

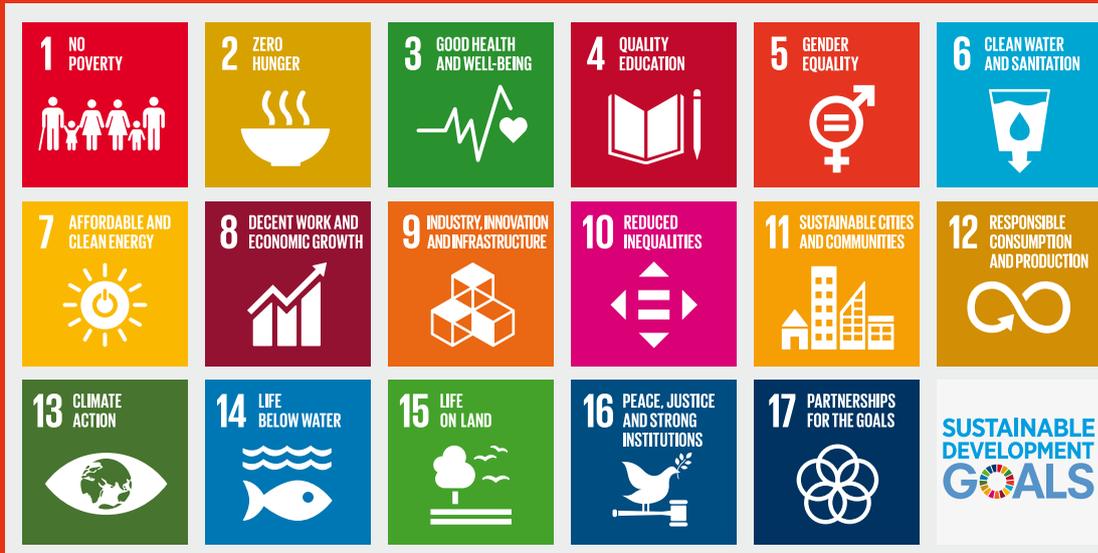


The SDGs in municipal international cooperation

40 inspirational
examples



🕒 THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG's)



Youth of Sint-Truiden (Belgium) and Nueva Guinea (Nicaragua) discover the SDGs together during exchanges in the framework of their city-to-city partnership.

The SDGs in municipal international cooperation

40 inspirational examples



SDG's?



INTRODUCTION

The SDGs

Citizens, governments, schools, and companies around the world pursue the universal agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 goals include social, ecological and economic challenges that all countries of the United Nations want to achieve by 2030.

There is a growing consensus that the 2030 Agenda will only be realised if local governments put their back into it. Flemish cities and municipalities are pioneering with the local implementation of the SDGs. Civil servants raise awareness among citizens, politicians integrate the framework into their coalition agreements, and management teams base their multi-annual strategic plan of the municipality on the SDGs. Four years after signing the agenda at the United Nations, around two out of three Flemish municipalities are already using this international framework.

This local commitment to the SDGs is often powered by civil servants and aldermen responsible for international cooperation. They make sure that the SDGs are included in the municipal operations. As specialists in global themes, they introduce the international agenda to the municipality, but also strive not to lose track of the global dimension in the local implementation of the SDGs. After all, there is a risk that the realisation of the 2030 Agenda will only focus on what can be achieved within the municipal borders. By continuing to look across the municipal borders, local governments are in the perfect position to connect the local with the global. Many Flemish cities and municipalities give international justice a permanent place on their agenda and contribute to the realisation of the SDGs around the globe through their international policy and activities.



Why link the SDGs to international cooperation?

The SDGs do not only offer options for working on sustainable development within the own municipal borders using a transversal approach; they are also a good framework for the international activities of your municipality. International city-to-city partnerships (also called twinnings) can benefit from the SDGs in a number of ways:

1. The 17 goals are **the perfect international framework**. The 2030 Agenda gives you the opportunity to incorporate your city-to-city partnership into a greater story. If governments, companies, schools, and citizens start working on them, how can your partnership stay behind?
2. The SDGs speak **a universal language**. North or south, east or west: the international agenda creates connections. Both your municipality and your global partners have a responsibility to contribute to the 17 goals.
3. The 2030 Agenda promotes a **comprehensive, transversal, and multi-stakeholder approach**. All 17 goals are interrelated. Making a consistent contribution to one SDG automatically means making choices about various sustainability themes. The 2030 Agenda offers a framework for involving both municipal departments and colleagues, as well as citizens and private companies, in the city-to-city partnership or other international activities of your municipality.
4. By integrating the SDGs into the project cycle of a city-to-city partnership, you will automatically start working in **a more sustainable manner** within your own municipality and in your international cooperation efforts.
5. The SDGs create **visibility** for the international activities of your municipality. The goals show that everyone around the globe is working on the same themes. By using them in your communication, you bring the city-to-city partnership closer to your citizens, increase the support, and show that you, as a municipality, are an open-minded and committed player.

This publication as a source of inspiration

This publication aims to inspire local governments, and by extension anyone engaging in international partnerships. It presents ideas and methods for integrating the SDGs into international partnerships through awareness raising activities, policy exercises, work visits and by introducing them in your partnership programme.

The content was provided by Flemish civil servants that coördinate global city-to-city partnerships. The VVSG organised various workshops to gather the methods and ideas set out in this publication. Many examples will primarily concern city-to-city partnerships, but various ideas can also be used for other forms of international cooperation, international networks, cross-border economic partnerships and partnerships with 4th-pillar organisations.

Some examples in this publication are already being implemented, while Flemish municipalities are currently taking the first steps with other ideas and yet other ideas only arose in unpolished form during brainstorming exercises and need to be further developed.



This publication contains several links to movie clips and documents. To consult them, it is best to open the digital version of this publication: go to <https://www.vvsg.be/kennisitem/vvsg/sdg-documents-in-foreign-languages>

MORE INFORMATION?

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Youngsters in Nueva Guinea, Nicaragua learn about the SDGs.

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Ghent at the UN SDG Action award ceremony in Bonn

RAISING AWARENESS

By linking the communication about your city-to-city partnership or international partnership to the SDGs, you can bring your story close to the citizens and society. At the same time, you will not only be highlighting your twinning, but also raising awareness about the SDGs. Everyone benefits!

SDG challenges In 2018, the city of Ghent (Belgium) was awarded for its successful communication campaign about the SDGs and received the 'UN SDG Action Award' from the United Nations. The idea was simple: the Ghent city council challenged five other Belgian cities to highlight the 2030 Agenda. Ghent fought Sint-Niklaas for the title of best vegetarian city (SDG 2), Kortrijk for having as many people as possible visit social restaurants (SDG 1), Genk with the 'Everyone a Feminist' campaign (SDG 5), while Ostend had to strive to increase bicycle use among its citizens (SDGs 3 & 11) and Liege was challenged to organise the largest education marathon (SDG 4). The campaign was successful: over 6,000 participants were introduced to the SDGs.

Why not organise something similar with your international partners? Let the youth departments in both municipalities challenge each other, make schools race each other on one SDG, or encourage competition between companies from the different municipalities.





Water hike in Bierbeek



SDG hike The municipality of Bierbeek (Belgium) organised a water hike to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of their partnership with San Felipe de Oña in Ecuador. Both municipalities have been working on themes like drinking water facilities, sanitation, and irrigation over the past two decades. Bierbeek was inspired by its partner city Oña which has a similar hike. The hikers learn more about the SDGs and the city-to-city partnership through a brochure and during the 7.5 kilometre hike. The hike connects the two municipalities, teaching the hiker about the many aspects of water in Bierbeek and in Oña, and about its crucial importance at a local and global level.

You can reach a new audience by organising hikes and bicycle rides in the context of one or more SDGs and by cooperating with your international partner. Hiking clubs and individual cyclists can learn more about global themes during their spare time.

For more information about the hike contact inge.hatse@bierbeek.be



Joint Facebook page The Flemish city of Harelbeke has set up a joint Facebook page with its Namibian partner Eenhana. Both municipalities use it to highlight their SDG experiences, awareness campaigns, and policy plans. Harelbeke and Eenhana manage this Facebook page jointly. Not only the international civil servants place posts, colleagues from the environmental, youth and communications departments of Harelbeke and Eenhana also communicate through the [Facebook](#) page. Video clips about local news (such as climate protests in Flanders) can also be shared in this manner.

Facebook page Harelbeke-Eenhana



Art project Art brings people together. Some options:

- Send young people to the partner municipality and ask them to create an SDG artwork or take pictures of projects/campaigns that contribute to the SDGs.
- Each partner municipality takes 17 pictures, one for each SDG. With these pictures, each partner municipality shows what each SDG means to them. The pictures from both municipalities can be placed next to each other in the municipal buildings. The city of Mol and its partner from Nicaragua completed such a picture project.
- Create an artwork to look at the partner municipality 'through the viewpoint' of an artist. Each municipality sends an artist to the partner municipality, asks him/her to study the SDG impact of the partner municipality and to create a piece of art about this.



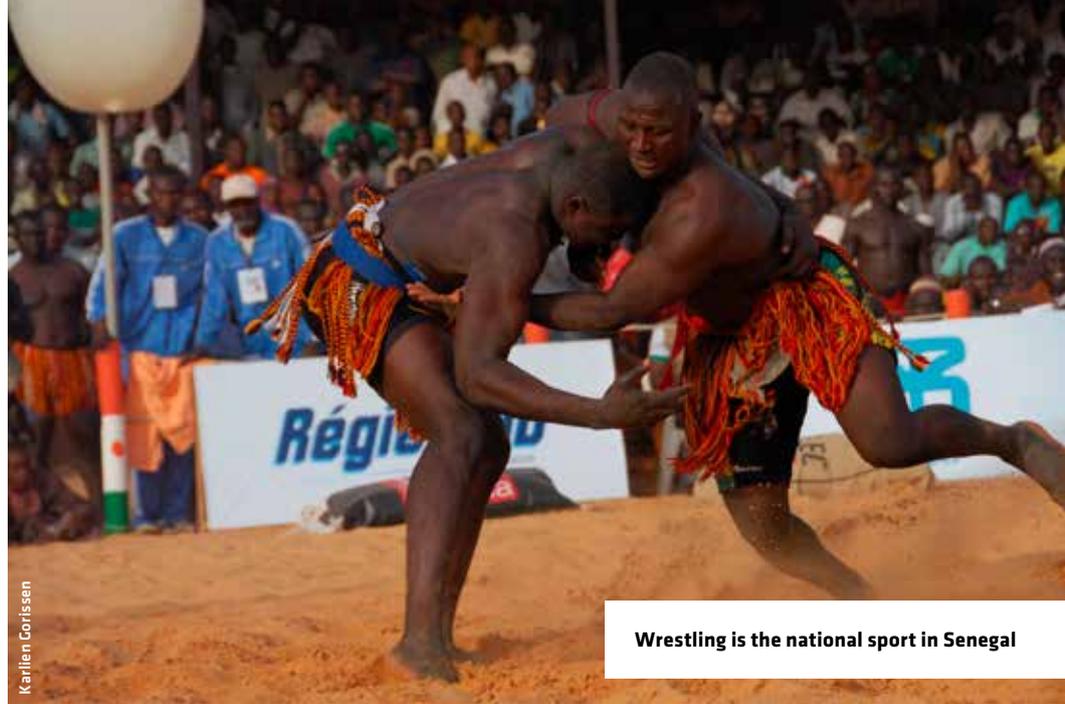


SDG clips Partner municipalities can create short films that show how local governments contribute to the SDGs. For example, the partner municipalities Bierbeek and Oña (Ecuador) created a [video](#) which shows how their partnership contributes to the realisation of the SDGs in the Ecuadorian partner municipality. The video of [Harelbeke and Eenhana \(Namibia\)](#) shows some good practices from both municipalities for each SDG. Sint-Truiden and Nueva Guinea (Nicaragua) created a [series of news reports](#) about their youth exchange programme. One report is fully dedicated to the SDGs.

Streaming the 'same' SDG campaign Both partner municipalities can organise a sustainable campaign at the same time. You can see what the partner municipality is doing using video conferencing/streaming. Some ideas: donating blood at the same time en masse (SDG 3), bringing together young entrepreneurs in both municipalities to exchange ideas about sustainability (SDG 8), simultaneously opening a park or planting the first tree of a new forest (SDG 15), organising a joint clean-up campaign on the beach or in the streets (SDG 11).



Olympic SDG games Think of a sports activity for each of the 5 pillars of sustainable development (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership). An example for People: organise a yoga session with as many people as possible; Planet: go 'plogging' with as many hikers/runners as possible (cleaning up as much waste as possible when hiking/jogging). You can try to achieve a certain goal in both partner municipalities or organise a competition.



Wrestling is the national sport in Senegal

You can also set up an exchange related to SDG 3 (health) by focussing on the **national sport** of the partner municipality. For example, by organising a wrestling tournament in the Flemish municipality, which is the national sport of the partner municipality in Senegal. The activity can be linked to mental health (SDG 3), inclusive sports (SDGs 1, 5 & 10), etc.



Choose a fixed sporting moment,
find a partner and
take that first hurdle. It's worth it!



Local sustainable heroes in Flanders

SDG heroes (or SDG ambassadors)

- Heroes campaign (or [Week of the Sustainable Municipality](#) of the VVSG) as part of which both municipalities identify local SDG heroes. These SDG heroes can be individual citizens, companies, schools, or civil society organizations that take steps towards a more sustainable world in their daily activities. Examples are organic farmers, an association organising homework assistance for children of refugees, a renewable energy company, etc. These heroes are made visible to the citizens in both municipalities (for example, by means of an article in the municipal informative newspaper or website), and celebrated by the local government (for example, at a local event, on local radio, or during a gathering at the city hall). The communication about a hero who contributes to SDG 1 (no poverty), for example, can be linked to the hero related to SDG 1 from the partner municipality. Working with heroes also gives a human face to the goals, making them more specific and tangible.
- Appoint '**ambassadors**' in both partner municipalities for each SDG. These ambassadors can exchange information about the theme (and possibly visit each other during a physical visit to the partner municipality). They can look for good practices and set up campaigns together.





**Youth campaigning for the SDGs
in the city of Tienen**

Municipal Youth Council Various Flemish municipalities have a municipal youth council. The municipal youth council meets several times per year (with, for example, two children from each school in the territory of the municipality) to discuss themes that children consider important at that time. These may be themes like 'playing during spare time', 'poverty', and 'road safety'. Set up a similar youth council in the partner municipality. Appoint the participating children as ambassadors of the city-to-city partnership, the SDGs, and international solidarity. Make the themes discussed, the SDGs, and proposals by the municipal youth council visible in both municipalities using a campaign or a game.

SDG comic Pupils of a Flemish primary school draw a comic related to the SDGs and let their peers from the partner municipality complete the text balloons (or vice versa). Another version: pupils write the start of a comic related to the SDGs and let pupils from the partner municipality add to it and finish it.

SDG youth parliament Young people from both partner cities meet (online) for a debate. An underlying goal is exchanging and refining debate techniques. Each group is given one SDG about which they need to debate with the young people from the partner municipality. The goal of the debate is to let young people from both municipalities choose a specific project they can work on through the exchange. Prior to the youth parliament, the young people can complete preparatory exercises to get acquainted with the SDGs.

SDG twinning app A website and/or app could be created to visualise the SDGs in both partner municipalities. The app can contain general information about both municipalities and the SDGs, but also infographics, good practices and campaigns that contribute to the SDGs. The website and/or app can be used by schools (also to work on the digital skills of the youth), by the tourism department, by organisations, etc. Ideally, the app offers features for interaction (such a check-ins, option to upload own SDG pictures, chat feature, SDG games, facts and figures, etc.).



The fishing game of Sint-Truiden

Copy existing **SDG games for children** for use in the partner municipality. The Flemish City of Sint-Truiden has created a 'fishing game'. This is a blue plastic shell (or a large basin) in which ducks and fish swim. However, there is also garbage floating around amongst the ducks and fish. The children must catch the garbage (and not the ducks) from the bath and sort it correctly. This creates a link with various SDGs, including SDG 14 related to oceans and SDG 12 related to sustainable consumption. A similar game could be developed by the partner city in Nicaragua.

Digital storytelling In 2019, a ‘digital storytelling and SDGs’ workshop was organised in Tambacounda (Senegal), the partner city of Sint-Niklaas. 16 participants, including 10 young people from local youth organisations, participated in this workshop managed by an external partner over the course of 5 days. Storytelling includes many challenges: combining content, pictures, SDGs, and music in a clip of no more than 3 minutes. The participants first determine what they are passionate about or what they are working on in their daily work or life. They write this down and establish a connection with one or more SDGs. They subsequently record their text and look up illustrative images on the Internet or use their own pictures. Finally, everything is edited into a clip. The participants acquired a range of skills in the field of media, as well as knowledge about the SDGs. The finished clips from Tambacounda cover issues like poverty, climate change, illegal migration, health, child marriages, etc. They are all honest testimonials about the challenges and worries of young people in Senegal. The clips are then discussed in a pedagogic context





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Playing the SDG GPS game

SDG GPS game This GPS game can be used to discover the city centre of Bruges, Kortrijk, Ostend, or Roeselare in an interactive and playful manner in the context of the SDGs. Teams challenge each other by creative questions and assignments at different locations. Each team is given a tablet and collects as many points as possible in a race against the clock and each other. It is good for team building activities, with your family, with your organisation, or simply with a group of friends. Roeselare goes the extra mile by introducing into their SDG GPS game facts and figures about their Beninese partner city Dogbo. All information about reservations can be found on the [Iedereen Mondiaal website](https://www.iedereenmondiaal.be).

SDG exhibit

- The Municipality of Bierbeek developed an exhibit with 17 panels, one for each SDG. Bierbeek used these panels to show how the municipality works on each SDG and how Oña, the Ecuadorian partner, works on each SDG, and how their city-to-city relationship contributes to this.
- The city of Menen annually organises an exhibit on partnerships between the north and the south which have led to artistic and sustainable results in the context of the SDGs. In previous years, for example, the exhibit showed an educational bike of NGO Join for Water, a graffiti exchange between Antwerp and Colombia and inspiring images of the city-to-city partnerships between Harelbeke & Eenhana (Namibia) and Roeselare & Dogbo (Benin). The exhibit is primarily aimed at schools (primary and secondary). The city offers guided visits with playful challenges.



SDG exhibition in Bierbeek



SDG exhibition in Menen



Edegem is doing the VVSG circle exercise

POLICY IN MUNICIPALITIES WITH A CITY-TO-CITY PARTNERSHIP

All policy levels, anywhere in the world, must do their bit in order to achieve the universal 2030 Agenda. Local governments can introduce this agenda in their own municipality through their international partnerships. How can you use a city-to-city partnership to make the policy of your own municipality more sustainable? How can you develop campaigns that contribute to the SDGs in both partner municipalities based on global cooperation?

Each partner municipality completes an **SDG inventory exercise**. Which goals is the municipality already working on? What could the municipality focus on more? Where are the gaps and opportunities? The **VVSG circle exercise** can be used for this brainstorm exercise. Afterwards, the partner cities exchange their SDG inventories, discuss them, exchange methods, and draw up a (joint) action plan.

Each partner city develops and proposes a **policy project** for its partner. In each municipality, a group of people will think about a project that can be carried out in the other municipality, for example based on the SDG inventory exercise discussed above.



Let your partner city take a look at the policy of your municipality through the perspective of the SDGs. The partner municipality can conduct **an assessment** of the contribution that your municipality is making to the SDGs or a to a specific SDG from its own perspective. Your own municipality can also learn a lot by assessing the policy of your partner

- The Flemish city of Harelbeke and the Namibian city of Eenhana chose to assess each others' coalition agreement and multi-annual strategic plan from an SDG perspective. The partners informed each other of what struck them in the policy documents of the other municipality and gave input about how they would address situations.
- The municipality of Herent had their Guatemalan partners take a close look at its poverty policy (SDG 1). This resulted in indignation of the partners over the “individual diagnosis of and approach to poverty” in Herent, as poverty issues and solutions were assessed in the perspective of society as a whole in Guatemala.

You can let your partner city conduct an **context analysis** of your municipality based on the SDGs. Their input and proposals can be inspiring for the own municipality, both in terms of the content and in the way they draw up the document and create a link with the various SDGs.

The partner cities can hold a **community consultation** about the SDGs in both municipalities. Which SDGs are citizens worried about?

Which SDGs should be prioritised according to citizens? The Guatemalan city of Nimlaha'kok, partner of the Flemish city of Herent, identified two priority SDGs in six communities. The citizens were mainly worried about climate (SDG 13) and education (SDG 4). They also added an 18th goal to the 2030 Agenda: “interconnectedness of the 17 SDGs, expressed through the Mayan Cosmovision”. For more inspiration to arrange such community consultation in the context of the SDGs, take a look at the [inspirational brochure about the SDGs & citizen participation](#) developed by the VVSG.

Each department from both partner cities chooses one SDG and develops a related **action** to be implemented by their municipality. Both municipalities will present their SDG actions and assess them together. These can be internal actions (such as choosing for gender-equal use of language and images in all municipal communication) or external actions towards citizens.

Both partners can jointly identify and select **SDG indicators** that can be followed up on in both municipalities. The indicators can be identified by the parties jointly, after which each municipality can define their own target values. Each municipality follows up on the indicators and discusses them on a regular basis with its partner. VVSG has developed a [set of 205 local SDG indicators](#) and an accompanying [manual](#). This set can serve as a source of inspiration and can be supplemented by own indicators.



Nimlaha'kok carried out an SDG-based community consultation



Harelbeke and Eenhana carrying out the SDG circle exercise

INTRODUCE THE SDG'S INTO THE PROGRAMME OF YOUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The SDGs offer the perfect framework to look for the themes you will cooperate on with your (international) partners. You can also use the SDG framework to make existing projects and campaigns more sustainable. Even though cooperation grows from specific needs, interventions can most likely be linked to the SDG's. Discussing the SDGs can be a way to address local challenges and to approach the partnership programme as broadly as possible.

The **VVSG circle exercise** can be used to carry out an SDG-based assessment of the city-to-city cooperation. Both municipalities work together to assess their partnership based on the 17 SDGs using the game board. The city-to-city partnership as a whole (or a specific project) is placed in the centre of the circle. How does the partnership contribute to the 17 SDGs, and how can this be improved? How can you make a specific project more sustainable and take into account as many other SDGs as possible?

The Flemish municipality of **Lommel** recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of its cooperation with the municipality of **Ongwediwa** in Namibia. A new five-year programme was drawn up and subsequently assessed based on the SDGs using the circle exercise. Both partner cities concluded that the new multi-annual programme did not contribute to five goals (SDGs 5, 6, 7, 12, and 14). The partners studied how they could include these five SDGs in their programme. Their partnership was adjusted and they decided to focus on, inter alia, gender and water treatment.

Prioritise one or two SDGs each year in both partner municipalities, set up a corresponding campaign, and present a 'finished product' to each other at the end of the year. Remember that it is impossible to treat the goals separately. Working on one SDG leads automatically to contributions to other sustainability themes and other SDGs.

Lommel and Ongwediwa (Namibia) chose to focus on one SDG in their communication each year. They selected five prioritised goals in their five-year programme. A different SDG is highlighted and communicated about in both partner municipalities each year. This allows you to establish a connection between local and global aspects and to create a locally driven but global dynamic: what are we doing in our own municipality with respect to this SDG, what is our partner municipality doing, and what are we doing in the context of the city-to-city partnership?



Set up an overarching **city-to-city parliament** in both partner municipalities which represents and brings together the citizens of both municipalities to think about the implementation of the SDGs. This parliament can prioritise SDGs for the city-to-city partnership, distribute (part of) the budget of the programme, etc. Why not let this parliament develop its own SDGs? These 'localized' SDGs can be compared to the original SDGs afterwards.

SDG-index Both partner cities score and rank themselves on each SDG. You can create an official index/survey for this, or simply determine it using dialogue and exchange of information. The municipalities will match a number of SDGs afterwards:

- Establish matches by linking the strengths of a partner city to the weaknesses of the partner city. Look for the SDGs on which one partner scores well, while the other does not. The partner who scores high on the SDG can share its experience and knowledge related to the theme. The partners will together think about how they can cooperate in relation to these SDGs and which partners (e.g. civil associations, companies, etc.) can be involved. This exercise enhances the principles of reciprocity and peer learning.
- You can also choose to prioritise those SDGs on which both partner municipalities have a low score. By adopting this approach, you can look for good practices together and organise exchanges, site visits or education activities.

In-depth dialogue The partner municipalities select one SDG together, based on which a diverse group of actors is gathered in both municipalities (civil associations, companies, knowledge institutions, civil servant, politicians). The groups from both municipalities will meet in person and hold a dialogue about their selected SDG. How do we create room for the story of the other party? How do we incorporate this into our shared programme? This example is currently being implemented by the three Flemish municipalities of Herent, Edegem, and Brasschaat and their respective partner cities Nimlaha'kok (Guatamala), San Jerónimo (Peru), and Tarija (Bolivia). They address these during a three-year programme 2019-2021.

Integrate the SDGs into the **partnership agreement and the multi-annual programme**. Make sure that the SDGs are (at least) explicitly set out in the partnership agreement and give them a fully-fledged role as a leading framework of your international partnership. Ideally, you also draw up the multi-annual programme using the 17 SDGs (or the 169 SDG sub-goals) as a deliberate approach to all strategic goals and/or action plans. You can also choose to conduct a **materiality or impact analysis** at the start of the process, as part of which you identify those SDGs on which your partnership can have the greatest impact or can make the greatest progress. These 'prioritised' SDGs can then be used to check all new activities in the multi-annual programme. Finally, make sure that the programme is drawn up in close cooperation with aldermen, civil servants, and actors from civil society organizations after an exchange of information about the (sub-)goals has taken place between the various groups from both municipalities.



In-depth dialogue between three Flemish municipalities and their Latin-American partners



SALLE DE VISITE

HEURES DE VISITE DES UNITES DE PRODUCTION

- Du Lundi au Vendredi:
- 08h30, 10h30, 15h30, 17h
- Samedi:
- 08h 30, 10h 30, 16h 00
- Jour férié: 9h00

La visite du centre les dimanches
Les visites de groupe de plus de 20 personnes
doit se présenter 30 min avant

Respectons l'environnement
Prenez soin de votre environnement
Ne jetez pas nos ordures dans les poubelles

La propreté c'est

ROOM

ATTENTION TO THE UNITS

- Friday:
10:30am - 2:30pm, 5:30pm - 8:30pm
- Saturday:
10:30 am - 4:00 pm

Hoogstraten visiting its partner Za-Kpota (Benin)

WORK VISITS

Work visits are often a benchmark within international partnerships. Meeting in person allows for true in-depth dialogue, exchange of knowledge, and introduction to methods. Work visits are also the perfect moment for working on the SDGs with the partner city and the delegation.

Choose **one or more SDGs around which the visit resolves** for each work visit to your partner. Set up delegations based on the chosen goals and discuss this with the persons in the host municipality also working on this SDG. These can be colleagues from the municipality, citizens that contribute to the 2030 Agenda in their own way, companies, etc. Inviting less obvious parties to participate – for example your colleague from the parks department, an organic farmer, or a manager from a sustainable company – promotes a transversal approach to the city-to-city partnership.

Municipalities that have participated in the SDG heroes campaign of the VVSG ([Week of the Sustainable Municipality](#)) can select one or two **initiatives of the heroes**, which are to be visited by the partner municipality. This introduces partners to specific sustainable practices that take place in the municipality. It can also be interesting to invite the hero to a work visit or immersion trip to the partner municipality.



Take the **SDGs on the road**. Visit cities and municipalities, organisations, companies, suppliers, and the like that are working on the SDGs (such as a road trip through the country) with department managers or civil servants, both from the Flemish municipality and the partner municipality. This trip can take place both in Flanders and in the partner country. In a second phase, colleague-to-colleague exchanges about lessons learned can take place.



Highlight the 17 SDGs during a work visit Let the partner municipality show at least one good practice related to each of the SDGs.

If there are **partner city committees** with civil servants, politicians, civil society organizations, or interested citizens active in the partner municipalities, these committees from both municipalities can be introduced to each other to discuss the SDGs. Methods like the **VVSG circle exercise** can be used for this.



Zoersel making the SDG circle exercise

A **programme** (who, what, where, when) is drawn up for each work visit, potentially supplemented by a memo or reference terms. This informs the delegation members about their stay at the partner municipality and provides a guideline during the visit. Try to integrate the SDGs into the programme of the work visit. This can be done by scheduling half a day for discussions about the 2030 Agenda, or by linking the 17 icons of the goals to certain programme components.

An **agreement memo** can be drawn up after a work visit. Both partners will set out the agreements made, allocate responsibilities, and set corresponding deadlines in this memo. This provides a better guarantee that all agreements and to-dos are followed up on. The SDGs can serve as the framework for such agreement memo.

Some partners draw up a **protocol** for work visits. This is a type of conduct agreement used during visits. Try to integrate the 2030 Agenda into your protocol with the partner municipality or link the various items of the protocol to the 17 sustainable development goals. For example SDG 5 (gender): attention paid to a balanced distribution of men and women in delegations; SDG 13 (climate): compensation for CO₂ emissions of the flight by planting trees; SDG 16 (good governance, transparency): clear agreements on expenses and subsistence allowances.





Ongwediva and Lommel planted trees to compensate CO₂ emissions

Lead by example as a municipality. A city-to-city partnership without exchanges is only half as effective. Flights between both partner municipalities are often unavoidable, but try to consider the impact of these flights on the climate. Focus on SDG 13 (climate) by **compensating** the **CO₂ emissions** of your flights. You can do this by planting trees in your (partner) municipality – which also makes your (partner) municipality a better place to live – or contact a certified organisation which converts your CO₂ emissions into environmentally-friendly initiatives (such as Bos+ or greentripper.org). In the context of the youth exchanges between Lommel and Ongwediva (Namibia), the decision was made 2 years ago to plant 15 trees per participant: 10 in Lommel and 5 in Ongwediva.

Use the work visit to your partner municipality to discuss the 2030 Agenda not only with the partner, but also with other stakeholders. Examples are the Belgian embassy and the national government of the partner country. Use your international partnerships to **lobby** them about the importance of local governments in the global realisation of the SDGs and about the contribution that city-to-city partnerships can make.



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EVENEMENTEN



Flanders
State of the Art



Belgium
partner in development



PLATFORMA
LOCAL & REGIONAL INTERMUNICIPAL ACTION