

URBAN AGRICULTURE GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

A guide for policymakers



ИНСТИТУТ
ПО ФИЛОСОФИЯ
И СОЦИОЛОГИЯ



EFUA

European
Forum
on Urban
Agriculture

What is the aim of this guide

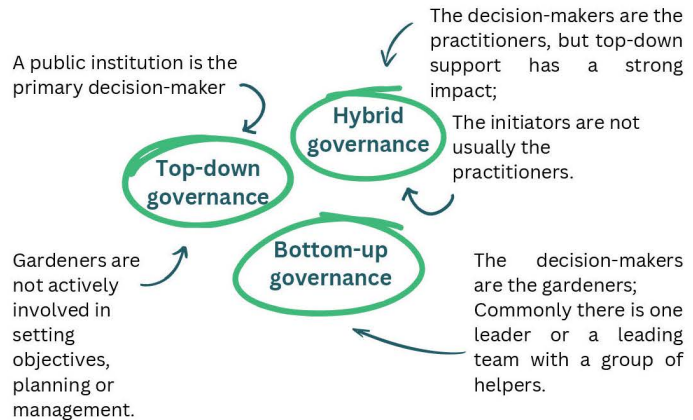
Urban agriculture initiatives (UAI) play a crucial role in promoting sustainable and innovative urban development, as well as community engagement. However, ensuring good governance throughout the various stages of UAI development can be challenging. This guide aims to help policymakers navigate UA governance 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.



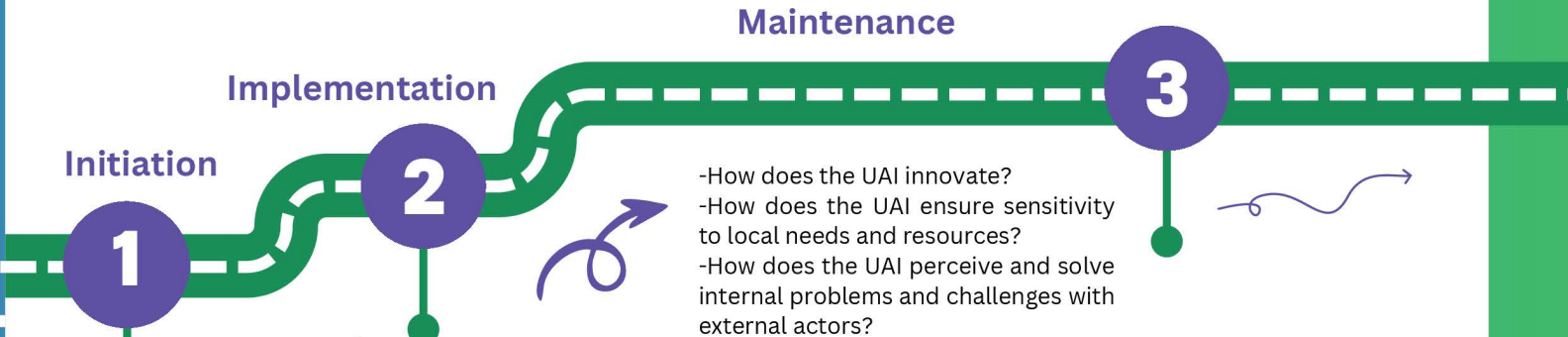
What is a UA governance model?

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



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

- 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?

- 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

- Encouraging a diverse range of actors to initiate UAIs. Prior farming experience and knowledge are not essential.
- Setting clear goals and planning objectives for the UA at the relevant policy level.
- Ensuring UAIs access to necessary resources and securing them through partnerships or funding.

- Availability of resources (land, water and key infrastructure, financial, human and administrative resources), and clear planning for resource acquisition
- Clarity of goals and criteria to assess progress.
- Supportive policy environment.



IMPLEMENTATION

- Adopting a suitable governance approach based on the characteristics of each UAI (top-down, bottom-up, or hybrid).
- Establishing an inclusive decision-making process involving all stakeholders.
- Providing leadership training or support for effective management.

- Strong leadership with interpersonal skills to navigate challenges and build relationships with external actors.
- Engaging external actors/partnerships that provide necessary knowledge, resources, or support.



MAINTENANCE

- Ensuring inclusive and efficient decision-making processes, with genuine citizen participation.
- Active involvement of community leaders in policy agenda-setting and decision-making on local issues.
- Developing public-private partnerships and support systems that contribute to long-term sustainability.

- Long-term funding sources for ongoing operations that have demonstrated capacity for positive social, environmental or economic results.
- Strong commitment from community members involved in managing the UAI.
- Engaging external stakeholders who offer continuous support or resources.

UA GOVERNANCE BARRIERS

- Limited access to resources, particularly financial resources for starting up UAs.
- Lacking or inefficient coordination between different departments and institutions that are responsible for regulating UA activities.

- Administrative burdens in complying with regulations and policies related to UA activities.
- Lack of understanding from external actors and political entities (local institutions and policy-makers).

- Limited funding sources for maintaining long-term operations
- Difficulty in engaging external stakeholders/supporters over time



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

Policymakers play a key role in ensuring the success and sustainability of UAIs. By addressing key success factors and overcoming common barriers, policymakers can significantly enhance the impact of these initiatives. Here is how you can do this:

HOW TO BRING SUCCESS

HOW TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

FOSTER DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

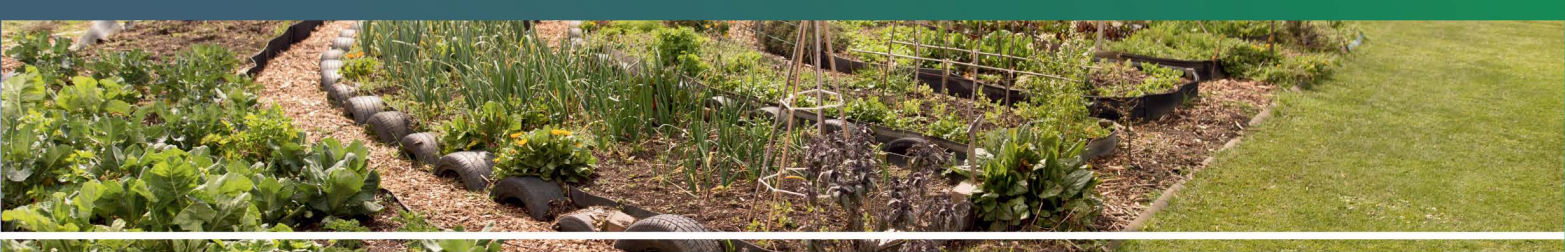
- Create inclusive platforms such as community forums, advisory committees, and public consultations to bring together diverse stakeholders, including community members, local businesses, and non-profit organisations.
- Allocate funding and resources specifically for grassroots projects. Simplify application processes for grants and subsidies to make them accessible to small community groups and individual initiatives.

- Reduce bureaucratic obstacles by streamlining administrative processes for starting and maintaining UAIs.
- Provide clear guidelines and dedicated support staff to assist community groups in navigating regulatory requirements.
- Develop educational programs and awareness campaigns to promote understanding and interest in UA among potential initiators.

ENSURE COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE PLANNING

- Secure initial and long-term funding: Establish dedicated UA funds within municipal budgets. Encourage public-private partnerships to leverage additional funding.
- Fund educational programs and training workshops to enhance the skills of UAI participants and develop human capital in UA. Partner with local universities and vocational schools to offer relevant courses.

- Address funding gaps by creating emergency funds or contingency plans to support UAIs during financial shortfalls. Provide microloans or revolving funds to help initiatives sustain operations during challenging times.
- Streamline administrative procedures related to UA activities through policy revisions where necessary.



HOW TO BRING SUCCESS

PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

- Develop strong leadership by offering leadership training programs for community members. Recognize and support local leaders who can advocate for and guide UAI.
- Foster inclusive decision-making in top-down UAI where all stakeholder's voices are heard.

UTILIZE ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE MODELS

- Foster top-down and bottom-up integration by developing policies that encourage hybrid governance, combining government support with community-driven efforts.
- Provide institutional backing while allowing community groups the autonomy to manage daily operations.
- Implement pilot projects to test innovative approaches and scale up successful models.

HOW TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

- Build leadership capacity by providing mentorship programs where experienced leaders can guide new ones.
- Ensure continuous development opportunities for UA leaders to keep them motivated and effective.

- Encourage policy innovation by fostering a culture of innovation within governmental bodies to continuously improve and adapt policies supporting UA. Create task forces to explore and improve existing governance practices.



Photographs by Daniel Mnderlein,
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This project has received funding from
the European Union's Horizon 2020
research and innovation programme
under Grant agreement No 101000681.



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