

URBAN AGRICULTURE GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES



A guide for civil society representatives



EFUA

European
Forum
on Urban
Agriculture

What is the aim of this guide

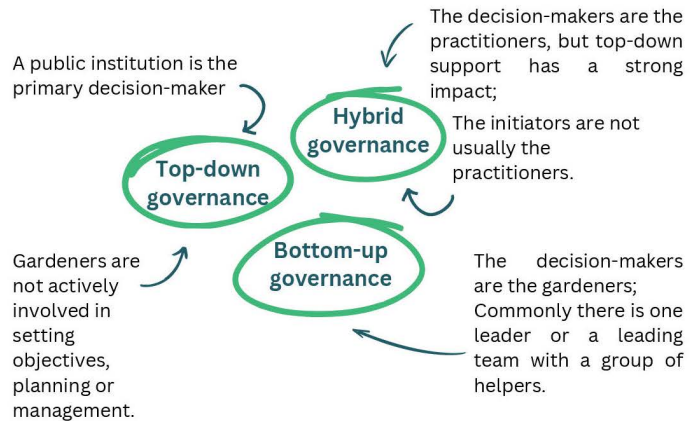
Urban agriculture initiatives (UAI) play a crucial role in promoting sustainable and innovative urban development, as well as community engagement. However, ensuring good governance throughout the various stages of UAI development can be challenging. This guide aims to help civil society representatives navigate UA governance processes by learning about best governance practices, success factors and common pitfalls throughout the different stages of UAI development. The information in the guide is based on the EFUA research on the most common governance mechanisms that make UAIs sustainable, innovative and place-sensitive.



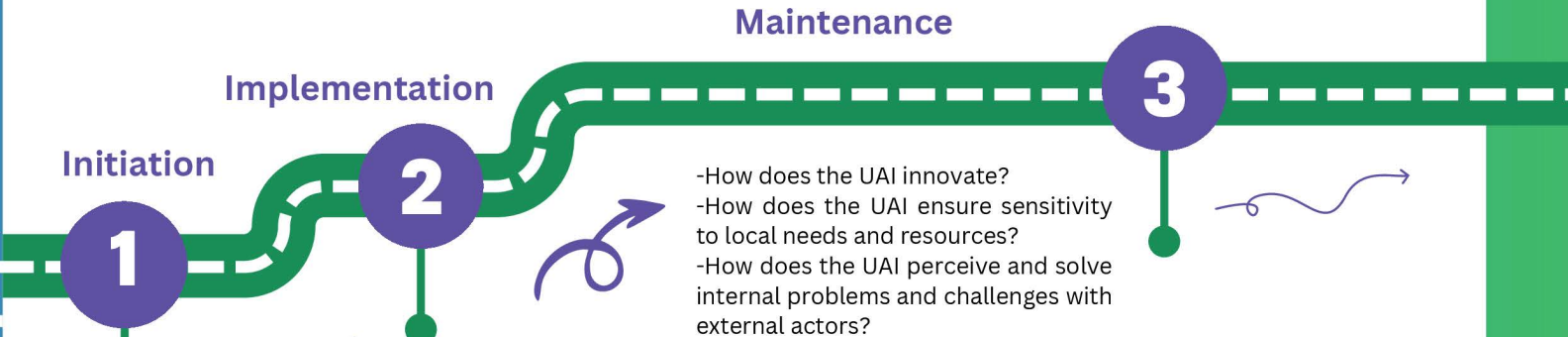
What is a UA governance model?

UA governance models represent “ideal types” of the most common ways in which UAIs may be structured internally, their practice characteristics and the way they interact with external actors and the broader urban context. These characteristics tell us what the initiative is all about: who runs it, with what goals and resources, how decisions are made, how problems and conflicts are solved.

In the EFUA project, we identified three most common UA governance models:



The stages of UAI development



Initiation

1

- Who initiates the UAI?
- What are the objectives?
- What are the local cultural, political, economic and climate contexts?

2

- Who is involved in running the UAI and how?
- What important skills are leaders bringing for the success of the UAI?
- What is the role of external actors and how are they involved in the UAI?

Maintenance

3

- How does the UAI innovate?
- How does the UAI ensure sensitivity to local needs and resources?
- How does the UAI perceive and solve internal problems and challenges with external actors?

During the **initiation stage**, the focus is on setting goals, securing resources, and considering important contextual factors for a successful start. In the **implementation stage**, decision-making processes, leadership characteristics, and the involvement of external actors play key roles in achieving success. In the **maintenance stage**, the main governance characteristics ensure sustainability, innovativeness, and embeddedness of the urban agriculture initiatives.

UA GOVERNANCE BEST PRACTICES

UA GOVERNANCE SUCCESS FACTORS



INITIATION

- Fostering collaboration between diverse actors, regardless of previous farming experience or knowledge.
- Encouraging cross-sectoral knowledge sharing to promote innovation and sustainability.
- Supporting clear goal-setting and planning objectives to ensure a strong start.

- Access to resources such as land and funding.
- Diversity of initiating actors with different skills and resources.
- Clear goal-setting and planning at the outset.



IMPLEMENTATION

- Adopting a hybrid governance model that combines bottom-up grassroots involvement with top-down support when necessary.
- Facilitating inclusive decision-making processes that involve stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.
- Establishing transparent communication channels within the UAI community to foster trust among members.

- Effective leadership skills in the decision-making processes and building relationships with external actors.
- Building partnerships with external actors who can provide resources like funding, expertise, or land access.



MAINTENANCE

- Establishing transparent decision-making processes through formal structures (e.g., boards) or democratic participation models within the UAI community.
- Promoting inclusion by involving all relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- Fostering continuous learning by sharing knowledge among UAI members and beyond through regular meetings and other events.

- Building strong partnerships with external actors (e.g., local authorities, education and research institutions etc.) ensures ongoing support and sustainability.
- Regular assessment of progress towards goals & adapting strategies accordingly.

UA GOVERNANCE BARRIERS

- Lack of supportive policies or regulations for UA.
- Limited access to initial funding
- Negative attitudes towards urban agriculture.

- Lack of understanding or negative attitudes towards UA arising from political or cultural contexts.
- Lack of collective action to support UA interests, making it harder to compete with larger-scale farming operations.

- Limited availability of funding sources for maintaining long-term operations.
- Administrative burdens such as complex bureaucracy or changing rules that make it difficult to sustain UA operations.
- Lack of awareness among citizens about potential benefits of UA, leading to missed opportunities for engagement with different social groups.



How can civil society foster success and overcome common pitfalls in UAI development?

Civil organisations that perform educational, consulting or mediating roles in UA play a pivotal role in ensuring the success and sustainability of UAI. By addressing key success factors and overcoming common barriers, NGOs can significantly enhance the impact of these initiatives. Here is how you can do this:

HOW TO BRING SUCCESS

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF UA

- NGOs can organize workshops, training sessions, and public events to raise awareness about the benefits of UA and the potential it has for addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges.
- NGOs can host events such as farmers markets or food festivals that showcase locally grown produce from UAI.
- NGOs can collaborate with educational institutions to develop educational programs related to urban agriculture. This could involve creating curriculum resources for teachers or organizing field trips to local UAI.

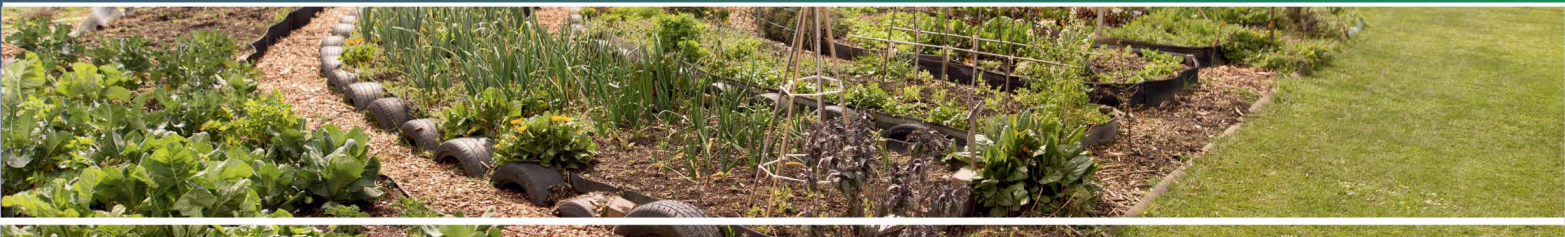
PROVIDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- NGOs can provide technical assistance and training to UAI on topics such as organic farming practices, urban planning regulations, project management, marketing strategies, and social inclusion.
- NGOs can arrange on-site demonstrations at UAI to showcase best practices in action.
- NGOs can act as a resource hub by providing UAI with access to research findings, guidelines, and manuals related to UA, as well as contacts with relevant experts.

HOW DOES IT OVERCOME BARRIERS

- By raising awareness about the benefits of UA, NGOs can help overcome barriers such as lack of understanding among key stakeholders, funding constraints, and resistance from policymakers.
- NGOs can foster an environment where there is increased appreciation for UA, leading towards more support, policies, and resources being directed towards sustainable urban agricultural practices.

- By providing technical support through these capacity-building initiatives, NGOs enhance the skills, knowledge, and resources needed for successful UA projects.
- NGOs play a vital role in helping aspiring entrepreneurs overcome barriers related to lack of expertise, funding limitations, lack of access, to promote more sustainable farming practices, and ultimately contribute towards the growth and development of the UA sector.



HOW TO BRING SUCCESS

HOW DOES IT OVERCOME BARRIERS

FACILITATING NETWORKING

- Networking opportunities between different UAI's foster knowledge sharing, collaboration, and partnership development. This includes conferences or meetings where practitioners can exchange experiences and best practices.
- NGOs can act as facilitators between different UAI's by connecting them (in person or online) based on complementary skills or shared objectives.

- By facilitating networking opportunities and building partnerships for resource sharing, NGOs help address barriers related to limited access to funding, knowledge, policy support and material resources. This enables organisations to leverage each other's strengths and overcome common challenges.
- This collaborative approach enhances the resilience of UAI's while fostering a broader culture of cooperation within the UA sector.

ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

- NGOs can conduct research on the benefits and impacts of UAI's, and use the results to advocate for evidence-based supportive policies at local, national EU level.

- By advocating for supportive policies, NGOs can help create an enabling environment that recognizes and supports the value of UA.

ASSISTING IN EFFORTS TO SECURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- NGOs can assist UAI's in identifying funding opportunities, preparing grant applications or crowdfunding campaigns.
- NGOs often have established networks within philanthropic communities or with corporate partners who may be interested in supporting UAI's, through funding campaigns or public-private partnerships.

- By assisting in fundraising efforts NGOs can help UAI's overcome administrative hurdles.
- NGOs can also offer capacity building on fundraising strategies, empowering UAI's with the knowledge and skills to effectively raise funds through donor research, networking, and developing fundraising plans.



Photographs by Daniel Mnderlein,
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For more detailed information, data and analysis on
the governance mechanisms that contribute to
sustainability, innovativeness and place-sensitivity of
each type of UAI, visit the Public resources section of



www.efua.eu