backgrounds and the contribution of citizens' everyday knowledge and experience in the production of urban waste; ▪ The exchange of points of view among people; ▪ The discovery of new perspectives related to the problem of waste; ▪ The opportunity "to discuss" ideas in small groups, which allow people to extract findings and listen to different points of view; ▪ The opportunity to compare the different positions of administrators and citizens, representatives of associations and institutions.
Event organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The materials prepared; ▪ The location selected (in some cities); ▪ The punctual beginning and length of the meeting.
The methodologies applied in the Physical Agoras sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organisation of practical working groups; ▪ The brainstorming; ▪ The work dynamic; ▪ The good work structure; ▪ The effective methodology of activity involvement; ▪ The methodology of shared work; ▪ The voting method; ▪ World café methodology; ▪ The model for the development of the proposals; ▪ The use of technology to make a remote presentation in the seminar event;



MAIN TOPIC	POSITIVE POINTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The concrete and practical nature of the meeting.
The way the events were conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The working environment and desire to cooperate; ▪ The rhythm of the session was understandable; ▪ The opportunity to participate in a flexible way; ▪ The real ability to manage work at tables; ▪ The concise presentations, timely and satisfactory speeches; ▪ The constructive and open discussion, and the effective, though complex, workflow; ▪ The facilitator (in some cities).
Positive and collaborative environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The interesting participants; ▪ The active involvement of participants; ▪ The desire to carry on the action; ▪ The creation of collective knowledge; ▪ The common knowledge and learning; ▪ The exchange of ideas and people's engagement; ▪ The good level of participant engagement; ▪ The informal dialogues with participants and the spirit of collaboration.
Improvement of the Physical Agoras sessions throughout the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The participants note that the feedback given at previous sessions was taken into account; ▪ Paper was saved in comparison with previous Agoras; ▪ The clear operation and clarifications.

Negative points

From the analysis of the stakeholders' evaluations, the following observations emerged as negative points. Table 4 below includes some aspects that may have contributed to some of the stakeholders' withdrawal. However, over the course of the project, adjustments were made to address the negative points identified by stakeholders to assure their engagement.

Table 4 - Stakeholders' evaluations - Negative points.

MAIN TOPIC	NEGATIVE POINTS
Time control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The delay in beginning the work; ▪ The time distribution was a negative point in some sessions.
Session's duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little time to debate and develop ideas; ▪ The duration was limited; ▪ It was too fast; ▪ It takes more time to talk to each other.
Participatory process timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The length of the process and lack of clarity at the beginning; more explanation of the project and more details were needed.
Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The methodology was not very productive because the absence of preparation for the activity made the time / results ratio unfavourable; ▪ The SWOT/TOWS methodology (formats are difficult to understand at first; longer explanations; difficulties in filling in the forms); ▪ The presentation of the project should have been better prepared;



MAIN TOPIC	NEGATIVE POINTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The repetition of known concepts.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The participants' lack of focus; ▪ The poor presence of young people; ▪ The lack of more people's participation.
Participants' speeches/ Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private/personal nature of speeches; ▪ Some people talked to much; ▪ Unfortunately, one of the participants didn't respect the working methodology; ▪ Overlapping of discussions - lack of respect in communication; ▪ Chaotic dialogue owing to participants' education - not the fault of the organisers.
FF Agoras sessions communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The initiative was not well publicised.
Collected data unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little investigation of observations; ▪ Little knowledge of the subject; ▪ Need for greater concreteness; ▪ Did not achieve a concrete result.
Previous information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor information received before the event; ▪ Materials need to be received before the session to prepare for the work to be done in the session.
Bureaucratic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clash with excessively bureaucratic issues.
Moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explanations from the moderator not accurate enough (A*, D*); ▪ The rigidity of the dialogue, difficulty in understanding correctly each step (C*); ▪ Arrogant activator (C*). <p style="text-align: right;">*Consult point below for clarifications (3.2.2)</p>

3.2.2. SWOT analysis

The main results of the SWOT analysis performed by the actors who were directly and indirectly involved in the participatory process are presented in the following sub-sections. Only the SWOT analysis outputs and results regarding the Physical Agoras sessions are presented.

In order to synthesise the analysis results, and to make it easier to gain an overall idea of the main points identified by each type of actor, the tables presented below have three columns: one for each of the three types of actors that performed this analysis. Each column is filled in whenever the actor identifies a specific element. Also, in order to preserve anonymity, Pilot Cities are represented in the tables below by letters (A to H). Using the same logic, the community activators are identified by the letter of the relevant city where they work followed by the number 1 (A1 to H1). Technical partners are represented by the symbol X since some have supported more than one city.

The Table below displays the SWOT analysis results with reference to two main issues: "Involvement/engagement of the stakeholders" and "Agoras general observations". The



results are shown together because some/most of the points were repeated by the respondents with reference to both issues.

The “Involvement/engagement of the stakeholders” issue wasn’t evaluated by the community activators, since, while completing their SWOT analyses on the “Agoras general observations” issue, they raised some of the same points that the Pilot Cities and technical partners did with reference to the “Involvement/engagement of the stakeholders” issue, it was decided to present these results together.

The SWOT analysis confirmed that several points previously identified in stakeholders’ evaluations corresponded with the strengths identified by the respondents. The results in Table 5 below reflect the views of the Pilot Cities, the Technical partners and the community activators that followed up the participatory sessions.

Table 5 - Strengths identified by actors in their SWOT analysis.

INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	Pilot Cities	Technical partners	Community activators
STRENGTHS (S)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with Stakeholders through telephone calls, e-mails, and during events; Invitation for the Agora sent through e-mail, printed flyers, promotion through FB & municipality website and personal social media of the bloggers and technicians. 	A D		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of the district committee and economic operators working in the Municipality; Presence of the Administration; Presence and involvement of the Municipality at all the Agoras; Municipality’s, citizens’ and stakeholders’ engagement in public issues; Participatory approach with local key stakeholders. 	A C F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation and interest of some stakeholders; Willingness of participants to engage in dialogue and comparison; Good interactions and networking. 	B C D		D1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive opportunity where citizens and stakeholders can participate and share their ideas about city’s problems and needs, policies, etc. 	D		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of stakeholders with different experiences. 	A D E		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The municipality have appropriate rooms available; Excellent organisation of the event (room, coffee break, etc.). 	B		B1 D1 H1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous knowledge about public participation/stakeholders. 	G		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder map. 	F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of the point of view (from traditional perspective to urban metabolism approach). 	F B		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts with public service companies and other stakeholders. 	F		



INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	Pilot Cities	Technical partners	Community activators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new methodologies, dynamics, constructive and result-oriented discussions and solutions; The stakeholders were grouped at working tables, according to interests; Interactive workshops appreciated by the participants; Interaction between working groups. 	F B C	X	B1G 1H1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topics covered were appreciated and the debates were very well organised. 	B	X	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stakeholders invited by the City Hall were relevant persons from all the waste industry sectors who could make a substantial contribution to the project. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost half of Agoras participants were reasonably constant in the process, which ensured its continuity; Creation of a group of stakeholders always present in each Agora. 		X	D1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of the Physical Agoras results: the results of Physical Agoras were published on the Online Agoras, on the official pages of UW partners and were also sent by e-mail to stakeholders/participants. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the participants decided to support Cities in implementing the pilot actions. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local entities involved had the capacity for engagement. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social networks with much interaction. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens & municipalities acquired knowledge of each other. 			G1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accurate explanation of the project's meaning and engagement rules by the municipality team to the citizens involved. 			H1

Similar to what happened with the Positive Points of stakeholders' evaluations and the Strengths of the SWOT analysis, several points previously identified by stakeholders corresponded with the weak points identified by the respondents (Table 6).

Table 6 - Weaknesses identified by actors in their SWOT analyses

INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	Pilot cities	Technical partners	Community activators
Weaknesses (W)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diversity of stakeholders was low, with low participation from industrial sector partners and with poor involvement of businesses and voluntary associations. 	A E		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This engagement requires time and effort both from the municipality and the citizens that is difficult to put into practice; Difficulties in involving stakeholders in meetings. 	D B		B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties in the follow up with stakeholders (i.e. delays in the reporting). 	D		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some stakeholders asked to be informed in advance regarding the activities that were carried out during the workshop and to receive documents. 	D		



INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	Pilot cities	Technical partners	Community activators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scarce number of stakeholders that followed the process from the beginning to the end - Lack of interest on the part of the citizens. 	C D	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too strict methodology (not always adequate for the city and its stakeholders); Tools not easy to understand for citizens, too much technical detail (SWOT, DPSIR...); Some cities say that the participatory methodology is adequate for technicians but does not emotionally engage the participants. 	F G E	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not always having the proper time to discuss each idea extensively. 			H1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional community activator not involved in the project. 	F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High complexity of UrbanWINS project. 	A F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Length of the participatory process; Exhaustive and tedious process - too many Agoras with similar topics. 	A D F	X	C1G1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication efforts have low impact. 	A F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes management asked too much and not everything was good in practice - e.g. an excessive number of participants, too much paperwork, too many presentations, most of the issues were covered twice in different Agoras, too much to prepare in too little time. 	C		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the participants presented their own vision on a problem (or their own list of problems). 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Agoras represented a medium-term process the objectives of which were to be established by the stakeholders, issues that created confusion among some of them; Process and issues not understandable; results not easy to follow. 		X	G1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The citizens' bad perception of inadequate municipal waste management. 		X	

Keeping in mind the points previously identified, which refer to internal factors that influenced the efficacy of the participative sessions and the capacity to maintain/engage the stakeholders in the process, external factors were subsequently identified. These external factors may represent opportunities and/or threats for the stakeholders' better involvement in the process and its continuity, as shown in the following tables (Table 7 and 8 below).



Table 7 - Opportunities identified by actors in their SWOT analyses

INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	Pilot cities	Technical partners	Community activators
Opportunities (O)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep making Agoras in other decision processes, in such way that they could become a common practice; Opening the possibility for the municipality to make use of Agoras for other issues relevant to the citizens. 	CE A		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the municipality's relationships and networks with the stakeholders. 	D		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the level of efficacy of preparing Physical Agoras and emailing the ideas outlined at the meeting to give time (2-3 days) to add things/ideas that could not be presented at the debates. 	E	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Novelty, curiosity and high degree of innovation. 	F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation. 	F	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good networking among participants; New approach on waste prevention and management and its dynamics could be very interesting and create good synergies. 	C	X	G1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community activators were well prepared and had all the answers related to legislation and responsibilities in the field; 	C		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to establish relations with stakeholders useful for future initiatives and the Physical Agoras were an opportunity to build a community and develop new projects. 	B		H1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visibility of the project in the mass media with presentation of an analysis on implemented solutions that resulted from the discussions. 		X	

Table 8 - Threats identified by actors in their SWOT analyses

INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL APPRECIATION	Pilot cities	Technical partners	Community activators
Threats (T)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor participation; Citizens' apparent lack of interest in waste prevention and management. 	A B F	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strict timeline to carry out the Agoras and reporting process. 	D		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited availability of stakeholders and citizens; Time constraints; It was very difficult attract participants because of the time and schedule. 	D G		G1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the Agoras should end and stakeholders should stop discussing the subject. 	E		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens' lack of interest in waste prevention and management; Citizens' low attendance in municipal participation processes; Interest of citizens and stakeholders in taking part in this type of event. 	D F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition with other participatory processes and activities. 	F		



INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & AGORAS GENERAL APPRECIATION	Pilot cities	Technical partners	Community activators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too much planning and voting and not enough time for implementation; The stakeholders' decision to abandon the participatory process due to there being too many Agoras on the same topics (e.g. voting on the actions). 	C	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many meetings and a lack of effect. 	B G		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are not used to long term participatory planning sessions and some of them withdrew from the process or from the implementation of the pilot actions. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders' lack of consistent knowledge on legal aspects of waste, which hindered the efficiency of discussions. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of direct communication channels with all kinds of citizens (e.g. all people). 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The political risk was not considered enough; The political world was not involved in the Agoras and the pilot actions had no political support. 	B F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The selection of ideas could generate disaffection with the project and a diminution of active involvement. 			H1

4. Lessons learned

Several points in the evaluations simultaneously encompassed positive and negative aspects; this may be attributed to the fact that what went well in some of the cities didn't go so well in others. This allows us to extract a set of lessons that must be seriously considered when organising a successful participatory component and that may contribute to effective stakeholder engagement.

Factors to be carefully considered:

- **Community activator (CA):** the role of the CA is central to the whole process. Cities with an adequate CA are reported as having a more successful participatory process by the participants, the technicians and the cities' representatives.
- **Physical Agoras:** Some Pilot Cities suggested making these a common practice in the municipality for other issues relevant to citizens due to their potential to expand the level of democratisation in local decision making. This would allow the municipality to have more inclusive and expanded processes and to make the most of citizens' involvement/engagement, making them more active, engaged and responsible. In short, this practice could make citizens part of the whole process, transforming them into local agents of change who support municipal policy.
- **Networking:** The municipalities with successful Physical Agoras suggest that these could be used for improving the municipality's relationships and networks with the





stakeholders. This would contribute to the creation of social capital, which is of the utmost importance for the success of local municipal policy.

- **Innovation:** Those involved considered the physical Agoras to be novel forums that promoted interest in a highly innovative way. But they also, in and of themselves, provide space for debate favourable to the sharing and discussion of issues from different perspectives; in other words, they are spaces for innovation.
- **Motivation:** Having CAs, city representatives and technicians that are mobilisers, and the process itself being a mobiliser, added value to a dynamic active participatory process. Several respondents also identified motivated stakeholders as key for the success of the process.
- **Knowledge:** In the cities where the Physical Agoras succeeded, some attributed the creation of collective knowledge and learning especially to the sharing of ideas and practice. Participants mentioned that the interested parties' active involvement, informal dialogues, and the spirit of collaboration substantially contributed to this.
- **Participatory session's implementation:** Several respondents mentioned the way the event was conducted as relevant to the results, namely that the event's organisation created a dynamic, pleasant working environment that enhanced the desire to collaborate. Factors such as the opportunity for flexible participation, the ability to manage group work, concise, timely and informative presentations, constructive open discussion and the workflow were enriching even if complex. Informality was also mentioned as a key element of success.
- **Methodologies of the Physical Agoras:** In several cities the respondents identified the good work structure, the participants' effective, active involvement, the methodology to promote shared work, the organisation of practical working groups, the brainstorming, the work dynamics and the development of the proposals, as positive factors for success. They also identify the use of technology for remote presentation as positive.
- **Logistics of the participatory event:** the logistics were also considered relevant by some of the respondents, namely the materials, the selected location, the punctual beginning and length of the meeting.
- **Diversity of stakeholders:** Several stakeholders considered this diversity to be enriching, namely because it brings a diversity of ideas and perspectives to the setting of the participatory sessions, allowing for the joint creation of new solutions. This diversity also educates the participants on the problems that others are subject to and makes it easier to identify aspects that require further debate.
- **Debate:** Several mentioned the open and inclusive debate as crucial to the process, identifying, in particular, the open and free debate for expressing opinions, suggestions with good participation level and a sound discussion of the issues.





5. Final Remarks

The participatory process was conducted through sequential phases, each one of them with a specific objective involving several stakeholders.

Stakeholders were actively involved in the participatory process through the Pilot Cities' and technical partners' continuous and close contact, communicating the process's results and products, sending invitations, and launching challenges. This approach and the type/format of the events led to an effective engagement of involved stakeholders, which is confirmed by the attendance level (45% of the participants) of stakeholders who participated in more than one session.

Participatory processes are key to ensuring inclusion. Simultaneously, they work as tools for creating more active, responsible and engaged citizens. Participatory processes may be successful or not. Besides those conceptual requirements presented in the Theory of Communicative Rationality, ensuring success requires a set of elements regarding operational matters. Besides setting up a collective agenda, the details regarding the place where it will occur, the schedule, the length of duration - in short, the preferences of the citizens/stakeholders - are elements that lead to the stakeholders' improved engagement.

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