



## Understanding the value proposition of city networks and measuring impact

14 July 2021 · 15.00h – 17.00h CEST

By-invitation online meeting with experts, practitioners and city representatives (via Teams)

Organised by: CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs) in collaboration with Metropolis and The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, with the support of Barcelona City Council

City networks have become a permanent fixture of the global landscape of urban governance. They have proliferated to an extent hardly imagined some decades ago, and today they constitute a complex ecosystem composed of more than 200 entities and counting. At its core, city networks can be characterized as institutionalized structures that facilitate cooperation among local (and/or regional) governments, which can join (or leave) the network voluntarily. Relatedly, **these networking spaces provide a variety of services and functions to their members** and play a decisive role in helping them address shared challenges collectively.

Broadly speaking, **most city networks perform three types of functions**. First, **advocacy**: they represent the collective interests of their members vis-à-vis other tiers of government and lobby on their behalf to include the urban voice in global policymaking. Second, **knowledge dissemination**, by acting as platforms for knowledge sharing, policy learning and peer-exchanging. And third, **policy implementation**: city networks encourage adoption of regional and global policy frameworks and stimulate action to reach these goals (i.e., Agenda 2030, European Green Deal, or climate targets).

Yet, despite the wide range of activities and services on offer, there is still a poor understanding of **how such initiatives are perceived, experienced and valued by city networks members**. Nor if they are adequately responding to the membership expectations and requests. Further, we lack a clear framework to **measure its impact and effectivity to transform local realities** on the ground. For instance, to what extent joining a particular city network may improve the formulation of local climate, gender or digital policies? Are cities making the most of the services on offer? And if not, what are the main obstacles and limitations they are facing? How can the value proposition of city networks in terms of advocacy, knowledge dissemination and policy implementation be enhanced to serve their member's needs better?

Those are not trivial questions, since being able to appraise impact could provide a clearer picture for cities on the added value of joining one network or another – which is even more important if we take into consideration the current overcrowded ecosystem of city networks. By the same token, measuring the return on efforts invested in these transnational networking spaces could also prove a valuable instrument for local governments to legitimate internationalization policies and strategies in the eyes of their citizens. Lastly, this is a relevant issue not only for cities but also for the increasingly professionalized network's secretariats, who are interested in bringing maximum value to its members and are open to reformulating its functions and services to better serve them.

Seeking to contribute to this much-needed debate, CIDOB's Global Cities Programme hosts a digital seminar to launch a reflection process around these issues. Organized in collaboration with Metropolis and with the support of Barcelona City Council, the overall aim of the session is to generate an interactive debate and to gather inputs and insights from all participants. The seminar's conclusions will inform a policy paper to be published by CIDOB in the coming months.

**14 July, 2021**

*By-invitation online meeting with experts, practitioners and city representatives (via Teams)  
Note all times are Central European Summer Time (CEST)*

- 15.00 – 15.05 **Welcome**  
**Pol Morillas**, Director, CIDOB  
**Laia Bonet**, Deputy Mayor, Barcelona City Council (*tbc*)
- 15.05 – 15.15 **Introductory remarks and presentation of the session**  
**Agustí Fernandez de Losada**, Director, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB
- 15.15 – 15.45 **Kick-off statements**  
**Júlia López**, European Regional Director, C40 Cities  
**Luz Amparo Medina**, Director of International Relations, Mayor's Office of Bogota  
**Kate Joseph**, Deputy Director of Strategy and Research, City of Johannesburg, South Africa  
**Ian Klaus**, Senior Fellow on Global Cities, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- 15.45 – 16.55 **Discussion**  
*Debate among participants around two blocs of questions*
- How to achieve policy impact?**  
*What mechanisms are deployed by city networks to achieve policy impact among members? Are they successful? Why (not)? What elements hinder their effectiveness in achieving greater levels of policy impact (i.e., insufficient funding, inadequate governance model, etc.)? How can city networks serve the needs of both globally leading cities and second-tier ones?*
- How can impact be measured?**  
*How to measure the impact of the advocacy activities of city networks? How to measure the effectiveness of the knowledge dissemination efforts? How to appraise the impact of the actions by city networks on policy implementation? What are the challenges in measuring such impact?*
- Debate facilitated by:* **Octavi de la Varga**, Secretary General, Metropolis
- 16.55 – 17.00 **Concluding remarks**  
**Marta Galceran**, Adjunct Lecturer, Pompeu Fabra University

**List of invited participants**

- **Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Director, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB
- **Alena Sirka-Bred**, Head of European and International Affairs, Vienna City Council
- **Anna Lisa Boni**, Secretary General, Eurocities
- **Andrea Noferini**, Pompeu Fabra University
- **Anthony Pipa**, Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Center for Sustainable Development, Brookings Institution
- **Arnau Gutiérrez**, Professor, Carlos III University
- **Daniel Pejic**, Research Fellow, Connected Cities Lab, University of Melbourne
- **Diana López**, UNDP
- **Edgardo Bilsky**, UCLG
- **Eleonora Betancur**, Director, ACI Medellín
- **Elif Durmus**, Utrecht University – Cities of Refuge Project
- **Emmanuelle Pinault**, C40 representative
- **Eric Apelgrean**, Durban City Council
- **Eugene Zapata**, Global Director Strategic Partnerships, Resilient Cities Network
- **Eva Garcia-Chueca**, senior researcher, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB
- **Felip Roca**, Director of International Affairs, Barcelona City Council
- **Felipe Llamas**, Professor, Carlos III University
- **Francisco Resnicoff**, Undersecretary of International Affairs, City of Buenos Aires
- **Guillem Ramírez**, Barcelona City Council
- **Hannah Abdullah**, senior researcher, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB
- **Henri Paul Normandin**, former director International Relations, Montreal City Council
- **Ian Klaus**, Senior Fellow on Global Cities, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- **Joe Brady**, Glasgow City Council
- **Júlia López**, European Regional Director, C40 Cities
- **Kate Joseph**, Deputy Director of Strategy and Research, City of Johannesburg, South Africa
- **Laia Bonet**, Deputy Mayor, Barcelona City Council
- **Lina Liakou**, Global Director of City Engagement and Knowledge and Head of Europe and the Middle East, Resilient Cities Network
- **Lorenzo Chelleri**, Director, International Master City Resilience Design and Management, International University of Catalunya (UIC)
- **Luz Amparo Medina**, Directora de Relaciones Internacionales, Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá
- **María del Huerto Romero**, Relaciones Internacionales, Intendencia de Rosario
- **Maria Vittoria Beria**, Head of International Affairs, City of Milano
- **Marina Canals**, Secretary General, Educating Cities
- **Marta Galceran**, Adjunct Lecturer, Pompeu Fabra University
- **Max Bouchet**, Senior Policy Analyst, Global Economy and Development, Center for Sustainable Development, Brookings Institution
- **Michelle Acuto**, Director, Connected Cities Lab, University of Melbourne
- **Nahuel Oddone**, Associate Research Fellow UNUCRIS
- **Nicolas Mancini**, Director, Paradiplomacia
- **Octavi de la Varga**, Secretary General, Metropolis
- **Paola Arjona**, Technical Director, Red ALLAs, City of Mexico
- **Paul Costello**, GMF Cities, German Marshall Fund of the United States
- **Pol Morillas**, Director, CIDOB
- **Rachel Abrams**, Global Cities Officer, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

- **Ray F Lara**, University of Guadalajara
- **Robert Muggah**, Co-founder and Research and Innovation Director, Instituto Igarapé
- **Rodrigo Perpetuo**, SG ICLEI South America
- **Rosa Arlene**, Director, CIDEU
- **Rosa Suriñach**, UN Habitat
- **Samuel Kling**, Fellow and Director of Global Cities Research, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- **Simon Curtis**, University of East Anglia and Senior Fellow on Global Cities at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- **Tobia Zevi**, Associate Research Fellow, Global Cities Programme, ISPI
- **Wolfgang Haupt**, research associate, Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space
- **Xavier Tiana**, Head of International Relations, Barcelona Metropolitan Area