



UrbanShift Brazil 1st National-Local Dialogue

Summarised by Pratibha Caleb

Overview:

The National- Local Dialogue addressed several key thematic areas focusing on sustainable development and governance in Brazil's metropolitan regions. They emphasized integrated urban planning and multi-level governance as crucial for sustainable development.

Building Metropolitan Governance: Need for greater compliance with the Statute of the Metropolis, funding, and integrating the metropolitan agenda into public policies.

Roadmap for Strategic Actions: Need for continuity in governance, joint planning, and cross-cutting strategies.

Topic of First National-Local Dialogue: Ways to Boost Integrated Urban Planning and Multilevel Governance

Level of Representation:

- National government representatives: Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI), Ministry of Cities (MCID), Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA), National Institute for Space Research (INPE)
- State government representatives: State Metropolitan Agency of Santa Catarina (SUDESC), State Civil Defense of Santa Catarina, State Secretary of Environment and Sustainability of Pará
- Local government representatives: Belém, Florianópolis, Teresina, Timon, Belo Horizonte and Guadalajara (Mexico)
- Other Representatives from research institutes, UN agencies and NGOs

How the National-Local Dialogue Contributed to Existing Policy:

Brazil's urban sustainability policies are shaped by a multi-tiered approach involving national, state, and municipal levels of governance, aiming to address the rapid urbanization and environmental challenges facing its metropolitan regions. Key policies include the Statute of the Metropolis, which provides a legal framework for integrated urban planning and metropolitan governance, and the National Policy on Urban Development, which focuses on reducing social-spatial inequalities and supports municipalities in implementing sustainable urban development.



The National-Local Dialogue, notably within the CITinova II¹ project framework, has been instrumental in influencing these policies by fostering collaborative efforts between various governmental levels and stakeholders. During the dialogue, discussions highlighted the need for improved coordination and cooperation across different sectors and regions to address urban sustainability challenges effectively. Speakers underscored the importance of integrated urban planning and multi-level governance to enhance sustainable urban development, with particular attention to the unique issues faced by cities like Belém, Florianópolis, and the Teresina-Timon urban agglomeration. This dialogue has paved the way for strategic actions and roadmap processes that aim to strengthen metropolitan governance and integrated urban planning, ensuring that local insights and initiatives are aligned with national sustainability goals.

Local Level:

The National-Local Dialogue significantly influenced discussions among local city governments by fostering a collaborative environment where municipal representatives could share experiences and strategies for sustainable urban development. It provided a platform for cities like Belém, Florianópolis, and the Teresina-Timon urban agglomeration to voice their unique challenges and explore tailored solutions, thereby encouraging a more nuanced approach to urban planning and governance. Local officials highlighted issues such as budgetary asymmetry, solid waste management, and urban mobility, leading to a greater emphasis on creating integrated development plans and mechanisms for effective metropolitan governance. The dialogue also facilitated the exchange of best practices and promoted the idea of multi-level cooperation, which local governments recognized as crucial for implementing sustainable policies and projects. This interaction not only strengthened the commitment to metropolitan governance but also inspired local governments to align their initiatives with national sustainability goals, ensuring more coherent and impactful urban development efforts.

Outlook for the Second National-Local Dialogue

As an outcome of the 1st National-Local Dialogue, ICLEI South America will develop the multilevel governance roadmap and ensure continued engagement between the metropolitan regions. The 2nd National-Local Dialogue will thus serve as a critical checkpoint to assess progress, ensure accountability and further refine collaborative strategies.

¹ Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF-7), CITinova II project addresses a central challenge for metropolitan regions in Brazil: improving integrated management at a metropolitan level, enhancing its sustainable development and the well-being of its population.



Reflections on National-Local Dialogue: Key Challenges and Opportunities

The National-Local Dialogue illuminated several key challenges and opportunities in the realm of urban sustainability and metropolitan governance.

Challenges:

A primary challenge discussed was the lack of integrated urban planning, which has led to fragmented and inefficient development across Brazil's metropolitan regions. The rapid and often unplanned growth of urban areas, compounded by climate crises, underscores the necessity for comprehensive and cohesive planning efforts. Additionally, the principle of municipal autonomy often clashes with state and federal actions, creating a complex and sometimes conflicting landscape for urban governance. This issue is exacerbated by budgetary asymmetries and the difficulties in managing solid waste, transportation, and green areas.

Opportunities:

Despite these challenges, the dialogue revealed numerous opportunities. The collaborative platform facilitated the exchange of innovative solutions and best practices among cities, fostering a spirit of cooperation. The CITInova II project emerged as a pivotal framework for integrated metropolitan management, emphasizing the importance of multi-level governance. The potential for sustainable tourism, bioeconomy, and the establishment of metropolitan councils was particularly highlighted. Additionally, peer-to-peer learning and international cooperation present pathways for local governments to gain insights and validate their efforts on a global stage.

Next Steps:

Moving forward, the next steps involve concrete actions to build on the discussions initiated during the dialogue. ICLEI South America will continue to support the UrbanShift project by preparing a multilevel governance roadmap, ensuring sustained engagement through regular meetings and follow-ups. This ongoing dialogue aims to integrate the commitments made during the first meeting into practical urban development strategies, enhancing the resilience and sustainability of Brazil's metropolitan regions. Collaborative efforts and strategic planning initiated in this dialogue are crucial for overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities in urban sustainability and governance.

In conclusion, the National-Local Dialogue has highlighted the complexities and potentials of advancing urban sustainability and metropolitan governance in Brazil. Reflecting on key challenges, from disjointed urban planning to budgetary asymmetries, underscores the urgent need for cohesive strategies and multi-level cooperation. At the same time, the identified opportunities, such as the CITInova II project, sustainable tourism initiatives, and international cooperation, offer a clear roadmap for transformative urban development.